



## Preliminary notes on the idea of “Landscape”

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As a first approach to the topic of landscape, it could maybe useful to distinguish the idea of “landscape” from others, such as, on one hand, environment and nature, or, on the other hand, territory (see *European Landscape Convention*). As a matter of fact, landscape is closely related with all these ideas, but at the same time has a specificity which ought not to be forgotten.

In focusing landscape and its specificity, it’s important to say that landscape is closely related with places’ recognizability (the architect Norberg-Schulz spoke of “genius loci”), and is therefore linked with the concept of “value” (whose individuation and management is, as a matter of fact, one of Landsible’s goals). Because of the fact that landscape is the outcome of a relation between a subject and an objective-natural context, the idea of “landscape” contains a deep complexity of interlinked concepts, such as moral responsibility, local identity, cultural memory, imaginary, myth, social and individual representations, needs, etc., which the project will have to be possibly aware of. The interdisciplinary perspective will moreover have to intersect the topic of landscape at different levels and scales, from local, to national, to European as a way of perceiving and acting in overall contexts.

Firstly to be noted is that the attention for landscape issues derives from its deterioration, a decay that people feel and live. The fact is that landscape is a fundamental element for the quality of individual and social life and is at the same time a source of identity and feeling of belonging for population. Moreover, landscape is, could become and ought to be also a source of economical income, not only for tourism, which has the aim of finding out sustainable development and management strategies for landscape as also an economical value. Therefore, landscape has a potentiality which ought to be rediscovered, preserved and efficaciously managed by local administrations, politicians, citizens, and all other involved stakeholders.

Back to the idea of landscape, it implies and refers to different approaches, views, ideas, perceptions, and interpretations, that methodologically ought to be studied and considered, on one side, together and as if they were not strictly the same, and, on the other side, separated and yet having to do with landscape as a whole. Some of these relevant approaches and points of view (that may also coincide with several lines of research on landscape topics) are the following, many of which may be found in the *European Landscape Convention*.



- landscape as a **place of individual and social life** and not only as an individual aesthetic representation;
- landscape as an element of recognizable **identity** (landscape singularity) of a place;
- landscape as expression of **identity** and **culture** of a community; i.e. landscape as the product of spatial history spread out, or landscape as **palimpsest**, which is engraved and rewritten as time passes, or landscape as an expression of the **personality** of a place, that changes, and still remains always itself<sup>1</sup>. Dealing and working with landscape means therefore to **involve its inhabitants**, who participate to landscape construction and fruition with their daily and concrete life;
- landscape as **heritage** and overall public and political dimension, and therefore as **"ethos" of living**, that can hold together the singularity of local landscapes as values and the total of its articulated and "complex" relationships;
- landscape as inscription of the meaning of individual and social existences in the **memory** of places and as the expression of the human need of memory recovery (collective and single);
- landscape as expression of the ambivalent relationship between man and nature and of the relationship expressed by all places, because of their spreading from **local** to **global** dimension; in this line, landscape expresses the dimension that is able to hold together the polarities and tensions of human life (economy, human mobility, etc.);
- landscape as an **added value** for the community of its inhabitants and therefore for other stakeholders (tourists); such a "value" has an articulated and complex meaning (it involves different aspects: economic, political, social, cultural, naturalistic, etc.);
- landscape as an expression of the need of finding **new strategies and methodological lines** (network logics, with multi-centric and multi-scale elements) for its management and preservation; key element of this planning method is the involvement of stakeholders, that live in the landscape (therefore, relative aim is to stimulate **participative** landscape movements and formation/training of a **landscape consciousness**); in this sense, the new style of planning should coincide with the need to discover **new forms of political action and new ways of reading landscape**.

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<sup>1</sup> See Ch. Norberg-Schultz's "genius loci".