

The CHeriScape project, 2014–2016: key messages from CHeriScape – cultural solutions for cultural problems

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Received 3 October 2019 | Accepted 21 October 2019 | Published 8 May 2020

CHeriScape's background

“CHeriScape”, 2014–2016 (‘Cultural **HERI**tage in Land**SCAPE**’), was a three-year exploration from a (mainly western) European perspective of the cultural, social and environmental policy connections between the concepts and practices of landscape and heritage¹. One of ten projects funded under the transnational pilot call of the Joint Programming Initiative on *Cultural Heritage: A Challenge for Europe* (JPI-CH)^{2,3,4}, and coordinated by Newcastle University’s McCord Centre for Landscape, it acted through a series of five conferences organised by seven partners in five countries. Some of the partners were based in universities⁵, others in national research and heritage management agencies⁶.

The CHeriScape network was landscape-focused but designed to use dialogues between researchers and practitioners to explore the advantages and benefits of bringing together the two ideas of heritage and landscape and to identify new approaches to heritage using modern integrative and multi-disciplinary concepts of landscape. The project design argued that an integration of heritage and landscape offers new and more constructive ways to benefit from their individual social, economic and environmental values. To this end, the project adopted a strong societal and people-centred approach to decision making and planning, framing its ideas within the context of the European Landscape Convention (2000) (and therefore also the HUL recommendation from UNESCO), the Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage to

Society (2005), and the ESF/COST Science Policy Briefing ‘Landscape in a Changing World’⁷.

CHeriScape also looked beyond conventional approaches to landscape and heritage policy, and in three main ways. Beyond the common labels of ‘landscape heritage’ and ‘heritage landscapes’ (which downgrade landscape to be a subset of heritage, thus shorn of its transformative and integrative powers), CHeriScape saw a more nuanced combination of the two concepts which can provide a cultural counterweight to the dominance in most policy areas of economic and eco-environmental ideas, for example culturally-caused problems and challenges such as environmental degradation, demographic pressures, social change. Beyond the heritage simplicities of protection or reuse, CHeriScape saw ways in which the process and practice of heritage, through the enlarging lens and extended reach of landscape, could help society to meet bigger global challenges than its own self-preservation. Beyond, finally, current and emerging methods and approaches, CHeriScape employed innovative methods, using its conferences as action research, listening to others and gathering data, and where possible looking beyond experts towards a wider participation.

Framing CHeriScape

Both Heritage and Landscape in their different ways reflect people’s history, identity, memories, lifestyles and

aspirations. They are significant ways in which people connect with their environment and interact socially and intellectually, at local and universal, personal and collective scales. But they are intricately and reciprocally inter-linked: heritage contributes to people's perceptions of landscape, and landscape contextualises heritage to make it better understood, used and connected to modern life.

Heritage and landscape are two sides of a coin. Using them together increases their social, economic and environmental power and impact. For a world facing anthropocentric environmental degradation, strong demographic pressure and major social and political changes, the currently-dominant policies based on economic market forces or eco-environmental solutions are insufficient on their own. To complement and sometimes counterweight them requires a strong cultural and societal dimension in decision making and planning. The ideas discussed at the CHeriScape conferences promote such a culturally-sensitive, people-centred approach: in other words, a CHeriScape approach offers cultural solutions to culturally-created problems.

The project (and the much wider network created through the five conferences) was guided by four high level objectives, framed as principles. The first was the ambition to promote a culturally-focussed, socially-oriented and people-centred approach to the instrumentalisation of landscape and heritage in policy, to be achieved by an alliance between the broad and interdisciplinary interpretation of 'landscape' found in the European Landscape Convention and modern ideas about heritage (found in the Faro Convention, the critical heritage trend, and the ELC-influenced HUL recommendation). This 'landscape approach'⁸, which has gained ground in several quarters over the past decade or two, is an integrative policy tool for addressing challenges in more ambitious ways than heritage conservation or landscape protection can. The second objective was to seek a common ground, using landscape's role as an interdisciplinary meeting point and as an arena (through government and civic society) for discussion, constructive contestation and negotiation. In historical, pre-modern, usage of the term landscape (but also following both the ELC and the ESF/COST science briefing '*Landscape in a Changing World*'), landscape is based on community, custom and shared access: literally, it was a commons, the shared space within which communities and society operate.

Simultaneously, as our third objective, CHeriScape kept in mind a further nexus, that of heritage/landscape/nature. Heritage perspectives on landscape and nature may privilege time depth, human agency and social value, but this ought not to marginalise nature, but rather place 'nature' within its current anthropocentric context and see the non-human and the human worlds as a single whole. Finally, CHeriScape saw heritage and landscape as convergent world views, transversal and simultaneous realities that can form a single way of seeing and acting to help people and society transition from past to future. Convergence can make it seem as if the

words are simply different terms for the same idea, and other terms – ecosystems services, or environmental humanities, or nature-based solutions, for example – can be similarly integrative, of course: a broader integration remains a future goal.

Doing CHeriScape – methods

The CHeriScape team and network embraced a wide range of researchers, practitioners and policymakers in heritage and landscape and in other fields too, such as ecology and planning, and from many disciplinary backgrounds. These people were brought together through a coordinated sequence of five conferences held in our five partner countries between July 2014 and June 2016.

These conferences were at the heart of the project, its motor, so to speak. They were designed to be both research-focused and practice-focused, looking beyond the state of the art within five main topics, and aiming to identify the social and environmental benefits that could spring from the synergy of the landscape/heritage nexus. At these meetings, a wide diversity of heritage and landscape questions were debated, fuelled by a wealth of local and specialist examples provided through lectures and poster displays. Less than half the time at these conferences required our participants to be in the passive 'listening' mode that is common to many conferences; there were some traditional presentations from invited speakers but the majority of conference time was dedicated to discussions and debates in a variety of active, small scale (to give everyone a voice and to hear from the widest possible range of experience) formats. The CHeriScape conferences therefore were designed not to be presentations of the project team's ideas or research, but as an open and energetic sharing of ideas, experience and knowledges. In a sense, our conferences modelled the role of landscape as a common forum for discussion and decision.

Each conference explored a different aspect of the importance to society of 'landscape as heritage':

1. Landscape as Heritage in Policy (in Ghent, Belgium, 1–2 July 2014)
2. Landscape as Heritage in Science (Amersfoort, The Netherlands, 5–6 November 2014)
3. Landscape as Community (Oslo, Norway, 19–20th May 2015)
4. Facing the Challenges of Global Change through Landscape (Madrid, Spain, 23–25 Sept 2015)
5. Landscape in Imagination and the Virtual Future (in Newcastle, UK, 14–16 June 2016)

In addition, to broaden even further the range of voices and ideas we heard, we organised sessions as part of conferences organised in other countries by other groups. These were in Finland (the closing conference of the COST IS 1007 Action, Culture in Sustainability,

Helsinki, May 2015)⁹; Italy (3rd Landscape Archaeology Conference, Rome, September 2014)¹⁰, Sweden (4th Landscape Archaeology Conference, Uppsala, August 2016)¹¹ and Austria (27th PECSRL conference, Innsbruck, September 2016)¹².

The conferences each had a participation of between 75 and 100 colleagues, taken from the main disciplines working with heritage and landscape policy and research, but also including artists, politicians, and journalists, for example. There was good continuity in participation from conference to conference, and in all, almost 300 participants came to our five conferences, from 28 countries. A further 100 colleagues attended the extra sessions we organised at other landscape conferences.

After each conference, the general flavour and main results of the discussions were summarised in three short 'Briefing Notes' to be handed out at the next conference: on the conference in general and on science and policy. All 15 leaflets are available on the project webpage. Towards the end of the 3-year span of the project an overarching conclusions document was produced, 'Key Messages'. This was first outlined at a brainstorming meeting of our core project team held in Treviso (Italy), courtesy of the *Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche*. It was finally tested and refined at two extra CHeriScape meetings: a closing colloquium in Limburg, Belgium at the conference centre of the castle of Alden Biesen (8–9 November 2016) to which c25 members of the project's wider network were invited, people who had already substantially contributed to our work by attending our conferences; and a small consultation meeting with European Commission / JPI-CH officials was held in the FWO offices in Brussels (10 November 2016). The final version of these conclusions – 'Key Messages from CHeriScape', *Cultural Solutions for Cultural Problems* – is available on the project webpage, and a presentation to the JPI-CH 'Project Parade' of February 2017 is available on the JPI Cultural Heritage webpage¹³.

CHeriScape assumptions

During the conferences, it became obvious listening to colleagues from many different academic and action communities with diverse cultural, disciplinary, national and historical backgrounds that ideas taken for granted in one group sometimes prompted lively debate or were new or controversial to others. Not everyone hears the same things in the word landscape, and not everyone is completely familiar with the idea that landscape and heritage are 'everywhere' (everyday as well as special areas), contain 'everything' (e.g. ever-widening definitions of heritage) or derive from 'every-when' (all of human history, its long duration). The *Key Messages* summary therefore listed four of CHeriScape's main underpinning ideas, to help readers position themselves.

The first, in brief, is that landscape is *essentially cultural*, only existing when perceived by people, and fundamentally cultural in the widest anthropological sense. This sense of landscape's cultural foundation connects strongly with notion of the Anthropocene and its challenges and leads to the fundamental suggestion that culturally-focussed responses are as necessary as 'nature-based solutions'. Second, even though dealing with landscape as heritage, the ethos of CHeriScape is to be *future-oriented*. This reflects the continual remaking that characterises landscape, but it also coincides with the turn that Heritage (following the Faro Convention, and through the critical heritage movement) has taken in recent decades to become increasingly a socially-embedded process not a mere collection of objects. CHeriScape also embraced the *plurality and complexity* that resides inherently and unavoidably within landscape and heritage. Both are frequently contested, and their intrinsic complexity is an unavoidable and valuable attribute which affords the heritage / landscape nexus its inspiration, richness and power. Everything the CHeriScape team heard in its conferences confirmed the value of a multiplicity of views. But it is clear that research, policy and practice are frequently pulled towards over-simplification, seeking an often-hollow consensus, not least because established ideas, *old paradigms*, can sometimes stand in the way of new policies. The reductionist concept of a singular scale for landscape - 'the landscape scale' - still survives in parts of academia and policy, and undermines one of the main strengths of the landscape approach, its scalability. Another example is the preservationist instinct that remains the default response to threats to heritage and landscape; as long as this takes precedence it is difficult for society to realise the extent to which dynamism, change of all types, is an essential attribute of landscape, without which there is less room for the successful co-construction of future landscapes.

CHeriScape Challenges

The debates at the CHeriScape conferences and other meetings confirmed the view that a CHeriScape way of seeing and acting through heritage-as-landscape could reach out towards a form of cultural sustainability that could help society address even the biggest global challenges such as climate change, demographic change, environmental degradation, food and water security, social cohesion and political exclusion, migration and mobility. All these are land-based and spatial issues involving people's lives and can therefore be addressed through the idea of landscape, while all involve the transition between past and future that can be addressed through heritage. All are touched by questions of identity and memory. In short, all are culturally-caused problems for which solutions should be sought in cultural, social and political spheres.

Analysis of the CHeriScape debates, however, identified several types of operational and/or behavioural obstacles or challenges that need to be faced before heritage and landscape can be used ambitiously for goals beyond the traditional ones of safeguarding. Common to all of the challenges is the need for increased communication between societal interests. Time and again in the CHeriScape conferences, discussion returned willy-nilly to the vexed question of how to increase public participation. These obstacles are highly summarised below, and longer versions can be found in *Key Messages*.

Structural challenges, primarily about governance, headed the list. The structures and institutions that control how decision-taking, and even how problems are defined, do not encourage integrated or holistic thinking. At local scales people frequently, even unthinkingly, act holistically, in an automatic adoption of a landscape approach, but regional, national and European government rarely do the same when addressing global challenges. When they do, they focus on ecological, environmental and narrow economic priorities, instead of on the culturally-based solutions that bring people together. From the CHeriScape debates came the obvious but still rarely seen suggestions for change: improved landscape-aligned transversal and integrative governmental structures, increased awareness and use by decision makers of knowledge of the cultural, anthropocentric factors that underlie global challenges, government measures to correct the free market's inability to manage heritage or landscape values or to use them to address broad challenge.

The question of landscape rights, following the lead of the European Landscape Convention, came second in the CHeriScape list. Although land is legally owned by individuals, corporations or the state, it is also shared and therefore 'owned' in a softer sense by all those who perceive, use or remember it. Through the concept of universal commons landscape becomes a way to materialise democratic rights. The tensions between the rights and responsibilities of landowners and of public and private stakeholders can perhaps be balanced by collaborative partnerships and mutual respect within a landscape framework.

A landscape approach may be able to offer an equitable framework for societal balancing acts but there is a democratic challenge in how to achieve greater participation. Shared responsibilities and rights were historically a natural, customary part of local landscape use, but larger-scale modern societies need written process, agreements and sometimes law. Community management of landscape (just as private landownership does) requires a broader democratic and strategic context for decisions and actions. Local people may be central to managing landscape (even if under alternative names such as 'place' or 'neighbourhood'), but some important stakeholders and interested communities (such as communities of interest, heritage communities, scientific communities) are not local, and in any case local opinions and aspirations usually need wider contextualisation¹⁴.

Ensuring a more sophisticated public awareness and understanding of landscape and heritage is highly relevant to democratic participation, so sharing and learning became an important issue in the CHeriScape discussions. Public and 'academic' ideas about landscape and heritage are poorly aligned. Academic 'complications' need to be made more accessible to civil society and experts in other fields, including politicians and planners, while experts could learn to comprehend local 'understandings' of landscape, to see how landscapes are 'lived', and to benefit from the wealth of practical expertise about their landscapes that local people may still hold. CHeriScape concluded that what is required is 'landscape-literacy', built from school onwards by learning about and through landscape – another version of the landscape approach.

Making (more) connections is also important. Landscape studies is one of the most interdisciplinary and action-oriented of scientific fields, hence the increasing acceptance in many fields of the value of taking a landscape approach. Nevertheless, the CHeriScape conferences showed that the integrative and analytical potential of landscape is not being realised, largely because of poor connection between action and practice, disciplinary fragmentation and lack of alignment with decision making at all scales, but especially in relation to global challenges and at national scale (local connections and solutions are the easy ones to achieve).

CHeriScape concluding ... and continuing

The CHeriScape challenges are difficult to separate because they are closely inter-connected and co-dependent. Each challenge might appear to be the responsibility of a specific group of people, but in the CHeriScape approach collaboration with other groups is always essential, whether those groups are the public, politicians, planners or other practitioners, landowners or researchers.

Our conferences collected a wealth of exemplars for how to put CHeriScape ideas into practice. Most have ideals of co-construction / co-production at their heart. They include a wide range of educational initiatives at all ages, but predominantly in school, the power of good examples, storytelling as a powerful method of communication, stronger understanding of the social and cultural processes within landscape, appreciation of the *longue durée* and of the legibility of the past within the present, landscape creative engagement and performance to enhance participation, dialogue to drive inter- and trans-disciplinary research and action, new communication technologies (currently the power of social media) and a strong role for communication specialists, and wider recognition of the value of future landscape change as well as preservation. These methods however, like much on-the-ground landscape and heritage man-

agement, tend to be most-used at small-scale site level. They need to be scaled-up to regional or national level.

In conclusion (at present), the three-year long interdisciplinary conversation facilitated by the 2014–16 JPI-CH project underlined the benefits of bringing heritage and landscape together. Heritage and Landscape is a golden combination to be cherished for the sound future of Europe's cultural identity. It can also help ensure a sound socio-environmental future. Because it is founded on socially and culturally embedded understandings of the challenges facing society, it offers cultural solutions to cultural problems.

The approach outlined in 'Key Messages' offers at least one way to empower and encourage others to look in

new ways at heritage and landscape. Landscape in particular (but heritage also, especially in conjunction with landscape) offers collaboration and co-operation but also constructive conflict and innovative, creative consensus. There is a need to overcome apathy, and landscape (because it is personal) might stoke interest and activism. Landscape as commons, in its earlier substantive significance of landscape as community-dwelling and sharing¹⁵ has a great potential in 21st century Europe: one possible insight from CHERiScape is that landscape is almost the only thing in Europe's diverse, plural societies divided by ideology, politics, class, faith, race and self-identity that everyone must actually share.

Published and accessible outputs from CHERiScape

The CHERiScape webpage: <https://cheriscape.eu>

Briefing Notes ('Conference', 'Policy' and 'Science') from each of the CHERiScape conferences I – V; <https://cheriscape.eu/conferences/>
Final presentation of CHERiScape project to the JPI – Cultural Heritage Funded Research Projects Parade, Brussels, 20–21 February 2017. http://jpi-ch.eu/2017/02/joint-programming-initiative-on-cultural-heritage-workshop-funded-research-projects-parade_results/-click%20%E2%80%98cluster%20%E2%80%99

The constructive interaction of landscape and heritage (Fairclough, G., Dabaut, N. and Van Eetvelde, V. 2015), published in Di Stefano, M (Ed) 2015, *ICOMOS 18 Florence Symposium, Heritage and Landscape as Human Values*, Conference Proceedings (Di Stefano, M and Settis, S. (Eds) 2, Theme 2 Landscape as Cultural Heritage), ICOMOS Italia / Edizione Scientifiche Italiane s.p.a., 24 7–50.

Landscape and Heritage in the Cultural Construction of Everyday Life. (Fairclough, G with Dabaut, N., Reher, G. Van Eetvelde, V. (2016); (Summary of a CHERiScape-organised session at the COST IS 1007

closing conference, Culture(s) in Sustainable Futures: theories, policies, practices, Helsinki 2015.) On-line

Seeing Heritage through the Lens of Landscape – New Approaches in Landscape Archaeology Based on the Fusion of Heritage and Landscape (Introduction by and edited by Fairclough, G., Pedroli, B and Dabaut, N. 2016); In Sjoerd Kluiving et al., 2016 *LAC 2014 proceedings - Multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary research in Landscape Archaeology*; 9pp, oct. 2016. <https://doi.org/10.5463/lac.2014.64>

Essentially Cultural: Perspectives on Landscape from Europe (Fairclough, G. 2017). *Landscape Journal*, (CELA; University of Wisconsin) 2017, 35 (2): 14 9–166.

Landscape and Heritage: Ideas from Europe for culturally-based solutions in rural environments, (Fairclough, G. 2018), *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, online 11 June 2018.

In preparation: The role and values of immaterial heritage in transhumance landscapes (Bele, Simon, Orejas and Sarlov-Herlin).

In press: Educational Strategies in Cultural landscapes: are we complying with the Faro Convention? (Reher et al)

Endnotes

- 1 CHERiScape webpage is here: www.cheriscape.eu.
- 2 The JPI web page is here: <http://jpi-ch.eu/>.
- 3 Our JPI-CH Funding Bodies were: AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK); FWO (Flanders Research Foundation, Belgium); MINECO (*Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad*, Spain); NOW (Dutch Organisation for Scientific Research – Council for the Humanities Foundation, NL); RCN (Research Council of Norway).
- 4 Additional funding and sponsorship also came from other bodies, notably the Directorate for Cultural heritage (RAA) of Norway and the Netherlands (RCE), Newcastle University, Alden Biesen Kasteel (Belgium) and the *Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche* (Treviso, Italy).
- 5 Newcastle University, UK; Ghent University, Belgium; Wageningen University, The Netherlands.
- 6 *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas*, Spain; *Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research* (NIKU) and *Bioforsk* [now *Norwegian Institute for Bioeconomy Research* (NIBIO)], Norway; *Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed*, The Netherlands).
- 7 Council of Europe. 2000. *European Landscape Convention, European Treaty Series, no.176*, (Florence Convention). Strasbourg: Council of Europe.; Council of Europe. 2005. *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*, European Treaty Series 199 (Faro Convention), Strasbourg: Council of Europe.; Council of Europe. 2009. *Heritage and Beyond*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe. <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/identities/> (5 October 2015); UNESCO 2013. *New Life for Historic Cities: The historic urban landscape approach explained*, UNESCO, Paris. whc.unesco.org/document/123441 (accessed 30 May 2017).; ESF/COST (2010) *Landscape in a Changing World – Bridging Divides, Integrating Disciplines, Serving Society*, Science Policy Briefing 41, European Science Foundation and COST, Strasbourg/Brussels. www.esf.org/publications/science-policy-briefings.html (accessed 4 October 2017).

- 8 Shuttleworth, S. 2018. Editorial annex: key findings and recommendations from the HERCULES research project, and the need for a landscape approach to environmental governance, *Landscape Research*, 42(8), 819–830.; Plieninger, T., T. Kizos, C. Bieling, L. Le Dû-Blayo, M.-A. Budniok, M. Bürgi, C. L. Crumley, G. et al. 2015. Exploring ecosystem-change and society through a landscape lens: recent progress in European landscape research. *Ecology and Society* 20(2): 5., <http://dx.doi.org/10.5751/ES-07443-200205>.
- 9 <https://congress.cc.jyu.fi/helsinki2015/schedule/proceed.html>.
- 10 Papers published here: <http://lac2014proceedings.nl/>.
- 11 https://www.arkeologi.uu.se/Seminarier/konferenser-och-workshops/tidigare-konferenser/lac_2016_se/sessioner/
- 12 <http://www.pecsr12016.com/index.php/sessions/19-contributions/55-s11.html>.
- 13 http://jpi-ch.eu/2017/02/joint-programming-initiative-on-cultural-heritage-workshop-funded-research-projects-parade_results/ - click on 'cluster C'.
- 14 Nor is democracy straightforward or ever a finished project: the CHeriScape project ended in the year of the UK's EU Referendum (the week after CHeriScape's 5th conference in the UK) and of the election of President Trump (during the project's Alden Biesen meeting), causing some reappraisals.
- 15 For example: Olwig, K. R. 1996. Recovering the Substantive Nature of Landscape. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 86–4, 630–53; Olwig, K. R. 2007. The practice of landscape 'conventions' and the just landscape: The case of the European Landscape Convention, *Landscape Research*, 32(5), 579–594.; Mitchell, D. 2003. Cultural landscapes: just landscapes or landscapes of justice? *Progress in Human Geography* 27, 6 (787–796).