



Interview with Laure Cormier, PhD students in landscape (architecture) sciences, Agrocampus Ouest, Centre d'Angers, Institut National d'Horticulture et du Paysage

1. THE THESIS

1.1 What did you study before the Doctorate? What is your first Diploma? Why did you decide to prepare a doctorate?

I completed the diploma of landscaper engineer at the Institut National d'Horticulture (which became on the 1st July 2008 AGROCAMPUS OUEST, Centre d'Angers, Institut National d'Horticulture et de Paysage). The curriculum lasted five years, starting at the INH, directly after my scientific A level. After my A level, I wanted to orient my professional project towards environment. Realizing the fact that the notion was very wide, I decided to approach it through plants.

During my curriculum, I discovered the notion of landscape. I rapidly got a high interest in this transversal notion, which allows to approach a territory through a global approach involving social as well as physical, political, economical and environmental aspects.

With the engineering curriculum, I strengthened general skills, and decided to specialize myself in landscape and more precisely in the analysis of landscape in territory development. Thus, I decided to prepare a doctoral thesis after the completion of my diploma.

It was important to me to specialize myself on a subject, to analyze it exhaustively, to take the time for reflection and to propose perspectives of evolution. The thesis constitutes an extraordinary personal enrichment thanks to the opportunity to conduct a project from A to Z, the freedom which is given to orient my work, the accumulation of knowledge during the three years, the scientific interaction with colleagues and researchers of external laboratories, the scientific networks.... The list is long!

1.2 Please precise the doctoral school where you are registered

The doctoral school DEGEST (Droit, Economie-Gestion, Société et Territoire) of the Angers University

1.3 Please mention your thesis Directors and your research laboratory

Thesis Director: Nathalie Carcaud, geographer, professor at the landscape department in the INHP
Co-directors: Fabienne Joliet and Monique Toubanc, associate professor, geographer and sociologist
Laboratory: AGROCAMPUS OUEST, centre d'Angers, Institut National d'Horticulture et du Paysage, landscape department

1.4 Could you precise the title of your thesis? What do you want to point out?

Les trames vertes : un projet de paysage au service de l'aménagement de la ville ?
Greenways: a landscape project for the city development?

The question of the development of a greenway (*trame verte*) cannot be ignored today in the development project of urban spaces. A possible answer is to preserve and connect spaces considered as nature within

urban and suburban territories for different meanings (ecological, social and landscape). I try to understand the place of this phenomenon in the decision making of territory development, how it is taken in consideration by the developers, its translation in the public policies and the urbanism documents, its representations and its influence on the future of the city. I also focus on the place of landscape project to build a sustainable development of the greenway (*trame verte*), according to the demands, representations and social uses of the space.

1.5 You are now in the second year of your thesis. Are you facing any difficulties? If yes, could you describe them?

The thesis is a difficult exercise by itself. It is indeed difficult to keep concentrate on his work, no to scatter or not to be influenced by each read theory. It requires to question each reading and to link them to the thesis questions.

I face particularly one difficulty: the relationships between the research and development professionals. In order to conduct my researches, I focused on the Angers agglomeration, and faced numerous of problems to obtain information or the right to take part to development orientation meetings (for example for the SCoT elaboration). Despite commitments regarding aspect of confidentiality, the menace of the scientist remains and affects the research.

1.6 Are you receiving a research grant? (Or other subsidies?) From which organization? How much is the monthly net amount?

I receive a research grant from AGROCAMPUS OUEST, centre d'Angers, Institut National d'Horticulture et du Paysage, of 1078 euros per month (net).

2. THE THESIS AND THE LANDSCAPE PROJECT

2.1 Which role, according to you, should have your research results in the design of a landscape project?

To provide new reflections to better identify the interactions between public actions, space managers and landscape users

2.2 For you, what are the relations between the practice of the landscape architect profession and your doctorate?

According to me, theoretical research on landscape enables to point out the necessity to integrate the complexity of space development. Landscape is a *vector* enabling the coordination of the different challenges for a reasoned territory development (necessity of an interdisciplinary approach).

My doctorate aims at pointing out the relations between the territory, the uses and the actors which develop it in function of their representations and the models developed by the scientific world. These relations should be better taken into account during landscape developments, during which, most of the time, the integrity of the "landscape system" is insufficiently considered.

3. THE THESIS AND EUROPE

3.1 Do you know any other doctorate in landscape architecture in Europe? Which one? What do you know about this doctorate?

I don't have precise knowledge on doctoral studies overseas. However, I had the occasion to meet, during seminars or symposiums, foreigners PhD students: mostly Italians from Milan (who are working on the notion of landscape project, urban landscapes), Spanish as well as Norwegian, Croatian...

4. YOUR RESEARCH APPROACH

4.1 What are the three main concepts in your thesis? Could you define them?

Greenway (*trame verte*): « un réseau d'espaces linéaires qui est conçu, planifié et géré à différentes fins : écologiques, récréatives, culturelles, esthétiques ou tout autre objectif compatible avec la notion d'usage durable du territoire » (Ahern, 1995).

Landscape: I focus on the relations between the materiality of landscape in the greenway (*trame verte*), its representations and the political actions on landscape development.

Landscape project: the construction of collective projects on landscape, taking in consideration representations, needs and confines of the actors and the users in a global approach for the understanding of the forces which structure the landscape.

4.2 What are the main tools and methods you are using? Their assets? Limits?

I would like to emphasize the materiality of the study spaces with its representations and practices of the professionals as well as the users in order to question the efficiency of the public policies implemented.

- The cartography through a SIG of the land use at different time in order to determine the evolution dynamics of the Angers Greenway development (my study territory) during the last 50 years.
- A 3D representation of this evolution through a software of territory modeling and visualization (LandSim 3D)
- Interviews on the notion of Greenway (*trame verte*) overseas (with scientist and developer), in France in several agglomerations and in Angers agglomeration (with decision makers, developers, managers and inhabitants).

4.3 Are you using resources available on Internet? Which one? Why?

- To develop the bibliography, I use Google scholar, online revues such as Geocarrefour, Cairn, Elsevier, Springer link, Persée, Strates, Annales de la recherche urbaine, revue.org, HAL...
- To identify events (symposiums, seminars...): the website calenda

4.4 What role is your thesis Directors playing?

My thesis director plays an important role of advice, orientation in my work, follow up, and assistance on a daily basis.

4.5 What role plays your thesis committee? Who is part of it?

The thesis committee has a critical role for my researches. It enhances my reflections and helps me to precise my research axes.

It is composed with: Nathalie Carcaud, Monique Toublanc, Fabienne Joliet; members of my school: François Colson, David Montembault; and members of research laboratories: Bernadette Lizet, Yves Michelin.

4.6 Which courses are you following (or will you follow) during your thesis? Why?

I followed several courses at the doctoral school on thesis organization, oral communication, English... (Compulsory courses at the school)

4.7 Today, which idea do you have on your final thesis work?

I don't have yet a precise idea on my final thesis work. I suppose, it is still too early.

4.8 What are you planning to do after your thesis?

I consider two orientations. One would be to continue postgraduate teaching and work in a school of landscape (combining research and teaching which I particularly like). Having spent time in local authority, the other option would be to work as consultant for local authorities, administrations, ministries, to assist in the territory development reflections and the implementations of public policies.