

The safeguard and rehabilitation of the city image for the conservation of the urban landscape. A multidisciplinary perspective

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Abstract

In order to debate the importance of a multidimensional and integrated approach of the urban landscape, and the challenges that if places in the perspective of safeguard/rehabilitation of the city image when incorporating concerns related with the promotion of a social and sustainable development, an anthropologist and a restoration technician basically consider two aspects: the importance of the development of multidimensional, inter/multidisciplinary, dynamical and dialectical approach of the contexts of the intervention, considered as an instigating element of the intervention proposals enhance the image of the city from a sustainable social and urban landscape development perspective; the development of such perspective of the city image as a contribute for the sustainable conservation of the urban landscape. These matters also consider the urgent necessity to think the image of the city as an integrant part of a wider and complex urban landscape.

Keywords

Integrated, multidisciplinary, sustainable, social/urban landscape development.



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In order to debate the importance of a multidimensional and integrated approach of the urban landscape, and the challenges that it places in the perspective of safeguard and rehabilitation of the city image when incorporating concerns related with the promotion of a social and sustainable development, an anthropologist and a restoration technician basically consider two aspects:

- The importance of the development of multidimensional, inter-/ multidisciplinary, dynamical and dialectical approach of the contexts of the intervention, considered as an instigating element of the intervention proposals enhance the image of the city from a sustainable social and urban landscape development perspective;
- The development of such perspective of the city image as a contribute for the sustainable conservation of the urban landscape.

These two matters show the importance to articulate the architec-



Fig. 1 - Natural, architectonic or multidimensional landscape?



Fig. 2 - Natural, social or multidimensional landscape?

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tonical, historical, geographic, economical, social and cultural dimensions that give consistency to the urban and landscapes values, with the physical values of the edifications, the functions and the activities that can make possible its rehabilitation.

The complexity inherent to the urban landscape demands a multidimensional approach that considers the relation between exterior and interior space, the historical dynamics, its artistic quality, as well as the distinct environments, geographic, urban, social and cultural, that it constitutes.

These matters also consider the urgent necessity to think the image of the city as an integrant part of a wider and complex urban landscape. The different aspects that compose the urban image are interactive, influencing themselves mutually and dynamically, allowing to consider that the image of the city changes in consonance with the urban landscape. The construction of such landscape is intimately related with the social changes.

This varied set of aspects allows detecting distinct social and urban environments, evidencing specific ways of living, perception, use, representing and imagining the city, thus contributing for the construction of urban images that compose landscapes.

The form and the processes how the dimensions that integrate the image of the city are revealed define the specificities on which the dynamics of safeguard and rehabilitation will have to occur. When considering the importance of social and sustainable development, such dynamics of intervention show ways that can contribute for the integrated conservation of the urban landscape. Such views reflect the interdisciplinary approach expressed here.

1. Basis for a multidimensional approach of study and intervention contexts

The importance of the promotion of study perspectives and interventions aiming at social development and urban territory sustainability has been widely recognized. But to turn that into a plausible objective is not always easy.

Transform into a practice the intention of a multidimensional approach within a study and an intervention context implies the establishment of an interactive relation between sociocultural and physical dimensions. From a technical and methodological point of view, the investment in the promotion of knowledge regarding the plausibility of such development is more justifiable. This enhances the need to produce more knowledge about how to implement an interactive and effective logic of analysis, project, plan, management, intervention and evaluation.

In this sense, we consider important to present some reflexive and



Fig. 3 - Historical or natural landscape?



Fig. 4 - Architectural social or empty landscape?

methodological remarks based in different techniques and disciplinary work. However, and despite the distinction between the safeguard and the rehabilitation of urban patrimony, such perspectives share a concern regarding contexts' sustainable development. It is also implied that sustainable development it's not feasible without the social empowerment of populations involved in the contexts of physic intervention (Menezes and Tavares, 2003a-b, 2006). In this sense, we assume the idea that "urban patrimony is formed by everything that a city has done, is doing and will done, and in the end

urban patrimony will be the social body that lives in the city. In truth, it is the social body that forms, that establish and that destroys the urbis" (Cornélio da Silva, 1987:381).

1.1. Short reflexive notes

Regarding our concern with social and sustainable development related with the preservation and rehabilitation of urban image, it as been noticed the importance in investing and promoting: 1) multi and interdisciplinary approaches; 2) social and ecological perspectives of analysis and interpretation; 3) platforms of intervention and maintenance of intervened contexts (Menezes and Tavares, 2003c).

The need of development of an interdisciplinary and multidimensional approach can be based in the following considerations:

- The urban image is a process – continuous and dynamic of configurations and reconfigurations and an expression of a variety of aspects, facts and historical, political, ideological, sociocultural, economical, geographical and technological factors.
- The constructive and decorative dimensions of architectonic patrimony are related with different historical moments, knowledge evolution and the influence of several styles, trends and taste, i. e., with social dynamic.
- The city image is one of the dimensions that integrate urban landscape and is closely related with social, cultural, economical, political, organizational and environmental dimensions which provide expression to urban contexts.
- The reading and interpretation of image and urban landscape is diverse and a function of individuals perception of meanings, and symbolic, social and cultural values.

By another hand, the socio-ecological approach constitutes another remarkable aspect in the contextualization of areas of study and intervention in the sense that gives a contribution to:

- The integrated comprehension of different elements that compose urban landscape.
- The definition of improved conditions towards the implementation of integrated processes of social and sustainable development of urban contexts.

Another relevant aspect is the creation of a participated platform of intervention and maintenance in urban contexts, which can be crucial to the implementation of integrated processes of social development that can be based in the following:

- The populations should be active in the project of rehabilitation and preservation of urban contexts, namely because they are an active part of those processes of construction/destruction and of sociocultural expression of urban patrimony (tangible and not



Fig. 5 - Social and architectonic complexity



Fig. 6 - Urban complexity

tangible).

- The populations and the diverse ways of organization (associations, collectivities, etc) are vital to the dynamic, valorization, preservation and maintenance of urban contexts.

- Populations can have specific technical know-how necessary to the conservation and restoration of architectonic patrimony, as well as to the maintenance of both cultural and urban patrimonies.

The investment in developing interactive methodologies of research and intervention can give an important contribution to the

implementation of preservation and development logics. In this sense, and based in a brief presentation of two different research perspectives with intervention purposes – anthropological and of restoration – we identify the following:

- Research procedures aiming at identifying sustainability, conservation and development goals, which can be considered as important to the intervention.

- Basis to the construction of an inter/multidisciplinary approach.

1.2. Methodologies of approach and technical and constructive analysis: brief presentation

In the last years, restoration techniques improved their scientific quality of approach and intervention. Currently, it is central the concern regarding the revalorization of traditional techniques, na-



Fig. 7 - Handcrafts know-how and divulgation



Fig. 8 - Local know-how and survival

mely in what regards the mitigation and/or the minimization of degradation problems. This treatment objective can be identified through the reduced interventions and the use of compatible materials. Coatings, decorative elements and original mortars has been widely considered as the elements responsible for the buildings' architectonic structure and physiognomy or physical appearance. Therefore, guaranteeing quality in restoration techniques is essential to buildings' rehabilitation and to city image [Tavares, 2007]. Restoration is a critical, technical and scientific act. Restoration can be identified through a set of studies and operations aiming at the rescue of current architectonic patrimony, which allow the maintenance of a "living" patrimony, preserving it for the future. The conservation of historical and architectonic patrimony implies a multidisciplinary approach, involving a variety of professionals and cooperation between different knowledge. Regarding a procedural logic, the intervention in historical patrimony is preceded by studies and diagnosis, as the following [Tavares, et al, 2005b]:

- Historical studies and of previous interventions – aiming the understanding of the global monastic/built structure supplying data regarding the interventions of modification or rehabilitation that occurred throughout time and the information regarding materials and constructive techniques.
- Building inspection and anomalies identification – aiming the evaluation of construction techniques, the identification of anomalies and the extent of deterioration through a detailed observation, photographic records, work files and the identification in a graphic matrix.
- Specialized researches (in situ and lab essays) – aiming at identifying the relation between research methods and conservation and restoration technologies, contributing to an in-depth knowledge of the technique, materials and the ways that have been used. The main applied goals of these researches are the determination of the materials composition and its techniques, the diagnosis of materials transformations and its causes and the selection of more adequate restoration methods.

The expression of a given set of building' anomalies are perceived by the generality of the individuals. However, the adequate solutions can not be dependent by sensorial and impressionist diagnosis, demanding complementary techniques of restoration and conservation, like in situ and lab diagnosis, as well as historical studies and prior interventions reports. This procedural logic allows the definition of treatment and intervention proposals, which should be guided by framing principles as, for example, the one of authenticity. Frequently, the option is for minimalist interventions,

by reversibility and by materials compatibility. These procedures are very important to the maintenance of cultural meanings and the buildings safeguard for the future, as well as for historical and architectonic patrimony sustainability [Tavares, et al, 2005^a].

1.3. Methodologies of approach and sociocultural analysis: Brief presentation

Sociocultural approach in potential urban contexts to intervene use a procedure logics that permit a better compatibility between the approach, study and analysis agenda and the timings imposed for the project' dynamic, regarding planning, programming and intervention. This implies the use of more operative and dynamic techniques and work methodologies. In this sense, we highlight the importance of sociocultural diagnosis that, in sum, must include:



Fig. 9 - Before



Fig. 10 - Local know-how and survival

- Answers to questions like: What? For what? Why? How?
- Information regarding context's historical, social, cultural, socio-spatial and economical characteristics; problems, needs, potentialities and existing resources

The quality of the diagnosis is related with the quality of the intervention project. In this sense, it is necessary to transpose the idea of diagnosis as just a quantitative survey, or a cadastral process, or even a mere checklist of resources and problems. So, diagnosis should be conceived as a tool that allows the identification, the definition and the ranking of social dynamics that cross analyzed contexts. This also permit to underline the problems, resources and contexts' potentialities, in what regards the relation between dynamics, practices, representations and environment (Menezes, 2006). The efficiency and effectiveness of such purposes are related with three conditions:

- Dynamism: to avoid the production of static images and static characterizations of contexts.
- Interactivity: to promote an articulate reading of different approaches of a given context in order to relate with other types of diagnosis (architectonic, urban, historical, economical, archeological, technological, etc).

- Participation: to include the actors' logics and their propositions. The use of social sciences' methods, techniques and measures are equally useful (surveys, questionnaires, life stories with privileged interlocutors, observation, document analysis with bibliography, newspapers and cartography, demographic census). Also, there are more quick techniques of data gathering as SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), the walk-through (identifies problems, positive aspects and potentialities, controlling interventions and assuring a posteriori sustainability evaluation) and focal-groups (based in the identification of groups that express mutual interest in a guided discussion of a given problem (Menezes, 2006).

The main purposes of sociocultural diagnosis are:

- The development of a reasoning regarding the relation between culture and society, the dynamics of degradation, segregation and socio-spatial exclusion.
 - The possibility of putting into perspective previous proposals of action that make possible the inversion of situations that produce and/or reproduce problematic sociocultural dynamics.
 - The identification of previous proposals of action that enhance resources and potentialities inherent to the intervening contexts.
- Sociocultural diagnosis is a useful tool that makes possible the construction of variables in the observation of social reality and



Fig. 11 - Social problems and intervention



Fig. 12 - Sociocultural potentialities and intervention

in the definition of registration forms (Menezes, 2006), allowing the following:

- To give information regarding problems' causes and consequences which allow the identification of tendencies and typical situations.
- To identify the resources inherent to the contexts and the ways for it improvement.
- To identify the conditions related with successful interventions, as well as to identify obstructive and at risk conditions related to the action.
- To identify the actors (institutions, organizations, individuals, resi-

dents, local commerce) and its roles in social dynamic and in the possibility of creating partnerships.

- To establish a relation between problems and needs in order to identify intervention priorities, ways of action and types of social follow-up.

Within preservation and urban rehabilitation perspectives, socio-cultural diagnosis should aim at urban and sustainable development in its different sources. Specifically, it should contribute:

- To enhance and re-qualify the citizenship function in order to develop a "project of urbanity" (Ferreira, 2004: 15).
- To create conditions for building's and public spaces restructuring, improvement and innovation.
- To facilitate functional adaptation of the activities according sociocultural characteristics and social needs.

2. Basis for the construction of a methodology within a inter/multidisciplinary approach

Guaranteeing the quality of an intervention is related with the application of a methodology that assist, in a reasonable and well informed way, to the following (in Guia Técnico de Reabilitação Habitacional, 2006: 295):

- Production of a diagnosis of the situation, as well as "to fundament a posterior aims definition and the degree of intervention [phase of analysis and diagnosis]".
- Conception of "adequate intervention solutions aiming at responding defined purposes [phase of project]".
- Execution of an "adequate implementation of the projected solutions [phase of execution]".

Without entering in technical and specific details of the phases considered above, it is important to define a methodological departure base that integrates different perspectives, i.e. multidisciplinary approach. In this sense, the phase of analysis and diagnosis should make a relevant contribution toward the identification and the linkage between problems, needs and resources with measures, actions, strategies and tactics that can permit a minimization of a given problem-situation. The stages and objectives that characterize this first phase can be described as (Menezes, 2005):

- Situation analysis: characterization of the problems, needs, resources and potentialities.
- Organizing and integrating gathered data: classification and definition of problematic situations, resources and potentialities, within a given typology.
- Interactive hierarchy of problems and needs: ranking information [from the less priority to higher priority] aiming at the actions defi-

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Fig. 13 - Landscape and architectonic heritage



Fig. 14 - Landscape and sociocultural heritage

nition and measures implementation.

- Predefinition of the nature and the purpose of the actions: through the organization, definition and classification of actions [related with specific areas of intervention and in temporal terms: short term, mid term and long term objectives].

Regarding the results optimization, and as pointed out by Ascher (2004), it is central to privilege the goals with a larger probability of performance and less demanding (taken as an order, law, discipline or submission).

The phase of elaboration should incorporate the conception of an integrative project of conservation and rehabilitation. Within a maintenance and sustainability perspective, this phase should allow the creation of an organizational model of integrated management of the program and the planning. In this sense, it is important to create the satisfactory conditions in order to incorporate a monitoring and evaluative culture during the project development. The phase of project can be important to the definition of a qualitative typology of possible interventions, such as:

- Isolated actions, where problems and related causes are recurrent.
- Palliative actions, which can minimize negative effects without aiming the nature of problem.
- Preventive actions, as those aiming at the conditions favorable to the emergence of a given problem.

Regarding the phase of implementation/execution, another aspect that must be assured is the preparation of a good activities plan, which should be oriented to the following (in Guia Técnico de Reabilitação Habitacional, 2006: 309):

- "Setting objectives and goals (these goals can be qualitative, financial, temporal, etc)"
- "Defining which tasks must be developed and its limits in detail and with clarity".
- "Identifying the intervenient and related qualifications within each task.
- "Identifying the used methods and technologies, which should be, as possible, based in normalized procedures".
- "Assigning competences and identifying responsibilities".

3. Final considerations

The European Letter of Architectonic Heritage dated from 1975, meanwhile deeped with the Declaration of Amsterdam (1975), highlighted that "urban conservation of architectonic patrimony depends on its integration in citizens' lives and in local and regional urban planning and appears as a way of defending and preserving older urban tissues from its threatening dangers", namely through a shared work between restoration techniques and adequate functions definition (in Guia Técnico de Reabilitação Habitacional, 2006: 89).

Step by step, conservation logics enlarged their focus of actuation, in the sense that more attention has been paid to the conservation of wider urban tissues, and not only of relevant buildings. Conservation and urban rehabilitation assume both the promotion of a better environment and quality of life and the safeguard,



Fig. 15 - Before and later



Fig. 16 - With and without intervention

maintenance and sustainability of spaces, goods, patrimonial and sociocultural values. Nowadays, the principles that sustain urban rehabilitation ranges are of diverse nature, namely social, democratic and environmental. Such principles emphasize the need of developing integrated approaches and interventions and draw attention to aspects related with regional planning, social justice and social participation (in Guia Técnico de Reabilitação Habitacional, 2006: 91).

In order to project an intervention, it is also recognized the need

of an in-depth knowledge regarding contexts' specificities, which constitute a extremely important step that cross – or should cross – distinct disciplinary fields and techniques involved in conservation and urban rehabilitation. In this sense, the investment in a diagnosis, that allow an accurate description of reality' different features, corresponds to a adequate data collection regarding architectural, social, urban, archeological and technological aspects. In this sense, a good diagnosis is a correlate of the idea of a good project. Such idea implies taking the results provided by the diagnosis in a process, dynamic, multidimensional and inter/multidisciplinary perspective; also, the effective conception and execution of a given project is intimately related with the application of such principles. Guided by this perspective, urban conservation and rehabilitation has an integrated logic of action may contribute to the improvement of the quality and the maintenance of urban landscape. Another relevant aspect is the concern regarding social and sustainable developments that underline the following:

- To develop intervention strategies that enhance sociocultural, economical, environmental and functional values of urban degraded contexts.
 - To activate such strategies through measures allowing the implementation of better dwelling conditions, community equipments, infra-structures and public spaces in urban degraded areas.
 - Is also equally important the development of measures allowing the mitigation, or at least, the minimization of conjuncture deficiencies situations (mainly when lasting over the time), social exclusion, social, economical and spatial disadvantages, marginality and insecurity.
- Here lies the importance of interactive and participated work between knowledge, disciplines, powers (public and private) and citizens.

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