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Vernacular and Technology. InBetween.

Mihaela Hărmănescu*, Cristina Enache

"Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism, Academiei 18-20 Street, Bucharest, Romania

Abstract

The challenges of 21st century are related to the community's ability to succeed a sustainable management of the landscape's resources, in a world where tradition's nostalgia and the patrimonialization are interpreted and re-used in relation with globalization and consuming. In a time of dramatic changes on the social scale and technology, sustainability means more than preserving traditions in places where the vernacular knowledge are important resources to recovery the local identity. It requires a reformulation of their use, a suitable dynamic adaptation of the contemporary world, merging with the technology integration into the landscape. This paper proposes introspection on the integration of indigenous values identified in the current technology development through the transfer of information on landscape. A smart landscape is an adaptable landscape. Adaptability is derived from the proposed uses of technologies in a sustainable vision, in a balanced use of local resources and evolutionary protection of the heritage. The resource, local heritage and technology need to be reconsidered in a relationship with a return to the primary motivation - their coexistence in the landscape, which can be seen as information's primary database that spawned the first technological elements - clay, metal tools and first building blocks. In a cyclical evolution, the technology returns in the 21st century landscape in the form of information and its impact and consequences oscillates between transformation and conservation nostalgia. In this context the dialogue between vernacular and technology gains materiality, redefining old taboo-dispute between tradition and contemporaneousness. The paper aims towards to highlighting the concept of "vernacular" and "technology" and to underline how can their relation be reinterpreting in a sustainable and resilient vision, in a way that respond to the landscape continuous changes.

* Corresponding author., Tel.: +40213077180.
E-mail address: mihaela.harmanescu@uauim.ro (M. Hărmănescu)*;* cristina.enache@uauim (C. Enache)

1. Introduction

1.1. Vernacular and Technology in Landscape – the importance of the subject in the context of the globalization and environmental issues.

The study aims to analyze the relationship between the tradition and the technological evolution, using the landscape as background – regarded as life framework of the society, as resource for its construction and as future economical development. Identifying the various contexts derives from both features belonging to the natural – relief, climate, geographical area, and also from specific local resources which determine particular approaches and solutions. Being in the theoretical phase, the paper outlines the general framework, delineating the theoretical concepts and preparing the methodological basis for further investigations.

In the European Landscape Convention, one of the four measures which should be undertaken at national level by each country is "the legal recognition of landscape constituting an essential component of the setting for people's lives, reflecting the diversity of their common cultural and natural heritage and as the foundation of their identity" [1]

The sustainability occurs as an important element in the study due to the issues involved – related to the intimate relation with the nature, to the identification in the tradition of several solutions which can be technological developed in a resilient vision, seen in the context of currently existing discussion on international level.

The relation between technology and landscape must be considered bidirectional: technology - landscape. The technology – result of society's evolution, aiming to satisfy its needs and to increase the comfort and the living conditions – changes the landscape. The landscape also often proves to be the necessary framework for the development of certain technological processes; it can determine changes in the technology evolution (the ecology and the environmental economics have determined revising / reducing / elimination of the polluting technology.

The technology is basically a result of the human need for adaptation and surviving; the relation technology – landscape can be seen as an effect of territory dwelling by the society. The first landscape was the untouched nature landscape, where the man had to survive. The first settlements were looking into the nature those elements that provide the necessary of human existence.

The morphology and evolution of the landscape describe the relationship between society and place, the way the man dwells the space. The link between a community and landscape is expressed through individuals' activities and the territorial behavior, in relation with two major issues – firstly, the type of economy and how the natural resources are exploited, and second – the type of the settlement and the manner the houses are build, from which derives both the population structure and the functional and aesthetical features of the buildings – the architectural style. The agrarian and industrial societies gave rise to specific landscapes, seen as a synthesis not only of the social or economic nature of its inhabitants, but also of historical and cultural foundations. Thus, a strong connections was established between the landscape perception and several concepts associated with the idea of place – identity, vernacular or local character.

1.2. Methodology

The subject of this research starts from several issues of the landscape sustainability – understanding the landscape as human's life framework, as natural and cultural resource.

The present paper tries to delineate the study area and the methodological approach. The objectives of the future research aim to outline a continuous study structure in order to define the relationship between vernacular and technology, in the large context of the landscape sustainability:

- Defining the concepts - "vernacular", "technology", "tradition" – in a theoretical approach
- Identifying the characteristics and particularities of different contexts – depending on natural conditions (relief, climate, geographical area)
- Outlining the general / particular situations – in relation with the history of the society and with the local cultural landscape
- Identifying the main issues on various scales – from global to local, aiming to generate general and particular solutions, using old and new technologies