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Exploring Research Methodologies in the Literature

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Bridging Heritage Conservation and Urban Development Planning Policies: Exploring Research Methodologies in the Literature

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Abstract

Cities are the main drivers in the race to sustainable development, and the needed transformations would affect their built environment. Transformations through development plans or projects are often regulated by local planning policies, which are assumed to simultaneously enable transformation and the conservation of irreplaceable resources such as heritage. Earlier research, however, denounces a different reality, where local planning policies omit heritage or a share of these resources e.g., intangible, or even when local planning policies acknowledge heritage as a whole, but their guidelines of transformation are unrelated to heritage and/or their attributes. This paper is part of doctoral research that aims to discuss the dynamic between heritage conservation and urban development in planning policies and tools. It introduces the results of a systematic literature review crossing both fields. Focused on the methodology adopted recent researches, it discusses the outcomes of an in-depth analysis of 37 publications, with a detailed methodology description. The analysis explored the type of data sources, actors addressed and heritage categories, values and attributes. Results confirmed the recent trend in which the relation between heritage and planning is shifting, from being considered a threat to a crucial resource to development. Although still far from the leading role as promoted by international documents as the UNESCO 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. The results of this research are relevant for science, but also for society, by highlighting how these approaches can raise the efficiency of planning policies, the results assist cities developing more sustainably.

Keywords

Heritage, conservation, planning policies, development, systematic literature review

1 INTRODUCTION

Recurrent economic crises and the growing awareness for resources scarcity are pressuring societies to rethink their models of development. The challenge strives as the demands for transformations and needed resources clash with ambitions to conserve resources for future generations. From tangible to intangible, cultural to natural, object to landscape, heritage resources have been broadened in categories, and consequently also the group of stakeholders involved in its identification and consequent management.

Urban transformations are generally lead by development plans or projects, often regulated by spatial planning policies, assumed to simultaneously enable urban development and the protection

of public interest (Nadin and Stead, 2013). Spatial planning policies have a significant impact not only on the built environment but also on how people sense the place (Nadin et al., 2018) and thus on the value ascribed. Indeed, even if not directly addressing heritage, regulatory tools such as policies, legislation, land-use plans, or building codes, may contribute both to conserve or destroy cultural significance (O'Donnell, 2014).

Tensions between heritage conservation and urban development is a "hot" topic in policy analysis, being cultural heritage often perceived as the weakest link, mainly when development is exclusively focused on short-term economic growth. While the planning focused on heritage conservation is already being researched (e.g., protected areas, conservation areas plans, management plans), far less is known on if and how these resources are being addressed in general planning policies and tools (e.g., master plans, strategic plans, development tools such as Transfer of Development Rights). This lack in research is the scope of a doctoral project in development in the University of Technology of Delft (The Netherlands) and the Research Center of Architectural and Urbanism of Faculty of Architecture of Porto University (Portugal). The aim is to understand how this phenomenon influences the perspective over heritage and its management, and finally to confirm the role played by this valuable resources, tangible and intangible, on the construction of contemporary societies and urban development models.

A conceptual framework identified three approaches on the degree of integration between heritage and planning (Fig. 1): "sector" as isolated and a threat, "factor" as included and a resource, and "vector" as leading and vital for sustainable development (Janssen et al., 2017). Although these approaches are considered to have evolved, they can be coexistent in the same city, depending on the heritage resources, actors, and/or transformations.

FIG. 1 Dutch Heritage-Planning nexus Source: Authors, adapted from Janssen et al. 2017.

This paper presents the results of a systematic review on published research addressing the dynamics between heritage conservation and urban development policies and tools. Particularly, this analysis focuses on revealing and discussing the methodologic proceedings, namely which data sources, actors, and heritage categories, values and attributes that had been considered by published research. The application of a systematic method to search and analyse literature distinguishes this research from more traditional methodologies based on conventional narrative literature reviews. This paper aims to unveil how research has been evolving in the last two decades, namely, if this heritage-planning nexus remains a concern exclusively for conservation planning. Besides, it also

aims to understand, if the perspective over heritage in planning context has been evolving towards from sector, to factor and vector approaches, on the track for more sustainable development models. A growing of inclusiveness and integration between urban development and heritage conservation policies, that have been promoted and supported by international documents such as the UNESCO 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda (UN, 2015, 2016; UNESCO, 2011).

2 A SYSTEMATIC METHOD TO PUBLISHED LITERATURE

This literature review applied the Boland (2017) systematic method for qualitative research, aiming to provide a less-bias and analytical overview of how approaches to heritage in urban development planning have been addressed in published literature. Based on a search made in March 2019 in the acknowledged scientific online database *Scopus®*, this research used the following search syntax - *heritage AND planning AND polic* AND urban OR ("urban development" OR conservation OR governance OR regulations OR legislation)* - applied to *Titles, Abstracts* and *Keywords*. The definition of these keywords derived from previous scoping searches and the identification of key papers (Parkinson, Scott, & Redmond, 2016; Pellegrini & Micelli, 2019; Puren & Jordaan, 2014a) illustrating the studies variety that best suit described research goals.

The original 802 identified records were screened and cumulatively excluded – first by keywords, abstracts, and finally, the full-texts. Following a set of defined criteria, selected papers reflect research assessments taken at urban contexts, addressing regulation documents (e.g., plans, regulations, legislation, etc.) and over the actual urban management dynamics, instead of the studies proposing models to assess heritage issues on planning policies. This research took as base 88 publications, from the last two decades (2000-2019), being mostly articles (83), and few chapters (2) and conference papers (3). More than half of the publication's reports on case studies were identified in the UNESCO region Europe and North America. China, however, stands out as the country with more case studies, and in particular, the city of Hong Kong was the most researched.

From the 88 publications selected for the general literature review, less than half (37) explicitly detail their methodological proceedings, used as the absolute quality criterion to select the final poll to be systematically analyzed in this paper. The main aim was to reveal and discuss data collection methods, data sources and analysis issues. Data was extracted through a pre-coding process based on tested taxonomies (Tarrafa Silva & Pereira Roders, 2011; Veldpaus, 2015), following the evaluative criteria and parameters detailed in Table 1. The quantitative analysis enabled to make results comparable between the two types of planning perspective: (a) *conservation planning* and (b) *general planning*. These two perspectives were defined following the dominance of the kind of planning documents: conservation planning when heritage protection tools are prevalent, e.g. conservation/ safeguard plans, management plans. General planning was considered when general regulations and plans prevail (e.g., masterplans, built controls). Results revealed a slight dominance for research focusing on conservation planning (59%) over general planning (41%). Seldom were found relating these two categories of planning sectors.

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA	CATEGORIES	PARAMETERS
Data Sources	Type	Media; On-site observation; Interviews; Official information; Decisions; Plans; Regulations, laws and acts.
Actors	Type	(Pb) National officers; Local officers; (Pv) Professional/Experts; Developers; Daily users.
Heritage categories	Protection categories	Listed; Non-listed/Designated.
	Attributes (urban scale)	(T) Asset - Building elements; Building; Urban element; Natural element; (T) Area – Ensemble; Context; Area; (T) All – Landscape; Layering; (I) Relation – Character; Relation; Concept; (I) Social – Use; Knowledge; Association; Community; (I) Process – Planned; Not planned.
	Values	Social; Economic; Political; Historic; Aesthetic; Age; Scientific; Ecological.

TABLE 1 Exploratory framework for data analysis. Sources: Bryman, 2008; Pereira Roders, 2019a; Veldpaus, 2015; Gutscoven, 2016; Pereira Roders, 2007; Tarrafa Silva and Pereira Roders, 2011.

Note: (Pb) Public; (Pv) Private; (T) tangible; (I) intangible.

3 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Qualitative methods, such as document analysis (100%), interviews (65%) and observation (30%), fully dominate the research assessments analyzed throughout the 37 publications selected as describing the methodology followed.

The analysis also revealed that the dynamics between heritage and urban development planning had been addressed across three main themes: conservation plans analysis (Cho & Shin, 2014; Katapidi, 2014; Lee, 2016; Nordh & Evensen, 2018; A Parkinson, Scott, & Redmond, 2016a, 2016b; Arthur Parkinson, Scott, & Redmond, 2015; Puren & Jordaan, 2014b; Slae, Kark, & Shoval, 2012), followed by researches focused on the consequences of urban renewal projects (Mowery & Novak, 2016; Pendlebury, 2002; Swensen & Berg, 2018; Wang, 2011; Yung, Zhang, & Chan, 2017; Zhai & Ng, 2013; Tao Zhou, Zhou, & Liu, 2017), or urban management policies and programs (Al-hagla, 2010; Bagader, 2018; Higgins, 2010; Shin, 2010; Shipley, Reeve, Walker, Grover, & Goodey, 2004).

3.1 DATA SOURCES AND ACTORS ADDRESSED

Breaking the collection methods into data sources, particularly into the different types of documents (Fig. 2), results indicated that most research focused on society, applying structured (e.g., surveys, online inquiries) or semi-structured interviews (individual or focus groups). Those were found complementing document analysis methods and combined with *in situ* observations. The comparison

between planning perspectives demonstrates that the use of interviews and observation methods is more commonly used in conservation planning perspectives. In contrast, comparatively, general planning researches prefer official information (e.g. official websites, newsletters, etc.).

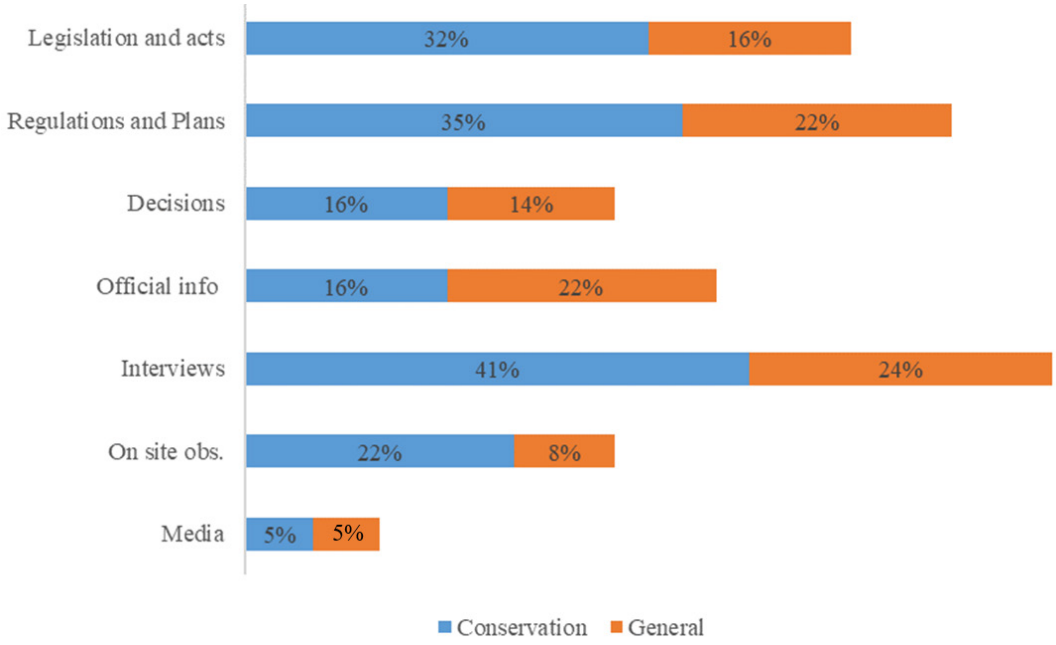

FIG. 2 Data sources. Source: authors

Results through the lens of proposed planning revealed that actor's perspective (Fig. 3) has more weight for conservation planning. This occurs in all categories of actors, particularly official entities, either national and local governments, as also considering the voices of daily users, residents, or workers, as well as of private developers. On the other side, it revealed a higher preference of general planning approaches to expert's views, as well as for the official information retrieved from institutions' communication channels, such as the institution's websites.

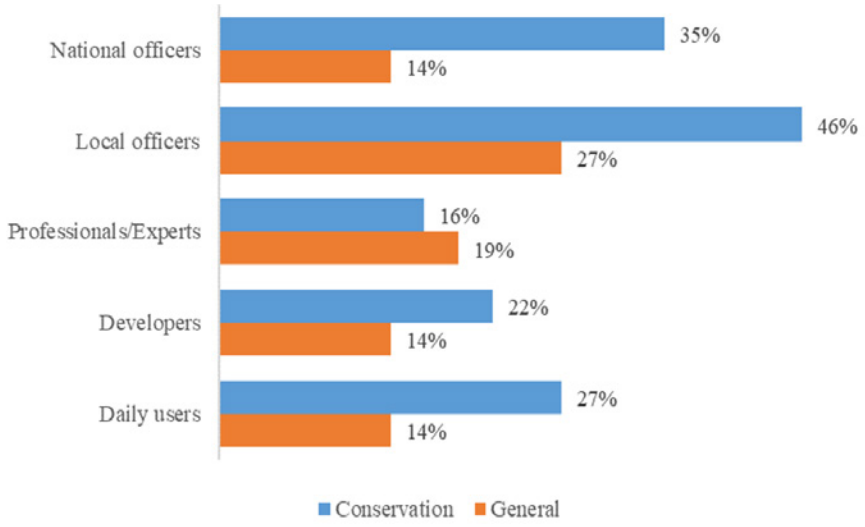

FIG. 3 Type of actors. Source: authors

Moreover, if the combination of private and public perspectives, or exclusively the latest view, are more common, mainly for conservation planning (40%), approaches addressing only private actors, even a few (11%), are more related to general planning. The clear relevance attributed to actors and the recipients of the process reveals the growing of signals related to the new institutionalism theory in research assessments (Lowndes & Roberts, 2013). According to it, planning policy analysis processes cannot anymore rely on formal practices exclusively but include the informal ones, such as the beliefs, feelings and perspectives of key actors. The integration of the actor's perspective, directly or indirectly involved in urban planning processes has been established as a common practice.

Relevant is also the assessment of official decisions combined with the analysis of urban management tools (e.g. regulations and plans) or the legal frameworks. Those generally express how local decision-makers, namely local public officers, interpret the legal requirements and, for instance, to unveil the conditions that lead to pro-conservationist or pro-development decisions (Mualam & Alterman, 2018).

3.2 HERITAGE CATEGORIES, ATTRIBUTES AND VALUES

The last analysis criterion concerned the types of heritage addressed, based on the designation or statutorily listed categories; and the values and the attributes, or qualifiers, carrying those identified values.

As illustrated in Fig. 4, the analysis demonstrates a dominance of heritage statutorily listed (solo or combined with designated heritage assets) as the dominant heritage category addressed by heritage and development planning assessments. Meanwhile, it also indicated a lack of publications addressing designated heritage solely, i.e., assets with heritage value recognized, in urban plans or inventories, but not statutorily listed, and then protected. The analysis by planning perspective seemed to indicate that conservation planning researches are more traditional and administrative, preferring the assessment over listed heritage. While general planning researches showed to be more opened also to designated heritage, which the lower legal protection often makes it more vulnerable to development pressures.

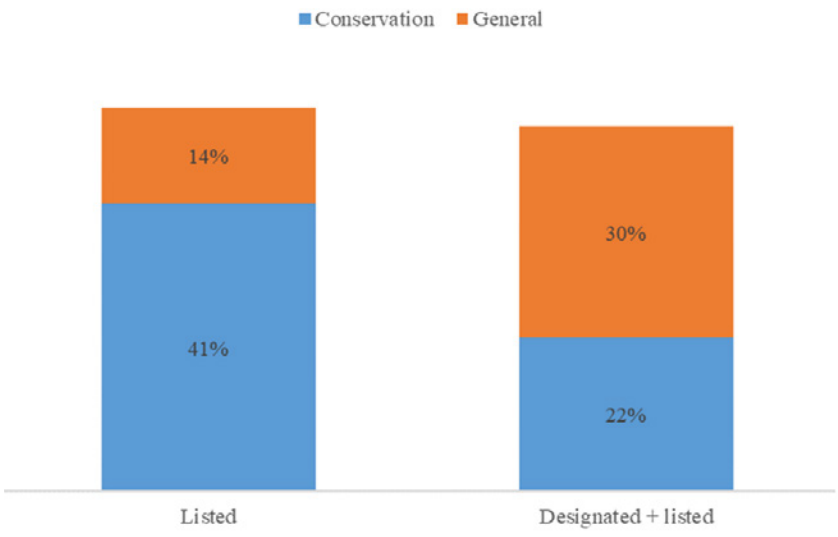

FIG. 4 Heritage categories. Source: authors

The cultural significance assessment is performed through the identification of values (*why*) and attributes (*what*) that entitles a particular heritage asset. While attributes are more frequently referenced than values (Fig. 5), there was noted a tendency tangible macro-categories, e.g., built environment instead of urban environment, which could be both tangible and intangible. The use of other ambiguous terms, such as "heritage" or "valuable assets" was also common. Values were rarer to found referenced, as they depend on the justification of why selected resources are listed or designated as heritage.

Nevertheless, values were found researched in sixteen papers, within which only four of the seven of cultural values categories were found: *Age, Historic, Economic* and *Social*[1] (Pereira Roders, 2007). Values related to the property use – *Economic* – were the most referenced (Djukić, Stupar, & Antonić, 2018), followed by *Social* values, meaning the relation with the community (Tunefalk & Legnér, 2019), mainly for conservation planning. Nevertheless, values related to justified by property age and antiquity (*Age value*) and the connection with historic events (*Historic*), were exclusively found for general planning researches (Nordh & Evensen, 2018; T Zhou, Zhou, & Liu, 2017). While conservation planning addresses a wider variety of values, including *Ecological*, general planning also focused on traditional values, e.g. age and historic values.

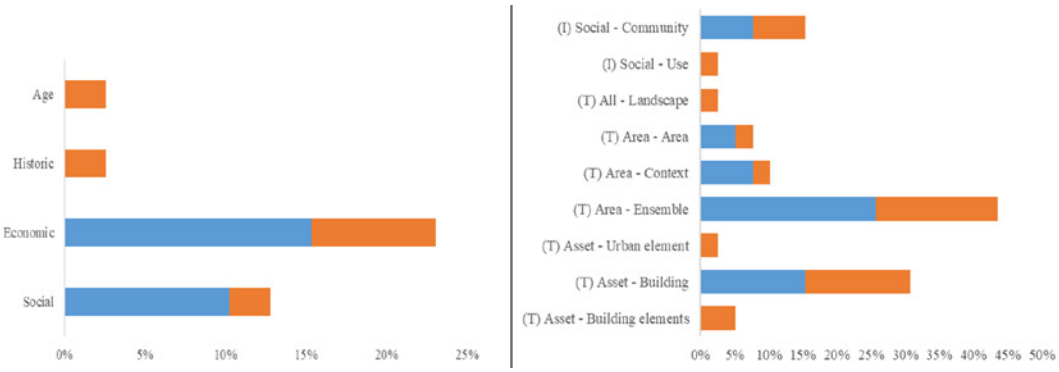

FIG. 5 Heritage Values and Attributes. Source: authors

Concerning the attributes of cultural significance[2], the analysis identified nine out of the eighteen categories defined by Veldpaus (2015): seven tangible and two intangible. Tangible attributes are prevalent, being the references to single *Buildings* and *Ensembles* the most mentioned categories for both conservation and general planning. In comparison, research addressing general planning demonstrates a wider variety of categories, such as *Building elements* in the case of the renewal projects impact over building's courtyards (Shin, 2010), or over *Landscape* (Shipley et al., 2004), *Urban Element*, e.g. sculptures (Liu, Uyttenhove, & Zheng, 2018), and *Use* functions (intangible).

Overall, the selected papers demonstrated a wider variety of attributes and values for general planning, than for conservation planning. However, results also revealed that the focus was common and primarily to traditional tangible attributes related to conventional architectural heritage, such as isolated buildings, architectural ensembles, and historic centers. Research on the intangible attributes of architectural heritage remains limited, as well as on intangible heritage. But, the preponderance of researches concerning Economic and Social values, over the ones traditionally

1 Missing values categories: Political, Aesthetic, Scientific, Ecological.

2 Missing attributes categories: (T) Asset - Natural element; (T) All – Layering; (I) Social – Knowledge; Association; (I) Process – Planned; Not planned.

considered, e.g. historic, age and aesthetical (De la Torre & Mason, 2002), might indicate a paradigm shift into a greater integration between heritage conservation and urban planning. Heritage is no longer considered solely due to its aesthetical, historic or antiquity qualities, that should be protected against any change, but as a valuable resource to development.

4 FINAL REMARKS AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

The efficient management of urban resources is of outstanding relevance at this moment, where awareness over resources scarcity is growing. Despite the long-established debate over the dynamics between heritage conservation and urban planning, limited research still exists comparing research methods applied. This paper gave the first step to fill this gap, confirming the prevalence of a lack of systematic analysis applied to qualitative research, as well as the lack of researches in this field that valorizes detailed methodologies.

Results confirm a, still slow, growing concern into integrating heritage and planning. The latest research appears to be more inclusive, entailing a higher percentage of other heritage categories besides the statutorily listed heritage, as well as a broader range of attributes, primarily intangible categories. The valorization of non-traditional cultural heritage values, such as Economic and Social, confirms that the relationship between heritage and planning is moving from a conflict to functional integration. In other words, planning is no longer seeing heritage as a threat – sector - (and vice-versa) but as a resource to development (factor).

Howbeit, we can also confirm that in the research community, the integration of heritage in planning policies is still weak, being clear the dominance of research assessments focused in conservation planning and few concerns on the perspective of general planning. Facing this, and despite the last decades' evolution in their disciplinary field, these results reveal the persistence of a traditional view led by conservation planning assessments, primarily focused on tangible urban heritage attributes (buildings and ensembles). The road to the final stage of the conceptual heritage-planning nexus proposed by Janssen et al. (2017), where heritage, with all its categories and attributes, leads the development process (vector) remains too long. Move the research focus from conservation to general planning policies and practices, as proposed by this doctoral project shall reveal the pitfalls, but as the features and links that should support this paradigm shift in which heritage became a crucial driver towards more efficient and sustainable cities (SGD Goal 11).

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