ICOA1714: Cultural landscape diaspora and multicultural community building

Subtheme 02: The Role of Cultural Heritage in Building Peace and Reconciliation

Session 1: Heritage as Peace Builder, Tying and Benefitting Community
Location: Silver Oak Hall 1, India Habitat Centre
Time: December 13, 2017, 12:15 – 12:30

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Abstract: Under cultural globalization, cultural pluralism prevails in post-industrial cities worldwide. Cultural pluralism has brought about diasporic cultural landscapes which are distinct from conventional cultural landscapes defined by UNESCO. Based on a literature review and visual observations of diasporic cultural landscapes in Italy and Germany, this research seeks to explore the roles that diasporic cultural landscapes play in a multicultural society. To begin with, it tentatively extends the connotation of cultural landscapes by perceiving them under the macro social environment with a perspective of cultural pluralism. Then, the research analyzes the driving forces of cultural landscape diaspora, focusing on endogenous and exogenous forces. Finally, it looks into the roles of diasporic cultural landscapes in multicultural community building. It is found that diasporic cultural landscapes play an important role in building up a multicultural community characterized by harmonious coexistence in terms of social relationship consolidation, cultural experience diversification and place-making, as well as landscape quality upgrading and generation of positive externalities that are shared among all cultural groups.

Key words: *cultural pluralism, ccontemporary ccultural landscapes, cultural landscape diaspora, diasporic cultural landscapes, multicultural community building*

Cultural Pluralism and Contemporary Cultural Landscapes

John Tomlinson (2013) maintains that human society worldwide is going through cultural globalization, simply because of a unity of culture and globalization: globalization is central to modern culture, and cultural practices are central to globalization. The most direct consequence of cultural globalization is that it brings about cultural pluralism[1]. Cultural pluralism seemingly appears in trifold facets that are spatial, temporal and social. Spatially, it affects and is affected by interaction and integration between local cultures and global cultures. Temporally, cultural pluralism sees the transition, often troubled, from traditional cultures to modern cultures. As for its social facet, cultural pluralism brings about multicultural coexistence as urban spaces are increasingly shared and reshaped by culturally diverse communities especially in post-industrial cities.

Indeed, under cultural pluralism, urban landscapes, as a type of cultural landscape, are undergoing deep transformations. Cultural diversity, multi-layered human experiences and value systems, and increasing intercultural connectivity are three pronounced attributes of today's urban cultural landscapes. To have a closer look at contemporary cultural landscapes in cities, especially their being as transformative, requires a rethinking on cultural landscapes. According to UNESCO (2016), cultural landscapes represent the «combined works of nature and of man (...). They are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal[2]. UNESCO identifies three types of cultural landscapes, namely, landscape designed and created intentionally by man, organically evolved landscape (either relic or continuing), and associative cultural landscape. Both UNESCO's definition and classification of cultural landscapes are grounded on a focus on an essential human-nature interconnectivityby which human beings interact with natural environment. Throughout this dynamic process wherein cultural landscapes are formed, human beings have shaped the natural environment, and meanwhile the latter has also impacted considerably the formation of the former's value systems and cultural mindset. However, given the emergingcultural pluralism in post-industrial cities under the influence of cultural globalization, which tends to enrichcontemporary urban landscapes with diasporic cultural landscapes, it is therefore necessary to expand the conceptof «cultural landscape». The enlarged concept will highlight the «interactions between human beings and their environment»[3]. Here, human environment can refer to any of the social, economic and cultural dynamics embedded in a multicultural society that transform contemporary urban landscapes. Consequently, the spatial setting of cultural landscapes are no longer confined to natural environment. In this sense, diasporic cultural landscapes are contemporary cultural landscapes because they are more a result of interaction between the diasporic community and the multicultural society (macro social environment) as a whole.

Cultural Landscape Diaspora

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[1] (Ou 2012).
[2] (UNESCO 2016).
[3] (Liu 2013: 230).

Currently, there is a limited literature on cultural landscape diaspora, which is often addressed as part of discussions on immigration-related studies[4]. In contemporary times, diasporic cultural landscapes are formed following cultural landscape diaspora, a by-product of migration that brings about cultural diffusion. diasporic cultural landscapes are emerging also because that, «International migrations amplify cultural diversity and trigger or accelerate cultural change in societies involved[5].» With a broader perception of cultural landscapes as both a physical construct and associative construct, Ou (2016) defines Chinese cultural landscapes diaspora as an on-going historical and contemporary phenomenon and a dynamic process where Chinese culture landscapes in artistic, socio-cultural and architectural forms diffuse and develop abroad, following increasing intercultural communications and exchanges between China and the rest of the world. This research adopts a similar definition when referring to cultural landscape diaspora. Such a definition highlights the intercultural interactions between culturally diverse communities in triggering cultural landscape diaspora and the complex forms that it can take. As a concept, cultural landscape diaspora reveals «migrants' textual practices[6] through a discursive terrain that highlights complex migration and integration dynamics through migrants' everyday practices of 'home' and 'belonging'[7]». The diasporic community's everyday practices of identity and values maintain and diffuse diasporic culture, which has «a direct and enduring impact on the landscapes, and because landscapes are culture before they are nature»[8]. For example, African diaspora has shaped Brazil's biological and cultural landscapes where they settled to meet their cultural and spiritual needs[9]. In investigating the religious spatiality of Afro-Christian diasporas, David Garbin notes that migrants and ethnic minorities are forming «spaces of alterity, often at the 'margin' of the urban experience»[10]. This kind of transformative spatial appropriation, such as converting anonymous warehouses into places of worship, has led to regeneration and re-enchantment of the urban landscape.

Cultural landscape diaspora occurs under two driving forces that are either endogenous or exogenous. In the first case, it is the minority groups that are the sole player in the formation of the diasporic landscape. They foster the diasporic landscape to satisfy their need for maintaining their cultural identity and ties with their homeland and realizing «social construction of imaginery borders/boundaries between various immigrant communities»[11]. A typical example is the *Tempio Buddista Napoli* (Naples Buddhist *Vihara*) (Fig. 1), the biggest *vihara* in Europe. As a diasporic landscape, it was nothing easy to build it. The Sri Lankan community raised money and collaborated on its construction. Finally, the community converted an abandoned warehouse into this spiritual site for collective activities after 18 years of continuous construction that completed in 2015.

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[4](Falola 2013; Liu 2013; Carney and Voeks 2003).
[5] (Romaniszyn 2004: 141).
[6]Grounded in cultural geography, Binaisa defines «texts» as,«(...) the narratives in life histories; they are migrants' practices within and outside transnational social fields. Texts can be the writtenword, performative, domesticated and built environment.» (2013: 557). All in all, «Texts can range from the material to the symbolic. (*ibid*.)»
[7] (Binaisa 2013: 553).
[8] (Romaniszyn 2004: 157).
[9] (Carney and Voeks 2003).
[10](Garbin 2013: 692).
[11] (Mehta 2004: 33-34).

Fig.1– Sri Lakan community preparing for the celebration of Buddhist festival «Katina Mahotsawaya». © Ou Yapeng (2015)

In the second case, cultural landscape diaspora occurs as a response to the host community's desire of cultural exchange. Since it is initiated from the host community which actually commissioned the creation of a diasporic landscape, this type of cultural landscape diaspora is exogenous. Since the 1960s, there has been a trend wherein classical landscape gardens have been used as a medium to promote mutual understanding and cultural communication between the East and the West. This trend has led to the diaspora of Chinese, Japanese and Korean classical gardens in Europe and North America. Just to name a few, the *Frühlingsblumengarten* (Spring Flower Garden) (Fig. 2) and *Koreanischer Garten* (Korean Garden) (Fig. 3) in Frankfurt, Germany, and the *Jardin Japonais* (Japanese Garden) (Fig. 4) in Nantes, France were built. These «alien» yet highly authentic landscape gardens often are well fitted into their immediate setting, therefore forming together with the original landscape new cultural landscapes that are somehow «betwixt and between». Among these gardens, the *Frühlingsblumengarten*is very representative. Its design and construction strictly complied with the principles and norms of classical Chinese gardens, and painstakingly took into account the existing landscape elements and attributes, and addressed the modern need of accessibility of the elderly and the disabled. Indeed, the biggest challenge was how to introduce the Chinese garden while maintaining the overall landscape harmony within the historic *Bethmannpark* (Bethmann Park)[12].

Fig. 2– Frühlings blumengarten in Bethmannpark, Frankfurt.
Frankfurt.
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Fig.3– Koreanischer Garten Grüneburgpark,

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[12](Stadt Frankfurt 1989).

Fig.4– Jardin Japonais on Île de Versailles, Nantes.
the
© Ou Yapeng (2012) Frühlings blumengarten, Frankfurt.
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Fig. 5– Newlyweds taking their wedding photos in

Multicultural Community Building

Scott Peck remarks that, «In and through community lies the salvation of the world»[13], and he sees global community as the only way to achieve international peace. In fact, under cultural pluralism, community is an increasing issue because it brings about global spatial proximity which «stretches» social relations[14]. The «stretching» of social relations can end up either in dialogue or conflict.So now the question is, how can a multicultural community characterized by harmonious coexistence be constructed? In the first place, the process of community development is driven by communication and fueled by diversity[15].A benign multicultural community is envisioned by Gudykunst and Kim as «consists of diverse individuals who are honest and open with each other, trust each other, engage in ethical behavior, and are committed to living together. Members of a community are civil to each other, they value diversity, and at the same time, they search for the commonalities humans share»[16].Irrespective of time and place, immigrants have employed language, diet and religion to help construct their diasporic homes[17]. With cultural landscape diaspora, they have still another source at their disposal for helping build up a multicultural community: diasporic cultural landscapes.

Diasporic cultural landscapes contribute to multicultural community building in three ways. First, given that modern society is characterized by a rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependences[18], diasporic cultural landscapes can consolidate social relationships by providing a vital public space where intercultural communication and interaction among different cultural groups take place. At the *Tempio Buddista Napoli*, Sri Lankan immigrants perform their everyday rituals and other cultural activities, and socialize with each other to continue their community life. The temple is open not only to Sri Lankan people, but also local residents from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Every Tuesday from 8 pm to 9 pm is scheduled for an open meditation class open to all. Second, diasporic cultural landscapes, as an «exotic» setting, can diversify and enrich cultural experiences of culturally diverse groups. This plays an important role in the place-making of the locality and improvement of local communities' quality of life. Different cultural groups will carry out different cultural activities, according to their specific cultural needs (Fig. 5). For examples, the *Frühlingsblumengarten* now is quite a hot destination where local residents spend their leisure time, meditate, meet with friends and take their wedding photos, school teachers offer pedagogic visits to school children, artists undertake artistic creation, etc. Third, diasporic cultural landscapes, especially

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[13](Peck 1998: 17).
[14] (Tomlinson 2013).
[15](Ou 2012).
[16](Gudykunst and Kim, 2007: 403).
[17] (Kershen 2004).
[18] (Tomlinson 2013).

when well integrated into the original landscape, can not only create a new urban landscape that is harmonious and humane, but also upgrading the overall landscape quality. This often times generates positive externalities that can be shared by the multicultural communities, such as improved amenities, livable environment, improved subjective well-being, etc. In addition, when endogenous cultural landscape diaspora occurs in particular, the guest community can play a significant role in regenerating unused urban spaces, as the construction of the *Tempio Buddista Napoli* has illustrated.

Conclusion

With the deepening of cultural globalization, cultural pluralism prevails in post-industrial cities worldwide. Cultural pluralism has brought about diasporic cultural landscapes which are distinct from conventional cultural landscapes defined by UNESCO, since they are a result of interaction between the diasporic community and the multicultural society (macro social environment) as a whole. Diasporic cultural landscapes result from cultural landscape diaspora, which occurs under two driving forces that are either endogenous or exogenous. In the first case, it is the minority groups that are the sole player in the formation of the diasporic landscape. In the second case, cultural landscape diaspora occurs as a response to the host community's desire of cultural exchange. Diasporic cultural landscapes contribute to the multicultural community building in three ways. First, diasporic cultural landscapes can consolidate social relationships by providing a vital public space where intercultural communication and interaction among different cultural groups take place. Second, diasporic cultural landscapes can diversify and enrich cultural experiences of culturally diverse groups within a certain multicultural society. This plays an important role in the place-making of the locality and improvement of local communities' quality of life. Third, diasporic cultural landscapes, especially when well integrated into the original landscape, can not only create a new urban landscape that is harmonious and humane, but also upgrading the overall landscape quality while generating positive externalities. Future research on diasporic cultural landscapes is expected to focus on their role in regenerating urban spaces. Besides, different cultural groups' perception/utilization of diasporic cultural landscapes in relation to the formation of diasporic identity also makes an interesting topic.

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List of Figures

ICOA1714: DES CONFLITS SOCIÉTAUX À L'UNIFICATION SOCIALE: LES PAYSAGES URBAINS HISTORIQUES COMME ESPACES DE DIALOGUE DANSUNE SOCIÉTÉ ÉCLATÉE

Sous-thème 02: Le rôle du patrimoine culturel dans la construction de la paix et de la réconciliation

Session 1: Le Patrimoine En Tant Que Constructeur De Paix, Communautaire De Types Et De Bénéfices
Lieu: Silver Oak Hall 1, India Habitat Centre
Date et heure: 13 Décembre, 2017, 12:15 – 12:30

Auteur: Ou Yapeng, Marina Fumo

Ou Yapeng est titulaire d'un mastère du programme Erasmus Mundus dans le domaine du management des paysages culturels, qui s'est déroulé en France, en Italie et en Allemagne (2012-2014). Ou a travaillé à temps complet à ICOMOS-Italie de février 2014 à octobre 2015. Il était membre du comité d'organisation italien de la 18ème Assemblée Générale de l'ICOMOS et a collaboré à la publication des actes du symposium scientifique. De novembre 2015 à janvier 2016 il a travaillé comme consultant au centre du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO. Actuellement, il a intégré le programme de doctorat « régénération urbaine et développement économique » (URED) initié par l'Union Européenne. Ses principaux centres de recherche portent sur les paysages culturels, le patrimoine, la conduite de la réhabilitation au niveau local, l'aménité urbaine et la qualité paysagère.

Résumé: La mobilité transnationale rendue plus facile par la globalisation a fait émerger des diasporas culturelles de plus en plusnombreuses qui ne créent pas seulement des opportunités nouvelles pour les sociétés d'accueil, mais font souvent ressortir des conflits sociaux entre les différents groupes culturels. Prenant comme étude de cas la ville de Naples, en Italie, la présente recherche a pour objectif de montrer comment le paysage urbain historique a été mis à contribution pour améliorer la compréhension mutuelle et promouvoir la cohésion sociale tout en réduisant des conflits sociaux sous-jacents.

Pour cela, elle s'intéresse d'abord au rôle du paysage urbain historique napolitain comme espace de dialogue où des valeurs partagées peuvent s'exprimer et interagir. Fondée sur l'analyse de groupes issus de contextes culturels diversifiés, elle montre qu'un processus de dialogue interculturel s'intègre dans leur perception du paysage urbain historique. Ce dialogue interculturel permet à des gens issus de contextes culturels différents de rechercher des racines communes et de comprendre des valeurs communes, ce qui est essentiel à la construction de la cohésion sociale par la réduction des conflits sociétaux. Puis cette recherche, s'appuyant sur les observations des auteurs, analyse la façon de donner pouvoir à des groupes ethniques de pratiquer des rituels et de s'adonner à leur propres activités culturelles, en mettant en lumière la fonction novatrice des espaces publics et du patrimoine bâti pour promouvoir ces expressions culturelles en même temps que le dialogue interculturel. Enfin, prenant en compte le contexte de dispersion des populations, cette contribution propose une approche de la gestion des paysages urbains historiques fondée sur les droits, en particulier en termes d'émancipation culturelle, de diversification des espaces publics et de construction de bâtiments communs multiculturels.

Mots clé: *paysage urbain historique; conflit et dialogue; cohésion sociale; approche fondée sur les droits*