

The historic center of Salvador De Bahia. Contemporary challenges in conservation and management.¹

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Abstract

The historic center of Salvador de Bahia, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1985, has undergone a serious process of loss of centrality, ruin and impoverishment throughout the second half of the twentieth century, culminating in the controversial Historic Center of Salvador Revitalization Program instituted by the government of the State of Bahia in the 1990s, which resulted in the expulsion of hundreds of low-income families and the creation of a scenic space for cultural tourism, entirely financed by public funds. Since 2007, public policies for the historic center of Salvador seem to have taken a new direction. However, the "new" conservation and management policies implemented since then have not yet incorporated the concepts of sustainability and social participation, as they still focus on attracting touristic activities and on disregarding the remaining families in the area.

1. Conservation policies in the historic center of Salvador (1960-2000)

The area named historic center of Salvador has been the subject of conservation actions for 78 years. Between 1938 and 1945, about 50 buildings in this area were listed, a fact that, considering their proximity and the legal provisions that protect their environment, turned great part of the city's urban core into an object of conservation. Only in 1959 did the first urban complexes located in this area get listed as heritage sites, as a result of the pressures on the center to expand and verticalize, given that it was by then the main administrative, commercial and financial center of the city. In order to control these pressures, and in keeping with the international conservationist ideology that defined urban surroundings as fundamental parts of historic monuments, the old sub-districts of *Sé*, *Passo*, *Conceição da Praia*, *Saúde* and *Palma* were protected as urban heritage sites along with other areas outside the city center, such as the Tororó Dike and districts located in the neighborhoods of *Bonfim* and *Ribeira* in the *Itapagipe* Peninsula.

Despite having been the main centrality of the city in the 1950s, the old center already featured some physically damaged and marginalized sectors at the time, due to the migration of its former, wealthy residents to new neighbour-

hoods such as *Vitória*, *Canela* and *Graça*, starting at the end of the 19th Century. The area became occupied by ever-poorer segments of the population, with several streets located in the surroundings of the *Terreiro de Jesus* occupied by slums, the so-called, abnormal habitations, and activities connected to prostitution and the informal market. Nevertheless, the area corresponding to the original core of the city and its extension on the *Sete* and *Carlos Gomes* avenues, as well as the one located in the vicinity of the Port, constituted what Milton Santos named a "monopolist center", because all the main urban functions of the city and region were concentrated there (Santos, 1959). This monocentric urban structure, however, was radically transformed during the 1960s and the 1970s. The consolidation of important industrial activities connected to the oil refining in Simões Filho, the implantation of the Aratu Industrial Center and, finally, the implantation of the Camaçari Petrochemical Complex during this period, made investments and incomes converge, changed the economic profile of the metropolitan area, and forced the reordering of the city of Salvador's territory.

Beyond these impacts, there was also a large population migration to Salvador, rapid urban growth, swelling of the urban periphery and a strong expansion of the city towards the Atlantic coast. These vectors of expansion and real estate production were strengthened by several public projects. Among these: public land alienation; the opening of several valley avenues starting in the 1960s; the transference of the Administrative Center of the State of Bahia to *Paralela* avenue and of the main bus station of the city to *Vale do Camaragibe*; and the building of the *Iguatemi* shopping

1. This paper is put together from the authors' contributions to the "Report on the Status of the Historic Center of Salvador", prepared at the request of the Deliberative Council of the Brazilian Section of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (Icomos Brazil). The report, whose main goal was to analyze the causes of the current situation of degradation of the Historic Center of Salvador de Bahia, as well as the possible strategies for turning it around, was developed by a commission indicated by Icomos Brazil and comprised by Márcia Genésia de Sant'Anna, Nivaldo Vieira de Andrade Junior and Rodrigo Espinha Baeta (Sant'Anna, Andrade Junior & Baeta, 2016).



Figure 1 – Historic Center of Salvador: Largo do Pelourinho (Nivaldo Andrade, 2015).

mall in this area (Sant’Anna, 2004, p. 59-62). These new centers and areas of expansion competed with the Old Town that became as a result more and more of a “historic center” emptied of its previous urban functions, including serving as a financial center – this role was also transferred to the new city center located in the surroundings of *Iguatemi* during the course of the 1990s.

This restructuring and the migration of investments to new areas of expansion in the city functionally vacated the most dynamic sectors of the Old Town and aggravated the physical deterioration of its listed areas. It was in this context, during the 1970s, that the first “revitalization” initiatives of the historic center emerged, based on tourism development and encouraged by the implantation of the Historic Cities Program – PCH (1973-1987)². These initiatives were fundamentally based on the restoration and conservation of important religious monuments such as the Sé Cathedral and the *Rosário dos Pretos* Church, and of some of the most representative buildings located in the surroundings of the *Largo do Pelourinho*, for the installation of tourist facilities or government offices. They were also to serve, on a smaller scale, for the creation of housing for low-income families and the construction of primary and secondary schools. In more

specifically urban terms, the main intervention corresponded to the restoration of façades (including the demolition of parapets and other typical Eclectic decorative elements) and the restoration of buildings located in the *Largo do Pelourinho* and along *Alfredo Brito* Street – which connects the *Largo* to the *Terreiro de Jesus* – thus creating a “touristic corridor” for shops and services related to this sector. The idea was that this set of interventions financed by public resources would start a process of change of the image and use of the main sector of the historic center in order to promote private investments, which did not occur, at least on the expected scale.

In the 1980s, the general situation of the historic center’s urban heritage conservation had not substantially changed, nor had its general profile of popular use and occupation. The interventions financed by the PCH, especially those connected with tourist facilities, started to empty out, change ownership, or deteriorate, with only the properties occupied by public facilities remaining better preserved. The initiatives for the improvement of housing standards did not fare well either, due to their small scale and to the lack of systematic programs of social inclusion and generation of work and income, as well as the lack of monitoring once the properties were occupied. Despite this situation, however, the protected area was expanded in 1984, and the

2. Here we adopt the periodization proposed by Sandra Corrêa (2012).

Historic Center of Salvador was finally officially delineated, and also declared a World Heritage Site by Unesco the following year.

In 1986, the municipality of Salvador, until then unconcerned with the conservation of this area, formulated and initiated the implementation of the Special Program of Recuperation of Historic Sites in the City of Salvador³, coordinated by architect Lina Bo Bardi. In this program, the historic center was conceived of as a “meeting, working, dwelling and leisure place”, with the greater part of its building stock to be dedicated to housing space, using reinforced plaster building elements, according to a system conceived by architect João Filgueiras Lima (Lelé). The program resembled a Concerted Urban Operation (although this term was not used) and foresaw therefore the creation of incentives for the promotion of private investments, through the creation of instruments such as the transference of construction potential, onerous granting, and exemption from municipal fees, but it could not raise enough funds to complete its execution. Only five projects were completed⁴ and the most important gesture made towards strengthening the centrality of the sector was the installation of a provisional Town Hall building in the Municipal Square, a project also developed by João Filgueiras Lima.

Thus, the two main approaches to the problem of conservation of the historic center, both complementary and contradictory, were established throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s; they have characterized the actions of public authorities in Salvador’s historic center up until the present. One aims to change the area’s profile of popular use and occupation and to galvanize its economy through the development of touristic, commercial and leisure activities. The second proposes the creation of a residential zone for the working and middle class, in which tourism would act as a supplementary source of activity and employment. Although the first approach has always enjoyed more prominence and resources, neither was able to fully produce or generate the desired results.

In the beginning of the 1990s, when the Bahia State Government began the implementation of the Historic Center of Salvador Revitalization Program (PRCHS)⁵, the situation of the historic center in terms of urban dynamism, use and occupation profile and conservation of heritage was not much different than it had been in the 1960s, despite the public investments made. At that time, the city already presented

3. Programa Especial de Recuperação dos Sítios Históricos da Cidade do Salvador.

4. the Gregório de Matos Theatre (conceived in 1986 as part of the “Barroquinha Project”); the Sé Belvedere (1986; radically changed between 1999 and 2002); the pilot project in *Ladeira da Misericórdia* (1987); the Benin House in Bahia (1987) and the Olodum Headquarters (1988; today uncharacterized).

5. Programa de Recuperação do Centro Histórico de Salvador.

the bipolar situation that characterized it in terms of its main urban centralities, with a significant transfer of services linked to the wealthier classes, as in the case of the financial sector, formerly located in the *Comércio* neighbourhood, being relocated to the *Iguatemi* area. The *Comércio*’s building stock, modernized during the 60s and the 70s, was then emptied out and displayed an expressive array of unoccupied properties.

As with other programs in the past, the PRCHS included a set of interventions intended to foster, enhance and reinforce the sector’s utilization through touristic and high-luxury commercial and leisure uses, aiming to transform the popular commercial and residential profile that had characterized the area over the course of decades. Interventions removed all the inhabitants of the sector by means of pecuniary compensation or transference to other neighborhoods⁶, according to a strategy, based on public investments, of creating favorable conditions for the attraction of private investments, new activities and users. The private sector, however, did not respond as expected, oscillating between indifference, opportunism and speculation. 531 buildings were rehabilitated: the Bahia State Government acquired 432 properties and obtained the usage of another 133, becoming the largest owner in the area (Gordilho-Souza, 2010, p. 92). As has been exhaustively commented in several studies, the conservation of the buildings located in the area under intervention in the six main stages of this program has been conducted up until now by means of state government resources, which demonstrates the low degree of economic sustainability and real transformation of the urban situation of the sector.

The fragile results of this initiative were already visible and commented- upon by the end of the 1990s, which in the following decade triggered more concentrated reactions by social and popular movements against the eviction of residents and in favour of the production of social housing in sectors of the historic center. This movement encouraged the appearance of alternative proposals to the touristic and commercial use model previously adopted and the strengthening of the historic center⁷’s, housing function, although these have been minimally and incompletely executed up until the present, as will be detailed later. During the entire process of implementation of the seven stages of PRCHS one may

6. 2.909 families residing in 470 buildings were expelled. Of the 100 million dollars invested in PRCHS – the greatest amount invested up until then in a Brazilian Historic Center – only 3,9 million dollars were destined for the families that chose indemnization.

7. One of the more far-reaching proposals corresponded to the seventh stage of the PRCHS, in which the properties of the sector located between the *Saldanha de Gama*, *São Francisco*, *Bispo* and *Ladeira da Praça* streets would be recovered primarily for residential use, foreseeing the implantation of commercial use on the ground floors (see Mourad, 2011).

verify the absence of consistent measures regarding the return, maintenance or strengthening of traditional central or even commercial functions, such as those that still endure and are fortified by the popular use profile of a good part of the sector, like the ones concentrated in *Baixa dos Sapateiros*, *Ladeira do Taboão*, *Rua Saldanha da Gama* and *Ladeira da Praça*. Similarly, there is no evidence of consistent initiatives for strengthening housing use in the neighbourhoods in the

north of the historic center (*Passo, Carmo* and *Santo Antônio*), nor in its surroundings (*Barbalho, Nazaré, Saúde, Desterro, Aflitos, Palma, 2 de Julho*, among others).

The reasons for this history of unsuccessful projects are undoubtedly multiple and complex, but one of them may be cited as being perhaps the most important: the government's incapacity to conceive of the sector's urban revitalization in terms other than the trinomial: "tourism, heritage



Figure 2 – Historic Center of Salvador: aerial view just after the implementation of the six first stages of the Historic Center of Salvador Revitalization Program (Bahia, 1995).

and leisure". This approach gave rise to the proposal and implementation of projects disconnected from the sector's real dynamics and focused instead on an inexistent or exaggerated demand, which therefore need to be maintained by the government. In fact, since the end of the 1960s, public investments in the development of tourism in this sector were massive and continuous (with a short discontinuity only between 1986 and 1990), being even more intensified in the 1990s. Nonetheless, the indicators of this activity have not displayed, up until now, any meaningful economic performance by tourism in Bahia or any significant change in its general behaviour, considering a historic series starting in 1950, despite the increase in flow that occurred during the 1990s, when the "inauguration" of the new Pelourinho took place.

Current figures for national tourism show that in 2013 the total of foreign tourists in Brazil was 5,813,342, and in Bahia only 128, 838. In other areas of the Northeast – Ceará, Pernambuco and Rio Grande do Norte – the number did not surpass 324,019 (Anuário..., 2014). A rapid comparison with

for their part, numbered, respectively, 577 and 357 million arrivals. (Anuário..., 2014)

Despite its weak general performance, touristic use has been, since the 1970s, the main way of conceptualizing socio-economic stimulation and the rehabilitation of the architectural heritage of the Old Town, subordinating any other approach to the integration of the historic area with the city and its actual dynamics of use and occupation. In search of this chimera, the historic center of Salvador has, over the past forty years, been a target of interventions that do not consider the real demands of use and occupation linked to the popular social groups that use and inhabit the area. Furthermore, those interventions do not address the structural processes that have determined the situation of abandonment and deterioration over at least 30 years, including the loss of institutional, commercial and service sector polarity, inadequate conditions of accessibility and transportation, and the lack of vectors of consolidated private investments.

Despite the great investments made in the conservation



Figure 3 – Historic Center of Salvador: aerial view of ruins in the Lower City and Elevador Lacerda (CAU-BA Archives, 2015).

the numbers of the main countries receiving tourists shows how far we are from a situation in which tourism can effectively play an important role in the economy. In 2012, for instance, there were 83 million foreign arrivals in France; 66.7 million in the United States; 57.5 million in Spain and 46.4 million in Italy. Emerging countries such as China and Turkey,

of *Pelourinho* during the 1990s, there was no meaningful change in this general framework in the first years of the twenty-first century, beyond the improvement in conservation of the properties located in the area of the six first stages of the PRCHS, implemented between 1992 and 1997. Even so, this condition of good conservation was

achieved (and still is today) due to annual injections of public funds in the maintenance of these properties, which includes roofing, the painting of façades, window frames and other elements, since the inhabitants of the recovered properties claim not to be able to afford to make the improvements due to sector's poor commercial dynamics.

The investments made actually augmented the process of depopulation of the central area. In 1991, and thus before the implementation of the PRCHS, the Old Town of Salvador⁸ (CAS) – an area that includes the historic center and other neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the central area⁹ – held 86,255 residents, 11,949 of whom lived in the historic center (Gordilho-Souza, 2010, p.81). In 2000, the population of the Old Town totalled 79,776 inhabitants and that of the historic center decreased to 8,255, a loss of almost 3,700 inhabitants (Idem, ibidem).

With respect to urban dynamism, aside from the preponderance of residential use in the Upper City, the Old Town maintained an intense dynamism in terms of commerce and services of a popular character, especially around the *Estação da Lapa* and parts of *Sete Avenue*, a feature that was reproduced in areas such as *Baixa dos Sapateiros*, *Taboão* and the surroundings of *Terminal da Barroquinha*. In addition to the open-air tourist shopping mall implemented in the surroundings of *Pelourinho* which, as previously mentioned, already displayed serious difficulties with sustainability, several sectors of the historic center previously dedicated to the retail business, such as *Rua Chile*, were also vacated, as well as a good part of the building stock of the *Comércio* neighbourhood in the Lower City, despite the incentives conceded by the municipality for the installation of private universities in this area.

In summary, the project of transformation of the historic center and a good part of the Old Town into a hub of tourism, leisure and education geared towards a wealthy population had clearly failed. Even the “recovered” heart of the historic center had already become a kind of leisure area for the central neighbourhoods

– extremely deficient in this aspect – as well as a hub of urban and metropolitan leisure for casual visitors, starting with the implementation by the government of the State of Bahia of an intensive schedule of concerts.

From the point of view of the management of the listed and/or protected heritage by the three government bodies, at the beginning of the twenty-first century the only point

8. Centro Antigo de Salvador.

9. The Old Town of Salvador includes, beyond the areas listed by Iphan, *Sete de Setembro Avenue* and its surroundings, *Largo Dois de Julho* and its surroundings, *Campo Grande* and *Barris*, *Tororó*, *Nazaré*, *Saúde*, *Barbalho*, *Macaúbas*, *Comércio*, *Santo Antônio Além do Carmo* neighbourhoods and part of the populous *Liberdade* neighbourhood, with a total area of 7 km².

of articulation remained the Technical Office for Licensing and Monitoring (Etef).¹⁰ Etef was the result of a mid-1980s agreement between the National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute (Iphan)¹¹, Bahia's Cultural and Artistic Heritage Institute (Ipac)¹² and the City of Salvador. It was created with the mission of developing joint studies for the establishment of standards and specific intervention criteria for the listed site and its surroundings – in 1983, by decree of Municipal Law no. 3.289/83, this entire complex was also declared an Area of Cultural and Landscape Protection –, intending to serve as base for a shared effort of licensing and inspection. Although by the 1980s studies towards this goal had been made in areas such as *Carmo* and *Perdões* in the north of the historic center, the office became considerably emptied-out over the years, setting aside this fundamental part of its mission.

In addition, after the partial implementation of the Special Program of Recuperation of Historic Sites of the City of Salvador in the second half of the 1980s, the Municipality virtually exonerated itself from any responsibility related to the management of the historic center heritage, beyond the representational role played by its superintendence of licensing and inspection in the Etef and one-time interventions linked to the operation, concession and planning of public services. The management of the historic center heritage remained under the leadership of Iphan, with the responsibility for requalification and rehabilitation initiatives falling to the government of the State of Bahia, through the Conder¹³, but with no policies or projects articulated between the various government bodies.

The isolated regulatory treatment, lacking an overview of the historic center complex, as well as the abandonment of studies on the institution of rules related to occupancy rates, utilization coefficients, maximum number of floors allowed and indents adapted to the fragile and heterogeneous urban fabric of the sector, have been producing quite negative urban and landscape impacts. Without the support of detailed information about the historical and morphological characteristics of the urban fabric, and without specific guidelines related to the conservation of the sectors that make up the historic center, even in relation to building materials, colours, textures and visual or perspective effects, the licensing of projects, on a small or large scale, has not been very consistent.

10. Escritório Técnico de Licença e Fiscalização.

11. Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional.

12. The Instituto do Patrimônio Artístico e Cultural da Bahia (Ipac) is the public administrative institution created by the government of the State of Bahia that is responsible for protecting Bahia's cultural heritage.

13. Companhia de Desenvolvimento Urbano do Estado da Bahia (State of Bahia Urban Development Company).

Furthermore, the lack of planning and of identifying uses that can be implanted in the historic center has led to a mechanical and uncritical application of the general parameters of use established by the city for this sector, which makes it difficult to discern the tendencies of concentration of uses and, thus, of their urban, visual and social impacts, preventing the setting of limits and the adopting of an agile and consistent approach to processes that can affect the landscape and the “load capacity” of the area.

The historic center of Salvador and environs are, thus, full of examples of the consequences of this lack of planning and of specific standards. The urban deregulation of the central area has also left an open field in which real estate capital can attack, with a view to amplifying its building limits, including in its few reasonably regulated zones, such as the *Comércio* neighbourhood in the Lower City. Under the pretext of halting the process of functional evacuation of what was once one of the most dynamic and important sectors of the city, and of allowing the construction of a luxury hotel that would fly the Hilton flag, the maximum building height of 45m, which was established for buildings in this sector since the 1950s¹⁴ as a way to protect the visibility of a part of the slope that allows an onlooker in the Bay of All Saints to distinguish the Upper City from the Lower City, was raised to 51m, with the approval of Iphan¹⁵ itself.

2. The historical center of Salvador in 2010: Change of the paradigm of planning and intervention

The commercial and touristic project implanted by the Historic Center of Salvador Revitalization Program displayed an inadequate capacity to transform and reverse the situation of damage and desertion of the area's occupants and functions. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, this prompted reflections about the importance of bolstering residential use around the “recovered” area. Attending to demands established by the *Monumenta* Program and by the reorganized social movements for housing in the cen-

14. The maximum construction height of 45m in the *Comércio* neighbourhood was established by Decree no. 1.335, January 1, 1954, which, in turn, resulted from studies developed in the Office for Urban Planning of the City of Salvador (Epucs), coordinated by sanitary engineer Mário Leal Ferreira between 1942 and 1947 and after, until 1950, by architect Diógenes Rebouças

15. A document elaborated by Iphan's Department of Tangible Heritage and Inspection (Depam) approved not only the increase of the permitted construction height from 45m to 51m in the case of properties destined for the Hilton Hotel, but also suggested the adoption of the same increase for the neighbourhood's other properties. This judgement was used as justification to incorporate an amendment to the Master Plan for the Urban Development of the City of Salvador (PDDU), then being voted by the City Council, which resulted in an increase of permitted building height in the whole neighbourhood.

tral area, such as the Association of Friends and Residents of the Historic Center (AMACH)¹⁶, the seventh stage of this program was conceived with an emphasis on the residential use of the area between *Saldanha de Gama*, *São Francisco* and *Ladeira da Praça* streets, thus distinguishing itself from the six previous stages.

Furthermore, at the start of that decade, the Federal Savings Bank (Caixa)¹⁷, in collaboration with consultants indicated by the French government, began the implementation of the Program of Revitalization of Historic Sites (PRCH), whose touchstone was to be the implementation of housing projects for medium- and low-income residents in properties located in several historic centers of the country, including Salvador. In this city, the projects were named *Rememorar I* and *II* but, as was the case with the seventh stage of the PRCHS, only a few units were built due to real estate and financial difficulties and especially due to the lack of a firm political will. The project of the seventh stage (an area currently named “*São Dâmaso*” by Conder), for instance, after a legal fight won by the residents in 2005 with the support of the Public Prosecutor's Office, foresaw the implementation of a Social Housing Program, comprising 103 apartments and 13 commercial spots, in addition to a specific program designed to assist public servants in the state, with 234 residential and 42 commercial units (Mourad, 2011). In 2010 – that is, five years after the signature of the Term of Adjustment of Conduct filed against Conder, which had guaranteed, for the first time, that residents could remain in the historic center area – only 8 of the 76 properties originally foreseen had been restored and only 36 social housing units had been produced.

These difficulties, the persistence of the sustainability issue and of the low transformative impact of the touristic-commercial intervention realized in the surroundings of *Largo do Pelourinho*, in addition to the debate initiated in 2005 which resulted in the Ministry of Cities' Plan for Rehabilitation of Central Urban Areas (PRAUC), led to important paradigm changes in the approach to the problem of Salvador's historic city center and, in the end, to the formulation of the document entitled Participative Rehabilitation Plan for the Old Town of Salvador (Bahia, 2010).

This plan began to be structured in 2007 with the creation of the *Escritório de Referência do Centro Antigo de Salvador* – Ercas (Reference Office of the Old Town), structured by the Management Council of the Old Town and by Thematic Committees linked to various issues of this urban area¹⁸. Its elabo-

16. Associação de Moradores e Amigos do Centro Histórico.

17. Caixa Econômica Federal.

18. This Committees' themes were: 1) Culture, Education, Tourism and Leisure; 2) Economy, Planning, Commerce, Services, Employment and Income; 3) Human Rights, Security, Citizenship and Justice; 5) Housing, Infrastructure, Mobility and Environment.

ration included technical support by Unesco and linked several federal, state and municipal agencies, as well as representatives of the civil society and of the *Universidade*

tions of this initiative were the expanded reflections on problems beyond the historic center, including the central area complex and implanting a new concept of "Old Town" as an

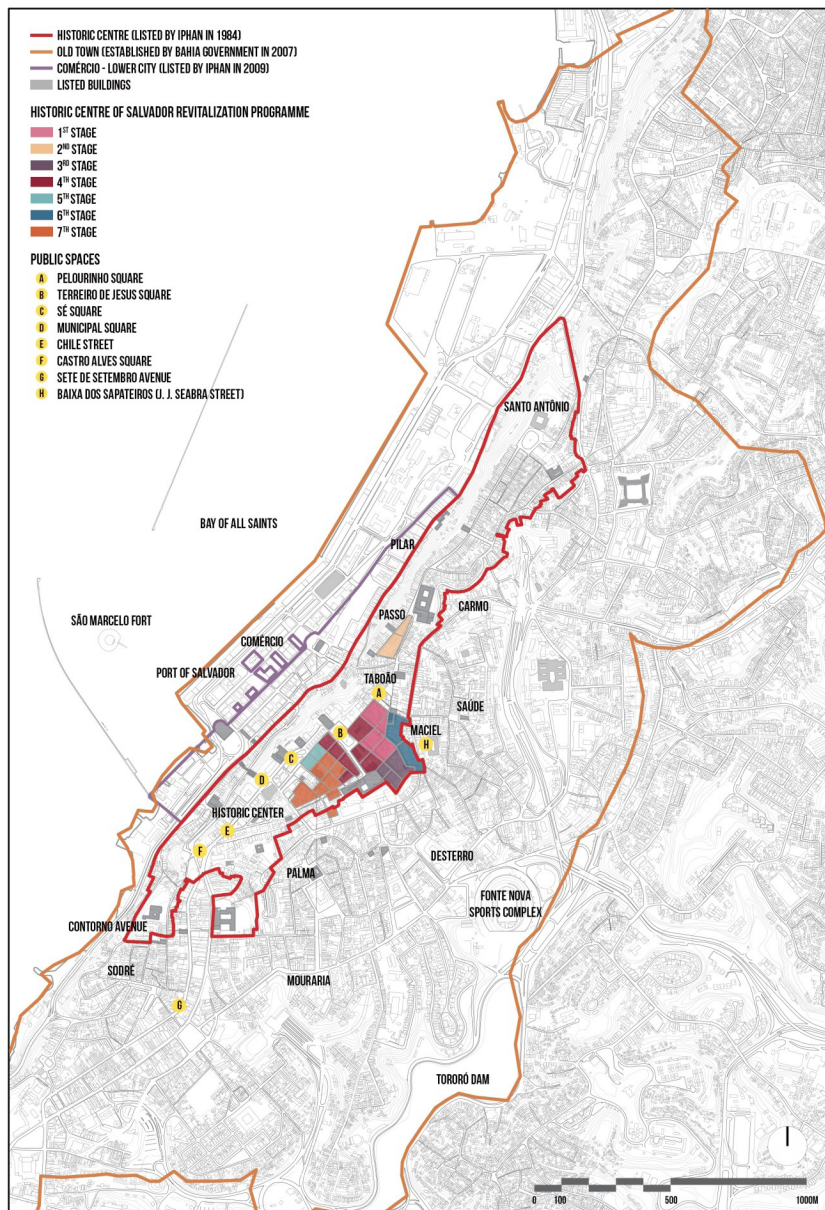


Figure 4 – Map of the Historic Center of Salvador and the Old Town (designed by Gabriela Otremba under the supervision of the authors).

*Federal da Bahia*¹⁹ in an Executive Group. The main contribu-

19. From the national government, the Ministries of the Cities, of Culture, of Tourism and Planning, of Budget and Management, Iphan and the Special Ministry of Ports of the Presidency of the Republic; from the State of Bahia government, the Ministries of Culture, of Urban Development, of Promotion of Equality, of Public Security, of Planning and of Tourism; from the local government, the *Pelourinho* neighbourhood administration, the Saltur (Salvador Tourism Company S/A) and Salvador Ministries of Reparation, Urban Transports and Infrastructure, Urban Development, Housing and Environment and Public Services and Violence Prevention. From civil society: the aforementioned AMACH, the CNBB, the Municipal Forum for Sustainable Development of the City Center, the Pestana Hotel Company, and the *Abraço Fraternal* ("Fraternal Hug") Project. Lastly, the UFBA Direction of Extension.

area of intervention; the elaboration of an ample diagnosis of this sector's situation, creating a set of 14 propositions varying from the stimulation of economic activities and the reduction of insecurity, to the incentive for residential and institutional uses in the Old Town and to actions designed for the vulnerable population in this area.

In short, while continuing to emphasize cultural tourism, the set of proposals is quite comprehensive and addresses the main problems that affect the historic center and its surroundings, with emphasis on the strengthening of residential use and tackling of the delicate social issues that per-

meate the area. Another gain, in terms of content, was the proposal to create a governing body destined to link the three government bodies and society itself around common guidelines for action in the central area of the city.

Analysts, however, opine that the elaboration process of the plan was developed with the participation of sectors of society in a very controlled and guided way (Rebouças & Mourad, 2012, p. 6). Moreover, the final plan elaborated is not effectively an urban plan, with clear guidelines for the use, occupation and economic galvanization of this region, being reduced to listing a set of recommendations and goals without sufficient detail, specialization or a timetable for implementation. In addition, though comprehensive in its per-

Participative Rehabilitation Plan for the Old Town of Salvador, in 2010, a survey carried out by Conder indicated the existence of 1,101 vacant properties in the central area, of which 466 were in ruins, 486 corresponded to closed buildings and 149 to empty lots (Gordilho-Souza, 2010, p. 84). In this area, 28% of the buildings dedicated to residential use were found to be in precarious conditions of occupancy (idem, p. 81-83). This problem was also seen as an opportunity to recycle and offer about 8,600 new housing units, which would not only allow the relocation, in 2,700 housing units, of the families occupying precarious dwellings in high risk areas, but also offer more than 5,000 housing units, thereby attracting around 25,000 new dwellers to the Old Town (idem, p. 97).



Figure 5 – Historic Center of Salvador: ruins in the Lower City (CAU-BA Archives, 2015).

spective on the Old Town, the “plan” sets aside and fails to analyze the urban expansion processes, the formation of centralities, concentration of uses, densification tendencies, or the dispersion and valorization of urban land that characterize the city of Salvador and affect the situation of its central area, which decreases its reach. Strategies to attract urban functions capable of strengthening this centrality are also missing, as is attention to the issue of financing residential use, especially that related to social interests, aside from the implementation of a Real Estate Investment Fund, whose characteristics will be detailed later in this paper.

At the time of the elaboration and divulgation of the

The plan, however, is not clear as to the intended use of this building stock and does not foresee the delimitation of new Special Zones of Social Interest (ZEIS – *Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social*) beyond the six previously established. The issue of financing the housing production operations is not addressed beyond the creation of the Real Estate Investment Fund, whose nature and outline only started to become clear in 2015. As Rebouças and Mourad observe (2012, p. 12-15), in 2012 the “plan” had already acquired the model of a market-oriented Urban Operation as its implementation strategy, aiming to adopt private-public management.

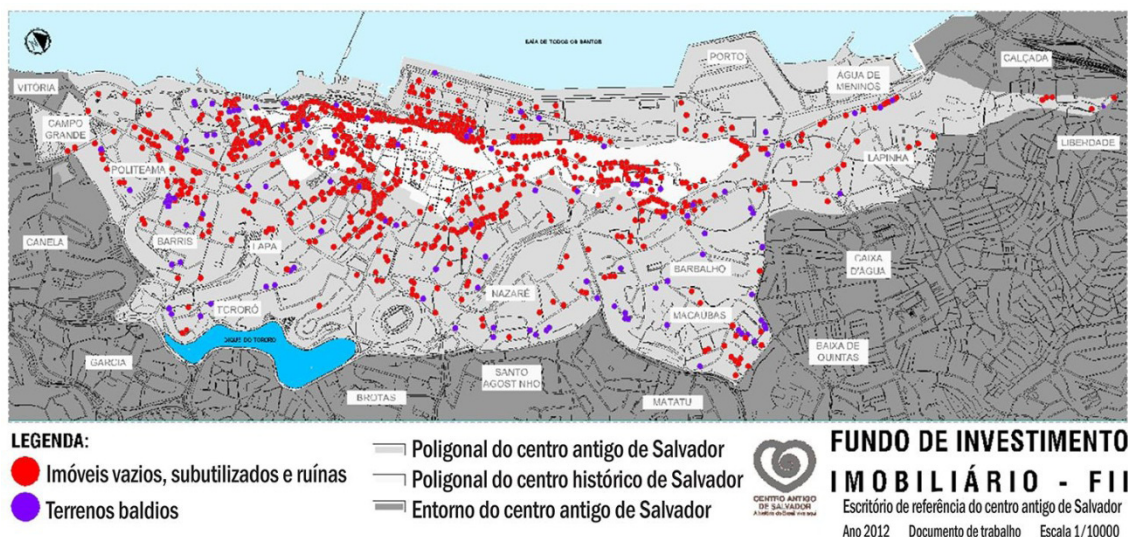


Figure 6 – Historic Center of Salvador: map of the empty lots (purple dots) and vacant properties, including ruins and closed buildings (red dot) (ERCAS Archives, 2012).

3. The current situation of the historic center of Salvador

Between the launching of the Participative Rehabilitation Plan for the Old Town of Salvador in 2010 and the present day, very little of the content of that plan has been implemented, and its coordination office (the former Ercas, now Dircas)²⁰ has acted mainly on the articulation of disconnected public and private investments proposed for the area. Only in 2014 was any kind of coherent scheme presented, with the disclosure of the so-called “Old Town Strategic Master Plan”, and in 2015, with the disclosure of the Real Estate Investments Fund project. It should be noted that in this period the difficulties of coordination between state and municipal public entities, particularly during the isolated and progressively disastrous administration of then-Mayor João Henrique Carneiro (2005-2013), during which the city’s production was almost completely given over to real estate capital through the questionable PDDU that was approved in 2008 and is still under judgement.

The final document released by the State Government evaluating the execution of the Participative Rehabilitation Plan (Bahia, 2014) lists the meagre advances obtained, among which are the actions focused on strengthening residential use, but also reveals that the depopulation process of the Old Town continues. If in 2000 the Old Town had 79,776 inhabitants, in 2010 the total came to 77,721. If in 2000 the historic center had 8,255 inhabitants, in 2010 it numbered only 5,985, demonstrating the on-going nature of the depopulation process.

20. Dircas is the *Diretoria do Centro Antigo de Salvador* (Old Town’s Department), linked to Conder.

This trend is aggravated by the perception that Salvador’s inhabitants have of this area. As can be seen in the document evaluating the Participative Rehabilitation Plan developed by Conder, research sponsored by PNUD/Unesco in 2015 reveals that 57% of the city’s inhabitants do not frequent this region, considering it insecure and a locus for drug use and prostitution. According to the same research, the higher the social class of the interviewee, the higher the percentage of rejection, despite the fact that the historic center is one of the less violent areas of the city of Salvador (Bahia, 2014, p. 124-125). The research also brought up an interesting fact: despite the negative general perception of the sector, 13% of those interviewed, almost 348,000 people, expressed interest in living in the Old Town. However, the research does not tell us in which income bracket groups these interviewees are (Idem, p. 128).

The demand for social housing in the Old Town has increased, despite the on-going process of population depletion. The report on the advances of the Participative Rehabilitation Plan indicates an increase of 9.56% in the number of families in a vulnerable situation in the Old Town (Idem, p. 164), a growth rate higher than that of the population depletion process. The number of vacant properties has also increased, currently totalling around 1,400 (Idem, p. 165), increasing, therefore, the potential of producing new residential units.

However, the same document reveals that of the 506 social housing units destined for public servants – who depended on the 2010 financing programs –, only 211 were made available, an equivalent to 41% of the total. Considering that the total demand was 3,000 social housing units, and that only 170 of these units were delivered, it can be seen that only

5.6% of the demand was met. A general balance shows that of the 1,884 residential units foreseen in 2010, 500 were delivered, 83 are in the execution phase and the others are in the design or preliminary study stages (Idem, p. 175).

One of the main products of the Rehabilitation Plan in the last 5 years was the Old Town Strategic Master Plan, released in 2014. The document foresees the carrying-out of 20 actions, in three stages or “moments”, each with a duration of three years. The focal points of the strategy are the expansion of the urban connectivity of the Old Town through a set of actions linked to the transport system and to mobility, and to housing by means of the production of 8,000 residential units, 5,000 of which are intended for the middle class. Of the 20 actions listed, these stand out: the recovery of selected properties to take part in the Real Estate Investments Fund; the recovery of the vertical means of transportation in the historic center and the implantation of new funiculars; the construction of belvederes; interventions on the port seafront; the implantation of high capacity LRT in the *Comércio* area and of a tram circuit in the historic center; the construction of new parking lots and the requalification of streets, slopes and squares. As can be seen, this constitutes a set of beautification and requalification actions that are well aligned with the urban operations of the 1990s, but with an emphasis – appropriate, in our opinion – on accessibility and mobility. Considering that the historic center is presently an island inaccessible to public transportation in the entirety of its longitudinal dimension, the implantation of a tram that follows this course could represent an important action not only for the mobility of the city center dwellers, but also for visitors.

In parallel, Iphan initiated the elaboration of the *PAC Cidades Históricas* (PAC-CH) action plan for Salvador²¹ in 2009. Unlike the actions traditionally executed by Iphan and other heritage organs, the PAC-CH, in its original conception, was not to be restrained to the restoration of listed buildings or properties located on listed sites. Thus, the actions foreseen by PCH-CH for Salvador take into account, at least in their conception, the entire city and the direct relation between conservation of cultural heritage, urban planning, social development and economic dynamics.

The plans of action of PAC-CH for Salvador, developed between 2009 and 2010 in the Superintendence of Iphan in Bahia, went through several alterations between 2010 and 2013 due to budget adjustments, the definition of priorities, and limitations on the establishment of institutional partnerships. Among these alterations exists, unfortunately,

21. PAC-CH is part of the Brazilian Government *Plano de Aceleração do Crescimento* Program (PAC), and arises from the need to structure the National System of Cultural Heritage, linking the cultural heritage conservation actions implemented by the National Government with those implemented by the States and Municipal Governments. PAC-CH articulates the several existing local, state and national plans and programs, as well as actions implemented by private initiative.

the elimination of a series of strategic actions, the most important of which is the creation of a Credit Line for Private Properties that would implant a very successful experience, previously tested by the *Monumenta* Program in several Brazilian cities, in the historic center of the city of Salvador.

Although PAC-CH's official plan of action foresees the execution of constructions linked to urban mobility, such as the recovery of the *Taboão* Elevator and the creation of new urban lifts, the projects currently under execution, with contracted costs of 54 million Brazilian reais, correspond mostly to the restoration of listed religious monuments, such as the Cathedral, the *São Domingos* Church and the *Santíssimo Sacramento da Rua do Passo* Church, resembling in this the other programs executed by Iphan during the previous decades. The exceptions are two sets of properties of lower architectonic value, yet very important to the composition of the landscape and urban fabric, that will be destined to new uses, with the participation of public or private partners: the Ceremonial attached to the *Conceição da Praia* Church, that will be administrated by its relevant fraternity, and the *Memorial do Frontispício/Memorial da Cidade* (Frontispiece Memorial/Memorial of the City), in the back of the Basilica Cathedral, which will be managed by Salvador City Hall.

Although Salvador PAC-CH shares, at least in its plan of action, some of the guidelines of the Participative Rehabilitation Plan for the Old Town of Salvador – such as the creation of new urban lifts to connect the Lower and Upper Cities and the valorization of our monumental heritage – they both are disarticulated programs, sometimes dissonant, sometimes in competition. The housing issue, a priority according to the Participative Rehabilitation Plan discourse – though still insignificant as far as its practical application – is not even contemplated by the PAC-CH.

In this fashion, the actions aimed at strengthening the Historic Center and the Old Town as a liveable area are still unclear and certainly diverge from attending to the demand for social housing. All of the region's approximately 1,400 vacant properties are defined as ballast of the Real Estate Investments Fund (FII) – conceived within Dircas – which will be constituted and managed by the *Caixa* starting with the land regularization of these properties, be it via ownership transfer or state government-sponsored expropriation²². The properties that will be part of the FII were included in four decrees issued by the government of the State of Bahia that set up areas of public use for purposes of expropriation²³. With the expropriation executed and the

22. FII are investment structures administered by financial institutions, regulated and inspected by the Commission of Real Estate Values – CVM, created in order to gather partners and generate funds to be invested in projects whose base is constituted by real estate assets.

23. Decrees no. 14.865, 14.866, 14.867 and 14.868, of December 11, 2013.

regularization of succession chains, the properties would then constitute the FII that, in turn, must be able to attract private investors and entrepreneurs (Bahia, 2014, p. 185). The owners of properties in the area can also participate in the fund as shareholders, through the recuperation of their properties with their own resources. In the FII, the State is also a shareholder, but has the prerogative of deliberating and monitoring the investments, and discussing and defining the investment strategy through regulation, as well as the format of governance, the desired results and the duration of the fund (Idem, p. 186).

For the operation of the FII of the Old Town of Salvador, five stages of execution were defined, located in the following areas: (I) private properties located between *Contorno Avenue*, *Ladeira da Montanha* and *Ladeira da Misericórdia*; (II) public properties of the State located in the CHS; (III) public and private properties located in *Gravatá Street* and on *Ladeira da Independência*; (IV) public Federal property, in use by the Marines; and (V) detached private properties located in several neighbourhoods of the Old Town (Idem, p. 78). For these areas, volu-

metric studies and economic and financial viability studies were defined in alignment with the Master Plan. It should be noted that at no time are the existing ZEIS in the Old Town or in the Historic Center mentioned; not even in the context of the earmarking of resources for producing social housing.

The first stage, especially as concerns the properties located on the *Contorno Avenue* slope, is destined for high-income real estate production, as is the case for the properties that possess a view of the Bay. The FII is in fact organized as a real estate and financial operation, aiming to attract, once again, high-income segments of society to the historic center, contributing to consolidate and, who knows, kick off long-desired processes of change in the social and occupancy profile, ignoring the current dwellers in these properties, including some who have been living there for decades.

The stretch of the Bay of All Saints located in the surroundings of the historic center was inserted in the Rigorous Protection Area of the Cultural and Landscape Protection Area delineated in the Old Town by the then-operative municipal legislation, and has been, for at least 20 years, in



Figure 7 - Historic Center of Salvador: shored-up ruin in Taboão Street (Nivaldo Andrade, 2015).



Figure 8 – Historic Center of Salvador: new developments (high-income housing, restaurants, etc.) in the Bay of All Saints shoreline, surrounded by ruins (Nivaldo Andrade Archives, 2009).

the sights of real estate capital. The beginning of the 1990s already saw the emergence of the first proposals to landfill and build residential towers in the area around the *Solar do Unhão* as part of the process of implantation of the current *Bahia Marina*. Although at the time the project had been rejected by Iphan's office in Bahia – which allowed only the construction of the marina itself and of some supporting low buildings –, the goal of building high structures on these filled-in areas was bit by bit becoming a reality, starting with the many modifications of the original project that sought permits, and which considerably expanded the built area of the enterprise in regards to the piece of land that was taken from the sea. The goal of producing high-luxury occupations “inside” the Bay of All Saints and primarily along the geological fault that borders this sector is already a reality that has taken shape in the regulatory vacuum that characterizes the Old Town. This objective is increasingly becoming a tangible reality, with the intersection of the content of the Strategic Master Plan featured by Dircas with the stages of implantation of the Real Estate Investment Fund. But even before this scenario took shape, the apart-hotel projects, predicted or implanted on old piers, clearly indicated the consolidation of this trend, that undoubtedly takes advantage of the legal

vacuum and the lack of specific planning that characterize the management of the historic center's heritage.

But aside from these plans and projects, and despite the continuous public investments, from the 1970s onwards the attraction of private investments never corresponded to expectations in the historic center and is still mostly focused on speculative actions linked to the acquisition of properties and land in the slope area facing the Bay and on its shoreline, without any significant alteration to the conditions of physical ruin and deterioration of most of the protected sectors, a fact that has forced the government to carry out constant shoring-up and even demolition actions.

The initiatives to strengthen social housing have not progressed over the course of decades, not only due to traditional real estate, bureaucratic, legal and technological barriers, but mainly due to the lack of credit lines that are subsidized and adequate for the rehabilitation of historic properties; to the still very high costs of such rehabilitation; and, last but not least, to the lack of commitment by the municipal and estate governments to enable the process, as is demonstrated by the standstill of the works of the seventh stage of the PRCHR, the minimal execution of the residential projects sponsored by the *Caixa* and the government's disregard for

the low-income population of the Old Town.

On the other hand, despite the countless lessons taught by the past having to do with the collapse of those projects that tried exclusively to attract high-income sectors of society to the historic center, this approach has been taking shape, over the last few years, as the main focus of the government and real estate investors. The most concrete and tangible result of this tendency, up till the present, is the configuration, over the course of the last 10 or 15 years, of a vector of production of high-luxury residential and commercial real estate along the Bay of All Saints and on some parts of the slope, in the zone near the *Bahia Marina*. This vector has been fed, as we have seen, by a series of clearly opportunistic projects, by the lack of clear regulations for use and occupation in this sector as well as in the entire Old Town area, where a real legal vacuum holds sway since the 1980s.

Combined with this trend (or in answer to it) is a set of proposals that, apparently, are not articulated with one another, such as the Manifestation of Private Interest approved by the City for the central area; the proposal of the creation of a public company, by Dircas/Conder, to manage the central area's real estate heritage and funnel resources to a Real Estate Investment Fund through, among others, the proposal of new use and occupation parameters for sectors of the historic center; and the expropriation and massive purchases of properties, especially on the strip that corresponds to the frontispiece facing the Bay of All Saints and in *Rua Chile*²⁴.

But what has actually changed in the central area and is encouraging all these investments?

The successful real estate exploitation in the *Corredor da Vitória* and the undermining (or exhaustion) of the real estate borders of the Atlantic Seafront and *Paralela Avenue*, due to the permanent road congestion (with no solutions in sight), turned the edge of the Bay of All Saints and sectors of the historic center into areas with great potential for real estate development for high-income groups. Added to that is the beauty of the view; the public investments in the requalification of public places; the still relatively low price of land and buildings; the project for the former warehouse area in the Port; the perspectives that are opened up with the construction of the Salvador-Itaparica bridge and with a

24. In June of 2015, the national press reports that an investor from the state of Minas Gerais, "in partnership with Salvador City Hall, the state government and Iphan", had acquired 124 properties located in *Rua Chile* and surroundings. Among the interventions foreseen, were the restoration and requalification, already underway, of the Palace Hotel, the most important hotel in the city in the second quarter of the last century and which had been abandoned for many years, in addition to the creation of 6 restaurants, 1 nightclub, 2 art galleries and 1 parking lot. The report also informs that the same entrepreneur had already invested, up until then, a total of 150 million Brazilian reais in the area (Via mais antiga..., 2015).

new accessibility option promoted by the *Via Portuária*; and we conclude that the central area is turning into a good deal. This inventory of projects, actions and intentions shows the possibility of a change in scenario and attests to a clear movement of the private sector, supported by the public sector, towards the implementation of high-income residential and commercial buildings in this area.

The political and macroeconomic crisis that Brazil has been facing is putting brakes on public and private investments, however, which may lead to the abandonment, postponement or bankruptcy of many of these projects that may yet be conserved on a speculative level.

On the other hand, the demolition of sets of properties located on *Ladeira da Montanha* and *Ladeira da Preguiça*, carried out in May 2015 by the Civil Defence Body of Salvador City Hall and endorsed by Iphan²⁵ after a period of high rainfall rates that resulted in the landslide of several properties and the death of two people²⁶, caused great controversy and a negative reaction by the residents of the Old Town of Salvador and groups of architects in the State of Bahia²⁷. The demolition of these properties and the removal of 30 resident families from the places where the landslides happened, associated with the existence of expropriation decrees already mentioned, were interpreted by several sectors of the society as actions intended to result in the social cleaning-up of the historic center, aimed at future occupation of the properties by private enterprise.

25. Iphan, however, declares that it authorized the demolition of only six properties: "a set of five façades, with little remaining of the other parts of the houses", on *Ladeira da Montanha*, and a "house", on *Ladeira da Preguiça*, coinciding with the two places where, on the previous days, properties collapsed due to the rain and resulted in the death of two people (O Impacto..., 2015).

26. On May 18, 2015, as a consequence of intense rain, two houses collapsed on *Ladeira da Preguiça*, killing Oberdan Barbosa. On the following day, two houses hit by the collapse were demolished by Salvador City Hall, that claimed to have Iphan's authorization. On May 20, a landslide on *Ladeira da Montanha* affects six properties and causes the death of Claudenice Gonçalves. On the following day, with Iphan's authorization, Salvador City Hall initiates the demolition of six properties hit by the landslide, removing 30 families from the area. On May 23, the demolitions executed by Salvador City Hall in the historic center total 31 properties. Salvador City registered a total of 21 deaths due to the collapse and landslides during this period.

27. On June 30, 2015, the Department of Bahia of the Institute of Architects of Brazil (IAB-BA), the Department of Bahia of the Council of Architecture and Urban Design (CAU-BA) and the Syndicate of Architects and Urban Designers of the State of Bahia (Sinarq-BA) forwarded a document denouncing the historic center of Salvador's situation of abandonment to the Unesco World Heritage Committee in Paris, and, "considering the gravity of the situation and the imminence of new demolitions", requested of the Committee "the urgent remittance of a monitoring mission with the objective of evaluating the historic center of the City of Salvador's situation of ruin and its possible inclusion in the List of Endangered World Heritage Sites" (Instituto..., 2015, p. 4). Although IAB-BA, CAU-BA and Sinarq-BA have received, on August 4, 2015, a letter from the Unesco World Heritage Center acknowledging the receipt of the complaint and pledging to take appropriate actions (Unesco, 2015), until the present moment there has been no action taken in that direction.

4. Urban planning, cultural policies and historic centers: The incorporation of concepts of sustainability and social participation

Over the course of the last decades, the processes of urban planning have tried to incorporate two concepts that had not previously been part of the discussions and practices of this disciplinary field: *sustainability* and *social participation*.

The concept of sustainability, which originates in ecology and environmental conservation, means ensuring that the use of natural resources for current needs does not compromise their usage by future generations. The application of this concept to urban planning – commonly linked to the idea of *energy sustainability* – results in the understanding, among others, that the reoccupation of empty or underused properties in central urban areas provided with infrastructure, in opposition to continuous expansion and urban spreading, promotes the optimization of existing urban networks (such as road systems, public transportation, electrical energy, water, sewer, urban drainage etc.), which implies the reduction

of the huge energy and economic costs linked to the provision of infrastructure for new urban areas. Furthermore, in regard to the application of the concept of energy sustainability to historic centers, the reuse or recycling of pre-existing buildings, whether protected or not as heritage, also represents a reduction in energy and economic costs, when compared to the processes of urban renovation involving the demolition of pre-existing architectural structures and the subsequent construction of new buildings.

In Brazil, from 1960s onwards, in most major cities new centers emerged in areas of urban expansion and concentration of real estate investments, which not only caused the “emptying” and the loss of prestige of the oldest centers, but also promoted the devaluation of land and buildings. The rehabilitation of buildings and the occupation of empty land in the old centers could be set up as something accessible to lower income social sectors demanding housing in these areas, thus helping to reduce the housing deficit and to strengthen links between urban heritage and social and economic sustainability. However, as seen in this article, in the historic



Figure 9 – Historic Center of Salvador: demolitions of sets of properties in Ladeira da Montanha, carried out in May 2015 by the Civil Defence Body of Salvador City Hall (CAU-BA Archives, 2015).

center of Salvador public policies have not trodden this path. Instead, they have focused mainly in higher income population and encouraged gentrification processes that, though not fully materialized, have pushed up the price of the best-located real estate and land and have encouraged speculative dynamics that make it increasingly difficult to meet the social demand mentioned above.

When addressing the sustainability theme in historic center, however, it is also necessary to deal with *social sustainability*. According to Danish architect and urban planner Jan Gehl (2013, p. 109), in order to guarantee social sustainability in the cities, it is necessary to “promote the idea of an accessible city, attractive to all social groups”, striving to fulfill a “democratic function in which people can find social diversity and comprehend one other, through sharing the same urban space.” After all, “social sustainability [...] has an important democratic dimension that prioritizes equal access so that we can find ‘other people’ in the public space.” In the same fashion, Ecuadorian architect Fernando Carrión argues that in the city, it is up to the historic center to play the role of “public space *par excellence*”, thus being “the fundamental element of social integration and structuring of the city.” (Carrión, 2005, p. 54-55).

The notion of *sustainability* applied to the preservation of patrimony was already present in the final document of the Congress on European Architectural Heritage, held in Amsterdam in 1975. Although the expression *sustainability* did not appear in its text, the Declaration of Amsterdam already presented the notion of *energy and environmental sustainability*, in affirming that “it is [...] being realized that the conservation of ancient buildings helps to economise resources and combat waste, one of the major preoccupations of present-day society” and that “the rehabilitation of existing housing helps to check encroachments on agricultural land and to obviate, or appreciably diminish, movements of population.” (Declaration of Amsterdam, 1975). From the point of view of *social sustainability*, the Declaration of Amsterdam argued 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. (Idem, ibidem).

Lastly, the Declaration of Amsterdam also brought up the issue of *social participation* in the planning and management of the intervention programs in historic sites, arguing that:

In order to enable the population to participate in the drawing up of programs they must be given the facts necessary to un-

derstand the situation, on the one hand through explaining the historic and architectural value of the buildings to be conserved and on the other hand by being given full details about permanent and temporary rehousing. This participation is all the more important because it is a matter not only of restoring a few privileged buildings but of rehabilitating whole areas (Idem, ibidem).

In Brazil in the last thirty years, the theme of participation has been incorporated into legislation relating to cultural policies and urban planning. The Federal Constitution of 1988 establishes, among the principles that must rule national cultural policy, the “democratization of decisive processes with social participation and control.” (Brazil, 1988, art. 216-A, § 1st, point X). In turn, Federal Law no. 10.257, of July 10, 2001, known as “City Statute” (“*Estatuto da Cidade*”), establishes, among general guidelines for urban policy, the “guarantee of the right to sustainable cities, understood as the right to urban land, to housing, environmental sanitation, urban infrastructure, transport and public services, work and leisure, for present and future generations” and, further, the “democratic management through the participation of the population and of associations that represent various segments of the community in the formulation, execution and monitoring of plans, programs and urban development projects.” (Brazil, 2001, art. 2nd, points I and II).

Often the agenda for social participation in the urban planning processes is carried out bureaucratically, through the holding of public audiences that are poorly publicized and in areas of difficult access, for instance. However, even if it is questionable whether the urban policies and planning processes of Brazilian cities effectively became participative, it is incontestable that the theme of participation is on the agenda.

In the area of culture and the preservation of heritage, important advances have been made in the last decade in the direction of democratization and the increase in access to the benefits of these public policies in Brazil. Initiatives such as the *Cultura Viva* Program affirmed the fundamental role of society in cultural production and made possible the promotion of cultural projects proposed by social segments that had never been the focus of cultural policy. It is also worth noting, with the promulgation of Decree no. 3.551, on August 4, 2000, the formulation and implementation of a policy to safeguard the intangible dimension of cultural heritage, which is centrally based on the participation of society. The notion of intangible cultural heritage is inseparable from this approach, in that it concerns practices, knowledge, abilities and expressions that exist only through the individuals and social groups that hold, reproduce and transmit them. Therefore, the safeguarding process can only occur with the

participation of the latter and of other social actors interested in the permanence and continuity of these cultural properties. This participation takes place at every stage of the process (identification, recognition, management and promotion) and has as its final goal the strengthening of the autonomy of the social group in the conservation and management of its own heritage. In this policy, however, the government's role is not to constitute patrimonies and determine how they will be handled, but to receive, foment and support initiatives and processes of conservation that emanate from society itself, recognizing the competence of social groups to develop or even lead these processes.

An interesting example can be found in the recognition of the *Samba de Roda* of the *Recôncavo* Region in Bahia as Cultural Heritage of Brazil in 2004, and in its safeguarding process.²⁸ Although very ancient and connected to the daily life of several social groups, this cultural expression was found, in the beginning of the 2000s, to be in a state of increasing fragility. This was due to the generally precarious socio-economic situation of its practitioners, and to relative disinterest in the practice on the part of the youth, in addition to unfair competition with other musical expressions promoted by the cultural industry. In addition, the traditional *samba de roda* groups were far apart and had no contact with one other. This situation and the divulgation of the principles and instruments of the federal government's safeguard policy encouraged leaders and local groups to request the registering of this cultural expression as intangible heritage, which unleashed a participative process of identification of practitioners, of adhesion and social mobilization which was strengthened during the process and remained part of the management of this heritage after it was recognized. The key instrument was the creation of the *Associação de Sambadores e Sambadeiras do Estado da Bahia* (ASSEBA) in 2004, at the initiative of its practitioners; it is an institution which has ever since been coordinating and leading the safeguarding process and expanding the number of participants in the work of conservation. In this manner, a permanent dialog with the government was established concerning the supporting, fomenting and safeguarding actions which must be undertaken, a process that has been successful as the quantity of practitioners has grown, as well as the number of *Casas do Samba*, of which there are already eleven in several cities of the *Recôncavo* Region in Bahia.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about Brazilian urban heritage preservation policies, which do not incorpo-

28. The *Samba de Roda* is a musical, choreographic, poetic and festive expression that occurs in several municipalities in the State of Bahia. *Samba de Roda* has its origin in the *Recôncavo* Region (which corresponds to the area around the Bay of All Saints), a region that currently concentrates most groups of practitioners. In 2005, the *Samba de Roda* of the *Recôncavo* Region in Bahia was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

rate these advances. Social participation in the formulation of these policies, even by residents of the protected areas, is very low and is not encouraged by the public preservation bodies. In the case of the historic center of Salvador, for instance, there is a conspicuous lack of participation by residents in the policies implemented by the federal, state and municipal governments over the last decades, which often produced impacts of expulsion and segregation.

6. Conclusion

As observed by Salvador Muñoz Viñas (2003, p. 176-177), the conservation of cultural properties "is done for current or future users (that is, for the people) and not for the objects themselves." Thus, "a good Restoration is the one that inflicts less pain on a smaller number of sensibilities – or the one that gives more people greater satisfaction", since it "is the consensus between those affected [...] that will ultimately determine its validity". In Brazil, urban planning specialists already comprehend the importance of social participation, but the same is not true of the managers of the tangible cultural heritage.

In order to guarantee the economic sustainability of the historic centers, it is of incontestable necessity not only to preserve its heritage, but also to dynamize it, which will only be possible through the promotion of its residential use, once it has been seen to be impracticable to occupy the whole vacated territory of this area with directorial, administrative, commercial or touristic activities. In the case of the historic center of Salvador, the promotion of residential use for the middle and high classes must be necessarily accompanied by the guarantee that the low-income population that lives in this area can remain, ensuring the area's sustainability and social diversity.

In order to make it viable for this population to stay, it is evident that political will is necessary – in the implementation of practical actions and not only in the plans' guidelines –, just as it is necessary that popular movements become increasingly organized in order to assert their rights. It is also necessary to adopt mechanisms that can control valuation and real estate speculation and to implant adequate lines of credit. The *Porto Maravilha* project in Rio de Janeiro, for instance, shows that the *Caixa* is more interested in working with certificates of real estate value than in extending accessible and adequate lines of credit for the production of social housing in consolidated urban areas, which helps render the contemporary challenges related to the conservation and management of the historic center of Salvador even more complex.



Figure 10 – Historic Center of Salvador: aerial view of the Santo Antônio Além do Carmo neighborhood (Nivaldo Andrade Archives, 2009).

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