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LANDSCAPE POLICY AND POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN SÃO PAULO

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Abstract

This article analyzes how the concept of landscape was transformed into an urban policy device in the municipality of São Paulo, structuring institutional and emerging practices. Although traditionally presented as polysemic, the concept of landscape is seldom used in political geography. Our research analyses the landscape concepts in the Clean City Law and the Territories of Interest for Culture and Landscape as examples of the landscape policy process, which enabled the landscape's mobilization by movements opposed to governmental decisions, giving rise to political landscapes. This aspect is discussed based on field observations of the demonstrations involving the Teatro Oficina and the documents produced on these movements. The results reveal how the landscape has been used to carry out political actions and show that new understandings of the concept structure different political spaces.

Keywords: Landscape Policy. Political Landscape. Teatro Oficina. São Paulo's Urban Policy.

Resumo / Résumé

POLÍTICA DA PAISAGEM E PAISAGEM POLÍTICA EM SÃO PAULO

Este artigo analisa como o conceito de paisagem foi transformado em dispositivo da política urbana do município de São Paulo, estruturando práticas institucionais e insurgentes. Apesar de tradicionalmente ser apresentado como polissêmico, o conceito de paisagem apresenta pouca utilização nos estudos de geografia política. Nesse artigo, foram analisadas as concepções de paisagem utilizadas nos instrumentos Lei Cidade Limpa e no Territórios de Interesse da Cultura e da Paisagem compreendidos como exemplos do processo de política da paisagem. Foi considerado que esse processo possibilitou a mobilização da paisagem por movimentos contrários às decisões governamentais, dando origem as paisagens políticas, aspecto discutido a partir da observação em campo das manifestações envolvendo o Teatro Oficina e dos documentos produzidos sobre esses movimentos. Os resultados revelam como a paisagem foi utilizada para o exercício da ação política e mostram que novos entendimentos do conceito estruturam diferentes tipos de espaços políticos.

Palavras-chave: Política da Paisagem. Paisagem Política. Teatro Oficina. Política Urbana de São Paulo.

POLITIQUE DU PAYSAGE ET PAYSAGE POLITIQUE À SÃO PAULO

Cet article analyse comment le concept de paysage s'est transformé en dispositif de politique urbaine dans la municipalité de São Paulo, structurant les pratiques institutionnelles et émergentes. Bien que traditionnellement présenté comme polysémique, le concept de paysage est rarement utilisé en géographie politique. Notre recherche analyse les concepts de paysage dans la loi sur la ville propre et les territoires d'intérêt pour la culture et le paysage comme exemples du processus de politique du paysage, qui a permis la mobilisation du paysage par des mouvements opposés aux décisions gouvernementales, donnant naissance à des paysages politiques. Cet aspect est discuté sur la base d'observations sur le terrain des manifestations impliquant le Teatro Oficina et des documents produits sur ces mouvements. Les résultats révèlent comment le paysage a été utilisé pour mener des actions politiques et montrent que de nouvelles interprétations du concept structurent différents espaces politiques.

Mots-clés: Politique du Paysage. Paysage Politique. Teatro Oficina. Politique Urbaine de São Paulo

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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally presented as polysemic, the concept of landscape is seldom used in political geography, as is evident from its absence in manuals related to the field (AGNEW; MITCHEL; TOAL, 2003; CASTRO, 2005; COX, 2002; GALLAHER et al., 2009; TRIGAL; DEL POZO, 1999).

The concept's recent incorporation in public policy instruments and institutions is indicative of the process of landscape policy (RIBEIRO, 2018). The transformation of the landscape into a device[1] means it is no longer related to the distant view and has instead become part of political action, forming political landscapes. These are intentional visual portraits of the varied elements structuring conflicts between the different that are mobilized by institutional or pressure groups to influence the political agenda.

Although other authors have considered landscape and politics, we examine the possibility of considering the landscape as a central aspect of politics, starting from the perception of plurality as a necessary human condition for political action, which is the exercise of convincing the other (ARENDT, 1995). We consider the landscape an instrument of mobilized awareness-raising to achieve organized groups' goals in political spaces. Thus, both landscape policy and the political landscape explicate the interests of the groups involved in its use, as they draw attention to issues relevant to established and emerging actors. As a result, the concept moves away from understanding a still frame and becomes the foundation of political action, and therefore of interest to political geography.

This article addresses three key questions regarding the landscape. First is how landscape policies and the political landscape are conceptualized. The second involves how different concepts of the landscape are transformed into devices for urban regulation. Finally, we examine how institutional and pressure groups mobilize the landscape. The documentary analysis is based on the research of the norms, laws, and decrees involving the Clean City Law and the Territory of Interest of Culture and Landscape, which are examples of landscape policy in the municipality of São Paulo. The understanding of the political landscape, on the other hand, is based on documentary evaluation and field observation of the pressure groups involved in the preservation of the Teatro Oficina.

LANDSCAPE POLICY AND THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Since the 1990s, when UNESCO created the Cultural Landscape typology, the use of the concept of landscape as a management tool has intensified. Following this proposal, other bodies recognized the importance of standardizing[2] the landscape and incorporated the concept into apparatus and governmentalities to regulate subjects and territories, establishing the process known as landscape policy (RIBEIRO, 2018).

Interpretations originating in the Renaissance period linking the concept to the perception of Nature expressed as a pictorial transposition (BESSE, 2006) persist in technical documents aimed at regulating the landscape. However, readings of the landscape that value its holistic character to manage a territory's unique aspects have become more common, transforming it into a category of political practice. The expansion of the term's polysemy is evident in geographers' conceptual discussions about the landscape.

In morphological approaches originating from the German tradition of landscape studies (CAPEL, 1983), geographers consider that the State is the primary agent producing political landscapes. Interested in the forms inserted in a space to demarcate political power, such as monuments, public squares, walls, and borders, this approach is influenced by Carl Sauer, who considers the political landscape as shaped by a dominant group (BROX, 2019; KLIOT; MANSFIELD, 1997). Sanguin (1984, p.30) makes his morphological approach explicit when alluding to Sauer's The morphology of landscape "[...] Politics is the agent, the natural space is the means, while the political landscape is the result".

From the 1970s, studies taking a symbolic approach (MELO, 2001) attributed a political meaning to the concept of landscape, viewed as the result of practical and discursive actions aimed at maintaining power (DUNCAN, 1990; OLWIG, 2002). Produced by the dominant elites, the political landscape is often perceived as distorting reality to maintain control of the means of production (COSGROVE, 1998;

MITCHEL, 2005). When considered by subalternate groups, it becomes a resignification of space produced by violent actions or the result of individual activism that does not necessarily leave a material mark on the space (BAIRD, 2014; TILL, 2004).

The morphological and symbolic approaches present thought-provoking points about the approximations between landscape and politics. However, we consider that their limitations stem precisely from the interpretations of these two concepts.

Both approaches use the concept of landscape as a passive element in the face of decisions by the holders of political power. In contrast, we consider the landscape as a guide for political action, interpretations, and spatial movements. This perspective transforms the landscape into an active instrument, which is mobilized to explain the desires and interests of the political groups who control its formative elements.

Like Sauer's view of culture, morphological approaches to politics adopt a supra-organic definition of the concept, where the State acts without interference from groups or the existing system of objects. Limited to the study of physical characteristics captured objectively by the gaze, the political landscape is one where conflicts are non-existent since the central power dominates all the subjects and territories homogeneously.

Symbolic interpretations of the landscape adopt a reading of politics inherited from either political economics or sociology. The former view politics as the result of the elite's interest in maintaining the means of production. Thus, ideology is used to falsify reality to produce landscapes, requiring a deciphering of the visible elements to understand the actors' interests and desires (COSGROVE, 1998). The latter follows a Foucaultian line of thinking about politics from the concept of power, seen from a relational perspective and transmitted by actors in particular contexts who expand the theme beyond the State's practices but often reduce politics to individual activism. Neither explanation of politics is useful in analyses that adopt a closer understanding of political theory by considering the institutional system of conflict resolution as a space available for diverging actors to pursue their goals by convincing others.

This article takes an alternative perspective, viewing contemporary politics as more than a top-down phenomenon, which presents possibilities for participation starting from state institutions. Nor do we see politics as occurring everywhere or in individual activist movements. Politics is understood as a practical and discursive action carried out in specific political spaces by groups organized around a theme and interested in convincing the different. Plurality and difference, the founding conditions of political action, are regulated by rules designed to avoid the absence of politics, that is, violence (ARENDT, 1998).

In the classical period, action and discourse were only available to those present in the polis. In contrast, in the modern period, the exercise of politics occurs by controlling the instruments through which a political actor invested with citizens' status exerts a force on the individuals present in a given social space (ARENDT, 1995; BOBBIO; METTEUCCI, 2004). With the recognition of the landscape as an object of interest to the community, the landscape itself has also become an instrument of recurrent mobilization for actors interested in vertically transforming the political agenda, that is, from existing institutions.

Various works show how different groups have mobilized the landscape to alter the political agenda, including how the production of landscape representations of natural and cultural elements have served to strengthen nationalist movements and how the construction of narratives about space and the struggle against the insertion of new objects has created movements revindicating a form of landscape citizenship. They also examine how the registration of artistic representations by groups excluded from urban policy has established emerging landscapes in world heritage sites (BARBOSA, 2018; BRITO, 2019; NOGUÉ; VICENTE, 2004).

Far from being understood as mere visually perceived features or aesthetic representations to be deciphered guided by necessary dominant ideologies, these works comprehend the landscape as a narrative that selects material and symbolic elements, capable of mobilizing groups and guiding political decisions. It is a perspective that proposes interpretative work based on images and the concrete forms of terrestrial space (MACIEL, 2005; RIBEIRO, 2013).

It is essential to highlight that in understanding the landscape as a narrative composed of material

and symbolic elements capable of guiding political actions, we are not returning to humanistic geographical perspectives that value subjects' individual experiences. On the contrary, we focus on regarding space as mobilizing a community that recognizes a justification for political action in these readings. As political action permeates the articulation of the different, studies of political landscapes must consider the vertical practices carried out by groups that organize around a landscape and not individual activists, who only transform the geographical space when they gain political visibility, that is, when they organize a group of other people to carry out activities with institutions.

In this sense, since political action is unpredictable once it has started (ARENDT, 1995), the function of individualism in the landscape is to call attention to a problem or conflict. When launching a movement, individual subjects lose control over the landscape's narrative, now built collectively in manifestations, acts, and posters, among other actions.

Thus, we consider political landscapes as those that articulate objects present in space in a narrative to influence collective political actions. They do not falsify a necessary reality that needs deciphering; on the contrary, they make the mobilizing groups' interests explicit. Both the landscapes produced by the instituted powers, present in urban planning instruments and transformed into apparatuses by the landscape policy process and the landscapes formed in demonstrations and protests by pressure groups are political, as they use politics as a guide for ways of looking at the system of objects distributed in space.

Therefore, it is vital to understand how different landscape concepts support the instruments for management and revindication in the landscape policy process and how certain landscapes structure conflicts and consolidate political landscapes.

LANDSCAPE POLICY IN SÃO PAULO: FROM THE CLEAN CITY LAW TO THE 2014 SMP

Traditionally, the analysis of landscape policies in different cities has been based on the insertion of the landscape concept in Master Plans (CAETANO; ROSANELI, 2019; FELIPPE, 2003). In the city of São Paulo, the term landscape appears in these documents since 1972; however, it was only used as a specific instrument for the execution of urban planning actions after the 2014 Strategic Master Plan (SMP).

Figure 1 -The blind wall of a building seen from the Minhocão expressway filled with advertising before the Clean City Law and in 2020 with a vertical garden. Source: Author's organization based on images from https://sao-paulo.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,a-transformacao-do-minhocao-e-visivel-e-ainda-continua,10000078040. and Google Streat View. Accessed on 25/07/2020

Before the introduction of the concept in the 2014 SMP, the Clean City Law was an example of the landscape policy process that regulated the municipal urban landscape. In force since 2007, intending to combat visual pollution generated by advertisements, the Law produced a significant change in the city's landscape by opening up areas for new uses, such as graffiti art or vertical gardening in the blind walls of buildings. (Figure 1).

The Clean City Law defines the landscape as any natural or constructed element visible to observers in public areas. Thus, preserving the landscape's visual character as a strategy to enhance the natural and built environment is detailed below:

Art. 3º The objectives of ordering the landscape of the Municipality of São Paulo are to meet the public interest in line with the fundamental rights of the human person and the need for environmental comfort, with the improvement of the quality of urban life, ensuring, among others, the following:

I - the aesthetic, cultural, and environmental well-being of the population;

II - the security of buildings and the population;

III - the enhancement of the natural and built environment;

IV - safety, fluidity, and comfort when traveling by vehicles and on foot;

V - the perception and understanding of the referential elements of the landscape;

VI - the preservation of cultural memory;

VII - the preservation and visualization of the particular characteristics of the streets and facades;

VIII - the preservation and visualization of the natural elements taken as a whole and in their native environmental peculiarities;

[...] São Paulo, 2006.

The legislation adopted a similar approach to the landscape as Kevin Lynch (1982), where only an urban landscape planned to enhance the reading of its indispensable elements would allow citizens to move adequately through the urban space.

The Urban Landscape Protection Commission (ULPC) is the body responsible for defining which objects allow an adequate interpretation of the landscape by regulating the placing of advertisements and new urban facilities[3]. So, as well as opening up new uses of the city landscape, the Clean City Law also consolidated the ULPC as a limited political space (CASTRO, 2018), as it transformed the Commission into a meeting place for different people to clash over ideas and resolve conflicts over the urban landscape.

The Commission was the starting point for discussions about the landscape that transformed the concept into a device available to different organized political groups. By establishing the ULPC as a space of parity between government and civil society, other organized groups could demand changes in the urban landscape, mobilizing the landscape as a strategy to change the political agenda.

Two events involving the Clean City Law significantly demonstrate how landscape policy granted established actors the possibility of mobilizing the concept. The first occurred when the COPAN Building's manager sought a new interpretation of the Law in an attempt to establish financial alternatives for the renovation of the building's facade. In search of the political capital to restore the symbolic modernist building, Mayor Gilberto Kassab agreed to relax the legislation, allowing advertisements on the façades of historical buildings to finance refurbishments. The second event involved Mayor João Dória, who proposed the return of advertising hoardings in the public space along the Marginal Pinheiros and Tietê highways as visual counterparts for companies that carried out the restoration of urban objects or took on the management of squares and parks. Regardless of whether the proposals met with approval or the practical effects achieved, these are examples of how the transformation of the landscape into a device enabled its mobilization by groups interested in influencing the city's political agenda.

The concept of landscape in the Clean City Law was subsequently inserted in the 2014 São Paulo SMP in the Guidelines for Landscape Planning, where it was recognized as essential to well-being and fundamental to quality of life. The State is responsible for its preservation and should guarantee the right to collective and equal enjoyment. The SMP regulates São Paulo's municipal landscape through Landscape Planning Guidelines, strengthening the Clean City Law and consolidating the ULPC as a

limited political space to manage the urban landscape.

The Territories of Interest for Culture and Landscape (TICL) are another example of landscape policy in the 2014 SMP. The creation process of the legal device stemmed from the articulation of different urban movements in São Paulo, resulting in the recognition of two TICLs: Jaraguá/Perus and Paulista/Luz (SANTANA, 2017).

The TICL's interpretation leaves aside the notion of landscape as scenery and instead uses norms to address the direct experiences of those who experience a particular territory. Based on the premise of relationships established between people, landscapes are not composed of statice elements portrayed in a picture; they are contradictory and dynamic cuts territorially defined by local groups (SANDEVILLE JR, 2012).

The insertion of this interpretation in the SMP mobilizes the landscape due to human relationships in specific territories. Thus, the panoramic long-distance perspective of the landscape found in the SMP's Guidelines for Landscape Planning is complemented by the idea that landscapes are constructed in the locus of people's experience by valuing their holistic character, as observed in the legal definition:

§ 1 The TICLs must be constituted for their importance for the city as a symbolic territory that shelters protected areas or a group of natural or cultural areas, significant places for the memory of the city, citizens, and institutions of cultural and scientific relevance (SÃO PAULO, 2014).

This instrument uses the landscape to strengthen democratic and participative management by creating joint management councils of public authorities and civil society. The inclusion of the landscape as a regulatory device in the 2014 SMP enabled the institutionalization of new limited political spaces to delimit the TICL, thus expanding the concept's institutional density.

As well as strengthening the spaces for landscape management through the vertical exercise of the policy and indicating the themes of interest for municipal management, the inclusion of the landscape in São Paulo's urban policy expanded the perception of the concept as a collective interest. Consequently, political landscapes were created to structure open political spaces, organized by pressure groups that adopted the landscape as a structure for their demands.

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE TEATRO OFICINA

São Paulo's landscape policy process enabled pressure groups opposed to government decisions, who organized demonstrations in public spaces and established political landscapes.

Public demonstrations demonstrate how specific places have a spatial relevance when transforming public space into an open political space (CASTRO, 2018). Political landscapes are those that give rise to open political spaces. They structure vertical revindication movements in public spaces. They differ from the landscapes produced by various other protests, where the landscape issue is not the structure for disputes.

When an organized group takes to the streets to protest against education cuts, the location's landscape is intensely modified, but the landscape does not structure the protest. The political landscape guides the demands; it initiates and is the base of political action, mobilized by pressure groups to focus on the interests of the different.

The demonstrations involving Teatro Oficina demonstrate how the transformation of the landscape into a political landscape meant it could be mobilized to coordinate groups against government decisions. The conflict between the Uzyna Uzona theatre company and the Silvio Santos Group has been ongoing for more than forty years, but in the late 1990s, it took on landscape dimensions. The Teatro Oficina's headquarters, located in Bairro do Bixiga, in the Bela Vista district, was listed in 1983 for its historical value by the state heritage agency. This was a strategy by the theater group to avoid the building's purchase by the Silvio Santos Group, which planned to demolish it and incorporate it into an existing land plot (Figure 2).

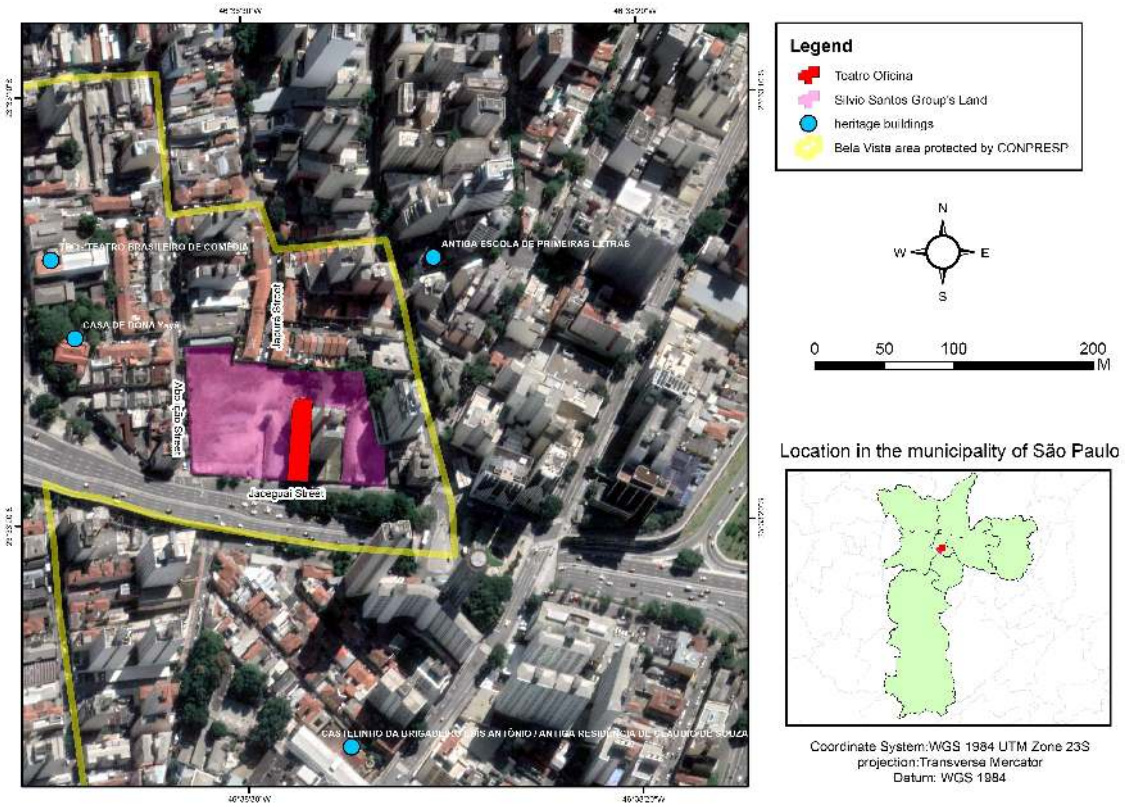

Figure 2 - Location of the Teatro Oficina in Bixiga and the Silvio Santos Group's Land

After that first clash, a renovation by Lina Bo Bardi changed the shape of the building, preserving the original listed facade and building a 150m² side window overlooking the Minhocão expressway. Taking the street as a concept, a longitudinal stage surrounded by the audience served as a connecting corridor between Rua Jaceguai and Rua Japurá (Figure 3). The project sought to integrate the city landscape with the spectacle (LIMA, 2008). Despite the laws applied to the listed building[4] , in 1997, the Silvio Santos Group obtained municipal authorization to build a Shopping Mall on the land adjacent to the theater, initiating a conflict over the landscape.

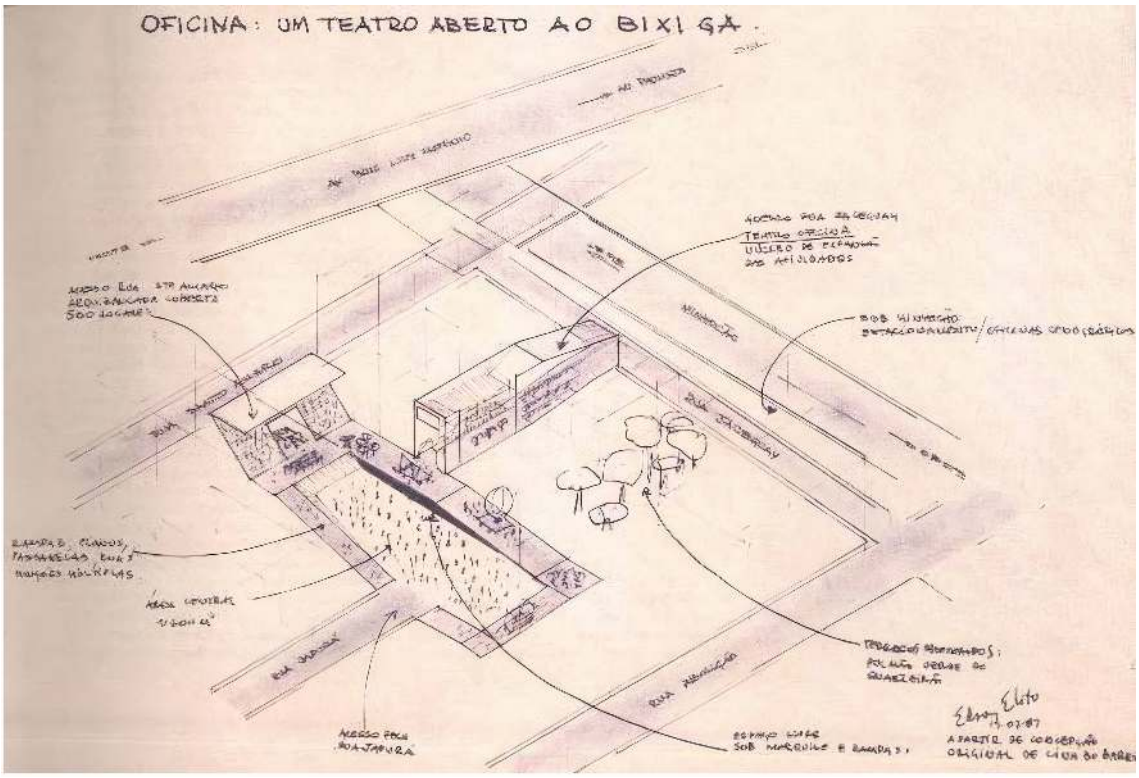

Figure 3 - Lina Bo Bardi's design for the workshop theater in São Paulo. Source: https://fotos.estadao.com.br/galerias/cidades,teatro-oficina,11999 Accessed on 25/07/2020

From that moment, the landscape was mobilized to prevent the construction of the enterprise. José Celso Martinez, the theatre company's director and the spokesperson for the Teatro Oficina Movement, spoke about how the preservation of the landscape became central to the group's actions:

They want to give us an area in exchange for building the mall next door but watch the sun coming in now through the glass sidewall that would be hidden then. We put on Boca de Ouro with this natural lighting at 2:30 pm and Os Sertões at 6:00 pm, with that absolutely wonderful sun coming in here. Lina Bo wanted to give a theater a revolutionary treatment. The theater cannot be like a shoebox, as Oswald de Andrade says [...]. No, the theater has to open up to the Cosmos, to Nature. If it is not convenient for a set, the wall is closed with a curtain. Natural light has been a luxury, not only for the theater but for all the activity here. There is the tranquility of [an Afro-Brazilian] terreiro, a temple, a luxury in São Paulo. Now, a tower next door that corresponds to a 30-meter building stealing the sun, that really cannot be accepted (José Celso Martinez, Jornal Bela Vista, on 12/30/2001).

The Companhia Teatral's demands were longer related to the protection of the building itself but the preservation of the landscape designed by Lina Bo Bardi. The architect's name became fundamental in the landscape conflict's initial stage since her innovations were the basis for applying for a new listing from the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute due to its architectural value (MACHADO, 2016). In 2010, the listing came into effect, protecting Lina Bo Bardi's project, thus preventing the tower's construction and preserving the landscape.

The Teatral Group mobilized the landscape to establish a political action that demanded the preservation of the panoramic view designed in the 1990s by activating the institutional spaces responsible for protecting heritage sites. Therefore, a specific landscape's relevance was recognized, structuring a vertical political movement, which began to claim ownership of the land to conclude the architect's ideas of integrating the whole area into a park-theater.

In 2016, the Silvio Santos group applied to build three 100-meters plus residential towers over with the justification that it was following the heritage conservation bodies' rules. During the legal comings and goings, several demonstrations were organized by the Teatro Oficina group, structuring political spaces opened by the landscape's preservation. Perhaps the most significant act was Domingo

No Parque do Bixiga! maniFESTAção cosmopolitismo de carnaval, held on November 26, 2017, which brought together approximately 2,000 people and sought to avoid the "boxing in" of the Theater by the towers. There was an "embrace" in the land in question and a cleansing to "ward off negative energies" (Figure 4). As the listing instrument was no longer useful, the protesters' strategy started to link the preservation of the landscape with environmental issues. They proposed the construction of the Bixiga Park on the site through a Municipal Bill [5], thus guaranteeing Lina Bo Bardi's original proposal.

Figure 4 - Protest held in 2017, showing the landscape mobilized from the occupation of public space.
Source: https://www.facebook.com/parquedobixiga Accessed on 21/09/2020

To achieve its objectives, the Teatro Oficina group mobilized the preservation of the landscape surrounding the building and initiated a political act of resistance against government decisions. By transforming public space into an open political space structured based on the dispute over the landscape, the group redefined the space into a political landscape. The landscape became the demonstration's raison d'être and an instrument to organize groups opposed to real estate interests, mobilizing different actors around a conflict.

CONCLUSION

This text analyzed how incorporating the landscape in instruments related to urban policy consolidated the landscape policy process in São Paulo. Using the landscape as a device and recognizing it as a collective element meant the concept could be appropriated by both established groups, such as representatives of the municipal executive, and pressure groups, like the movements involved with the Teatro Oficina.

Even though TICLs are not regulated yet, the recently adopted concept of the landscape indicates how it has been increasingly used to consider territorial management in an integrated manner, which articulates cultural and natural, material, and symbolic aspects, as well as social participation. The interpretation used by the Clean City Law is based on the notion of panoramic landscapes governed by technical criteria. In contrast, the approach used in the TICL adopts a perspective of the landscape experienced in locus, valuing its holistic character and the interpretations and appreciation of the groups involved.

The consolidation of political spaces aimed at landscape management is perhaps the main challenge for successfully using these apparatuses. It requires recognizing politics as the meeting of the different in institutional spaces to challenge ideas and construct norms, rules, and practices that include society in a fair way, avoiding actions that meet particular interests.

The case involving Teatro Oficina shows how the landscape served as a spearhead for society's involvement and the consequent debate on government decisions, expanding the concept beyond the

uses related to technical knowledge. The landscape mobilized by a group served for the political organization of the different and structured open political spaces, becoming a political landscape.

In the examples analyzed, the landscape is no longer just a visual portrait and now structures political conflicts, initiating established, and pressure groups' actions. Whether to guide the actions and interpretations used by the State or as a fuel for movements opposing the political and economic elites' practices, the landscape is an instrument for the execution of political action, an active element in the visual structuring of contemporary conflicts.

NOTE

1 - According to Agamben's proposal (2005, p.13) we understand a device as "anything that has the capacity to capture, guide, determine, intercept, model, control, and ensure the gestures, conduct, opinions and the speeches of living beings".

2 - The European Landscape Convention, the Cultural Landscape Award proposed by IPHAN in 2009, the Rio de Janeiro Master Plan 2011, and UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape are examples of instruments. Regarding these regulations, we recommend consulting Ribeiro (2007; 2020).

3 - Information on the Commission can be viewd at https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/urbanismo/participacao_social/conselhos_e_orgaos_colegiados/cppu/

4 - The Laws on listed properties seek to maintain the ambience and view of the protected site. See the work of Motta and Thompson (2010).

5 - PL information and procedures are available at http://splegisconsulta.camara.sp.gov.br/Pesquisa/IndexProjeto Accessed on April 16, 2020

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