

Preface

The Centre for Landscape Democracy (CLaD) established in 2014 at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences is a cross-disciplinary international centre for the creation and dissemination of scientific knowledge, creative interpretations and innovative solutions within the theme of landscape democracy. Its mission is:

To lead, host and provide a conceptual framework in order to motivate high quality research discourses and practices associated with democracy, rights and public engagement in landscape functions, patterns and change.

The making of this book is a response to the above aspirations. The discourses, discussions and deliberations presented by the authors are underlined by a conviction that landscape, in its wider conceptual sense, is the life support system for human and ecological communities. Physical, mental, emotional, economic, social and cultural wellbeing depend in large part on inclusive planning and management of landscape. The general axiom is that one can own land, but landscape is a common good and resource that should afford equal access rights to all. Seen in this way, a right to landscape is a universal human right and the intellectual discourses on the concept of landscape democracy are paving the road toward spatial justice. At the same time constitutional ideals of democracy, human rights, equality and freedom have a tangible landscape dimension. Democracy as an ideal is rooted in free debate in public space; landscape can be understood as the spatial materialisation of democracy (or oppression). At this time of global environmental and economic challenges driving increasing social tensions, there is an urgent need for an ongoing discussion about the role of landscape in society. The relevant insights and knowledge included in this anthology are one small step towards spatial justice.

The Editors
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