Chapter 10
Social Housing in Historic Centers: Contemporary Experiences in Latin America

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10.1 Social Housing and Experimentation in Latin America

The architectural critic Justin McGuirk, in a book focused on analyzing some of the most important architectural experiences in social housing held in Latin America in the last decades, asks himself: "Why is Latin America special? And what can we learn from it?". He answers:

> […] the countries of South and Central America were home to some of the greatest experiments in urban living of the twentieth century. [...] It was in an attempt to deal with the scale of urban migration that Latin American architects picked up the gauntlet thrown down by the European modernists. If standardised, industrialised housing was the future, then it would be adapted to the scale of the New World." (McGuirk, 2014, pp. 07–08).

These "great experiments in urban living in Latin America" are the massive social housing complexes built in the major cities of the region between the 1940s and 1960s, such as the Unidad Vecinal n. 3 in Lima (1946–1949), designed by Fernando Belaúnde Terry and his team, housing 1112 apartments; the Pedregulho Housing Complex in Rio de Janeiro (1947–1952), designed by Affonso Eduardo Reidy, comprising 384 apartments; the 23 de Enero Housing Complex in Caracas (1955–1957), designed by Carlos Raúl Villanueva, comprising more than 9000

This chapter is dedicated to the late professor and architect Esterzilda Berenstein de Azevedo (1949–2020), who, in the wake of Lina Bo Bardi, bet on social housing in the historic center of Salvador and succeeded —at least for some time—to convince public managers and politicians of this goal. She involved dozens of young architects and architecture students in this proposal, among them one of the authors of this text. Her intelligence, aggregating character and enthusiasm continue to serve as a reference for new generations of architects, and even some who have not had the opportunity to work directly with her.

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apartments; the Unidad Vecinal Portales in Santiago, Chile (1954–1966), designed by the Studio Bresciani, Valdés, Castillo and Huidobro, housing 1860 apartments in 19 blocks; or the massive Nonoalco-Tlatelolco housing estate in Mexico City (1960–1964), designed by Mario Pani, with more than 100 buildings and 15,000 apartments, housing nearly 100,000 people—the equivalent of a medium city.[1]

Since the late 1960s social housing experiments in Latin America took other paths, leaving the utopia of gigantic complexes and focusing on other issues such as incremental housing, as in the Experimental Housing Project – PREVI (1968–73), promoted in Lima by the United Nations and the Government of Peru,[2] and in the projects designed by Elemental, as the Quinta Monroy complex (2004), in Iquique, Chile, which was mostly responsible for the 2015 Pritzker Prize awarded to the group leader, the Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena.

Although Latin America houses several listed urban sites, 35 of which inscribed in UNESCO's World Heritage List,[3] the experiences of social housing in historic centers in the region are exceptions and began much more recently, different from Europe, where initiatives such as the Piano per l'Edilizia Economica e Popolare (PEEP) of Bologna's historic center, conceived from 1963 and whose first housing units were delivered between 1970 and 1971, already highlighted the importance of social housing as a central element in historic centers' public policies (Cervellati et al., 1981; Cervellati & Scannavini, 1976). Other significant experiences on a smaller scale were carried out in other European countries from the 1970s onwards, such as the São Victor housing complex, designed by Álvaro Siza Vieira under the program SAAL (Serviço de Apoio Ambulatório Local), created after the Carnation Revolution in 1974, and built in the historic center of Porto in the mid-1970s, with 52 units.

In general, the scarcity of social housing experiences in Latin America stems from the fact that public policies implemented in these areas have privileged, in the last 50 years, tourism-related activities. This prioritization of tourism is associated with a prejudiced view that social housing is incompatible with tourism. With this,

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[1] The Nonoalco-Tlatelolco housing estate was built in a historic site, where the Aztecs where finally defeated by the Spanish, and where there is also the sixteenth century church of Santiago Tlatelolco.

[2] The PREVI complex consists of 24 housing types in clusters of approximately 20 units each. The types were designed by 13 foreign architects or studios, directly invited by the promoters for their previous experience in social housing, and 13 Peruvian architects or studios, selected by an open competition. Among the foreign architects, world famous professionals such as the British-American Christopher Alexander; the Parisian office Candilis, Josic and Woods; the Indian Charles Correa; the Dutch Aldo van Eyck; the Japanese Kiyonori Kikutaki, Kisho Kurokawa and Fumihiko Maki; the British James Stirling; and the Colombian Germán Samper. Among the Peruvian architects, important names such as José García Bryce, Jacques Crousse and Luis Miró Quesada (Land, 2015)

[3] Antigua Guatemala, Arequipa, Camagüey, Campeche, Cartagena de Indias, Casco Viejo de Panamá, Cienfuegos, Colonia del Sacramento, Cuenca, Cuzco, Diamantina, Goiás, Guanajuato, Lima, Mexico City, Morelia, Oaxaca, Old Havana, Olinda, Ouro Preto, Paraty, Potosí, Puebla, Querétaro, Quito, Salvador de Bahia, San Miguel de Allende, Santa Cruz de Mompox, Santo Domingo, São Luís, Tlacotalpan, Trinidad de Cuba, Sucre, Valparaiso, and Zacatecas.

in recent decades, many Latin American countries continue to produce massive housing complexes, with hundreds or even thousands of units in the outskirts of large cities and without the same quality of design that characterized the experiences held between the 1940s and the 1960s. In some countries, such as Brazil and Venezuela, to cite just two examples, programs like Minha Casa Minha Vida (2009–2020) and Gran Misión Vivienda (from 2011) continue to be responsible for the construction of millions of housing units of poor architectural quality in the urban peripheries, far from the basic infrastructure and services, corresponding to most of the social housing production in these countries in the last years.

10.2   The Uruguayan Experience of Housing Cooperativism

One exception seems to be Uruguay, with more than half a century of experiences with housing cooperativism, which emerged in the second half of the 1960s, in a scenario of social and economic crisis that allowed the emergence of new political organization models, capable of articulating and legitimizing alternative strategies to hegemonic modes of production. Given the context of complete inactivity of the construction industry and the fragility of public policies to promote housing (Cecilio, 2015), the emergence of Uruguayan housing cooperativism have reflected the social movements action in the fight for decent housing, which led to the development of "an authentic system of production and social management of habitat" (Vallés, 2015, p. 16).[4]

The Uruguayan National Housing Law, established in 1968, brought significant advances to the development of housing cooperatives, guaranteeing the right to decent housing, and incorporating cooperativism as a regulated housing production regime (Vallés, 2015). Through the creation of the National Housing Fund, the law provides the financing organization for state, private, and cooperative projects; it institutionalizes the Technical Assistance Institutes (IATs), multidisciplinary non-profit teams responsible for providing all necessary support to cooperatives; and "recognizes the various forms of ownership and cooperative modalities for access to housing and services" (Cecilio, 2015, p. 31).

The modalities of cooperatives are classified according to two criteria, which refer to the model of the ownership regime and the type of initial contribution to the financing. According to the first criterion, housing units can be owned individually or collectively—in this case, it is a mode of use, in which residents have the right to use a unit for an indefinite period, being able to pass it on for generations. The second criterion recognizes and classifies cooperatives according to two financing modalities: ahorro previo (mutual savings), which mainly serves the portion of the population with average income, and ayuda mutua (mutual aid), in which

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[4] The first experiences of housing cooperatives emerged from three initiatives carried out by the Uruguayan Cooperative Center, in the regions of Florida, Salto and Rio Negro, in 1966.

low-income families have the possibility to contribute with working hours in the construction of their own houses (Vallés et al., 2011).

It should be noted that this policy has an enormous range capability, due to the different types of cooperatives offered, being able to adapt to different urban contexts, including diverse social profiles of residents, different locations, and various types of financing, which makes it a system of enormous potential for expansion and effectiveness.

The success and longevity of Uruguayan cooperativism are reflected in the execution of about 30,000 units over the 50 years of existence of the system (Vallés, 2015). Even during the period of the military dictatorship (between 1973 and 1985), when the government closed the IATs and tried to extinguish collective property, to disarticulate the system, Uruguayan society found mechanisms of resistance and demonstrated the depth of the system's roots, by resuming cooperative practices in the post-dictatorial democratic scenario (Vallés et al., 2011).

In general, the Mutual Aid Housing Cooperatives (CVAM) are structured on principles of democratic management and social participation promoted through the mutual aid undertaken by members of the cooperative and the state: the government facilitates access to the soil, to loans and grants; users provide the workforce and are responsible for the management of the cooperative; and the IATs technically advise the working groups. The CVAM "refers and transforms a unique tradition of popular sectors—self-construction—into a practice through which a family with limited and occasional external support raises its own home" (Iglesias, 2008, p. 46).

This type of construction offers a very pertinent response to the social, economic, and spatial demands of the residents, who demonstrate the capacity and autonomy to build houses with spatial and constructive quality at low cost. The residents, associated in community organizations, become protagonists of the integral process, from the moment of choosing the site to the management of the post-occupation communities, in a collective effort that builds meanings. About this aspect Vallés et al. (2011, s.p.) consider that:

> From the sociological and anthropological dimension, it is possible to affirm that the CVAM is constituted in an area of production of a differentiated cultural identity, understanding culture from the scope of its production and not from its consumption. This implies that, through the reelaboration or symbolic representation of material structures, one understands, reelaborates and transforms the social system and the struggle for hegemony.

In Brazil, the Uruguayan cooperativism has influenced several relevant initiatives since the 1980s, especially in São Paulo, such as the self-managed housing projects of Vila Nova Cachoeirinha, started in 1982 (Baravelli, 2006), and the work of Usina, technical assistance office in architecture and urbanism created at the end of that decade in São Paulo and operating in several cities over the country. João Marcos de Almeida Lopes (2018, p. 243), one of the Usina founders, recorded that:

> For us technicians, the references to an associative political culture were and are, to a large extent, Eurocentric [...]. Other exogenous references, such as Uruguayan cooperatives, producing houses through mutual aid and self-management, should be also included.

10.3 Latin American Historic Centers: Tourism as Salvation and Social Housing as Taboo

The event that established the defense of tourism as a priority activity to be implemented in Latin American historic centers is the Meeting on the Preservation and Utilization of Monuments and Sites of Artistic and Historical Value, held in 1967 in Quito, Ecuador, by the Organization of American States (OAS) whose final report became known as the "Norms of Quito." Based in the European experience, the Norms of Quito defend, in the section "VII - Monuments as Touristic Attractions," the use of monuments and sites as touristic attractions as the only way to preserve them:

> 1. Intrinsic cultural values are neither weakened nor compromised by association with tourist interests; on the contrary, the increased attraction of the cultural properties and the growing number of outside admirers confirm awareness of their importance and national significance. [...] Europe owes to tourism, directly or indirectly, the salvation of much of its cultural heritage condemned to complete and irreparable destruction, and modern man, more visually than literarily sensitive, finds increasing opportunities for self-enrichment through viewing examples of western civilization, scientifically rescued because of the powerful incentive of tourism.
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> [...]
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> 7. The economic and social advantages of tourist travel vis-a-vis monuments are evident in most modern statistics, particularly in those European countries that owe their present prosperity to international tourism and include among their major sources of wealth the inventory of their cultural properties. (Icomos, 1967)

In this period, the first missions to Latin American countries by international consultants in heritage preservation took place, based on requests to UNESCO by national governments. Among the missions effectuated in the period, we highlight those carried out in 1966 and 1967 by Michel Parent in 35 Brazilian cities within the scope of the "Cultural Tourism" program of UNESCO. Parent was at the time Inspector General of French Historical Monuments and the theme of touristic exploitation of monuments and historic centers was the focus of his report:

> Tourism can certainly be one of the sources of the future development of national income and provide an economic alibi for the considerable efforts that must be made if we are to safeguard the vast cultural heritage that has long been in danger, but whose ruin will soon be irreversible (Parent, 2008, p. 46).

Despite Parent's defense of tourism as a strategy for transforming cultural heritage into a vector for economic and social development, in line with the thinking that was then prevalent at UNESCO—and which would also be defended in the "Norms of Quito"—Parent (2008, pp. 46–51) himself had reservations about this strategy:

> But tourism cannot do everything. Leaving the heritage solely to the criteria of immediate tourist profitability would be making contestable choices, aggravating certain imbalances, confronting "facade effects" with the increase of internal degradation [...]. On the contrary, it is important that tourism does not constitute an end in itself, nor even a means of simultaneously satisfying the curiosity and comfort of non-Brazilians or a few Brazilians disconnected from the national reality, but that the technical model of infrastructure associate the

way of knowing the Brazilian culture with the way of living it and, in this way, can integrate the tradition, science and the safeguarding of the values of ancient Brazil to the development of the future Brazil.

Paulo Ormindo de Azevedo (2001) remembers that this model based on tourism was introduced in the region through projects sponsored by UNESCO or OAS and consisted in creating touristic development poles in the most important squares in the historic centers. Azevedo also remarks that Parent's report would serve as the main guideline to the first interventions held in the 1970s in the Historic Center of Salvador. Also in the early 1970s, Carlos Flores Marini, a Mexican architect who was one of the two Latin Americans to directly contribute to the Venice Charter in 1964 and who was among the signatories of the Norms of Quito, developed technical missions as an OAS consultant in the historic centers of Panamá and Cartagena de Indias, proposing the same tourism-based model.

However, the most ambitious among those projects developed by international agencies in Latin America was, undoubtedly, the Plan Copesco (*Proyecto Nacional de Conservación y Puesta en Valor del Patrimonio Cultural en el Perú*), created in 1969 and that focused on the tourist exploration of cultural heritage in a large area of 84 thousand kilometers that included Cuzco and the margins of the Titicaca Lake. The Plan Copesco comprised building urban and touristic infrastructure, as well as the restoration of several monuments.

Azevedo (2001, p. 303) notes that the adoption of cultural tourism as a lifeline for the built heritage and for national development was a solution that, in Latin America,

> charmed the authorities and national elites, who, in addition to the possible external benefits, saw in it the opportunity to reappropriate the historic centers abandoned to the excluded. With this inspiration, and the illusion of solving all the complex social and physical-environmental problems with a magic word, many resources have been spent with very modest results.

Azevedo (2001, p. 315) also records that the mistakes and successes of these experiences based on cultural tourism:

> should not be credited exclusively to national or local authorities, but also to international organizations and agencies that, without knowing the local problems, have led to the adoption of experiences developed in very diverse contexts. Cultural tourism as a panacea for all the ills of the historic center is the most obvious example.
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>   However, little by little, it is understood that the solution for our historic centers inevitably involves issues that directly affect the local population, such as the slum and informal work. Although these problems are structural in Latin American society, there are always creative ways to mitigate them. It is necessary to overcome prejudices and cut privileges that do not contribute to the solution and tend to perpetuate the problem. We must learn to work with street vendors and to turn tenements and slums into decent homes for their inhabitants.

For Azevedo (2001, p. 315), the cost-benefit of experiences aimed at the local population of Latin American historic centers "is greater than the building of expensive tourist infrastructures that cannot be profitable without the previous surpassing of the existing social framework in these areas":

> Those who choose to live in the center are subjected to subhuman conditions of habitability and wholesomeness. The acquisition of the buildings by these residents is practically impossible both for their low income and lack of real guarantees, as for the indivisibility of mansions and townhouses, leading to a progressive subdivision and ruining of the buildings, operated as a sublet. (Azevedo, 2001, p. 299).

Thus, according to Azevedo (2001, p. 308), there is no escape from the conclusion that:

> The matter of housing [...] is one of the key issues in the rehabilitation of historic centers. Firstly, because the historic center has always been a polyfunctional area and in this lies its great dynamism and vitality. Second, because housing creates affective links with the building and with the neighborhood, which facilitate the preservation of the historic center. Third, because the presence of a fixed population creates a neighborhood typical economy, represented by artisan production, shops of first need and personal services. Fourth, because only housing can guarantee life and security 24 h a day, dispensing expensive security and animation systems. The architectural typologies of the historic center are basically habitational or mixed, and the progressive elimination of this function means not only its functional adulteration, but also of its architectural and heritage aspects.

Despite this, Azevedo (2001, pp. 308–309) recognizes that:

> However, housing has always been a taboo theme in the restoration programs of Latin American historic centers. On the one hand, due to lack of familiarity with the subject, housing agencies allege that their residents do not have the capacity to participate in social housing programs and that there is no demand from other social groups to live in the historic center.
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> There is also a widespread prejudice that the recognition of the right of these populations to continue living in the historic center would render their rescue for tourism unfeasible. [...]
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> But the bottom line is another. About 80–90% of the owners of the historic center properties have abandoned them and have no interest or capacity to recover them, but do not detach them because of their potential value. Added to this is the fact that the mansions and townhouses of aristocratic rural families do not adapt to the possibilities and needs of today's nuclear families, demanding their transformation into multi-household condominiums. This situation of impasse demands that the State intervene in these areas to carry out such transformations, which forces a courageous political decision.

This article will focus on this "courageous political decision," through the analysis of some social housing projects in Latin American historic centers carried out since the 1980s and specially in the last 20 years.

10.4 The Pioneering Experiences of Social Housing in the 1980s

In the 1980s, several technical meetings were held in Latin America dedicated to discussing the importance of housing in the historic centers' conservation. Estela Cañellas, Viviana Colella, and Natalia Da Representacao (Cañellas et al., 2008, p. 4) observed that:

Following the movement that is in development in Europe but adapted to the context of Latin American cultural and socio-economic reality, numerous instances are developed that promote a Latin American vision of the problem, [...]. Among the most relevant are: the ICOMOS meetings in 1982, 1984 and 1985; the Second Inter-American Symposium on the Conservation of Monumental Heritage in Morelia (1981) and the Third in 1983, which ratify the social aspects of rehabilitation; the Seventh International Symposium on Conservation of the Monumental Heritage of Puebla (1986), where emphasis is placed on integral rehabilitation; the Symposium "Housing today in yesterday's architecture" in Mexico (1987), about the reconstruction of the historic center after the earthquake, and the Seminar on Housing Rehabilitation in Historic Areas held in Mexico and Havana (1987) whose final declaration had much significance in our environment since "While reiterating the points made in previous documents, the document is an important step in the process of raising awareness of the values that the housing heritage rehabilitation assumes for our American circumstance".

This period coincides with the end of the military dictatorships installed in the previous decades and with the consequent processes of redemocratization in many countries of the region, such as Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, and Chile,[5] which have contributed to strengthening the social movements and to broadening the debates on citizens' participation in public policies.

10.4.1   *La Boca Urban Recovery and Development Program in Buenos Aires*

The 1980s also correspond to the time some pioneering social housing projects were executed in Latin American historic centers. The La Boca Urban Recovery and Development Program in Buenos Aires, better known as RECUP-Boca, was conceived in 1985, in the context of the Argentine redemocratization. According to Guevara (2011), RECUP-Boca "was an ambitious program that aimed to promote the integral development of the [La Boca] district, both on the urban and social levels. It incorporates, in turn, the participatory dimension as a fundamental component of design." Guevara (2011) remembers that:

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[5] In 1980, the architect Fernando Belaúnde Terry was elected for the second time president of Peru, ending 22 years of military dictatorship, which began with the coup of Juan Velasco Alvarado in 1968; in 1982, Hernán Siles Zuazo returned to the presidency of Bolivia, elected for the second time, re-establishing democracy after 18 years of political instability and military governments; in 1983, the election of Raúl Alfonsín to the presidency in Argentina marks the end of one of the continent's bloodiest dictatorships, started in 1976, with the coup that overthrew President María Estela Perón and installed the "National Reorganization Process"; in 1984, the election of the civilian Julio María Sanguinetti for the presidency of Uruguay ends the civic-military dictatorship started in 1973; the following year, the election—albeit indirect—of Tancredo Neves for the presidency of Brazil ends a period of 21 years of military dictatorship, started in 1964; in 1989, the end of the General Alfredo Stroessner's government, in Paraguay, closes one of the continent's longest dictatorships in the twentieth century, which lasted 34 years; in 1988, in Chile, a plebiscite approves the end of another long military dictatorship, General Augusto Pinochet's government, which began with the military coup against President Salvador Allende, in 1973.

The RECUP recognised two main action lines. On the one hand, the immediate actions, aimed at alleviating the situations of housing emergency, to guarantee minimum conditions of habitability in the buildings, while the definitive works were carried out. On the other hand, actions aimed at the general rehabilitation of the neighborhood, through the incorporation, rehabilitation and progressive transfer of properties to beneficiary families, allowing to restart the investment cycle with the recovery of credits. A key element of the rehabilitation component was the existence of a significant reserve of fiscal land on the estate known as the "Casa Amarilla". RECUP intended to use this reserve as a land bank to relocate families of tenement houses and dwellings that were considered irrecoverable or were in critical overcrowding, while progress was being made in the rehabilitation of properties that were considered recoverable.

Unfortunately, the implementation of RECUP-Boca had no follow-up, and its performance was largely limited to the purchase, by court auction, of 21 tenement houses between 1989 and 1990, and the management of the rehabilitation works for four of them. Guevara (2011) notes that:

> This program, which "have put in tension the municipal logic" for its novel formulation in terms of rehabilitation, failed in breaking down the "prevailing order": the *laissez faire* of the State in the face of "occasional displacements" of the low-income population and their expulsion from the central city.

10.4.2   The Special Program for the Recovery of Historic Sites of the City of Salvador

Between 1986 and 1989, the historic center of Salvador—which, in 1985, had been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List—is the subject of another innovative but equally failed experiment of social housing in historic buildings. At the invitation of the mayor Mário Kertész, the Italian born architect Lina Bo Bardi elaborated the "Special Program for the Recovery of Historic Sites of the City of Salvador" (PERSH), in which she positions herself frontally against a gentrification based on the tourist activity, advocating the maintenance of the resident population in the place:

> It is not a tourist job, done with the intention of turning the Pelourinho into an ice cream city.
>   The bases are for us old acquaintances: it is the fight against folklore. [...]
>   The case of the Historic Center of Bahia is not the preservation of important architectures, [...] but the preservation of the Popular Soul of the City. In a nutshell: the plan must be socio-economic to avoid repeating the mistakes of known interventions in illustrious cities such as Rome, Bologna, Venezia, and countless wonderful corners of the Old World that have changed the social base of entire Regions, with the residents of years and years thrown away and middle-middle-class taking over.
>   To avoid this, we are looking to associate work and housing [...] and small shops: a kind of underground economy.
>   [...]
>   In general, people are taken out of their homes, other shelters are provided on the outskirts of the cities. In the restored buildings are installed boutiques for tourists, exhibitions, crafts made in São Paulo, etc. Now, the main idea of recovery in Salvador is precisely to maintain the population who lives in the houses that need to be restored, recovered.

The general idea is to do, on the ground floor, small shops […], production of foods, small works, recovery, restoration, repair of things. And, on the upper floors, housing. That what currently exists [1987] in Bahia is just this kind of thing.

This is the idea that accompanies the architectural restoration of the Historic Center of Salvador. (Bardi, 2008, p. 270, p. 295).

The PERSH, conceived by Lina Bardi, included a several cultural facilities, many of them, such as the Casa do Benin in Bahia and the Casa do Olodum, aimed at valuing the African contribution to Bahian culture, but its main axis was the refurbishment of hundreds of tenements houses in ruin process, through the adoption of a building system in reinforced mortar developed by the architect João Filgueiras Lima, the Lelé. During Kertész's tenure, Lina could execute only the pilot project on Ladeira da Misericórdia, which should serve as a model for the interventions in the rest of the historic center. The pilot project corresponded to five adjoining buildings in one of the oldest slopes that connected the Upper City and the Lower City of Salvador, then quite degraded. The three remaining old houses, which almost entirely preserved the original facades, would house five commercial establishments on the ground floor and seven apartments on the upper floors. An existing ruin between the houses would house the "bar of the 3 arches," for selling "liquor + crabs," while in the empty land located at the north direction would be built the most striking of Lina's works in the complex, housing the "Coatí Restaurant."

Ladeira da Misericórdia buildings were never formally occupied as social housing, except for a short period in which, with the intervention of Lina already executed, the properties were invaded by homeless families living in the historic center. This project failure had several reasons, among which, no doubt, the main was what Azevedo (2001, p. 309) identified as being "the widespread prejudice that the recognition of these populations the right to continue living in the historic center would make it impossible to rescue them for tourism." Today, the five buildings restored by Lina Bardi in the second half of the 1980s, although belonging to the Municipality of Salvador, are empty and again in the process of ruin, except for one of them that is used by the Military Police.

10.4.3   The Manzana de San Francisco in Buenos Aires

In the late 1980s, Buenos Aires have witnessed the rehabilitation of the Manzana de San Francisco, in the heart of the Argentine capital urban center. This intervention, carried out through a partnership between the Municipality of Buenos Aires and the Regional Government of Andalusia, consisted in the recycling of seven buildings belonging to the Banco de la Ciudad, located in the same block of the San Francisco Church, in the Monserrat neighborhood, 100 meters from the Plaza de Mayo. The buildings were tenements and housed 114 families who, organized in a "neighborhood commission," actively participated in the whole planning and project process, initiated in 1989, following the realization of the San Telmo Open Congresses, events to establish jointly, between neighbors and municipal public managers, the

rehabilitation strategies of the Bonairense center. The architectural project of the Manzana de San Francisco rehabilitation was designed by architects Armando Otero, Jorge Ponce, Ricardo Tiraboschi, and Judith Vinocur, under the coordination of Cristina B. Fernández and Salvador Moreno Peralta, and the works were completed in 1995 (Cañellas et al., 2008; Municipality of Buenos Aires, 1991).

According to Cañellas et al. (2008), the Manzana de San Francisco operation takes place "As a response to the occupation of buildings and in a context in which social organizations claim the right to living and having as antecedent a form of intervention that had started with the RECUP-Boca project."

10.5 Social housing in Latin American Historic Centers in the 1990s

Despite those experiences in the historic center of Salvador and in La Boca neighborhood and *Manzana de San Francisco*, public policies adopted in Latin America since the 1990s frequently has been favoring tourism over residents.

10.5.1 *The Recovery Plan for the Historic Center of Salvador*

In Salvador, the State of Bahia Government implements, from 1992, the "Recovery Plan for the Historic Center of Salvador," focused on tourism and involving US$ 100 million investment approximately in infrastructure works (such as peripheral parking lots), refurbishment of public spaces and restoration of buildings. 531 buildings were recovered; the State Government acquired 432 buildings and obtained the use of other 133, becoming the largest owner of the Historic Center of Salvador (Gordilho Souza, 2010, p. 92).

The "Historic Center of Salvador Recovery Program" has transformed in a remarkable way the landscape and the social frame of the old *Maciel-Pelourinho* neighborhood, provoking great controversy by the social sanitation and gentrification processes that it promoted, with the forced transfer of 2909 families from the 470 houses recovered in the first six stages of the project implementation (1992–1997), transformed into cultural spaces, shops, bars, and restaurants aimed at tourists.

In Roberto Marinho de Azevedo words (1994, p. 131), "Pelourinho has become a setting. That neighborhood where one felt the old Salvador appears today as a theater where one represents Salvador for tourists." In addition, the expulsion of the population from the Historic Center and the reduced amounts paid as compensation to these families resulted in the immediate occupation of neighboring areas:

> The massive withdrawal of old residents, the attraction to the informal market, the existing social ties, are some factors that have contributed, in recent years, to promote the intensive

occupation of the slopes of Pilar, Lapinha, Santo Antônio and Taboão, in addition to the emergence of new tenements in Baixa dos Sapateiros and Saúde, followed by the systematic occupation of idle buildings and ruins [...] (Gordilho Souza, 2010, p. 93).

10.5.2   La Boca Art District in Buenos Aires

In Buenos Aires, in turn, since 2008, several "creative districts" have been invented through municipal laws, such as the Design District, in the Barracas neighborhood, in 2013; and the Arts District, in La Boca and in sectors of San Telmo and Barracas neighborhoods, in 2012. According to Ana Gretel Thomasz (2016), this model of "creative city" adopted in Buenos Aires is indebted to liberal urbanism and "is based on a peculiar mode of public intervention in which the State acts as a market facilitator, providing economic benefits to inverters interested in settling in the New Districts."

Ethnographic research conducted by Thomasz (2016) "indicates that the intervention in La Boca violates various rights enshrined in the World Charter for the Right to the City." Among the testimonies collected by Thomasz on the District of the Arts creation, there are those who argue that the action, under the guise of bringing artists to a neighborhood that already has them, without consulting them, "It's a cover for a real estate project" and that the law that created the Arts District "has nothing to do with the promotion of arts, culture. It is real estate business. It is totally expulsive to small artists," stimulating the installation in La Boca of two "large conglomerates" linked to the cultural and entertainment industries, giving "entrance to the large chains of bookstores, of tango for tourists" and preparing ground.

> for a process of privatization, mercantilization and spectacularization of local artistic-cultural expressions, like what have been done in Caminito, where old tenement houses were acquired by investors, displaced and converted into workshops, *tanguerias* [tango houses], restaurants or "thematic" shops for tourists [...]
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>   "Caminito is an antecedent of the Arts District. It was privatized and transformed into a place where three or four capitalists took all. They have not created jobs, or put the art in representation of all", remarked Jimena, member of a La Boca social organization [...]. (Thomasz, 2016).

10.5.3   Casa de los Siete Patios and La Victoria Brewery in Quito

At the same period, the historic center of Quito was the scene of interesting experiences, even if punctual. The best known is the Casa de los Siete Patios, executed in an agreement between the Municipality of Quito, through FONSAL[6], and the

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[6] Quito was the first site to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1978, along with the historic center of Krakow, Poland. After the serious earthquake of March 5, 1987 that mobilized the entire Ecuadorian society and resulted in the declaration of state of emergency, the

Regional Government of Andalusia between 1989 and 1993, with a project designed by architects Jorge Carvajal, Patricia Fondello, José Roman Ruiz, and Emilio Yanez. After the intervention, the Casa de los Siete Patios could house 39 families, of which 23 already lived in the property, occupied by low-income families since the 1970s. Another relevant experience was the conversion of the old La Victoria Brewery, with more than 14,000 square meters of built area, carried out by FONSAL between 1989 and 1998 and designed by architects José Ordoñez, Marcelo Bravo, Enrique Vivanco, and Diego Salazar. The experiences of social housing in the historic center of Quito continue throughout the 1990s, although always punctually, with the rehabilitation of 508 Caldas street, performed between 1995 and 1997 by FONSAL, this time through an agreement with the French NGO Pact Arim (Quito 1992, 2000).

10.5.4   COVICIVI I in Montevideo

In Uruguay, through the 1990s, in the scope of the experiences of the mutual aid cooperatives, a new modality was created called recycling, which consists in reusing the existing physical structure in the city, generally found in the central area, with the potential to implement housing use through the application of social technology based on self-construction and self-management. This modality seeks to reconcile the resolution of the quality housing problem with the right of its inhabitants to remain in their traditional neighborhoods, through the insertion of housing use in rehabilitated buildings with historic value (Vallés et al., 2011).

As in other large and medium-sized Latin American cities, the historic center of Montevideo has undergone a process of population loss and reduction of quality of urban space, reflected in the progressive degradation of its physical structure and in the emptying of the buildings. On the other hand, the historic center of Montevideo remains a very well-served sector in terms of urban infrastructure and services compatible with appropriation for housing use. This context favors the appropriation of the underused or empty properties existing in the central area in actions of mutual aid housing cooperatives, in an initiative that articulates rehabilitation of the built

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National Government promulgated the Law of the "Cultural Heritage Rescue Fund," delegating to the Municipality the guardianship of the real estate of Quito's historic center; the National Congress enacted, in December of the same year, a law creating the Cultural Heritage Rescue Fund (FONSAL), funded initially with 10% of the resources of the National Emergencies Fund (FONEN)—equivalent, in the first year, to six million dollars—and with the transfer of 3% of the price of all tickets sold for public shows held in the city, as well as national and foreign donations. Subsequently, the transfer to FONSAL was defined as a percentage of the Income Tax of all taxpayers living in the city of Quito. FONSAL existed until 2010, when it was renamed the Metropolitan Heritage Institute (IMP), a name it still retains today. Due to its administrative autonomy, which allowed the continuity of actions and projects even with the changes in municipal management, and also due to the exceptional budget compared to other Latin American cities, FONSAL and the historic center of Quito quickly became a paradigm of urban historical sites management in the region.

heritage with the housing demand, in addition to enable to the reestablishment of the property social function.

In the 1990s, the Municipality of Montevideo has developed four pilot programs[7] to demonstrate the feasibility of mutual aid cooperatives in architectural recycling experiments. One of these experiences was the "Las Bóvedas" program, started in 1993, under the shared responsibility of the Old City Housing Cooperative (COVICIVI) and the Technical Assistance Institute Hacer-Desur (Vallés, 2008). Within the scope of technical assistance, the COVICIVI has had to overcome some challenges to formulate a working methodology compatible with the introduction of this system in the rehabilitation of pre-existing properties. It was necessary to make adaptations in relation to the model guided by the construction of new buildings. In relation to these processes:

> [...] was a challenge for all actors. For the inhabitants it meant a change in the collective imaginary of traditional private housing of the cooperatives: single family in open set, with shared free spaces; with front and/or back courtyard, as well as the construction materials and technologies typicals of this system. Recycling existing buildings was equivalent to modifying the typology of housing and therefore the common spaces obtained. For the technicians, the challenge of designing and managing a work in which the builders do not have previous experience, is even greater, because they are pre-existing buildings with heritage value (Vallés et al., 2011).

The construction, inaugurated in 1998, combined the recycling of existing buildings and new constructions in an emblematic sector of the historic center, totaling 34 housing units and recomposing the urban morphology of the block where it was deployed, in addition to creating collective spaces for the complex inside and on the terrace (Vallés, 2008).

10.5.5 *The New Alternatives Program in Rio de Janeiro*

In Rio de Janeiro, during the first administration of Mayor César Maia (1993–1997), the Municipality created a series of social urbanism programs that became a reference, the most famous of them being the *Favela Bairro*, created in 1994 and focused on the implementation of urban infrastructure, services, public equipment, and social policies in the favelas, aiming to integrate them into the formal city. The same creators of this program—architects Luiz Paulo Conde and Sérgio Magalhães, then at the head of the city's urban planning and housing departments—created, in 1996, the New Alternatives Program (PNA), intended for the refurbishment of residential buildings, initially throughout the city and, in a second moment, concentrated in the central area neighborhoods. Among the PNA's lines of actions were the

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[7]The "Mujefa" Program, a cooperative made up of female heads of households; the "Pretyl" Program, recycling by the Civil Association "Pretyl"; the "Goes" Program, carried out by the Cooperative COVIGOES I; and the "Las Bóvedas" Program, which will be discussed further in this article (See Vallés, 2008, p. 156)

rehabilitation of old proletarian villages, the renovation of tenements and the restoration of ruined buildings. The PNA continued during the administration of the mayor-architect Luiz Paulo Conde (1997–2001) and in César Maia's second tenure (2001–2005), and between 1998 and 2005 delivered 119 housing units distributed in rehabilitated or new buildings in the central area of Rio de Janeiro. According to João Carlos Monteiro (2015, p. 447),

> Despite the insignificant number of houses produced, the PNA is frequently cited as a successful experience of incorporating the housing component into urban "revitalization" projects, having served as an inspiration for such actions in other Brazilian cities.

The first projects carried out under the PNA consisted of the recovery of tenements, especially the oldest in Brazil, located at Rua Senador Pompeu, n° 34. The building, about 120 years old and declared cultural heritage by the Municipality, was recovered in 2003, with 23 one-bedroom housing units.

10.6   Social housing in Latin American Historic Centers (2000–2020)

Intervention experiments aimed at adapting old buildings located in Latin American historic centers to social housing have intensified over the last 20 years; although they remain exceptions in quantitative terms, represent interesting and diverse examples of project and management challenges.

The projects that will be analyzed have been implemented in contexts as distinct as the historic centers of Mexico City, João Pessoa, Lima, Montevideo, Quito and Salvador, as well as São Paulo's central area (see Fig. 10.1). The last one, although not being a "historic center" in the traditional sense, concentrates a high amount of individually listed buildings, including many office towers built between the 1940s and the 1970s that pose other design challenges in the face of its conversion into housing.

10.6.1   Quito: From Esquina de San Blas to the Old Hotel Colonial

In Quito, the Historic Center Company[8] carried out, between 2000 and 2008, 10 rehabilitation or new buildings for housing purposes, totaling 390 apartments. The financing was carried out through public funds and loans offered to buyers. The largest projects are *"Esquina de San Blas,"* with 103 units, and *"Camino Real,"*

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[8] The Historic Center Company was created by the Municipality of Quito with mixed capitals to run the historic center rehabilitation program
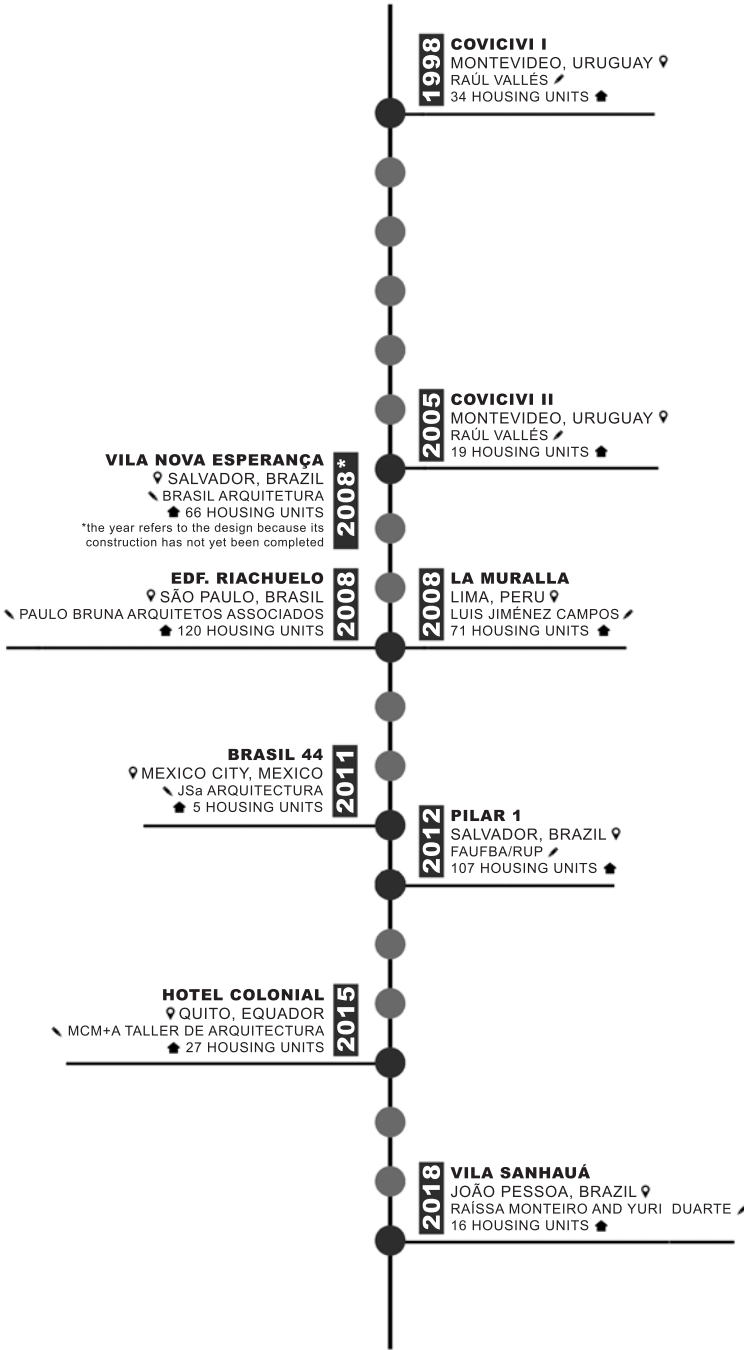
1998
COVICIVI I
MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY
RAÚL VALLÉS
34 HOUSING UNITS

2005
COVICIVI II
MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY
RAÚL VALLÉS
19 HOUSING UNITS

VILA NOVA ESPERANÇA **2008*****
SALVADOR, BRAZIL
BRASIL ARQUITETURA
66 HOUSING UNITS
*the year refers to the design because its construction has not yet been completed

EDF. RIACHUELO **2008**
SÃO PAULO, BRASIL
PAULO BRUNA ARQUITETOS ASSOCIADOS
120 HOUSING UNITS

2008
LA MURALLA
LIMA, PERU
LUIS JIMÉNEZ CAMPOS
71 HOUSING UNITS

BRASIL 44 **2011**
MEXICO CITY, MEXICO
JSa ARQUITECTURA
5 HOUSING UNITS

2012
PILAR 1
SALVADOR, BRAZIL
FAUFBA/RUP
107 HOUSING UNITS

HOTEL COLONIAL **2015**
QUITO, EQUADOR
MCM+A TALLER DE ARQUITECTURA
27 HOUSING UNITS

2018
VILA SANHAUÁ
JOÃO PESSOA, BRAZIL
RAÍSSA MONTEIRO AND YURI DUARTE
16 HOUSING UNITS

Fig. 10.1 Social housing projects analyzed in this chapter

Fig. 10.2 Panoramic view of the *Hotel Colonial.* Source: *MCM+A Taller de Arquitectura* Collection. Credits: Sebastián Crespo (Photographer)

with 95 units, both located at the northern end of the Ecuadorian capital's historic center (Del Pino, 2010, p. 38).

More recently, between 2012 and 2015, the Metropolitan Heritage Institute of Quito, in cooperation with the Regional Government of Andalusia, restored and adapted in social housing the old *Hotel Colonial*, converted into 27 apartments, 11 of them in the block built in the 1930s and 16 others in the block built in the 1960s and in its extension (see Fig. 10.2). The architectural design by the office *MCM+A Taller de Arquitectura* was chosen through public competition and was recognized with the National Award in the category Rehabilitation and Recycling in the Pan American Architecture Biennale of Quito, in 2016. Despite this, for various reasons, the rehabilitated architectural complex has not yet been occupied, 6 years after the completion of the works.

10.6.2   *The Housing Regeneration Plan and Brasil 44 in Mexico City*

In Mexico City, the Federal District Government, through the Federal District Housing Institute (Invi) and the Office for Urban Development and Housing (Seduvi), in partnership with the Regional Government of Andalusia, has developed

Fig. 10.3 *Brasil 44*'s facade after the intervention. Source: *JSa Arquitectura* Collection

a housing regeneration plan for the historic center, with the aim of reversing the population loss process, resulting from changes in land use, the physical degradation of buildings, and the serious earthquake of 1985, that destroyed several buildings. This process resulted in the loss of 118,609 inhabitants in the historic center between 1970 and 1995. Add to this that the area daily receives a floating population of approximately 1.2 million people, generating conflicts about interest for the occupation and use of public and private land. The historic center vitality makes it an attractive location for the vulnerable population of the city, leading them to the occupation of abandoned or ruined buildings (Suárez Pareyón, 2004).

Among the social housing projects carried out as part of the housing regeneration plan of the historic center of Mexico City, it is worth highlighting the building located at number 44 of República de Brasil Street, less than 600 meters from the Metropolitan Cathedral and Zócalo, which used to house five low-income families and a wedding dress shop (see Figs. 10.3 and 10.4). The project was carried out between 2006 and 2011 after these old tenants had acquired the property through a government credit. According to the architect Javier Sánchez, from JSª Architectural Studio,

Using minimal resources, the program sought the flexibility to allow the users to help adapt a 65 m^2 space according to their individual needs. The ceiling heights were used to con-

Fig. 10.4 Detail of a
Brasil 44's apartment.
Source: *JSa Arquitectura*
Collection

struct mezzanine levels in both public and private areas, together with the use of common areas such as the roof terrace, passageways and central courtyard, elements that recovered their original dimensions to provide improved illumination. (apud Montaner & Adriá, 2013, p. 140).

10.6.3   COVICIVI II and Other Cooperative Experiences in the Old City of Montevideo

In the last 20 years, the historic center of Montevideo, known as the Old City, has hosted new interventions of preexisting buildings recycling in social housing, promoted by cooperatives. In the same block of COVICIVI I (see Figs. 10.5, 10.6, and 10.7) and designed by the same architect Raúl Vallés, the Old City Housing Cooperative carried out, between 2001 and 2005, a second recycling project, COVICIVI II (see Figs. 10.8 and 10.9), which stands out for having been the first intervention in a mutual aid system in a protected building: the house of Brigadier-General Bernardo Lecocq, built in 1795 and listed in 1975 (Vallés, 2015).

Lecocq house is an example of the civil architecture of the colonial period and integrates one of the most important historical complexes of the city, located in front of the port area. The building was in an advanced state of degradation, but still retained its stylistic, typological, and spatial characteristics, which allowed the
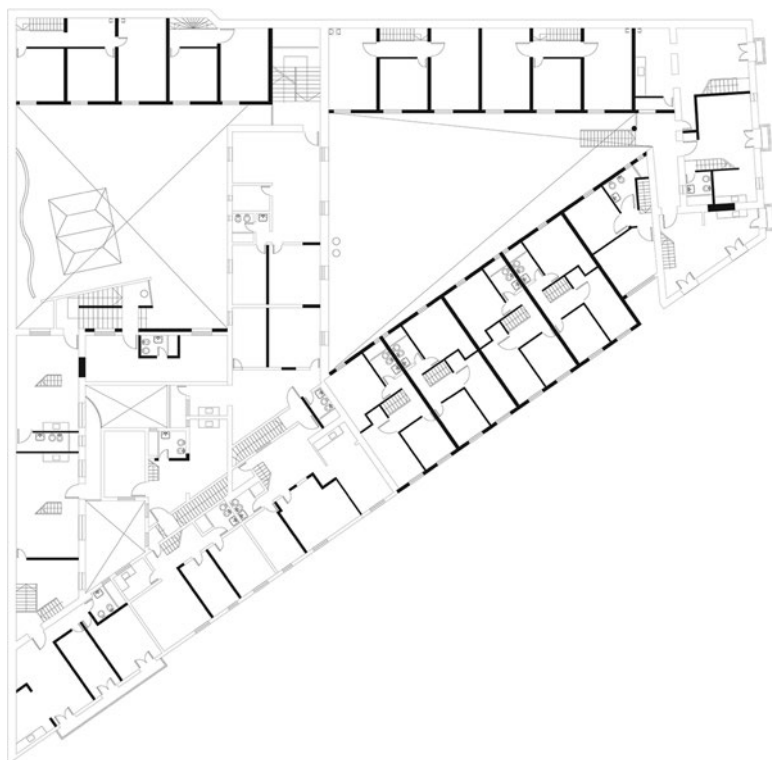
Fig. 10.5 COVICIVI 1's facade after the intervention. Source: Architect Raúl Vallés Collection

Fig. 10.6 Detail of COVICIVI 1's courtyard. Source: Architect Raúl Vallés Collection

Fig. 10.7 COVICIVI 1's ground floor plan. Source: Architect Raúl Vallés Collection

restoration of the facades and the maintenance of the central courtyard. Internally, the floors were redivided for better use in the distribution of the units. The complex also includes collective spaces on the ground floor that connect the two blocks, as well as commercial points with direct and independent access to the street, which facilitate integration with the external environment and the square (Vallés et al., 2011). A volume inside the complex was demolished due to the critical state of its structure, which enabled the construction of a new block, with four floors. In total, the COVICIVI II houses 19 apartments, with an average of 67 m^2 each, 11 in the existing building and 8 in the new building (Vallés & Castillo, 2015, p. 119).

The construction was executed in a mixed technique, associating the pre-existing wall structure in self-supporting masonry with the insertion of prefabricated parts and restoration procedures.

> We must highlight a constant search for constructive rationality calling for light prefabrication, almost on an industrial scale, that the cooperative movement adopted from an adequate technical assistance and that potentiates the supply of unskilled labor, organized by the mutual aid system. (Vallés, 2015, p. 18).

In the following years, less than a kilometer from COVICIVI II and in front of the Porto Market, the emblematic Jaureguiberry Building, built in 1911 and characterized by its mansardas and enclosed galleries along the facades was rehabilitated

Fig. 10.8 COVICIVI 2's facade after the intervention. Source: Architect Raúl Vallés Collection
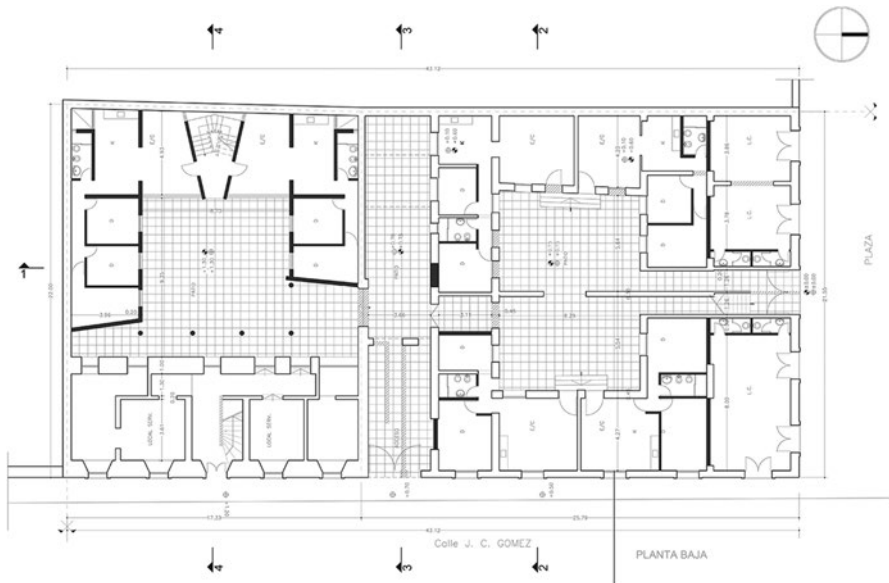

Fig. 10.9 COVICIVI 2's ground floor plan. Source: Architect Raúl Vallés Collection

by the cooperative *El Resorte*, formed predominantly by architects and architecture students.

The rehabilitation of the Jaureguiberry Building, executed between 2004 and 2009 and designed by the architects R. Béhèran, A. Mazzini, E. Mazzini, and O. Otero, was financed by the Municipality of Montevideo and the Provincial Deputation of Barcelona, with the support of the Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment. The building now houses 16 units, with duplex apartments on the third and fourth floors. Taking advantage of the location in one of the main tourist attractions of historic center, the ground floor is occupied exclusively by commercial activities. Although it is an example of housing rehabilitation for people of a slightly higher economic level than the other projects, it demonstrates the vitality of the architectural recycling experiences conducted by cooperatives in the historic center of Montevideo.

Southeast of the historic center, in Barrio Sur neighborhood, where the Afro-Uruguayan community traditionally lives, an old abandoned industrial building was rehabilitated between 2000 and 2010 by an Afro-descendent female family heads belonging to the *Mundo Afro* organization. The *Ufama al Sur* housing complex was designed by architects Gonzalo Morel and Guillermo Rey with 36 housing units of a single room but with the possibility of extension: 22 may become two-bedroom apartments and 6 may be extended up to three bedrooms. The complex also includes a civic center and sports facilities.

The Irupé Building (2004–2005), in turn, corresponds to a new housing complex, built in a cooperative regime on a small site (220 m^2) in Montevideo historic center, in front of Solis Theatre, one of the most important monuments of the city. The building, designed by the architects Gonzalo Guevara and Rodolfo Schwedt with assistance from the institute ECO, houses 17 units, being 12 of one room and 15 of two rooms, besides two communal halls, one on the ground floor and another in the basement, open to a courtyard where the remains of the historical wall of the citadel, discovered during the excavation, can be appreciated (Vallés & Castillo, 2015).

10.6.4   La Muralla Housing Complex in Lima

In the historic center of Lima, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991, the La Muralla housing complex was built between 2005 and 2008, next to the Government Palace and 150 meters from the Plaza de Armas (see Fig. 10.10). The name refers to a historical wall discovered on the site during archaeological inspections and denotes the site importance within Lima's urban context (Jiménez Campos, 2021). Despite the privileged location, the existing buildings of the block chosen for the complex implementation were in a very degraded condition, inserted in a context of economic decay and social vulnerability of the residents.

Fig. 10.10 Insertion of the La Muralla Housing Complex in the pre-existing urban context.
Source: Chapter's author Collection

As in other Latin American metropolises, the Historic Center of Lima also underwent a process of physical degradation and functional emptying, starting in the 1950s and 1960s (Jiménez Campos, 2021). Faced with the critical situation in which it was, in the early 2000s, the Municipality launched the "First Program for the Urban Renewal of the Historic Center of Lima" with the intention of identifying the areas that needed improvement and carrying out urban rehabilitation projects at the central area. The initiative to conceive the La Muralla Housing Complex arised from this programme (Jiménez Campos, 2020).

To enable the implementation of the Program, in 2003, the municipal government sanctioned a new legal framework based on the Law of Promotion of Private Investment in Urban Renewal Actions, on the creation of the Metropolitan Fund for Urban Renewal and Development (FOMUR), as their financing agent, and on the foundation of Municipal Real Estate Company of Lima (Emilima), agency responsible for managing the Programme. The organization of this new legal structure demonstrates the Municipality's intention to carry out urban renewal actions, which made it possible to finance and promote large-scale and important initiatives in this way.

Inside the block, there were seven old buildings listed by the National Institute of Culture (INC), whose structures were in critical condition, and which had been transformed into tenements (Jiménez Campos, 2020). The buildings typology—organized around internal courtyards (see Fig. 10.11)—and the existence of an

Fig. 10.11 Panoramic view of the La Muralla Housing Complex's new housing blocks. Source: Chapter's author Collection

empty lot—a residual space left by a demolition—had enabled the installation of another informal occupation model inside the block: houses built in an improvised way in mudbrick and wattle-and-daub, in extremely precarious conditions of habitability and health and devoided of urban infrastructure systems and basic sanitation (Jiménez Campos, 2021).

In parallel to the demolition and restoration activities, started in August 2004, the Municipality developed a great work of social assistance, integration with the community and training of residents, building a relationship of trust with the beneficiaries of the project. Social work has integrated the central objective of the renovation plan: to improve people's quality of life through access to decent housing, skills, and employment, as well as to rehabilitate the deteriorated urban heritage, through the recovery of the block and the restoration of examples of the built cultural heritage in Lima.

The participatory model was implemented through the creation of a Management Committee, composed by representatives of the residents and the governing agency (Emilima), and the legal organization of the local community around the "*Rastro de San Francisco*" Association. The strategy implemented by Emilima's management was highly successful with the incorporation of residents and their cultural practices in the development of the Program, bringing it

credibility and sustainability and building a relationship of trust with them, particularly during the period in which they were transferred to a temporary shelter for the works execution.

This model reflects the understanding that public policies aimed at central historic areas need to overcome the paradigm of urban rehabilitation based only on the material dimension of the space, to the detriment of the social and cultural dimensions. Such policies should combine initiatives of morphological and landscape restoration and rehabilitation of buildings to mechanisms that favor the permanence of people in their traditional territories and the valorization of cultural expressions and meanings practiced in places, to thus promote the preservation of the neighborhood's memory and affirmation of the population's identity along with quality of life and social transformation.

In this sense, a training program to residents for services related to civil construction, restoration, carpentry, etc., with the intention of taking advantage of them to work in the construction of their own houses and in the restoration works of the old buildings. Informal workers, many in extreme poverty, the residents had the opportunity to qualify themselves and achieve conditions to gain space in the work market and enable a way to pay for the property financing installments. The author of the project, the architect Luis Jiménez Campos (2020, p. 252), highlights the importance given to the figure of women in social inclusion and empowerment program:

> On the other hand, the inclusion of women as a fundamental part of the program was emphasized, and the training processes were incorporated for their inclusion in the work related to the project. The protagonism assumed has empowered the women of La Muralla in its organization and administration.

The architectural project, chose by a public competition, seeks to establish relations of unity and identity between the pre-existing building fragments, the surrounding historical houses, and the new architecture. The project establishes a harmonious dialogue with the historical surroundings and reinterprets striking elements of the pre-existing houses—as the scale and the high of the buildings, the rhythm of the facades, the striking colors, the eclectic language of preexistence, the balconies, etc.—in contemporary architectural language, which is affirmed by the absence of decorative elements, the apparently random distribution order of the openings in the facades—but which strictly corresponds to a pre-established pattern—and in the use of concrete walkways that connect the spaces of circulation and conviviality created around the residential pavilions.

The La Muralla Complex benefits 71 families with housing units distributed in duplex apartments, with three bedrooms and area of 82 m^2 (see Fig. 10.12), and triplex apartments, with five bedrooms and area of approximately 90 m^2 (see Fig. 10.13). Each unit had a maximum estimated cost of around $10,000 and were subsidized through the *Techo Propio* program, through a credit offered by Lima Metropolitan Bank. The project also includes a multipurpose room, four commercial points, a place for tourist use, a municipal guard post and an amphitheater, besides to the housing blocks (Jiménez Campos, 2020).

PRIMER NIVEL DUPLEX

SEGUNDO NIVEL DUPLEX
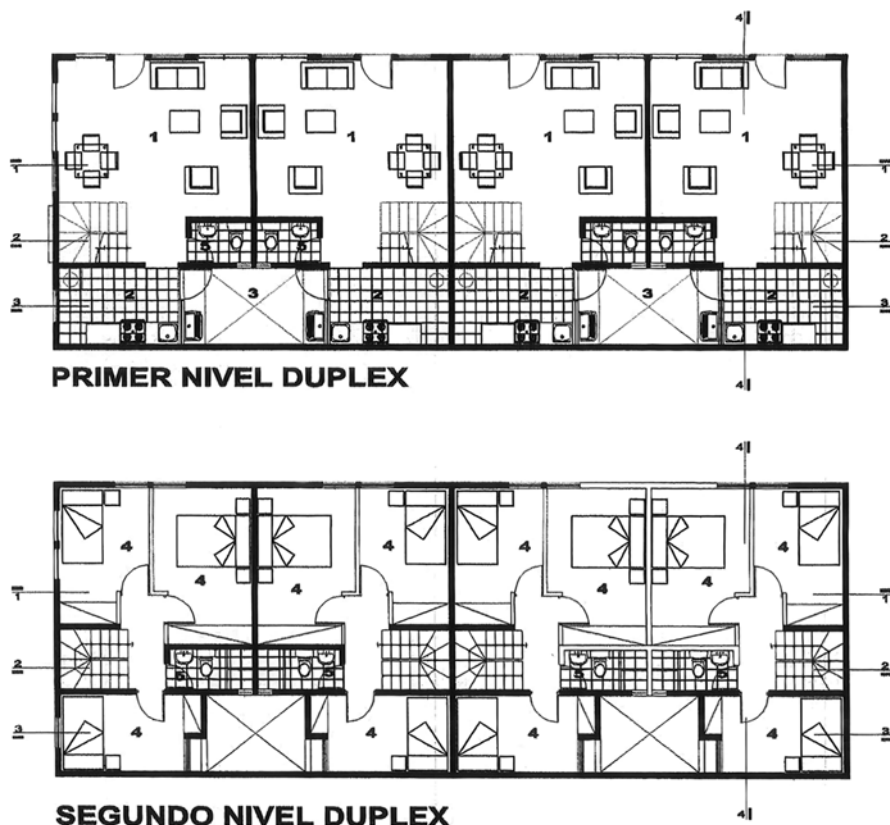
Fig. 10.12 Duplex apartments floor plans of La Muralla Housing Complex. Source: Architect Luis Jiménez Campos Collection

10.6.5   Social Conflicts and Abandoned Projects in Salvador

After the implementation of the first six stages of the "Recovery Plan for the Historic Center of Salvador" (1992–1997), focusing on cultural and leisure activities aimed at tourists and which resulted in the expulsion of almost three thousand families, the program was forced to incorporate the low-income population resident in the area: in the seventh stage of the Plan, 103 families demanded the right to remain in the area, through a Direct Action of Unconstitutionality (Adin) filed by the Association of Residents and Friends of the Historic Center of Salvador (Amach). Faced with this demand, the Public Prosecutor's Office filed a Public Civil Action that, through a Term of Conduct Adjustment (TAC), signed with the Government of the State of Bahia in 2005, managed to guarantee the permanence of those families that wished to remain in the historic center, through the Social Housing Program (PHIS), with resources from the Ministry of Cities initially estimated at almost R$ six million
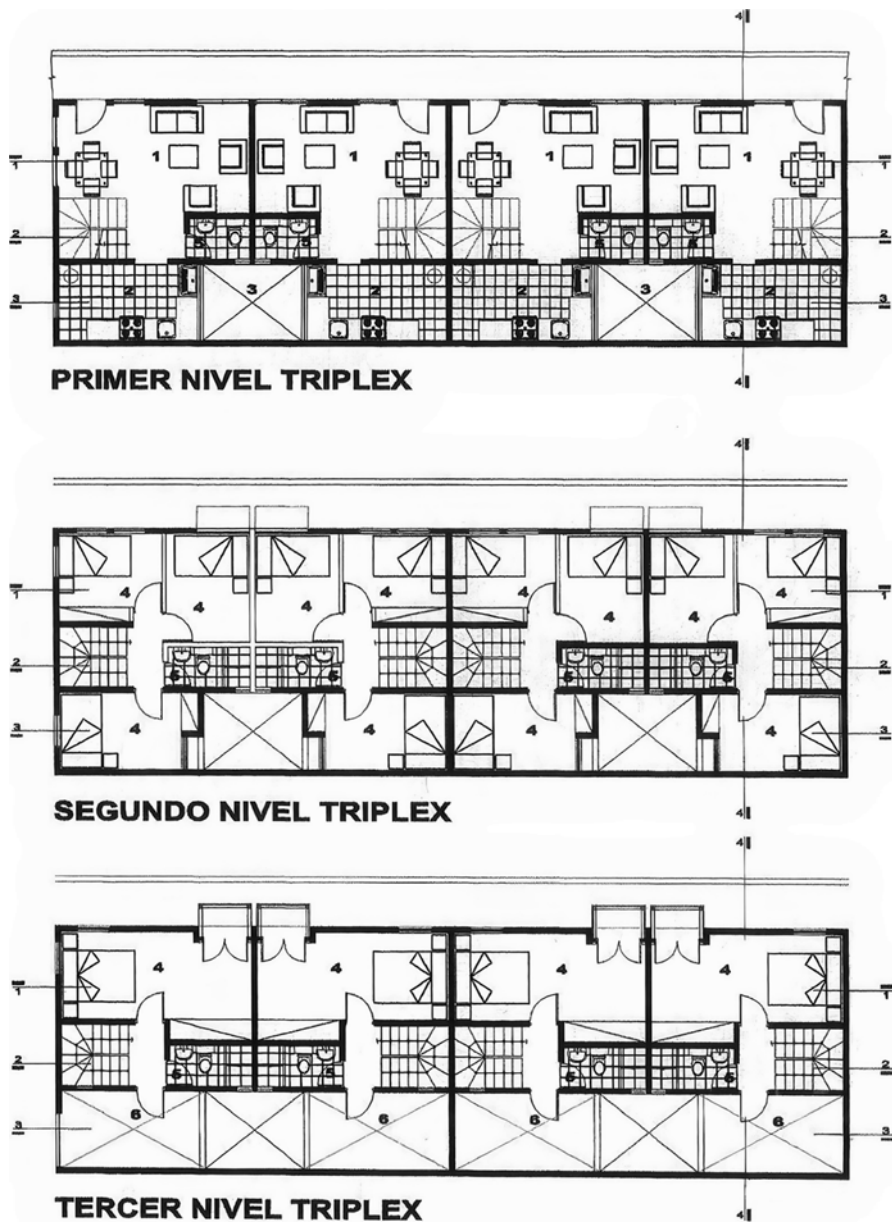
Fig. 10.13 Triplex apartments floor plans of La Muralla Housing Complex. Source: Architect Luis Jiménez Campos Collection

(Bahia, 2010). Fifteen years after the signing of the TAC, almost a third of the 103 families benefiting from PHIS have not yet received their permanent residences and continue to live in precarious "temporary houses."[9]

While the seventh Stage interventions began to be carried out in the historic center of Salvador, two other State Government initiatives were conceived aimed at recovering historic townhouses and adapting them to social housing. In the Santo Antônio Além do Carmo neighborhood, on the north end of the historic center, the government of the State of Bahia, within the scope of the Caixa Econômica Federal Residential Rental Program (PAR), with the support of UNESCO and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) resources, recovered some properties in ruins that were transformed into residential complexes, preserving the façades and reconstructing the external volumetric reading of the buildings, based on a project by the architect Demetre Anastassakis. Of the various properties contemplated in the project, only a few were restored, such as the ruins of an old townhouse covered with azulejos at Rua Direita do Santo Antonio, n° 19.

Another contemporary initiative to the seventh Stage is the Pilar Urban Rehabilitation Plan (RUP), which results from an agreement between the Government of the State of Bahia and the Faculty of Architecture of the Federal University of Bahia (FAUFBA), signed in 2003. It included some empty lots and, mainly, dozens of townhouses in an advanced state of degradation located on the streets of Pilar, Julião and Caminho Novo do Taboão, at the foot of the slope that separates the Lower and Upper Cities, on the northern limit of the historic center of Salvador.[10]

Many of the townhouses had been occupied and transformed into tenements, and the main objective identified by the Plan, which guided the architectural projects prepared between 2003 and 2008, was to promote housing for the population already residing in the area, qualifying the properties in terms of habitability. The first project developed within the scope of the RUP corresponded to the adaptation and expansion of the former State Ice Factory, a robust-reinforced concrete structure erected in the 1940s between Jequitaia avenue, the hillside and the access bridge to the tunnel connecting to the Upper City. The old structure was supposed to be adapted to house 107 families residing in irregular buildings erected a few meters away, at the foot of the Ladeira do Pilar. The majority (73%) of these families had an income of less than half the minimum wage and their transfer was urgent, either because of the risk situation in which they found themselves, due to the constant threats of landslides, or due to the impact that this occupation had on the landscape of the listed site.

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[9] The analysis of the housing projects carried out in the historic center of Salvador is based on the deeper one previously developed by Nivaldo Andrade Junior (2015, 2021).

[10] The Agreement was signed as a consequence of the International Design Seminar: Urban Renewal and Town Culture, promoted in 2001 at Faufba, with the participation of professors and students from Brazilian, Italian and Chilean universities and sponsored by the Government of the State of Bahia, having the areas between the streets of Pilar and Julião and Avenida Jequitaia as an intervention area. Just after the agreement was signed, in 2003, the Pilar Urban Requalification Laboratory (RUP) was created, within the scope of Faufba, to elaborate the plan and a series of architectural projects for the area. Both the seminar and the RUP were conceived and coordinated by Profa. Esterzilda Berenstein de Azevedo.

Fig. 10.14 Panoramic view of the Pilar 1 Housing Complex. Source: RUP/FAUFBA Collection

Fig. 10.15 Detail of the access staircase to the apartments that connects the two housing blocks— Pilar 1 Housing Complex. Source: RUP/FAUFBA Collection

   The Pilar 1 Housing Complex (see Figs. 10.14 and 10.15) was finally opened in 2012, after a series of changes in the project, including the decision to demolish the existing concrete structure and build three *ex novo* apartment blocks. The Pilar 1 Housing Complex would be the only project prepared in the RUP/FAUFBA and

Conder agreement to be effectively built. The other projects, developed between 2005 and 2008 and corresponding to the restoration and recycling of ruined properties or to new buildings to be built on vacant lots on Julião street and Caminho Novo do Taboão, would create hundreds of housing units to shelter the resident population in the area. In addition to the projects not having been executed, many of the townhouses that should have been restored and requalified were ruined to such an extent that, in 2010, they had to be propped up, as happened with those located on Julião street, between the numbers 01 and 09. The adoption of shoring as a strategy by the preservation agencies has only delayed the collapse of these buildings, since the metal struts also degrade, and, in the absence of actions aimed at the effective recovery of the buildings, they end up transforming, after a few years, in an overload for already damaged structures.

In 2007, a new phase began in the management of the historic center of Salvador by the State Government, adopting a new policy, supposedly less focused on tourism and more on its inhabitants. To mark this new moment, the government of the State of Bahia hired the architectural office Brasil Arquitetura, settled in São Paulo by former associates of Lina Bo Bardi—among them Marcelo Ferraz, co-author of the Pilot Project of Ladeira da Misericórdia—to develop a requalification project for Vila Nova Esperança (see Figs. 10.16 and 10.17), a community located at the back of the old Faculty of Medicine of Brazil, a few meters from Terreiro de Jesus, one of the most important squares of the historic center of Salvador. Formed by 49 families, "the Vila Nova Esperança community is notably one of the last strongholds of resistance of the black population in the Historic Center," being, according to one of the residents, "the only community that remained in the entire revitalization process do Pelourinho" conducted by the State Government in the 1990s (Teixeira & Espírito Santo, 2009).

Despite having been developed with the intense participation of the community and having received the first place in the Prize of the Institute of Architects of

Fig. 10.16 Sketch of the urban insertion of the *Vila Nova Esperança* Project. Source: *Brasil Arquitetura* Collection
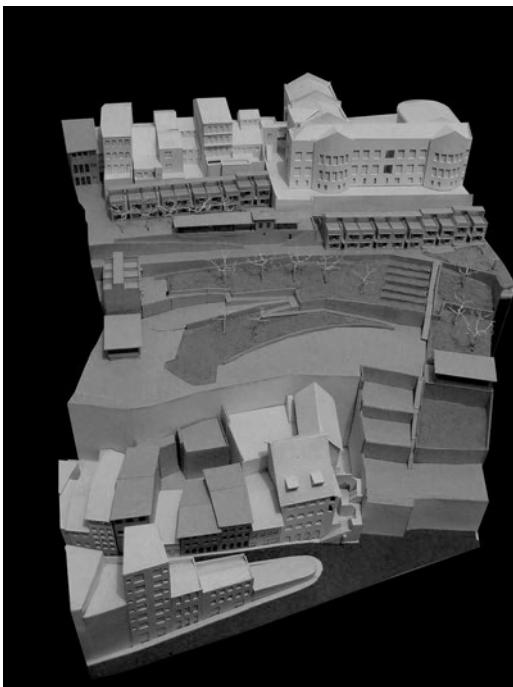
Brazil—São Paulo Department (IAB-SP) in 2008, in the category "Public Social
Housing," the Brasil Arquitetura's proposal for Vila Nova Esperança had its con-
struction started only in 2012 and the works were stopped a few months later. In
2018, a new bid was carried out to continue the execution of the works, that are
expected to be finished in 2021.

10.6.6   The Villa Sanhauá Experience in João Pessoa

Located in the historic center of João Pessoa, a listed site by the Institute of Historic
and Artistic Heritage of the State of Paraíba (IPHAEP) in 2004 and by the National
Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage (Iphan) in 2009, the Villa Sanhauá corre-
sponds to the rehabilitation of a set of eight ruined detached houses carried out by
the local municipal government. The project, designed by architects Raíssa Monteiro
and Yuri Duarte, of the Municipal Housing Office (SEMHAB) of the Municipality
of João Pessoa, under the coordination of Pascal Machado, then director of Housing
Programmes, was drawn up between 2013 and 2014. The works were concluded in
2018 and included 17 housing units and, on the ground floor, commercial activities
related to the creative economy, aiming to contribute to income generation for the
house's maintenance.

Initially, the project would be executed through the *Minha Casa Minha Vida* Program (PMCMV), in the range of families with average income between US$ 800.00 and US$ 1600.00. It would correspond to PMCMV first experience related to the conversion of historical buildings into housing. However, PMCMV was conceived and formatted for new buildings and, therefore, did not contemplate the specificities of this type of project. The various bureaucratic and operational obstacles to the project feasibility put by the financing agent of the PCMVM, the national bank Caixa, led the Municipality to decide to fund the operation with its own resources (Machado et al., 2019, p. 142).

The Cultural Historical Assets Protection Council (CONPEC), IPHAEP's advisory agency, had classified these eight old buildings as "Partial Conservation," for preserving "part of their spatial, structural, volumetric, typological and decorative original characteristics." In this way, any intervention in the buildings should contemplate the "preservation of the original roofs and the adequacy of the changed ones to the traditional typologies," the "preservation and [...] rehabilitation of the original typological composition of the openings, doors and windows on the buildings facades" and the "repair or adaptation of the internal spatial distribution and the strictly necessary roof to improve the conditions of stability, health, habitability, ventilation and insolation" (apud Machado et al., 2019, p. 142). According to the project authors, this last determination corresponded to "an opportunity to justify interventions to enable projects like this" (Machado et al., 2019, p. 142).

Five of the eight old buildings preserved only the external walls, of the original structure, while another two also preserved their roofs and a third also had a concrete slab. In general, the remaining buildings walls were in an advanced state of degradation, presenting structural pathologies due to maintenance lack and large exposure to weather. In the facades, the *art déco* ornaments were reasonably preserved, which allowed their restoration (Machado et al., 2019) (see Fig. 10.18).

According to the project authors, the main design challenges were related to the roof preservation in its original format, usually with three faces, and to the narrow and deep old buildings adaptation in residential units with adequate ventilation and lighting conditions.

The solution found by the architects was to create an internal courtyard integrating the housing units and ensuring the natural lighting and ventilation needs (see Fig. 10.19). This continuous courtyard corresponds to the only area where the original roof, reconstructed in colonial type ceramic tiles, is interrupted, and separates each old townhouse in two housing units sets: those in the front, with openings in the main facade and in the courtyard, and those in the background, illuminated and ventilated by the courtyard and the small backyards kept on the back of the lot.

All housing units therefore have cross ventilation and have their accesses through the courtyard, which is traversed by a continuous metal walkway. This is a variation of the architectural solution adopted in the adaptation projects of some old townhouses in social housing, in the historic center of Salvador, elaborated a few years before by the RUP/FAUFBA team.

Fig. 10.18 *Vila Sanhauá's* facade after the intervention. Source: Author's Collection

Fig. 10.19 Detail of a *Vila Sanhauá's* apartment with a mezzanine. Source: Author's Collection

According to the authors of the Villa Sanhauá architectural design, the courtyard

also creates a common access hall that integrates the apartments in a single neighborhood unit, a design strategy that rescues the sense of 'village' inside, keeping the exteriority of the houses. The courtyard and the metal walkway that crosses the townhouses, besides connecting the new neighbors, ensures the destination for gardens areas. (Machado et al., 2019, p. 143).

The window frames and balconies were also recovered according to their original design, while parts of the cement tiles that were in good condition were restored. The 17 housing units, with areas between 40 and 73 m², have two bedrooms, living room, kitchen, bathroom, and laundry room; one of the units was designed to house disabled people. The ground floor has six commercial spaces, with areas between 40 and 131 m², with direct access to the street, and a room for institutional use. Vertically, the floor levels followed pre-existing buildings, to avoid the intersection of the new floor slabs on the historic facade's windows. Because of the height of the ceiling in the upper floor apartments, it was possible to insert a mezzanine and increase the useful area of the unit (see Figs. 10.20 and 10.21).

Inaugurated in June 2018, Villa Sanhauá is under Municipality management and adopts the social leasing system, aiming to prevent the complex from becoming disputed by the real estate market and the area from going through a process of gentrification. Through this system, units are granted to beneficiaries chosen through a public call, which prioritized the selection of artists, artisans and other culture professionals who demonstrate already reside or work in the historic center of João Pessoa. In 2021, the monthly rent, partially subsidized, is only US$ 60.00, which, in an economic crisis period such as Brazil goes through, can be fundamental to ensure the permanence of residents in the historic center.
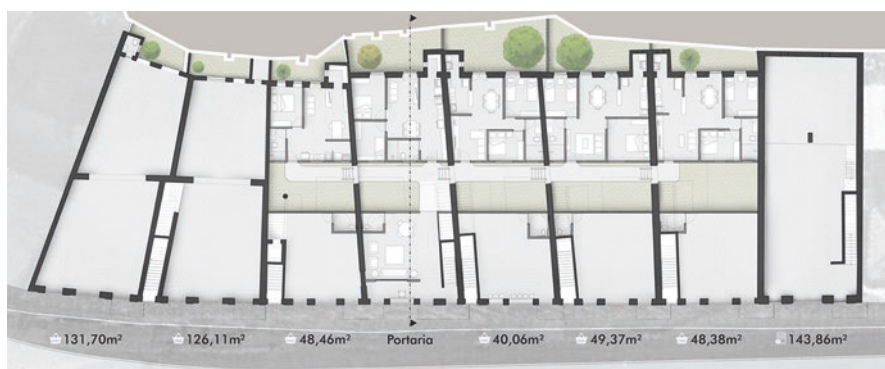
Fig. 10.20 Ground floor plan of *Vila Sanhauá*. Source: Architects Raíssa Monteiro and Yuri Duarte Collection
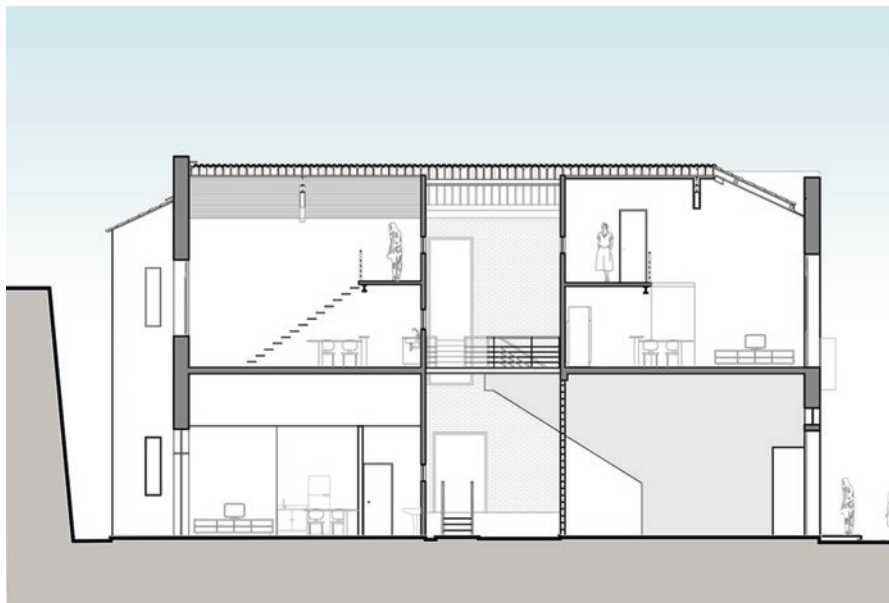
Fig. 10.21 Cross section showing the project solution for the roof, the mezzanines and courtyard—*Vila Sanhauá* Project. Source: Architects Raíssa Monteiro and Yuri Duarte Collection

10.6.7 The Challenge of Converting High-rise Office Buildings in São Paulo

In a heterogeneous and verticalized center like São Paulo's, but that goes through, in several areas, the same processes of pauperization, physical degradation and emptying as the other Latin American metropolis, another kind of problems arises, like, for example, the adaptation in social housing of high-rise buildings originally built in the twentieth century that used to house offices or hotels and which are currently empty.

Felipe Anitelli (2017, p. 65) notes that, since 2001 and until today, São Paulo Municipality has maintained a rehabilitation and conversion policy of idle and/or deteriorated buildings into social housing, highlighting that this policy "was included, with less or greater focus and resources from varied origins, in all municipal administrations" of the period, although occupied by antagonistic political groups. Anitelli also recalls that the implementation of public housing policies in the central region dates to the Mayor Luiza Erundina administration (1989–1992), as part of the Brazil's redemocratization process, after the military dictatorship. These experiences, however, were discontinued in the 1990s.

In the last 20 years, the financing social housing models in the central area of São Paulo have been the most diverse: from rent with possibility of purchase to the *Minha Casa Minha Vida* Program, in the modality Entities, with shared management with residents. Some properties had their units rented by the Social Leasing Program. According to Anitelli (2017, p. 66),

[...] the few and discontinued rehabilitation experiences certainly made it impossible to establish methodological procedures that could be (re)applied and (re)evaluated in each new rehabilitation, thus preventing the identification of the main recurrences, problems, unforeseen, costs, waste, demands, etc. It must have also prevented the improvement of this activity and the professionals involved, both in the public and private sectors. [...] On the other hand, there are 1351 families who now live in rehabilitated buildings, a number that can more than double when (and if) all properties already expropriated or in expropriation process are rehabilitated. Over the years, the opportunities and amenities existing in the center should be increasingly present in the beneficiaries' daily lives. Finally, if this is associated with other public policies to combat social inequality, such as the *Bolsa Família* Program or facilitated access to public universities, these people can enter society under more balanced and stable conditions.

One of the most paradigmatic examples of this policy in São Paulo is the Riachuelo Building rehabilitation. Built between 1942 and 1945, with 17 floors, it originally housed offices and the social activities of the Association of Trade Employees of São Paulo. After some time abandoned, it was occupied by homeless families in the 1990s until, in the Mayor Marta Suplicy term (2000–2004), was included in the Living Downtown Program, aimed at promoting housing in the central area through a social leasing system. The rehabilitation of the building was promoted by the Metropolitan Housing Company of São Paulo (Cohab), with a project by the architectural office Paulo Bruna Arquitetos, and was completed in 2008 (see Fig. 10.22). According to the authors of the project,

Fig. 10.22 Riachuelo Building's facade after the intervention. Source: Paulo Bruna Architects Associated Collection

The recovery sought to respect the original constructive logic […]. The solid brick walls that separated the different offices were kept since they are part of the structure's bracing, so basically every office was turned into an apartment, in a total of 120 units, ranging from 301 square foot to 516 square foot of floor space. Many of them include private balconies and balcony doors, and those were kept because the façade has been listed as historical heritage. The apartments were eventually sold and their residents value and maintain the building in an exemplary way. (Bruna & Gouveia, 2017, p. 195).

10.7   Final Considerations

The 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." He remembers that historic centers are, moreover, "civic places in which the invisible society becomes visible and in which otherness is generated" (Carrión, 2005, pp. 54–55).

The implementation of public policies that privilege tourists to local inhabitants in Latin Americans historic centers, held since the 1960s and 1970s with the support and patronage of international organizations such as UNESCO and OAS has led to the gentrification of these areas, expelling and driving away the most vulnerable, and converting the *place of otherness* into *non-places for immediate consumption*: the *ice cream city* that Lina Bo Bardi did not want the see the historic center of Salvador transformed into. Quoting Fernando Carrión (2003, p. 40) again,

The historic centers are characterized by heterogeneity because they come from it—it was, in a big moment, the whole city and because without it they die. Social, economic and cultural heterogeneity is a condition of its existence; hence, if an homogenizing proposal is planned, it would end up losing centrality and reducing time, space and citizenship condition. A historic center intended only for certain activities, such as tourism, or converted in the habitat of poverty, will eventually become a periphery.

For many years, social housing in historic centers has been seen as a taboo theme, incompatible with tourism. After the pioneering (and abandoned) experiences in the 1980s, a serie of interventions, some of exceptional quality, started to be implemented in several Latin American historic centers in the 1990s and especially in the last two decades.

Even if these projects are almost always limited to a few dozen housing units and take many years to complete—and some are not even completed or occupied, as we have seen in this article—, they show the viability of social housing in historic centers and its compatibility with other uses and activities, including tourism. These experiences also place several specificities, in the stages of project and of construction as well as in its management aspects, which differentiate them from other social housing projects, carried out in contexts with less historical complexity or without such significant cultural values. But also differentiate them from other heritage intervention projects, considering that they must associate principles inherent to social housing projects—as constructive rationality, cost-effectiveness and

durability of materials—with the conservation of architectural values of the buildings that are being intervened.

Regarding management, one question that emerges is the social location system, adopted in some of the examples analyzed, such as Villa Sanhauá, in João Pessoa, and some projects of the Living Downtown Program, in São Paulo. Experience shows that, in programmes where residents become the owners of the properties in which they live, they often may have difficult to pay all the costs involved, such as condominium taxes, water and energy bills, etc., so they can end up selling the property. Besides minimizing this impact, social leasing helps to prevent that the real estate market, in its voracity, acquire the rehabilitated properties, promoting a gentrification process that expels those whom the intervention was intended to meet. The social leasing system, however, needs to impose itself in opposition to the traditional properties system, with decades of prioritization and extremely mobilizing in countries characterized by constant economic instability—a context in which owning a roof, in a way, represents a safety guarantee in times of work shortage.

Still in the scope of management, one aspect to be highlighted is the residents' participation in the project and in the work execution, through the Uruguayan model of mutual aid cooperatives (even in individually listed buildings, as in the case of COVICIVI II, in Montevideo) whether through the residents training in services related to construction, participating directly in the building process of their own homes (as in the case of the La Muralla Complex, in Lima). In the latter case, the perspective of improving life quality with the new housing is enhanced: beyond the new home, these experiences bring the possibility of better job opportunities because of the professional qualification obtained.

About architectural projects, as noted by Raúl Vallés and Alina del Castillo,

> This action model poses new challenges to the project and management. The project logic is no longer generated by the repetition of a housing unit. The conditions of pre-existence force us to think from the whole and the projects respond more to its singularities than to preconceived types. (Vallés & Castillo, 2015, p. 72).

The analysis of social housing projects in old buildings located in Latin American historic centers allows to identify certain recurrences. For example, faced with the need to create smaller spaces with low ceilings in buildings that used to have large and high rooms, the creation of internal courtyards has been a recurring solution adopted to ensure ventilation and lighting to all rooms. The analysis of adaptation projects executed into narrow and relatively deep townhouses, originally characterized by dark rooms with no ventilation, such as those of Julião street and Caminho Novo do Taboão, in Salvador (2005–2008), and those of Villa Sanhauá, in João Pessoa (2013–2018), shows how the creation of internal courtyards is recurrent, in these cases crossed by metal walkways that guarantee access to the units to the bottom.

The experiences held in São Paulo in the last 20 years bring other design challenges, related to the conversion of obsolete high-rise commercial buildings into social housing. Projects should solve problems such as insufficient vertical circulation, reduced area of vertical surfaces facing open spaces and inadequate electrical

and hydraulic installations. The urgency in implementing programs and developing projects to face this challenge is directly proportional to the number of idle office towers existing in the large Latin American cities' central areas: in Brazil, only the Federal Government has more than 10,000 vacant properties, which could, in many cases, be converted into housing (not just social housing), optimizing the use of installed infrastructure, avoiding urban sprawl and reducing displacements. And if we remember tragedies like that of the Wilton Paes de Almeida Building, in São Paulo's central area, which belonged to the Union and was occupied by 146 families after years of abandonment, and its collapse after a fire in May 2018, resulting in seven deaths, this urgency is even greater.

If, as commented by McGuirk, the gigantic modern housing complexes represented the Latin American architectural experimentation between the 1940s and the 1960s, and more recently this experimentation was identified with other approaches, as the incremental housing of Elemental, in Chile, or some interventions in the slums of Rio de Janeiro and Medellín, it is necessary to recognize that adaptation projects in historic centers carried out in recent decades in Latin America are also part of this investigative and experimental tradition.

The social inequality that characterizes Latin American countries, aggravated by the economic and social crisis, makes housing precarious for the most vulnerable strata of the population. A good part of the population of these countries resides in areas lacking basic urban infrastructure, with insufficient or non-existent sanitary sewage, inadequate paving and lighting, and scarce supply of transport and services; the dwellings do not reach the minimum parameters of habitability and healthiness and have small and/or shared rooms, with inadequate ventilation and lighting. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought to light the urgent need to expand social protection for the most vulnerables. The projects presented here, developed in the pre-pandemic period, acquire even more importance in the current context and demonstrate how good architecture, inserted in historic centers, can contribute to social justice, ensuring quality of life, creating decent housing and promoting the empowerment of communities commonly marginalized by public action.

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