

METHODOLOGICAL ADVANCES IN THE ANALYSIS, ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION OF INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPES

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Abstract

We are currently witnessing a gradual extension of the concept of heritage. This idea has evolved to encompass landscapes and is even reaching into an area which, until recently, had not received sufficient attention: industrial heritage. This new notion of what constitutes heritage is particularly interesting from a cultural perspective, with the appearance of the term “cultural landscape” which covers landscapes produced by industrial decay, among other things.

This extended concept of heritage, which is gradually growing both quantitatively and qualitatively, has not only added extra complexity to the limits of what is considered heritage, but is also bringing an evolution in the methodological parameters used for analysis, protection and action, from a 19th-Century modern scientific perspective towards a more epistemological, ideological, political, cultural and technical approach.

In environmental research, the most common methodologies with the widest scientific acceptance are those that refer to natural and rural landscapes, while there are hardly any that refer to industrial landscapes and pay them special attention as cultural landscapes, such approaches as exist being in their very early stages.

In this sense, the object of this paper is to study and analyze the theoretical principles and developments made at international level in relation to environmental research, from the second half of the 20th century to the present day. More specifically, we will focus on the methodologies which seek to overcome the obsolescent tools and methods used in landscape analysis, often limited to traditional parameters, and which give industrial landscapes special consideration as cultural landscapes.

For this purpose, we will pay particular attention to the methodologies that go beyond considering landscapes as mere visual phenomena, to treat them as an intimate and complex relationship between people and a place. The British methodology *Landscape Character Assessment* (LCA) will have a special place in this study. However, this interest in LCA does not mean that we will be ignoring other major methodological contributions.

This method review will ultimately enable us to define the basic supporting pillars for the development of a specific methodology to be used in the analysis and intervention of industrial landscapes produced by industrial decay.