



Cultural Heritage, Urban Projects and Planning Legacy: An Implicit Normative Dimension in Urban Space of of Rio de Janeiro Central Area

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The current spatial configuration of an urban space derives from the sedimentation of settlements and interventions carried out both in urban and architectural scales, whose tracks become relatively evident or concealed in various levels such as a palimpsest. Regarding the case of city centre of Rio de Janeiro, there are traces of urban legislation prescriptions concealed on urban configuration, even when the laws are no longer in force. This assumption has motivated this paper, which presents a historic overview on urban projects and plans from the perspective of urban ordinances, searching for their results on urban space, by correlating changes in normative dimension with other elements of urban dynamics, including heritage conservation.

As current in contemporary central areas of large cities, a plethora of urban ordinances generates an overlay of regulations applied in urban tissue. Being both Historic centre and Central Business District (CDB), this area has been regulated by an association of zoning, heritage norms, building regulations and urban plans, besides has been object of bulk urban projects. Its urbanization process has abruptly changed its spatial configuration, by implementing motorways and redevelopments, shaping continuities and discontinuities into urban tissue.

The successive urban ordinances applied on the local, since the city first zoning (1924), up to 1970 functionalist zoning ordinances, have configured urban space distinctly, until heritage protection zones were established in the mid-1980's and 1990's. There is a significant building stock preserved by heritage legislation, rather listed or included in one of the five preservation zones. Although their contribution as urban assembly is assured, on paper, by law, it is not enough, as the area needs rehabilitation efforts. Hence, it seems relevant, to correlate urban planning and heritage issues by situating heritage - its demolition or preservation - as one of the normative decisions of urbanism and urban planning.

Besides zoning ordinances, Street Alignment by-laws, known as P.A.s - Alignments projects, are one of the implicit normative marks observable in the city's spatial configuration. According to a traffic planning logic, these projects have prescribed new alignments, by demolishing existing urban assembles. The historic survey on Street Alignments Projects has revealed projects of urban renewal based on bulk redevelopment of traditional urban tissue, inspired on Modern city model paradigm.

These projects elucidate the current stagnation of some particular heritage areas, which would be knocked down for been considered inappropriate for CDB. Although the highways projects have been aborted, it had already condemned those buildings, which turn to be abandoned by the landowner, becoming deteriorated.

Moreover, the 1970 zoning has restricted residential use, despite the significant multi-family housing presence. Because of that, there were no real estate developments in CDB fringe, which has promoted urban preservation, even though buildings were not legally protected.

This paper expects to bring analytical tools for the comprehension of the complex dynamics of preservation and development of a historic centre, pointing out the constraints for its rehabilitation. Furthermore, the comprehensive analysis of its spatial transformations also reveals the conceptual changes in the 20th century urban theory paradigms.

KEY WORDS: Urban legislation, historic centre, heritage conservation planning history.