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TWO CURRENT VISIONS OF THE LANDSCAPE

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the acceleration of urban growth and the increasingly strong environmental sensitivity call for new global approaches that not only address the urban and landscape dimensions, but also the processes of growth and transformation in cities (Monclús, 2017, p. 219). This is what we call the construction of the city of the future, that is, the sustainable city. How will the current city be transformed into that city of the future? European cities already show us some elements and characteristics that must be part of new cities, such as: eco-neighborhoods, urban agriculture, the reuse of old structures and, of course, the landscape. Must we address the same criteria for Anglo-Saxon cities as for those of Latin origin?

It is, to a large extent, the recovery, among other parts of the city, of degraded areas in strictly urban areas such as the recovery of an obsolete railway infrastructure or, on a territorial scale, the possible regeneration of a huge landfill (Monclús, 2017, p.222). The reality of urban and industrial environments in the city imposes more than one special way of acting with planning, design and management, so that the city can be reconciled with its rural and natural landscapes (Celecia, 1995 in Salvador, 2003, p.192). And this is where the question arises: how to intervene today's cities in the search for the sustainable city of the future? We find at least two ways to do it: for English and North American cities that have a long tradition of conserving conservation areas and green areas in general, the *landscape urbanism*. For those cities with an important historical tradition and that preserve a large number of heritage elements, the so-called *urban landscape*.

Historically, we must recognize that the relationship between artefact and nature arose in the 19th century with Olmsted and Mumford, substantially renewed in the work

of Ian McHarg and his *Ecological urbanism or ecological landscape planning*, different from the architectural tradition, but very close to a continuity with North American landscaping, the place where the various 'landscape disciplines' have been most developed (Monclús, 2017).

It is precisely with Ian McHarg, and his ecological planning that "opens up a path of interest in nature and as a repertoire and basic material for city design, and also as an introduction of the ecological component in urban planning". The landscape and the environment constitute a double possibility for the city: an aesthetic sense or a healthy character. These two considerations are of vital importance, although their regulation is scarce (Salvador, 2003, p. 170).

Why is the subject of landscape having so much importance in recent years? Of course because of the growing concern for the environment and a global ecological awareness. There is also the growing interest in tourism and the consequent need for regions to preserve a sense of their own identity. We must also consider the impact of urban growth on rural areas. There are also imaginative and metaphorical connotations for many contemporary architects and urban planners (Monclús, 2017). The acceleration of the growth of cities and the strong environmental awareness "are calling for new global approaches that address not only the urban and landscape dimensions, but also the processes of growth and transformation of cities." This has given rise to "complex urban realities that require the renewal of forms, especially as a consequence of the processes of urban sprawl and the formation of 'new peripheries', as well as others that are at the base of the formation and transformation of urban metabolism in all its dimensions" (Monclús, 2017).

RESULTS

LANDSCAPE URBANISM

In response to all these concerns expressed above, and as part of the study of the landscape, a current trend appears with roots in England and the United States of America, which they call *landscape urbanism*, that seeks intersections between ecology, engineering, design, programming and other sectoral strategies with an integrating vocation seeking a better quality of the new metropolitan landscapes. It seeks to face complex urban situations, with a growing role of infrastructures, both green and gray (Monclús, 2017). The most important challenge of *landscape urbanism* is its need to converge and integrate with urban planning, which could be achieved by incorporating its instruments in a more flexible urban planning and attentive to landscape components or, on the contrary, seeking a more normative landscaping, not so dependent on construction projects, unique and exceptional landscape (Monclús, 2017). It is precisely the importance that nature has acquired in recent years, a consequence of its degradation, when the importance of the landscape and its relationship with the city rises.

The reappearance of the landscape in the broader cultural inventiveness is due, in part, to a marked increase in concern for the environment and a global ecological consciousness, the growth of tourism, and the subsequent need for regions to preserve a sense of identity, own, as well as the impact of urban growth on rural areas. (Corner in Monclús, 2015, p. 218)

So Javier Monclús proposes James Corner's *Landscape Urbanism*, as a subdiscipline that investigates environmentalism and global ecological awareness, on the one hand, and on the other, "the specific phenomenon of suburban sprawl, with the consequent

consumption of land rural areas and transformation of natural areas", in addition to the growth of tourism and resistance to trivialization and the proliferation of transgenic landscapes (Monclús, 2017, p. 219). To try to understand the origin of this vision, we must go to the USA and Canada during the 19th century, countries where the lack of ruins (ancient or medieval) did not limit the emergence of a "conservationist" thought, which resulted in national parks. that created these two countries (Santacana and Serrat, 2009, p. 204, 205).

The most interesting part of this proposal is the inclusion of a series of activities that have been developed alongside this landscape specialty, such as green infrastructures, *greenfields* and *brownfields*, urban agriculture, the reuse of construction structures abandoned etc Of course, this proposal is suitable only in the cases of countries like the USA and England or similar countries, which have a strong tradition with their gardens, with their nature reserves and, furthermore, a tradition in the creation of garden cities.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURES, GREENFIELDS AND BROWNFIELDS

Within this approach to the landscape, we must first consider attention to urban green areas, which are underdeveloped, "taking into consideration, the multifunctionality that they can play and the possibilities that would be opened up by understanding them as a whole as a great green system". We must not only create pleasant and beautiful spaces that allow various activities linked to the leisure of the population "The interesting thing is knowing how to exploit its potential as an environmental reinforcement within the urban ecosystem" It must become "a configuring framework of the urban fabric that not only gives shape, but rather allows its proper functioning, both in its social and

environmental aspects” (Ávila, 2017. P. 243).

Additionally, it is important to consider the concept of *green infrastructure*, which the European Commission defines as “a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural spaces and other environmental elements designed and managed to offer a wide range of ecosystem services (such as water purification, air, space for recreation and climate mitigation). It includes green spaces (or blue in the case of aquatic ecosystems) and other physical elements in terrestrial (natural, rural and urban) and marine areas”. “It is important to reinforce the role of these green infrastructures in the water cycle, creating spaces capable of retaining and absorbing maximum rainfall or cushioning the effects of flooding in rivers and seas. Likewise, the decontaminating role of plant filters must be strengthened to avoid discharges of dangerous elements into rivers and seas” (Ávila, 2017. P. 245).

Another use of green infrastructures is to prevent soil loss. The paving that generates the great development of urbanization causes damage to the city, such as: strong runoff, increase in temperature in urban centers), in addition to a significant loss of productive soil, on which agricultural, forestry and / or livestock exploitation (Ávila, 2017. P. 246).

It is important to review what has been the development of the garden city (created by Ebenezer Howard). It is in England and the United States, where this proposal for a garden city had the greatest development. As a consequence and evolution of the same, in 1918 the *New Towns Group* was founded in England, a social group that seeks to stop the ‘oil stain growth’ of large conurbations and that this be assumed as a national policy, initiatives that were applied for the first time to a large city through the County of London Plan (*London County Plan*, 1943), developed by Patrick Abercrombie and John Henry

Forshaw, “in which emphasis was placed on the conservation of campaign spaces” and, later, Abercrombie developed the Great Plan of London, both plans taking up the idea of the Metropolitan Green Belt proposed in 1935, with which the protectionist associations managed to ensure that the growth of London “was not done at the cost of losing landscape values, cultural and productive of the English countryside” (de la Cal, 2017. p. 250). With this, the creation of new English cities in the fifties is accompanied by the creation of wide spaces that separate the metropolitan central cities and the new cities. These new cities built on land that previously had agricultural uses were called greenfields, which together with the green belts or green belts of the cities, seek to avoid suburban developments in the *greenfields* (de la Cal, 2017. p. 250).

The success of this policy has only been partial despite the planning instruments, since green spaces have been exposed to a gradual process of erosion, which is why it has been suggested that open spaces cannot be empty spaces, which has allowed the British to believe that “it is a necessity of urban life to make a field out of the field, to bring the field into the city”, and has led to London, to the commitment to compact cities, which is leading to a preference for the more compact development in inner London, precisely in the *brownfields* or land that previously had industrial, railway or port uses in disuse, a policy that seeks to “improve the quality of life in disadvantaged areas and facilitate their integration into the city.” So in 1998 the British government proposed that 60% of the new housing to be built in England be built on land *brownfields*. In 2008 it was possible to verify that 80% of the housing stock in England had been built on *brownfield* land (de la Cal, 2017. p. 251).

It is important to point out that the urban project must not only contemplate

the development of empty land, but also the reuse of existing residential buildings that have fallen into obsolescence. “The issue of urban recycling therefore exceeds the scale of residential complexes and is introduced into large vacant spaces (de la Cal, 2017. p. 252, 253).

THE REUSE OF OLD CONSTRUCTION STRUCTURES

Adaptive reuse, rehabilitation and redevelopment are currently ways of intervening in cultural heritage that involve recycling old abandoned structures, according to circular economy principles, with the purpose of reducing damage to the environment. These disciplines are in fashion and are having a significant boost in architecture magazines in some countries, mainly in the United States of America, a technique that has its roots in the destruction of buildings as a result of the Industrial Revolution, a situation that was happening in the United States of America in the sixties of the last century, and which gave rise to important social movements (Cedeño, 2022). At the same time, another vision of reusing old architectural structures, which became known as *Riuso politics*, It reappeared during the intervention in the historic center of Bologna in the 1960s and 1970s, and in the early 1980s, and since then, it has remained a very important policy in Italy, as a resource that offers the possibility of responding to problems. social, mainly housing. We thus see two positions towards the reuse of buildings that have ceased to be useful in their original use: adaptive reuse, so fashionable today, and reuse used in Italy, and whose history would go back to the origins of human history. (Cedeno, 2023).

These two positions, with very different social roots, coexist today and, as de la Cal points out, they must be incorporated into

urban projects that think of the landscape as the main axis of these projects. This is already expressed in the proposals of the European Landscape Convention and the Vienna Memorandum, where it is established that the historic urban landscape must integrate heritage conservation, care for the environment and attention to the city and the territory.

URBAN AGRICULTURE

We believe that one of the most important challenges of the sustainable city and landscape is to achieve and promote urban agriculture. “Urban agriculture is an emerging market with an international projection, of special interest in large cities” (Marcos, 2014, p.140).

Urban agriculture was part of the socioeconomic fabric of cities from its origins. Before 1900, cities had farms and orchards, and while such niches of activity still exist, today’s needs for commerce, industry, and living space have pushed food growing beyond the suburbs and into the more distant countryside. The high cost that urban land reached contributed in an important way, to rule out this activity in the urban environment. We know that this happened with cities during the 20th century, but it would seem that this 21st century marks a return to this activity, relying on technologies that make it possible to take advantage of underused spaces, both on the ground and in buildings (terraces, rooftops, facades). which allows increasing the productivity of the social environment, connecting people directly with the landscape and the food that they themselves generate (Mollison & Mia, 2007, p.183)

We must keep in mind that in all cities there are unused free spaces: free plots of land, parks, industrial areas, roadsides, corners, meadows, areas in front of and behind houses, terraces, cement roofs, balconies, walls and glass windows directed to the sun. Most

of these spaces are devoted to ornamental vegetation and little to resources for its maintenance. These activities can be directed to the cultivation of useful species (Mollison & Mia, 2007, p.183). That is, urban agriculture.

In order to understand what this is, we must first understand that urban agriculture includes intra (AU) and peri-urban (APU), and it is precisely the cities with the greatest recent growth that manage to preserve the practice of traditional urban agriculture, “maintaining their rural customs and having as an essential objective the supply of the family” (de Felipe, 2015, p.24). For this reason, it is important to identify agriculture with a food vocation and differentiate it from ornamental agriculture, which in turn can be intra-urban, peri-urban and rural. In all of them, leisure agriculture must be considered, predominantly in intra-urban agriculture. But while peri-urban agriculture (APU) is generally based directly on the land, in intra-urban agriculture, in addition to this modality in landscaped areas, streets, etc., there are other modalities such as rooftops and roofs, walls, balconies, interiors. In this, the workforce comes from the family that inhabits the homes for what has been considered as a leisure activity. The economic benefits would be secondary, which is offset “by social relations or self-esteem, including at the business level” (de Felipe, 2014, p.26).

With urban agriculture, one can think of the return of the countryside to the city and the possibility of creating eco-neighborhoods or sustainable neighborhoods, where a large part of the food consumption is generated by the community itself (Cedeño, 2022¹; Cedeño, 2022²).

THE URBAN LANDSCAPE

In countries that do not have a tradition of conserving parks and gardens and in the face of the global era and all its consequences on their cities, the *urban landscape* is proposed

as “expressing new centralities that emerge from the economic whirlwind and as a source of attraction for tourists and global societies must be read synthetically. Its reading must not call into question, the capacity of those who observe it, the diffuseness of the landscape of the traditional city facilitates reading” (Palacios, 2010, p.175). “With globalization, ‘generic’ urban landscapes are built to standardize the entire world, materialized by a banal, credible, repressive, and discriminatory architecture.” “The urban landscape is a cluster of images that refer to a way of living by certain inhabitants, making a reading of the landscape, it is possible to identify the objectified and subjectivized forms culturally speaking of the inhabitants.” The urban landscape “serves as an instrument to know the differences and qualities of the images and spaces of the city at a given moment, which refers to a particular social environment” (Palacios, 2010, p.176, 177).

For some authors “the quality of the urban landscape is an increasingly significant element, perceived as an implicit component in the actions, but susceptible to specific analysis” (Ferrer, 2009, p. 41). The author adds that the images that correspond to our immediate environment and that we call landscape, “always start from the same relationship (or tension) between a cultural matrix (interpretive key) and a spatial dimension (physical space). The first depends on the historical, intellectual, sociocultural context, capable of forming those keys; the second is specific to each place, each city. And it depends on its distinctive features. The tension between both factors determines our perception and conditions our judgement”. Thus “the city, as a physical environment built for social life, can be seen, or imagined, as a landscape”. Therefore, the urban landscape “will then be the result of a series of transformations largely produced

by urban plans and projects, by architectural interventions and by a multitude of various actions related to the organization of spaces, the shape and arrangement of furniture. urban, to the incorporation of technical elements, to the inclusion of advertising, to lighting, to vegetation, to signage. To traffic control, etc.” (Ferrer, 2009, p. 41, 42).

But since the valuation of these urban spaces is based on an established cultural matrix that allows us to interpret them, so we must refer to the premises, orientation and cultural content of the intervention instruments that produce or modify landscapes, as well as the projects that they affect urban spaces” (Ferrer, 2009, p. 41-42). “In the context of an advanced society, urban space must necessarily respond to the requirements of functionality, but also to those of order on which good urbanity is based [...] The growing sensitivity to express and value landscapes responds, thus, to the need to express values that include functional aspects, order, balance, comfort, quality of life and also of a cultural nature” (Ferrer, 2009, p. 42). This must be the way in which the landscape must be valued and not reduced to an aesthetic judgment. So the perception of urban space as a landscape would be to assess the coherence of the sum of interventions on the city, which we know are not uniform in scale, content, or impact on the landscape. We distinguish between those that affect the general structure of the city (or the essential elements of its form) and those that are limited to a part of it or to certain objects, spaces or urban elements “The continuous addition of elements, the juxtaposition of interventions, the reinvention of spaces and forms, in short, the diachrony inherent to the dynamics of urban spaces, allow us to value their successive images as integrating or disruptive with respect to the established general structure”. Therefore, the urban landscape is always the ultimate synthesis and, therefore, momentary, of the

evolution of a specific environment or space, which is capable of integrating the successive previous states and the set of interventions received (Ferrer, 2009, p. 42).

“The structuring elements are those that determine the global architecture of the city, those that define the constants, the relationships or the permanence of the public space of a city: a regular scheme of streets, proportional relationships between the empty and the full, the typological regulation of the building or the repetition of characteristic urban spaces would be some of these elements”. Other elements from local interventions also contribute, and in many cases decisively, to the formation of the urban landscape.

Therefore, the urban plan of the city must contemplate in a specific way, the interventions on the structural elements of the urban space and try to systematize and regulate the common elements of urbanization. “The urban landscape of a city depends above all on the ability to regulate and select the elements with the greatest technical soundness and cultural value, at one level or another.” “The urban landscape is therefore the consequence of successive urban actions, which operate on very different scales and areas” (Ferrer, 2009, p. 43).

We have pointed out how this vision of the landscape is more adapted to cities with a Latin tradition, where due to the confluence of political, socioeconomic and cultural factors, the codification of spaces, architectures or urban elements strongly characterizes urban landscapes (Ferrer, 2009, p. 44). For these cities with historical roots, we consider it important to address the issue of the historic city and the landscape, and in this sense we must first mention Patrick Geddes who considered that the entire city could be susceptible to conservation, not just a specific district or section. He coined the term “conservative surgery”, which sought

to “minimize the destruction of historic buildings and urban spaces to adapt them to modern needs, something that would apply in Edinburgh and Dublin, as well as in India, in Balrampur, Lahore and other cities” (Bandarin and Van Oers, 2014, p.47). Following the ideas of Geddes, Gustavo Giovannoni, who defined a technical proposal that constitutes, to this day, the basis of urban conservation (Choay, 1992 in Bandarin and Van Oers, 2014, p. 49), and where “the historical city could play an important role, not linked to production or communication, but focused on life and social exchange”, “an area where new functions compatible with traditional urban morphology could be assimilated”. The beauty of the ancient city is an element that further reinforces this role, establishing a hierarchy and a dialogue between ancient and modern urban forms (Bandarin and Van Oers, 2014, p. 49). Jane Jacobs criticizes the architects of the Modernist Movement who forgot to consider the past in their projects, and proposed that the new models of urban growth must respect historical models, the meaning of their spaces, and their social ties (Bandarin and Van Oers, 2014, p.47). Later, during the intervention in the historic city of Bologna, which began in the 1960s and continued into the 1970s, Pier Luigi Cervellati, the last of the architects in charge of this great bet, from the Italian Communist Party, wrote about the need that the protection extends to the whole city. Cervellati argued that if protection zones were drawn up, for real estate speculation it would be clear what was protected, but also what was not, spaces where it was understood that it was possible to intervene without restrictions (Cedeño, 1998). These ideas will be taken up by the European Landscape Convention and by the Vienna Memorandum.

CONCLUSIONS

The sustainable city of the future must consider the landscape as a basic element when making urban development plans, a situation that is having to be considered due to the strong environmental problems of the planet. In this article, two current ways have been proposed that carry out this incorporation of the landscape into urban-territorial planning, ways that respond to the type of city and the country where this incorporation is considered. On the one hand, there are the North American and English cities that have a strong tradition in the creation of nature reserves, parks, gardens, and the possible evolution of the garden city. For this case, it is recommended *landscape urbanism* as the most appropriate way to carry out said plans. This proposal also incorporates complementary elements that help this proposal have a better development in the future. Said elements are: *green infrastructures, greenfields, brownfields, the reuse of old construction structures, urban agriculture and environmental assessment of the landscape.*

On the other hand, we have cities with a Latin tradition and an important historical tradition, for which the *urban landscape* is suggested as the most appropriate technique to intervene in them, and which, of course, must be part of their urban planning, planning that must place particular emphasis on *urban conservation*, that is, that vision that contemplates the conservation of the entire city, and where heritage elements will play a basic role in the structuring of the entire city.

These two visions on the subject of landscape must be key in the construction of the future sustainable city.

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