



Research Article

Landscape in Dispute: An Urban Ethnoconservation Approach at Senator Salgado Filho Square, RJ

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Abstract

The management of cultural landscapes often faces challenges related to assigning values, ineffective monitoring, and institutional disarticulation, especially in dense urban World Heritage settings where community perspectives are rarely incorporated into formal conservation frameworks. This paper addresses these deficiencies by developing a conservation management policy for the cultural assets located in the Carioca Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Taking Senator Salgado Filho Square, a site designed by Roberto Burle Marx, as a case study, the research employs an urban ethnoconservation approach, which is grounded in the Value-Based Conservation framework. The methodology involved historical research and the assignment of heritage values (historical, artistic, landscape, and scientific), followed by an inventory of multivocal sociocultural values through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and ethnography, with data systematically coded and spatially represented through ethnotopographic mapping. This analysis revealed conflicting needs among diverse user groups—including vendors, vulnerable populations, women, and LGBTQIA+ communities—regarding safety, accessibility, and inclusion. Based on this reading, the study proposes an integrated conservation model. Key guidelines include establishing a Cultural Significance Statement, a risk management plan using the ABC Method, implementing multidimensional monitoring indicators (physical integrity, social use, environmental sustainability, and symbolic values), and strengthening participatory governance and sustainable economic financing. The policy emphasizes social inclusion, conflict mediation, and heritage education as cross-cutting pillars, ensuring that preservation efforts safeguard the material memory alongside the affective and social meanings of the place. Unlike prior ethnoconservation studies, typically applied to small-scale or rural settings, this research introduces a replicable, indicator-based model specifically designed for dense and socially contested urban World Heritage sites. This proposal offers a replicable model for preserving cultural landscapes in urban contexts, addressing governance gaps, and fostering a democratic relationship between citizens and their shared heritage.

Keywords

Urban Ethnoconservation, Cultural Landscape, Roberto Burle Marx, Heritage Management, Landscape Policy, Rio de Janeiro

1. Introduction

In its classic conception, the geographical landscape was understood as the visible expression of the interaction between nature and society in each territory [1, 2]. Paul Vidal de La

Blache and Carl Sauer, pioneers of this perspective, emphasized that human beings shape the features of the natural environment, producing cultural landscapes marked by the uses

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Received: 23 November 2025; Accepted: 20 July 2026; Published: 18 August 2026



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and customs of each place [2]. Along the same lines, Milton Santos defines the landscape as the visible domain of geographical space — the set of forms that expresses the heritage of the successive relationships between humanity and nature [3].

With the advance of contemporary cultural geography, this understanding has broadened: authors such as Paul Claval and Denis Cosgrove highlight that the landscape is also a symbolic construction, loaded with cultural values, meanings, and ideological representations [4, 5]. In addition to reflecting identities, the landscape is not neutral—it is configured as a space for symbolic dispute and a field of power, where different groups project their values and interests onto the territory [5, 6].

This critical view underpins the recent approach of “Landscape Policy” [6], which conceives landscapes as palimpsests of natural, historical, and symbolic layers, whose management demands integrated policies and active social participation in preservation processes. Within the scope of heritage, this conceptual evolution led international organizations to incorporate new conservation paradigms. In 1992, UNESCO introduced the Cultural Landscape category to its World Heritage list, officially recognizing sites resulting from the inseparable interaction between man and the environment. Following this advance, the concept of the Historic Urban Landscape spread, emphasizing the necessary integration between the preservation of cultural property and sustainable urban planning [7, 8].

These conceptual innovations broadened the scope of heritage conservation, including cultural, natural, and symbolic dimensions of the landscape. However, practical challenges persist: the management of cultural landscapes frequently faces gaps in the assignment of values, absence of effective monitoring indicators, and institutional disarticulation among the responsible bodies [9]. Such deficiencies highlight the difficulty of translating integrative approaches into efficient public

policies. Despite this growing conceptual sophistication, the literature still lacks operational, empirically grounded models capable of translating Value-Based Conservation and Landscape Policy principles into replicable management tools for dense, multi-stakeholder urban heritage sites—a gap that becomes particularly evident where World Heritage designations coexist with informal uses, social vulnerability, and unresolved governance conflicts.

The city of Rio de Janeiro constitutes an emblematic case of this problematic. Its site, named “Rio de Janeiro: Carioca Landscapes between the Mountain and the Sea”—inscribed as World Cultural Heritage in 2012—covers a set of parks, gardens, and natural monuments that collectively express the unique historical relationship between environmental exuberance and urban interventions in the metropolis. However, recent UNESCO and ICOMOS reports point to fragilities in the management of this site [9]. Among the highlighted deficiencies are the lack of a structured monitoring system for indicators, conflicts of normative competence among the various institutions involved in protection, and the insufficiency of social participation mechanisms and continuous financing for conservation. These factors compromise the effectiveness of safeguarding actions and highlight the need for a more integrated approach — in line with the Landscape Policy — that addresses both the protection of material attributes and the valorization of the cultural and social meanings of the place.

Against this backdrop, the present article aims to develop a conservation management policy for the landscape assets located in the Carioca Cultural Landscape. For this purpose, Senator Salgado Filho Square, located in the Buffer Zone of the Carioca Cultural Landscape Site and designed by landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx between the 1930s and 1950s, is taken as a case study [10].



Figure 1. Current location of Senator Salgado Filho Square. City Center (RJ). Source: Google Maps (colors modified by the author).

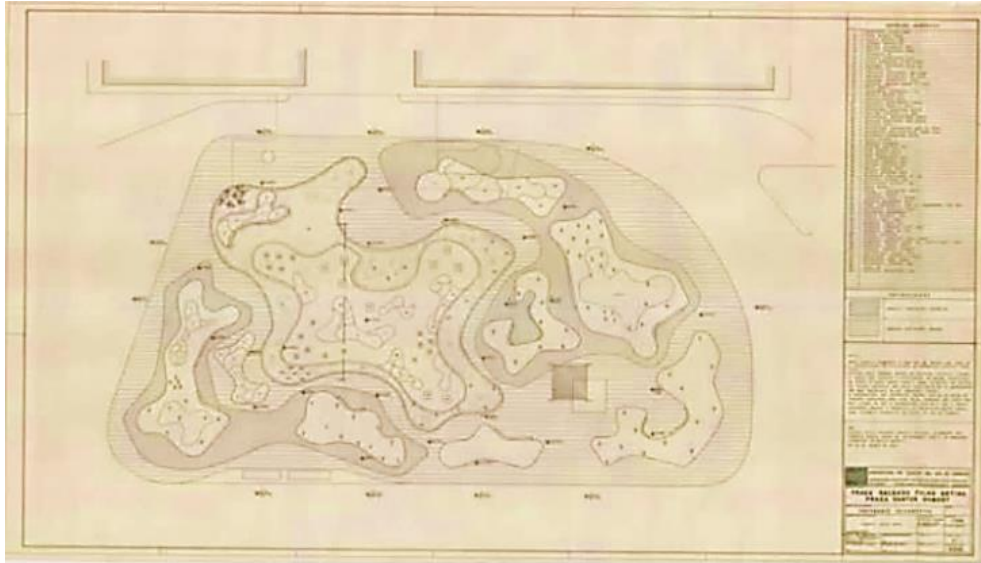


Figure 2. Design for Senator Salgado Filho Square (1954). Roberto Burle Marx. Source: Technical Archive Collection of the Parks and Gardens Foundation.



Figure 3. Senator Salgado Filho Square in front of Santos Dumont Airport, RJ. Photo: Alda Ferreira, 2023.

The study thus seeks to contribute to filling the management gaps identified in the Rio de Janeiro site by proposing an integrated conservation model that reconciles material preservation with social memory and that can be replicated in other cultural landscape contexts. Specifically, the study aims to identify and document the heritage values associated with Senator Salgado Filho Square, as well as to analyze the multiple perceptions of use and meanings attributed by its various daily users.

Based on this multivocal reading of the place, the article elaborates a Cultural Significance Statement and preventive conservation guidelines, including risk management measures, definition of intervention priorities (ABC method), establish-

ment of monitoring indicators, improvement of inter-institutional governance, assurance of economic sustainability, and heritage education actions. In short, the introduction of these theoretical and contextual elements serves to underpin the objectives of the article, which are oriented toward strengthening the conservation policy for the Carioca Cultural Landscape through the valorization of both the tangible aspects of the square and its symbolic and social meanings.

2. Materials and Methods

Urban ethnoconservation is an operational unfolding of Landscape Policy and is grounded in Values-Based Conservation [11]. Unlike traditional methodologies, which prioritize the material integrity of cultural assets, ethnoconservation integrates subjective and intersubjective dimensions, recognizing that the landscape is composed of the values, practices, and identities attributed by the groups who experience it [10]. This approach connects heritage preservation to community life, incorporating urban ambience — the set of sensory, affective, and material aspects that shape the relationship with place [12].

Based on the assumptions of James Semple Kerr, the research was developed in four complementary stages. The first consisted of historical research and value attribution, with document analysis, survey of original design projects, and review of protective legislation. The investigation highlighted the architectural and landscape relevance of Senator Salgado Filho Square and the gaps in the protection of its original elements [10].

The second stage was the inventory of multivocal sociocultural values, in which semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and ethnotopography (spatial ethnography) made it possible to map the perceptions of different users of the

square [13, 14]. The mapping revealed diverse profiles and evidenced barriers related to safety, accessibility, and prejudice [10].

The third stage involved the analysis of urban ambiances, with sensory records and qualitative observations to understand how the atmosphere of the space influences the feeling

of belonging [12]. Finally, the fourth stage consisted of drafting a Statement of Cultural Significance based on the Burra Charter [15] and Mason [16], guiding the periodic renegotiation of the heritage value.

Table 1. Synthesis of the methodological stages, aligned with the postdoctoral research periods reported in the Acknowledgments.

Stage	Purpose	Main techniques	Period	Main outputs
1. Historical research and value attribution	Establish the historical, architectural and landscape relevance of the site and identify gaps in the protection of its original elements	Document analysis; survey of original design projects; review of protective legislation	Documentary phase, first postdoctoral research period (2019–2020)	Inventory of heritage values (historical, artistic, landscape, scientific)
2. Inventory of multivocal socio-cultural values	Map the perceptions, uses and values attributed by the square's different user groups	Semi-structured interviews; participant observation; etnotopografia (spatial ethnography)	Year-long ethnographic fieldwork, second postdoctoral research period (2021–2022)	Multivocal value inventory; ethnotopographic mapping (Figure 4)
3. Analysis of urban ambiances	Understand how the sensory and affective atmosphere of the square shapes users' sense of belonging	Sensory records; qualitative field observations	Conducted concurrently with Stage 2 fieldwork (2021–2022)	Characterization of urban ambiances and their relation to heritage values
4. Drafting of the Cultural Significance Statement	Consolidate the findings of Stages 1–3 into a formal statement guiding conservation priorities	Synthesis of prior stages against Burra Charter [15] and Mason [16] criteria	Consolidation phase, third postdoctoral research period (2023–2025)	Cultural Significance Statement and preventive conservation guidelines

3. Results

3.1. Attribution of Heritage Values

Senator Salgado Filho Square is a landmark of Brazilian modernist landscape design, situated opposite Santos Dumont Airport in central Rio de Janeiro. Conceived between 1938 and 1951 by the renowned landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, the project reflects a pivotal moment when Rio was re-inventing its waterfront and embracing modernism in architecture and planning [10, 17]. Working in collaboration with botanists Henrique Lahmeyer de Mello Barreto and Luiz Emygdio de Mello Filho, Burle Marx introduced a bold use of native tropical species, marking a departure from European-inspired garden models and affirming a distinctly Brazilian landscape identity [10].

Historical value. The square's historical significance lies in its role within Brazil's urban modernization and the consolidation of modernist landscape architecture. Commissioned in the context of the development of Santos Dumont Airport, it was designed to signal Rio's transformation into a modern metropolis and to showcase a new national aesthetic that integrated infrastructure, ecology, and public space [10, 17].

Artistic value. The artistic value is associated with Burle Marx's formal language: abstract and geometric compositions, mosaic pavements, sinuous planting beds, and sculptural plant groupings. These elements transform the square into a living artwork, placing it among the canonical examples of modern landscape architecture in Brazil [10, 17].

Landscape value. The landscape value derives from the integration of native vegetation, topography, and panoramic views. The square establishes visual and spatial dialogue with Guanabara Bay and the airport waterfront, offering a landscape experience in which urban and natural elements interpenetrate and reinforce each other [10, 12].

Scientific value. Finally, the square holds scientific value as an open-air laboratory for urban botany and landscape architecture. The diversity of plant species, the ecological management strategies, and the design solutions adopted by Burle Marx and his collaborators provide relevant material for research in urban ecology, environmental design, and the history of modern landscape architecture [10, 16]. Taken together, these historical, artistic, landscape, and scientific values synthesize the multidimensional importance of Senator Salgado Filho Square and justify its preservation as a cultural landscape.

3.2. Apprehension of Multivocal Sociocultural Values

The sociocultural diagnosis of Senator Salgado Filho Square was grounded in a year-long ethnographic enquiry that combined participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and *etnotopografia*—a form of spatial ethnography aimed at capturing the atmosphere and lived experience of a place [13, 26]. By visiting the square at various times of day and week, the research mapped everyday interactions and recorded sensory impressions [10, 12], allowing the identification of distinct social profiles and the values they attribute to the site. The mapping revealed that taxi drivers, car washers, street vendors, airport employees, police officers, tourists, homeless people and minority groups such as women, Black people, the elderly, people with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ individuals all appropriate the space differently. Interviews showed that each group expresses specific concerns and expectations: women highlight safety issues; LGBTQIA+ users recount experiences of belonging and vulnerability; homeless people regard the square as a refuge; and workers emphasize its role as a place of employment and community. This diversity underscores the need for a multivocal approach to conservation that respects and integrates overlapping values [10, 11].

Use value. For many users the square's value derives from its convenience and functionality. Located at the interface between Santos Dumont Airport and the city center, it functions as a transition zone and an open-air workplace. Taxi drivers, car washers, snack vendors and airport workers value the square as a shaded, ventilated and supportive environment where they can rest between tasks, receive customers and build community. A taxi driver and a vendor interviewed for this study emphasized the importance of the trees and breeze for their well-being and for attracting clientele; they described the space as “a point of support, security and welcome” indispensable to their daily routines. These practical uses coexist with more informal uses, such as resting or waiting for transport, illustrating how the square's physical and social affordances generate a dynamic use value that is socially produced [10].

Shelter and survival value. The research also found that homeless individuals use the square as a refuge and sleeping area, underscoring the need for social assistance policies. Their presence highlights the square's role as a survival resource and reveals tensions between different user groups over space and visibility [10].

Well-being value. Many visitors—both workers and occasional passers-by—associate the square with sensory and psychological comfort. The shade of native trees, the breeze from Guanabara Bay and the presence of birds and small monkeys create a microclimate that mitigates heat and noise [12]. A long-time car washer described the “peace” and “sense of belonging” provided by the green environment, noting that the constant flow of people adds to the sense of security and conviviality. These qualitative perceptions indicate that the square

contributes to urban quality of life and mental well-being [12, 10].

Aesthetic and symbolic value. Users also appreciate the square's artistic qualities and cultural symbolism. Designed by Roberto Burle Marx, the site is recognized for its mosaic paths, sinuous planting beds and sculptural groupings, which reflect the modernist movement. People interviewed expressed pride in its distinctive design and identified the square as a visual landmark that embodies the identity of Rio's waterfront [17]. For some, memories of childhood visits and family outings reinforce their sentimental significance, demonstrating how heritage values are layered with personal and collective meanings [10].

Safety value. Despite the presence of workers and security guards, women and other vulnerable groups report a persistent sense of insecurity. Drawing on Jane Jacobs's notion that safety is linked to “eyes on the street” [27], participants noted that poor lighting, lack of public restrooms and hidden areas reduce their sense of protection. Elderly users also pointed to the need for more benches and accessible paths, while people with disabilities emphasized the absence of ramps and tactile signage. These observations suggest that improving basic infrastructure is essential for broadening the square's use value and aligning it with universal design principles [10, 11].

Inclusion and accessibility value. Interviews with Black people, older adults, individuals with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ users revealed that physical and symbolic barriers often limit their full enjoyment of the square. While the landscape design offers shade and vegetation, inadequate accessibility measures restrict mobility; moreover, experiences of prejudice and discrimination—reported by a Black car washer who felt mistrusted because of his race—indicate that social inclusion remains a challenge [10]. LGBTQIA+ respondents stressed that acceptance and safety are prerequisites for their presence. Recognizing and addressing these barriers is fundamental for inclusive heritage management [11, 10].

Environmental value. The square's vegetation contributes to urban biodiversity, microclimatic regulation and ecological education. Its assemblage of native species attracts birds and small primates, reduces heat and noise, and offers shade for users. For many, these ecological qualities foster a connection with nature and raise awareness of environmental stewardship, aligning the square with broader objectives of urban sustainability [10, 18].

Economic value. Finally, the square has an economic dimension. It provides livelihood opportunities for taxi drivers, vendors and car washers, whose income depends on the flow of passengers and visitors [10]. At the same time, heritage tourism represents a potential source of revenue for conservation, provided that economic activities are balanced with the preservation of cultural and social values. Stakeholders therefore advocated tourism initiatives and creative-economy events that generate funds without commodifying the space or excluding vulnerable groups [9, 10].

Taken together, these multivocal values reveal Senator Salgado Filho Square as a space of encounter, work, refuge and memory. Rather than a static monument, it is a living landscape where different groups negotiate meanings and resources. Effective conservation policies must therefore balance their historical and ecological significance with the everyday needs of users, ensuring that heritage protection does not reinforce exclusion but rather supports inclusive and sustainable urban life [10].

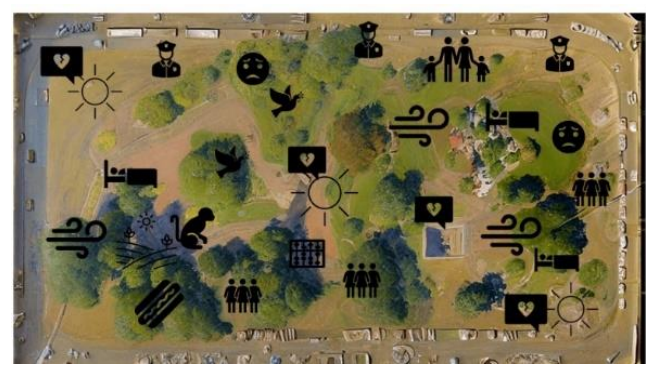


Figure 4. Ethnotopography and Mapping of Manifestations at Senator Salgado Filho Square, RJ. Source: Alda Azevedo, 2024.

Figure 4 presents a methodologically interpreted synthesis of the fieldwork, rather than a purely illustrative sketch: qualitative codes drawn from interview transcripts and field notes—organized by value category (use, shelter, well-being, aesthetic-symbolic, safety, inclusion, environmental, and economic) and by user profile—were geo-referenced onto the square's spatial layout, allowing overlapping and conflicting perceptions to be visualized systematically rather than only narratively. This coding-to-mapping protocol, adapted from etnotopografia [14, 26], is designed to be replicable in future applications of the model to other public spaces.

Table 2. Map legend of activities in Senator Salgado Filho Square, Rio de Janeiro. Source: prepared by the author.

Legend	
	Police
	Fear
	Space most used by families
	High sun exposure
	Unwelcoming place
	Refuge for homeless people

Legend	
	Pleasant/shaded area
	Street vendors/Snack sales point
	Presence of wildlife
	Presence of birds
	Gathering place for taxi drivers and local workers
	Games area
	Pleasant breeze

4. Discussion: Conservation Policy

The diagnosis of Senator Salgado Filho Square reveals a dichotomy common to many cultural landscapes: while the site possesses recognized historical and artistic values, its current management fails to address social dynamics and operational challenges. The identification of multivocal values and the risks associated with the abandonment of the square demonstrate that traditional preservation mechanisms—focused solely on material protection—are insufficient to guarantee the vitality and sustainability of the site. Therefore, the results indicate the urgency of a new management model that articulates heritage conservation with urban reality. This section discusses the guidelines for an integrated conservation policy, structured to fill the gaps identified in the case study and aligned with the principles of urban ethnoconservation. The discussion is organized around eight complementary axes: cultural significance, integrated governance, geopolitical and cultural practice, accessibility and safety, risk management (ABC Method), monitoring indicators, economic sustainability, and heritage education.

4.1. Cultural Significance Statement of Senator Salgado Filho Square

A cultural significance statement explains why a property should be preserved and for which audiences this conservation is relevant. According to the Burra Charter, the cultural significance of a place refers to its aesthetic, historical, scientific, social, or spiritual value for past, present, and future generations [15]. Mason [16] reinforces that the identification of these values must consider the multiplicity of meanings attributed by different social groups, as the notion of heritage value is dynamic and depends on contexts of use and collective perceptions.

Considering these guidelines and the research conducted, Senator Salgado Filho Square possesses cultural significance

because it materializes Roberto Burle Marx's modernist landscape architecture and the evolution of urban planning in Rio de Janeiro. Its abstract forms, mosaics, and native plant species dialogue with the natural landscape and represent an aesthetic and scientific landmark of the modern movement [10]. It is also important because it serves as a space for conviviality, well-being, and resistance for a diversity of groups: workers, tourists, women, the elderly, the homeless population, Black people, and LGBTQIA+ individuals build memories, affections, and cultural practices there, transforming the square into a symbol of inclusion and urban identity [10, 11]. From a social and economic standpoint, the square offers livelihood opportunities for street vendors and taxis, in addition to attracting visitors and fostering cultural tourism. Environmentally, it contributes to urban biodiversity and the microclimatic regulation of the region [10, 18].

Preserving the square, therefore, is essential both to safeguard the material and intangible memory of Brazilian landscape architecture and to ensure an inclusive space that meets the needs for leisure, shelter, work, and sociability of the groups who frequent it today and of future generations [16].

4.2. The Need for an Integrated Approach

The analysis of the "Rio de Janeiro: Carioca Landscapes between the Mountain and the Sea" World Heritage site highlights structural fragilities that compromise the effectiveness of safeguarding actions. Recent reports by UNESCO and ICOMOS point to critical deficiencies, such as the absence of a structured monitoring system, conflicts of normative competence among institutions, and the lack of continuous financing mechanisms [9]. In the specific case of Senator Salgado Filho Square, these macro-structural problems manifest as physical degradation, insecurity for vulnerable groups, and a disconnect between the official heritage discourse and the users' daily experience [10].

Overcoming this scenario requires an integrated approach that transcends the isolation of heritage agencies. As observed in the results, the square is a territory of dispute where social demands (security, accessibility, shelter) compete with preservation requirements. An effective policy must, therefore, operate on multiple fronts simultaneously: it must ensure physical integrity through preventive conservation; promote social inclusion by recognizing the values of diverse groups; and guarantee viability through participatory governance and sustainable economic models. The following guidelines propose a transition from a static preservation model to a dynamic management system, capable of mediating conflicts and strengthening the bond between the community and the landscape.

A cultural heritage conservation policy comprises the guidelines, principles, and actions through which public and international bodies protect material and intangible cultural assets, guiding conservation decisions and ensuring their

transmission to future generations. By implementing such policies, governments and organizations safeguard collective memory and cultural identity, treating heritage as both a legacy of the past and a living resource for the present.

A conservation management policy based on urban ethno-conservation must begin with the active inclusion of local communities in heritage management. Authors like Mason [16] and Avrami et al. [11] advocate that preservation processes incorporate the cultural and social meanings attributed by different groups. In this sense, it is crucial to create user councils, community forums, and periodic public consultations so that residents, workers, and other users participate in defining conservation guidelines [10]. These democratic and inclusive mechanisms ensure that management considers the plurality of values and needs present in space, aligning with international principles that emphasize social engagement [9, 15].

It is important to ensure the representation of marginalized groups—homeless individuals, women, the Black population, LGBTQIA+, the elderly, and people with disabilities—so that heritage policies reflect sociocultural diversity and promote equity in the use of space [10]. Continuous social participation, based on shared values, strengthens the sense of belonging and legitimizes conservation actions [11, 16].

Given the multiple meanings and uses attributed to the cultural asset by different actors, conservation must be treated as a practice of mediation. The landscape functions as a field of cultural negotiation, where tensions may arise between, for example, commercial interests, leisure needs, informal housing, and historical preservation. It is necessary to establish instances for conflict mediation, such as committees or multi-sector working groups, to reconcile divergent views and prevent the exclusion of vulnerable groups [10]. This approach recognizes that heritage management involves symbolic and power disputes, requiring constant dialogue. Avrami and Mason [11] reinforce that conservation must be inclusively mediated, respecting the meanings attributed by communities and promoting tension resolution. Thus, heritage policies can accommodate contemporary uses without compromising cultural values, avoiding gentrification and ensuring that social memory is preserved along with the materiality of the asset.

The technical dimension of conservation policy requires a preventive and sustainable approach, integrating traditional conservation principles with contemporary environmental guidelines. Worthing and Bond [18] emphasize the importance of continuous maintenance practices, regular monitoring, and risk management to prevent degradation that requires drastic interventions. Ecological techniques should be adopted in the square's conservation—appropriate management of native vegetation, use of compatible and resistant materials, pest control, and sustainable cleaning—ensuring the integrity of Roberto Burle Marx's original design and the conservation of the characteristic landscape elements [10].

Measures such as faithful restoration of damaged elements, judicious repriming (selective removal of incompatible ad-

ditions), and, above all, continuous maintenance are indispensable for prolonging the life of the heritage [10, 18]. Furthermore, management must align with environmental and urban regulations, incorporating low-impact solutions, for example, efficient irrigation systems, waste management, clean energy for lighting—so that material conservation proceeds alongside the environmental sustainability of space. This technical-ecological integration ensures that preservation is not only physical but also environmentally responsible, contributing to the asset's resilience against climate change and urban pressures.

4.3. Conservation as Geopolitical and Cultural Practice

Urban cultural heritage is not neutral: its management involves dealing with geopolitical and cultural processes that shape which histories and identities are valued. This axis of conservation policy recognizes the asset as a space for symbolic disputes and social demands. It is necessary to incorporate strategies that promote collective memory, cultural diversity, and social justice within preservation actions [10]. This means, for example, supporting initiatives to valorize local history and the narratives of traditionally marginalized groups, as well as adopting affirmative policies for gender equality and racial inclusion in the use and cultural programming of space.

By understanding conservation as a political act as well, managers begin to consider who benefits or is harmed by the interventions. Thus, guidelines must be constructed with critical awareness, preventing heritage protection from serving as a pretext for gentrification or the militarization of urban space. Instead, conservation should strengthen the role of the place as a territory for conviviality and cultural resistance, expanding access and the recognition of the diverse meanings attributed by the community [10, 16]. This vision expands the scope of conservation beyond technique, encompassing the civic and symbolic dimensions of heritage.

4.4. Accessibility and Safety

Guaranteeing universal accessibility and safety in the public heritage space is transversal to all axes. Conservation policies must foresee concrete improvements in urban infrastructure, ensuring that all users can enjoy the space with comfort and protection. In the case studied, women emphasized the need for adequate lighting and community surveillance to prevent harassment, and people with disabilities and the elderly pointed out physical barriers that hinder mobility [10]. As a response, conservation must integrate universal design—architectural adaptations such as ramps, tactile signage, and obstacle elimination—without compromising the historical design, ensuring full access. Similarly, the installation of inclusive public restrooms, improved lighting with efficient technology (LED), and the presence of community guardians or

security patrols can enhance the sense of security for vulnerable groups. Creating safer and more accessible environments is aligned with the concept of the right to the city, making heritage a truly public and democratic space. Safety measures must be implemented in a participatory manner, in partnership with the local community and with gender sensitivity, to avoid discriminatory approaches. By incorporating these urban accessibility and safety provisions into the conservation policy, it is reinforced that the valorization of heritage and social well-being are inseparable.

4.5. ABC Method (Risk Management)

To ensure preventive conservation, a risk management plan that identifies threats, estimates their magnitudes, and prioritizes actions is essential. The ABC Method—developed by ICCROM and the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI)—is a risk management approach conceived and refined over ten years within the framework of the Reducing Risks to Collections course. Its objective is to optimize the preservation of cultural heritage value by providing tools to establish intervention priorities and strategies [19].

The methodology uses three complementary scales to quantify risk: component “A” measures the frequency or speed with which an adverse event occurs; components “B” and “C,” together, quantify the expected loss of value in the affected items [19]. The combination of the three components generates a magnitude score, which allows for the comparison and ordering of different risks.

This score is classified on a magnitude scale with practical implications, ranging from “catastrophic” and “extreme” to “negligible” [19]. To facilitate application in urban areas, it is proposed to adapt this scale into three priority levels:

High Priority – Equivalent to catastrophic or extreme magnitudes. These are imminent threats that can cause significant loss of value in the short term, including critical structural degradation, tree collapse, insecurity for women and the LGBTQIA+ population at night, and extreme weather events. They require immediate actions, such as stabilization work, emergency pruning, reinforcement of lighting, and increased public or community surveillance.

Medium Priority – Corresponds to high or medium magnitudes. They do not immediately threaten the physical integrity of the asset but compromise the ambience and the sociocultural experience. Examples include limited accessibility (broken sidewalks, absence of ramps), disorderly occupation by informal commerce, and moderate degradation of street furniture. Actions can be planned in the medium term, focusing on infrastructure improvements, participatory ordering of space use, and partnerships with social assistance to relocate inappropriate uses.

Low Priority – Refers to negligible magnitudes. Involves minor issues, such as gradual aesthetic wear, small acts of vandalism, or the need for repainting. Although they do not require immediate intervention, they should be monitored and

integrated into periodic maintenance to prevent problem accumulation.

Practical applications of the ABC Method in historical sites—such as the Manguinhos site of FIOCRUZ (Rio de Janeiro), Petra (Jordan), and Colombian cultural heritage—demonstrate that the method places the question of value and loss of value at the center of the process, involving communities and specialists in the attribution of values and the assessment of impacts [20].

By prioritizing interventions based on the magnitude of the risk and the values attributed by the various actors, the ABC Method optimizes the use of scarce resources and ensures that the most severe threats are addressed first. It is recommended that the risk matrix be reviewed periodically with the participation of community councils, incorporating new perceptions of danger and adjusting priorities according to the transformations of space [20]. Thus, risk management becomes transparent, adaptive, and shared with society.

In research on urban ethnoconservation, the ABC Method is adopted as a diagnostic and planning tool for the preventive conservation of the cultural landscape. After identifying and attributing values to the site (inventorying historical, artistic, landscape, and sociocultural attributes), the team applies the ABC Method to assess the physical, environmental, and social risks that may compromise these values. The method is structured in five stages—establishing the context, identifying risks, analyzing risks, evaluating risks, and treating risks—and associates risk management with heritage values, allowing researchers to determine which threats are most critical to the material and immaterial integrity of the place [19, 20].

The prioritization (hierarchization) of risks is based on quantitative and qualitative parameters. The ABC Method uses three scales to measure the magnitude of each risk: (i) component “A,” which quantifies the frequency or probability of occurrence of an adverse event; (ii) component “B,” which estimates the expected loss of value in each affected item; and (iii) component “C,” which assesses the proportion of items in the set that will be affected [19]. The sum of the scores of A, B, and C results in the risk magnitude, which is compared with a scale of practical implications: high scores (equivalent to catastrophic or extreme categories) indicate high-priority risks and require immediate responses; intermediate scores point to medium-priority risks, which can be addressed in the medium term; and low scores correspond to low-priority risks, monitored in the long term or integrated into routine maintenance. In simplified adaptations for communities, these ranges are grouped into three categories—High, Medium, and Low priority—to facilitate the communication of results [20].

In addition to technical parameters, the research incorporates qualitative criteria, such as cultural significance and user perception, in the impact analysis. The final prioritization, therefore, considers not only the probability of occurrence and the potential for damage but also the value attributed by different social groups to the cultural asset, ensuring that mitigation actions are guided by the principles of ethnoconservation

and community participation [19].

4.6. Monitoring Indicators

A set of monitoring indicators was developed, aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the urban ethnoconservation approach, covering the five axes of sustainability (environmental, economic, social, cultural, and institutional) as recommended by best practices in integrated heritage management [21].

In this research, the concept of sustainability is grounded in the classic definition of sustainable development from the Our Common Future (Brundtland Report) by the World Commission on Environment and Development [22]. This report established that development must meet the needs of the present generations without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs. This concept introduced the ideas of intergenerational equity and a balance between the use and regeneration of ecosystems. Subsequently, John Elkington broadened this vision by proposing the “triple bottom line” [23], arguing that sustainability must simultaneously consider the environmental, social, and economic dimensions, such that the neglect of any one dimension compromises the others.

The work also aligns with the guidelines of the UN 2030 Agenda and the UNESCO Policy on World Heritage and Sustainable Development. These documents emphasize that heritage management must be guided by transparency, dialogue, and social inclusion [24, 25]. Furthermore, they highlight that SDG 11 specifically seeks to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable [24, 25]. Thus, the research adopts a multidimensional understanding of sustainability—environmental, social, economic, cultural, and institutional—in consonance with the Sustainable Development Goals. This approach recognizes that the conservation of Senator Salgado Filho Square must integrate ecological management, community participation, economic viability, cultural valorization, and effective governance, ensuring the transmission of heritage values to current and future generations.

4.6.1. Indicator of Environmental Quality and Climate Resilience

In the environmental axis, the aim is to measure the landscape integrity and environmental sustainability of the square through the increase of green infrastructure (e.g., rain gardens, permeable pavement, afforestation) and the reduction of climate impacts such as flooding and heat islands. This indicator reflects goals from SDGs 11 and 13—resilient cities and climate action—ensuring that the original design by Burle Marx and its characteristic natural elements are sustainably preserved and managed [10, 21]. For example, the implementation of 100% of green drainage solutions in critical areas can reduce flooding points by up to 80%, strengthening local resilience [21] and meeting international recommendations to make cities safer and more sustainable [9].

4.6.2. Indicator of Economic Sustainability of Conservation

In the economic axis, an indicator of resource mobilization and financial autonomy for the square's maintenance is adopted, based on SDG 11.4 (protection of cultural heritage) and SDG 17 (partnerships). This indicator assesses the volume of funding obtained through public-private partnerships, sustainable cultural tourism, donations, or heritage funds, in proportion to the space's conservation costs. The creation of an exclusive "Heritage Conservation Fund," for example, ensures continuous resources for preventive actions and valorizes the heritage [10]. Such a measure is in line with successful experiences in World Heritage sites, where the combination of cultural tourism revenue with government support guaranteed the sustainability of initiatives [9]. The goal is, therefore, to reduce dependence on public budgets, reaching a percentage of costs covered by own revenues, which reinforces the project's long-term economic viability.

4.6.3. Indicator of Inclusive Social Use and Safety

In the social axis, an indicator of engagement and social accessibility of the square is defined, in line with the goals of SDG 11.7 (inclusive public spaces) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities). This indicator covers the quantity and diversity of frequent users and the perceived degree of satisfaction and safety in the location by different groups (gender, age, social origin) [10]. Visitor frequency, segmented by community residents, women, the elderly, children, and other groups, as well as the realization of accessible cultural and educational activities, reveal how inclusive and vibrant the space's use is [10]. Field research in S. Salgado Filho Square identified barriers of safety, accessibility, and even prejudice that limited certain audiences [10], making the monitoring of users' perception of safety and comfort—through annual satisfaction surveys—fundamental. The objective is to gradually increase public satisfaction indices and ensure universal accessibility, eliminating physical and communicative barriers as envisioned in SDG 11.7 actions. Improvement in these social indicators will signal a more inclusive, safer, and more participatory square, meeting the Landscape Policy guidelines to foster community appropriation and social cohesion in heritage [6, 9].

4.6.4. Indicator of Cultural Valorization and Belonging

In the cultural axis, an innovative indicator of symbolic values and social memory is proposed, consistent with urban ethnoconservation research and SDGs 4.7 and 11.4 (heritage education and cultural heritage safeguarding). Unlike purely physical indicators, this measures the intangible aspects of conservation, for example, the degree of belonging of users to

the square and the preservation of collective memory linked to it. Quantification can be done through periodic surveys on the feeling of belonging and the cultural importance that frequent users attribute to the place, as well as the number of heritage education initiatives and community cultural events held annually. This approach meets recommendations for evaluating the cultural and social benefits of preservation, going beyond the material dimension [11, 16]. Qualitative indicators such as these capture the proportion of users who feel like "guardians" of the square or who recognize its historical value, reflecting the success of educational and local engagement actions [10]. By monitoring such perceptions, management ensures that conservation is not limited to the physical object but includes maintaining the community's affective and identity bonds with the space, putting the ethnoconservation paradigm into practice [9, 10].

4.6.5. Indicator of Participatory Governance and Transparency

In the institutional axis (governance), an indicator of effectiveness of inter-institutional management and social participation is adopted, aligned with SDG 16 (effective, transparent, and inclusive institutions) and urban governance goals of SDG 11 (such as 11.3.2 on civil society participation). This indicator verifies, for example, the existence and regular functioning of a multisectoral management committee for the square—with periodic meetings, published minutes, and the involvement of heritage, environment, security, urban planning agencies, and local community representatives. The reestablishment of collegiate decision-making bodies was recommended by UNESCO as an urgent step after the disarticulation of the Carioca Cultural Landscape management committee in 2019 [9], as integrated coordination between government spheres and civil society avoids overlaps in competence and gaps in preservation. Thus, monitoring the number of meetings of the management council and compliance with integrated plans and regulations makes the degree of institutional cooperation tangible [9, 21]. Complementarily, the active transparency of management is assessed, measured by the percentage of project information and documents made publicly available and the openness of participation channels (ombudsmen, online consultations). Achieving an "optimal" level of transparency (according to control body criteria) is a goal that reinforces public trust [21]. These mechanisms of collaborative and open governance are in line with the Landscape Policy, which advocates for integrated policies and social participation in the protection of the landscape [6], and ensures that the results of previous indicators are monitored by society, closing the monitoring cycle with social control and shared responsibility in urban heritage conservation.

Table 3. Summary of the multidimensional monitoring indicators by sustainability axis.

Axis	Indicator	Key SDG alignment	Measured dimension
Environmental	Environmental Quality and Climate Resilience	SDG 11; SDG 13	Green-infrastructure coverage; reduction of flooding and heat-island impacts
Economic	Economic Sustainability of Conservation	SDG 11.4; SDG 17	Share of maintenance costs covered by own revenue and public–private partnerships
Social	Inclusive Social Use and Safety	SDG 11.7; SDG 10	User diversity and frequency; perceived safety and satisfaction across groups
Cultural	Cultural Valorization and Belonging	SDG 4.7; SDG 11.4	Sense of belonging; heritage-education initiatives and community cultural events
Institutional	Participatory Governance and Transparency	SDG 16; SDG 11.3.2	Functioning of the management committee; public transparency of information

4.7. Governance and Economic Sustainability of Conservation

The consolidation of an effective conservation policy requires the reactivation and strengthening of the Carioca Cultural Landscape Management Committee, which was dissolved in 2019. The weakening of this body severely fractured the coordination between federal (IPHAN), state (INEPAC), municipal (IRPH and city hall) agencies, and civil society. To reestablish this governance, the committee must include balanced representation from society and multiple institutions—covering heritage, urban planning, environment, social assistance, and security—ensuring that decisions reflect diverse knowledge and competencies [9]. In addition to recomposing the participatory body, it is fundamental to harmonize existing regulations and unify inspection procedures; the fragmentation of rules and the absence of a single deliberation mechanism have compromised the application of heritage policies and the management of urban interventions.

In the financial sphere, the sustainability of conservation demands the creation of a Heritage Conservation Fund, with dedicated resources for preventive maintenance and projects that valorize the space. This fund, proposed by Ferreira [10], must gather various revenue sources—public contributions, public-private partnerships, urban compensations, and donations—ensuring transparency and accountability. The experience of World Heritage sites shows that revenues generated from cultural tourism and the creative economy can supplement public financing, if activities are planned so as not to compromise the integrity of the heritage [9].

Finally, the institutionalization of thematic working groups—focused on security, accessibility, or cultural programming—places community co-management at the center of governance. Continuous dialogue with local users allows for the adjustment of priorities and reinforces shared respon-

sibility in preservation. Thus, the convergence between participatory governance, integrated regulations, and robust financing constitutes the foundation for the longevity of the conservation policies for Senator Salgado Filho Square and other cultural spaces.

4.8. Heritage Education: Strengthening Bonds

Finally, the sustainability of the conservation policy depends on the continuous strengthening of the affective bonds between the population and the heritage site. Heritage Education is proposed here not merely as the transmission of information, but as a strategy of “sensitization” to the values of the place [10]. Based on the concept of *ambiances*, educational actions should encourage users to experience the square sensorially and cognitively, recognizing it as a space of identity and memory [12].

To achieve this, the policy proposes the implementation of interpretation programs with physical and digital signage (such as QR Codes) that tell the history of Roberto Burle Marx’s design and the botanical species present, making the landscape “legible” to daily passersby [10]. Concurrently, partnerships with local schools should be established to use the square as an open-air classroom for botany, history, and arts, fostering a sense of guardianship in younger generations. Furthermore, capacity building for local actors is essential; workshops with street vendors and maintenance workers—who are the daily custodians of the space—aim to help them understand the heritage value of the elements they interact with, transforming them into partners in preservation rather than agents of unintentional damage [10]. By integrating education into the management routine, the policy ensures that conservation becomes a shared social practice, strictly aligning with UNESCO’s recommendations to place communities at the heart of heritage processes [9, 25].

5. Conclusions

The research conducted on Senator Salgado Filho Square confirms that the management of cultural landscapes in complex urban contexts can no longer rely exclusively on static preservation paradigms. The case study revealed that the most critical threats to the site were not merely physical degradation, but the profound disconnect between official heritage policies and the social reality of the territory. By adopting an *Urban Ethnoconservation* approach, the study showed that safeguarding modern heritage effectively depends on reading Roberto Burle Marx's design together with the multivocal meanings that daily users attach to the square, rather than treating the material and social dimensions of conservation as separate problems. This integrative approach distinguishes the study from prior ethnoconservation research, which has generally been applied to small-scale, rural, or single-value heritage sites: here, the model is tested against the complexity of a dense, contested urban World Heritage setting, combining risk-based prioritization with multidimensional, SDG-aligned monitoring within a single replicable framework.

The proposed conservation policy, structured around the ABC Risk Management Method, multidimensional monitoring indicators, and participatory governance, addresses the management gaps identified for the "Rio de Janeiro: Carioca Landscapes between the Mountain and the Sea" World Heritage site. The results indicate that recognizing the square as a territory of coexistence—where demands for leisure, shelter, and work intersect with preservation—does not compromise its historical value; on the contrary, it strengthens the sense of belonging necessary for its long-term sustainability. Furthermore, the research highlights that technical solutions alone are insufficient without a strong institutional framework. The reestablishment of a multisectoral management committee and the creation of financial sustainability mechanisms are in-

dispensable conditions for overcoming the current fragmentation of public actions.

Some limitations of this study should be acknowledged. The research is based on a single case study which, while methodologically rich, constrains the generalizability of the findings to other sites within the Carioca Cultural Landscape or to cultural landscapes elsewhere; the qualitative interviews and observations, although extensive, reflect a purposive rather than probabilistic sample, and the researcher's own positionality inevitably shapes the interpretation of multivocal narratives. Furthermore, the monitoring indicators proposed here have not yet been empirically tested over time, and their sensitivity to seasonal, political, or economic fluctuations remains to be assessed. Future studies should apply longitudinal and comparative designs to address these limitations and strengthen the replicability of the proposed model.

Regarding future research directions, given the innovative nature of the indicators developed, subsequent studies should focus on validating and scaling this methodology to other public spaces within the Buffer Zone of the Carioca Cultural Landscape. Specifically, it is recommended to investigate the applicability of the "social use and safety" indicators in sites with different urban typologies, such as historical parks versus beachfronts. Additionally, it is relevant to assess the long-term impact of Heritage Education programs on vandalism rates and conservation costs, as well as to develop digital tools that allow for real-time community monitoring of the proposed indicators. Comparative studies across other UNESCO-listed urban landscapes facing similar governance fragmentation would further test the model's cross-cultural replicability. In conclusion, this work establishes a replicable model for transforming "landscapes in dispute" into territories of democratic memory and resilience, offering a pathway to reconcile the protection of the past with the dynamic needs of the contemporary city.

Abbreviations

RJ	Rio de Janeiro (state/city abbreviation used in the title)
COC	Casa de Oswaldo Cruz (Oswaldo Cruz House, research unit of Fiocruz)
Fiocruz	Fundacao Oswaldo Cruz (Oswaldo Cruz Foundation)
UFRJ	Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro)
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and Other Sexual and Gender Minorities (LGBTQIA+ communities)
ABC (Method)	ABC Method for Risk Assessment in Preventive Conservation (risk-ranking method using components A, B and C)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN	United Nations
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
LED	Light Emitting Diode
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
CCI	Canadian Conservation Institute
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals (of the United Nations)
IPHAN	Instituto do Patrimonio Historico e Artistico Nacional (National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage, Brazil)

INEPAC	State Institute of Cultural Heritage (Instituto Estadual do Patrimonio Cultural)
NAHM	Núcleo Arquitetônico Histórico de Manguinhos (Manguinhos Historical Architectural Core)
FGV	Fundação Getúlio Vargas (Getúlio Vargas Foundation)
ONU	Organização das Nações Unidas (Portuguese designation for the <i>United Nations</i> — same institution as “UN”)
ABAP	Brazilian Association of Landscape Architects
IFLA	International Federation of Landscape Architects
CIPA	International Committee for Documentation of Cultural Heritage (Formerly Comité International de la Photogrammétrie Architecturale)

Acknowledgments

This research was developed over the course of three post-doctoral stages conducted at the Laboratory of Architecture, Subjectivity, and Culture (LASC/PROARQ) of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (2019–2020 and 2021–2022) and at the Study and Research Group on Politics and Territory (GEOPPOL/PPGG/UFRJ) (2023–2025).

The author gratefully acknowledges Prof. Dr. Cristiane Rose de Siqueira Duarte and Prof. Dr. Rafael Winter Ribeiro for their generous guidance and the sustained intellectual dialogue that contributed significantly to the development and maturation of this investigation.

The realization of this work was also enriched by exchanges with the residents, users, and workers of Senator Salgado Filho Square, whose narratives and experiences constitute the core of the urban ethnoconservation proposal developed herein. To all those who contributed with generosity, time, and affection to this research journey, I record my sincere appreciation.

Author Contributions

Alda de Azevedo Ferreira: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

Funding

This work is supported by the Fundação Carlos Chagas Filho de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro – FAPERJ (Grant No. SEI 26003/014816/2023 APQ1) and the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico – CNPq (Grant No. 400724/2023-5), through the Program for the Fixation of Young PhDs in Brazil.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the outcome of this research work has been reported in the book *Política da Paisagem: Desafios e Práticas em Etnoconservação Urbana* [10].

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Appendix: Ethnographic Drawings and Affective Cartography

The following illustrations were produced during the field-work phase of the research and reflect the ethnographic and affective relationship between users and the cultural landscape of Senator Salgado Filho Square. These figures document subjective perceptions of use, identity, and vulnerability, supporting the ethnoconservation diagnosis of the site.

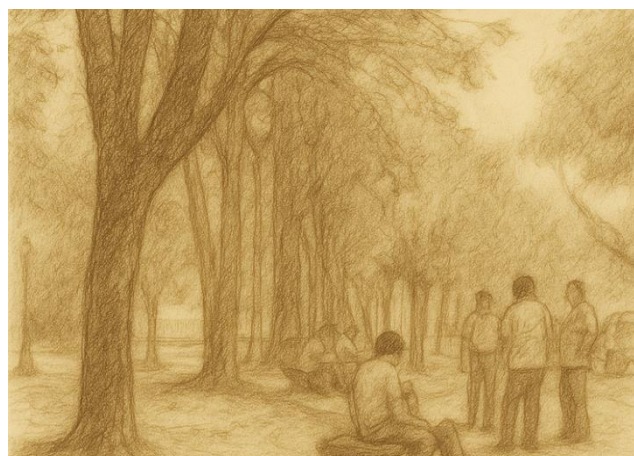


Figure A1. Affective Map of Senator Salgado Filho Square.

Spatial representation of areas perceived as safe or welcoming by different groups of users. Drawn from community-based mapping and interviews. Source: Ferreira, A. (2024)



Figure A2. *Affective Map of Spatial Uses.*

Mapping of circulation flows, informal uses, conflict zones, and sensory references of the square, developed through spatial ethnography. Source: Ferreira, A. (2024)



Figure A3. *Memory and Belonging Zones.*

Illustration of symbolic territories such as childhood memory areas, cultural gathering spots, and urban thresholds of displacement. Source: Ferreira, A. (2024)

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Biography



Alda de Azevedo Ferreira is an architect, urbanist, landscape architect and postdoctoral researcher at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), working with the Laboratory of Research and Studies on Policy and Territory (GEOPPOL) and the Sustainability Program of the Historic Architectural Core of Manguinhos at Fiocruz. She holds a DSc in Architecture from PROARQ/UFRJ and a Master's degree in Urban Development from the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE). Her research focuses on cultural landscapes, heritage conservation, urban ethnoconservation and socio-environmental justice, with case studies in World Heritage sites and historical areas of Rio de Janeiro. Dr. Ferreira currently coordinates the Rio de Janeiro Chapter of the Brazilian Association of Landscape Architects (ABAP-RJ), serves in ICOMOS/IFLA scientific committees on cultural landscapes and CIPA heritage documentation, and is the author of *Politica da Paisagem: Desafios e Práticas em Etnoconservacao Urbana*.

Research Field

Alda de Azevedo Ferreira: Cultural Landscape Management, Urban Ethnoconservation, Heritage Conservation Policy, Modernist Landscape Architecture, Socio-environmental Justice, Participatory Heritage Management, Urban Planning and Cultural Heritage.