


EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS OF THE MASTER PLAN OF PORTO NACIONAL – TO: A FOCUS ON THE HISTORIC CENTER

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ABSTRACT

This article aimed to analyze the effectiveness of governance mechanisms and citizen participation in the ongoing revision of the Urban Development Master Plan of Porto Nacional, Tocantins, with a focus on the importance of conservation of the Historic Center. The relevance of the proposed work lies in the search to understand how governance structures and community participation affect both sustainable urban development and the conservation of cultural heritage. Employing a methodology that integrates document analysis and literature review, the study sought to understand the way in which governance and community participation are being incorporated into the process of revision of the Municipal Master Plan, especially in light of the detection of abandonment and deterioration of properties located in the Historic Center of the city. In conclusion, it is verified that the findings related to the phenomenon studied indicate the need to improve actions aimed at the use of community participation and governance instruments so that society is assured the full exercise of the right to the city and the safeguarding of cultural heritage is guaranteed.

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INTRODUCTION

Porto Nacional, located in the state of Tocantins, has a settlement process that dates back to the eighteenth century, and its Historic Center was recognized as a Brazilian cultural heritage by the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute - IPHAN (2023). However, there is an alarming scenario of population emptying and advanced degradation of the properties that make up this urban complex. This situation not only threatens the integrity of the city's cultural heritage, but also raises critical questions about the effectiveness of governance mechanisms and citizen participation in urban management.

These issues are part of the contemporary debates on the revision of the Urban Development Master Plan (UDDP), in progress since 2019, initiated as a compensatory measure linked to the environmental licensing of the Xingu-Rio transmission system. Such revision is pending consideration by the City Council, especially in relation to the conservation of the Historic Center, an area whose protection is of indisputable importance and urgency.

In view of this scenario, the present study has as its central problem to investigate to what extent governance and popular participation are effectively contemplated in the revision of the Master Plan, particularly considering the phenomenon of emptying and degradation of properties in the Historic Center. The focus of this analysis lies in the guarantee of the right to the city and the preservation of cultural heritage.

This paper aims to examine the effectiveness of governance mechanisms and popular participation in the process of revision of the UDDP of Porto Nacional, with special attention to the Historic Center. The proposal aims to foster sustainable urban development and the preservation of cultural heritage, aligning with the need for local community engagement in a more inclusive and effective urban planning process.

Methodologically, the research adopts a qualitative approach, based on documentary analysis referring to the studies for the proposal to revise the Master Plan of Porto Nacional and bibliographic review. According to Almeida (2019), the documentary study explores organizational and governmental documents, such as public data reports, while the bibliographic review allows analyzing the role of various actors in the discussion about the master plan of Porto Nacional. This study seeks to understand the Master Plan review process, investigating the level of popular engagement and the effectiveness of governance in the implementation of the guidelines, as well as the strategies adopted to promote urban sustainability and heritage preservation.

After a careful and multidimensional analysis of the elements of governance and popular participation, the study concludes that the level of community participation has been insufficient to guarantee effective proposals and resources for the recovery of properties and the preservation of the Historic Center. In addition, the study points out deficiencies in the current governance structure, proposing reflections to improve the effectiveness of urban management and heritage conservation. These reflections are presented as a starting point for future academic research and for the formulation of more sustainable and inclusive public policies, capable of promoting sustainable urban development and cultural preservation.

GOVERNANCE AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Urban governance, as analyzed by Fernandes, Lacerda and Pontual (2015), involves the articulation and cooperation between various actors, including the State, civil society and the private sector, in the formulation and execution of public policies. In this context, popular participation emerges as an essential component for the effectiveness of governance, especially in the processes of reviewing master plans. In Brazil, this perspective is reinforced by authors such as Souza (2006) and Rolnik (2011), who highlight the relevance of democratic management and citizen participation in urban planning, in line with the precepts of the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 and the Statute of the City (Brasil, 2001).

The Federal Constitution of 1988 and the Statute of the City institutionalize popular participation as an instrument of democratic management, understanding it not only as a right, but as a means of building a more inclusive and fair city. This concept of "Right to the City" formulated by Lefebvre (2001) is based on the possibility that the population actively participates in the life and transformation of urban space.

In the context of urban planning, the practice of advocacy, as discussed by Davidoff (1965) and mentioned by D'Ottaviano and Medeiros (2021), takes on particular importance. The practice of advocacy in the context of planning seeks to ensure that community voices are heard and effectively considered in decisions that shape urban development. According to Davidoff, advocacy must transcend formal public consultation, promoting the active and informed participation of civil society.

The concept of sustainable urban development, outlined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987), is based on a tripod that balances economic, social and environmental dimensions. However, this approach, while comprehensive, often relegates cultural heritage to a secondary position. Bandarin and Van Oers (2012) argue that cultural heritage and historic areas play a central role, both as a factor of identity and social stability, being an intrinsic dimension that contributes to community cohesion.

In this way, cultural heritage can be understood as a vector of sustainable development, strengthening local identity and promoting social inclusion. Ignoring this dimension can lead to development policies that, while effective in economic or environmental terms, threaten the social and cultural fabric, resulting in unsustainable development in the long term.

In addition, social participation must be analyzed from the perspective of citizenship, a fundamental element for planning to achieve its mission of social transformation. Participatory planning allows the population involved to contribute with useful information and experiences to the process, while strengthening citizenship, understood here as the set of rights and duties of individuals in a democratic society. In this sense, Paulo Freire (2005), in "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", defends participatory planning as a strategy of awareness and social organization, arguing that the active participation of the community in planning is essential for an effective social transformation. For Freire, planning should be dialogical and participatory, enabling the community to take an active position in defining priorities and solutions to local problems.

The "Right to the City", as articulated by Harvey (2008), offers a relevant theoretical framework to understand this integration. The concept transcends the right to a physical space, encompassing the right to a culturally rich and historically significant environment. Thus, the preservation of the cultural heritage of Porto Nacional represents not only a conservation action, but also an affirmation of human rights, ensuring the community the right to maintain its identity and social cohesion.

In this way, sustainable urban development, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the "right to the city" are interlinked concepts, which, when considered together, provide a more holistic and sustainable approach to urban planning.

Within the scope of municipal management, the Municipal System of Planning and Democratic Management should be implemented, being operationalized, above all, by the

Municipal Council for Urban Development. This body, composed of at least eight members, will be responsible for several functions, such as:

- Monitor the Master Plan review process;
- Evaluate the final draft of the revised Master Plan, before its submission to the City Council;
- To debate and prepare proposals for laws of urban interest and related regulations;
- Manage the Municipal Fund for Urban Development (FUNDURB);
- Approve its internal regulations (ARCADIS, 2019a, p. 63).

In addition, the creation of the Municipal Fund for Urban Development provides for priority application in housing projects of social interest, urban equipment, leisure spaces and green areas; urban infrastructure works; recovery of springs and permanent preservation areas; in addition to the protection and enhancement of assets and areas of historical-cultural value, with 30% of the resources allocated to the Historic Center (ARCADIS, 2019a, p. 64).

URBAN DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN OF PORTO NACIONAL

The Urban Development Master Plan of Porto Nacional is a strategic instrument of urban policy, fundamental to order the growth of the city and ensure the preservation of areas of relevant historical and cultural value. Structured to respond to the challenges of the municipality, the plan covers both urbanization and infrastructure aspects and the conservation of local heritage, especially in the Historic Center. This document guides the guidelines for sustainable development, aiming to balance the contemporary demands of urban expansion with the appreciation and safeguarding of cultural heritage, in order to provide a better quality of life to the inhabitants of Porto Nacional and stimulate tourism and socioeconomic development.

CONTEXTUALIZATION

Porto Nacional, located in the State of Tocantins, has a population of 64,418 inhabitants, according to the most recent Census (IBGE, 2022), representing a population growth of 31.07% compared to the 2010 Census. This increase reflects the city's urbanization process, which faces important challenges, such as excessive urban sprawl, land irregularity and the lack of an adequate public transport system, especially in

peripheral areas, many of which have low occupancy and lack of basic infrastructure (PORTO NACIONAL, 2005). However, the municipality has significant potential, such as its strategic location near Palmas and a listed historic center, which, added to the natural attractions of the surroundings, suggest a promising tourist potential. These elements, if properly explored, can contribute to a more balanced and sustainable development of the municipality (PORTO NACIONAL, 2019).

The process of occupation of Porto Nacional began with the gold cycle, with the foundation of the Arraial Bom Jesus do Pontal in 1738. The urban center was consolidated by the commercial and port importance of the city, located on the banks of the Tocantins River, which made it possible to connect with other regions, such as Pará and Maranhão, in addition to being influenced by neighboring mining areas, which boosted population density (IPHAN, 2008).

During the elaboration of the Master Plan for Sustainable Development in 2006, a scenario of gradual decharacterization of the historic area was projected, due to the low valuation of cultural heritage. This context of economic stagnation could lead to the degradation of the built heritage, making it imperative to "rescue local traditions and value cultural heritage" (Prefeitura Municipal de Porto Nacional, 2005, p. 24).

In order to mitigate these challenges, policies aimed at valuing cultural heritage were proposed, through strategies of territorial planning, historical-cultural preservation and incentive to sustainable tourism. It is noteworthy that the aforementioned urban center was recognized as Brazilian cultural heritage by IPHAN in 2008, which has become a relevant actor in local governance.

In the revision of the guidelines for sustainable urban and territorial development, carried out in 2019, the municipality was divided into two macrozones: Urban Macrozone and Rural Macrozone. The Urban Macrozone encompasses the municipal headquarters, industrial, urban and moderate occupation centers (ARCADIS, 2019a). The Historic Center is located in the seat of the municipality, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Rua Misael Pereira - Historic center of Porto Nacional



Source: IPHAN (2020)

The city has a significant Historic Center, testimony to its rich history, which reinforces the importance of heritage preservation. Complementary Law No. 05/2006 (Prefeitura Municipal de Porto Nacional, 2006), which provides for the Master Plan for Sustainable Development, highlights in its article 3, III, the valorization of the historical-cultural heritage, integrating this dimension into the urban development strategy of the municipality. This approach is relevant in the Brazilian context, where urban legislation often prioritizes economic development to the detriment of other dimensions.

In response to the heritage relevance of Porto Nacional, identified in the diagnosis, the Master Plan proposes sectoral policies in several areas, focused on the requalification of the Historic Center (ARCADIS, 2019a; 2019b). In the environmental area, education and ecological and cultural awareness stand out. In the tourism sector, the focus is to promote tourism compatible with cultural and natural heritage, with special attention to the Historic Center. In addition, culture and the protection of historical-cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, are recognized as vectors to boost the economy and promote sustainable development.

STAGES AND ACTORS INVOLVED IN THE REVISION OF THE MASTER PLAN

The revision process of the Porto Nacional Master Plan represents a collaborative and complex effort that involves multiple actors and stages. Initially approved in 2006, the plan underwent a review in 2019, after the ten-year legal term stipulated by Complementary Law No. 05/2006, which determined the need for a ten-year review (Prefeitura Municipal de Porto Nacional, 2006). This review emerged as an opportunity to adopt an integrated

approach that prioritized economically viable, environmentally sustainable, and socially just development.

This review process was driven by the need for environmental and territorial adaptation due to the Xingu-Rio Transmission System, known as "Linhão". The consulting company ARCADIS was hired to provide technical support in the review, as one of the conditions of the Installation License issued by IBAMA (ARCADIS, 2019a).

The Municipal Executive Branch, through the Department of Environment and Development, played the main role in conducting the review. However, the process also had the participation of other sectors, including the Legislative Branch, non-governmental organizations, the business sector and academia. To coordinate the revision of the Master Plan, a Management Committee was established composed of representatives of all municipal departments, organized society, educational institutions, public agencies, and the community in general (Prefeitura Municipal de Porto Nacional, 2019a).

Before the first public hearing, meetings were held by neighborhoods, in order to collect opinions and suggestions from the community. These meetings prepared the community for the subsequent public hearings, promoting a preliminary stage of citizen participation (ARCADIS, 2019a).

The review was meticulously organized and executed in several stages. In February 2019, a meeting with the Steering Committee defined the schedule of activities. In March, the first public hearing took place, where the initial diagnosis was presented. In September, at the second public hearing, proposals and improvements for urban and rural areas were discussed, with a special focus on the Historic Center. The activities culminated in November, with the third public hearing, where the final guidelines were debated together with workshops, including a specific workshop for the Historic Center.

The process of revising the Master Plan of Porto Nacional, therefore, reveals itself as a multifaceted initiative that requires the collaboration of various sectors of society. Understanding the processes that enable popular participation in the municipality is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of the community involvement strategies employed.

Popular participation in the review process

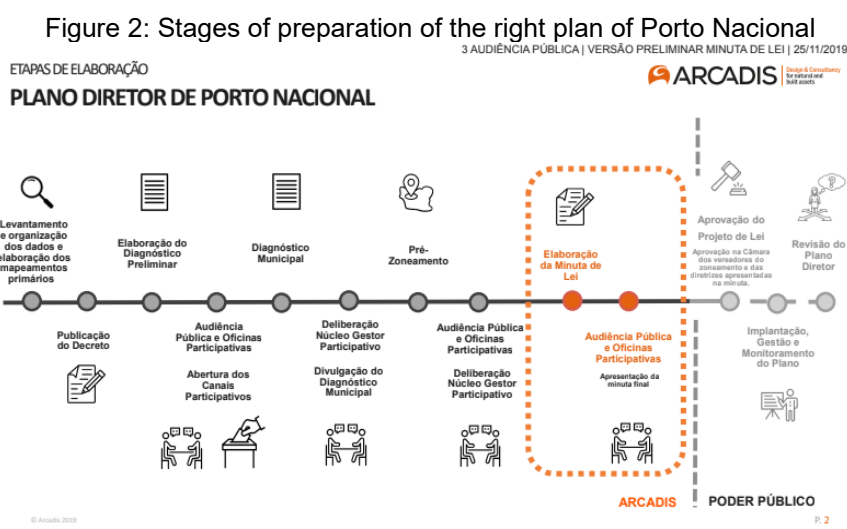
Popular participation is a fundamental element in the formulation and review of master plans, as it promotes community engagement in defining the direction of urban development. In the case of Porto Nacional, it is relevant to analyze the history of this

participation to understand its implications in the current review. Moraes (2014) studied the elaboration of the 2006 Sustainable Development Master Plan and stressed that, although there were participation mechanisms such as conferences and public debates, this participation was predominantly consultative, with little influence on final decisions.

More recent data, provided by the Arcadis Public Consultation Results Report (2019c), corroborate the low popular adherence in the consultation stages. In the first phase of consultation, physical and online forms were made available, totaling 65 responses. In the second phase, focused on macrozoning and zoning, online participation dropped to only 25 people (ARCADIS, 2019d). These numbers indicate an insufficient level of popular engagement, whose representativeness and effectiveness deserve critical analysis.

In the specific context of the Historic Centre of Porto Nacional, the effectiveness of popular participation is of even greater importance, given the cultural and historical relevance of this area. The representativeness of this participation can be gauged by the number of properties affected and the number of participants in public consultations and hearings. The low adherence suggests a gap between the formal mechanisms of participation and the effective inclusion of the community in decisions that directly impact the historical heritage.

The revision process of the Porto Nacional Master Plan was structured to enable citizen participation in multiple stages, as shown in Figure 2.



Source: Arcadis, 2019a.

Figure 2 shows that the review process had several opportunities for popular engagement, from the initial data collection to the final approval of the bill. Public hearings, participatory workshops and online channels were made available to encourage community participation. However, despite this well-articulated formal structure, levels of effective participation remained low, as indicated in Arcadis reports. This scenario reinforces the criticism that, although popular participation mechanisms are formally present, substantive community engagement has not yet been achieved, remaining a central challenge for urban governance in the context of the revision of master plans.

The case of Porto Nacional is in line with the study by Mergen (2018) on the revision of the Master Plan of São José dos Campos, in which the author observes that, even with important regulatory frameworks such as the Federal Constitution of 1988 and the Statute of the City, democratic management and popular participation are not effective in a practical way in territorial management. The lack of community engagement is interpreted not only as a technical failure, but as a denial of the exercise of citizenship (Mergen, 2018).

The low adherence observed in Porto Nacional, therefore, reveals a deficiency not only in urban planning, but also in the civic and democratic sphere. This framework points to the need for more effective mechanisms to foster community engagement, not only as a formal requirement, but as an effective and experienced practice of citizenship.

Governance in the implementation of the guidelines of the master plan

The implementation of the guidelines established in the Master Plan for Sustainable Development of Porto Nacional, initially published in 2006 through Complementary Law No. 05, represents a milestone for the sustainable development of the municipality. This plan was prepared based on a multidimensional diagnosis, addressing physical-territorial, environmental, economic, sociocultural, urban and institutional aspects. Since its publication, the local scenario has undergone substantial changes, which have required updates and adjustments in urban planning.

In this context, the concept of governance, as defined by Gonçalves (2010), is particularly relevant. Governance involves the ability of different social actors, both public and private, to coordinate actions and decisions aimed at common goals. This principle is closely linked to the Master Plan review process, which began in 2019, which adopted a participatory approach, including workshops, public hearings, and virtual consultations to obtain input from the community, in line with the principles of democratic governance.

The guidelines emerging from this review process cover several sectoral areas, such as tourism, basic sanitation, housing, urban mobility, health, public safety, education, sports and leisure, and culture. The main objective is to establish favorable conditions for sustainable development, taking into account both the specific strengths and weaknesses of the municipality.

The Historic Center of Porto Nacional, with its rich architectural and cultural heritage, occupies a prominent role in this context. In addition to being a local identity landmark, the historic center has great potential as a vector of tourism and cultural development. The Cathedral of Our Lady of Mercy (Figure 3) exemplifies the architecture influenced by the Dominicans and serves as a symbolic and cultural reference for the population. The way in which the community of Porto Nacional is involved in the revision of the Master Plan, especially with regard to the protection of the historic center, is an important indication of the local commitment to the preservation of the cultural legacy and the sustainable development of the city.

Figure 3 – Cathedral of Our Lady of Mercy - Historic Center of Porto Nacional



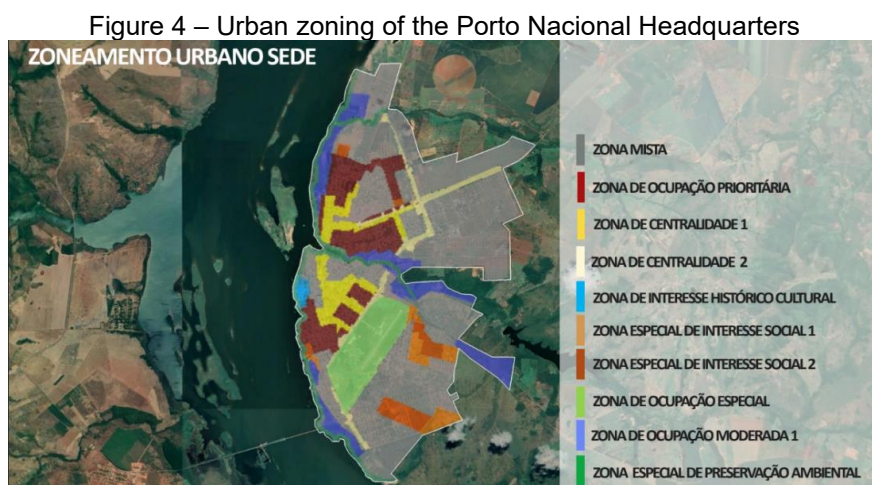
Source: Cejane Pacini (2022)

With regard to the municipal administrative structure, the Secretariat of Tourism and Culture of Porto Nacional plays a central role in the implementation of actions aimed at the valorization, promotion and dissemination of local culture, in collaboration with the Secretariat of Infrastructure and Urban Development and the Secretariat of Education. The integration of these secretariats and community engagement aim to strengthen heritage conservation and enhancement actions, facilitating the articulation between sustainable urban development and cultural preservation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

IMPLICATIONS OF THE REVISION OF THE MASTER PLAN

The revision of the Master Plan for Sustainable Development of Porto Nacional introduced significant changes in its territorial planning, with emphasis on the creation of Historic Protection Zones, especially in the Historic Center. One of the innovations was the institution of the Special Zone of Historical-Cultural Interest (ZIHC), with the objective of "ensuring the preservation, ambience, and landscape harmonization of properties of historical, artistic, architectural, archaeological, and landscape value" (ARCADIS, 2019a, p. 33). This change, as illustrated in Figure 4, resulted in a reduction in the area of historical-cultural protection, which in the new proposal now coincides with the surrounding area defined by IPHAN.



Source: Arcadis (2019a)

This change resulted in a reduction in the area designated for historical-cultural protection, becoming the same as the surrounding area defined by IPHAN (Figure 5).

Figure 5 – Map of polygonal re-ratification of listing and surroundings.



Source: IPHAN (2012).

The architectural characterization of the properties in the Historic Center, predominantly single-storey adobe buildings and buildings with shared walls, required greater control over land use (ARCADIS, 2019e). In the previous master plan, there was a provision for single-family residential, commercial use and service provision. "The only restriction on the installation of the uses included in the CS1 subcategory of use is the maximum limit of 40 beds in the area demarcated by Historic Zone 1" (ARCADIS, 2019e, p. 25).

In the new proposal, Housing I (HB 1), ⁶Commerce and Service 1⁷ (CS 1), Commerce and Service 2 (CS 2),⁸ Infrastructure⁹ and Institutional¹⁰ are now allowed. For the use of Commerce and Service 2, the Neighborhood Impact Study instrument was provided. In addition, the gauge is now 2 floors for Commerce and Services 1 and Commerce and Services 2.

The new parameters for subdivision and land use establish a minimum lot of 250 m², with a utilization coefficient between 0.3 and 1, an occupancy rate of 70% and a permeability rate of 20%. For lots of 250 m², the minimum construction area is now 75 m²

⁶ A housing unit on the lot.

⁷ Businesses and services that, due to their characteristics of size and activity performed, do not cause nuisance to the neighborhood.

⁸ Businesses and services that, due to their characteristics, imply a moderate nuisance to the neighborhood, the exercise of which can be controlled with special rules to be defined in Consultation Prior to the approval of the project.

⁹ These are "uses and activities necessary for the implementation and qualification of the basic infrastructure of the municipality, such as basic sanitation, urban mobility, solid waste management, gas and electricity distribution and related activities" (PRESENTATION PUBLIC HEARING, p. 14).

¹⁰ Community health, education, culture and leisure equipment.

and the maximum is 175 m² (ARCADIS, 2019a). In addition, the revision made the required setbacks more flexible and introduced specific rules for the dismemberment and remembrance of lots, such as the reduction to a minimum area of 180 m², according to Complementary Law No. 76 of 2019 (Prefeitura Municipal de Porto Nacional, 2019b).

The changes in the rules of land use and occupation seek to encourage the densification of the Historic Center, an area already endowed with basic infrastructure and with a cultural and tourist vocation. However, these changes do not consider the morphological specificities of the area, characterized by single-storey buildings aligned with the streets and with wooded backgrounds facing the Tocantins River. Therefore, additional regulations will be necessary to ensure the landscape harmony of the historic core.

Although the diagnosis pointed to the need for tax incentives, such as IPTU exemptions and facilitated licensing for works, these instruments were not included in the revised version of the Master Plan. This omission represents a significant gap, since the Historic Center faces challenges of emptying and degradation of properties. Diversifying the uses in the Historic Center is a crucial strategy for the vitality of public spaces, as proposed by Jacobs (2009), but it is necessary to balance these uses to avoid security problems, as warned by Barause and Saboya (2018).

Another critical aspect is the number of abandoned properties in the Historic Center, where 73% of the predominant use is residential, according to the diagnosis (ARCADIS, 2019e). The absence of use contributes to the deterioration of buildings and the loss of material heritage. Therefore, tax and financial incentives are pertinent to encourage the occupation of properties and stimulate pedestrian circulation, increasing the feeling of security in the place.

Finally, it should be noted that the revision of the Master Plan did not include an update of the Construction Code, which dates from 1977. This gap directly affects urban planning, considering that an updated code is essential to enable the new guidelines for occupation and conservation of heritage in the Historic Center. The revision of the Master Plan of Porto Nacional, completed in 2019, is still awaiting a vote by the City Council, and although new legislation related to zoning has been approved, such as the Special Zone of Social Interest and the regulation of the dismemberment of lots, the absence of a coordinated update between the code and the master plan reveals a disconnect between the planning and execution of long-term urban policies.

URBAN POLICY INSTRUMENTS

As established in article 2, VI, of Federal Law No. 10,257/2001, urban policy aims to order and control land use, preventing problems such as the inappropriate use of urban properties and the exposure of the population to disaster risks (Brasil, 2001). This objective is especially relevant in historic areas, where urban policy faces the challenge of balancing urban requalification with the prevention of gentrification, a phenomenon that can result in the expulsion of low-income residents, compromising the social and cultural diversity of the area.

In the context of the urban policy instruments defined by Federal Law No. 10,257/2001, the revision of the master plan of Porto Nacional proposes the application of the Transfer of the Right to Build. This mechanism offers "compensation" to the owners of properties located in the Special Zone of Historical-Cultural Interest (ZIHC), allowing them to transfer the right to build to another location or sell this right to third parties (ARCADIS, 2019a). The financial resources raised with this instrument should be allocated to improvements in the urban space, contributing to the preservation and revitalization of the Historic Center.

In addition, the revision of the master plan provides for the carrying out of Neighborhood Impact Studies (EIV) for the implementation of Commerce and Service 2 activities. This study, which can be prepared by both the public authorities and the private sector, aims to assess the impacts of new developments in the area and propose mitigating measures, in order to preserve the environmental and social balance in the Historic Center (ARCADIS, 2019a).

However, the diagnosis of the Master Plan (ARCADIS, 2019e) identified the need for tax and financial incentives, such as IPTU exemptions and facilities in the licensing of works, which were not included as urban instruments for the ZIHC. The absence of these incentives presents a significant challenge, given the context of emptying and degradation of properties in the Historic Center and the high costs of recovery, especially for the low-income population.

An important aspect highlighted in the diagnosis is that, even before the listing of the Historic Center in 2008, there was a displacement of commercial activities to areas of new centrality. In this sense, the stimulus to economic and cultural activities in the Historic Center is essential to sustain the occupation and preservation of the area. Currently, the IPTU exemption is granted only to retirees, widowers and seniors with a family income of up

to one minimum wage and who own a single residential property, as provided for in article 13 of Complementary Law No. 46 of 2015. There are no specific incentives for properties located in the historic area, limiting the potential for conservation by tax bias.

Between 2020 and 2023, the Porto Nacional City Council presented only one proposal related to cultural heritage: the renovation and revitalization of Fortunato Lopes Tavares Square, according to consultation with the matters panel of the Porto Nacional City Council. This low number of proposals suggests an insufficient engagement of both the municipal management and the councilors in relation to heritage issues, although the guidelines of the City Statute encourage popular initiatives for urban development and cultural preservation.

The year 2020 was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and the municipal elections, factors that interrupted the Master Plan review process. This interruption raises questions about the validity of the data collected and the effectiveness of the proposed strategies, considering the time elapsed since the beginning of the review process.

The 2006 Master Plan for Sustainable Development already pointed to the decharacterization of the Historic Center of Porto Nacional, a trend that persists. Although the City Statute offers instruments for the preservation of heritage, these instruments have not been applied effectively. The area faces a significant emptying, requiring fiscal and tax measures to encourage the occupation and preservation of properties. As discussed by Jacobs (2009) and Barause and Saboya (2018), regular occupation is essential for the safety and vitality of public spaces, but abandonment contributes to deterioration, as properties are exposed to the action of vandals and wear and tear without maintenance, making it urgent to comply with article 1,276 of the Civil Code (Federal Law No. 10,406/2002) regarding abandoned properties.

With regard to social participation, the current urban development council is composed mostly of representatives of the public power, reflecting a non-parity structure that limits the representativeness of decisions and reduces the effective participation of the community in urban planning.

Recently, initiatives have been implemented to strengthen cultural tourism in Porto Nacional. A partnership between the City Hall and Sebrae, for example, proposed the Sustainable Tourism Development Project, including the creation of a Gastronomic Route and religious tourism associated with the architectural heritage of the Dominicans, including

the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mercy, the São José Seminary, the Old College of the Sisters and the Memorial of Padre Luso.

Another significant example is the "Geotourism Route of Porto Nacional", carried out by the Federal University of Tocantins (UFT), through the Center for Urban Studies and Cities. This project offers tour classes that include visits to historic streets and buildings, including the Nossa Senhora da Mercês Cathedral, the São José Seminary, the Municipal Museum and the UFT Campus, with conversation circles about local educational history (UFT, 2023). On August 25, 2023, the composition of the new Municipal Tourism Council was published, reinforcing the commitment to the cultural and tourist enhancement of the municipality.

Additionally, in September 2023, the National Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN), in partnership with the Federal University of Tocantins, launched the "Tocantins Conservation Model Site" (IPHAN, 2023). This project offers free public technical assistance for conservation interventions of listed assets in Natividade and Porto Nacional, according to Federal Law No. 11,888/2008, aiming at the development and qualification of professionals for the preservation of cultural heritage.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study highlights the importance of participatory planning in urban development and democratic management, promoting the inclusion of different social groups in decisions aimed at building a more just and egalitarian city. During the analysis, the essential concepts of governance, popular participation and sustainable development were synthesized, addressing citizenship and sustainability as fundamental pillars for effective urban policies.

It was possible to discuss sustainable planning as an urban policy strategy, aimed at ordering and controlling land use in an integrated way. Such an approach strengthens urban management, which should be the responsibility of the municipal government, following the guidelines established by national legislation, such as the City Statute. This statute not only reinforces the obligation of the master plan in strategic municipalities, but also underlines the need for democratic management with the active participation of the population and associations representing the community. In this context, public consultations and debates are essential to ensure the adequacy of urban policies to the needs of the population, promoting a more democratic environment.

The results of the research revealed that, as pointed out in the 2006 Master Plan, the decharacterization of the Historic Center of Porto Nacional persists as a consolidated trend. Although the City Statute provides for instruments to guarantee the social function of property, they have not been applied effectively. The revision of the Master Plan, completed in 2019, remains without approval by the City Council, which reflects challenges in the implementation of the planned guidelines.

It was also found that the emptying of the Historic Center of Porto Nacional urgently requires incentive measures for the occupation of properties. The application of the instruments of the City Statute, including fiscal and tax incentives, as well as compliance with Federal Law No. 10,406/2002 for abandoned properties, is crucial for urban land and cultural heritage to fulfill their social function. In the last four years, there has been a low engagement in municipal management in relation to heritage preservation, despite the provision of social participation. However, this participation occurs unevenly in the urban development council, whose mostly public composition makes it difficult to effectively represent the community.

In recent years, initiatives in partnership with institutions such as Sebrae and IPHAN, as well as the involvement of the Federal University of Tocantins, have promoted projects in areas such as tourism, social housing, technical training, dissemination of knowledge and support for the conservation of cultural heritage. Such actions reinforce the potential for inter-institutional cooperation as a means of filling gaps in municipal management and fostering the cultural and economic appreciation of the Historic Center.

Based on the analysis carried out, it is recommended that future research address governance and popular participation in the context of the development of municipalities, contributing to an in-depth reflection on these themes and to the improvement of municipal management. These studies are expected to help drive sustainable, urban, and cultural development, promoting a more inclusive and resilient city model.

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