

Extreme Cultural Landscapes
in the Context of Globalisation:
Mali, China and Mexico.
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EXTREME CULTURAL LANDSCAPES IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALISATION: MALI, CHINA AND MEXICO

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Globalization and faltering economy are jeopardizing landscapes and forms of life that are world heritage, whether they have been recognized as such or not. In some cases, opening up to tourism is the best way to preserve a cultural landscape, while in other contexts, it is the fastest way to destroy it.

The relationship between cultural landscapes and development could be critical in both hypo and hyperdevelopment contexts. In several cities in Europe, Asia, and America, tourist activities are an economic complement to consolidated commercial and industrial activities, however, in hypodevelopment cases, it may be the only option to prevent population displacements, with the consequential territory abandonment.

Several cultural landscapes declared World Heritage by UNESCO are already important tourist destinations; however, there is a latent lack of plans and studies to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants, who inherited an ancient culture that became tangible in their territory. On the other hand, there are many difficulties in obtaining information and mapping the land and its intangibles.

Culture is the fourth pillar of sustainable development, as Hawkes claimed over a decade ago. Keeping this idea in mind, we might understand cultural landscapes where both nature and men work together in perfect harmony. Those landscapes are extreme when located in places where the whether weak or rising economy (hypo/hyperdevelopment) endangers unique, ancient ways of life.

In order to make a first approach to these countries we must recognize the multidimensionality of the concept of development, which could be cultural, economic, technological, or in human rights, among others. For instance, in Africa, there is a sense of time different from the Gregorian calendar, for centuries, this difference has been an argument to indicate a developmental impediment. In fact, several African civilizations do not conceive time as an incisive linear arrow but as a complex circular process, divided in the time of the dead, the time of the living and the time of those still unborn. This way of seeing time weaves it and makes it cyclic while it loads it of responsibility in relation to past and future generations. Interestingly, it is possible to compare this conception of time to sustainable development, which wields the banner of intergenerational equity, which means that extreme cultural landscapes are cherished by a cluster of intangible assets.

Those intangible assets are so fragile that even the actions to preserve the built heritage may infringe them. Therefore, new strategies should be traced, integrating intangible and built heritage, involving local people before setting intervention strategies in order to prevent the breach of the

very sensitive identity. Therefore, identity should be considered in economic activation projects through urban planning strategies that promote cultural tourism.

With the criterion of *minimum intervention for maximum share*, the sustainable management of cultural tourism is an opportunity for development, as long as it is established as a form of exchange that considers both tangible and intangible expressions as an opportunity to highlight the uniqueness of the context.

Ginna Kanda International Forum for Sustainable Development of Extreme Cultural Landscapes is a research group of the Architecture School of Barcelona in Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, which has been studying extreme cultural landscapes of Mali and China since 2005. From then on, several case studies have been considered (Mexico among them), as ideal sites for urban, architectural, landscape architecture, and academic projects for sustainable development in which the intangible assets become the engine for transformations, thereby improving the quality of life.

Cultural landscapes and the fragility of the intangibles

According to Sauer, *"a cultural landscape is transformed from a natural landscape by a local group. Culture is the agent, and the natural area is the medium. The cultural landscape is the result of that transformation"* (1925). Therefore, cultural landscapes are urban and regional locations where human action is displayed in the transformation of nature and the construction of unique landscapes full of history and contents. Through the recognition of the cultural value of landscapes from the identity, territorial projects include intangible assets as a mean of multidisciplinary, scientific, social and cultural approach, from understanding the complexity of such sites. Currently, few interventions that promote the transformation of the landscape consider local culture in a sense in which urban and economic development do not adversely affect the intangible assets.

Intangible assets are disembodied, ideal and abstract; they are actions that left their imprint on the site and on local architecture. The intangibles might not be seen, but the approach to other cultures is nurturing because of their presence.

Many hill tribes living around Sa Pa in Vietnam do not fear foreigners, because since the 18th Century, they got used to the passage of the French who settled a mountain station in the area. Until twenty years ago, economy based on agriculture, but the ban in opium cultivation in Vietnam in 1993 caused a decrease of cash flow. Shortly afterwards, Sa Pa was rediscovered by European travelers.

Thus locals, encouraged by economic reasons, have contributed to make it a thriving tourist destination.

While men work in the fields, women, in addition to housework, take care of everything else: they collect indigo, manufacture and dye fabrics, sew clothes, embroider, take care of animals, trade in Bac Ha weekly market and in various villages markets. In addition, women of various tribes of the Hmong ethnic group, whose language skills are admirable, serve as tourist guides to take travelers through the villages that hide at the edge of steep roads that coil along the mountain ridges and rice terraces. Although their written history has been lost on the road after centuries of emigration, the Hmongs have always carried with them their costumes and traditions. Until now. Until now that tourists invade their markets demanding souvenirs; or require spaces with electricity, drinking water and drainage to stay; or need motor vehicles to reach the high peaks of the mountain; or wear hiking shoes and waterproof jackets. Until now, when villages are being adapted to the comfort of others, local tribes begin to question whether their traditional way of life is the one they chose or the only one they knew so far.

Another case: for ethnic groups living in Prey Lang, the "forest of spirits" in Cambodia, tourism is the least of the harms that stalk them, as the government has authorized the progressive destruction of the woods on behalf of logging companies, rubber plantations and mining companies. To evaluate the possibility of preserving the forest as a nature reserve with tourist routes, it should be understood that tourism itself is not the solution, but it is a way to start the economic engine; which means that the installation of touristic infrastructure could be motivated by a cultural rather than economic exchange. Meanwhile, the establishment of large industries in the area has expelled the natives, their spirits and one of the most sustainable cyclic plantation systems known to humankind. Even with the idea of *minimum intervention for maximum share* (Ginna Kanda's motto), it is difficult to adapt the entrance into the woods for tourism without violating the intangibles, since access is conditioned to the permission of the forest spirits. However, as the intangible assets have religious roots that have already been secularized, nature predominates as a hint of the intangible.

How to prevent the destruction of reality on behalf of creating scenery for tourists? "The rescue of endangered cultural landscapes should be done in compliance with local beliefs, since the commitment to local culture has an impact in society", says Malian architect Mamadou Koné. Koné, with the support of UNESCO, has been in charge of preserving the built heritage in Néni and Mori, sometimes restoring temples in which their status as sacred places imposed difficulties such as working barefoot, without artificial light, and performing rituals in order to sanctify places that had

been touched. The value of vernacular architecture is not only in that its form and materials are functional concerning to local livelihood systems, but also most of its value is intangible. The restoration of those temples with outside techniques with no regard for the indigenous beliefs would have made the sacred places lose their authenticity in exchange for freezing a moment in time. Thus, locals would not feel any ties with the restored temples, making them become scenery for tourists. In the cultural landscape, architecture ceases to be a built environment in order to become a material cultural element.

Building a method to manage extreme cultural landscapes

Ginna Kanda has been working on practical applications of the theoretical studies developed so far. The aim is to create a methodology of territorial representation and interpretation of the landscape and built heritage of case studies in different contexts, while intangible heritage is studied in order to trace intervention strategies that would promote sustainable development. For the extrapolation of the methodology, it is important that the case studies do not follow the same pattern, therefore, they should be placed in different countries, have a variety of sizes, scale approaches, levels of development, biophysical conditions, ecosystems, traditions, and cultures.

Among the immense possibilities, three case studies have been selected for building the method: China, Mali and Mexico, representing hyperdevelopment, hypodevelopment and a bridge between the previous two, respectively. The methodology to study the built and intangible heritage of the named case studies involves the construction of maps showing landscape elements, the spatial configuration of the territory, territorial dynamics, identifying structuring elements and identifying the intangible assets.

Beijing, in China, is a city whose growing economy and openness to globalization has generated an accelerated development with its consequent identity crisis. There are more than 4.500 streets that conform the *hutong* in potential risk of progressive destruction since Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. Due to their centric location, the land value makes the urban layout and the traditional architecture prone to be replaced by new housing and new monuments to modern architecture. In addition, the series of seven concentric rings that form the basis of Beijing's urban morphology has gradually spread on agricultural lands, causing both the disappearance of labour fields to feed the city's population, and the exodus of farmers to the urban area. About 70% of the people who use the public transportation system in Beijing are farmers who have been forced to move to the city in

search for work. This is an unsustainable model that involves the loss of intangible values and local identity, as the millenary identity is compromised by accelerated development. This phenomenon, present in the Republic's capital city, is a large-scale reflection of what happens in the different inner provinces, such as Huangtupo and Badong counties in Hubei province, by Yagtze river, comprising a complex territory of an extension of more than 6 km whose population has been evacuated due to the flooding of the Three Gorges Dam. The new towns built to house the displaced population are large-size, low-quality containers at a permanent risk of landslides, while the ancient villages that contain the history of the region stand as enormous empty skeletons.

On the other hand, ancestral forms of life present in Bandiagara Cliff in Dogon Country (Mali) have been affected since its declaration as World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1989. Although the restoration of built monuments have been successful from the architectural point of view, which should have had a positive impact on the social cohesion and the economy of one of the ten poorest countries in the world, has resulted in the loss of intangible assets due to lack of identity elements in the intervention projects. For instance, the restoration of the Great Mosque of Djenne, which respected the façade and original layout, and mixed traditional architecture with modern building techniques and materials, at the time it led to a temporary economic mobilization concentrated in the area. However, in the long run, the impact has not been as positive as expected: the restoration of the mosque with local materials (such as clay, straw, and natural binders) involved an annual pilgrimage, thus, the activation of local economy through the exchange and collaboration of several villages. The restoration with imported weatherproof materials (such as concrete or clay mixed with cement as binder) formed, on one hand, the loss of the annual festival to rebuild the mosque, and on the other, the alteration of the intangible values by not respecting the ancestral standards for building procedures for sacred places. Djenne mosque is just one of many examples in Mali of the effect of the ignorance of local culture by visitors, even when involving good intentions.

Across the world, intangibles abound in Mexican culture, from the traditional festivals, food, music, language (derived from a mixture of Castilian with local indigenous dialects). For instance, the Great Pyramid of Cholula, Tlachihualtépetl (the "handmade hill" in Nahuatl) is disguised as a prominent hill topped by the Sanctuary of la Virgen de los Remedios. The 2300-year-old archaeological site comprises a series of layers of the different civilizations that occupied the site since pre-Hispanic times until the Spanish Conquest. Being through history one of the most important ceremonial centres in Mexico, the Great Pyramid of Cholula is strongly linked to the identity of the region. Also, rural land for flower plantations around the pyramid, while enhancing such identity, acts as a buffer for urban growth. Though, recent government initiatives plan to transform the surroundings of the

archaeological site into a commercial and tourist pole of growth, meaning the expropriation of protected and rural land for shopping, parking and advertisement. Therefore, the fact that the site has been active since its construction until today, has been on one hand, its greatest achievement, and, on the other hand, its greatest threatening. Due to shared historic and current conditions of threats in a global world where economic development is a priority, Mexico could act as a bridge between Europe, Africa and Asia, and could serve both as a reference and as a lab for the implementation of sustainable development criteria.

At present, the recognition of intangible assets for interventions in the territory is limited and fairly recent, since the introduction of the concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003, UNESCO makes an effort to identify and preserve these intangible assets. The need for reconnaissance surveys of the built and intangible heritage was originated by the search for a new management model for cultural tourism that, rather than pausing a site in time for touristic contemplation, conducts the preservation of traditions and their natural evolution through exchange.

Regardless of the initially selected case studies, the purpose of Ginna Kanda is to implement the study of endangered cultural landscapes while mapping the intangibles. As a part of the practical research, diagnoses are carried out through the construction of a dynamic cartography that should show the traces of the historic city, the transformations of the urban artefact, and the permanence and/or disappearance of the intangible elements of the local culture, in order to develop interventional strategies. The utility of this research would be the applicability of the methodology in practically any given case study. The participation of international students, researchers and fellows is highly encouraged, promoting the inclusion of the academic and professional community with local authorities and citizens, which would raise the awareness regarding the intangible assets and sustainable development.

The role of UNESCO in the preservation of built and intangible heritage

Since the actions of UNESCO to preserve the archaeological and historical temples of Abu Simbel in Egypt in 1959 until now, more than one thousand sites around the world have been entitled as World Heritage. However, in view of the tendency to cultural homogenization due to the effects of globalization, UNESCO officially introduced in 2003 the definition of Intangible Cultural Heritage as the following.

"The intangible cultural heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development" (UNESCO, 2003).

In Mali, UNESCO has recognized as World Heritage the ancient cities of Djenne (1988), the ancient city of Timbuktu (1988), the tomb of Askia (2004) and Bandiagara Cliff in Dogon Country (1989). From this recognition, several action plans for the preservation of architectural heritage have been set. But, in the case of Bandiagara Cliff –Ginna Kanda's case study-, we are not talking about a large city's old town or a small village, but an extension of 400.000 hectares which includes 289 villages with different ecosystems. It is a vulnerable area on a number of fronts: climate change, tourism, time and economy. Thus, scarcity pushes the abandonment of a traditional way of life intimately linked to the landscape and the territory from the social, cultural and economic points of view, favoring tourist development as the income of external resources.

According to UNESCO, the territory of Bandiagara Cliff is listed a National Heritage of Mali by Decree 89-428 P-RM of 28th of December 1989 as natural and cultural sanctuary. There are also valid laws as the forestry exploitation law 68-8/AN-RN of February 1968, and the hunting ordinance 60/CMLN of the 11th of November 1969. The Ministry of Culture of Mali (who bears the responsibility of protecting this territory) has delegated the management of Bandiagara Cliff to the Cultural Mission of Bandiagara. They prepared a land management and preservation plan for 2006-2010, where the implementation of programs related to preservation was required, with the intention of improving living conditions of the inhabitants –the true heirs of the heritage assets of the site.

In China, UNESCO has declared as World Heritage 33 architectural assets since 1987 until 2014 (besides of 10 natural parks and 4 mixed sites). Among them, the site of Peking Man in Zhukudian (1987), the Imperial Palaces of Ming and Qing dynasties in Beijing and Shenyang (1987), the Temple of Heaven (1998), the Summer Palace and Imperial Garden in Beijing (1998), the Imperial Tombs of Ming and Qing dynasties (2000), the Great Canal (2014) and the Great Wall (1987). The laws that

protect Cultural Relics in China and the regulations on the management of cultural heritage sites, managed by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, provide legal, institutional and administrative guarantees to ensure the maximum protection of the authenticity and integrity of the heritage site. However, intensive tourism and urban hyperdevelopment of large cities (Beijing specifically) have a negative impact both in recognized heritage areas and in those that have not been yet recognized by UNESCO. For instance, the damage suffered by architectural monuments such as the Imperial Palaces of the Forbidden City, produced by intensive tourism exploitation. Also, the *hutongs*, the alleys of old Beijing built during the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, have been progressively demolished to make way for modern development. It is important to note that both initiatives (the intensive tourism and the demolition of the *hutongs*) were carried out by the City of Beijing Administration.

Moreover, Mexico has 32 cultural, natural and mixed sites recognized by UNESCO, from the pre-Hispanic city of Teotihuacan (1987) to the Central Campus of Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (2007); plus 8 registries in the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, including pre-Hispanic festivals dedicated to the commemoration of the dead (2008), the ritual ceremony of Voladores de Papantla (2009), traditional Mexican cuisine (2010), Mariachi (2011), and the Centre for the Totonaca Indian Arts (2012). The National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) guards the archaeological sites recognized by UNESCO. Also, there is the Federal Law on Monuments and Archaeological, Artistic and Historical Sites, in force since 1972.

UNESCO has legislative scopes worldwide, which imply introducing economic resources for the preservation of the sites and the opening of such site for tourist uses. However, these advantages may also be the greatest weaknesses of UNESCO's method, as the protected elements are usually preserved to face tourists while turning its back to the locals. Thus, while the built heritage is protected, the lack of understanding towards the intangible cultural values causes the cultural isolation of the protected element. As a result, the community no longer feels identified with it and is excluded from the preservation process.

Even though the cultural value of the knowledge and practices related to *imzad* in the Taureg communities (in Algeria, Mali and Niger) was recognized in 2013, to date, the lifestyle, the ritual masks, the graves, or the Dogon traditional routes (to name a few in Bandiagara Cliff) have not been recognized. About China, UNESCO has an extensive list of cultural intangible heritage, including the crafts linked to traditional architecture with wood frames, traditional designs and construction techniques with wooden arch bridges (2009). China has faced countless internal struggles in which

the territory has expanded, contracted, broken, and restored many times, while grouping different ethnicities and customs in an area of almost 10 million km². However, we must understand that Chinese civilization has had, from the Xia Dynasty (c. 2000 BC) until the 20th Century, few outside influences; therefore, it is a unique case study in which it is possible to observe the sociocultural evolution of civilization in an almost continuous line. Though, the introduction of economic reforms in 1978 led to the fastest economic growth worldwide, and to the opening to globalization that involves an identity crisis with its consequent loss of traditions and intangible assets. The urban effects of this phenomenon is the devaluation of the *hutong* in favor of modern business and housing complexes that reproduce European aesthetics without consideration of the local traditions (as in Tianducheng, Shanghai, built in 2007 as a copy of Paris). As a result, they end up being ghost towns. From the economic point of view, the loss of identity is manifested in the replica and reproduction of foreign goods, damaging productive creativity.

Ginna Kanda as a catalyzer for development

Following the implementations of the plan drawn by UNESCO, Ginna Kanda has recognized the lack of information, and detected the need of studying territories within the frame of cultural landscapes in the fields of land planning, landscape, architecture and land management. The purpose is that, applying the tools we have as professionals and researchers, we could interpret the results in order to search for local collaboration, resulting in the transformation of cultural landscapes into engines of sustainable development to benefit local communities.

Ginna Kanda has generated collaborative links with academic and research purposes with prestigious international universities, such as Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (Spain), Ecole Supérieur d'Ingenierie, d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme de Bamako (Mali), Tsinghua University (China) and China University of Geosciences, in order to allow international exchanges of students between Europe, Africa and Asia. The consolidation of new links in Mexico, Latin America and the United States of America is in progress.

So far, three specialization courses for Mali have been carried out with students of architecture from Bamako and Barcelona. As a result, we have generated an updated cartography of Bandiagara Cliff, from satellite images and field trips, including the intangible assets, from which several landscape intervention projects were developed proposing tangible elements to interpret and explain the

features of local identity to the visitors –the cultural tourists- in order to sensitize them.

In China, six workshops have been conducted since 2007. There, students from Barcelona and China were in charge of recognizing the intangible elements of the collective memory and the culture in sites as challenging as Huangtupo, Badong and Panjiayuan Market. Then, strategic projects were traced.

In Mexico, an updated cartography of Ciudad Victoria has been built, being the first morphogenetic atlas of the territory, with strategies for San Marcos river that have been considered for the urban development plan. Cholula's cartography has also been updated in order to study the pattern of land use and to identify the stakeholders, which lead to the definition of a spatial development strategy involving sociocracy. Ginna Kanda seeks for sponsors as CONACyT, La Caixa Bank, Banco Santander, and collaborative partners as Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas, Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Universidad de las Américas Puebla and Universidad La Salle. Meanwhile, the theory behind the territorial dialectics and the identity has been an essential part of the debate in the workshops in Spain, China and Mali.

The educational project implies a new social consideration of the landscape as a cultural asset of remarkable value, and involves the diagnosis of the current situation in which the heritage value is threatened by urban development, and the awareness of the scientific community and students of architecture, who in the near future will spearhead the protection or destruction of built and intangible heritage.

The theoretical axis of the educational project is: 1) the recognition of the built heritage by UNESCO; 2) the cartography building process and territorial diagnose by Ginna Kanda; 3) the design of intervention strategies via urban, architectural and landscape projects by professionals and students in international workshops.

To do so, besides of using the appropriate software for drafting, mapping and updating the cartography of the territory, the use of satellite images is complemented with field trips. Site visits have the aim of making a photographic record of the site while searching for cultural exchange. Through the host/guest experience, the contact with foreigners allows the recognition, the approach, the awareness, and the verbal and written explanation of the landscape and the intangibles.

While UNESCO recognizes the value of tangible assets, Ginna Kanda distinguishes the intangible heritage that has not been mapped before. Therefore, the sum of these two criteria is a great

opportunity for developing integrated projects that could be included in local legislations and in regional development plans.

Visioning extreme cultural landscapes towards 2025

The sustainable management of cultural landscapes is an opportunity for development, as long as it is established as a form of exchange to consider the tangible and intangible elements of the local culture. Whenever economic development involves the inclusion of cultural tourism, it should not be invasive, nor it should pretend to freeze in time reminiscences of the past, but it should contribute to preserve a living culture, immerse in an unstoppable evolutionary process. Interventions should be done respecting local traditions with a vision of development in which the exchange brought by tourism could increase the quality of life and bring economic benefits for local population.

A key strategy consists of the survey and diagnosis of the territory, through recognition and analysis studies. This phase of sustainable development must include social participation (locals, administratives, academics) in the tracing of strategic projects that would contribute to the sensitization and the recognition of local identity.

Another strategy is to prepare tourism and tertiary infrastructure strongly based on identity, memory, and collective imaginary. This would open the doors to a sensitive and respectful visitor, while activating the economy, the preservation of the built heritage, the recognition of intangible values, and cultural exchange.

However, the limitations of the problem are often economic: there are ancestral ways of life about to disappear due to the lack of resources, or because they are being engulfed by urban development. In government action plans, economy is usually a priority, before sustainability and cultural preservation.

Also, globalization acts as an economic and cultural homogenizer, with paradoxical effects in which fair trade actions are taking place, while the economic gap is increasingly evident at all levels of development. With this in mind, let us take a second look at our case studies. China is developing at the expense of their human and natural resources, with political actions that ignore international agreements in terms of environmental sustainability, working conditions and life quality. On the other hand, Mexico has serious socio-political and economic problems, due to insecurity, corruption and impunity, aggravated by the war against drug dealing. In the same line, the recent attacks in

Burkina Faso and Mali by militant groups affiliated to Al-Qaeda and Islamic State has weakened West Africa in terms of security, quality of life, and economy. The relegation of the preservation of cultural landscapes to the background is unavoidable. It is inevitable to recall the destruction of the 1700-year-old statues of Buddha by the Taliban in the Bamiyan Valley of Afghanistan in 2001.

Thus, the future of urban planning of extreme cultural landscapes in the context of globalization is twofold. The first possibility: in view of the limited resources and lack of interest, many ancient cultural landscapes, together with their intangible values, will be progressively destroyed and occupied by a rather modern global urban culture, with the consequential increased poverty through the consumption of rural and natural lands. In a glimpse, it is possible to see that Africa is currently an immense lab where drones are being tested, which would lead to new urban planning strategies in terms of infrastructures. The risk involved in such measures without awareness of the importance of cultural landscapes, would be the destruction of natural and cultural heritage to give way to large containers. Connectivity would be subject to goods trading rather than human interaction. In a context in which people have more access to internet than to drinking water, the threat of this future is imminent.

The other possibility, however, is more promising. The future of urban planning points towards the design of smart cities, hence, the opportunity to humanize cities, making them more environmentally friendly, more accessible, more efficient in terms of transportation and metabolism, makes us think that it is possible to believe that, in the city of the near future, intangible values will also be recognized. Cultural tourism is one of the many alternatives to prevent the destruction of cultural landscapes without disrupting the intangibles, as long as the resulting economic growth improves the quality of life of the community instead of transforming traditional ways of life into servitude and entertainment for tourists.

Ginna Kanda has been taking actions in terms of generating knowledge through the construction of a dynamic methodology, the survey and mapping of the studied territories and their intangibles, and, equally important, sensitizing the community through scientific dissemination, cultural exchange and teaching. When those actions have a domino effect in other research groups, communities and administrations, many cultural landscapes would be recognized, reversing the negative effects of globalization (such as the loss of identity) without undermining the positive effects in terms of economy, openness to the world, access to information and technology, and social equality.

Whether pessimistic or hopeful, the destruction of many cultural landscapes is unfortunately unavoidable, since the awareness of their importance is not yet widely disseminated. In 2025,

countless landscapes will be irrevocably destroyed or damaged. Nevertheless, there will be a new generation of professionals, already aware, already sensitive, who will not be as flexible as we are today towards sustainable development. Such lack of flexibility will not be given by stiffness, but by the impossibility of taking actions different from trying to reverse the damage previous generations made, due to their (our) lack of transgenerational vision. A vision that, it must be said, has been present in societies not as modern as Western civilization.

Cultural landscapes should –and someday will– be considered as catalyzers for transformation and social unity, because of their strong bonds with local identity. In places where there is no room for modernity, the recognition of intangible values do fit, as well as the respect towards their evolutionary time and space.

