Abstract

This paper aims to observe how the Integrated Conservation principles, systemized in The Declaration of Amsterdam have been assimilated by Brazilian recent preservation practice. For that purpose we will analyze three case studies of historic centers revitalizations: the Bairro do Recife in Recife, the Pelourinho in Salvador and the Praia Grande in São Luís. The revitalization processes under analysis have been developed since the eighties, when the approach to the Integrated Conservation assumes a strong economic characteristic.

According to the theoretical framework of the Integrated Conservation, revitalization processes should be conducted by the local government with the participation of all citizens. In this participation, two aspects deserve special attention: the need to establish partnership with the private initiative and the concern with the maintenance of the dwelling population. In the three case studies our analysis will focus these three important aspects for achieving an Integrated Conservation process. The questions posed are: Who is responsible for the conduction of the process?; How does the private initiative participate of the process? and Have these process guaranteed the permanence of the original inhabitants?

In other words, by observing these aspects, we can have a panorama of different management approaches and how they helped to achieve the main Integrated Conservation principle: deal with historic heritage considering all the values involved.

Key-words: Revitalization, integrated conservation, citizen’s participation

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1. The proposal of Integrated Conservation and its systematization in The Declaration of Amsterdam

The fundamental principle of Integrated Conservation is the concern with the historical heritage in a complex way, that is, taking into account the different values which compose it: cultural, economic, social, etc.

The Bologna experience marks unquestionably a dividing line in the preservation practices, since it reintroduces in the ancient city the value of use, making its insertion in the market possible. Cervellati, Scannavini and de Angelis consider the cultural meaning as an additional value and prioritize the social function of the historic urban tissue. Such proposal marks the beginning of the conceptions of “Integrated Conservation”, whose origin is in the progressist Italian urbanism of the seventies (Lapa e Zancheti, 2002: 31).

The methodology developed in Bologna will be taken as an example for several other experiences carried out in Italy (Ferrara) and other countries. The Integrated Conservation concept will be first defined and publicized in the European Letter of Architectural Heritage (September 26th, 1975) and shortly afterwards in the Declaration of Amsterdam (October 25th, 1975). That was after its first applications in Italy.

The Declaration of Amsterdam, that was a result of the European Architectural Heritage Conference, systematizes the theoretical framework of Integrated Urban Conservation. The central idea in this concept of conservation is that preservation cannot be dissociated from the modernization of the cities. The conservationist work should consist in making the historic sites take part on the urban dynamic of the present time. From this point of view, the declaration defends that architectural conservation must be considered, not a marginal issue, but a major objective of town and country planning: “A permanent dialogue between conservationists and those responsible for planning is thus indispensable.”

Among the principles established in this declaration, we can observe the central role played by management in order to achieve the goal of working dialectically with preservation and modernization. In that way, the declaration points out that “Integrated conservation involves the responsibility of local authorities and calls for citizens’ participation.”

In these “citizen’s participation”, the Declaration of Amsterdam emphasizes the importance of the private initiative pointing that one of the objectives of the local authority must be to stimulate their involvement and financial commitment. The Declaration of Amsterdam poses that: “It is vital to encourage all private sources of finance, particularly coming from industry. Numerous private initiatives have shown the viable part that they can play in association with the authorities at either national or local level”.

About the permanence of the original population, the Declaration of Amsterdam emphasized, as a basic consideration, that “The rehabilitation of old areas should be conceived and carried out in such a way as to ensure that, where possible, this does not necessitate a major change in the social composition of the residents, all sections of society should share in the benefits of restoration financed by public funds.”

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2 Ibid
3 Ibid
4 Ibid
However, the mainly social approach of initial practices (70’s and early 80’s) is progressively replaced by an economy-based approach (80’s and 90’s). The first practical examples focus on the recuperation of physical, social and economic structures of the places under intervention. From the 80’s onwards, Integrated Conservation starts to be seen as a means of “revitalizing” obsolete central areas through a process of real estate appreciation (Lapa e Zancheti, 2002: 31).

More than thirty years after the Declaration of Amsterdam, our paper aims to observe how these principles are assimilated by the Brazilian practice of urban conservation. By observing the practice in three revitalization processes, the Bairro do Recife in Recife, the Pelourinho in Salvador and the Praia Grande in São Luís do Maranhão, we may have a relevant overview of the applicability of Integrated Urban Conservation in Brazil.

In this paper we will focus the analyses towards three main points of these three processes: whose is the responsible for the conduction of the process? How the private initiative does participate of the process? Have these processes guaranteed the permanence of the original dwellers? As we saw above, these management aspects are fundamental for the implementation of a revitalization process guided by the Integrated Conservation principles.

2. The Integrated Conservation in Brazil: Recife, Salvador e São Luís

The historic center of Recife: Revitalization program of Bairro do Recife

The Bairro do Recife is a symbol of its people’s cultural identity. The city of Recife even borrows its name from the area where its formation started with intense port activity. The present configuration of the area, practically rebuilt in its totality in the beginning of the 20th century, includes eclectic, proto-rationalist, modern and contemporary buildings.

Getting to the 80s, completely decayed, the Bairro do Recife begins to be perceived by the local governments as a possible rich source of income hidden behind those old buildings. Since 1985, some initial attempts took place, with evident social concerns.

The city government, from 1985 to 1988, defined the rehabilitation of Bairro do Recife as one of its main goals. In this administration, the Rehabilitation Plan was created, as well as the Revitalization Office, situated in Bairro do Recife. That office had a crucial role in the mediation of interests and creation of a participative process. Bairro do Recife’s Rehabilitation Plan was a result of a wider project to rehabilitate the entire city center. During the elaboration of this greater plan, the administration realized that the Bairro deserved a specific project, focused on the area’s urban planning. This conclusion was, in great part, due to the very advanced level of decay and abandon of built heritage.

Bairro do Recife’s Revitalization Office started its activities in 1986 and, two years later, had already completed several tasks in accordance with the political directives of the administration, which gave priority to the worst-off population: identification of people living in slums and tenements; research of oral history; projects to convert ancient buildings into collective dwelling places; projects of a popular restaurant and education center. Despite its good intentions, the plan did not survive the end of the administration, because the actors involved had no conditions to keep it going. According to Zancheti (1995, p. 104), the actors who could have made it possible for the plan to continue (port authorities, great industrial and estate owners, financial groups and international trade
agents) had not been adequately integrated into the process by Bairro do Recife’s Revitalization Office.

In the following city administration (1989 to 1992), the program went through a period of clear stagnation. Its importance lies on the elaboration, by the State Government, of *Bairro do Recife’s Revitalization Plan*, that was to be adopted by the next city administration.

This plan was implemented in Bairro do Recife from 1993 onwards. Zancheti (1995, p.105-107) points out that the basic difference between previous plans was its main strategy, that tries to “introduce the new in order to maintain continuity” through a shift in the utilization of the area.

In this case, the process is commanded by the municipality and the private initiative was mobilized to participate since the beginning of the actions, as the Integrated Conservation defends. PRBR shows the characteristic entrepreneurial behavior of one of the main contemporary urban management practices. Private initiative is seen as a partner that must take part in the interventions brought about in the city, to help make them sustainable and relatively independent of local governments. In Bairro do Recife, from 1993 to 1996, only five houses were recuperated by the city government. All the others have been renewed by the owners or by investors who rented them to implement some business (Zancheti e Lacerda, 1997).

The city government divided Bairro do Recife into three sub-areas, called “poles”: Bom Jesus Pole, Alfândega Pole and Pilar Pole (Botler; Pereira e Jurema, 1995, p. 36). Bom Jesus Pole was considered the spearhead of the program and received the first investments. The proposal here was to change the use of the area through the adaptation of buildings, stimulated by tax relief, marketing, rehabilitation of urban space and joint ventures to reduce costs. As most of the historically important buildings are in Bom Jesus and Alfândega Poles, partnerships with the owners were stimulated to reduce public investments in the reform of the buildings.

Pilar Pole’s situation is completely diverse, with a far greater level of abandonment and decay. This area has industrial and port activities, as well as large derelict areas deriving from the port’s enlargement. These derelict areas were occupied by very low-income population, forming the slum of “Favela do Rato”. There are few preservable buildings in this area (Amorim, 1995, p. 111).
The program was to be induced by so-called “Projects of Impact”, implemented in a short period of time, in order to create a “state of trust” in the process. The plan included two “Projects of Impact”, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank: (1) creation of the main leisure, culture and nightlife area around Bom Jesus Pole and (2) rehabilitation of Pilar, the most abandoned area (Zancheti, 1995, p. 108).

The citizen’s participation was, since 1993, concentrated mainly in the private initiative. The implementation of the plan suffers the consequences of this limited participation. Priorities are changed during its implementation reflecting the force of the private initiative in the conduction of the process.

In Bairro do Recife the social issue draws little attention because the number of people involved is not very large. There is still no intervention in the area with the worst social problems: the Favela do Rato. The second project of impact, that was planned, should have been done exactly in this area but it is still left aside. However, the Alfândega Pole, an area with far less structural problems, that was intended to be treated after the Favela do Rato, has already been the target of great interventions like a new shopping center in the ancient Customs Building and the construction of a garage building to serve this shopping. As seen, there has been a clear shift of position from a program which aimed at all classes and actors involved to one focused primarily on the business sector (Vieira, 2006).

This demonstrates the central role played by management. On one hand, the participation of private initiative is essential for the sustainability of the process. On the other hand, the municipality must be able to manage the participation and satisfy the needs of all actors involved in the process.

The revitalization process of Bairro do Recife shows an attempt to implement the three Integrated Conservation aspects under analysis in this article, as well as the difficulties found along that process. As the Integrated Conservation recommends, in Bairro do Recife the process is conducted by the municipality, trying to attract the private initiative as a partner in the investments. Regarding the permanence of original dwellers, according to the plan, a second project of impact was to be executed: the revitalization of the Pilar, a slum area where the neighborhood’s population is concentrated. Unfortunately, this project has never been executed.
The practical application of these principles proves the important role played by management to assure that private initiative is a partner, not the final decision maker, in the process.

The historic center of Salvador: Revitalization program of Pelourinho

The historic center of Salvador and, more specifically, the area called Pelourinho, after being the stage for the dwelling of the owners of sugar mills, businessmen and employees of the Crown, underwent a process of emptying and decay which can only be understood by analyzing the logic of development of the city as a whole and its insertion in the economic process of the country.

The Pelourinho is one of the few large sets of buildings with colonial characteristics which can still be found in Brazil. Its permanence is due, in a way, to the abandonment and the change of centrality which took place in the city. Since the 70s, a contradictory movement which stimulated the decentralization of the city and, at the same time, raised the banner for the restoration of the historic center, has been trying to reverse such process.

In 1992, was started the Programa de Recuperação do Centro Histórico de Salvador 5 (PRCHS) that aims to restore the physical and economical aspects of the area. The first aspect to be observed is who’s the responsible for the process conduction and how the private initiative participates. PRCHS has a specific aspect about the type of management implemented. Against all present-day tendencies, its main characteristic is a strong centralization of public investments in the area, without a more effective participation of the private initiative. That leaves room for clientele relationships and the questionable sustainability of the process in case the State Government ceases to keep its investments in the area.

For the project realization the state government compulsorily purchased the abandoned buildings that corresponded to 30% of the area’s buildings and negotiated the loan of 70% of the area’s buildings for a period which goes from five to fifteen years (Fernandes, 1998).

The short period for the loan (5 to 15 years) must be stressed. How can money that belongs to the entire population be invested in a privately-owned house that will be recuperated and given back to its owner just five years later? More important than recuperation itself is the fact that the property will be inserted in a highly-valued area.

The development of work in the Pelourinho, exclusively under State funding and with high investments in a short period of time, can, like other factors involved, be seen as a smoke curtain for the government’s election interests. The entrepreneurs still wait for the government to fund the smallest things, even to repaint their houses. To avoid wasting all the money and image invested, the government ends up agreeing.

Thus, combining restoration in record-breaking time, ostensive police presence, publicity campaigns and the expelling of former residents, the State Government managed, through highly centralized management, to be seen as responsible for an action which has destroyed the image of prostitution and marginality of the Pelourinho.

On March 24th, 1994, PRCHS’s third and fourth stages were inaugurated. That inauguration looked like a civic festivity. Salvador’s people received a “renewed

5 In English: Salvador Historic Center Recuperation Programme.
Pelourinho” from the governor’s hand. PRCHS included, in those four stages, 16 blocks, 334 properties and 9 ruins, with investments of R$ 24 millions (Fernandes e Gomes, 1995; Bomfim, 1994; Oliveira, 1998: 83; Ipac, 1995).  

Observing the social issue in Pelourinho, the lack of respect for the worst-off is evident. Despite the beautiful social discourse in the first written document, practice has proven entirely diverse. The area’s inhabitants have been ruthlessly expelled without any embarrassment to the public authorities. On the contrary, the action was seen as proof of efficiency.

The document, issued by the CONDER on 1992 January 31st, before the works began, with the title of Salvador’s Historic Center, aims to help the implementation of the restoration program using a entrepreneurial approach and calls attention to the extraordinary symbolic value of historic buildings. The discourse used in this document demonstrates attention to the social aspects too: “The historic center restoration, then, goes beyond its dimension of cultural rescue and assumes the simultaneous roles of a powerful economic instrument capable of promoting the heritage revaluation of the central areas (…) and of a powerful instrument of urban reordering, offering decent alternatives for dwelling as well as for running businesses for all sectors of the population” (CONDER, 1992: 5).

However, that document also states that “through the revaluation, the laws of the real estate market will take upon themselves to solve – without any social commotion – the worrying problem of the neighborhood, for those who want to make the Salvador Historic Center a safe and decent place for dwelling, work and leisure” (CONDER, 1992: 6).

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6 On the first stage was restored eighty nine buildings situated in four blocks. Nine ruins were also restored for inhabitants relocation. Seventy nine small business and tree hundred and ninety nine families were compensated, with a total amount of R$ 500 thousands. Twenty six families were relocated. The second stage, included forty seven buildings situated in two blocks. R$ 150 thousand was spent in the compensation of nineteen small businesses and one hundred and seventy six families. Sixteen families were relocated. The third stage included fifty eight buildings situated in three blocks. R$ 280 thousands were destined for the compensation of fifty eight small business and three hundred and seventy four families. Sixteen families were relocated. Finally, the fourth stage included seven quarters and one hundred and forty buildings.

7 State department responsible for urban planning in the city of Salvador.
During the implementation of the process, the dwellers of Pelourinho were first inventoried, and then the negotiation with the IPAC took place. Three options were offered: indemnification to leave the place; definitive relocation (stay in a restored building and pay a rent for it); temporary relocation (stay in the building for some time and then move to another. The great majority of the dwellers, 85% of the total, chose the first option. After this result, IPAC describes the process of removing the original dwellers of the area as follows: “In the beginning of the works, there was a generalized statement that the removal of the dwellers could only be carried out by using force. However, that was done quickly, in a very short period and without big problems. Only one of the dwellers went to court, but lost the action” (IPAC, 1995).

The majority of the dwellers opted for the indemnification, mainly, because of the uncertainty of the relocation. “The deporting operation, dreamed of since 1967, was performed in great part” (Fernandes e Gomes, 1993). Of the R$ 24 million invested in the first four stages, only R$ 386 thousand were destined for the restoration of buildings for the relocation of the dwellers, that is, 1.6% of the total invested. The indemnifications cost R$ 930 thousand which correspond to 3.8% of the total. Thus, the discourse of prioritizing actions for the benefit of the population of the area and its social and cultural development was abandoned.

Regarding the three aspects under analysis in this article, the process of revitalization of the Pelourinho, more specifically in the period from 1992 to 2000, moves quite away from the proposal of Integrated Conservation. The process was conducted by the state government rather than by the municipality. Furthermore, there is no participation of the private initiative and the treatment of the population aims at their expulsion.

Although aiming at the economic revaluation of the area, as recommended by the Integrated Conservation, the process does not seem to have approached the area taking into account the diversity of values involved.

The historic center of São Luís: Revitalization program of Praia Grande

The case study of the historic center of São Luís, whose main area is called Praia Grande, has gone through a similar process. Having been the center of the city’s development during the colonial period, the area was progressively abandoned by the middle and higher classes in consequence of the development of the city towards the continent. The Praia Grande area and the Pelourinho are among the few large sets of buildings with colonial characteristics which can still be found in Brazil. Their preservation is due, in a way, to the abandonment and the change of centrality which took place in both cities.

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8 State department responsible for heritage preservation in the city of Salvador.
A more organized movement for the preservation of São Luís’ historic center begins in the late 70s. The starting point is the *First Convention of Praia Grande*, in 1979, which resulted in the elaboration of the *Praia Grande Project*, implemented by the state government between 1980 and 1982.

The *Praia Grande Project* invested R$ 2.5 million, concentrating around the traditional Praia Grande Fair. The first intervention was the Fair’s revitalization, implemented with strong popular participation (Maranhão, 1981).

After this first project, the historic center underwent a period (1983-87) marked by, on one hand, a lack of physical interventions, and on the other, by the elaboration of a comprehensive preservation plan, the *Plano de Preservação do Centro Histórico de São Luís* (PPCHSL), developed by the state’s technical staff.

In 1987, a new state administration starts and gives priority to PPCHSL, under the name *Projeto Reviver*. From 1987 to 1990, it will recuperate the whole Praia Grande area: 107,000 square meters of urban area, 15 blocks, 200 properties and 40,000 square meters of specially important restored historic buildings (Pereira, 1992). Therefore, the *Projeto Reviver* was marked by a huge investment in a short period of time, without effective participation of the various actors involved.

From 1991 onwards, the project’s progress becomes inconstant. It is important to point out the great effort to obtain the United Nations’ title of World Heritage in 1997, as well as the beginning of Prodetur (Programme for the Development of Tourism), funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and executed by the state government. Prodetur’s investments began in 1998 and were all destined to the historic center (Andrés, 1998; Andrés, 2000).

From the very beginning, in 1979, the process has been conducted by the state government. The municipality starts a timid participation in 1997, with the creation of the Heritage Department. Only in 2003, the municipality assumes a more central role, creating the *City Center’s Management Board*, to strengthen interaction among the various actors involved.

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9 In English: São Luís Historic Center Preservation Plan.
government levels working in the area. Precisely in that year, the participation of the state
government weakens, as the new administration doesn’t see PPCHSL as a priority.

Even though PPCHSL has a subprogram called Partnership promotion and Investments
Seizure, private initiative’s part in the project is still very small and lacking in official
incentive. The same happens with the population involved in the area’s activities. With
the exception of Projeto Praia Grande, in the very beginning, the process of revitalization
was concentrated in the state government.

As we can see, the program’s sustainability is threatened, for the historic center ceased to be a priority for the state government. This problem is further aggravated due to few public resources and lack of participation from the private initiative (Vieira, 2006).

Another aspect under analysis is the treatment of the resident population. The
PPCHSL included the realization of a Housing and Social Promotion Subprogram that began
to be executed only in 2001. Before that, however, in 1993’s a Pilot Housing Project was
executed. The first building that was converted for housing use, situated in João Vital
Street, was adapted to house 10 families who had the support of state social assistances to
help them assimilate the extension and dimension of PPRCHSL. However, the results
were not satisfactory. The inhabitants continued to behave as illegal occupants,
disrespecting neighborhood rules, stealing water and energy, playing very loud music
late at night, etc.

The state government civil servant responsible for the Housing and Social Promotion
Subprogram considers that the main motive for the failure of this attempt was the
inhabitants’ very low education and income level and the lack of relationship with the
historic center. They were there by chance, simply because it had been the easiest place to
invade a building. The engineer argues that the historic center’s true inhabitant is that
“who values the area for what it is, likes it and wants it to develop, regardless of his
income”.

In 2001, the Housing and Social Promotion Subprogram begins, targeting the civil
servants of the state government. The basic requirements to take part in the program
were: (1) not to own another housing unit in São Luís, (2) work in the historic center, (3)
have a minimum income of R$ 600,00 (4) pay the installments through direct discount on
their paycheck and (5) live in the building.

The government drew the housing units among the servants as soon as they were
available. At first, the units would be rented and the contract renewed yearly, to make
sure the tenants fulfilled the requirements. After a ten-year period, the inhabitants could
buy the units, using the values already paid as part of the payment.

The sub-program was initially divided in two phases: the first one included the
adaptation of ten buildings, measuring a total of 11,595 square meters, converted in eighty
two housing units located in the higher floors and thirty seven shops in the ground floors.
For the second phase, six other buildings were chosen, with 4,130 square meters, to be
converted into thirty-one housing units in the higher floors and fourteen shops. In May
2003, the first phase was in this situation: four buildings had already been delivered and
occupied; two buildings were at works and the bidding process had started for another
four. After the conclusion of the two reforms, the program was paralyzed.
This housing program in the historic center was very well structured, unlike an isolated action like the *Pilot Housing Project* that took place in 1993. However, it brings new inhabitants for the historic center instead of aiming at the current population. The question posed by the civil servant responsible for the program, about who is the real inhabitant of the historic center, deserves further reflection.

The revitalization process of Praia Grande, historic center of São Luís, aims, as the Integrated Conservation defends, the area’s treatment as part of the whole city’s urban planning. However, observing the aspects under analysis in this article, this process is still very far from some of the central Integrated Conservation orientations. In São Luís, with the exception of an initial movement towards a participative management, the process was concentrated in the state government’s hands until 2003. The private initiative began to participate, in a very timid way, only in subsequent years.

This process shows a concern and reflection towards the resident population, very different from what happened in Pelourinho. However, the discontinuity of the specific housing program shows there are difficulties in its implementation.

**3. Final considerations: still a long way to go...**

The case studies presented above makes it clear that, in general lines, we can clearly observe the attempt to apply the Integrated Conservation principles in the northeast of Brazil. Surely, the revitalization plans that are being put forward in Pelourinho, Bairro do Recife and Praia Grande have managed to give “a new look” to these areas, which had undergone an accelerated process of abandonment and decay. However, some questions must be raised in order to achieve the Integrated Conservation principles.

The cases of Pelourinho and Praia Grande are both implemented by the state governments and concentrate a very large amount of investments in these historic centers without involving other actors. In both cases, the state government wanted to take the credit for changing a situation of ruin and abandonment. The problem of such management perspective is the sustainable condition of the processes through time and, specially, after the end of the political period of the administration responsible for the intervention (Vieira, 2000; Vieira, 2006).
In Bairro do Recife, from the very start, the contribution of private initiative was a sine qua non condition. Whilst the Government of Bahia spent R$ 24 million from 1992 to 1994 in Pelourinho, Recife’s municipality invested R$ 2,4 million from 1993 to 1996 in Bairro do Recife, with a further R$ 2,8 million from private initiative. The question here is exactly in the private sector’s strength over the municipality decision to allocate resources. Obviously, with such an investment, Pelourinho had a much larger area revitalized in a short period. However, the strategy used in Bairro do Recife aims at a gradual and crescent renovation which can have more chances of sustainability than an action such as Pelourinho’s, with short-term goals in mind.

The restoration which started in 1992 in Pelourinho was the fulfillment of ancient desires and proposals which had always had the economic returns of the area as its final goal, through tourism and the removal of low-income population. Pelourinho’s recuperation program was taken by the state government and executed in record time. In 1994, the governor inaugurated the four initial phases of the program that included 16 blocks, 334 buildings e 9 ruins. In this short time was not possible to establish a participative program (Vieira, 2000).

All three cases demonstrate the difficulty of maintaining the traditional residents in the revitalized areas. Such aspect deserves further reflection. Is this specific principle established in the Declaration of Amsterdam an utopia?

In order to deal with all difficulties seen in the case studies presented, management plays a central hole. The participation of private initiative is essential for the sustainability but has to be controlled. The management process observed presents some fragility as political period dependence and the difficult relationship between different government levels. In this sense, our challenge is to build management structures that surpass political periods and that guarantee the public interest preservation by the participation of all actors involved (Vieira, 2006).

In all three cases we have aspects that follow the Declaration of Amsterdam’s principles and others that are very far from the ideals of Integrated Urban Conservation. In this Brazilian panorama, we can see that we still have a long way to go in order to preserve our historic areas without denying them the right to be modernized.

References


