

ABSTRACT - 4. CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES IN HERITAGE DISCOURSE - A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STATE OF THE ART IN HERITAGE DISCUSSIONS, CONSIDERING THE EVOLVING PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES THAT HAVE EMERGED SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THE VENICE CHARTER. EXAMINING THE RELEVANCE OF THE VENICE CHARTER IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT, WITH A FOCUS ON CHALLENGES POSED BY THE WESTERN DIVIDE BETWEEN NATURE AND CULTURE, THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF METROPOLISES, SOCIAL INEQUITIES, THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF HUMAN ACTIVITIES, DISASTERS AND CONFLICTS, AMONG OTHERS.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES VERSUS MIXED SITES: TOWARDS A CRITICAL REFLECTION

Mônica Bahia Schlee (monbasch@gmail.com)

The adoption of the cultural landscape category in 1992 and the launch of UNESCO's 2011 Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscapes significantly expanded the scope of heritage conservation toward a broader understanding of landscapes, encompassing interwoven social, cultural, and natural values. Over the past three decades, however, UNESCO has systematically reclassified sites initially recognized as "mixed sites" into "cultural landscapes." While mixed sites refer to locations that present natural and cultural values and attributes, which may or may not be intertwined, cultural landscapes are defined as the combined works of nature and humanity that express an intrinsic relationship between people and their natural environment. The similarity between these two definitions and the theoretical and practical overlap between them have caused

conceptual instability and led to management inconsistencies for both types of sites. In this context, this article aims to critically examine this issue through a comparative analysis of two UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Brazil: Carioca Landscapes between the Mountain and the Sea, inscribed as a cultural landscape in 2012, and Paraty and Ilha Grande: Culture and Biodiversity, inscribed as a mixed site in 2019. The former represents a cultural landscape located in a metropolis of over six million inhabitants, characterized by its historic gardens, parks, and natural monuments, as well as the dynamic processes interweaving cultural and natural values, both tangible and intangible. In contrast, the latter highlights the intricate ties between nature and culture along Brazil's Southeastern coast, encompassing the well-preserved historic center of Paraty—one of the best-preserved colonial coastal towns in the country—biodiversity-rich ecosystems of the Atlantic Forest, and traditional communities that sustain a multicultural environmental system rooted in their daily life. The inscription of Paraty and Ilha Grande acknowledged the ties between nature and culture along the southern coast of Rio de Janeiro and northern São Paulo, highlighting the region's rich living heritage. This landscape encompasses the historic center of Paraty, one of Brazil's best-preserved colonial coastal towns, and one of the world's five main biodiversity hotspots. It features well-preserved Atlantic Forest ecosystems spanning parts of the Serra do Mar mountain range and Ilha Grande Bay, alongside the traditional communities living there, forming a multicultural environmental system rooted in daily life. Although UNESCO has reclassified ten mixed sites globally, Paraty and Ilha Grande site represents the first such case in Brazil. This process invites critical reflection on the values, management practices, and theoretical frameworks that differentiate these two categories of sites in order to explore how these distinctions can contribute to the debate on adjustments to these classifications. From these two examples, the article questions the necessity of framing landscapes as either cultural or historical, instead advocating for a unified conceptualization of “landscape” that transcends such qualifiers. Landscape is landscape. This concept has the potential to offer an integrative perspective on cultural and natural heritage. To support this argument, the article explores the evolution of the landscape concept and critically analyzes key international charters on landscape protection, examining contributions from the Global South and their implications for national legal frameworks. Thus, the article proposes revisiting the terminology of mixed sites and cultural landscapes, advocating for a single classification of landscapes, whether terrestrial or marine, encompassing both natural and cultural elements. To this

end, it presents a proposal and recommendations to rethink Articles 1 and 2 of the World Heritage Convention, aiming to redefine landscapes as pervasive heritage assets. This involves merging and reformulating heritage site definitions from an inclusive perspective, recognizing the diversity and gradation of human interactions with nature. A more transversal approach across conventions—acknowledging the intrinsic relationship between nature and culture, the cultural diversity of heritage, its deep connection to territory, and the political dimension of the landscape concept—can foster shared management practices among ICOMOS, IUCN, ICCROM, and local communities.

Palavras-chave: landscape; cultural landscape; mixed site; world heritage convention; heritage management.