The role of municipal government in the protection of historic centres in Latin American cities[1]

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I. INTRODUCTION

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THIS PAPER CONSIDERS the current and potential role of municipal government in reversing the deterioration in the historic centres of Latin American cities; it also outlines a new approach to conservation which can be implemented despite existing resource constraints. Central to this approach is a municipal guided strategy for each centre which ensures that the needs and priorities of the many poor inhabitants of historic centres are addressed and that full use is made of the historic centre's central location, commercial vitality and tourist appeal.

Section II gives the definition of historic centres while section III considers current conditions and trends in these centres, including the deterioration of the architectural fabric and of the living conditions and quality of life of their inhabitants - many of whom are low-income groups. This includes a consideration of the changes in the use of buildings and the negative impact of ill-conceived tourism. Section IV discusses responsibility for the management of historic centres while Section V discusses the strategies for intervention, contrasting three approaches: destructive management; the "conservation" approach; and constructive management. This third approach combines the need for conservation with the needs of those living and working in historic centres. Section VI discusses the future for historic centres and stresses the need for a new kind of municipal government which seeks to protect the architectural and urban heritage for the benefit of all city-dwellers. Part of this is an orientation for conservation which gives as much importance to the social and political lives of the inhabitants of historic centres as to the protection and rehabilitation of buildings there. It is difficult to conceive of preserving the physical fabric if these centres' social fabric is destroyed.

Latin America has a rich urban heritage, drawing from its pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial past. The diversity of its pre-colonial urban past which stretches back more than two millennia is often forgotten. So too is the age of many colonial cities; most of the region's largest urban centres today had already been founded by

1580. All the historic centres of cities and metropolitan areas in Latin America have suffered significant destruction or alteration during the last 30, 40 or 50 years, although the extent of the damage differs considerably from centre to centre. The alarming loss of the architectural heritage, including many historical monuments, and the urban degradation has led to major changes in their physical appearance and a deterioration in hygiene and public services. These changes are still taking place, despite current legislation and accepted norms which seek to prevent any deterioration in the quality of life of their inhabitants.

Since the early decades of this century, virtually all nations in Latin America have had some form of national legislation to protect buildings and groups of buildings which have been declared national monuments. However, what is much more recent is the legislation which requires municipal governments to set out bye-laws for the protection of the architectural and urban heritage of their historical areas. In practice, it is only within the last ten or 15 years that some municipalities have taken initiatives to protect and rehabilitate their historical centres. It has gradually come to be accepted that there are basic pre-requisites which have to be met to allow the works to be undertaken - and to attract the needed public and private capital. These include: precise municipal legislation which can be implemented; a special municipal office with trained specialists responsible for planning, management and control; and public awareness of what is happening and what is to be done. These are the essential steps which have to be taken to prevent the continued rapid deterioration of historic centres.

II. HISTORIC CENTRE AND CITY

THE HISTORIC CENTRE of a city is simply one *barrio* or district in the city. Like any other district, it has features which distinguish it from other districts. Historic centres are usually popularly identified by a name (San Telmo in Buenos Aires, Pelourinho in Salvador, Ciudad Vieja in Montevideo, Casco Antiguo in Panama City). They are also inhabited by a stable population who often both live and work there. They have their own social and cultural life, and schools, shops and facilities associated with a neighbourhood. However, perhaps the fundamental feature of a historic centre is the recognition by its inhabitants and by the inhabitants of the city that this centre is an urban area with its own identity and particular appearance.

Some historic centres, such as those of Santiago de Chile, Bogotá (Colombia), Montevideo (Uruguay) and Quito (Ecuador) have preserved some of their central functions. Although they may have a stable resident population (many with a very low level of income), the continuity of certain traditional services based there attracts many people from other areas of the city. For instance, the fact that many people come to visit government offices or banks every day, give these historic centres qualities and activities which are distinct from those of other districts. In Buenos Aires and Salvador, on the other hand, the historic centres have lost the central functions which used to set them apart from other districts.

What do we mean by "centre" and what do we mean by "historic"? The historic "centre" of a metropolitan area or large city can be distinguished from other urban districts (including other historic districts) by the fact that it was the site where the central functions of the city

2. Central District is a term derived from the Central Business District (CBD), taken and adapted for Latin American cities by César Vapnarsky to identify the urban district in which is located the greatest concentration of fixed-location services. In the classification of services (by service networks, fixed-location services and transport services), fixed-location services are those which require the user to physically go to the specific place where they are offered, such as supplies, public administration, education, health care and leisure. See Vapnarsky, César (1984), "Servicios urbanos: el modelo de los lugares centrales y el de la ciudad dispersa", *Revista Interamericana de Planificación*, No. 71, Sociedad Interamericana de Planificación, September, Mexico, pp 7-25.

3. Final document of the "Coloquio de Quito", Proyecto Regional de Patrimonio Cultural, PNUD/UNESCO, Quito, 1977.

4. The 1950s saw the most rapid urban growth in the history of Latin America, with an annual rate of 4.6 per cent for the region. The rate fell to 4.2 per cent during the 1960s, 3.7 per cent in the 1970s and 3.2 per cent in the 1980s. The estimate for the 1990s is 2.6 per cent. The growth in urban population in Latin America during the 1950s was 39.2 million inhabitants; during the 1960s, 55.8 million inhabitants; during the 1970s, 73.6 million inhabitants, and during the 1980s, 88.7 million inhabitants. The estimate for the 1990s is 94.6 million inhabitants; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (1987), *Global Report on Human Settlements, 1986*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, Table 1.

were originally concentrated. The area is usually recognized as the historic centre in that it was (and in many cases still is) its central district - the "centre", as it is called in many places - developed on the site where the city was founded.[2]

At a seminar in Quito in 1977, historic centres were defined as "those living human settlements, strongly conditioned by a physical structure dating from the past, recognizable as representative of the evolution of a people."[3] This definition highlights a fundamental feature of historic centres, the fact that they are inhabited. They are a living cultural nucleus in the present. This definition of a historical centre excludes abandoned areas and clusters of ruins and archaeological monuments, since they have no continual socially organized life there. The definition recognizes that historic centres do not consist solely of their material and physical heritage - buildings, roads, squares, fountains, arches, sculptures, lamps - but also include what has been preserved of the natural landscape and, of course, the population, its habits and customs, work, economic and social relationships, beliefs and urban rituals.

The definition also notes the important presence of the past and understands by "historic" all those cultural, architectural and urban expressions recognized as significant and which express the social and cultural life of a community. It discards any selection based on a limited recognition of the term "historic" and any valuation of older periods above those which are more recent. In short, we can state that it is the recognition by society or by a social group which qualifies an area of the city as being "historic".

III. CONDITIONS AND TRENDS IN HISTORIC CENTRES

OVER THE LAST few decades, all historic centres of Latin America have suffered gradual renovation in construction and changes in land use, growing physical deterioration, increased traffic congestion and deterioration in services.[4] There are also indications of the general impoverishment of the resident population and a deterioration in their quality of life. However, in recent years, some historic centres have attracted the interest of property or development companies because of their location in central (or nearby) districts of the cities, the quality of their architecture and urban spaces and, in some cases, features of their natural site (for instance, on or close to a river or the sea).

Although most historic centres have lost the functions which were traditionally concentrated in central districts in their respective metropolitan areas, they still preserve some government, banking, educational and commercial functions. The movement of the traditional functions of central districts towards other areas of the city or towards new administrative, university and commercial centres and residential neighbourhoods has accentuated the economic marginality of historic centres and the decay in their buildings. This has happened in Salvador, Bahia, in Panama City and to some extent in Lima and Quito. In Salta in Argentina, by contrast, the construction of an administrative centre for the provincial government in the outskirts of the city, currently partly occupied, did not alter the residential, institutional, cultural, commercial and tourist functions of its historic centre. The historic centres of Salvador, Quito, Lima, Mexico City and many other cities remain the seat of the local administration, as do Cuzco, Morelia, Mérida (Yucatán) and almost all historic cities and

5. Yunovsky, Oscar (1971), *La estructura interna de la ciudad*, Ediciones SIAP, Buenos Aires, 1971; Moreno Toscano, Alejandra, co-ordinator (1978), *Ciudad de México y ensayo de construcción de una historia*, SEP-INAH, Mexico (see especially the Introduction by Alejandra Moreno Toscano, pp. 11-20); Hardoy, Jorge E. (1969), "El paisaje urbano de América del Sur", *Revista Interamericana de Planificación*, No. 11, September, pp 27-42. The transformations began in 1860 or 1870 in the old civic and commercial centres of what are today the most populous metropolitan areas, corresponding to the urban model of the first industrial stage.

metropolitan areas with a smaller population. But the headquarters of national and state ministries have been re-sited in most cases, although some old buildings are still the symbolic seat of national government. This is a consequence of the polycentric structure which cities and metropolitan areas have acquired in recent decades and of the intent to prevent unnecessary shifts in the population and staff working in administration. Bogotá and Mexico City retain many government functions in their historic centres in a partially deteriorated setting. Montevideo's Ciudad Vieja and Buenos Aires' Barrio Sur are close to the central seat of national government and its ministries, although both clearly function autonomously.

On a social level, the physical deterioration of historic centres' housing stock and old buildings (and even of many streets) is one indication of their deterioration. It reflects the abandonment of houses or flats in the centre by the wealthiest social groups and their replacement by groups with a much lower income.

Historically, all historic centres were residential areas complemented by commercial, civil and religious activities. In time, the growing complexity of each city's commercial and service functions modified the traditional pattern of the colonial city.[5] The secularization of activities and the physical spread of urban areas meant that old religious buildings became obsolete. Many of them were assigned a new function - as hotels, museums, universities, shopping centres or even cinemas (see Box 1).

Various public buildings also underwent changes of use. When the *cabildos* (city councils) disappeared as a municipal body, several of the buildings they occupied which had been purpose built in colonial times were used in the 19th century for legislative purposes. Many *cabildos* were demolished. The buildings of the old *cabildos* of Buenos Aires, Montevideo and Salta are currently used as museums while that of Jujuy is a police station and those of Salvador and Santiago de Chile are used for municipal activities. Stately civil buildings built in colonial times also suffered a change in use; for instance the Casa de la Moneda in Santiago de Chile became a government house and museum while the Casa de Moneda in Potosi became a historical archive.

Old houses went through similar processes of change. In general, turn-of-the-century urban renovations mainly affected buildings used for housing - whether by demolition and replacement or because

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Box 1: The Secularization of Religious Buildings in Historic Centres

Some examples of religious buildings in historic centres which were assigned new functions: the convent cloisters of Do Carmo in Salvador, San Antonio Abad in Cuzco, the convent in San Juan de Puerto Rico, San Francisco in Popayán and Santa Catalina de Siena in Oaxaca became hotels; those of Santa Catalina in Arequipa and Santa Paula in Havana were turned into museums; that of Belén in Potosí became a cinema; those of Santa Clara in Bogotá and La Almudena in Cuzco, restoration centres; those of Santo Domingo in Popayán, la Compañía in Ayacucho and la Compañía in Córdoba were transformed into universities; those of San Agustín in Lima and la Compañía in Arequipa are now shopping centres.

of change of use. The use of houses built during the colonial period as business premises generated independent architectural structures. Today, housing in deteriorated historic areas usually serve several concurrent functions - for instance being used as wholesale premises or warehouses, retail shops, craft workshops and residences. In some cases the internal courtyards *(patios)* have been occupied, being used for commercial purposes (for instance they are often used as a café bar). This fragmentation has affected the system of ownership. Properties were sub-divided by inheritance or by sale. But one of the key problems inhibiting the rehabilitation of deteriorated areas is the complex form of leasing and sub-leasing which has developed, much of it illegal, which is linked to the sub-division and multiple use of the buildings.

There is also the destruction caused by tourism. Several decades ago, some historic centres began to attract international and/or national tourists and became places of residence for professional groups, local artists and foreign residents. The possibility of living in "an historic place with tradition" became an important factor in encouraging the sale of property in an historic area.[6] National and foreign tour operators bring package tours to monuments and historic centres. But these processes generate incredible destruction: the demolition of residences of high historical value, such as Silva House in Cuzco; the transformations and artificial settings in various cities of America and, above all, the expulsion of the resident population whose roots have been in the historic centres. In settings such as that of Cholula in Mexico, in the "reconstruction" of the archaeological site of Tiahuanaco, or San Francisco in ancient Guatemala, large sums of money were invested to create an artificial "heritage", motivated by a mistaken interpretation of tourist interest. To these transformations we should add those provoked by the sudden penetration of customs and patterns of production and consumption which distorted the life of the historic centres as has happened in Taxco, Alamos and San Miguel Allende, in Mexico, and Cuzco, Peru.[7]

IV. MUNICIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF HISTORIC CENTRES

IN LATIN AMERICA, the municipality is a territorial, administrative and social unit. Because it is the lowest level of government, it is also the one in most direct contact with the day-to-day life of the inhabitants and their problems. In theory, it should be the level of government that is most accessible to city residents. In practice, the construction and administration of the city is not only the municipality's responsibility. Other public bodies dependent on higher levels of government (for instance national or provincial/state government) are also involved in these tasks, as is the private sector.

Specifically, the municipality is responsible for the construction, maintenance and administration of the city. Its involvement takes two forms: as a regulatory body., ie establishing the parameters within which the city must function, and as a direct manager of programmes and projects either in association with other levels of government and the private sector or on its own.[8] Ideally, in addition to regulator and manager, the municipality should also act as technical and political co-ordinator, representing the social and

6. This was the text used in an advertisement by an estate agent in 1978 which was promoting the construction of a building on the site of the demolished cloisters of the Convent of Santo Domingo in the city of Cordoba, Argentina.

7. Flores Marini, Carlos (1972), "Revitalización urbana y desenvolvimiento turístico", *Boletín del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas*, Universidad Central de Venezuela, No. 16, Caracas; Cooperación Perú-UNESCO (1975), ¿Qué es COPESCO?, Lima.

8. These concepts on the municipality are based on Chapter IV of Clichevsky, Nora et al. (1990), *Construcción y administración de la ciudad latinoamericana*, Instituto Internacional del Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo-IIED-América Latina and Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, Buenos Aires, June, pp 175-269.

economic interests of local society and its needs and priorities before higher levels of government.

With regard to the municipality and historic centres, for some historic centres there are special municipal regulations incorporated into the overall city plan. There are also national or provincial laws, and decrees and bye-laws for the specific protection of architectural and urban heritage. In addition, the property market in several historic centres is controlled by out-of-date rent control laws. These regulations mean that there is a different legal situation from that in force in the rest of the city. Broadly speaking, the laws and regulations which are meant to protect the city's heritage in reality condition and limit the possibilities for economic use of the property. They do this without considering, in most cases, other measures which could encourage the conservation or rehabilitation of buildings - for instance through tax or rates exemptions or credits or other forms of bonuses and penalties for promoting their preservation. Their net result is more often to encourage these centres' progressive deterioration, since no-one who might be interested in historic centres is able to do anything about it. Thus, the physical fabric of many buildings has deteriorated. A similar situation arises under rent control. Much of the residential property in many historic centres is sub-divided and rented out - in tenements or cheap boarding or rooming houses. Under rent control, neither owners nor tenants take responsibility for the maintenance of the buildings.

The economic crisis which has affected virtually all Latin American nations in recent years has had many negative effects on Latin American cities. One of them is the growth in the number of poor people and their concentration in certain districts of the cities - including the historic centres. Here, they find rooms at relatively low prices (although usually with multiple occupancy within each room). The central location within the city also means easier access to informal incomes in central districts. Intervention by public authorities aimed at reducing the effects of the economic crisis in historic centres tends to have a different orientation from that undertaken in peri-urban areas, although the objectives may be the same. Perhaps this was because in historic centres, many of the social, economic and cultural problems of the city occur in a much more concentrated form. Within the historic centres, the inequalities, the demands and the struggle of conflicting interests coming from social and economic extremes are aggravated. It is therefore more difficult to act in an historic centre than in peri-urban territories which are further away and where land prices are much lower. Municipal government itself, which can provide relatively positive answers to the demands for housing and infrastructure by the poorest sectors of the peri-urban areas, does not respond in the same manner to the demands of the poorest inhabitants in the historic centre. On the contrary, the actions implemented there often provoke their expulsion. This is what happened in Santiago de Chile, under the former military government where Pinochet's régime considered the presence of poor groups in the city centre as unacceptable and moved them to far-removed peri-urban settlements where they formed new islands of poverty. These eradications from the historic centre of Santiago were complemented by an almost total disregard for preservation work and for government regulations. The destruction or maintenance of important buildings was left up to the market, for the sake of higher profits.

The rehabilitation of historic centres cannot be reduced to the tasks of urban restoration or embellishment - or even to a more far-reaching

9. A preliminary version of this table was presented in Jorge E. Hardoy (1984), "Embellecimiento, restauración, mejoramiento o rehabilitación de los centros históricos?", presented at the seminar "El financiamiento de la rehabilitación de los centros históricos", Montevideo, August (mimeographed paper).

construction and urban redevelopment. These tasks are important and necessary, but not sufficient. The municipal government would seem to be the most appropriate institution to carry out an integrated rehabilitation of the historic centre. However, its ability to intervene effectively in the historic centre is directly linked to its competence in actually undertaking the governance of the city. Only if municipal government has real possibilities for managing and co-ordinating urban investment and activities will it be in a position to manage the complex task of ensuring both the preservation of an urban and architectural heritage and the meeting of inhabitants' basic needs. In practice, municipalities shy away from undertaking these tasks although some interesting changes in this are becoming apparent. To prepare the municipal government to address current and future needs, it is not necessary to have many resources, but rather to convert municipal government into an efficient co-ordinator of public and private investments and concerns.

Thus, it is important to consider the question of the responsibilities for historic centres of the various levels of government. Table 1 shows the various (often overlapping) different levels of municipal, provincial and national government, including their decentralized agencies, and private activities in the management of historic centres.[9] We have listed a series of actions which are or should be undertaken in historic centres. These include the maintenance of existing infrastructure, the creation and maintenance of social services, the renovation of historic buildings or houses and support for employment schemes and cultural projects and programmes. Five columns in the table identify the different stages of execution for programmes and projects: planning, legislative and regulatory responsibility, finance, implementation and control. In each case we define the levels of government involved and we also include the levels of involvement of private sector activity, although without breaking it down into sectors. Community participation is included under private activity.

Although circumstances vary so much from municipality to municipality and it would be rash to make any generalizations, we have prepared this table based on some experiments and studies. The first two columns show the important role taken by municipal government both in land use planning (including the design of urban open spaces) and in the norms and codes which regulate building and environmental standards in residential and work areas. Through its responsibility in land use planning - which means proposing or approving the siting of any productive, leisure, residential, cultural, intermediary or service activity which is carried out or planned within the limits of its jurisdiction - the municipality must be involved in any decision relating to infrastructural and service projects and productive programmes. The municipality is excluded from planning and legislation of university education, certain housing schemes and, in some cases, primary and secondary education. It is also rare for municipal governments to be involved in planning formal employment-creation schemes, although it does play a part in the regulation and location of informal employment.

In some cities, the responsibility for planning and legislation is shared with national and provincial levels of government with regard to the priorities and the location of projects for the supply and distribution of water, gas, electricity and sewage systems. These often depend on autonomous bodies. A key function of the municipality is the planning and regulation of land use and the guidance and control of urban expansion within the limits of its jurisdiction. This means the

Table 1: Role of Nation, Province, Municipality and private entities in the management of historic centre

(N=nation; P= province or state; M= municipality; Pr= private)

	I Planning	II Finance	III Legislative responsib.	IV Executive responsib.	V Control responsib.	Notes
1. Control of land use	M	-	M		M	Regulatory plans. Few municipalities have land aquisition policies.
2. Building code	M	-	M	-	M	There tend to be tax exemptions.
3. Environmental regulations	N-P-M	-	N-P-M	-	N-P-M	In larger municipalities. Different in countries with federal or unitary systems.
4. Expropriation of land and property	M	N-P	N-M	N-P-M	N-P-M	
5. New housing - investment programmes	N-P-M	N-P-Pr	N-P-M	N-P-Pr-M	N-P-M	In new schemes with municipal involvement.
Recovery and conservation						
6. Buildings inventory	N-P-M-Pr	N-P-M-Pr	-	N-P-M-Pr	-	
7. Listed buildings	N-P-M	N-P-Pr	N-P-M	N-P-Pr-M	N-P-M-Pr	
8. Old housing - consolidation and/or recover and/or change of use	M-Pr	N-P-Pr	N-P-M	Pr-P-M	N-M	Many redevelopments are done without planning permission. DIY building is important. Some countries offer credit and grants. Sometimes private initiative is involved.
9. Dissemination and community action	N-P-M-Pr	N-P-M-Pr	P-M	N-P-M	N-P-M	Sometimes private initiative is involved in dissemination.
Infrastructure						
10. Water and sewage	N-P-M	N-Pr	N-M	N-P-Pr	N-P	Decentralized national or provincial bodies or private firms.
11. Waste disposal	M	P-M	M	M-Pr	M	
12. Markets	P-M	M-Pr	M	M-Pr	M	
13. Electricity	N-P-M	N-Pr	N-M	N-P-Pr	N-P	Decentralized national or provincial bodies or private firms.
14. Gas	N-P-M	N-Pr	N-M	N-P-Pr	N-P	Decentralized national or provincial bodies or private firms.
15. Lighting	N-M	N-Pr	M	M-Pr	M	
16. Telephones and telegraph	N-M	N-Pr	N	N-Pr	N	
17. Traffic control	M	-	M	M	M	
18. Public transport	M	N-P-Pr	M	P-M	M	City transport, public or private companies.
19. Road paving	M	M-Pr	M	M-Pr	M	With owner participation.
20. Pavements	M	M-Pr	M	M-Pr	M	
21. Squares and public parks	M	N-P-M	M	M	M	
22. Street advertising	M	N-P-M-Pr	M	N-P-M-Pr	M	
Services						
23. Nurseries	P-M-Pr	P-M-Pr	P-M	P-M-Pr	P-M	
24. Primary and secondary education	N-P	N-P-Pr	N-P	N-P-Pr-M	N-P-M	
25. University education	N-P	N-P-Pr	N-P	N-P-Pr	N-P	
26. Health	N-P-M	N-P-M-Pr	N-P-M	N-P-Pr-M	N-P-M	In large municipalities. In smaller ones, the role of the municipality is almost nil.
27. Cultural activites	N-P-M-Pr	N-P-M-Pr	N-P-M	N-P-M-Pr	N-P-M	
28. Shops	M-Pr	M-Pr	M	M-Pr	M	
Productive programmes						
29. Formal employment schemes	N-P-Pr	N-P-M-Pr	N-P	N-P-Pr-M	N-P-M	The municipality is also a direct source of employment.
30. Informal employment schemes	M	M-Pr	M	M-Pr	M	
31. Credit	N-P-M	N-P-M-Pr	N-M	N-P-M-Pr	N-P-M	
32. Tourism	N-P-M-Pr	N-P-Pr	N-P-M	N-P-Pr-M	N-P-M	

control of different types of land use, of densities of development and other factors relating to land use and development intensity. It also has sole responsibility for more limited decisions directly linked to local life, such as those concerning pavements, storm-water drains, traffic control, parking, public transport, street lighting, reafforestation and the design, building and maintenance of streets and squares and construction and administration of cemeteries.

Where new housing schemes are concerned, municipal government tends to follow national or provincial programmes, although it approves or rejects sites, land use and densities, as well as defining building standards for all public and private projects. As for the renovation of old housing stock, it shares the planning with public or private activities, but it must approve any project. However, when housing is legally protected by national or provincial bodies, it shares with them the responsibility for legislation and control. But in general, only rarely is it involved in financing their expropriation, should this prove necessary, due to budgetary and sometimes legal restrictions.

Municipal tourist boards are usually evident in the municipalities of national capitals. They are also found in some large cities and many provincial or state capitals - and, above all, in those places with unique attractions for national or foreign tourism. But the work of such boards is partly subordinated to those of the national and provincial or state government. At a national or international level, the architectural and urban heritage and cultural heritage generally attract fewer tourists for a shorter period of time than do beaches and natural parks and reserves, save for exceptional cases such as Cuzco and Machu Picchu in Peru, Mexico City and surrounding areas, the Maya area in the Yucatán, and the historic centres of Quito (Ecuador) and Salvador (Brazil). In such instances, the municipality concentrates on providing the necessary indications and services to tourists who are in transit to other places.

Column II in Table 1 lists sources of funding. The absence of the municipality is noticeable in almost all the activities listed. This is a result of their genuine lack of resources and of their subordination to higher levels of government and to private action. It clearly reflects the economic inability of municipal councils to invest in projects and programmes. Municipalities are involved in the protection of historic buildings and, sometimes, in their rehabilitation. But they do so, co-operating with (but almost always dependent on) national and provincial agencies or ministries. Municipal governments may not even be involved at all in these stages. Until a few years ago, the listing of sites, monuments or buildings of historic interest occurred on the initiative of national or provincial level heritage commissions or boards. It is only recently that municipalities have come to list sites, monuments or buildings and this is still rare; so too are historic centres protected by special municipal regulations. Those directly responsible for projects involving the architectural rehabilitation of historic monuments and for funding such works are almost always national or provincial bodies. In recent years private enterprises have joined forces with these bodies although, in the case of national and provincial monuments, the project and its execution remain under the control of special public commissions.

The cost of rehabilitating privately owned historic monuments is usually borne by their proprietors. These are sometimes granted special credit facilities or tax exemptions, while control over the execution of the rehabilitation remains in the hands of the state or province. Although exemptions from property tax and (in some cases) from

rates are insignificant, these in fact represent an indirect contribution by the municipality to the funding of these works, although the municipality is not involved in directly financing the project.

The generation of employment is of considerable importance. Legislative responsibility in this regard falls solely on the state and the province. All levels of government, in addition to the private sector, are involved in employment planning, but municipal governments rarely take any part either in funding these programmes or in the responsibility for their execution and control. They usually neither generate nor maintain sectoral and general employment schemes, despite the fact that municipal governments actually operate as a great source of public employment and sub-employment by expanding the number of public employees - primarily for political ends but also as a means to reduce unemployment. It would be logical for the municipality to be directly involved, both in programming and funding and in executive responsibility for employment schemes. As such, it should become a direct actor and promoter which identifies and puts to work the city's unused or under-used resources, whose use points to an economic revival and to a solution of some of the most pressing social problems.

Table 1 therefore seeks to show the system of national, provincial, municipal, private and mixed responsibilities which operate on historic centres. Of course, co-ordination is required to bring together and regularize the institutional and private activities so that the many different efforts of the different agencies do not collapse or cancel each other out. This role should be fulfilled by the municipality, which has real social, political and economic participation in the life of the city. To this end, it must acquire political and economic strength to plan, sponsor and control the actions and strategies to be followed.

V. STRATEGIES OF INTERVENTION FOR HISTORIC CENTRES

10. A preliminary version of these ideas was presented in Hardoy 1984, see note 9.

THE POSSIBILITIES FOR action in historic centres fall into three broad approaches, depending on the scope and depth of the actions to be undertaken. We can talk about the destructive, conservative and constructive management of historic centres;[10] the characteristics of each of these three approaches is discussed below. The first key question is: how can we manage the existing social, economic, physical and environmental situation in an historic centre and how can we recover its cultural and socio-economic importance while also rehabilitating its urban and architectural heritage?

We would suggest the need to prepare a strategy in which existing problems would be overcome before drawing up any detailed plans. This strategy must give special importance to the municipal administrative organization which would take on responsibility for the direction of further planning and also for updating legislation and standards in force in the historic centre, for estimating the basic investment and for identifying institutions which could be involved. In effect, such a strategy for an historic centre is an essential background to a detailed plan.

Within the actions carried out to date in historic centres, there is a predominance of **destructive management**. This is characterized by the tacit acceptance - by those who have the greatest power to intervene - of very poor living conditions for many of their inhabitants

and of the loss of fixed capital in buildings, infrastructure and also in services and even in productive activities which cannot easily be transferred to other districts of the city. The result of this type of management is that many historic centres have been stripped of much of their heritage and have lost a large part of their installed capital. Such management not only constitutes an enormous social injustice but also the under-utilization of human resources available in historic centres through not making use of their productive potential.

The second approach can be termed **conservationist management** and this gives priority to the ad-hoc maintenance of the architectural heritage and only partially to the urban heritage.[11] It does so by undertaking the most essential works to prevent the disappearance or irreparable deterioration of buildings. Conservationist management of isolated buildings occurs hand-in-hand with the destructive management of historic centres. In Quito, significant efforts at the conservation of the convent of San Francisco and the objects of historical value (for instance paintings, furniture and statues) exist side by side with the destruction of 18th century mansions only a few metres away. In the Acho district, Lima, whilst the Perricholi Palace, also dating from the 18th century has been rehabilitated, several mansions have been destroyed.

Undoubtedly, the task begun decades ago in practically all Latin American cities by a few conservationist architects and historians who sought to save whatever could be saved, has permitted the conservation and rehabilitation of some of the best examples of the historic legacy. But in many instances, key buildings have been destroyed. In addition, this patient work has not been repeated on the scale of historic centres as a whole. There have been no attempts to preserve the volume and exterior appearance of buildings which make up the framework of streets and squares.

This valuable but static form of management for historic centres excludes the dynamic aspects represented by the society living in them and by their economy. Ad hoc solutions which focus on the restoration of buildings and the rehabilitation of the occasional urban space do not provide the answer to the vast and diverse problems of historic centres.

The **constructive management of historic centres** is aimed not only at conserving what already exists but also at increasing existing capital through social and physical investment. The aim is not to preserve a static situation but rather to encourage a dynamic process, taking advantage of the historic centre's location and the commercial vitality and tourist appeal which already exist (or which could be generated in an historic centre) to begin its rehabilitation.

Through carefully selected actions, it is possible to control part of the wastage involved in urban expansion, such as that produced in Latin American cities, where many districts, including the historic centres, are deteriorating through lack of maintenance, both of buildings and of the infrastructure of urban facilities. We believe that the cost of rehabilitating buildings, infrastructure and services in an already built-up district is lower than that entailed in providing infrastructure and services to cope with the rapid physical growth on peri-urban land, with its requirements for new systems of roads, drains, water pipes and public services. In all historic centres, there are deteriorated social facilities and infrastructures which could be repaired and modernized. There are also unused public properties and waste land, and houses and institutional buildings which could be repaired and re-used at a cost lower than that of new construction.

11. The term "urban heritage" is not the same as "architectural heritage" in that it includes those parts of a city's heritage which are not buildings - for instance squares (*plazas*), trees, pavements, roads, street furnishings, lamps and some natural landscapes.

In the case of buildings used as housing or for use on a city-wide scale which are in an historic centre, their recovery increases the social value of the investment, since they are well-situated and accessible to more people than buildings with a similar function located in peripheral districts.

If the integrated rehabilitation of the historic centre is accepted as a viable strategy, a series of productive activities could be encouraged there and in neighbouring districts, such as small workshops, crafts and non-polluting light industries. This would allow improvements in the level of income of the resident low-income population. In regard to housing, once the sites of housing estates have been located and plans for their rehabilitation drawn up, it is possible to invest in their improvement at a lower cost than that of constructing new buildings with the same surface area. In effect, improving housing and living conditions for the poorer groups living in historic buildings within historic centres is cheaper than building new accommodation to rehouse them. In addition, most low-income dwellers in historic centres would greatly prefer the improvement of the housing in which they live rather than attempts to relocate them. This does not act against the preservation of architectural and urban values. In fact, it is quite the contrary, since it serves as an insurance to preserve the determining elements of the appearance of streets and squares, maintaining the existing homogeneity both in façades and in the typology of buildings, and in the materials and techniques of construction.

From a strict cost-benefit analysis, the revival of historic centres is a more economic alternative for the municipality than eradicating the poor population living there by transferring them to peri-urban areas. By making use of unused resources, by mobilizing existing capacities, by developing productive potential, by rehabilitating each house and including appropriate in-filling and policies to increase density, considerable savings could be made both in socio-economic terms and in economic-environmental terms.

The obvious co-ordinating body for all these actions is the municipality and, through the municipality, such actions acquire full meaning with the addition of social and community support. Without the incorporation of the community living in the historic centre, both in setting the objectives of the rehabilitation as part of the city, and their involvement in decision-making and the execution of the steps to be taken, there can be no assurance of success in achieving these objectives of integrated rehabilitation.

VI. THE FUTURE OF HISTORIC CENTRES

LATIN AMERICAN HISTORIC centres can still continue to be centres of life and work for the population. Whether or not they can do so depends to a large extent on whether the interventions carried out in them do not act against what has already been achieved in terms of preservation and do contribute to a socio-economic improvement of the area as a means of guaranteeing that their population can continue to work. At the same time, rationalization in the use of open spaces in the historic centres must be sought in relation to the development of the whole city. Integration in this wider context will allow the historic centres to contribute their character and historical richness to the whole city population. There is always a risk that an historic centre will become an enclave, whether of poverty, wealth or tourism, or that it is allocated reduced functions, such as those

12. The thoughts expressed by Arthur Percival (1979) in *Understanding Our Surroundings*, Civic Trust, London, 1979, page 10, are important in this regard, noting the precariousness of our knowledge of the subject. He says: "At school we never learnt how communities evolve, we haven't even learnt how their vitality can be annulled by mistreatment and amputation."

relating to administration, commerce or teaching, thus limiting the vitality of the community which is settled there.[12]

The problem is one of policy decision and real integrated control over the city in the long term. Here the role of the municipal government as the constant articulator of social, administrative and economic life is irreplaceable. Within this broad strategy, the recovery of urban and architectural heritage, seen as a little-used, poorly used or unused resource, is one of the routes to rehabilitation.

Until today, defending a city's heritage has been a task undertaken by a handful of individuals, based in the national capital and in a few cities in the provinces. It is not a movement which has awakened general interest in the population nor indeed among the cultural or economic élites. There is even less interest in this from the majority of national, provincial or municipal governments; they do not perceive any immediate political returns in this area. In addition, those who lead this movement in each nation have rarely known how to present a case for historical preservation as being profitable in economic and social terms.

Many years of hard work by restorers and historians through national, provincial and sometimes international organizations have led us to believe that the protection of our heritage is of interest exclusively to certain privileged sectors of society - particularly of architects, historians and some intellectuals. It was also believed that the only way to carry out this task was by resorting to national or provincial laws of protection which usually lacked the essential financial and executive support. It seemed that the preservation of historic legacies was a cause upheld by those initiated in the subject. As such, it was quite separate from the social and political life of the mass of city inhabitants. The sequence of restoration and expulsion of the inhabitants seemed inexorable. The gap between restoration and commercial and tourist exploitation of the buildings seemed irreconcilable.

Constructive management of historic centres can provide a way of resolving these apparent contradictions and the division between the task of restorers or urban developers and the social interests of the whole community. This is possible as long as modes of intervention in the city are modified and participating organizations are formed which define a new relationship between state entities and civil organizations. This approach, the "new municipal government" understood as a forum for co-ordinating the forces, interests and problems of local life, is the key to begin testing this new constructive way of operating in the historic centres of Latin American cities. The municipality provides the best point from which to articulate a policy of preservation for the city's heritage which remains compatible with the interests of all sectors living in and using the historic centre. This allows the resolution of such contradictions as: the need for restoration and the economic possibility of doing so; and the need to meet the basic needs of the resident poor population and the economic interests which attempt to speculate with property and tourist exploitation of the city at the expense of expelling its residents.