The European Convention defines landscape as an area as perceived by people whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. From this definition the central role of the people aspect is very key in the understanding of landscape. The paper investigates the hybrid forms of urban landscape that evolve as a result of the anthropic influences of increasing populations through immigration and natural growth; the hybrid landscapes as a result of the interaction of different cultures on the landscape. This evolution of adoptable urban landscapes into flexible containers and instigators of cultural exchange where human expression takes place creating places that are defined by their experiences and ability to evoke emotions and sense of belonging. Also connected to this is the correlation between the quality of life of the urbanites and the new hybrid landscapes; landscapes that break the sociological, economic, cultural, physical and psychological barriers in rapidly urbanising cities where increasing populations are combined with income inequality, racial segregation, cultural and economic classification.

The research is on the role of these hybrid landscapes in social cohesion and how they can improve the quality of life taking the case of Rio de Janeiro where a significant amount of research and intervention in pragmatic approaches are going on by the local government and local initiatives in policy design, public space interventions and landscape management. These urban renewal projects in Rio de Janeiro are based on participatory approaches taking into account the needs and acceptability of the initial residents, therefore creating a cultural landscape of hybridity where diversity is accepted as the norm leading to social inclusion and an improvement in the quality of life.

Keywords: rapid urbanisation, cultural hybridisation, hybrid landscapes, sustainability

*Presenting author