

# “There is a Black Hole in What Juha Talvitie: Surveyors Should be More Involved in Plan

Going through the curriculum vitae of Juha Talvitie two things are leaping to the eye. The first one is the long relationship with the Helsinki University of Technology (over forty years). Second: his commitment to regional and spatial planning, having been involved in associations in Finland as well as countries or regions like Lapland and South Bothnia in west Finland. With 46 years of involvement Talvitie is definitely the person to talk to regarding spatial development and the surveying profession.

By Sonja de Bruijn



**Name:** Juha Pellervo Talvitie

**Date of Birth:** 12 September 1935

**Nationality:** Finnish

**Education:** Dipl. Engineer (Masters Degree), Licentiate of Technology, Doctor of Science (Technology)

**Past Positions:**

Started his career as a Planning engineer in a State Rural Development Authority in Lapland. Accordingly he became Managing Director of the Regional Planning Association of Lapland, then Managing Director of the Regional Planning Association of South Bothnia. After having been the Managing Director of the Association of Finnish Regional Councils he became Director of Structural Policy and EU-Affairs with the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. Membership of several professional organizations, amongst which the Finnish Association of Surveyors and FIG.

1976-78 Vice Chairman FIG commission 8

1978-81 Chairman of the spatial planning and development commission 8, FIG

1985-87 Vice President FIG

1988-91 President of FIG

**Current Position:** Retired.

## Too Many Secrets

On July 27 GeoInformatics had a phone interview with Talvitie, president of FIG from 1988-91. We called his home number since a recently acquired mobile phone offered too many secrets for immediate use. It didn't take the Finn long however to have the device up and running.

(New) technology, it was also one of the topics during the interview. Being 64 years old, Talvitie stopped consulting, a freelance activity which he started after his retirement from the service of the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities in 1998. 'Master of his agenda' again enabled him to do research with the aim to prepare a dissertation for the Helsinki University of Technology after the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on spatial development and planning.

## Space, Distance and Time

According to Talvitie the development of an information/knowledge society will affect urban and rural structures as did the development of the industrial society. He explains why: "The determinants of space, distance and, most important, time will change or disappear. As a result freedom of location will increase and people and organisations can reorganise their activities." One may ask what the result will be of this new spatial order. Talvitie believes planners should be educated to these questions.

## Interpret

"This information society places a challenge for surveyors", Talvitie continues. "It will also influence the activities of all scientific commissions of FIG. Their task is to interpret

how this development will affect different fields of surveying activities and how one should react. Of course the development of new tools will help to meet new challenges." All this is of influence at the surveying profession. Talvitie: "The development of rural areas in the developed world is changing the situation as it used to be. Surveyors in many countries have been very much involved in the development of these areas mostly related to agriculture. Now there is a need for new types of industries and new ways to use rural land. The values of properties may be affected by the new directions of spatial change. New location factors will have an influence on property values. Even some urban centres have lost their importance while on the other hand some rural areas may have a new future because of a rise in demand of rural land for special features."

# is Coming” ning

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## Globalisation

Of course the digital revolution has greatly influenced society and as such the profession of surveying. Most important in this respect are mapping and GIS technologies. Globalisation definitely is another factor, and according to Talvitie a consequence of the information technology we are living in now. It has increased competition between different occupations. “A good thing”, says Talvitie. There is another consequence: new occupations are developing, which means harder competition with the old ones. “And thus there is a need for new studies or courses. In order to succeed we

need to have a clear picture of how societies are developing in spatial terms. The basic task of the surveying profession is the relation man-land-sea-properties.”

## Role of FIG

What does Talvitie expect from FIG in future? “FIG serves both as a services and an interest organisation. They should see what is happening in our society in general terms and inform its members how it will affect surveying and surveying organisations and market surveying as a quality profession. This requires that people should be well educated. To me this means the following:

be able to understand social developments in spatial terms, insight in how the demands of different services will change, and see new business opportunities and technologies.”

Sonja de Bruijn ([sdebruijn@geoinformatics.com](mailto:sdebruijn@geoinformatics.com)) is editorial manager of GeoInformatics. Articles by Talvitie on the spatial impact of the application of ICT in general and specific planning areas and for the development of new planning theories, methods and models can be found at [www.nordregio.se/EJSD/refereed10.pdf](http://www.nordregio.se/EJSD/refereed10.pdf) and [www.hut.fi/Yksikot/Kiinteisto/julkaisut/Verkkajulkaisut/julkaisuB106.pdf](http://www.hut.fi/Yksikot/Kiinteisto/julkaisut/Verkkajulkaisut/julkaisuB106.pdf). The first one is a refereed article in the Nordregio journal European Journal of Spatial Development, which mostly deals with planning issues. The second one is a longer version about the whole thesis, published in the pages of the Helsinki University of Technology, Surveying Department.