



Research article

A post geographical vision of emergent micro cultural rural material world

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the emergence of micro-cultural material worlds in marginal rural areas of Spain from the viewpoint of postmodern rural cultural geography. The methodology is qualitative and geo-ethnographic, based on the study of three cases that suggest a renewed relevance of place as cultural capital in the production and consumption pattern of new or renovated rural materialities. The main conclusions suggest that two sides characterized the renovated houses: externally linked with traditional spirit and style of the area and internal with an individual and cosmopolitan design. These represent a new dialectic similarity/difference.

Keywords: rural; materialities; geography; postmaterial; global

1. Introduction

Soja [1] concluded that cities have continuous restructuring and adaptations, with phases of expansion, crisis, and change, in the form of new social mosaics restructured with a spatial specificity as a way of life. Metropolitan areas that grow faster have higher levels of inequality, which is a characteristic that can also be applied to rural areas. Material borders in modern post metropolis suggest the following question: are the old territorial borders valid? The globally restructured metropolitan region emerges within the framework of global geographies and world cultures. However, in the same way, the post metropolis proposes radical changes in urban politics, based on differences, identity and subjectivity. The old binary ways of understanding spatial reality are becoming extinct in the world city.

In this orientation, Harvey [2] indicated the existence of global cosmopolitan cultures, where the post metropolis became a point of connection. However, the culture of the post metropolis is derived from local cultures and is characterized by differences, subjectivity and identity. The old binary categories have been broken down. It is necessary to reformulate the urban and regional agenda in the context of a world city. Harvey [2] called the material insertion of social processes 'the web of life'. Geographic developments affected different social groups differently in an open and dynamic system with new appearances and exotic differences.

In the cycle of production and construction, new cultural politics have emerged with positive and negative images and narratives. Mainly, the construction of alternative memories, romantic utopias, and politics of place framing in connection with memories and histories of the past all acquire value. Ultimately, recovery traditions and a cultural revitalization in a balanced approach engage with the simultaneous social construction of both the collective memories and the future visions of place. Precarity is a component of contemporary structures of feeling. Geographies of precarity and insecurities are not firmly placed, while the topographies of living 'on edge' promote a precarious life [3]. There are medium scales that are a community-based regionalism that translates into spatializations [4]. Space matters and confronts the spatial turn in the face of social processes in a new socio-spatial dialectic.

Postmodern cultural geography and the cultural turn in rural geography comprise the adequate context for new materialities as a way of research. Place making is a central and permanent concern in rural transitions with bundles of space-time trajectories [5]. Collective memories and the role of the past in the place framing are determinant in the rural futures. This argument has relevant components in the rural post geography [6].

In the context of a progressive luxury consumption and the rise of global capitalism, Pomeranz [7] suggested other Europe's, other stories, building a more inclusive European story of with a modern core and periphery, and new surprising resemblances. The object of this paper is to analyze an emerging micro-cultural world from a post-geographical vision, based on the study of the process of renovation of three rural houses in central Spain. In short, the framing of this input aims to contribute to how we consider material culture in rural areas, with special attention to the gaps of rural culture in remote areas rather than to the focus on the urban area at the start in relation to relevant cultural theorists in human geography.

2. Built environment: the new role of quality (ies) in a renegotiation of rural space

It is possible to analyze rural houses as condensations of singularities in specific qualitative types. We take elements from some key postmodern geo-philosophers based on the value of differences and individuality, with the purpose of providing explanatory elements to each rural house analyzed in its exterior appearance and interior life. As Delanda [8] wrote: "Qualities of the materials (...and) the intensive processes that create these materials are another example of a process of progressive differentiation" [8] (p. 64). The houses would be 'cute' in Deleuze's expression [9], each of which expresses a world different from the other. This particular territory would be a rural house (i.e., a house that is constituted around a certain number of local singularities); however, each house constitutes a 'world'. The 'momada' suggests a world but does not express it without expressing a small territory of the world [9], which usually on a local place in rural geography. The difference does not stop unfolding and is retracted on each of the two sides, the interior, and the exterior of the house.

The duplicity of the fold – rusticity-postmodernity – is necessarily reproduced on the two exterior and interior sides of the rural house. In the wider context, there are renewed strategies of identification with other cultures in the new spatial context of discontinuous villages with other houses.

Power and place range between politics of a particular or individual place versus global or undifferentiated sense of place. Moreover, architecture emergence of a place from undifferentiated spaces hinges on the design of buildings and houses (animating place by materialities), specifically in the context of an emergent process of re-signification of local space and rural architectural structures. This new return to reality or materiality is in fact the materiality of power and is key to understanding the contemporary world and multiplicities of rural power as they spatially operate. In contrast, placelessness is a new dimension of spatial marginalities and the lives of oppressed groups. The Cambridge dictionary defines placelessness as ‘The fact of being similar to many other places and having no special character’ (Cambridge dictionary on line, 2024). In this perspective, a place is a distinctly modern phenomenon in the redefinition (or not) of rural areas. Housing rural consumption suggests several ways of conceptualization, which is a form of a shelter, a refuge, and a commodity. In any case, housing rural consumption needs a place approach where people live.

A house as cultural products generates both global and local territorial heritage consumption. At the same time, international is a specific site. The hybrid production of cultural houses in the international/local relationship produce either specific or particular ‘fusions’ of popular culture and a spiritual celebration of tensions and differences in rural houses. Each house is a cultural particularity, as new realities in particular ways are adapted to new spatial cultures based on consuming signs and images of contested visions. As Deleuze [10] (p. 43) indicated, there were places where what needs to be seen was inside. The anatomy of the interior and the independence of the exterior, in such conditions that each of the two terms – façade and interior – relaunches the other. The division of the interior and exterior refers to the spatial and functional distribution of the interiors. Deleuze [10] suggested the following elements: the material fold and form; the interior and exterior on the principals of sustainability and covering; the high and the low, where the fold differs in the fold; the deployment, which is an extension of the act based on a method and operation; textures based on material resistance; and the paradigm that is based on the choice of the subject.

The tensions between the territorial sense of material identity and the mobility relevance on rural architecture in the global era produce renovated cultural landscapes of differences, melancholy, and (post)modernity. The new habitat typologies materialize cultural identities and, at the same time, materialize the local agency. In fact, the political construction of subjectivity contains different identifications, ambiguities, and conflicts.

The contested visions of imagination identities suggest minor/micro social changes and some lines of rural resistance in a site-specific manner: agricultural fundamentalism and site-specific conservation; good practice in the context of positive planning; and resistance and reactions in the dualistic structure of rural houses, both internal and external. The ambiguity of the architecture and the cultural awareness introduce a new type of utopia/dystopia of micro-utopian visions, which are a new ‘cultures of appearances’ in the process of negotiating the renovated rural. In certain situations, the old infernal agrarian houses redefine smart villages that reimagine rural spaces in the XXI century. Presently, the rural houses integrate the bodily pleasures of architecture centered in the body and its rhythm of possibilities of the senses [11]. The new houses are local rivals in new ritual villages, with either political renovated rituals or ritual politics. As Lefebvre highlighted [12], the peasant, regional housing was adapted to a practice linked to the land, which was inscribed in a place

and in a landscape. The list of its virtues and qualities, those of its space and the appropriation of its space, could be lengthened: balance, robustness, a certain comfort, a certain beauty in the best cases, and an activity regulated by the hours and the seasons. This represents a trace of happiness but without pleasure. The architecture of leisure is nothing more than a simulation of pleasure within the framework of the control of the economic and political powers of these spaces. The utopia of pleasure tends towards the concrete and to the location of pleasure in concrete spaces [12]. The value of use is revived by the value of exchange in the new rural houses.

The new vernacular politics and alternative topographies produce a new category, namely ‘new sacred houses’, in some particular form and in site houses as a spiritual refuge. Tactical and stylistic appropriation of the streetscape suggests ‘structures of feelings’ in intimate cultural houses as places of material solidarity. Human life is special, temporal, and social in an interactive, real, and imaginary way in a new militant localism [4] that produces new cultural politics of difference (individuality and regionality) versus the traditional local-global binomial.

From a wider perspective, a cultural landscape is another world of popular heritage in the play of cultural and natural values. The rural houses are new particularities of place as a product of cultural values and live cultural experiences in landscapes. In this orientation, a place is the integration of society, culture, and nature in the form of individual senses of place (feelings and emotions). The place generates cultures, alters settings, and the sense of place may change in experimental, individual, and entity spaces [13].

As Entrikin [14] suggested, “the dominant meaning of place has changed from a location or a position in space to a complex relationship of self and environment (...) that presumes the social and political context of actors who engage in and transform the material world” [14] (p. 91). In the same argument, the author pointed out the following: “Their fluid spatial scales are adapted to collective and individual projects (...), projects do not occur in empty spaces, they must adjust to already existing symbolic and material conditions” [14] (p. 91). In the same argument, Delanda [8] (p. 57) highlighted that “an organism is defined both by its spatial architecture, as well as by the different materials”. The micro-contradiction qualities have substances and forms in new image-souvenirs. The same object (rural house) can have different planes and acquire new subjectivities. There is a current image and a virtual image in the form of a circuit that generates the rural distinction in two faces. There is a particular essence in discontinuous spaces: concrete universal to single types in a spectrum of differences. In this complex play of differential relations and singularities, Deleuze and Guattari [15] mentioned mobile territorialities with processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

Rematerializing cultural geography suggests a renovate relevance of place as cultural capital, class dimensions in production, and consumption patterns of rural materialities, specifically the effect of the relevance of culture in contemporary spatial relations in the context of emerging subcultures. This derives a framework of culturally creative activities in the houses, and the newcomers’ activities are mainly associated with creative classes, creative professionals versus deagrarianization, and new local politics. The common context of local houses stories and remaking rural spaces suggest new processes in the new social life of rural houses. Conservation includes preservation, restoration, renovation, new functions of the household, and new circuits of socio-material life, including new informalities for poor rural spaces. There are countless local spatial stories and some arguments based on big narratives. The biggest argument in the rural change contains three dimensions: strategy, needs, and desires, which are in the form of processes of creation, the dissolution of the place, and a renewed spatial relationship. The place/home becomes a private museum to protect itself from a space-time compression. The new

spatial qualities allow for the (re)evaluation of the importance of concrete spaces, places, and times for postmodernity. The new materialities contain cultural keys and cultural forms in a continuous process of death and resurrection of the anonymous author of the houses.

Higher-income and better-educated groups tend to make active uses of space, while lower-income groups tend to be trapped in (local) spaces. Low-income people are usually more identified with the place and are more affected by its alterations, while higher-income social groups are more indifferent to changes, as they have a greater capacity for spatial adaptation. For this reason, the transformation of rehabilitated rural houses corresponds to formed social groups and many cases of urban origin. The processes of spatial change affect the lower classes more, as their territorial framework for action is limited. Material processes of discourse are differentiated in the class analysis as a mechanism of expression. Social space is not only a variable between individuals and social groups, but it also changes over time. However, as we have indicated, the highest income groups tend to dominate the space while the lowest income groups are trapped in the place (rural). The individual either replaces or exchanges states of personal dependency for states of material dependency in the new rural areas. This affects the exchange values of rural materialities. Extra-suburbanism has its own patterns of space transformation and involves the creative construction of new spaces on top of effective and affective spaces. The product of the renewed intersectionality of rural materialism between new and old material, styles, and functions is definitive. The whole of differences fragments and segregates different parts in either a renewed logic of new materiality or in a renewed organic whole. These processes encompass different kinds of identification and a possible extinction of revival houses.

The less relevant the spatial barriers are, the greater the sensitivity of capital to the variations of the place in space, and the greater the incentive for places to differentiate themselves in spatial fragmentation. In the search for safe moorings in a changing world, the identity linked to the place is confused with the intersectionality of the set of identities linked to the houses. Postmodernism would be the insertion of individualities in a multidimensional set of discontinuous realities (houses in villages) based on lived experiences. This point of view is based on the adaptive capacity (ies) of houses in time-space and specific place-based markets relations and the reconfiguration of family life in the form of specific cultural narratives of people and houses. The local populations have a greater material dependence on the land and a feeling of attachment to the place. The memory of the past is an important component in the attachment to the rural locality, the rural environment, plays a determining role in the spatial dimension of the premises, strengthens the formation of 'aggregate materialities' in a redefinition of the public, and the private in the towns integrate in a new rural architecture as a mode of imagination. The sum of the space, place, and environment is a product of rural houses in regional folk cultures with two sides' modern/immigrant folklore and native folk.

A new anatomy of houses and spaces of opportunities in the quality turn of new materialities can characterize the postmodern rural materialities and architectures. The consumption of rural houses as a parallel process of connection, disconnection, and reconnection [16], is an essential characteristic of the new countryside. The (micro) competitive identity of houses change and increase the subjective role of rurality, the positive or negative reputation in marginal space, and the symbolic materials actions. A multiplicity of visions represent a space of spaces [8]. The rural houses would have three rhythms: active, passive and another witness or contextual that interact with each other. Each object or house has its rhythmic being [11] in an immense space-time that supposes the emergence of another world. There would be a difference between the material structure, contour,

and image. The contour as a place is the place of an exchange in both directions between the material structure and the figure. The figure tends to join with the material structure.

Table 1. Intersections cultural forms.

	locals	
Conventional rural	New cultural form	Remote rural
	New comers	

Source: own elaboration.

Following Deleuze and Guattari [15] (p. 97), the revolution is absolute deterritorialization. The resistance of materialities is based on the present by creating societies of resistance. The territory and the house imply pure sensible qualities [15] (p. 174). The revolution is that of absolute territorialization, faced with deep-rooted cosmopolitanism and localized material entities. The immense relative deterritorialization of world capitalism has accurate reterritorialization on the modern national state. In Spain today, relative deterritorialization could become absolute in the context of new territorial policies, with new socio-spatial types that emerge from history. In short, the revolution is absolute deterritorialization, but absolute deterritorialization is associated with reterritorialization. Territorialization and reterritorialization intersect in a double evolution, and the autochthonous and extensive entities can be distinguished in a process that constantly feeds back in two directions, that is, the movements of deterritorialization and reterritorialization are not separable in the territory where they absolutely and relatively occur.

Harvey [17] suggested the ‘the new cosmopolitans’ approach, which represented multiple nuanced versions of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism is currently particularized and pluralized (i.e., it is a realistic cosmopolitanism), where the local and global spheres are intertwined. As Harvey [17] wrote, we must protect ourselves from false cosmopolitanism that serves the interests of national hegemony. However, cosmopolitanism is based on the universality of individual human rights and the concept of citizenship. Renewed cosmopolitanism involves the development of multiple loyalties. Nuanced cosmopolitans share the idea of combining respect for social differences with the imposition of social principles. It is a cosmopolitanism rooted in place. The subaltern cosmopolitan perspective adopts a local and particularistic orientation, suggesting a unity in diversity with localized struggles. Subaltern cosmopolitanisms favor local politics of difference.

However, cosmopolitanism acquires precise meanings in localized debates and imagined communities. In reality, subaltern cosmopolitanism is founded on globalization, as described below. The ‘new cosmopolitans’ fail to base their theories on spaces and places in an effective and non-affective way, thus configuring a new elite power.

3. Built environment qualities in the field of “Sierra de Ayllon”, between Soria and Segovia frontier, stories of rural new materialism

This article is based on the intensive qualitative methodology, with a geo-ethnographical approach [see 18]. The methodological approach managed heritage places and houses in the context of new cultures of heritage in place as complex intersections and dialectics of new rural houses (Figure 1). In this sense, the methodology of the study of personal biographies and the biographies of

rural materiality's is a continuation of the trends of rural geography founded on sociocultural geography, which aims to highlight the importance of micro-studies based on the biographical orientation of materials and people in order to establish a close connection between the human's biographies and the biography of rural (im)materialities. With the use of this methodological orientation, the aim is to overcome a gap in rural geography studies that allows for the analysis and establishment of individual and singular strategies in the field of rural geography.

The case studies have been identified through sales processes in remote rural areas on specialized websites and interviews with the seller and photos of the house have been analyzed. They are key examples of renovated houses in extremely remote and unpopulated areas of central Spain. The visits to the renovate rural houses were carried out between October -two houses in Ayllon and Cuevas of Ayllon- and November 2023 -Piquera of Saint Esteban- in selected representative cases of contested sites of subjective marginal ruralities in the way of mapping house reproductions. One of the key features that was valued in the selection was the contrast in the renovation process in maintaining the traditional exterior façade and creating a cosmopolitan interior space. Two houses came from newcomers and another from a family inheritance process.

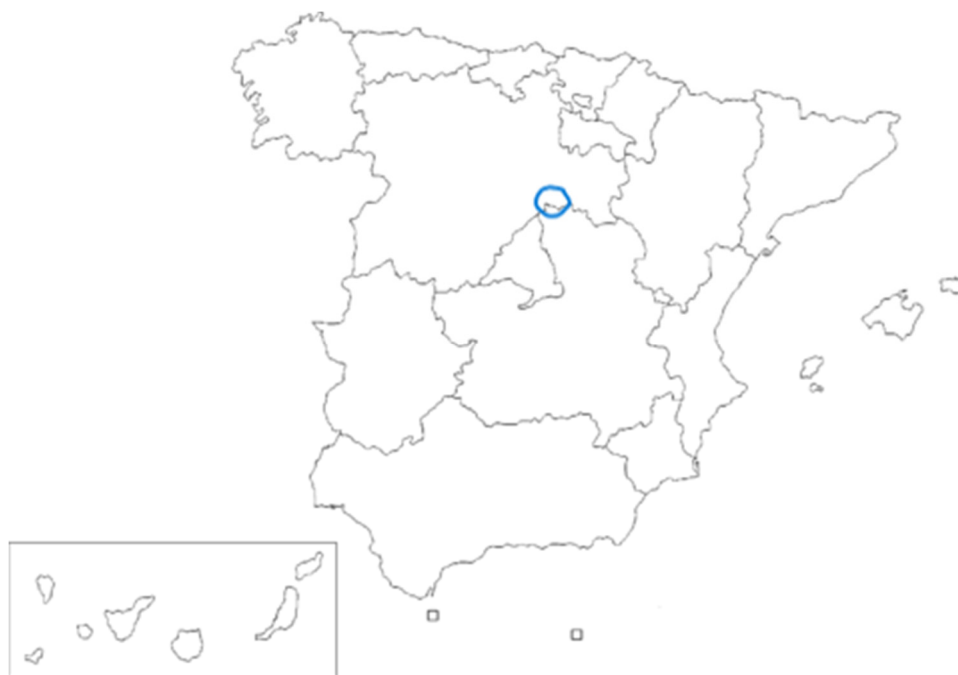


Figure 1. Research area.

3.1. Case 1. From traditional house to new comers seasonal dwelling. 'Something differentt'.

This is a typical case of newcomers in Ayllon (Segovia province), in which a traditional house was rehabilitated to maintain traditional materials and vernacular typologies. A rural old house was rehabilitated to maintain the traditional materials of adobe and wood and the style of 1900, of about 200 m² on three floors, with a post-modern interior decorated with antiques and furniture of a current design, with a very original contrast. The floors were arranged and the house only had one distinct

room. In this sense, the original mangers for feeding the livestock were preserved at the entrance, which reflected a new style of houses and new symbols. The owner was a decorator by profession and used it as a second home; however, due to age and physical problems, she can no longer regularly travel from Madrid. The daughter had another house in Ayllon which she recently sold in a familiar process of disassociating from the place. This is a good example of Deleuze [10], where places need to be seen inside, or in other words, the relevance of the *anatomy* of the interior and the independence of the exterior is important.

The house is located in the center of Ayllon (Segovia province), a small town that has all the necessary services and equipment: health, banks, restaurants, food, pharmacy..., with a population of 1154 inhabitants in 2022, and is located at an altitude of 972 meters.

3.2. Case 2. Traditional house rebuilding. 'A house with special charm'.

A traditional house was rebuilt with partial use change for seasonal housing use and sold by a family from newcomers in Piquera de San Esteban (Soria province). The owners had their current residence in Madrid province and a secondary home in Malaga. He acquired an old building due to his family origins in the area and completely renovated it. From the old layout of the house, in addition to the distribution patio, a stable, hayloft, and two houses with very bright rooms were built to highlight their post-modernity: a main one and a secondary one around the distribution yard. The façade made of traditional materials was respected, though the interior was completely transformed with post-modern functionality – including an American kitchen – and a very careful wood finish. The house has 370 m² distributed between the two houses on a 260 m² plot. This is an adequate example of Delanda [8], who highlighted it as an organism defined both by its spatial architecture, as well as by the different materials, where micro-contradictions qualities have substances and forms in new image-souvenirs. As previously explained, the highest income and better educated social groups were active in the micro-spaces with a greater adaptation to the rural place (in)materialities.

The town of Piquera de San Esteban is a small town of 19 inhabitants in 2022, without any services, and is located at an altitude of 899 meters. The house was sold because it is not currently used: the charm was lost and the obligation appeared.

3.3. Case 3. 'A house within another'.

The sales process occurred within the framework of a process of inheritance and transformation of the traditional house to a postmodern rural house materialities. The exterior appearance was maintained, but the interior was changed, thereby adapting it to new times and uses. Two brothers inherited and sold it since they had another one in the same town. The house was recently completely renovated, creating an avant-garde and current atmosphere inside, which contrasted the rustic style of the façade: 'a solid construction of good quality'. In its entirety, it has about 200 m² divided into three floors: the first is a social space, the second is a rest space, and the third is a traditional warehouse that is maintained. It is an excellent example of new cultural expression of local and traditional families in the common context of local house stories associated with new rural cultures of appearances.

The house is located in Cuevas de Ayllón (1042 meters) in the municipality of Montejo de Tiermes (Soria province), but 7 km from Ayllon, which is the closest town with services already in

the province of Segovia. It has a population of 25 inhabitants in 2019. It is a town where there is no equipment or services, only houses mostly rehabilitated with greater or lesser fortunes. The town is on the banks of the Pedro River, characteristic of the Sierra de Pela in the Northwest of Soria, with a highly attractive nature and varied fauna.

4. Discussion

This contribution reviews the critical materialities in the context of cultural politics in the process of emerging a plurality of geographical cultures at rural places. There is a renewed prestige of conservation with a change of use as new private open-air museums of rural architecture, which rescue the atmosphere of bygone eras. The purpose was to (re)build healthy buildings with recycled materials from the environment, and introduce natural ventilation and other environmentally beneficial features characteristic of postmodernity.

Houses reinforced the external territorialized identities, but also reinforced the internal de-territorialized identities in a renewed way of re-imagined resistance and as a material culture of rural resistance. The external identities were linked with traditions and the internal identities were associated with global cosmopolitanism. In the postmodern context of shopping, there were three new signs in the spectacle of the landscape: aesthetics, internal power, and good life. This included a new complex relation between equilibrium and the tensions with an asymmetric spatial component. The houses were renovated with heterogeneity and movement, but also with harmony with and a cultural nature in a new framework of the territorial culture scene and contested practices. New tensions arose between sites and the danger of destruction of the values versus the profit of prestige. In the definitive, transgressions became resistant [19], as well as in the wider context of curating a heterogeneous world based on the imbrications of local cultures within global capitalism. Culture is a complete way of life. The strongest barrier to the recognition of human cultural activity is the immediate and regular conversion of experience into finished products, which provides a privileged place to the flows and processes.

The final ‘product’ of sequence designs includes old villages, new houses, a built environment, and heritage houses with internal and external life identities in a new system design with a minor architecture. Villages by design and design houses segregate micro-spaces into new elite enclaves, with a notable cultural distinction and diversity by the design of social mix-spatial forms. A new fusion of powers in a micro strategic essentialism with formalism were redefined to new formalism [20].

5. Conclusion

Negotiating the future in the framework of *cultures of a low-density environment*, new houses in good or bad densities were seen as new subjectivities of density and new spirits of resistance. Local conditions determine the production of universal identities, as well as combine the specificity and multiplicity of roles in new contested sites of countercultural tendencies generated by contested sites in dispute. The tourist perspective and the life lived in the place is vital [21]. There is a cultural intimacy and the insertion of the distinctive in ‘the sweetness of the place’ [21]. The creation and dissolution of the place coincide in a rural house, where particular structures of feeling emerge, which are different and conflict loyalties with radically different structures of feeling. This process is influenced by determinants involved in the construction that promote a militant particularism of the

contradictory unity of global local forces, similar to the way of subsistence of habitat in the (new) rural houses [22]. In short, the new dialectic of similarity/difference in the conformation of the houses affects the community and locality, and makes the place open to global problems, approaches, and particular struggles. Jackson [23] suggested a craftsman style and a techno style that tend to be integrated into the traditional spaces of the home.

In the definitive, two sides characterized the renovated houses: externally linked with traditional spirit and style of the area and an internal individual and cosmopolitan design. Traditionally rural houses are historical geographical records, which are a material culture complex that is expressed in the ‘cultural landscape’ [24]. The nature of the culture area in the external expression of houses with modern rationalization is a social distinction of material culture [25]. A monumental space is a new site of memory or sites of imagination in an itinerary of patrimonial place, in definitively renovated ruins in the village [26]. The myth of promised land is as follows: living the myth of urban culture in the new promised land, where there is a symbolic value of the stone [27,28].

Use of AI tools declaration

The author declares that they have not used Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in the creation of this article.

Conflict of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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