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How European Planning Scholars Rank the Importance and Reputation of Journals: Summary of findings.

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With the support of the contact persons of AESOPs local planning schools, we had the opportunity to hold a European wide survey into the importance and reputation of planning journals under planning scholars belonging to AESOPs institutional membership. In order to get a representative list of European planning scholars, we selected from the local websites of AESOPs institutional member schools all teachers of planning courses (as far as available on the local websites). Next, the AESOP contact persons were so kind to correct our selection of planners. In the spring of 2010, the queries were mailed to a total number of 860 European planning scholars. The response was very high for a digital survey (214 respondents making 24.9% of the total) enabling us to draw very representative conclusions.

Two key questions were raised, dealing respectively with the importance and the reputation of the journals. The first question into the esteemed importance of journals was very open: *Which journals are important to your work?* This question did not give an indication of scale (local, national, European, global journals), neither of the theoretical or practical focus, nor indication of disciplinary or interdisciplinary orientation. The open nature of the question enabled the respondents to assess the importance of journals 'for their work as planning scholars' according to their own perception.
Also the second key question into the reputation of journals was deliberately kept as open as possible: *Which journals have the highest reputation?* We did not mention any indicators for reputation, such as ISI or Google Science ratings; we did also not specify the theoretical or practical reach of the esteemed reputation. In principle, all sorts of journals could be mentioned by the respondents but by selectively addressing the survey to the community of European planning scholars, the investigation obviously got a selected focus.

Planning scholars from 21 nations were involved in the survey. They brought forward a total number of 234 different journals.

The next journals are considered by European planning scholars as the most important for their work. The outcomes are weighted in order to pay tribute to priorities of respondents. Each respondent was allowed to mention 5 journals: the weighting procedure attributed 5 points to the first mentioned journal, 4 points to the second, etc. The next figure exhibits the ranking of importance for the top ten journals (figure 1).

Ranking Importance of Journals

1.	Urban Studies	277 points
2.	Environment and Planning A	192 pt
3.	European Planning Studies	183 pt
4.	Planning Theory & Practice	155 pt
5.	Town Planning Review	127 pt
6.	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	106 pt
7.	Environment and Planning B (*equal position 7 and 8*)	89 pt
8.	Planning Theory (*equal position 7 and 8*)	89 pt
9.	Journal of Planning Education and Research	85 pt
10.	DISP	76 pt

Figure 1. Journals important for work of European planning scholars (weighted scores)
Source: Salet & De Boer 2010

Urban Studies stands out as the most important journal for European planning scholars. This journal is not known for its pure specialization in planning studies. It combines contributions from urban sociology, urban geography, urban planning, urban economy, etc. Apparently, planners find their way in this interdisciplinary forum of urban research. The same goes for the secondly ranked journal: Environment and Planning A, which is also interdisciplinary. The third ranked journal, European Planning Studies, initially started as a typical planning journal, but at present only 50% of its publications are typical planning studies. The fourth and fifth ranked journals Planning Theory and respectively Town Planning Review also publish papers from different disciplinary backgrounds but hold a specialized focus on planning issues.

A further overall conclusion is that the landscape of journals is relatively flat. Similar research was done among American scholars of planning by Goldstein, H. & Maier, G. (2010) 'The Use and Valuation of Journals in Planning Scholarship: Peer Assessment versus Impact Factors'. *JEPR*, Vol. 30,1: 66-75. Among American planners two journals strongly dominate all other journals both in importance and reputation (with almost the same weight for both journals): the *Journal of the American Planning Association* and respectively the *Journal Planning Education and Research*. In Europe, in contrary, the landscape is more dispersed, as is illustrated in next figure. Urban Studies leads the ranking list but there is no evidence of a mono- or duopoly such as is the case in the appreciation of the American planners.

Spread of importance journals

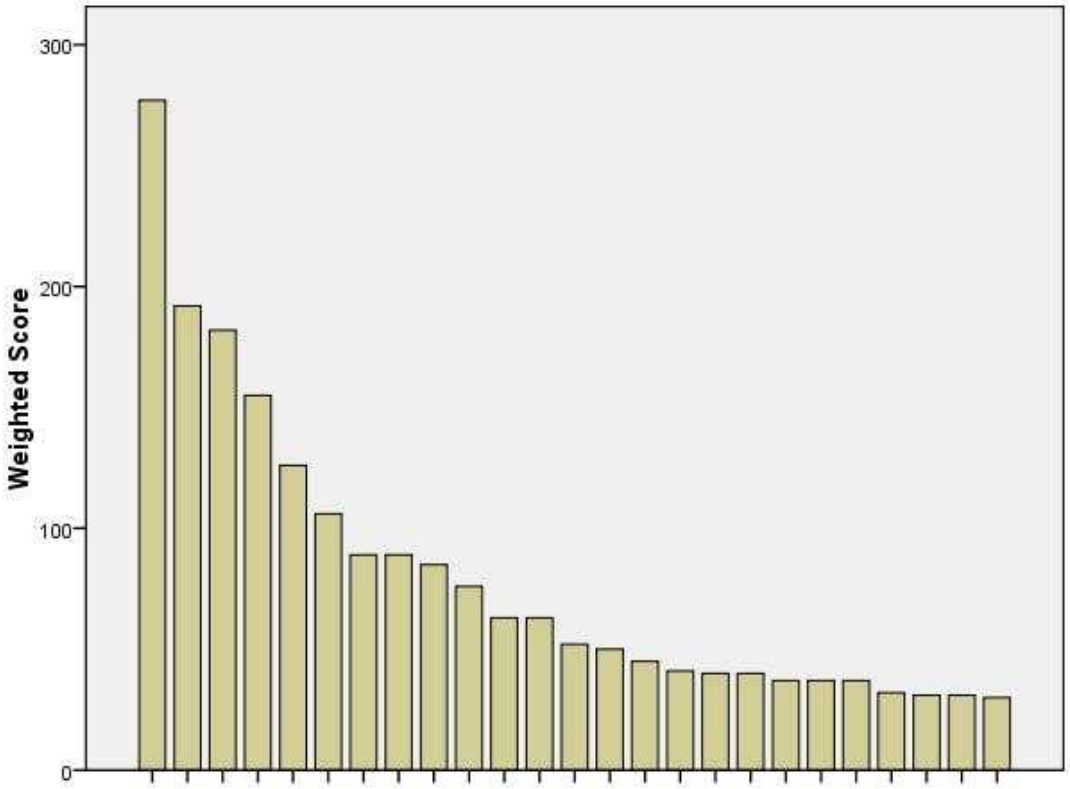

Figure 2. Spread of importance journals
Source: Salet & De Boer 2010

A further striking conclusion in polyglot Europe is the complete dominance of English language journals. Still, there is no dominant role for American journals. The two leading planning journals of USA are not very prominent in Europe. This may have been the case in the past – unfortunately the survey is not longitudinal – but at present only the Journal Planning Education and Research qualifies in the European top 10 (ranking on the ninth place with respect to importance). Apparently, also in Europe the dominant language is English. Many journals in different languages were proposed in our survey but none of these makes it to the top ten. DISP is the first not exclusively English language journal, ranking on the tenth place (DISP is dealing with three languages). Obviously, the appreciation of different languages differs within specific language areas, such as the German and the French speaking areas (the above figures are Europe wide). Our sample of planning schools of different nations was not large enough to generalize conclusions about the ranking of home languages in different countries. The planners from Germany

gave some indication of this tendency (planners from all German planning schools strongly favored German language journals) but there were not enough respondents from Germany to generalize these findings. Over the whole of Europe, there is no doubt of English as the common language.

The second key question regarded the reputation of journals. The findings are weighted in the same way as above.

	Journal	Points	ISI Rank
1.	Urban Studies	343	1.3
2.	Environment and Planning A	299	1.7
3.	Journal of American Planning Association	161	1.5
4.	International Journal of Urb and Regional Research	143	1.4
5.	European Planning Studies	132	0.67
6.	Planning Theory and Practice	125	
7.	Environment and Planning B	119	1.2
8.	Town Planning Review	105	
9.	Journal of Planning Education and Research	98	0.6
10.	Planning Theory	76	

Figure 3: Overall Reputation
Source: Salet & De Boer 2010

The findings of the reputation question do not dramatically differ from the assessed importance of journals. As indicated in figure 3, both Urban Studies and Environment & Planning A qualify again as the highest esteemed. Then, after quite a distance, the following journals rank very closely. Surprisingly, the third position is taken by the Journal of the American Planning Association. The status of this journal appears to be higher than the actual use in own work. Also the International Journal of Urban and Regional Research is well esteemed.
A further remarkable conclusion is that the reputation figures do not match the ranking of academic ISI impact figures. Among the top ten, three journals are not even established as 'ISI journals', although some of these are very close to this status. Still, there is reasonable alignment of high reputation and ISI Impact qualification in the top 10. In the lower rankings the differences between reputation and ISI Impact strongly increase.

The outcomes of the survey will be elaborated more in detail and discussed in a paper to be submitted to one of the planning journals. Members of AESOP will be informed about this in due time via AESOP web.

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