

EVALUATING THE ROLE OF HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPES IN URBAN REGENERATION PROJECTS

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH BASED ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA DATA

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► RESEARCH INFORMATION

KEYWORDS

Historic Urban Landscape (HUL), cultural heritage, cultural values, urban conservation, urban development, landscape approach.

INTRODUCTION / CONTEXT

- Heritage conservation concerns have shifted from addressing monuments, groups of buildings, and sites, to addressing the urban context as an entity that cannot be dissected into fragments where historic areas should be integrated into new developments and contemporary life through urban planning, to calling for a landscape approach to cultural heritage conservation.
- In 2011 UNESCO stressed on the role of cultural heritage for achieving sustainable urban regeneration and recommended the application of the HUL approach to achieve it.
- The HUL approach addresses the urban area as the result of historic layering of cultural and natural processes that construct it physically and mentally where the different cultural values embedded in the tangible and intangible attributes of the urban context are essential to the city's sense of place and unique identity, and should be taken as a point of departure in urban management processes.

QUESTION / GOAL

Our main research question is :

- What is the value of cultural heritage in achieving a balance between conservation and development concerns in urban regeneration projects?

The first phase of our research raised three challenges:

- How to conserve an urban area that is constantly developing and changing ?
- How to develop a pluralistic and value-oriented definition of heritage giving the fact that cultural values are diverse, vary among individuals, and change with time.
- How to decide on what to preserve? In other words how to achieve a balance between experts-users definition of heritage?

HYPOTHESIS / METHODOLOGY

- Our approach addresses the city as nexus of nature and culture, as a complex spatial and a mental entity. It recognizes the need to apply a holistic understanding of cities that integrates between cognitive, normative, and collaborative approaches within urban studies, landscape studies, and heritage conservation to address structures, functions, and flows.
- Our research combines traditional qualitative and analytical methods with data mining methods and social networks as a way to get access to information about the city environment.

RESULTS

- The review of the literature covered genesis of the HUL approach and its content. The review of the different analytical methods in urban morphological studies and landscape studies showed that these studies complement each other to provide a holistic, cross-disciplinary understanding of the urban landscape to serve urban management. When some methods focus on the analysis of urban form and its transformation over time, other methods examine these transformations in relation to different ecological processes, or focus on the study of the interaction between people and their environment.
- The assessment of the definition of the HUL and its main principles in addition to the different concepts embedded in the notion of urban landscape including the physical visual, and the perceived experienced landscape led to the development of the conceptual framework for addressing the HUL. The framework is based on four main principles: (i) relationality; (ii) valorization; (iii) participation; (iv) and adaptation.

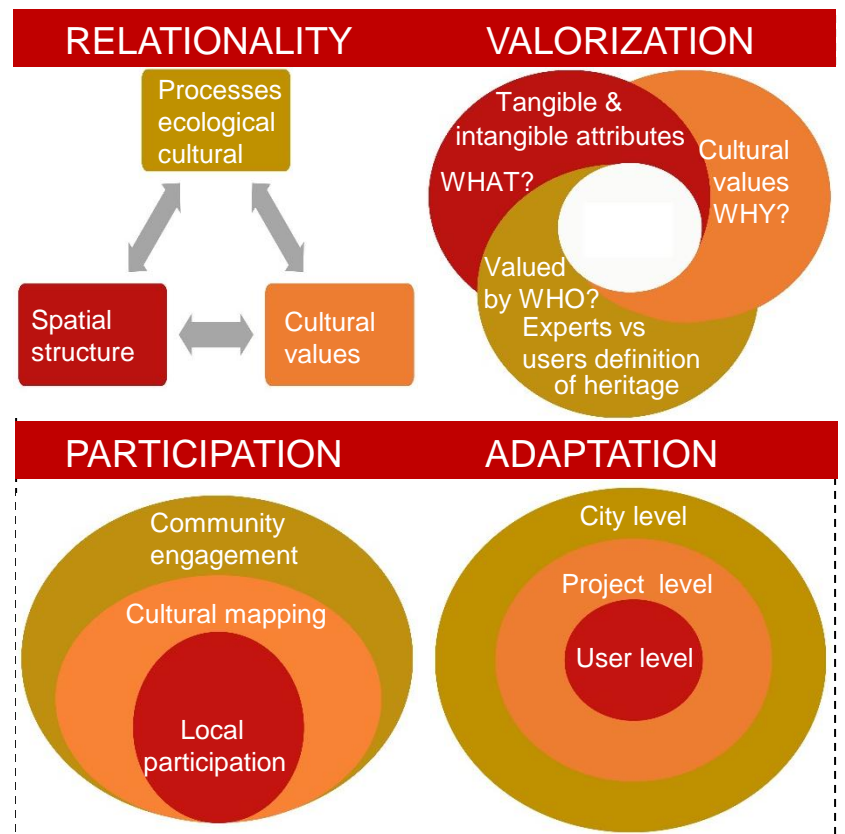
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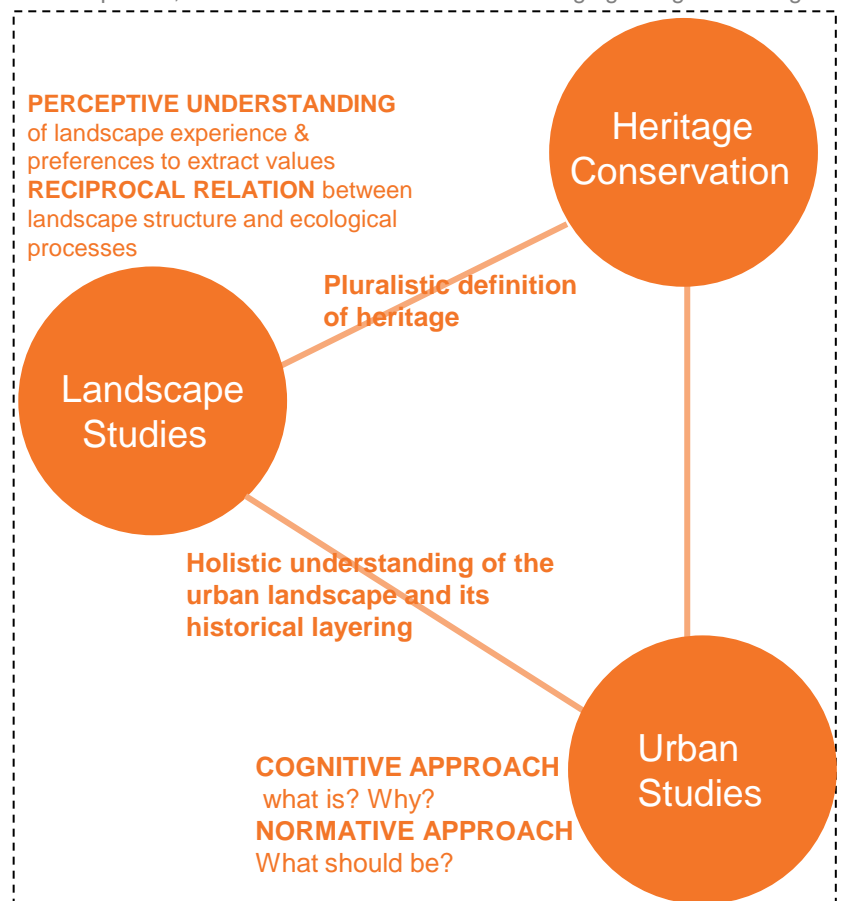
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► Fig. 1: Historic Urban Landscape Approach. Conceptual Framework.

The conceptual framework relies on four main principles: (1) relationality, meaning understanding the mutual relation between the physical setting and different natural, socio-economic processes and values; (2) valorisation, in which the values embodied in the urban landscape are the main constituents of cultural heritage; (3) Public participation is fundamental and imperative to build bridges between experts and users interpretation of the landscape; (4) and adaptation, in which conservation is about managing thoughtful change.



► Fig. 2: A value-based management process to heritage conservation.

The integration of perceptive and functional approaches in urban and landscape studies is imperative to the understanding of the spatial configuration of the historic urban landscapes in relation to different cultural and natural processes as to inform the conservation and management of historic urban landscapes.