



How successful is the resolution of land-use conflicts? A comparison of cases from Switzerland and Romania



Constantina Alina Tudor^{a,1}, Ioan Cristian Iojă^{a,*}, Ileana Pătru-Stupariu^b,
Mihai Răzvan Niță^{a,1}, Anna M. Hersperger^{c,2}

^a University of Bucharest, Centre for Environmental Research and Impact Studies, 1 Nicolae Bălcescu, 010041 Bucharest, Romania

^b University of Bucharest, Department of Regional Geography and Environment, Centre of Landscape-Territory-Information Systems 1 Nicolae Bălcescu, 010041 Bucharest, Romania

^c Swiss Federal Research Institute of Forest, Snow and Landscape (WSL), Land Landscape Dynamics, Zürcherstrasse 111, CH-8903 Birmensdorf, Switzerland

A B S T R A C T

Keywords:
Land use
Sustainability
Equity
Conflicts
Switzerland
Romania

Land-use conflicts are complex disputes that involve heterogeneous parties as well as environmental and social impacts that are often difficult to resolve. The measures and definitions of success in land-use conflict resolution still need further research. We investigated four cases of land-use conflicts in two countries, Switzerland (CH) and Romania (RO): a connection between two ski areas (CH), a ski track in a national park (RO), a residential project in a sensitive natural area (CH) and a residential project in an area with poor urban facilities and planning (RO). We developed a framework to assess the cases, and used it to address the following research questions: 'How successful is the resolution of land-use conflicts in these four cases?' and 'Which factors contribute to success or failure?'. The assessment was based on criteria and subcriteria related to conflict management and conflict-solving conditions. To identify the criteria and subcriteria that contributed most to successful resolution and to rank the cases we used the Analytic Network Process. Our results showed that Switzerland was more successful in the resolution process than Romania due to more emphasis on sustainability and equity. The low scores of the Romanian cases resulted from the poor implementation of spatial plans and poor enforcement of environmental regulations, little interest in environmental protection and a preference for quick economic returns, and little importance attached to public participation in the decision-making process. For conflict-resolution to be successful our findings indicate that it is important to foster not only economic aspects but also long-term ecological benefits and to take into consideration people's needs. This study should help planners as it identifies key elements for the successful resolution of land-use conflicts to achieve the best use of land.

© 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

In most countries, current economic developments are correlated with increased land demands and impacts on the environment. This leads to growing conflicts about how land is used (Goetz, Shortle, & Bergstrom, 2005). Such land-use conflicts are fueled by political and economic interests (Campbell, Gichohi, Mwangi, & Chege, 2000), competition for natural resources (Vihervaara,

Kumpula, Tanskanen, & Burkhard, 2010), the need for new developments and urbanization (Saint, Flavell, & Fox, 2009), and shortcomings in planning practices (AESOP, 2012; Lecourt & Baudelle, 2004). The cumulative effects of these forces often lead to complex conflict situations which require explicit strategies to resolve them.

Recent research on land-use conflicts (de Groot, 2006; Henderson, 2005; Sze & Sovacool, 2013; von der Dunk, Grêt-Regamey, Dalang, & Hersperger, 2011) has revealed the complexity of land use conflicts and of the challenges for coping with them. To ensure the best possible uses of land, especially people's expectations (Cotteleer & Peerlings, 2011) and people's attitudes towards their neighborhood (Cherubini & Nova, 2004) should be considered.

Conflict resolution is a complex process and many different aspects need to be taken into account. A number of valuable

* Corresponding author. Tel./fax: +40 2103103872.

E-mail addresses: constantina.tudor@wsl.ch (C.A. Tudor), iojacristian@geo.unibuc.ro, iojacristian@yahoo.com (I.C. Iojă), ileanageorgeta@yahoo.com (I. Pătru-Stupariu), mihairazvan.nita@g.unibuc.ro (M.R. Niță), anna.hersperger@wsl.ch (A. M. Hersperger).

¹ Tel./fax: +40 2103103872.

² Tel.: +41 447392560.

handbooks on environmental conflict resolution have been developed the face of the relatively weak government regulation in the US. These include *The Consensus Building Handbook* by Susskind and colleagues (Susskind, McKernan, & Thomas-Larmer, 1999), *Environmental Disputes* by Crowfoot and Wondollock (1990) and *Contested Lands* by Mason (1992). Furthermore, case studies have explored many specific issues for successful land-use conflict resolution, e.g. computer-based workshops for conflict resolution in infrastructure development (Timmermans & Beroggi, 2000), remote sensing and GIS as tools for communicating land-use needs in northern Sweden (Sandström et al., 2003), supporting social learning processes for adaptive co-management between conflicting landscape managers (Leys, 2011), the use of public consultations for conflict resolution regarding landfills (Owusu, Oteng-Ababio, & Afutu-Kotey, 2012), the contribution of policy regime changes to conflict resolution (Saarikoski, Raitio, & Barry, 2013), and conflict reframing (Asah, Bengston, Wendt, & Nelson, 2012).

For getting beyond conflict, recent developments in planning theory focus on the power of collaborative decision making. A number of influential books drive this development. Innes and Booher (2010) outline a theory of collaborative rationality and illustrate the actual dynamics of deliberation in order to demonstrate how collaborative reality really works. Healey (2006) proposes a new framework for planning which is rooted in the institutional realities of today. Forester (2013) advocates facilitative leadership to turn conflict into consensus.

Successful resolution of land-use conflicts is crucial in spatial planning in the context of approving policies and plans as well as in individual planning decisions. In the context of this paper, successful conflict resolution is characterized by public participation in the decision-making process, mutual acceptance of the decision and absence of subsequent conflicts on the same issue. In order to contribute to the growing literature on procedural and institutional characteristics of collaborative decision making, we investigated what factors contribute to the successful resolutions of land-use conflicts by comparing cases of such conflicts in two different countries with similar heterogeneous geographic landscapes but with very different economic, political and administrative and histories of planning (Table 1a, b). The comparison should provide useful insights for practitioners and planners to help them improve the use of land and learn from the experiences other countries have had in resolving common forms of land-use conflict. The study should also be a contribution to theory building in the field of conflict resolution.

The two countries we selected for comparison are Switzerland located in Western Europe and Romania, located in Central Europe. While Switzerland is a federal state with fairly independent administrative units and a well-developed economy, Romania has a communist past and a currently emerging economy. Although Switzerland is generally thought to have a good system of spatial planning (ARE, 2008), this does not mean it has no land-use conflicts that create tensions nor that such conflicts are always successfully resolved. Compared with other European countries, Swiss

Table 1a
Switzerland and Romania compared in terms of surface area, population density and rural areas.

	Surface in km ²	Inhabitants per km ² of the total area (2010)	Rural areas – % of the total area
Switzerland	41 285	195.6	60% mountainous, 31% forest, 37% agricultural,
Romania	238 391	93.18	31% mountainous, 27% forest, 61% agricultural

Sources (Eurostat, 2010; INSSE, 2011; VLP-ASPAN, 2012).

Table 1b
Switzerland and Romania compared in terms GDP growth, planning laws and planning levels.

	Growth in the GDP per inhabitant, in % – 2010	Planning law	Planning system levels
Switzerland	3.1	Federal law on spatial planning adopted in 1979 (Petitpierre, 2012)	Federal – cantonal – regional – communal
Romania	–1	Law on spatial planning implemented in 2001 (Puscasu, 2009)	National – county – local

Sources (Eurostat, 2010; INSSE, 2011; VLP-ASPAN, 2012).

spatial planning system generally functions well, which makes it interesting to analyze to find out why the system is so successful.

In Romania, in contrast, the spatial planning system is not always appropriate for complex issues under today's socio-economic conditions (Ianos, Sirodoev, & Pascariu, 2012). It is therefore a challenge to implement a planning process successfully, and developing appropriate plans and regulations involves a "long and bureaucratic process" (Petrisor, 2010). This has led to planners and local authorities becoming increasingly 'kind', and sometimes allowing land to be used without ensuring that the desired (or proposed) use is compatible with adjacent land use.

Framework for the analysis of land-use conflict resolution

We propose a framework to analyze land-use conflicts and the success of the resolution process in the cases we studied, drawing on work of Beck (2004), Sze and Sovacool (2013) and Orr, Emerson, and Keyes (2008) (Fig. 1). The criterion *consentaneity*, which refers to an agreement among involved actors is at the top because reaching a final agreement in the resolution process can be an important indicator of success when the agreements are able to last for a long time and to promote more economic efficiency or ecological protection of landscapes. In a hierarchy of criteria used to measure success in land-use conflicts resolution, reaching an agreement (unanimously or not) should be considered the first criterion (Beck, 2004), because it may bring beneficial implication for economy, society or environmental protection. We also applied the four criteria of Sze and Sovacool (2013): efficiency, equity, sustainability and compatibility, which can be used by practitioners to assess land-use conflicts. Efficiency refers to how the proposed project through the use of land and natural resources contribute to economic benefits and social well-being. Equity refers to the degree of equality in influence of actors in the decision-making process. In this criterion the informal and formal actions of actors either to express concerns about the conflicting situations or to build trust are assessed. Sustainability refers to the procedures used to address resource preservation and the current and long-term impacts of the conflict situations on environmental and socio-cultural characteristics. Compatibility refers to how suitable the location of the project is in regard to existing land-use regulations and how properly the land is used according to its productivity potential. The criteria's positions in the framework are the same in the evaluations of all four cases. We then selected as subcriteria aspects related to the process and outcome quality and specified them in terms of economic and environmental sustainability, economic and social efficiency as well as legal feasibility. These aspects are all essential for an efficient performance of the process. We also used subcriteria from the framework of Orr et al. (2008), which is practice-based, general and flexible, and therefore adaptable to our cases. It is especially useful for analyzing differences and similarities in processes of land-use conflict resolution that were

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/83335>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/83335>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)