Landscape mosaics

Thoughts and proposals
for the implementation
of the Council of Europe
Landscape Convention

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Preface

The landscape reflects a present which interacts with a mosaic of memory traces which have diverse symbolic values.

Valerio Di Battista

The European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 176)[1] aims to promote landscape protection, management and planning and to organise international co-operation. It applies to the entire territory of the parties and covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It concerns landscapes that might be considered outstanding, but also everyday or degraded landscapes. The convention represents the first international treaty exclusively devoted to all the dimensions of landscape, considered from a perspective of sustainable development.

The Council of Europe is continuing the work undertaken, since the adoption of the convention in 2000, to examine and illustrate certain approaches to landscape.[2] This book, entitled *Landscape mosaics – Thoughts and proposals for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe*, explores certain ways of understanding the landscape and makes proposals for more attention to be paid to it.

It brings together the reports presented by Council of Europe experts on the occasion of the Council of Europe conferences on the European Landscape Convention, organised at the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg, on 23-24 March 2017, 6-7 May 2019 and 26-27 May 2021. Representatives of governments and international organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, who took part in these meetings were able to discuss the subjects dealt with and make progress in the implementation of the convention.[3]

The experts who contributed to the production of this book are warmly thanked for the quality of their reflections and their proposals:

▶ Valerio Di Battista – Towards a grammar of European landscapes;

▶ Régis Ambroise – Designing agricultural landscapes for sustainable development;

▶ Patrice Collignon – The rural landscape in transition: energy, agriculture and demography;

▶ Mauro Agnoletti – Experience of Tuscany, Italy;

▶ Carmine Nardone – The Manifesto for the beauty of rural landscapes in Campania, Italy;

▶ Jean Noël Consalès – Urbanisation, town planning and landscape;

▶ Felix Kienast, with F. Wartmann, A. Zaugg and M. Hunziker – A review of integrated approaches to landscape monitoring;

▶ Barry Hynes, Valentin Riehm, Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons, with the contribution of Enrico Buergi – Experiences with public funds and the landscape;

▶ Yves Luginbühl – Landscape and responsibility;

▶ Michael Oldham – Professional recognition of landscape architects;

▶ Claire Cornu – Dry stone walls in the landscape, inheritance and innovation for rural sustainability;

▶ Gerhard Ermischer – Walking the landscape;

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1. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 19 July 2000, the European Landscape Convention (https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/176 ETS No. 176) – now entitled "Council of Europe Landscape Convention" – was opened for signature by European states in Florence on 20 October 2000. A protocol amending the convention (https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=219 CETS No. 219), which entered into force on 1 July 2021, aims to promote European co-operation with non-European states wishing to implement the provisions of the Convention, by opening it to their accession.

2. *Landscape and sustainable development – Challenges of the European Landscape Convention*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2006; *Landscape facets – Reflections and proposals for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2012; *Landscape dimensions – Reflections and proposals for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention*, 2017. www.coe.int/en/web/landscape/publications.

3. Conference reports: Documents CEP-CDPATEP (2017) 19; CEP-CDPATEP (2019) 20; CEP-CDPATEP (2021) 16. www.coe.int/en/web/landscape/conferences.

► Klaus Fürst-Elmecker: Traditional forms of thought and spirituality;

► Michael Oldham, with the contributions from Ana Luengo, Niek Hazendonk, Leor Lovinger, Indra Purs: Urban landscapes and climate change: the contribution of landscape architects to improving the quality of life;

► Régis Ambroise: Landscape and the responsibility of stakeholders for sustainable and harmonious development.

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Secretary of the European Landscape Convention, Head of Landscape, Environment and Major Hazards Division, Council of Europe

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Chapter 5
Urbanisation, town planning and landscape

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Drawings by Jean Noël Consalès.

Introduction

Since the mid-20th century, the process of urbanisation, which now affects the whole planet, has been marked by sustained and continuous growth (averaging 3% a year worldwide). In spite of disparities in its pace and forms (formal/informal urbanisation), in particular between developed and developing countries (for instance, the urbanisation rate in Europe is over 75%, as against the global average of 55%), it is tending radically to alter human societies' relationships with the world and to create more and more environmental, climate and ecological problems.

As the physical, perceptible and palpable local and regional expressions of the relationships between human societies and the parts of Earth's surface which they inhabit, landscapes suffer just as much as humans from the effects of urbanisation. Nevertheless, for reasons which are hard to define, these far-reaching changes in landscape do not receive much media coverage. According to the meaning ascribed to it by the Council of Europe, however, landscape clearly does play a key part in revealing the territorial processes under way, and above all urbanisation. For the purposes of the European Landscape Convention, landscape means "an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors". In this connection, there are rural and urban landscapes, built and natural landscapes, and they all now have to cope with the effects of contemporary urbanisation.

In spite of differences between states in their concepts and approaches, this process of urbanisation is usually covered everywhere by a corpus of sciences, techniques and skills relating to the organisation and development of urban areas, urban development or urbanism. Behind the latter generic term are many types of approach, among which two complementary ones nevertheless stand out:

► urban planning, which on a broad geographical scale (region, built-up area, town/city, neighbourhood, district) devises, plans, organises, manages and regulates the layout and the use made of urban areas, usually on the basis of regulatory instruments which govern land use and building;

► urban design, which on a narrower scale (neighbourhood, district, block, public space) devises, designs, forms, implements and backs up the physical layout and the use made of urban areas on the basis of various urban design tools.

It seems obvious that the operating methods of contemporary urbanism, in terms both of urban planning and urban design, are responsible for the current forms of urbanisation and their consequences for landscape. What then are the real relationships between contemporary urbanism and landscape? Are they antagonistic, ambiguous or merely distant? In any case, in which way do the urban development mechanisms currently at play contribute to the degradation of landscapes? Is this a structural or cyclical process? Has it been going on for a long time or is it relatively recent? Above all, what can be done to alter this situation and give thought to the conditions for bringing urbanism and landscape closer together in a constructive manner?

These are all issues which this contribution seeks to address by shedding light on the loose yet vital relationships between urbanism and landscape. While urbanism and the ways it currently operates pose a threat today to landscape balance, landscape can form the foundation, means and purpose of a new type of urbanism, in phase with the challenges of its time. In this connection, landscape must now be seen as a link between anthropogenic and ecological issues. It is necessary to promote theoretical and practical approaches involving landscape planning and landscape design in order to ensure balanced urbanisation that respects all forms of life.

1. Urbanisation, urbanism and landscape: elements of a complex equation

To understand the relationships between urbanism and landscape, it is necessary to consider the forms and mechanisms of urbanisation currently at play. To that end, we must begin by analysing the centrifugal processes of urban sprawl, as well as the centripetal processes of densification affecting all parts of numerous European countries, by looking at the recent history of their territories. It is also necessary to understand the urban development impact of the growth in tourism before, lastly, looking in depth at the ways the contemporary urban development process operates.

Development of suburbs

As reconstruction progressed in the aftermath of the Second World War, Europe's rural areas were regarded as places of country folk and cultivated nature, which were expected to meet nations' needs, whereas urban areas were densely populated and focused on the production of consumer goods and services. Town and country were governed by power relations in which the urban influence prevailed. Under that model, the countryside not only provided food for urban areas but also supplied labour on account of a rural exodus that varied in intensity between states. In practice, this process involved a kind of "agricolisation" of rural areas and landscapes, intensifying their productive features.

These post-war years also saw population growth, which was reflected firstly in the rebuilding and then in the growth of towns and cities. As they expanded spatially, these urban areas began taking over nearby natural and agricultural areas and affecting their landscapes. Europe, in particular western Europe, experienced a period of unprecedented economic growth. Jobs, living standards and consumption have been on the rise in the years following the end of the Second World War. All societies were transformed, caught up in this spiral of development, and new needs emerged, particularly in economic activities, travel and housing. Because towns and cities combined all the factors of dynamism (innovations, industries, new services), only towns and cities seemed to be able to meet these expectations. They therefore very quickly became the spatial symbol of progress and the whole of Europe embarked upon a powerful process of urbanisation. This involved not only the growth of towns and cities, the areas they occupied and the populations that made them up, but also the invention of a way of life set to become general. The advent of private travel by car allowed extensification of urban areas in suburbs that were henceforth much more residential than agricultural. Urban areas therefore became less densely built up than before. On the outskirts of cities, large housing schemes were developed in a diffuse way, following functionalist town-planning models which either reduced nature to the rank of mere décor or gave rise to new types of urban landscapes. Again, on the outskirts of cities, new commercial and industrial activities also began to be established, needing space for growth.

These beginnings of contemporary centrifugal urbanisation were largely fostered and regulated by key planning policies based on the use of tools for planning and regulating land use and building.

The advent of peri-urbanisation

The mid-1970s marked the end of a period of growth, however. The social discontent expressed at the end of the 1960s, the successive oil crises in 1973 and 1979 and the difficulties affecting the industrial sector were all problems that plunged Europe into a widespread crisis, against the backdrop of economic recession and rising unemployment. In countries experiencing complete breaks with their recent pasts, previous models and approaches were widely called into question. In territorial terms, the preponderance and domination of urban areas seemed no longer to apply. The rural exodus, which had been a major trend since the 19th century, slowed down and even stopped completely in some states.

In western Europe, this situation paved the way for a new process of urbanisation: peri-urbanisation. Under the combined effects of counter-urbanisation and the emergence of environmental ideals, urban society attached new value to rural areas. Better still, they became attractive again. Isolated rural areas attracted new flows of tourists, while country areas near to towns turned into residential zones for relatively well-off groups seeking to find alternatives to the urban lifestyle. This renewed appeal of rural life and the countryside revealed the crisis of the traditional city, a trend set to continue. The dominance of the urban model no longer satisfied urban residents seeking quality and authenticity in their living environment. Against this background, natural areas and farmland became more important again and new considerations emerged regarding these landscapes. City dwellers wanted to live in contact with them, while taking advantage of the benefits of urban areas. To that end, they devised a lifestyle based on individual, private housing and transport. Unlike previous decades, their aspirations no longer focused on the collective housing model but on houses with gardens. With the development of roads and motorways, more and more new rural residents were able to achieve their housing dreams by taking advantage of land and property prices that were much lower than those close to city centres. That meant they were able to work in cities while living far from them. In particular with their commuting, they came up with other ways of living in and using space, thereby restoring the landscape values of the countryside which had come to be forgotten over the previous decades.

Conventional urbanisation models were overturned as a result. Cities no longer grew outward seamlessly with existing urban areas but, rather, in a piecemeal fashion, in the form of small built-up areas (housing estates) or individual houses (scattered urban sprawl) spread around the cores of old rural villages. New peripheral rings with low building densities developed at varying distances from city centres. They became the focus of a new form of spatial combination between the urban and the rural, known as the peri-urban, underpinned by the process of peri-urbanisation. This developed at the expense of natural areas and farmland, which nevertheless continued to dominate increasingly mixed landscapes. In this context, farmland was usually the main victim of this trend. It was seen as a real reserve of building land (less expensive, less strictly protected and more easily developed), often leaving farmers

with two options: give up or suffer the consequences of increasing pressure on land, resulting from speculation.

In these peri-urban areas, the standardisation and urbanisation of lifestyles went hand in hand with other needs and developments. Gradually, residents there were no longer content with the appeal of the landscape and the living environment alone. Residential peri-urbanisation led to peri-urbanisation of activities and, in particular, of commercial activities. Supermarkets and then hypermarkets came to dominate peri-urban consumption patterns based on car travel. Likewise, business parks and collective amenities developed in these areas, with much building of roads and motorways. This process gave rise to a very standardised urban scene: approaches to towns all over Europe marked by the same simplistic architectural styles serving the same commercial brands.

The transition from planned economies to market economies after 1989 went hand in hand with the liberalisation and privatisation of land and land use. This was reflected in the adoption of the peri-urban lifestyle by a growing proportion of the population of those countries and hence the centrifugal spread of towns and cities.

Peri-urbanisation clearly is now a major trend that has spread across the whole of Europe. In spite of some scattered and mostly cosmetic measures to combat this form of urban sprawl, it is not declining and probably therefore responds to some very widespread social aspirations. It is certainly also the result of a shift in the strategies pursued by governments. Instead of continuing to organise the provision of collective housing, they are more or less directly encouraging home ownership, in particular through tax incentives. Moreover, against a background of decentralisation, liberalisation and/or financial disengagement, central governments are increasingly delegating planning powers to local and regional authorities, thereby fostering centrifugal trends. This is because, at the lower territorial level, urbanisation is devised on the basis of geographically delimited and hence limited interests. For demographic and economic reasons, local authorities on the edge of cities tend to encourage urbanisation. It therefore has to be said that the lower the tier the more peri-urbanisation is muddled and poorly controlled. Those countries which anticipated this process at a very early stage by establishing governance entities of the right size and with the right powers therefore seem to have managed peri-urbanisation more effectively. Conversely, in many cases, urban growth continues to take place spontaneously, illegally and anarchically, completely disregarding the relevant planning documents and standards.

The era of metropolisation

Since the 1990s, in tandem with globalisation, there has also been a trend towards the concentration of inhabitants, economic activities and wealth within very large urban areas, a process known as metropolisation. The increasing competition between territories at global and regional level has led to both economic and demographic polarisation, and intensification around certain existing conurbations. This process also results in the networking of urban entities of varying sizes, usually arranged around a core entity and several secondary entities. In this way, metropolisation can produce megalopolises (huge conurbations of global significance), metropolises (large conurbations of lesser significance) or metropolitan areas (networks of disparate urban entities operating as a whole). In any event, the attractiveness of such territories involves an increase in travel and greater urban sprawl. The dispersal of economic activities, residential areas and recreational areas, which depends on the availability of land and the distribution of communication routes, results in high levels of travel from the central areas to the peripheral areas, as well as from some peripheral areas to others. With their diverse commercial complexes and huge business parks, the latter form real peripheral centres, or fully fledged entities, these being types of urban area that are now becoming well established. This trend towards the dispersal of activities is reflected, in particular, in problematic growth in private travel by car and its corollary, namely the expansion of road and motorway networks.

The establishment of peri-urban rings at increasing distances from city centres is therefore one of the main consequences of metropolisation. Rather than disappearing, the dream of owning one's own detached home is spreading to wider sections of the population and can only be achieved with relatively cheap land or properties, which are further from city centres. Initially, peri-urbanisation developed on the initiative of relatively well-off groups (middle and upper classes) with the building of individual houses on large plots (several hectares). Subsequently, the trend was much more towards new housing estates with small plots of a few *ares* designed for the middle and working classes. Now there is even a trend towards at least partial self-builds by less well-off groups on very small plots (a few *ares*) where the land value is the main investment given the low cost of the buildings.

Lastly, the establishment and operation of major metropolitan areas produces hyper-urban territories comprising not only densely built-up cities and much less dense peri-urban rings but also natural areas and farmland interspersed between them.

Nature is therefore fully involved in the process of metropolisation but in an ambivalent manner, providing much appreciated landscapes on the one hand while generating attractiveness, speculation and urbanisation on the other. In this connection, while outstanding landscapes made up of nature that is deemed to be exceptional continue to be protected on the whole, in the surrounding areas they generate land pressure that is detrimental to more ordinary landscapes made up of nature deemed to be unexceptional.

From sustainable development to densification

Metropolisation is not only reflected in centrifugal processes. It also triggers centripetal urbanisation involving densification of existing urban areas. Apart from the consequences of the concentration of inhabitants, economic activities and wealth in the existing core cities, this also stems from the implementation of the concept of sustainable development since the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992. To address the ecological and climate challenges of the 21st century, urban development must now be environmentally friendly. In this connection, combating urban sprawl, the high levels of travel it involves, and the resulting greenhouse gases is an increasingly significant imperative for spatial planning.

One of the key solutions put forward to tackle this thorny issue, is the densification of the existing urban fabric. This involves intensifying what already exists and further urbanising urban areas, even if that means disregarding or breaking with the rules that governed how they were built. For instance, it includes building upwards to meet the growing needs in terms of surface area for housing and economic activities while adapting to the lack of available land. For the time being, this principle of densification applies primarily to central areas. Some residual empty spaces and some buildings, blocks or districts inherited from the past that are falling into disuse become the focus of vast urbanisation schemes. In some cases, this involves the construction of new business districts modelled on North American central business districts and, in others, the development of new eco-neighbourhoods in line with contemporary environmental standards. In both cases, this trend requires co-operation between a great range of stakeholders, primarily local authorities. Above all, it brings about changes in the appearances of the old city centre. It very often entails a new urban aesthetic based on verticality (expressions of the architectural form of the tower) or sustainability (expressions of environmental architecture: solar panels, environmentally friendly materials, greening) or indeed both.

To a lesser extent, densification also applies in inner suburban areas. In such areas, it is based much more on private initiatives and the building of small blocks of flats, new housing estates and detached houses, sited on the basis of the availability of land. In some cases, this process may take place completely unlawfully and give rise to the development of neighbourhoods or blocks of informal housing.

Urbanisation and tourism

Urbanisation has also gone hand in hand with a process that is just as globalised: tourism. Since the 1960s, tourism has expanded and become a mass pursuit, giving rise to a real leisure culture, one of the obvious consequences of which is the increase in recreational travel, trips and visits away from people's own regions by an ever-larger percentage of the population. The resulting business activity has now acquired such dimensions that it is rightly regarded as a fully fledged industry that generates flows, travel and needs of all kinds and, more specifically, demand in terms of building.

Tourism is a factor in urbanisation that takes place in different regional contexts and therefore affects several types of landscapes. In coastal areas, first of all, seaside tourism is a relatively long-established spatial trend that has expanded constantly since the late 19th century. It entails intensive urbanisation, which is also compounded by processes involving the movement of people and activities to sunnier and coastal regions. Along some coastlines, there is a kind of urban continuum of built-up areas, laid out either as conurbations or on a multipolar basis, whose influence is tending to extend into the relevant hinterlands. In this case, the massive urbanisation of these coasts gives them a clearly metropolitan feel. In mountainous regions, winter sports tourism is relatively well established. It has led to massive developments designed to cater for and satisfy visitors who are less and less confined to the winter sports season. In the countryside, in spite of the increase in ethical or ecological requirements, the development of green tourism is still accompanied by some types of urbanisation. It is not therefore cases for green tourism to be combined with some processes of peri-urbanisation, even in rural areas that are among the most isolated.

Urbanisation without urbanism?

Urbanisation in Europe is therefore intensifying on the basis of processes that are essentially centrifugal, but sometimes centripetal, which are due to favourable combinations of sociological, economic and environmental factors.

It has to be said that this trend is taking place alongside a deliberate withdrawal of public stakeholders

from the urban development process. For the sake of controlling public finances, central governments, first of all, followed by local and regional authorities, have been tending to drop socialist interventionist models in the East and their Keynesian equivalents in the West. They are replacing them with neoliberal models that advocate a degree of deregulation of the urban development system and greater private-sector involvement. This is leading to a change in approaches. Public stakeholders are no longer the sole guarantors of the common good in urban development. They have to compromise with the economic and financial imperatives of private stakeholders who are fully involved in the process and, if necessary, they must negotiate or arbitrate to ensure the collective interest. They are therefore no longer the sole initiators of the construction of neighbourhoods, blocks or buildings. They are also no longer fully in control of the formal and functional ins and outs of urban development projects, as their influence at the level of real-estate projects has become too indirect. It is only exercised upstream, through planning tools and documents that on the whole continue to be governed more by approaches based on zoning of land for building or other purposes than by project-based approaches.

In practice, there is often poor co-ordination between urban planning as conducted by public bodies and urban design as carried out by private stakeholders. While there seems to be some consensus when it comes to major projects built from scratch or redevelopment in central or peri-central neighbourhoods, the diffuse type of urbanisation found in peripheral areas seems to be affected by this lack of co-ordination. In these peri-urban metropolitan-like areas, private stakeholders have much greater leeway. Property developers in particular stand out as the driving forces of urbanisation. Depending on the real-estate opportunities determined by land-use law, they design, produce and sell their commercial goods, namely real-estate projects, with an eye to maximised and immediate returns. Lying between the needs of the building market and the cost of production and development, it is these returns which actually dictate the rules for urban building. The resulting urbanisation consequently depends much more on technical than on aesthetic factors and its architectural and urban planning dimensions are reduced to their simplest expressions: solely the engineering, economic and financial approaches. In property developments of this kind, the ultimately limited part played by architects, urban planners and landscape architects compared to the leading role assigned to engineers probably bears witness to this problematic situation. The urbanisation here often takes place without any real concern for urban planning or design (high-quality urban development) and

actually generates very little urban ethos. It just meets the demands of its customers and ensures returns on investment for the developers, without giving any thought to the landscape impact it has in the areas concerned. Its consequences are just as worrying when it is based on private self-build initiatives of varying degrees of lawfulness and formality.

2. The negative effects of urbanisation and contemporary urbanism on landscape

The mass urbanisation trends currently at play are closely tied up with the often brutal operating methods of contemporary urbanism. Their combined effects tend to have an impact very swiftly on landscapes that have taken a very long time to develop. This change in pace lies behind significant transformations in landscapes which it is hard to consider positively. These all create imbalances in the profound defining characteristics of individual regions as reflected in landscapes at local level. These principal negative effects are never unambiguous and may be combined with one another. They may be classified on a graduated scale, from those with the least impact to those most harmful for landscapes.

Privatisation of landscape

Privatisation of landscape occurs when the urbanisation of a district, neighbourhood, block or plot confines views of all or part of a landscape to the beneficiaries of the relevant development alone. In such cases, the landscape is neither negated nor necessarily spoilt. Rather it serves as the driving force for the construction process and the sales argument for the urban development project around the landscape unit. The idea here is to sell privileged access to agreeable views and a high-quality living environment. Apart from the questionable commoditisation of these amenities, this type of urban development leads, above all, to the gradual closing or blocking off of landscapes. For, in order to ensure the best views for their occupants, the buildings are laid out in such a way that they partially or totally obstruct views of the landscape for the majority, in particular from public areas. Landscape therefore no longer seems to be a common good but, rather, the property of a few. In the regions concerned, this poses problems in terms both of fairness and liveability. In terms of fairness, privatisation of landscape for and by a privileged few compounds the environmental inequalities. Cities continue to be marked by real socio-spatial differences in terms of access to natural resources and ecosystem services. In terms of liveability, confiscation of landscape amenities can lead to a kind

of reduction in esteem for their living space on the part of population groups who are materially and symbolically dispossessed of the positive aspects of the environment they live in.
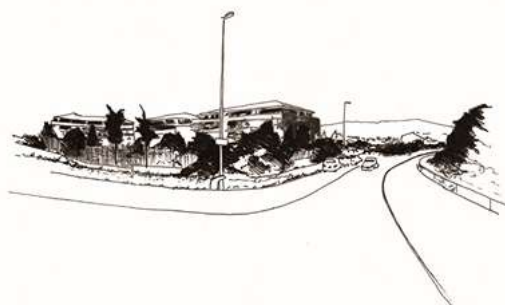

Figure 1. Privatisation of landscape

Figure 1 shows this possible privatisation of landscape resulting from contemporary urban development and the urbanisation it underpins. It shows a characteristic view of the outskirts of a major city. In this case, the densification of the suburb takes the form of new housing estates and small gated blocks of flats. The latter are particularly visible in the foreground and are superimposed on an almost rural landscape dominated by the limestone ranges that can be seen in the background. With their unusual geomorphology and garrigue vegetation, these hills are key factors in attractiveness and therefore one of the reasons for the urbanisation of the district. However, this development process is playing a part in gradually hiding the attractive landscape from the street, not only because of the position of the buildings but also because of the addition of elements protecting the premises (gates, railings, shrubs, etc.). However, the hills remain fully visible and can be appreciated by the occupants from inside the flats. Lastly, the landscape does a lot more to enhance the real-estate developments than it does to enhance the neighbourhood where they are located. While it does add value to the urbanisation taking place here, it unfortunately does not increase the value of the urban planning that regulates it.

From decontextualisation to standardisation: degradation of landscape

Deterioration of landscape occurs when the urbanisation of a district, neighbourhood, block or plot undermines the appearance of all or part of a landscape to varying degrees. Although the landscape is not necessarily negated, it gives rise to urban development interpretations that are seriously at odds with its intrinsic features and hence with the deeper meaning of the setting. Because it tends to involve tensions between individual and collective representations that are often contradictory, this process is likely to be judged very subjectively, but it may be measured objectively

both by a decline in the consistency, clarity and harmony of the landscape and by the disintegration of the population's collective understanding of it. With this process, the landscape acts much less as a factor in territorial unity. Worse still, it may be the subject of controversy. Its deterioration therefore involves a combination of temporal and spatial changes. The temporal changes stem from the very quick way in which contemporary urbanisation affects landscapes that have built up over a long time. It therefore imposes its pace and its immediacy. The spatial changes stem from the fact that contemporary urbanism is tending to deconstruct landscapes as it imposes its own signature or uses urban planning styles that fit in very poorly with what already exists. It involves either real decontextualisation or far-reaching standardisation of landscape.

Decontextualisation of urbanism

The decontextualisation of contemporary urbanism occurs when the urbanisation patterns of a district, neighbourhood, block or plot take little or no account of the features of the local landscape, thereby leading to its degradation. This process stems from urban planning choices in terms of building forms, materials and colours, types of layout and uses of developments that do not fit in well with the existing environment and make little positive contribution to established landscape balance. These choices may be entirely intentional and involve urban planning and architectural techniques that seek deliberately to break with the relevant context. This applies, for instance, to the implementation of certain projects in urban landscapes that already exist (central areas, in particular). These give rise to designs with outcomes that may or may not be successful. Sometimes the urban and architectural projects are a complete success and trigger a new landscape dynamic. Sometimes they are mediocre and spoil the urban landscape to a greater or lesser extent. Nevertheless, these decontextualised urban development choices mostly stem from lack of concern for, disregard for or total ignorance of landscape matters. Their approaches are dictated by primarily economic considerations, the aim being to carry out projects at limited cost, even if this means employing models, set-ups, techniques and materials that are in conflict with local features. This situation is all the more worrying since it actually does not leave much room for input from those urban design professionals (architects, urban planners and landscape architects) who are more capable of ensuring landscape integration. Some projects are designed to operate as well as possible within their immediate boundaries. However, the landscape impacts on a broader scale are only rarely assessed before

construction. The effects of this type of decontextualised urbanism are seen most frequently on the outskirts of urban areas, in the form both of new housing estates and the establishment of business and/or retail parks at the entrances to towns. On account of low-quality production methods, suburban areas are increasingly developed without the involvement of urban designers, on the basis of ill-assorted individualised strategies. For economic and commercial reasons which involve building functional and identifiable premises at low cost, the construction of business parks generates particularly decontextualised developments.
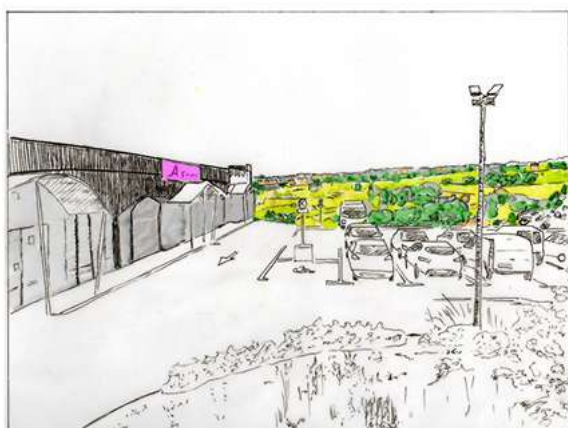

Figure 2. Decontextualisation of urbanism

Figure 2 shows this possible decontextualisation of contemporary urbanism, with a view of the entrance to a town. In this case, a typical small mediaeval town has developed in harmony with beautiful surrounding farmland. This is a semi-open hedged landscape, with natural grassland that is mown or grazed, criss-crossed by hedgerows of walnut and plum trees. Oak woodlands can be seen on the slopes. However, because of the location of a very specialised small industry, the town is experiencing quite significant peri-urbanisation. The construction of very low-cost self-build houses across the countryside has been accompanied by growth in several businesses and retail parks on the town's outskirts. The landscape is spoilt as a result and town entrances, which lend themselves particularly to urbanisation, have become real landscape blackspots that can be seen from all over the area. Around roundabouts in the developments concerned, there is a concentration of retail warehouses, whose shape (boxlike), cheap building materials (breezeblock or metal) and colours (garish to attract customers) absolutely do not fit into the landscape. This figure therefore shows a glaring difference in landscape between the retail area in the foreground and the farmland in the background, in other words, between

buildings put up quickly, if not on a fleeting basis, and centuries-old farming.

Standardisation of landscape

Standardisation of landscape occurs when the urbanisation of a district, neighbourhood, block or plot employs standardised building methods involving, in particular, the use of forms, techniques and materials that are not only very widely used but are also very much at odds with the local and landscape context. This process is one of the most striking consequences of the globalisation of urban building. The ways people inhabit and live in urban areas are becoming increasingly standardised and widespread. They are therefore expressed through types of development that are tending to become equally standardised. To ensure that building costs are controlled, urbanisation follows very well-established and often standard models. Traditional forms of housing are, for example, giving way to very common designs. The use of regional or local materials, which used to ensure a kind of landscape harmony between the physical and cultural features of a region, is being replaced by the use of standardised goods which are mass produced in various locations around the world and marketed by major international distributors. As a result, the specific features of the landscape are gradually being erased, even though some local features are sometimes conserved and reinterpreted with varying degrees of success. The increasing repetition of the same urban motifs with low landscape qualities is standardising the areas concerned, making them lose their identities. This trend is particularly noticeable in suburban areas where there is growth in detached housing.

This is shown in Figure 3. It depicts a peri-urban fragment resulting from the process of peripheral urbanisation of a region, the landscape matrix of which is a rich agricultural plain interspersed with wooded areas. The demographic and economic growth of core towns is very often reflected in diffuse centrifugal urbanisation. A loose mesh of detached houses gradually develops, transforming fields into a land reserve used for the expansion of access roads, private gardens and, above all, detached houses. These are built under property development programmes based on standardised planning principles: the schemes are reduced to very simple forms, are laid out in a contiguous manner to reduce costs and are built using common materials (breezeblocks for exteriors, plasterboard for interiors and imitation-slate PVC tiles for roofs). The spread of this urban model throughout the region concerned plays a major part in standardising its landscape.

Figure 3. Standardisation of landscape

From negation to destruction of landscape

Destruction is the final stage in the degradation of landscape. It occurs when the urbanisation of a district, neighbourhood, block or plot eliminates on a medium- to long-term basis the intrinsic features of a landscape, which is completely negated by the urban planning choices made. Those choices are not based on endogenous specific features of the regions concerned or on the meaning of the places but purely on separate exogenous factors that depend, in particular, on economic parameters. The aim of the advocates of this type of urbanism is usually to make the maximum profit from an area available as building land and put up buildings there that claim to respond to local needs in terms of growth and development. The result is therefore a massive and brutal process which leaves its mark on the area concerned while imposing its time frames. In so doing, the urbanisation in progress not only fails to fit into the existing overall landscape but also further contributes to the gradual and final erasure of its visible defining characteristics. It may, admittedly, give rise to an entirely different urban landscape with its own effects, amenities and impressions, but this takes place in disregard of the existence and perpetuation of another already constituted landscape.

This process raises real heritage issues because, in order to meet expectations which in many respects may appear to be temporary and perhaps even evolving, it condemns forever the inherited territorial structures to which landscapes bear witness as links between the past and present of places. This total negation of landscape that can lead to its disappearance continues to be associated with tourism-related urbanisation, especially the kind found in coastal areas. In those areas, the tourist industry generates such great added (monetary) value that it continues to be the driving force behind aggressive artificialisation of shorelines and surrounding landscapes.

Figure 4 shows this with a view of a coastal town. In this case, a small traditional fishing port has been completely transformed into a leading seaside resort. On the basis of permissive local development plans, a town of high-rise buildings geared entirely towards mass tourism has therefore sprung up. Its orthogonal urban layout perpendicular to the shoreline has been completely superimposed on the local landscape matrix. After much excavation work, a whole host of towers has been built along the coastline, not only erasing the heritage features of the site but also further restricting its links with the overall surrounding landscape. The town is focused on its tourist industry and has only very few landscape links with the mountains in its hinterland. Worse still, the beach and the sea seem to be confined to their functional and pleasure dimensions alone.

Figure 4. Transformation of the landscape

Degradation of urban landscapes as an indicator of environmental problems

The operating methods of contemporary urbanism, which lie behind several types of landscape degradation, also cause serious environmental problems, in particular the dramatic erosion of the various forms of urban nature and the related biodiversity. Urbanisation therefore clearly poses the same difficulties and the same threats to landscape and the environment as urbanism does. Although the two belong to separate conceptual fields, they may accordingly be looked at together. What is more, the deterioration of landscapes within different urban areas may, in many respects, be regarded as indicative of a decline of varying degrees in their ecological functionalities and wealth. For instance, the privatisation of an urban natural landscape clearly involves the closing off of an environment which may ultimately lead to the formation of an ecological isolate that is threatened by its confinement. Similarly, the debasement of an urban landscape made up in part of various natural spaces clearly demonstrates the fragmentation of the environment and hence the undermining of its ecological functionality. Lastly, it goes without saying that the destruction

of a natural landscape as a result of urbanisation inevitably entails the disappearance of the related habitats. Conversely, public policies and planning and design strategies to promote landscape are often guarantors for improved biodiversity. Against a background of environmental crises, landscape and ecology therefore involve common approaches which need to be dealt with jointly under new kinds of urban development practices.

3. Landscape as the foundation, means and purpose of a new type of urbanism

The ways in which contemporary urbanism operates therefore have negative effects on landscapes. Worrying though it is, this fact alone is no justification or defence for the futile notion that all urbanisation should come to a grinding and permanent halt. Confining landscape, in the name of protecting it, to a vision that is not only overly static (because landscape is a dynamic space, in a perpetual state of flux) but also excessively naïve about urban realities (because landscape cannot be considered in opposition to the growing needs of populations in terms of housing and activities) is not the answer. What might be conceivable, however, are urban development approaches that are more respectful of landscape. The notion is not outlandish – particularly as, in the past, a few leading figures in the world of design have worked hard to bring about just such a rapprochement. A long way from the schools of thought that, to a large extent, still dominate planning and design, a handful of theoretical propositions, some more recent than others, continue to influence what could be described as consciously landscape-oriented experiments in urbanism. It is only fitting, therefore, that we should examine at least some of these here. The aim is first and foremost to shine a light on new modi operandi that are friendly to landscape, with the latter now being seen as the interface between anthropic and ecological issues.

The pioneers of dialogue between urbanism and landscape

Although the dialogue between urbanism and landscape is of particular relevance today, it does not stem from a way of thinking set exclusively in the present. Over the course of the history of urban development, various prominent theorists and practitioners of urban and landscape architecture have erected bridges between these two areas of application, transcending sterile disciplinary boundaries and contributing to the rapprochement in question through their projects. With the construction in the 17th century of the gardens of Versailles and the promenade known today as the Champs-Élysées, the landscape gardener André Le

Nôtre is credited by some with having ushered in a "greener" kind of urbanism. It was not until the 19th century, however, that this type of landscape design became mainstream and spawned multiple applications throughout Europe. In Spain, for example, the pioneer of contemporary urbanism, Ildefonso Cerdà, with his holistic view of the city, introduced the motto "ruralise what is urban, urbanise what is rural", on which his 1859 plan for the expansion of Barcelona (Ensanche) was based. In the Paris of the Second Empire and Haussmann, meanwhile, Alphand and Barillet-Deschamps were devising innovative landscaping projects. The public spaces they created, including numerous parks (the Bois de Boulogne and the Bois de Vincennes, Parc Monceau, Parc des Buttes-Chaumont) established an urban archetype that was exported throughout Europe. It endured in various forms throughout the first half of the 20th century, notably through the major town-planning schemes implemented by the Englishman Raymond Unwin or France's Jean-Claude Nicolas Forestier and Henri Prost, whose work on park systems was inspired by the parkways of the American Frederick Law Olmsted. Around the same time, in England, Ebenezer Howard came up with an original scheme to create veritable "garden cities", combining the benefits of town and countryside, based on his Three Magnets diagram. Published in his 1898 book, *To-morrow*, the diagram became popular in Europe, influencing the construction of neighbourhoods and towns where the built and non-built spaces tended to fuse together in equilibrium. In a way, this experience foreshadowed the work of designers who, after the Second World War, would help to build or redevelop suburban housing estates, using landscape as the blueprint for creating a high-quality living environment. Bernard Lassus, Michel Corajoud and Jacques Simon were just some of the great French landscape architects who worked on projects of this kind. Today, various theories of urbanism are once again looking to the landscape for answers to the challenges of peri-urbanisation and metropolisation.

The garden metropolis: landscape as the foundation, means and purpose of planning

Among the various promising ideas that framed the emergence of landscape planning is that of the "garden metropolis", an almost forgotten concept from the French spatial planning of the *Trente Glorieuses* (the 30-year period from 1945 to 1975). Although formulated 50 years ago by the Organisation of Development Studies for the Loire Moyenne (Organisation d'études d'aménagement de la Loire Moyenne – OREALM) in that specific context, and although relatively unsuccessful in terms of its implementation, this concept has real relevance today. As an oxymoron, it dares to bring together

two terms that refer to ostensibly contradictory territorial realities: the metropolis, understood as a vast urban network characterised by complexity, speed and flows, and the garden, understood as a narrowly circumscribed place, the defining features of which are simplicity, slowness and intimacy. As a project, the garden-metropolis concept offered, from the outset, a way to combine the possibilities afforded by the infinitely large, with the comfort implicit in the infinitely small. From 1968 onwards, the cities of Orleans, Blois and Tours thus expanded within an interdependent metropolitan network known as the Paris Basin, because it was linked to the capital by a high-speed mode of transport: Jean Bertin's aerotrain. At the same time, the principle of green belts began to find its way into spatial planning, thus heralding the notion of "strategic gaps". The garden-metropolis experiment was also among the first spatial projects to formally embrace landscape as a design opportunity on such a vast scale, devising landscape planning responses tailored to local conditions and drawing on the services of a new breed of professional: the landscaper-cum-planner.

In retrospect, therefore, the concept of the garden metropolis can be seen as forward-looking, stimulating and wholly suited to the spatial and environmental challenges of our era. Reinterpreting it in the current context requires us to create a link between design processes that are now metropolitan in scale and environmentally friendly ways of thinking about spatial development. In this respect, the garden metropolis posits landscape not only as a means of questioning, or even transcending, traditional relationships with nature, but also as the foundation, means and purpose of planning and urbanism. The garden metropolis accordingly makes landscape the matrix of the everyday metropolitan environment but also uses the garden as a hallmark of the "liveability" of complex and composite urban spaces. Indeed, in the garden metropolis, landscape is embodied in the garden. The latter then becomes the reflection of a desire for change in the way we think about and manage nature in general, and the flora and fauna within metropolitan areas in particular. For metropolisation as we know it today produces, incorporates and adds built and non-built spaces of very different types and functions. This diversity typically results in piecemeal and partial approaches as well as sectoral policies that prevent all aspects of nature and biodiversity from being treated in a coherent and joined-up fashion. Building on this observation, the garden-metropolis project invites us to take an overarching view of nature and biodiversity, through the prism of the garden. Whatever their scale or situation, these elements of nature are, in effect, fully fledged components of the vast metropolitan garden: they function as a network on the ecological level and interact with one another on the landscape level. It makes sense to treat them, therefore, with the same gentle care one would bestow on a garden, respecting their distinctiveness but also considering them as part of the territorial whole. To do that, it is necessary to reconnect with a development-oriented landscaping based on the transdisciplinarity of landscape sciences.

Ecological planning: knowledge of landscape as a basis for effecting change

Ecological planning is a method of developing spatial planning projects that was invented in the 1960s. It was first articulated in *Design with nature* (1969) by the teacher and practitioner Ian McHarg, who founded the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania.

The ecological planning approach marks a turning point in the history of planning in that, very early on, it substituted the values associated with a certain ethic of care (of the environment) for the traditional aesthetic principles of urban and spatial development. It accordingly advocates a thorough knowledge of nature and, indeed, a real recognition of the functions that nature performs within urbanisation. To do this, it uses mapping not only as an element in the analysis of any given territory (a prerequisite for action) but also as a tool for producing a design (purpose of the action). In terms of spatial analysis, the map becomes, in effect, an instrument for cross-referencing different layers of information gleaned from expert evaluations spanning a range of scientific disciplines (geography, sociology, economics, ecology, hydrology, pedology, etc.). In this respect, ecological planning prefigured the landscape studies that are carried out today using geographic information systems (GIS). These layers of data are thus superimposed to produce a multicriteria spatial analysis from which decisions about land use can then flow. The principal advantage of decisions made in this way is that they make it possible to blend, or even balance, within the same territorial framework, human needs and ecological considerations. In terms of design, this method has a profoundly deductive character that sets it apart from more traditionally inductive landscape approaches.

The ecological planning approach has been applied in numerous projects in the United States and has attracted the interest of European planners, particularly in France, at the Société du Canal de Provence, where it has directly inspired the development of Toulon-Est and the new town of Vitrolles.

From sociotopes to bio-sociotopes: natural areas as a basis for landscape planning

In reference to the biotope, the sociotope is defined as "a place as it is used by people" (ADEUPa 2016). This concept is a result of the joint work of two

Swedish landscape architects: Alexander Ståhle and Anders Sandberg. It was first trialled from 1996 to 2002, as part of the Stockholm planning process. The sociotope method thus seeks to encourage the development of parks and natural spaces, while at the same time allowing for urban densification and growth. The first step involves compiling an inventory of all the natural areas within a given territory (intermunicipality, municipality, districts, etc.). The second step is to consult experts who, using a standardised observation protocol, determine the ways in which each place identified in the inventory, each sociotope, is used and, most importantly, the social value placed on those spaces. The third step is to carry out a survey of users in an effort to determine the real value of the areas in question, whether tangible (practices) or intangible (perceptions). Building on this, the fourth stage in the sociotope method involves producing a synthesis in the form of a map of the sociotopes. This map can then help to reveal landscapes and urban places through the uses that are made of them. Above all, it enables the relevant local actors to make planning decisions: to increase density in areas that have low social value or, conversely, to create, protect and improve the functioning of natural areas that users cherish.

Since its early days in Stockholm, the sociotope method has influenced the development of various urban areas, particularly in France with the adoption of town-planning documents. It has proved an effective way to give social meaning to the spatial imperatives of schemes involving ecological corridors or "green and blue" belts, helping to highlight the practices and perceptions associated with natural areas that contribute to the ecological functioning of the territory. In this respect, the sociotope method can, in principle, be seen as a way to balance nature and culture within the planning process. By placing the use value at the centre of the spatial decision-making process, however, it can also appear to derive from a somewhat anthropocentric viewpoint. For that reason, some recommend supplementing this approach with a more fine-grained analysis of the ecological functioning of the natural areas identified. Between use values and ecological values, the bio-sociotope method thus created would pave the way for landscape planning choices that satisfy both natural and human imperatives.

The urban bioregion: the territorial approach as a method of landscape planning

The bioregion, as originally conceived by Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmann, refers to an area defined not by policy choices but by its own natural characteristics and inhabited, with profound respect for ecological balances, by communities both human and non-human. The product of a 1970s American eco-anarchist movement (bio-regionalism), the concept tends to emphasise ways of life that are fully attuned and attentive to the natural wealth of the places where they are pursued.

Neither these origins nor this meaning are usually associated with bioregionalism, however. The publication of *The urban bioregion: a short treatise on the territory as a common good* by the Italian architect, urban planner and researcher Alberto Magnaghi (Magnaghi 2014), left its imprint on the concept, without, however, following on directly from the early writings of American bio-regionalists. The resulting definition, indeed, owes far more to a vision influenced by the Italian territorialist school. As a new type of approach to planning, the latter considers territory as the basic unit of development that is firmly anchored in the local (Magnaghi 2003). It is thus based on highlighting and utilising its specific resources, whether social, cultural, political, economic or natural. Viewed from a territorialist perspective, therefore, the region becomes a reference scale, a common good which, through its size, ensures positive and dynamic interactions between the urban and rural components of the space lived in. In this sense, it is held up as an alternative to the metropolis and its generalised urbanisation model. By creating within its midst the necessary conditions for balance between its component environments, furthermore, the region defended by the territorialist approach is a bioregion. Its functioning and development are enhanced by respect for local ecological diversity and landscapes.

In concrete terms, the concept of the urban bioregion has already influenced the planning of certain metropolitan areas where polycentrism and polyculture feature prominently. It provides an opportunity to draw on multidisciplinary territorial diagnoses, and to make planning choices appropriate to the scale of the territory which can then be translated into urban planning documents. Local stakeholders generally display an interest in landscape issues in discussions about creating ecological corridors or "green and blue" belts.

Landscape urbanism: landscape as a driving force in urban design

Heavily influenced by the thinking of Ian McHarg, landscape urbanism is closely linked to the theoretical work of Charles Waldheim, James Corner and Mohsen Mostafavi, American instructors, practitioners and theorists. It is also associated with the publication of a reference work: *The landscape urbanism reader* (Waldheim 2006). Compared to previous offerings, the landscape urbanism approach is far more design- than planning-oriented. By replacing architecture with landscape as the basic building

block of towns and cities, it offers a more radically ecological vision of development. Although its boundaries are still fluid, landscape urbanism is a new form of urbanism, therefore one characterised by the close attention paid, at the design stage, to the inherent features of the sites and the landscape systems already in place. An attempt to provide joined-up responses to the anthropic and environmental imperatives of our age, it requires us to think and act in ways that reach across the nature/culture divide.

To that end, it draws on a few basic tenets.

► Better suited to today's environmental context, landscape is replacing architecture as the basic building block for towns and cities.

► Landscape is a source of potential and opportunities.

► Landscape is a context which contains architecture and engineering.

► Landscape makes a connection between its various components.

► Landscape urbanism is a response to complex territorial, urban and ecological situations.

► Spilling over the perimeter of the site to encompass the landscape as a whole, landscape urbanism works for projects of any scale, from the smallest to the largest.

► Far from being nostalgic or backward-looking, landscape urbanism rejects the dichotomy between city and landscape and treats them as one.

► Landscape urbanism provides opportunities for social interaction.

► Landscape urbanism promotes interaction, or even hybridisation, between natural and engineered systems.

► Landscape urbanism is concerned with both the functioning and the appearance of a project.

► Landscape urbanism is concerned with revealing the invisible, especially infrastructure.

Although still not widely used by urban development actors, landscape urbanism echoes ways of thinking and doing that have long been part of landscaping practice and has its roots in an "urbanism of revelation", meaning approaches which tap into the substratum and the reality of the site to allow the project to emerge, and to establish the principles by which it will evolve over time. In this respect, some consider that the work of prominent French figures in international landscape architecture, such as Bernard Lassus, Michel Corajoud or Michel Desvigne, springs directly from landscape urbanism.

4. Principles for a new, landscape-based urbanism

In contrast to the realities on the ground, the few theoretical and practical proposals developed previously show the possible alliance between urban planning and landscape. Better still, beyond their mere illustrative value, these examples show that landscape is indeed the foundation, the means and the end of a renewed urbanism, i.e., an urbanism capable of integrating both the anthropic needs and the ecological imperatives of the time. Based on their teachings, it is then possible to define structuring principles of this renewed urbanism through the landscape.

Landscape as a way of thinking and acting beyond nature and culture

Amid environmental emergencies such as the dramatic erosion of biodiversity, it is becoming necessary to rethink the relationship between humans and nature. This imperative is particularly acute in the disciplines that go into making territories and towns, where the built-in obsolescence of the corpus of conceptual and design-related knowledge surely calls for a major ecological update. After all, urbanisation is still unfolding in ways that are greatly to the detriment of environmental balance or, worse, of sustainability. This situation is undoubtedly the result of distinctly Western considerations that draw a sharp line between nature and culture and put humans at the centre of the universe. Recent reflective advances, most notably by the eminent anthropologist Philippe Descola (2005), invite us to temper these notions, however. First and foremost, they urge us to regard the distinction between nature and culture as a simple cultural and social construct that must be overcome in order to create a more balanced relationship with the environment. Liberated from the excessive anthropocentrism that still too often permeates current thinking, such an assertion requires us to cast off traditional patterns of thought that pit, for example, human interests against environmental ones, good species against bad species, or extraordinary nature against ordinary nature. It makes sense, in that context, to proceed with humility and to seek to create a genuine ethic in urban planning and design that embraces all living things, i.e., to invent ways of thinking about and "doing" urbanisation that meet the needs of humans without totally compromising those of other species in the process. The right channel for expressing this kind of approach – which, today, too often meets with doubts and hesitations on the part of stakeholders trapped in outmoded conceptions – still remains to be found, however.

Certainly, landscape has the potential to provide such a channel. Based as it is on a system of

perceptions both individual and collective, it can be the instrument that individuals, social groups and societies turn to in order to think not only about these needs on a global scale, but also to understand and undertake ecological changes within their local area. The growing interest evinced by urban societies in nature, biodiversity and ecology cannot, therefore, be divorced from concern for the landscape. On that basis, public policies and planning or urban development strategies that seek to maintain and develop urban biodiversity (such as ecological corridors or "green and blue" belts) should gain in effectiveness from being approached from the integrative perspective of landscape. At local level, strictly ecological approaches to development are still too often perceived, by those involved in spatial development, as veritable injunctions that prioritise natural balances over human needs. Landscape approaches, on the other hand, command far greater consensus, as landscape is perceived in a sufficiently diverse way to be grasped by everyone and to ultimately emerge as a mediator between ecological imperatives and the anthropic needs of a particular territory. Embodying the interactions between natural and human factors, landscape cannot now simply be about schemes where the only considerations are aesthetic, when it has economic, social, cultural, environmental, ecological, political and ethical dimensions as well. In matters of urban planning and design, it thus calls for a radically new kind of urbanism, one that thinks and acts beyond the nature/culture divide.

Engage with the history and geography of a territory: landscape as the basis for a new type of urbanism

At the territorial and local level, landscape is the visible and tangible result of how each local community has, throughout history, interpreted the geography it inhabits. For a long time, humans have known how to care for the physical characteristics of their environment (climate, soil, altitude, vegetation, etc.) in order to derive maximum benefit from it, and to maintain landscapes that reflect their attachment to their particular piece of Earth. The new type of urbanism that is proposed here must rekindle this sense of dwelling and symbiosis. For, because they are happening at speed in landscapes that were formed only slowly, the forms of urbanisation that we are seeing today are very often at odds with the territorial dynamics that went before them. They seek to graft on to the local level globalised approaches to urban development that tend not only to erase the distinctive features of a place, but also to impose bland urban compositions that obscure the area's trajectories and legacies of the past and smooth its rough edges.

In order to put an end to these pernicious ways, what is needed is an urbanism based on relationships that are always set in the context of the landscape. This can be achieved through a series of highly practical measures, such as combating the homogenisation of buildings by supporting local suppliers of materials. First and foremost, it can be accomplished through new ways of thinking and doing. In this respect, landscape needs to be considered as the foundation, the means and the end of a new approach to urban development. The latter should thus create a link between the geography and history of territories and places. That does not mean slavishly copying that which already exists, producing cartoonish replicas of local and regional features while at the same time employing standardised means of construction. On the contrary, it means coming up with an innovative type of urbanism that, in both style and substance, follows on from what is already there, in keeping with the territory's dynamics, yet in harmony with its landscapes. For that to happen, there clearly has to be a re-evaluation of current ways of "doing" urban development which, little by little, is being turned over to private operators who are far more concerned about profitability and returns than they are about integrating and contextualising their work. Without necessarily doing away with these mechanisms, it is important to give public stakeholders greater control by inventing forms of urbanism that rethink landscape planning and design. It seems sensible, in that context, to refocus attention on the part played by craftsmen such as architects, town planners and landscapers in contemporary urban development, amid the growing dominance of technology and finance. While evidence of this planning and design culture can still be seen in major operations carried out in city centres, it remains all too rare in peripheral urbanisation, despite the many landscape issues that the latter throws up. In this context, the challenge is to put intelligence, sensitivity and creativity back into the spatial development process, as it relates not only to major landscapes but also to everyday ones, for greater quality of life.

Develop and manage landscape in a way that supports urban nature

In order to counteract the excesses of contemporary urbanism, spatial development approaches will in future need to be supplemented, or even replaced, by others based on genuine landscape stewardship. This is particularly imperative where urban ecology is concerned. For, while some planning methods conducive to the ecological functioning of urban areas (such as schemes involving ecological corridors or "green and blue" belts) have slowly begun to emerge, all too often these merely revolve around identifying, protecting and networking large tracts of remarkable, or even extraordinary nature. Urban planners, too, increasingly factor nature into

town-planning schemes. Various projects for rewilding the city are thus beginning to appear, even in highly urbanised areas. The tendency in those cases is to seek to recreate nature and natural dynamics, sometimes in places where before there were none. Such projects can be very costly and are apt to be highly horticultural in their approach. The focus is still on creating aesthetic effects with the help of a selection of plants rather than on setting in motion genuine ecological dynamics. At the same time, however, within the same areas, the same spatial development and town-planning tools are being used to eliminate more ordinary examples of nature. These more ordinary examples include notably open spaces made up of "third-landscape" (*tiers-paysage*) (wasteland and overgrown areas) but also gardens. Within the same urban areas and often under the banner of sustainable development, we thus find ourselves in a paradoxical situation where nature is being artificially recreated in places where it did not exist before and "artificialised" in places where it was already alive and well.

The answer to this paradox produced by outdated attitudes to spatial planning lies in landscape stewardship, therefore. Gone are the days when space, land and nature could be treated as infinite resources, or goods to be consumed in unlimited quantities. There needs to be an awareness not merely of their usefulness but also of their great preciousness. The shift from spatial planning to landscape stewardship requires us to probe deeply into existing paradigms, even where these are regarded as practical solutions to the problem of sustainable territories. Consider, for example, densification, which is forever being held up as an urban solution to hypermobility and hence greenhouse gas emissions, but which is effectively a death sentence for urban open spaces, land that supports a wealth of ordinary nature with obvious ecological benefits. There also needs to be a change in how we view spaces and "ordinary" biodiversity of this type because, low-cost and low maintenance, they provide multiple ecosystem services in the highly constrained setting that is the urban environment.

Discover and recognise the ecological value of urban landscapes

The processes of peri-urbanisation and metropolisation produce, incorporate and add not only "solids" (built spaces) but also "voids" (non-built spaces) of very different types and functions. These differences lead to piecemeal and partial approaches as well as sectoral policies that prevent all the features of a territory from being treated in a comprehensive and joined-up fashion. Mindful of this fact, the new kind of urbanism envisaged here proposes viewing them as a single entity, through the prism of landscape features are, after all, a fully fledged part of

the territorial complexity: they function as a network and interact with one another in terms of landscape. It is important therefore to approach them with equal care, and without any preconceptions. In particular, that means looking beyond the hierarchy that exists between the different elements of nature, distinguishing between "remarkable" nature and the more ordinary variety. For nature cannot serve a territory unless that territory, in turn, serves nature. Far from having a merely decorative function, then, nature should be considered in terms of its ecological functions, and in particular the mobility of its flora and fauna. Each natural feature, however small or mundane, thus needs to be understood, resituated and managed with due regard to its situation and role within the ecological network of the territory concerned. In urban planning, therefore, it is essential to challenge any preconceived hierarchies of space so that genuine ecological continuities can be established within the urban matrix.

To that end, landscape stewardship must be based on a full inventory of all-natural phenomena and a better understanding of their characteristics, to devise planning and design responses that are thoroughly contextualised, i.e., wholly suited to the specific socio-ecological features of the individual territory. These efforts to discover, and secure recognition of the value of, landscape must be undertaken without regard to the usual distinctions that are still made between the beautiful and the ugly, the useful and the useless, or the extraordinary and the ordinary. For example, it is important to map all wild areas, including open spaces such as wastelands, neglected areas and private gardens. Resources (water, air, land) and their potential ecosystem services must be mapped too. In every instance, the aim is to increase understanding of these natural phenomena and their ecological functions at the territorial level, because they offer practical solutions to contemporary urban planning issues. Urban land, for example, is intimately bound up with the agricultural and food challenges of our era.

Discover and recognise the agronomic value of urban landscapes

Contrary to received ideas that pit them squarely against one another, cities and agriculture have, from the start, enjoyed a relationship based on reciprocity, even if this reciprocity has been more in evidence at certain times in history than at others. In Europe, poor transport links meant that, until around the time of the Second World War, the primary function of the agricultural suburbs was to supply city dwellers with fresh produce. In return, the areas in question benefited from inflows of capital and organic material from the city. After the Second World War, however, these interdependencies dwindled. The development of transport links paved the

way for the arrival, on urban markets, of foodstuffs from specialised production areas, located further and further afield. As a result, cities and agriculture drifted apart, physically and symbolically speaking. In this context, intra- and peri-urban agricultural areas quickly came to be seen as land banks, destined for urban development. With the health and farming crises of the 1990s, however (most notably "mad cow" disease), agriculture once again became not only a societal but also very much an urban issue. Since then, in the eyes of a growing band of city dwellers, it has acquired new roles beyond simply production. Ensuring quality merchandise, promoting food and drink, focusing attention on the land and traditional know-how, maintaining quality of life and the environment – these are some of the tasks which many urban dwellers look to agriculture to perform. Expectations are particularly high when it comes to the cultivated areas, they know best and frequent the most: intra-urban, peri-urban and metropolitan agricultural areas. Echoing this trend, many eminently urban local authorities are attempting to implement policies for the maintenance, management and development of these areas, mainly for food-related purposes.

Commendable though these policies are, they still tend to address agriculture in a sectoral and piecemeal way. In the absence of a generic approach to the issue, they lead to approaches that are either economic or social and environmental, so create divisions between stakeholders. Here again, though, landscape can be leveraged for its capacity to be a factor in integration, including spatial integration, for the urbanisation that is happening today encompasses different sorts of agricultural areas. Those responsible for managing urban landscapes should use this opportunity, therefore, to develop a genuinely local agriculture that addresses various food-related challenges, which include reducing the carbon footprint of supply chains, reducing big cities' dependence on far-flung sources (cities currently store enough only for a few days) and satisfying growing social expectations, in terms of both local agricultural produce, identified as healthy and superior in quality, and an opportunity to reconnect directly with the soil. Any effort to manage urban landscape responsibly should focus, therefore, on maintaining and developing existing farms by putting them back in touch with local consumers (short, localised supply chains) and by encouraging them to embrace ever more environmentally friendly practices. At the same time, new forms of appropriation by businesses and local residents in intra-urban areas should be encouraged, by setting aside space for experimentation with urban farming. Above all, attention should be paid to protecting the land, a territorial common good in the true sense of the term. All too often, the tendency among those involved in town planning is still to treat land merely as plots capable of hosting urbanisation, whereas in reality it is a resource and a place that supports multiple ecosystem services, not least biomass production and biodiversity maintenance. Understood as an efficient means of reinventing urbanism, urban landscape stewardship thus calls for the development of transdisciplinary approaches to the different forms of nature in towns and cities, including the land.

Develop transdisciplinary approaches to landscape

Understood as a factor in the integration and interlinkage of anthropic and ecological issues, in favour of a new type of urbanism, landscape should be seen as a generic response to various spatial challenges. Having to contend not only with the complexity of the urban phenomenon, but also with that of multifaceted nature, which provides numerous ecosystem services, this new type of urbanism calls for diverse skills and approaches that span both scientific fields (life sciences as well as human and social sciences) and operational or technical fields (project-related specialisms). What are required are decompartmentalised, multi- or interdisciplinary initiatives that combine various perspectives on urban reality but also, and perhaps above all, transdisciplinary approaches capable of hybridising knowledge and know-how, in order to think across traditional boundaries and have a structural impact within territories.

Landscape, therefore, must cease to be the purview of a small number of specialists and instead become the common basis for reflection and action by the various stakeholders involved in making towns and cities. For this to happen, the scientific and professional disciplines called upon to participate in the development of a new approach to urban planning and design must be encouraged to embrace a genuine landscape culture. That in turn requires efforts in terms of education and training. Landscape should thus become a cross-cutting subject capable of generating interest among architects, town planners and landscapers in urban ecology and, conversely, of sensitising environmental experts to the mechanics of urbanisation. Drawing on this shared culture, both sides must be able to respond to the current challenges of spatial development and land stewardship. It would seem vital that such disciplinary cross-fertilisation be fostered within the framework of research and training programmes in higher education. In particular, efforts should be made to run joint courses on landscape, but also workshops that look at how landscape fits into urbanism in practice. For example, urban ecology and agronomy should be developed as an integral part of planning and design. It is also important that this transdisciplinary landscape culture move out of the realm of theory

and be tested against local and regional realities. It thus needs to become a genuine requirement in town-planning schemes, notably including those commissioned by public authorities, but also in development projects involving private operators. To this end, the process of acculturation to landscape, synonymous with an updating of existing practices, should be available to those in the business of making towns and cities throughout their careers, whether they work on the commissioning side or on the project management side. Landscape, indeed, should build on the closer relationship between these two hemispheres of contemporary urbanism and, consequently, make for greater reciprocity between planning and design.

Posit landscape as a link between planning and design

One notable cause of the adverse landscape effects arising from contemporary urbanisation lies in the disconnect that exists to a certain extent between urban planning, organised around the public sector, and urban design, organised around private firms. As the preserve of local authorities, which are gradually stepping back from the hands-on business of building towns and cities, urban planning is still apt to appear incongruous or out of place, not least because it imposes, at local level, ways of enforcing laws, rules and measures that were designed with a larger scale in mind. It continues, moreover, to be expressed through town-planning documents which, despite some changes, are typically still guided by zoning considerations about what can and cannot be built on, far more so than by considerations relating to design. At the same time, urban design is increasingly dominated by private businesses, primarily developers, who have to attend to their own economic and financial needs while also serving the interests of the community. In effect, the process by which towns and cities are currently formed is torn between different imperatives which are not only expressed in a disordered manner but also tend to accentuate the gap between those who commission projects and those who implement them.

In this context, landscape can be the common thread in an innovative approach to design that transcends scales and actors. As a tool that operates on every scale, from the territorial to the place, landscape effectively channels complementary positions that need careful co-ordinating. As such, it must be based on a proper linkage between urban planning and urban design. For without this complementarity, it is not possible to involve each element of the landscape in the workings of the territory and the natural environment. As a transversal tool, landscape also calls for more dialogue between enlightened contracting authorities and project managers willing to enlighten. In matters

such as these, development and/or stewardship projects cannot truly succeed unless they are properly commissioned in the first place. Because of the territorial and ecological complexities involved in landscapes today, therefore, we are seeing a return to the practice of development-oriented landscaping, where landscape is addressed on a territorial scale, especially within contracting authorities, in order to plan and create conditions for projects that respect the balance between human needs and the ecological requirements of our age. The revival of development-oriented landscaping, which is to be welcomed, should thus give rise to landscape planning which, by working with and for landscape, creates a real bridge between top-down regulatory approaches and bottom-up territorial ones. In other words, landscape planning should help to give tangible form and context, according to local features, to the main tenets of land stewardship. It should also create conditions for the emergence and oversight of development operations which, far from spoiling the landscape, enhance it.

Encourage the emergence, through landscape, of new urban forms based on the hybridisation of city and nature

Calling for a new kind of urbanism, one that ensures a degree of equity between all living things, and, consequently, is concerned with landscape balance, does not mean advocating a static view of territories. Ever evolving, territories require dynamic development and/or stewardship approaches that are forever adapting to human and ecological needs. It is not a case of denying, under the guise of protecting landscapes and the ecosystems they contain, the real urbanisation needs generated by steady growth of the urban population. But nor is it a question of abandoning those landscapes and ecosystems to anthropocentric demands alone. Clearly what is required, is to forge urban planning approaches that seek to reconcile urbanisation and land stewardship, including at the level of individual projects and operations.

To this end, landscape can be harnessed as the foundation, means and purpose of a new kind of urbanism. It should serve as a permanent reference point in the process of designing and executing operations. Once again, it is not a matter of imposing stunted, nostalgic or retrograde visions of development. On the contrary, it is about trawling the geography and history of the territory for ideas for compositions and construction that follow on from, and are in harmony with, that which already exists, while at the same time responding effectively to the ecological imperatives of our age. As the common thread running through the project, landscape must respond to the needs of the population in terms of activities, housing and mobility, while fully

respecting local natural resources. The days of sacrificing spaces and species on the altar of supposedly sustainable development are over. Looking after the land requires radical paradigm shifts in terms of growth and how we achieve it. Protecting natural areas is not enough on its own. A sort of rewilding of the existing built fabric is also required. Land stewardship accordingly calls for innovative urban regeneration projects that define new forms of hybridisation between city and nature. In effect, the process by which towns and cities are formed must be fully informed by the ecological workings of the territories that host them. It must also meet social expectations in terms of quality of life and surroundings, a quality that is now inextricably bound up with the quality of the landscape.

Engage with everyday landscapes in order to include those who live there in town-planning decisions

Fraught with negative consequences for the landscape, the urbanisation happening today is not solely a reflection of the priorities of local authorities or private businesses involved in urban development. It also owes a great deal to social aspirations about how territories are inhabited. In many respects, these aspirations can appear paradoxical, increasingly seeking contact with a glorified nature yet at the same time contributing to its destruction, through the ways in which they are expressed in urban development, especially the centrifugal kind. In this context, land stewardship unquestionably offers a way to improve residents' awareness of the environmental and ecological issues at stake. And, once again, landscape can be an excellent vehicle for this. The kind of landscapes that are envisaged here, however, are not outstanding, remarkable or even extraordinary, but rather the mundane landscapes that form the backdrop to residents' everyday lives, and indeed define their sensitive relationship with the land. These ordinary, everyday landscapes are, after all, the prism through which residents' attachment to the environment, as perceived and experienced, is determined. It is through them, therefore, that potential levers for mobilising and training citizens to be good stewards of the land can begin to emerge.

On that basis, these ordinary, everyday landscapes should ultimately come to be seen as a spatialised reflection of the willingness to look after nature in general and living things in particular. In a new-style urban planning/design project, that implies that, despite their diversity, all those with a stake in the territory should be able to take into consideration symbolically or physically the different elements that make up local landscapes. Symbolically, that means generating attachment and empathy for these different components. Physically, it means introducing design and management methods

and practices that are more respectful of all types of landscapes among those who have a direct stake in them: regional (and urban) development actors, managers, local residents and others. It also means supporting or encouraging wider social appropriation. For that to happen, a genuine landscape culture needs to be fostered among the general public. And the way to achieve such democratisation is through education. Landscape education thus needs to be available from the earliest age and continue throughout life because, for citizens, studying the landscape is undoubtedly a key to understanding the world they live in and the piece of Earth they call home. At a time when the tendency in urbanism is to seek to include inhabitants in its design methods, landscape would thus appear to be an effective means of achieving this objective, not only revealing what is at stake for local areas caught up in global changes, but also giving them a dynamic vision of themselves. In this respect, the emergence of a civic culture of landscape should help to instil bottom-up urban planning and design approaches that are fully mindful of the imperatives of our time and build on territories' geographical and historical foundations, without getting trapped in rigid and backward-looking considerations about the realities on the ground.

Recognise land and landscape stewardship as a political project

The advent of land stewardship rests on social and political choices that represent a radical departure from the way things are done today. However, is it simply a utopian fantasy? The fact is that this new way of conceiving and approaching urban planning and design does indeed provide tangible and realistic solutions to the issues raised by the environmental emergencies of our time. Better still, it can be the common thread that draws a territorial project together, a sort of road map with which to navigate the uncertainties currently surrounding urban planning and design. With land stewardship, indeed, landscape becomes not only a means to question, or even transcend, traditional relationships with nature, but also the foundation, means and purpose of an urbanism that is in tune with the imperatives of our time. This resolutely political project thus makes landscape the new matrix of the living environment. It also uses it to denote the "liveability" of urban spaces that are increasingly reticular and composite. In a project of this type, indeed, landscape is understood as the spatial expression of more muted nature-culture relationships, or ones where the dualism has been eliminated altogether. In this respect, land stewardship based on a new, landscape-based urbanism calls, here and now, for clear and responsible policy choices. The task of making those choices will fall,

in the first instance, to all the bodies that represent people at every territorial level and, consequently, to the men and women who were democratically elected to bring about much-needed paradigm shifts.

Conclusions

In all European states, the intense urbanisation happening today is the result of the centrifugal forces behind urban sprawl (peri-urbanisation and metropolisation) but also the centripetal forces behind densification. In some areas, it is still linked to burgeoning tourism. Driven by rationales that are increasingly shaped by the private sector, this large-scale urbanisation is invariably closely correlated with the (often brutal) operating methods of contemporary urban planning and design. Their combined effects thus tend to be felt extremely rapidly in landscapes that were formed only very slowly. This change of pace is responsible for shifts in the landscape that are as notable as they are harmful: privatisation, decontextualisation, homogenisation, negation or even destruction of landscapes. These negative dynamics invariably cause severe environmental problems, foremost among them the dramatic erosion of the different forms of urban nature and their biodiversity.

Although they belong to distinct conceptual fields, landscape and ecology have a common rationale that demands, in the current context of environmental emergency, that they be addressed in tandem within new-style urban planning and design practices. Better still, as some proposals have shown, landscape can provide a real link between anthropic and ecological issues. Because it is based on a system of perceptions that are both individual and collective, landscape can be the instrument that individuals, social groups and societies turn to in order to think about environmental needs globally and tackle environmental change locally. Landscape, then, can be an effective means of moving from a development-based mindset to one centred on stewardship of the land. It can also be the common thread in innovative design approaches that transcend scales and actors. As a tool that works from the territorial to the local level, landscape provides a focal point for complementary positions and a proper linkage between urban planning and design. For all these reasons, it is eminently capable of being harnessed as the foundation, means and purpose of new urban planning and design practices. These in turn should serve to ensure design and management methods that are more respectful of all types of landscapes, including the most ordinary. They should also provide channels for broad appropriation by all those who have a direct stake in those landscapes: regional (and urban) development actors, managers and above all local residents. Achieving this is a case not simply of fostering a transdisciplinary culture of landscape, but also of spreading that culture among the wider population.

The advent of land stewardship approaches based on a new kind of urbanism thus demands clear and responsible policy choices involving, first and foremost, the states parties to the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe. In matters such as these, after all, the latter has consistently shown its capacity for anticipation and commitment, and its ability to serve both as a role model and a showcase.

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