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Under-utilisation of the World Heritage Cultural Landscape category? A timely question

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ABSTRACT

UNESCO's *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (1972) *(Convention)* provides the highest level of international recognition for outstanding universal heritage places. While the *Convention* has been instrumental in aiding heritage preservation, arguably it has also reinforced a problematic 'culture' and 'nature' division in protected area management. This is not a new observation. One solution that attempted to address this issue was the introduction of the World Heritage (WH) 'Cultural Landscape' category in 1992. Yet, as of 2023, there are only 127 Cultural Landscape properties of the total 1157 properties on the WH List (10.9%). Poor recognition of the category appears particularly acute in some regions, such as Australia-Oceania, and in this paper, we consider this apparent under-utilisation with a systematic review of the literature about the category. Our analysis reveals significant and concerning regional variations in both use of the cultural landscape category and in research about it. In our current era, when better recognition of First Nation heritage is demanded, and when greater protection of heritage assets is required, further uptake of the Cultural Landscape category has the potential to redress these pressing societal concerns.

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Introduction

Heritage conservation approaches and the idea of 'cultural landscapes'

The idea of a 'cultural landscape' has long been regarded as a tool to bridge the conceptual and practical gap in recognising and protecting 'nature' and 'culture'. Almost 100 years ago Geographer, Carl Sauer (1925, 46), defined cultural landscapes as a place ' . . . fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape is the result'. Taylor et al. (2022) criticise the term 'natural landscape' as a misnomer as all landscapes are inherently cultural. The cultural landscape idea affirms the interconnections between culture and nature. Taylor and Lennon (2012) note that cultural attachment to landscape help shape identity to place and ascribe to it intangible values, therefore arguably landscapes everywhere are imbued with cultural connotations and are a product of cultural practices (Wylie 2007).

Much has been written about 'cultural landscapes' as a category for both describing and managing cultural and natural assets, but we do not review this literature here (see for examples, Bridgewater and Bridgewater 2004; Dailoo and Pannekoek 2008; Head 2000). Our aim is to aid our understanding of why the classification has not received greater success. To this end we have

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documented use of the term in academic literature since 1982 to identify trends and patterns for World Heritage (WH) Cultural Landscapes. We posit that in order to provide better recognition and protection of sites with significant interconnected cultural and natural heritage values, increased use of this category might be overdue or, at the least, its apparent under-use warrants further critical attention.

World heritage convention and cultural landscapes: an overview

The *World Heritage Convention (WHC)* (1972) is regarded as the most successful international conservation treaty and links nature conservation and the protection of cultural properties (UNESCO 2021, s.II.A, 45). WH properties were first designated as either one of two types, 'cultural' or 'natural' (UNESCO 2021, s.II.A, 45). Properties are assessed for potential inclusion on the WH List (WHL) by the *WHC's* official Advisory bodies, being (1) the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) for cultural properties, and (2) the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for natural properties. Sites could be nominated for both cultural and natural heritage, but would be assessed by ICOMOS/ICCROM and the IUCN separately (UNESCO 1985).

A key issue with a natural heritage listing was the specification that natural sites could not be modified by 'man' (*sic*) (UNESCO 1985). Yet, it was noted, following the preparation of the French Tentative List in 1985, that very few natural sites met this criterion due to the role of people shaping the landscape (UNESCO 1985). Initially this led to the recognition of 'Rural Landscapes', which were described as 'biocultural mosaics' and formed as a result of sustainable land production alongside human habitation (Rössler 2019). 'Rural Landscapes' reflected a more inclusive framework, however there remained concerns. One of which was related to the definition, which was thought to be too narrow, as it acted to exclude remote landscapes, as rural implied an agrarian society (Cameron and Rössler 2013).

The firm distinction between cultural and natural sites required revision, and so during the late 1980s, sites with both cultural and natural properties were prioritised for inclusion on the WHL through a new designation as 'Mixed Sites' (UNESCO 2021, s.II.A, 46). Mixed Sites 'derive their outstanding universal value from a particularly significant combination of cultural and natural features' (UNESCO 1999a, 18). While this development was significant, again there was dissatisfaction with the 'Mixed Site' category, especially as nominations only needed to satisfy the criteria for one of each of the cultural and natural criterion (UNESCO 1999a, 18). Thus, the interactions between cultural and natural assets were not necessarily established with the 'Mixed Site' category (UNESCO 1999a, 18). An inclusive, interconnected understanding of landscape remained absent.

At the same time, pressing demands for greater recognition of non-European Indigenous worldviews in WH management arose (Cameron and Rössler 2013). At this stage the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) *Operational Guidelines* (1992a, 14), which is the key guiding documentation for enacting *WHC* commitments, were incongruent with a First Nations holistic understanding of place-being. As Aboriginal *trawlwulwuy* scholar Lee (2016) reaffirms, Indigenous Australians for example, view nature and culture as inextricably linked and challenges the dominant dualistic narrative. Such a perspective was not reflected in the operationalisation of the *WHC* as community involvement was actively discouraged throughout the nomination stage, a practice that reinforced the culture-nature binary (Cameron and Rössler 2013; Hill et al. 2011).[1]

Another key moment in the evolution of the WH classifications came in 1986 when the United Kingdom nominated the English Lake District as a 'Mixed Site' (ICOMOS 2017).[2] While ICOMOS recommended inscription of the property for cultural values, the WH Committee decided to 'leave open its decision on this nomination until it had further clarified its position regarding the inscription of cultural landscapes' (UNESCO 1987). The nomination was deferred due to a lack

of sufficiently clear criteria at the time (UNESCO 1990). The WH Committee required the Secretariat to develop a proposal about 'Cultural Landscapes' for the Fifteenth Annual session in 1991 (ICOMOS 2017). As a result, 'Cultural Landscapes' were introduced as a separate category of the *WHC*, in October 1992, to better acknowledge sites as 'the combined works of nature and man (*sic*)' (UNESCO 1992). This was the first international legal instrument that provided recognition of cultural landscapes, defined as

> . . . illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment, and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal. (UNESCO 1992)

In 2002, ten years after the creation of the category, there were only thirty official Cultural Landscapes listed but, at that time, there was estimated to be over one hundred potential properties already inscribed that might be re-nominated into this category (Fowler 2003). There were expectations that another hundred sites could be further nominated in the forthcoming decade (by 2013) (Fowler 2003). By way of example, in the Australian-Oceania region, two sites previously designated as Mixed properties, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (Australia), and Tongariro National Park (Aotearoa/New Zealand), were the first to be re-inscribed as Cultural Landscapes (Hill et al. 2011).

In 2023, thirty-one years after the creation of the category, the WHL currently recognises 121 properties and six transboundary properties as Cultural Landscapes (in addition to one de-listed property in Europe, 2009) (UNESCO n.d.). This represents only 10.9% of all WH properties and is substantially less than the predicted number of properties which could be included under the Cultural Landscapes category. Understanding the patterns of an apparent 'failure' of the category to flourish is our aim. Commentators have indicated that it could be due to inefficiencies in the process (of nomination and assessment of dossiers), despite the category being, as Fowler (2003, 15) described, an 'increasingly known mechanism for describing one of the world's saner ideas . . . recognising humanity's near all-pervasive environmental influence'.

Unpacking the role of the category has been the subject of recent research. Brumann and Gfeller (2022), for example, have drawn attention to the inefficiencies of the category. They document a mis-prioritisation at work, including listing of non-Indigenous European heritage sites such as vineyard landscapes over Indigenous heritage landscapes, which the category was explicitly designed to protect. Another key issue they identified is the difficulty in gaining expert approval for Indigenous heritage site inscriptions, due to expert bodies being dominated by European perspectives (Brumann and Gfeller 2022). They suggest that these factors have led to continued under-representation of the category for WH properties (Brumann and Gfeller 2022). Alongside other scholars, such as Taylor and Altenburg (2006) and Winter (2014), there is an ongoing call for better awareness of the overarching European influence within which the *WHC* operates. A strong European perspective gives rise to a stark othering of non-European Indigenous heritage values, which is arguably reflected in the location and number of Cultural Landscape inscriptions worldwide. We look to whether scholarship about the category reinforces this spatial bias. While cultural landscapes worldwide warrant further attention (especially in relation to First Nation cultural practices), we consider whether an under-utilisation of the category in one place, the Australian-Oceania region, reflects and reinforces a lack of engagement with Indigenous worldviews.

Australia's World Heritage Cultural Landscape properties

There are twenty sites inscribed on the WHL in Australia in 2023, with twelve sites inscribed for natural heritage, four inscribed for cultural heritage and four inscribed under both cultural and natural 'Mixed' criterion (UNESCO 2023). There are only two WH properties in Australia inscribed under the Cultural Landscape category: Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.[3]

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (Central Australia) was the second Cultural Landscape inscription globally. It was first inscribed as a Mixed Site in 1987, but was re-listed in 1994 as a Cultural Landscape in light of revised cultural criteria (ICOMOS 1994; UNESCO 1994; IUCN 1987). The WH inscription recognises the site for its outstanding geological formations, which represent part of the Anangu Aboriginal cultural belief system (ICOMOS 1994). Despite effective joint management, there were no additional cultural landscape inscriptions in Australia for a quarter century. Accordingly, twenty-five years later, Budj Bim Cultural Landscape (South-Eastern Australia) was inscribed on the WHL in 2019 (UNESCO 2019). Budj Bim is one of the oldest and most extensive aquaculture systems in the world, which were modified by the Gunditjmara people and formed the core economy and society for over 6,600 years. It is inscribed on the WHL for the cultural traditions and knowledge practices, and the Cultural Landscape is a representative example of people interacting with the environment (UNESCO 2019).

Cultural Landscapes have been a distinct WH category for the past thirty-one years, yet the initial expectation that the category would flourish has not been met. Cultural Landscape properties are largely located in Europe, creating a spatial bias in the category. The bias persists despite countries such as Australia arguably containing a significant number of sites which are well suited to the classification given Australia is home to the oldest living culture in the world (Poroch 2014).

Methods

We provide an empirical review of the WH 'Cultural Landscape' category within English-written academic literature to shed light on the apparent underutilisation of the category, especially in an Australian-Oceania setting. We use the publication of research about WH Cultural Landscapes as a proxy for awareness about the category and to provide critical insights into its use. Literature searches were conducted using the databases, Web of Science, Scopus, and Informit, published between 1982 and 2022 to ascertain if temporal trends could be discerned.

The literature from each database was retrieved during February and March 2023 using the following combined search query: '*world AND heritage*', '*cultural AND landscape**' and Geographical Region such as '*Australia* OR Pacific OR Oceania*' or '*North OR South AND America**'. Each search was repeated for global areas of interest being classified regionally into Australia-Oceania, Africa, Asia, America (North and South) and Europe to identify the spatial distribution of research broadly relating to the 'Cultural Landscape' categorisation. These searches yielded a total of 494 results (Table 1).

As part of the initial scoping exercise, unrelated subject areas and categories were excluded to remove unnecessary noise from the search. The Web of Science categories were filtered to include the disciplines of '*environmental studies, geography, environmental sciences, humanities multidisciplinary, geosciences multidisciplinary, multidisciplinary studies and social sciences multidisciplinary*'. The Scopus searches were limited to broad disciplinary categories of '*social sciences, environmental sciences, arts and humanities*'. Searches using Scopus were also filtered using the following keywords: '*cultural heritage, cultural landscape, World Heritage Site, World Heritage, UNESCO and environmental protection*'. No additional filters were applied to the Informit databases. Results included journal articles, book chapters and media reports.

Table 1. Preliminary database results by geographical region (Web of Science, Scopus, Informit).

Region	Number of Results
Australia/Oceania	126
Africa	46
America (North and South)	75
Asia	61
Europe	186

Table 2. Refined database results by geographical region (Web of Science, Scopus, Informit).

Region	Number of Results
Australia/Oceania	47
Africa	17
America (North)	14
America (South and Central)	9
Asia	30
Europe	55

Search results were manually filtered for relevance, to include research investigating the integration of WH cultural and natural properties, values, or classifications, and mention of 'Cultural Landscapes' for the WHL.[4] The narrowed search resulted in a final publication collection of 172 papers (Table 2). This smaller body of literature reflects that while cultural landscapes are a widely utilised concept across multiple disciplines, its application to WH represents only a small subsection of its overall use.[5] By way of example, the search term '*Cultural AND Landscape**' yields 10,292 results on Web of Science alone.

Results

Search results yielded both spatial and temporal patterns from our dataset of 172 research papers. We firstly consider the spatial question of 'where' research about cultural landscapes is taking place. The results from the literature review, suggests in order of descent, that Europe has the most publications, followed by Australia-Oceania, Asia, Africa, North America and South America (Figure 1).

A temporal pattern was also revealed. The decadal results illustrate limited discussion prior to 1992 (pre-formalisation of the category), which was expected (Figure 2). An increase in literature following this period coincides with the growth of scholarly attention in the field of heritage studies (Gentry and Smith 2019). The *International Journal of Heritage Studies* was established in 1994 and followed by the development of the Critical Heritage Studies in the early 2000s (Gentry and Smith 2019). Publications occur across all regional locations in a relatively uniform manner between 2002–2011 (Figure 2). The 2012–2021 time-frame shows a slight increase in African-based literature, a small decline in Asian-based literature with a greater increase in Australian- and American-based literature (Figure 2).

The most significant increase is amongst the European literature, which reflects the region of the most inscribed Cultural Landscapes (Figure 3). What is clear is that while Australia only contains two WH Cultural Landscapes, there is a disproportionately large amount of scholarly interest from this region.

As mentioned previously, existing WH properties within the Australia-Oceania region were the first to utilise the Cultural Landscape category through the re-inscription process in 1993 of Tongariro National Park and in 1994 with Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park respectively (UNESCO, n.d..).[6] Again, despite a relatively fast adoption this momentum did not gain the expected traction both in Australia and other continents (excluding Europe) (Figures 1 and 2; Fowler 2003).

Many of the papers analysed underscore the arguments about an underutilisation of the Cultural Landscapes category. Research from Africa (Brumann and Gfeller 2022; Cocks, Vetter, and Wiersum 2018; Saintenoy et al. 2019), Asia (Akagawa and Sirisrisak 2008; Rössler and Lin 2018, Silva et al. 2022; Taylor 2009; Taylor and Lennon 2011), America (Carmody 2016; Losson 2017; Perez and Salinas 2015), and Australia (Carter 2010; Cullen-Unsworth et al. 2012; Hill et al. 2011; Lee and Richardson 2017) all reinforce this point. In reviewing this literature, three core themes regarding underutilisation emerged being (1) the definition of heritage within the *WHC* and

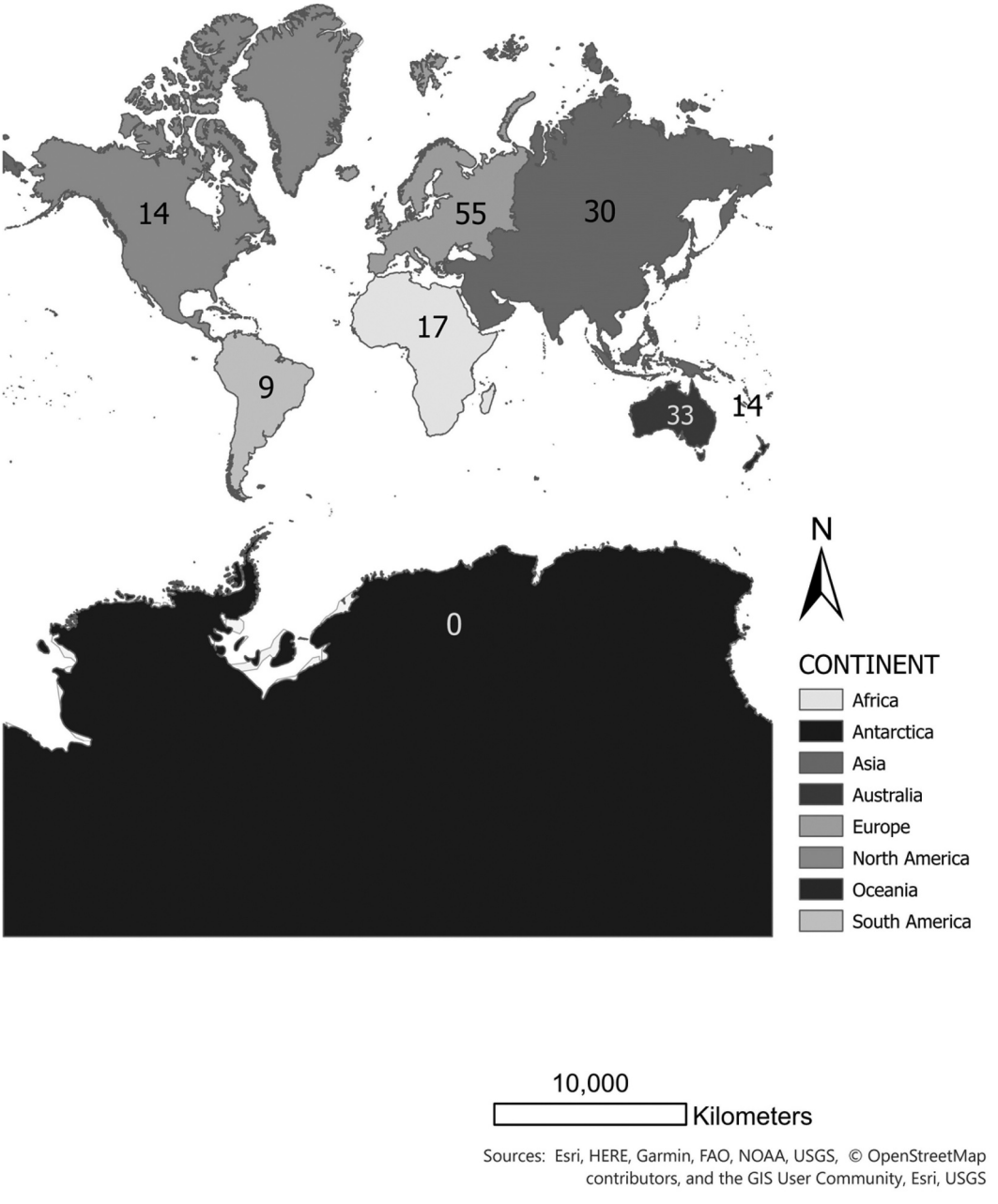


Figure 1. Use of cultural landscapes as a World Heritage category in the literature, organised by continent. Listed, and mapped by Author 1. Continent basemap open-source: Esri.

heritage management field, (2) the need for increased recognition of First Nations cultural heritage and (3) the re-nomination of existing sites inscribed under natural or mixed heritage values.

The first issue concerned concerns about how heritage is defined. From the development of the *WHC*, heritage has been separated as having cultural and natural value and was viewed as incompatible to protect together (Aplin 2007; Brumann and Gfeller 2022). This perception has remained within wider heritage management practices, even with a more inclusive framework which recognised Cultural Landscapes and 'Mixed' properties. Therefore, scholars have argued for

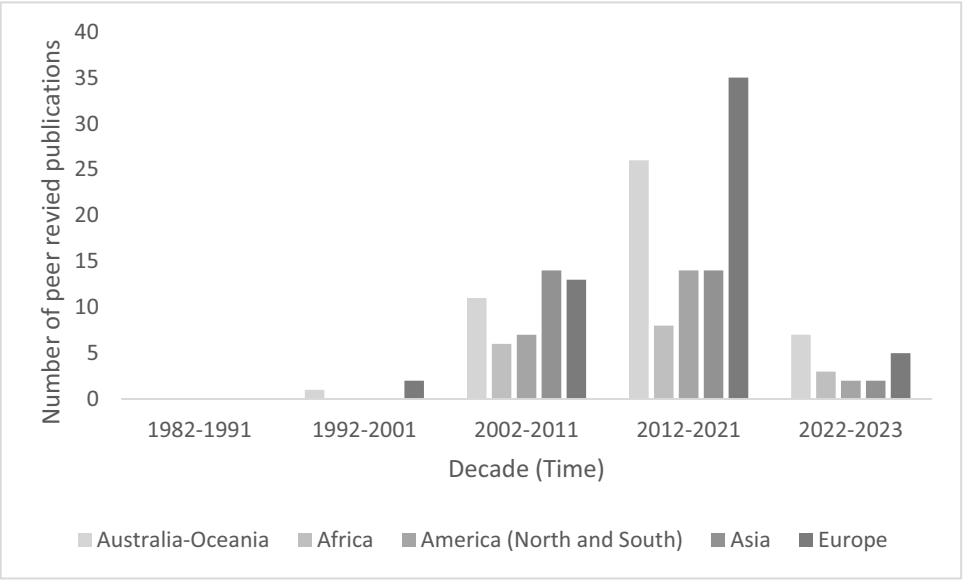


Figure 2. Use of 'cultural landscapes' and 'world heritage' by geographical region and decade (2023). Graphed by Author 1.

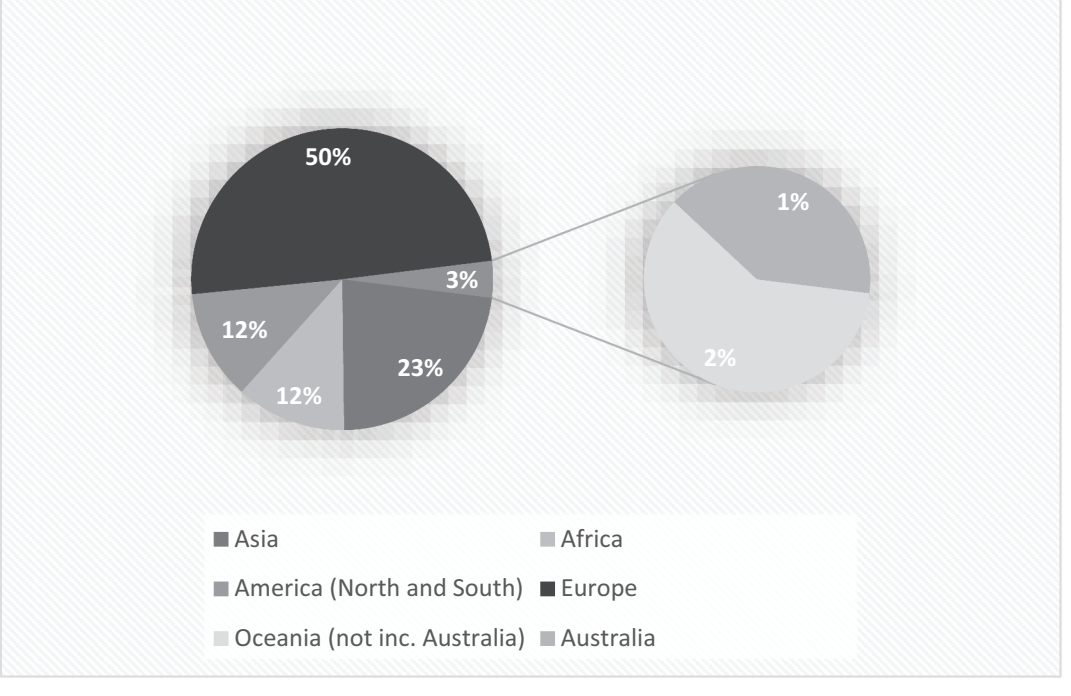


Figure 3. Distribution of World Heritage Listed Cultural Landscape properties (121) and transboundary Cultural Landscapes (6) by continent, including Australia (2023). Transboundary properties were graphed using the predominant country location of the site. Graphed by Author 1.

a more holistic and integrated approach to management of cultural and natural heritage (see for examples, Koch and Gillespie 2022; Marshall et al. 2022; Menzies and Wilson 2020).

The second issue called for stronger recognition of Indigenous cultural heritage and co-management practices through WH inscription. This perspective was dominant in over half (twenty-five) of the Australia-Oceania focused papers (see for examples, Carter 2010; Hill et al. 2011; Lee and Richardson 2017; Russell and Jambrecina 2002). Whilst a lack of representation and Indigenous engagement was noted in ten of the Australian publications (see for examples, Connolly 2007; Lee and Richardson 2017; Skilton, Adams, and Gibbs 2014; Smith et al. 2019).

The third notable trend related to a growing emphasis on the need to renominate existing WH properties, especially in an Australian context. Importantly, within this scholarship, twelve of the thirty-three Australian papers advocated for renomination of sites as Cultural Landscapes. Such calls for renomination also align with the aim to broaden an understanding of heritage as interconnecting both cultural and natural components.[7]

Discussion

Cultural landscapes: expanding the definition of heritage

The aim of the Cultural Landscape category was to expand the view of heritage to be more representative of its diversity (UNESCO, n.d..). However, the literature is divided in whether this has occurred through the WH categorisation. For example, Skilton et al. (2014) states that the Cultural Landscape category subverts the culture-nature binary that was prevalent within the *WHC* and Gfeller (2013) indicates the new category successfully bridged the divide. In contrast, Buckley (2022) affirms that the culture-nature divide is still prevalent, particularly as Cultural Landscapes are inscribed under the cultural category which they argue has exacerbated the imbalance. Further, Reeves and McConville (2011) suggested that a baseline understanding of 'Cultural Landscapes' through the WH category has had limited success.

In terms of support for the category, Australia and New Zealand, in particular, were strong advocates for the Cultural Landscape category which in part, led to its early success (Wallace and Buckley 2015). However, uptake and endorsement of the classification has faltered. A UNESCO (1999b), expert meeting noted there were multiple definitions of landscape and cultural landscape operating simultaneously. Specific interpretations of 'cultural landscape' were dependent on regional and national contexts and thus far an overarching universal definition has not emerged. To accommodate this, Reeves and Long (2011) suggested the term cultural landscape should be both flexible and technical. Today, heritage remains defined by the *WHC* as either 'cultural' (monuments, groups of buildings and sites) or 'natural' (natural features and sites, and geological and physiographical formations) and each category is clearly delineated (UNESCO 2021, s.II.A, 45). Despite expanding the categories to include cultural landscapes, the *WHC* still operates with siloed definitions which further perpetuates the distinction between culture and nature (Carter 2010; Lee and Richardson 2017). Carter (2010) highlights the current approach to heritage management has created a 'separationist paradigm'. A similar view is echoed in Lee and Richardson (2017), who argues that the protected area systems delineate a clearly defined geographical space which prevents a landscape scale approach to conservation, inclusive of culture and nature.

Of note is that the Cultural Landscape category (alongside ICOMOS Australia (2013) and UNESCO (2003)), has expanded the values of nominated places for WH status to include associative and intangible heritage (Head 2000; McBryde 2014). This is regarded as a significant shift away from monumental heritage, with its material and archaeological focus. In the context of the Australia-Oceania dataset twenty-five papers linked cultural heritage to non-Indigenous archaeological endeavours favouring assessments in terms of the material landscape (tangible heritage) (see for examples, Cullen-Unsworth et al. 2012; Draper 2015; Wallace and Buckley 2015). This focus on tangible heritage is perpetuated through dominant non-Indigenous European scientific

assessment models, and this phenomenon was identified by multiple authors as prevalent (Brumann and Gfeller 2022; Draper 2015; Taylor and Altenburg 2006; Winter 2014). However, best practice conservation strategies suggest there should be equal consideration of both tangible and intangible heritage (Connolly 2007; Marshall et al. 2022; Wallace and Buckley 2015). The WH nomination dossiers for Australian sites including Kakadu National Park, Tasmanian Wilderness, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and Willandra Lakes emphasised scientific perspectives and notably these properties were not originally nominated or recognised for cultural continuity (ICOMOS 1981, 1989, 1991, 1994; McBryde 2014).

Many scholars identified that the current protected area management system (including WH), has an insular approach to protection as it requires a clear distinction of spatial and temporal boundaries (Connolly 2007; Lee and Richardson 2017; Reeves and Long 2011; Russell and Jambrecina 2002). This limitation restricts heritage to a single defined place, making it difficult to incorporate the 'Cultural Landscape' concept (Connolly 2007) as cultural landscapes move beyond the protection of monuments and buildings alone (Blair and James 2016; McBryde 1997; Reeves and Long 2011). There lies a significant challenge where sites meet the definition of a 'Cultural Landscape', such as trade routes or song-lines, but there are no clearly defined boundaries for known routes or archaeological assemblages, which can be used to quantify significant associational, spiritual, cultural or ceremonial values (McBryde 1997, 2014; Russell and Jambrecina 2002). Again, many researchers have called for the adoption of a holistic landscape approach to avoid the rigid specificity of particular site-based assessments (Blair and James 2016; Buckley 2022; Carter 2010; Koch and Gillespie 2022; Marshall et al. 2022). Shifting the perspective of heritage classifications towards better use of cultural landscapes may enable better use of WH buffer zones to, for example, protect vulnerable ecological communities, and/or to give better recognition of local community attachment to place (Gillespie 2012; Russell and Jambrecina 2002; Trau, Ballard, and Wilson 2014). Ultimately, scholars argue that the Cultural Landscape category has the potential to enable better conservation outcomes (Russell and Jambrecina 2002). Similar terms have been coined to describe the interactions between people and the environment, including biocultural landscape and eco-cultural landscape (Bridgewater, Rotherham, and Rozzi 2019). Therefore, a shift to more inclusive terminology could add clarity and allow for more widespread use. To achieve this, arguably cultural landscapes require a more consistent and universal definition.

Lack of recognition of first nation cultural landscapes

One of the dominant themes from our review was a lack of recognition of First Nations heritage in the WHL. Researchers clearly present the case that a Cultural Landscape protected area classification is a suitable way to provide for greater First Nation heritage recognition and can enable an improved integration of non-European Indigenous values within the management of WH sites.[8] The UNESCO *Operational Guidelines* (2021) have gradually been adjusted to reflect Indigenous participation and consultation however, greater inclusion of Indigenous traditional knowledge systems are still required in the *WHC* (Jornet Aguareles 2023). WH sites which contain both cultural and natural elements have struggled to overcome often conflicting management approaches (Cocks, Vetter, and Wiersum 2018). Natural WH sites have tended towards a naturalistic management emphasis which can be very problematic, not least due to the displacement of Indigenous people and the resultant loss of connection with their traditional land- and water-scapes (Carter 2010; Lee and Richardson 2017). Arguably, a naturalistic gaze has led to an underrepresentation of non-European Indigenous sites on the WHL (Skilton, Adams, and Gibbs 2014). While 10% of WH properties worldwide are located on Indigenous owned land less than forty sites have been inscribed for Indigenous cultural values (Skilton, Adams, and Gibbs 2014).

The majority of cultural heritage properties on the WHL are located in European countries (Figure 1). This spatial unevenness led to a call for a more even distribution of the WH Cultural Landscape category beyond Europe (Brumann and Gfeller 2022; Reeves

and McConville 2011; Winter 2014). As previously mentioned, a Eurocentric emphasis has been attributed to the institutional structure of ICOMOS/ICCROM and IUCN experts and assessors, who focus on cultural and natural heritage values as separate entities (Cocks, Vetter, and Wiersum 2018; Gfeller 2013; Head 2000). From the whole dataset, we identified nineteen publications which commented on the biased European regional focus (see for selected examples, Brumann and Gfeller 2022; Taylor and Lennon 2012; Winter 2014; Zhang 2017). Scholarship most concerned about the spatial unevenness of the WH Cultural Landscape distribution, came from research based in Australia-Oceania (eleven papers), followed by Asia (six papers). Of the four cultural WH inscribed properties in Australia, Budj Bim Cultural Landscape is the only WH site in Australia to be inscribed entirely for First Nation cultural heritage (Beatty and Unsworth 2020). It is distinguished from mixed WH sites in Australia, such as Kakadu National Park and Tasmanian Wilderness. These sites are referred to as living cultural landscapes, but face ongoing management issues due to incompatible heritage values surrounding the presence and absence of people (Lee and Richardson 2017; Palmer 2007). Authors such as Blair and James (2016) signal that a cultural landscape approach is more inclusive and can recognise Indigenous, post-colonial and natural qualities of WH sites. It may be that the inscription of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape represents a sign of a gradual shift towards recognising the connection of Indigenous people to landscape (Beatty and Unsworth 2020). We suggest that as Budj Bim is currently the only example of this in Australia, it signals a vast under-representation of First Nations cultural heritage in Australia.

As many authors have identified, the siloed approach of the WH listing process further perpetuates a problematic culture-nature dualism for First Nations people (Bridgewater and Upadhaya 2022; Head 2000; Lee 2016; Palmer 2007). Palmer (2007) states that mixed cultural and natural listings create an oppositional distinction between the two values that causes tensions about site management leading to a reduction in Indigenous autonomy in managing cultural values for sites which are perceived as 'natural'. Similarly, Lee (2016) suggests the listing process reinforces a dualism that restricts a First Nations understanding of Country to an artificial view of 'culture' and this process ultimately undermines Aboriginal authority, and participation, whilst enhancing the status of natural values in protected area management.

Separation between culture and nature, evidenced in the institutional dynamic of the Advisory Bodies, introduces a tension between the 'scientific' management perspective for protected areas and Indigenous spiritual/cultural sensibilities (Blair and James 2016; Carter 2010). For example, Palmer (2006, 2007), uses Kakadu National Park to illustrate that nature should be reframed as a social construction, which takes into account the history of the place and co-existence over time. Many observe that there is a lack of integration between non-Indigenous and Indigenous knowledge systems, where the latter is often disregarded for not meeting criterion for authenticity, credibility and legitimacy and any such values are then subsequently not incorporated within management practices (Draper 2015; Palmer 2006). Joint management structures are sometimes established to bring together non-Indigenous scientific perspectives with other forms of knowledge (Carter 2010; Head 2000). Head (2000) illustrates this using Uluru-Kata Tjuta, which is managed through a combination of non-Indigenous European scientific methods, and traditional Anangu practices. This includes recognition of *Tjukurpa* (the law) across ancestral and present time and traditional management practices such as mosaic burning, hunting and gathering, and reciprocal migration with neighbouring groups (Head 2000). Joint management between Anangu and non-Indigenous European experts has led to cross-cultural insights for landscape protection.

Our review reveals that Australian based authors, reflecting on the management of WH properties, have drawn attention to how efforts to incorporate both local and dynamic Indigenous values into heritage protection can yield stronger protection outcomes. Increasing the use of the Cultural Landscape category to enable such practices can also potentially provide for greater recognition of the diversity of heritage across the globe.

Calls for re-nomination using the Cultural Landscape classification

Since the mid-1990s, UNESCO has cited the importance of increasing WH classifications for New World and east-Asian Cultural Landscapes, but this has not yet eventuated, despite significant opportunities (Taylor and Lennon 2011). In this section we reflect on the potential of re-nomination using the Cultural Landscape category in an Australian context, which emerged as a key issue in the literature.

Many authors provided recommendations for renomination of existing WH properties as a Cultural Landscape. In twelve papers various authors explicitly made this suggestion. Of these, the Greater Blue Mountains WH Area (Connolly 2007; Koch and Gillespie 2022), Purnululu (Connolly 2007), K'gari (Fraser Island) (Carter 2010), Wet Tropics WH Area (Cullen-Unsworth et al. 2012), Tasmanian Wilderness WH Area (Lee and Richardson 2017), and Kakadu National Park (Blair and James 2016; Bridgewater and Upadhaya 2022; Palmer 2007) were highlighted as current WH properties inscribed under natural or mixed criteria with the potential to be renominated as a Cultural Landscape (Taylor and Lennon 2011). These suggestions reflect recent calls from within ICOMOS to move towards a more inclusive heritage framework (ICOMOS 2023) and which was emphasised in the 'Nature-Cultures' sessions of the 2023 General Assembly Symposium (ICOMOS 2023). Moreover, during the Murujuga Cultural Landscape Symposium 2023, the Australian Federal Minister for the Environment, Tanya Plibersek announced a $5.5 million program to reassess Australia's existing natural WH sites for potential renomination for cultural values, which could provide greater recognition for the Cultural Landscape category (Plibersek 2023).

Many scholars identified that multiple WH properties were either described and/or managed as a cultural landscape, but were not currently inscribed as under the category. There were seven site examples, including the Tasmanian Wilderness (Lee and Richardson 2017; Pocock, Collett, and Knowles 2022), Kakadu National Park (Marshall et al. 2022), the Wet Tropics of Queensland (Hill et al. 2011; Cullen-Unsworth et al. 2012), the Great Barrier Reef (Pocock, Collett, and Knowles 2022), K'gari (Carter 2010), Purnululu (Connolly 2007) and the Greater Blue Mountains (Connolly 2007; Koch and Gillespie 2022). These authors argue that including intangible/cultural heritage within the definition and criteria for these sites is crucial for better recognition of Indigenous values and influence. Beatty and Unsworth (2020), indicate that intangible/cultural heritage values can be overlooked if not otherwise considered. Skilton et al. (2014) argue that the majority of the Pacific/Oceanic region could be classified as a cultural landscape, as most properties in this region currently on the WHL possess interconnected cultural and natural heritage qualities. In an Australian setting, these papers highlight the strong potential for further utilisation of this category, either through renomination of existing properties or through the nomination of new sites.

By way of example, the Greater Blue Mountains WH Area represents a site which was recognised at the time of nomination as containing significant Aboriginal cultural heritage (including 700 recorded sites, 40% containing some form of rock art) alongside natural heritage values (ICOMOS 1999). However, ICOMOS's evaluation of the site stated that European settlement caused a discontinuity of the 'intense interrelationship of nature and people over tens of thousands of years' (ICOMOS 1999) and so the Greater Blue Mountains WH Area was ultimately only inscribed for its natural values, which does not reflect how local Aboriginal people view the properties' heritage (ICOMOS 1999).

Shortly after, in 2003, there was another attempt by Australia to recognise the interconnected cultural and natural values with the nomination of Purnululu National Park, this time through the WH Cultural Landscape category (ICOMOS 2003). Despite displaying deep time hunter-gatherer traditions, the nomination was rejected by ICOMOS (2003) due to colonial settler arrival and subsequent resource extraction which resulted in the removal of the local Indigenous people (ICOMOS 2003). The assessment was uncertain about whether re-inhabitation of the proposed WH area would occur and the ICOMOS (2003) Evaluation cites that 'a certain number of people

will be needed in order to reach a sustainable system, which has a tangible impact on the area'. This suggests even within the Cultural Landscape category there is still a focus on physical heritage, as many of the intangible qualities of Purnululu are unrecorded. Such circumstances highlight the challenge the European WH framework has with assessing and monitoring Indigenous knowledge, ceremonies and oral traditions, which also may be culturally inappropriate to record (Marley 2019). An emphasis on protecting authenticity presents a significant challenge for the Cultural Landscape category as it allows for evolution of heritage over time but this can be viewed by the *WHC* as an erosion of the heritage values (Connolly 2007).

As some authors point out, formal designations often prioritise expert over local opinion (Cullen-Unsworth et al. 2012; Pocock and Lilley 2018). De-emphasising local perspectives potentially means neglect of local heritage values, which may be intertwined with sense of place, spiritual associations, belonging and identity. Scholars such as Carter (2010), Hill et al. (2011), Agnoletti et al. (2015) and Koch and Gillespie (2022) make the point that cultural landscapes can better give voice to concerns of local communities and provide a potential platform for ethical and social justice considerations in managing sites.

Conclusion

This paper provides an overview of publishing trends relating to WH Cultural Landscape properties since its inception as a classification type in 1992. We have used research scholarship as a proxy to indicate where/when the category has been used and to tease out some of the key concerns of scholars relating to the shortcomings and opportunities for WH Cultural Landscape classifications. In terms of regional issues in the Australian/Oceania area, these results suggest that there are clear calls for action, including for renomination of existing WH properties. For example, there are at least nine additional sites in Australia which have been advocated for inscription as Cultural Landscapes, five of which are already inscribed for either natural or mixed heritage values. Many have argued that First Nations heritage in Australia is under-represented on the WHL but the Cultural Landscape category could be used more effectively to, amongst other things, promote Indigenous voices.

The WH Cultural Landscape category enables a wider and more representative protection regime for sites where cultural and natural heritage is inseparable. However, there are still significant barriers preventing further utilisation of this category. These include a lack of a universal definition which may also be contributing to a lack of representation of First Nations heritage sites. The literature clearly identifies these concerns. Many scholars, particularly those writing about Australian/Oceania WH sites, loudly suggest it is time to seriously consider re-nomination of many existing WH properties as a matter of priority under the Cultural Landscape category. For this to occur, a shift in approach is required to acknowledge all environments have been shaped by people and are imbued with cultural meaning. While this is already recognised by the WHC, ICOMOS, and IUCN, there is further work to be done to translate what is already widely known into nomination and re-nomination of WH sites, to redress the under-representation of the Cultural Landscape category worldwide.

Notes

1. The authors have intentionally chosen to use culture-nature phrasing to subvert the dominant paradigm which often places an emphasis on nature over culture where both heritage values are present.
2. The English Lake District National Park was first nominated as a rural landscape and used a 'test case' for the applicability of the suggested changes to the category (Cameron and Rössler 2013). While it met the criteria it was ultimately replaced with the new cultural landscape classification.
3. There is one Cultural Landscape property, 'Murujuga Cultural Landscape' on Australia's Tentative List (UNESCO 2020).

4. The results from each database were compiled using EndNote, categorised into geographical region and duplicated papers removed.
5. There is a large body of literature that refers to cultural landscapes but it is not explicitly connected with World Heritage classification so falls outside the scope of this study.
6. This term includes the islands found throughout the Central and South Pacific Ocean, including Australia and New Zealand.
7. This may include the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003 (ICH Convention)*. The *ICH* recognises non-material heritage, which is an aspect of cultural landscapes that has traditionally been less considered by the *WHC* framework.
8. This paper recognises that there are many Indigenous European cultures and heritage, such as the Sami people of Norway. Menzies and Wilson (2020) note that the cultural landscapes category and integration of natural and cultural heritage, is reflective of Indigenous cultures more broadly. While there are similarities, particularly the issue of recognising intangible heritage, this paper is concerned with the unique challenges of non-European Indigenous heritage and management.

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