

ICOA1812: THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY MOBILIZATION OF RESIDENTS ASSOCIATIONS IN THE CONSERVATION OF URBAN AREAS: THE CASE OF THE PROTECTED AREAS OF THE CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT (APACS) OF RIO DE JANEIRO CITY IN THE 1980S

Subtheme 01: Integrating Heritage and Sustainable Urban Development by engaging diverse Communities for Heritage Management

Session 1: Sustainable Development and Community Engagement

Location: Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre

Time: December 13, 2017, 12:15 – 12:30

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Abstract: This work intends to discuss the origin and repercussions of the mobilization of residents associations in the conservation of urban areas, and the role of this legacy in the integration of the cultural heritage with the sustainable urban development models.

The article is divided into four parts. It begins with a brief description of the trajectory of urban area conservation with special emphasis on the consolidation of the interaction among the physical, social and economic domains along the lines proposed by Lichfield (1988), Tiesdell, Oc and Heath (1996). In the next step, there is assessment of the emergence of the conservationist mobilizations organized by residents associations, arising from the antagonism between development and conservation in the post-war period. Notably, this conjuncture is founded on the paradigms of Jane Jacobs and the public mobilization for the conservation of Covent Garden, in London, during the 1970s.

The third part concentrates on the Brazilian case of Rio de Janeiro city throughout the 80s, stemming from the precursor conservationist initiatives on the part of various residents associations, based on previous analogous situations. It was that experience that gave rise to the Protected Cultural Heritage Areas (Áreas de Proteção do Ambiente Cultural), the Brazilian version of the conservation areas, which integrated the parameters of protection, conservation, building and urban legislation, which were incorporated into the first Master Plan for the city in 1992 and transformed into a national reference. Examination of this context takes place, above all, in the discussion of the Bairro Peixoto Residents Association, by means of the reassessment of a monograph specialized in urban sociology, unpublished, written at the end of the 1980s constituting, perhaps, the sole reference available on this theme.

Finally, the work will study the consequences of the contributions of these residents associations in the current context of Rio de Janeiro urban policy, principally as to whether these arduously defended areas are contemplated in a social manner in the development strategies.

Key words: *conservation areas; residents associations; development strategies; Rio de Janeiro*

The contribution made by mobilization of residents associations in the conservation of urban areas: the case of the Protected Areas of the Cultural Environment (APACs) of Rio de Janeiro city in the 1980s

1- The emergence of the conservationist mobilizations

In the majority of cases, the formation of protected urban areas underwent moments of glory and decline. The loss of prestige of these places is correlated with the obsolescence of the buildings and urban structure. Nutt et al (1972), Nathaniel Lichfield (1988), Tiesdell, Oc, Heath (1996) and Peter Larkhan (1996) have studied this theme. They comment that obsolescence is an inevitable process that affects urban areas and their components from the very moment they begin to be used. In general, all the material assets are produced with what is most modern in terms of technology and aesthetic standards. The evolution of the life style of the society and transformations of the social, economic and cultural organization, in some cases, make this legacy out-of-date. This situation can vary over the years, decades or centuries, but it is perceived at the instant a request from the users (individuals, families, companies, public institutions, etc.) is not fully understood. It is as of this point that the obsolescence begins, and it can reach the extreme of total loss of efficiency and utilization.

The concept of obsolescence is controversial. It was and still is used in a distorted manner to enable demolitions of buildings and urban renewal schemes for districts considered “decadent” by the public authority and/or the property market. These places have been mutilated and, in some cases, thoroughly renovated in order to sanction models of urban development and urban policies. Several of them had the capacity to adapt and perform other functions in these new physical, social and economic frameworks. However, the justification of “progress” and “development” prevailed in the construction of expressways, demolitions of districts and their blocks, buildings, squares and so on.

The models of predatory urban development, above all in the post-war period, were severely contested at the beginning of the 1960s. One of the major expressions and manifestations of such initiatives were the urban social movements, as defined in an emblematical way by Manoel Castells (1972, published in Brazil in 1983). However, within the field of conservation studies, chiefly in the realm of conservation of urban areas, the spokesperson was indeed Jane Jacobs (1916-2006), whose book “The Death and Life of Great American Cities” (1961) became a paradigm of the contestation of unrestrained urban renewal in areas with potential for protection. The clashes between Jacobs and Robert Moses, a public official who worked especially in New York Metropolitan area, known as the “master builder”, were lengthy and heated ones and came to represent the conflicting between development (change) and conservation (continuity).

Another memorable watershed moment concerning worldwide repercussion and impacts of urban social movement’s connected to conservation of urban areas, took place in the early 70’s. The case of Covent Garden’s Residents Association standing up for their cause was an overriding exemplary case (*Fig. 1*). The initiative was triggered by announced plans to remodel practically the whole district. By 1971, The Greater London Council (GLC) had come to sketch a less destructive proposal plan, to be headed by Brian Anson (1935-2009), who soon after became a fierce opponent of the general revamping and renovation scheme. Later, Anson (1981) published a book entitled “I’ll Fight You for it: Behind the

Struggle for Covent Garden, 1966-74”, which soon came to be one of the main landmark works covering this event and soon converted itself into a reference on the topic.



These and other initiatives on the part of non-governmental organizations and resident associations collaborated decisively to create legislation for protection of urban areas, which complemented the protection listing. Tiesdell, Oc and Heath (1996, p. 2) state that the “1961 Monument Act” of Holland was the first, followed by “Loi Malraux” of France, in 1962, the “Civic Amenities Act” in the U.K. in 1967, and so on.

2 - The Brazilian context: The case of Rio de Janeiro

In Brazil, official efforts and initiatives aiming at ensuring and fostering cultural heritage protection were legally introduced in 1937. In the beginning (1930-1960) the majority of cultural sites holding and displaying what was regarded as of exceptional intrinsic artistic or historic value have earned public authorities attention and care. Mostly of these monuments were linked mainly with heritage and repertoire produced in the long Colonial Period (15th to 19th centuries). Such set of criteria was justified mainly by the prevailing mindset of a vision of national identity which coincided with the consolidation and centralization of the Brazilian State apparatus following the political/administrative rearrangements ensued by the revolution which took place in 1930.

Notwithstanding, by the late 60's, a visible change in paradigm regarding conservationist efforts and practices took place. It was most pronounced and noticeable in urban areas. The developmentalist model implemented in the previous decades brought about looming threats hanging over the areas with rich potential to be deemed of interest or falling under protection selection criteria. Urban renovations coupled with the episodic prevalence of truly “varied feverish modernist impulses” and the rise and expansion of the automobile industry, as well as related factors resembling those present at the New York and Covent Garden experiences. All combined to support urban policies which resulted in thrashing and erasure and eradication of traditional architectural sets, districts and the marginalization of areas already under protection.

In Brazil the 70's are associated with the emergence of the transformations of the so-called “Brazilian economic miracle” era which unfolded during the apex of the period of the reign of the military dictatorial regime (introduced by a military coup in 1964 whose demise and riddance only took place in 1985). Throughout those years a meaningful economic expansion took place and it impacted considerably the urban configuration of all the main metropolitan areas around the country. All these metropolitan areas went through sharp expansions, both in population and in territorial terms. By 1974, still under the prevalence of a background informed by biased social exclusionary policies, in an attempt to turn development compatible with conservation practices and policies, the National Council of Metropolitan Regional Areas (*Conselho Nacional de Regiões Metropolitanas – CNPU*) then seized the opportunity to

issue recommendations concerning the adoption of strategies aiming at harmonizing the two conflicting pull factors in the elaboration of urban policies. In the same fashion, since 1971, new legislation at the municipal level have become available, introducing the instrument of conservation areas which perennially consolidated the conservation of diversified and variegated urban areas. These locations were then sponsored and championed by residents associations, as shall be describe bellow.

By the late 70's, due to the breakdown of the technocratic urban policies carried out by the agents of the military dictatorial regime, at least within the confines of official discourse, due considerations was incipiently given to social issues in the planned interventions in protected urban areas. Above all, attention was given to the impact of urban interventions upon residents of such areas¹. In order to obtain a fuller picture it is also crucial to take into consideration the sheer expansion of protection indicators (less elitist and less centralized ones) which took place throughout the administrative tenure of Aluísio Magalhães (1979-1982). On the political scene, this period got to be known as “political distention” phase, anticipating the demise of the aforementioned dictatorial phase.

When compared to the British and American experiences mentioned above, one may say that in Brazil the origins of organized social movements - foremost the emergence of substantial mobilizing activities promoted by residents associations and by commercial or retailers associations at the grassroots level – took place relatively delayed in time. Such delays may be mostly attributed to the long period (21 years) of full swing political repression frameworks and apparatuses set in place to constrain all social interactions.

Exceptions to such general rule were two pioneer and localized cases of very active and effective commercial associations, both located in the Rio de Janeiro city centre: Friends of Alfândega Street and its surroundings (*Sociedade de Amigos das Adjacências da Rua da Alfândeg- SAARA*, created in 1962) and Friends of the Carioca Street and its vicinity (*Sociedade de Amigos da Rua da Carioca e Adjacências- SARCA*, created in 1978). Initially, their activism and mobilizing militant initiatives focused primarily on the struggle against upcoming projects of urban renovation that could produce relocations and dislodging in large proportions. Noteworthy was the opening of the “North-South” expressway launched in the early 60s, which had its continuation paralyzed by late 70's as a supposed direct result of the creation of the city centre conservation area in 1979. In the specific case of Carioca Street and its vicinity, the threats to its integrity came through an alternative proposal emanated from the Institute of the National Historical and Artistic Heritage (*Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional- IPHAN*). This aimed at tearing down one of its planes (the odd number side of the alleys) in order to enhance the ambience of the Saint Antonio Abbey (*Convento de Santo Antonio*). As a matter of fact, in a bid to better integrate it within the already partially consolidated modernist landscape of “Norte-Sul” expressway.

The drive and motivation behind several residents and/or commercial associations was the unyielding opposition against the destruction of the traditional built environment as well as the affective linkages and other immaterial factors. They were the fundamental pillars of a movement that culminated in the creation of various Protected Areas of the Cultural Environment (*Áreas de Proteção do Ambiente Cultural- APACs*), one of the main Brazilian versions of the conservation areas, by the Rio de Janeiro City Hall. The first associational initiative was the one launched in 1983 in the Saúde District by the Saúde Resident Association (*Associação de Moradores da Saúde-AMAS*) (Fig.2). Soon, along with the emergence of associational initiatives at twin adjacent areas (Gamboa area and at Santo Cristo area) - the remainder of the traditional areas sprawling along the old Port Zone- the very fruitful result came in the shape of the SAGAS Project (acronym formed by the initials of the respective districts). The SAGAS Project

¹ - According to an official internal orientation (*Exposição de Motivos 320*) issued in 1979 by the Ministry of Education and Culture by then the bureaucratic organism in charge to foresee and monitor and assure protection and conservation for all Brazilian listed cultural heritage sites.

vehemently opposed and resisted the unbending and uncompromising renewal proposal as conceptualized by the RIOPART Project (conceived in 1983 by Rio de Janeiro Trade Association).

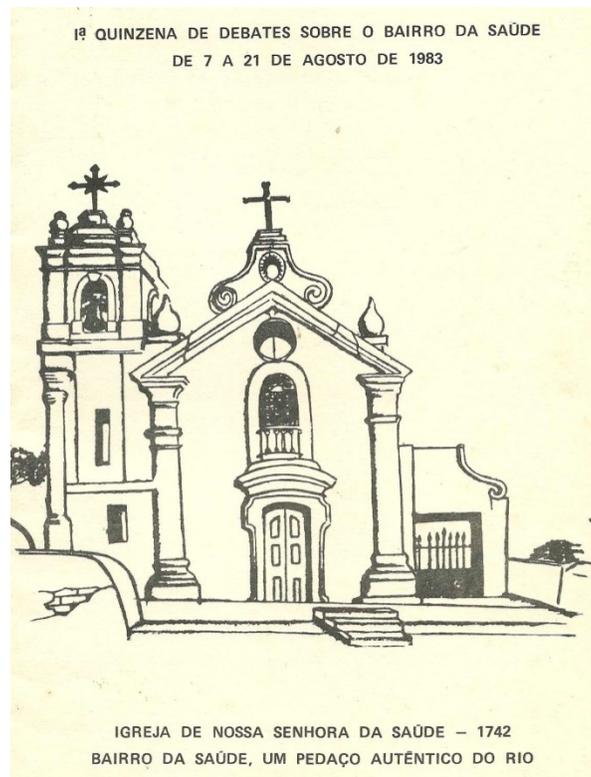


Fig.2– The first meeting of the Saúde Resident Association, 1983. From the original document.

The SAGAS conservation area, launched in 1985, was an innovative initiative as far as the conciliation of urbanistic parameters with conservation aspects is concerned. This was so because the massive participation and engagement by residents led the proponents to survey residents' aspirations and the residents' conservation claims were taken into consideration in the drawing of the major guidelines for the project's implementation. This seminal experience ended up providing the main subsequent policy model of best-practice for protective policies of urban areas in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Thus, its features and parameters were later incorporated and embedded into the guidelines for protection and enhancement of cultural heritage of the 1992 Master Plan for the City of Rio de Janeiro. Further afield, its legacy was also an enduring one. The results entailed by the learning processes achieved by the experience were later converted into a national paradigm of best-practices to be applied nationwide wherever and whenever circumstances demanded inspirations for the introduction of protective schemes.

Besides, all the way through the 80's, in Rio de Janeiro other residents associations followed the footprints pioneered by AMAS. Standing out were the initiatives carried out by the residents of areas as diverse as Santa Teresa (1984), São Cristóvão (1986), Urca (1988) and Bairro Peixoto (1988). Their emulation of AMAS experience and their own combative initiatives were paramount for the establishment of protection and conservation mechanisms to assist these districts. In the early 90's, the conservation

areas of Cidade Nova & Catumbi and of Laranjeiras & Cosme Velho also saw the light of the day under the aegis of that prevailing logic and mindset.

Understanding in depth the role of residents associations in shaping public conservation policies for urban areas as delivered by Rio de Janeiro Municipality from the early 80's onwards is something that still begs further inquiry and deeper scrutiny and elucidation. It is specially so because the city's heritage conservation, and later on the whole country's conservation approaches, both owe a great deal to the participatory aspects of that experience. Within the timeframe covered by the analysis, the articulated, organized and indefatigable mobilizing standings of local residents resulted in assuring the protected status of around four thousand edifices worthy of prime class rank as representatives of several architectural typologies and of distinct historical periods.

Informational and research-based works covering the historical development of the several conservation areas of Rio de Janeiro published by the Rio de Janeiro City Hall during the late 80's only approach residents associations in a superficial manner. One of the few (and, perhaps the only one) to specifically tackle the issue and to investigate the role of associations in the realm of urban areas conservation is the monograph: "*A mobilização preservacionista da Associação de Moradores do Bairro Peixoto*", "Peixoto Residents Association Preservationist Action" (Sampaio, 1988). This specific association, AMAPE, became mobilized after the detection of a sharp increase in the popular perception of worries and concerns regarding impending depletion of Quality of Life standards within the designated area. Later, a local conservation area was then established there. In this particular case, concerns and measures concentrated on the then urbanistic parameters enforced for the Copacabana area (Bairro Peixoto is a strip of the Copacabana district) since the early 80's, mostly those regarding use and occupation, with special emphasis placed upon maximum height limits for buildings, both in case of overhauls and of new constructions. Such permits were completely at odds and incompatible with the scale of the architectural settings that would later become a protected area in 1991 (*Fig.3*).

Extrapolating from the data presented by the aforementioned monograph and also from complementary information, one may conclude, on a provisional basis, that the initiatives of residents associations were pretty concentrated on the maintenance and preservation of local Quality of Life Standards. It was believed that this could be achieved through a framework of cultural heritage protection. Apparently, those organizing efforts were disconnected from what was suggested by Manoel Castells (1983) as one main rationale for social movements: contesting social contradictions of the capitalism status quo. Nonetheless, as the organized activities of such residents associations unfolded they have increasingly become intrinsically politicized since they started opposing themselves to the prevailing urban policies carried out by the Rio de Janeiro City Hall. Those policies were typically correlated with controversial processes of production and reproduction of capitalism system, as stated by urban investigators such as Mauricio Abreu (1987). The confrontational efforts concentrated mostly on the causes and consequences of powerful mechanisms of real estate speculation that were being articulated at local, regional, national and international levels.

From the early 90's onwards these organized mobilization efforts started losing momentum and entered into a shrinking stage and became disarticulated. This coincided with the country's adoption of a neoliberal approach to development which promoted the gradual demise of welfare state policies, the

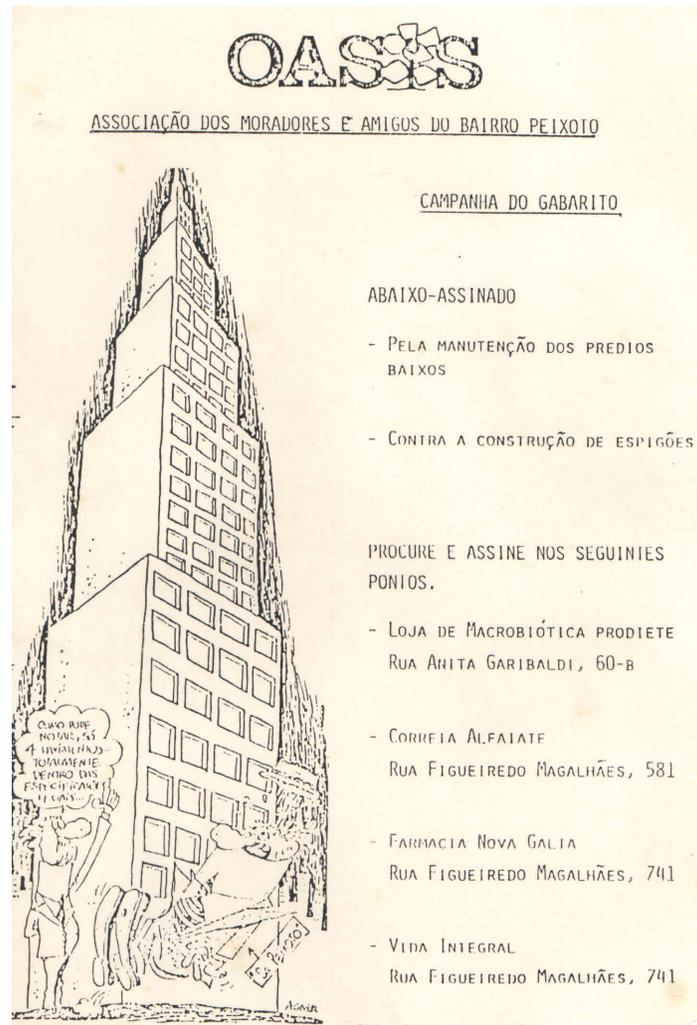


Fig.3– AMAPE campaign against the incompatible local height limits for new building in 1988. From the original document.

privatization of state-owned companies and of basic services delivery (urban infrastructure, telecommunications, health, education and so forth). Concomitantly, austerity programs and drastic cuts on social support and promotion public policies have produced a deep impact upon the performance of the public sphere apparatuses. The developmentalist model adopted on the previous decades was replaced by recessive monetarist policies. In the case of Rio de Janeiro, the landmark legacy of the 1992 Master Plan was sideline or ditched. This was a blueprint which was designed to replicate the favouring of social priorities above all other considerations and was well aligned with the new 1988 Constitution²; the new legal framework which embodied the transition from dictatorship to democracy and, therefore, contained a strong commitment with citizenry empowerment and rights protection including the conservation of nature and/or cultural (material and immaterial) heritage. In this context, by 1993 came about the implementation of a Strategic Plan resembling the market-oriented approaches of the British urban

²- This Constitution is the one still in force nowadays albeit recently it has suffered some meaningful amendments carried out under the auspices of a political, judicial and corporative managerial mind set enforced by a government whose legitimacy is highly questioned due to a raise to power following a controversial impeachment process against a democratically elected and re-elected government (2014 polls).

regeneration policies implemented during the 80's, which, according to Patsy Healey (1992), gained notoriety by their inbuilt mechanisms of social urban segregation.

In Brazil, not even the major shifts in orientation of social policies produced by four successive administrations led by Labour Party governments were able to avoid a supposed crisis of political representation that erupted during the 2013 mass demonstrations held in Brazilian streets³. Therefore, the current depiction of the Brazilian heritage institutions resemble the old days of scattering and isolation prior to the injection of effective reforms attributing higher value to the social dimension within the evolution of the conservation saga at the national level.

The key to overcome this picture of inertia lies, among other alternatives, on restructuring social movements' activism. Such transformation should depart from their insertion or embedding into information networks, as suggested by Castells (2014). This insertion could convert itself into an alternative to the centralized and personalistic actions of party-politics amongst the popular collectives and non-governmental organizations and other institutions milieu which have been traditionally involved with social issues struggles.

An attempt to mirror the past actions carried out during the 80's, that is, the return to and solidification of organized mobilization of residents associations – with a crucial additional trend towards a more critical consciousness and a more embedded and contextualized action- could mean an invaluable contribution to the present state of Conservation affairs in the public sphere as well as to the future of Conservation issues. Consequently, grassroots empowerment of conservation areas, in turn, renders them more democratic. This is of paramount importance especially nowadays, when the current administration of the Rio de Janeiro City Hall is considering to flexibilize and loosen up the urbanistic parameters of these localities bearing in mind the not always declared intention to heat up real estate markets (ADEMI, 2017).

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Figure 1 – The community march of Convent Garden's Residents Association, 1972. Anson, 1981, p. 112.

Figure 2 – The first meeting of the Saúde Resident Association, 1983. From the original document.

Figure 3 – AMAPE campaign against the incompatible local height limits for new building in 1988. From the original document.

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³ - It is important to point out that these mass demonstrations also took place in many countries such as Iceland, Spain, Turkey, Egypt, China (Hong Kong), and so on.

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ICOA1812: L'APPORT DE LA MOBILISATION DES ASSOCIATIONS DE RÉSIDENTS DANS LA PRÉSERVATION DES AIRES URBAINES: LE CAS DES AIRES D'ENVIRONNEMENT CULTUREL PROTÉGÉES (APACS) DE LA VILLE DE RIO DE JANEIRO DANS LES ANNÉES 80

Sous-thème 01: Intégrer le patrimoine et le développement urbain durable en engageant Diverses communautés pour la gestion du patrimoine

Session 1: Développement durable et engagement communautaire

Lieu: Hall Gulmohur, India Habitat Centre

Date et heure: 13 Décembre, 2017, 12:15 – 12:30

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Résumé: Ce travail a pour objectif d'analyser l'origine et les effets de la mobilisation d'associations de résidents pour la préservation des aires urbaines et leur rôle pour favoriser l'intégration du patrimoine culturel et du développement urbain durable.

Cette contribution se divise en quatre parties. Elle décrit d'abord brièvement l'évolution de la préservation des aires urbaines avec une attention particulière portée à la consolidation de l'interaction entre les aspects physiques, économiques et sociaux, selon les orientations proposées par Lichfield (1988), Tiesdell, Oc et Heath (1996). A l'étape suivante, elle analyse l'émergence des mobilisations orchestrées par les associations de défense du patrimoine face à l'antagonisme qui prévalait dans la période de l'après-guerre entre développement et protection. Cette analyse se fonde notamment sur les théories de Jane Jacobs et la mobilisation publique pour la conservation de Covent Garden, à Londres, dans les années 70.

La troisième partie se focalise sur le cas de la ville de Rio de Janeiro au Brésil tout au long des années 80, du fait des premières initiatives de préservation portées par plusieurs associations de résidents qui se fondaient sur des situations analogues antérieures. Ces expériences ont donné naissance aux Aires de Protection du Patrimoine Culturel (Áreas de Proteção do Ambiente Cultural), la version brésilienne des aires de préservation, intégrant les notions de protection, de conservation et une réglementation architecturale et urbaine qui ont été retranscrites dans le premier plan directeur de la ville et sont devenues une référence nationale. L'analyse se fondera surtout sur le cas de l'association de résidents du Bairro Peixoto au travers d'une monographie de sociologie urbaine, non publiée, écrite à la fin des années 80, qui constitue peut-être la référence fondamentale sur cette question

Enfin, nous étudierons les conséquences des contributions des associations de résidents dans le contexte actuel de la gestion urbaine de Rio de Janeiro, afin surtout de voir comment ces aires protégées

laborieusement acquises sont prises en compte, notamment sur le plan social, dans les stratégies de développement.

Mots-clé: aires protégées; associations de résidents; stratégies de développement; Rio de Janeiro