

11 Empowering communities to identify, treat, and protect their heritage

A cultural landscape case study
of the Horto d'El Rey, Olinda, Brazil

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Introduction

In the twenty-first century, there is ample evidence that there are fundamental problems with the practice of conserving built heritage and cultural landscapes largely due to the superficial treatment of the meanings and values associated with heritage. Much of this critique originates from critical heritage studies researchers (e.g., Gibson and Pendlebury 2009, Harrison 2013, Smith 2006), but also from planners (e.g., Mason 2003, Buckley and Graves 2016), as well as from heritage practitioners (e.g., Green 1998, King 2009, Hutchings 2015). Broadly speaking, there is a substantial divide between conventional experts and civil experts¹ in the meanings that they associate with old places (e.g., old buildings, old structures, cultural landscapes), including essential concepts such as authenticity, the value of certain “historic” places, and how these places ought to be treated. A primary reason for this situation is that most professional work in the field of built heritage conservation is compliance based; the meanings and values used by conventional experts are therefore dictated by law, rules, regulations, and doctrine (Wells and Lixinski 2016). Thus, conventional experts must rigidly follow these rules, laws, and regulations for built heritage conservation, which embody a positivistic, pseudo-scientific process that demands meanings be thin and often quantifiable (ibid.). If one conceptualizes the heritage meanings associated with urban places as complex, layered, and trans-temporal, it becomes quickly apparent that the dominant “thin” process for managing the richness of urban heritage completely disregards a deep understanding of the relationship between people and places.

Unlike conventional experts, civil experts are free to choose their own value system associated with the historic environment. Thus, a dichotomy

clearly emerges where the values of conventional experts focus on the continuity of fabric while the values of civil experts focus on the continuity of the *meanings* associated with this fabric (Zancheti and Loretto 2012). This latter approach is an important part of the concept of a “deep city” that embodies change as an essential quality of the urban experience while also exposing the challenges in the traditional policy-based approach in the management of these places. For many stakeholders, change to the fabric of places does not necessarily alter the experiential dimensions of authenticity; indeed, change in these situations can *enhance* the depth of the authentic experience (Wells 2010), which directly contradicts the regulatory regime of heritage conservation. In sum, the way in which built heritage conservation is largely conducted is based on a top-down approach, expert rule, and an unintentional disregard for the depth of values and meanings held by most stakeholders (Smith 2006, Lixinski 2015).

The goal in rectifying the problems inherent in the current system, according to Rodney Harrison (2013, p. 5) is to “[break] down the bureaucratic divide between laypersons and experts, suggesting new models for heritage-decision-making processes in the future.” Or, in another sense, the goal is to engage in a process of “deeper” planning. This study is therefore conceived as a possible way to dissolve the barrier between civil experts and conventional experts by inverting the conventional top-down system for heritage conservation so that it becomes bottom-up. Implicit in this endeavor is, as John Schofield (2014, p. 247) emphasizes, not questioning “whether anyone *needs* experts, but how should they *act* and how should expertise be used” (original author’s emphasis). Thus, this study is positioned not as questioning the need for experts but exploring the potential role experts can play in empowering communities. Indeed, what would the conservation of old places look like if it was community-driven and if experts became facilitators in a process of empowering community members as Keith Emerick (2014) suggests? To answer this question, this study explores how community-based participatory research can help communities engage professional heritage conservation practitioners as equals in a values-based dialog. Ideally, conventional experts may be able to use this approach to achieve important societal goals, such as social justice and participatory democracy.

A review of community-based participatory research

Participatory research strategies seek to balance power between civil and conventional experts and remedy social justice issues and are therefore frequently used as tools for community empowerment (Castellanet and Jordan 2004, Wilmsen et al. 2008, Wright 2015). In this sense, participatory research has much in common with participatory democracy by maximizing the opportunity for a community to make its own decisions. This process, as Timothy Pynch (2012, p. xiv) advocates, “opens up the

world of knowledge-making to people long silenced by forces intent on controlling knowledge for the educated elite." These goals are achieved through a process of "interdependent science" (Fortman 2008, p. 2) in which communities research themselves and where there is no clear distinction between the "researcher" and the "subject"; everyone is, in effect, a "co-researcher" and equally capable of contributing to all phases of the research including the definition of problems, creation of research questions, ways in which data is collected and analyzed, and how the results are used and disseminated (Fals-Borda 1987, Heron and Reason 1997, Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). As a result, participatory research is inherently an informal, iterative process that demands respect for local traditions and cultures where knowledge is defined by participants (Fals-Borda 1987, Kemmis and McTaggart 2005).

The assumption that civil experts can define the validity of knowledge requires the researcher/conventional expert to adopt a position of epistemological agnosticism when collecting and analyzing data. It must be acceptable for civil experts' "situated knowledge" (Fortman 2008, pp. 2–4, 8) to be accepted as functionally equivalent to the scientific knowledge of conventional experts (Bendremer and Thomas 2008, p. 65). In implementing this approach, an open mind, respect, and good listening skills are essential as Arora-Jonsson et al. (2008, p. 263) elaborate by suggesting that instead of pushing, you have to listen. You have to remain responsive to community ideas and needs. Rather than leading, you have to work in tandem with civil [experts], respecting and testing their ideas and accepting that they will test yours. Bergelin et al. (2008, pp. 146–161) offer the advice that conventional experts should listen carefully and not be "controlling" and strive to be "open and humble, persistent and strong." This hands-off approach, as Arora-Jonsson et al. (2008, p. 246) emphasize, manifests as "local people [being] treated, not as data sources, but as colleagues in producing new knowledge." Civil experts will therefore share and discuss meanings that may be substantially different from those of conventional experts; it is expected that these meanings will often conflict with accepted professional practice. To address these differences, the literature on participatory research strategies emphasizes "unforced" consensus as a way of moving forward (Fals-Borda 1987, Castellanet and Jordan 2004, Kemmis and McTaggart 2005).

Published literature that employs participatory research, including action research and community-based participatory research, is common in the fields of education and public health, but less so with other fields, but examples exist from areas as disparate as tourism (e.g., Duran 2012) and architectural design (e.g., Dabaieh 2013). There is a large body of work in international development that uses participatory rural appraisals (PRAs) (e.g., Castellanet and Jordan 2004, Bergelin et al. 2008, Narayanasamy 2009), which are based on the educational emancipation techniques of Paulo

Freire (1970). NGOs often use these PRAs in an attempt to better understand the needs of local people in developing countries when governments undertake economic and environmental planning activities. Participatory research techniques, however, are uncommon in heritage conservation and seemingly absent in planning that addresses the conservation of the historic environment (including cultural landscapes) (Wells 2015). Community archaeology is a significant exception, where the literature reflects the need to remedy the past ills of Western archaeology (e.g., colonialism, the destruction of indigenous cultures) through participatory research methods that seek the empowerment of traditionally disempowered peoples (e.g., Bendremer and Thomas 2008, Silliman 2008, Emerick 2009, Hollowell and Nicholas 2009, McGhee 2012). Within built heritage conservation, the University of Florida's Preservation Institute: Nantucket program uses participatory action research in its field program on the island of Nantucket (Massachusetts, USA) (Hylton and Widmer 2012). Beyond community archaeology and this one example from Nantucket, there does not appear to be any scholarly literature on participatory research techniques and the conservation of the historic environment.

The case: the Horto d'El Rey

The Horto d'El Rey (Garden of the King), also known as the Old Olinda Botanical Gardens and associated with the Manguinhos family, is located in the middle of the neighborhoods of Carmo, Amparo, Bonsucesso and Amaro Branco, near the historic center of Olinda, Pernambuco, Brazil (Figure 11.1).



Figure 11.1 Aerial view of the Horto d'El Rey in Olinda, Pernambuco, Brazil. The garden is in the middle of the image. Imagery © 2017 Google

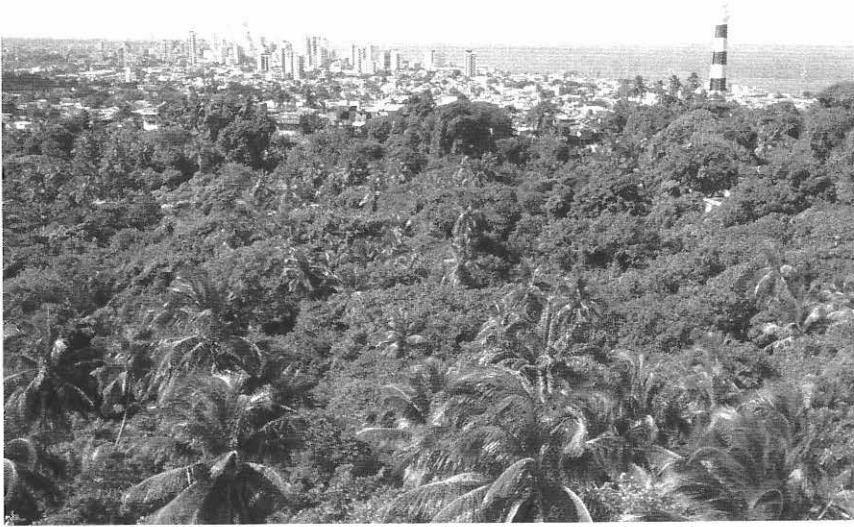


Figure 11.2 View of the Horto d’El Rey from the observation tower at the Alto da Sé. (Photo by J. Wells)

An integral part of the history and landscape of the city, the garden is undergoing continual change with its area decreasing each year. Currently privately owned, it consists of 13 hectares of Atlantic forest surrounded by very dense urban development (Figure 11.2).

The garden’s history is intertwined with the history of the much older village of Olinda (Pernambuco State, Brazil). Duarte Coelho, Governor of the captaincy of Pernambuco, established the village of Olinda in 1537 in a strategic location (Barbosa, Acioli, and Assis 2006). The village’s hills, upon which the garden would be located, were easy to defend and the location was ideal in order to facilitate transportation and defense between the ocean and the interior of the territory via the Beberibe River; the area also offered ample places for cattle pasture and ideal locations for dwellings (Loureiro 2012). The residents’ houses shared common green areas that formed the semi-private social center of family life, where children played, mothers talked about current events, and domestic duties were performed (Algranti 1997). It was this “harmonious balance between ... buildings [and] gardens,” as related in Olinda’s World Heritage nomination (UNESCO 1982) that helped establish why the original village center was worthy of recognition by UNESCO and the Horto d’El Rey was part of this tradition.

During the early seventeenth century, when the Dutch dominated the state of Pernambuco, Count Maurício de Nassau created what is considered to be the first Western-style botanical garden in the Americas near present-day

Recife; after the Dutch were expelled from Brazil in 1654, the garden was completely destroyed (Silva 2004). The next botanical garden to be established in Brazil was in Belém in 1796 (Meunier and Silva 2009, p. 67). The well-known botanical garden in Rio de Janeiro was founded a short while thereafter in 1808 (Bediaga 2007), but between the founding of the gardens in Belém and Rio de Janeiro was the Horto d'El Rey, in 1798. So, depending on one's perspective, the Horto d'El Rey is either the second or the third (if the destroyed garden in Recife is included) oldest botanical garden in Brazil.

The naturalist Manuel de Arruda da Câmara wrote a book in 1798 that emphasized the fertility and the potential of the flora of Brazilian lands; he also taught about botany at the Seminário de Olinda (Loureiro 2012). In the document, the renowned scientist argued about the economic benefits arising from the commercialization of spices acclimated in gardens as a way to promote the development of captaincies, thus influencing the creation of botanical gardens in Brazil, including the Horto d'El Rey. Arruda recommended that the ideal location for a botanical garden

should include a lowland, more or less fresh, a clay earth, a shale, high exposed to the wind and the sun; And it will be even more necessary for the garden to pass some stream or current source, which can easily water the plants.

(Mello 1982)

These characteristics, which could be easily found in the hills around the village of Olinda, led to a royal decree in 1798 that formally established the garden, comprised of 33 hectares, which then began operating in 1811 (Aragão 2008). According to Aragão (2008) the garden extended from the northern slope of the Sé, encompassing the land owned by the Jesuits (Seminário de Olinda), the lands of the Benedictines (Igreja das Graças), and the lands of Igreja do Monte and its slopes extending down to the Bonsucesso Valley, where today the neighborhood of Amaro Branco lies, next to the sea.

The primary functions of the Horto d'El Rey were to acclimatize seedlings for commercial planting and study exotic flora from around the tropics, primarily for medicinal purposes, but many food plants were studied here as well. According to Loureiro (2012) and Rodrigues et al. (2006), Joaquim Jerônimo Serpa, a retired physician who studied medicine at the School of Surgery of the Royal Hospital of São José, Lisbon, was appointed in 1834 to lead the work in the garden. By the time the last director of the garden, Bernadino José Serpa, was appointed in 1842, the garden was in significant decay. Eventually, a provincial law forced the sale of the area to private owners in 1844. As there were no buyers, it was determined to rent the property, but there were no interested parties. Finally, the government decided to cede the garden to Albuquerque Fernandes da Gama. In 1854, the

garden was taken over by the state and sold to Major João Baptista da Silva Manguinhos. The Maguinhos family is, to this day, owner of what remains of the Horto d'El Rey.

Today the area, although it is privately owned, is regulated, by local law, in order to protect its natural and ecological attributes and conserve the potential for recreational activities (Zona de Proteção Ambiental Recreativa, Art. 13; also known as a Recreational Environmental Protection Zone [ZPAR-04]). The area is also governed by national law through IPHAN (Institute of National Historical and Artistic Heritage; law 1155/79), as a "C – strict preservation green area, subarea C3" with limited occupancy and potential for uses. Even though the Horto d'El Rey is historically important, regulated by the national Brazilian authority for heritage, and part of the buffer zone for the Olinda World Heritage Site, it is still possible to build in the garden and thus threaten its unique cultural landscape. As a result, the garden has suffered from continual urban encroachment, especially informal settlements in the Bonsucesso and Amaro Branco neighborhoods. In the past forty years the garden has lost more than two thirds of its original area; today it is only thirteen hectares in size (Aguiar 2008). Yet, it is people from these neighborhoods (as well as the Carmo neighborhood) that wish to see the garden conserved.

Since the 1980s, the historical center of Olinda has been revitalized and protected from inappropriate development and, as a result, the value of real estate has increased significantly. The Horto d'El Rey, however, has remained largely forgotten, save for a few residents who took action and formed a local community group dedicated to conserving Olinda and the garden, the Olinda Society in Defense of the High City (SODECA). SODECA expressed an interest in working with the primary author and suggested the Horto d'El Rey as a case study to test the community-based participatory research method. Subsequent meetings with community leaders emphasized the interest of the community in working on a participatory research project with the garden.

Methodology and participants (co-researchers)

The overall methodology used for this research is a qualitative case study that incorporates community-based participatory research using the models defined by Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) and Fawcett et al. (2003). Per the theoretical assumptions of participatory research, the co-researchers (i.e., the participants) in the study defined the methods – storytelling and informal interviews – used to collect and analyze data. Data collection occurred at a series of community workshop meetings, which each lasted around 3 hours.

In this study, the roles of the "researcher" and the "subject" were conflated: *everyone* involved in the study was considered to be co-researchers and responsible for producing/collecting/analyzing data and making recommendations. In other words, there was no dichotomy between the

“researcher” and the “subject” and its associated power differential when the study was conducted. It was assumed that all individuals involved in the study, in any capacity, were equals in terms of contributing to the study and making decisions. The people involved in this study were, however, divided into conventional experts and civil experts depending on their ontological/epistemological orientations. All participants were age 18 or older and capable of informed consent.

The facilitators, who are considered to be conventional experts, consisted of the primary author and current and former students from the urban development program at the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), located in Recife, Brazil. The facilitators had the unique roles of (1) facilitating the overall process, including the community workshops and (2) gathering the final materials, interpreting them, and producing a report that described the actual process used, evaluating its overall success, and making recommendations in terms of whether it could be applied to other contexts and settings. The primary author trained the students in meeting facilitation techniques and human subject protection requirements prior to the community workshops. In terms of participants for this study, the students were uniquely responsible for the following tasks:

- Working with the primary author to arrange for the community workshop in a publicly accessible building, communication with stakeholders as to the meeting location/time, preparation of printed materials for all participants, and setting-up/breaking-down of the meeting room.
- Because of their Portuguese fluency, the students were responsible for directly engaging with community members in community workshops as well as assistance in creating written materials.
- Direct engagement with stakeholders in other tasks that resulted from the community workshops, including meetings with individual community leaders.
- Documenting the results of community meetings and other materials.

The facilitation process (students had to follow):

- Following an agenda
- Active listening
- Getting people to participate
- Making sure that some people don't dominate
- Summarizing information
- Consensus building
- Achieving meeting outcomes

Residents from the neighborhoods of Amaro Branco, Bonsucesso, Amparo, and Carmo, which surrounded the Horto d'El Rey, comprised the civil experts who participated in this study. Conventional experts were also

involved in the study and consisted of heritage representatives from the city of Olinda, the state of Pernambuco, the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN), the Olinda Society in Defense of the High City (SODECA), and faculty from UFPE. The owners of the Horto d'El Rey, who approved this research, also participated in the study.

The primary author and the students recruited participants for this study by identifying and meeting with individual community leaders, distributing flyers to residences (Figure 11.3), and hiring mobile audio announcements (Figure 11.4). In Brazil, as in many developing countries, it is very common to hire a service to broadcast public service announcements and advertisements via a loudspeaker affixed to a bicycle, motorbike, or automobile. Within Brazilian culture, this method for sharing information is both very common as well as accepted and is not limited by law – for example, noise ordinances.

Brazil has a long history of an economically and socially stratified society with limited mobility and limited mixing of economic classes (Pieterse and Cardoso 2014). Carmo, which is the neighborhood to the south of the garden, is much more wealthy than the neighborhoods to the north. During the planning of the study, several of the co-researchers expressed concerns over inviting the residents from all of the neighborhoods to a community workshop due to significant socioeconomic differences between the wealthy and less economically advantaged areas. In addition, we wanted to avoid having conventional experts present at the first community workshop meetings in order to address perceived power differentials between this group and the civil experts. For these reasons, it was decided to create a staged process where the residents of Carmo initially met separately from the other neighborhoods. Only upon agreement of all of the participants did the residents from all the neighborhoods meet together. In a similar fashion, all of the civil experts had to agree to invite the conventional experts to subsequent meetings. Refer to Figure 11.5 for a flow chart of the manner in which this process was implemented.

Lastly, the community workshop meetings were arranged in two steps. Step 1 workshops consisted of the identification of meanings/values, problems, and potential solutions associated with the garden while the step 2 workshop consisted of creating a work plan to put the participants' ideas into action. By consensus of the participants, it was not until step 2 that all of the residents from the neighborhoods met together along with invited conventional experts. All of the workshops took place at G.R.E.S. Preto Velho, a samba school (Figure 11.6) Snacks and non-alcoholic drinks were provided to all participants.

The primary author provided all UFPE students training in facilitating community meetings, with a focus on the following areas:

- Following an agenda
- Active listening
- Getting people to participate

VAMOS CONVERSAR
SOBRE O

**HORTO
D'EL REY!**

QUANDO?
Sábado, 28/11/15
Das 14 às 17h

ONDE?
Preto Velho
R. Bispo Coutinho, 681
Carmo

Fundado em 1811 para cultivar plantas exóticas, hoje esta área verde tão grande caracteriza fortemente uma das mais importantes paisagens brasileiras. E está logo no centro de Olinda, atrás do Alto da Sé, nos bairros Amaro Branco, Bonssucesso, Amparo e Carmo.

Porque ele não é utilizado
pela comunidade?

Você quer ver essa mudança?

Você acha que este jardim deve
beneficiar a sua comunidade?

Venha conversar conosco para saber
como você, trabalhando com seus
vizinhos, pode adquirir poderes para fazer
essa mudança acontecer.

Junte-se a nós, em uma reunião especial com a comunidade, onde vamos
conversar sobre o futuro deste jardim.

Expresse o que você pensa e sente sobre o nosso patrimônio!

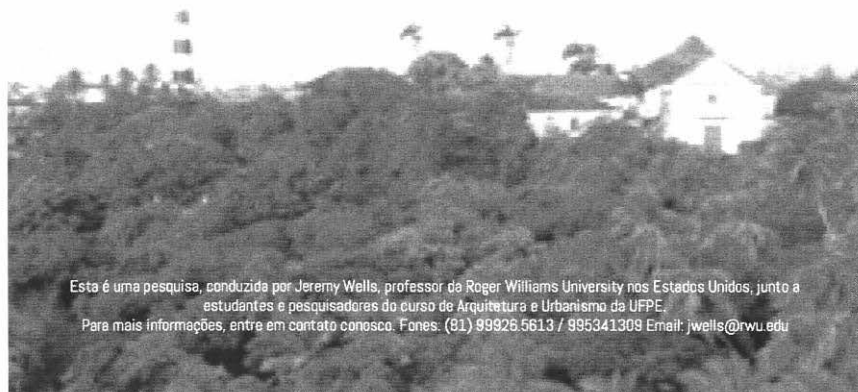


Figure 11.3 Example of a community solicitation flyer for a workshop



Figure 11.4 Community workshop announcements were made via loudspeaker, which is a common practice in Brazil. (Photo by Valéria de Abreu e Lima)

- Making sure that some people do not dominate
- Summarizing information
- Consensus building
- Achieving meeting outcomes

The students had to address different problem-solving scenarios, which require mediation, and learned about ways to engage participants, including brainstorming, small group discussions, role playing, journaling, round-robin discussions, drawing, music, and story-telling.

Results of the community workshops

Phase 1 workshops

The first community workshops focused on explaining the purpose of the study to participants from the neighborhoods and describing the overall research process. The student facilitators and the primary author emphasized that the neighborhood participants had full control over what would be discussed and the way in which information was to be recorded and shared.

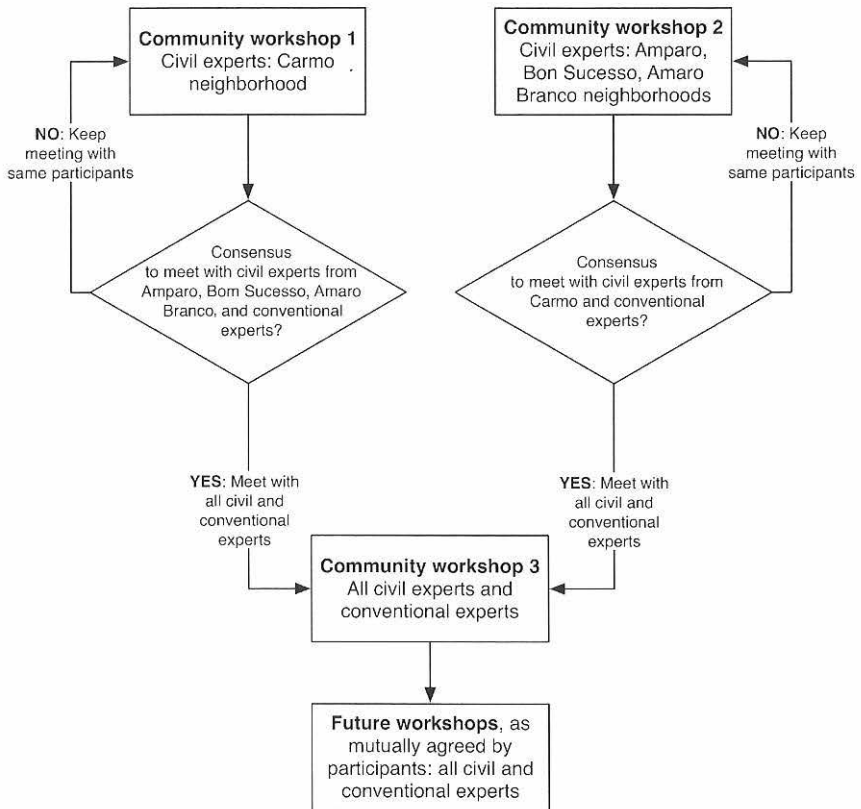


Figure 11.5 Plan to engage disparate socioeconomic classes in the participative planning process

At first, this degree of control was confusing to many of the participants, who were used to conventional experts visiting their community and providing a lecture in a controlled environment in which the solutions for certain problems are provided with little or no community input. The idea that the residents of the neighborhoods around the Horto d'El Rey could independently identify the values and problems of garden then develop solutions for these problems was received with much skepticism. One neighborhood participant voiced a concern that it might even be improper to be meeting without conventional experts, such as heritage experts from the municipality, being present. The student facilitators took great care to explain that this was an unconventional process, specifically designed to empower the neighborhood participants and that the primary author and the students had met with municipal leaders and conventional experts and had previously obtained their buy-in for the community-based participatory process. The



Figure 11.6 Location of community workshops at the G.R.E.S. Preto Velho, a samba school. (Photo by Ana Ísis Moura)

students also explained the overall goals of the research, the various steps we were proposing to take, and that there was no requirement to participate at all; anyone was free to leave the process without any repercussions. These explanations appeared to assuage some participants' concerns about the unusual nature of this research.

For each of the meetings, the student facilitators arranged people into groups of approximately three to five people around small round tables for informal discussions. Each table had a stack of letter-sized paper, pens, sticky notes, and a written pamphlet briefly describing geographical, botanical, and historical facts about the garden. The participants mutually agreed to write ideas as they were being discussed on sticky notes and to have a volunteer from each group verbally summarize a group's work and organize everyone's sticky notes under themes on a wall (Figure 11.7). This process worked well with each group collaborating in the brainstorming and refinement of the values, problems and threats, and potential solutions associated with the Horto d'El Rey.

Many of the neighborhood participants from Carmo, but not the other neighborhoods, were familiar with the history of the garden. Participants indicated that these historical associations were an important value of the Horto d'El Rey and contributed to the overall sense of pride in having one of the oldest research botanical gardens be a part of the neighborhood. These participants were also aware that the garden was part of the buffer zone for the Olinda World Heritage site and should be protected via local, state, and

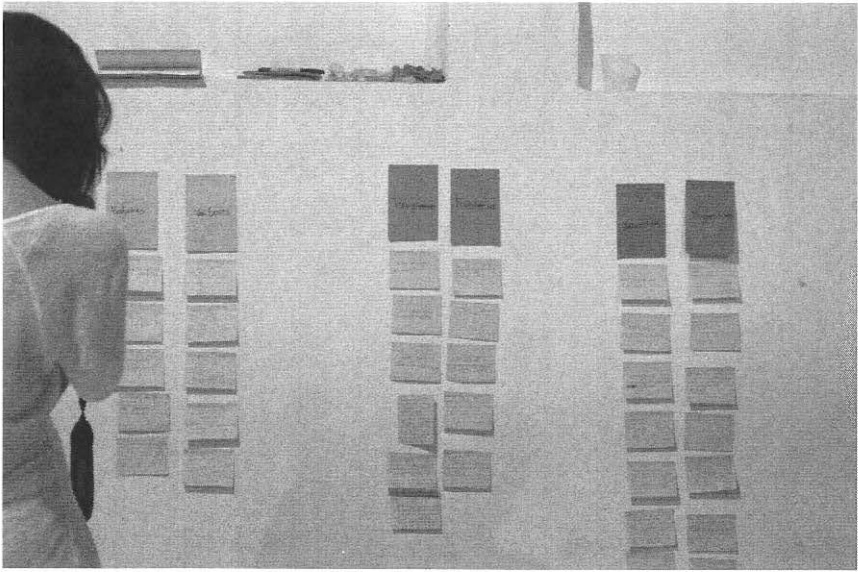


Figure 11.7 Discussion theme from a workshop represented in participant's notes.
(Photo by Ana Ísis Moura)

federal legislation because of this historical value. Participants expressed the importance of the environmental qualities of the garden as the “lungs of the city” and a place that should be protected because of these natural attributes, which included watersheds and animal and plant species. The garden was also described as a place of beauty in which the aesthetics of the landscape were very important.

Many of the participants shared stories about growing up around the garden and playing there as children, eating fruit, hunting insects, and cutting firewood for the festa de São João (festival of St. John the Baptist). Children still play in the garden today, and residents described how this long tradition of childhood memories is part of the folklore the community associates with the Horto d’El Rey. In this sense, participants shared many positive emotional experiences from their past and present about the importance of the garden in everyday people’s lives, including its importance as a kind of backdrop to the life of the city.

The neighborhood participants believed that there were many significant threats to the Horto d’El Rey due to neglect by public bodies, illegal building, misuse/abuse of the garden, crime/safety, lack of public education and access, and the lack of maintenance/upkeep. Technically, the garden is protected by multiple rules and regulations at the local, state, and federal levels, which include heritage and environmental protection. The participants believed that these government entities were not enforcing existing rules and different

levels of government failed to cooperate on this problem. One particularly salient area related to illegal building that had been occurring for decades on the property. While many residents living around the garden wished to see it conserved, the neighborhood participants explained that some residents instead use the garden only for its resources or as a dumping ground, which has led to deforestation, fires, and the deposition of trash. The participants mentioned a number of crime and safety issues, including the apparent use of the garden by drug dealers and associated crimes of murder, rape, and arson. Feral animals were also perceived to be a significant problem. The participants believed that the police were not doing enough to prevent and investigate these crimes. The use of the garden for illicit activity is facilitated by the lack of public access (technically, the garden is private property) and the apparent lack of awareness of the innate values of the garden by residents from the Amparo, Amaro Branco, and Bonsucesso neighborhoods.

There is also a lack of an overall plan to protect or conserve the garden and manage its natural environment. Numerous development proposals over the past couple of decades failed to recognize the values that the neighborhood participants believed were important to protect. Participants also believed that the property owners were not properly supervising their property, although some of the owners present at the meetings made it clear that they wanted to protect the property but were prevented from making an economic gain on the property because it could not be developed to the same height and density as the surrounding city of Olinda. Later discussions with municipal officials made it clear that there was much confusion amongst the neighborhood residents, the property owners, and various levels of government officials as to what extent the property owners could legally develop their property.

In order to solve some of these issues, the neighborhood participants suggested potential solutions, which included public access, tourism, research and education, and soliciting help from others. Currently, although many people enter the garden illegally, it is not open to the public and, as such, there are no public points of access other than through people's back yards. The development of official entry points, trails, and potentially facilities would help in legitimizing the access that is already occurring on the property and increasing the garden's benefit to the public; creating a public park from the garden was frequently mentioned. In terms of economic potential, the participants discussed ecotourism activities centered around the fact that the Horto d'El Rey is one of the last remnants of forest left in the area (although ecologically quite different from the original Atlantic rain forest that used to exist). There was a strong interest in potentially returning the garden back to its roots as a research botanical garden and using this as a foundation for educational activities related to the natural and cultural heritage of the Horto d'El Rey. The participants were especially emphatic on the need to educate the public as to the importance of the natural and cultural heritage of the garden and its role as the "lungs of the city." In exploring the desirable characteristics of this educational process, however, the participants

fluidly grouped the garden's meanings without regard for the conventional, and often artificial, categories of time, culture, and nature used by conventional experts. In this sense, the planning process became much deeper than happens with traditional practice by avoiding the superficial abstraction of thick meanings into thin values. The participants wanted to assure the full richness and complexity of the garden could be conveyed to others.

The neighborhood participants understood the importance of recruiting others to assist in the conservation of the garden, including rethinking of illegal residents as a potential benefit to the garden rather than a threat. Several ideas were discussed about how illegal residents could be turned into "garden conservators" rather than evicting them. In Brazil, there is widespread recognition of the difficulty that most people have in finding affordable housing; people are living in the Horto d'El Rey illegally because they have no other housing options. Another category of individuals who the participants considered to be important to solicit included intellectuals and artists whose creativity could be harnessed to capture the public's imagination.

Phase 2 workshop

The phase 2 workshop brought all the residents from the Amaro Branco, Bonsucesso, Amparo, and Carmo neighborhoods together with invited conventional experts with the specific goal of creating work plans to address:

1. Activities to educate people about the importance of the garden
2. Garden clean-up
3. Efforts to work in partnership with the garden owners to protect and improve the garden
4. Addressing crime in the garden
5. Creating a "conservation land trust"

Set-up for this workshop was similar to the phase 1 workshops, with participants seated at round tables in small groups. The students facilitated the discussion, as before, and the consensus was that there would be five groups, with each one addressing one of the topics, above. A volunteer from each group used a letter-sized paper to create a work plan that would address his/her area of focus, which was then discussed with all the other participants at the end of the meeting.

The overall dynamic of this workshop was significantly different as the conventional experts often took the role of leading the discussion groups. In fact, the civil experts often requested that the conventional experts assume this role. There was evidence, however, that the conventional experts respected the meanings shared by the civil experts. This result was not entirely unexpected, especially because the focus of phase 2 was in creating work plans, which was a process that was unfamiliar to many of the neighborhood participants. Unfortunately, with the exception of the education

group, the discussions tended to mirror earlier discussions about problems with the garden without moving into potential solutions and ways to implement these solutions. The group who wanted to work on efforts to partner with the owners of the garden did not actually address this topic; little was recorded by the group addressing crime; and the participants originally addressing a garden clean-up left to join the other groups.

During the earlier workshops the primary author introduced the idea of a conservation land trust for the garden because it would give the community the power to purchase the land and therefore control its destiny. Unfortunately, there is no precedent for land trusts in Brazil so the participants in this group had a limited ability to contribute to the creation of a work plan because most of the discussion centered around the primary author providing educational materials on land trusts to help bring the participants to a place where they could more easily contribute. For this reason, and due to a lack of time, this group did not create a work plan.

Exceptionally, however, the education group was able to create a well-articulated and functional work plan that addressed the issues identified in phase 1 (Figure 11.8). They proposed to train public health workers, school children, business owners, and neighborhood associations about the cultural and natural value of the Horto d'El Rey. On the surface, the inclusion of public health workers seemed unusual until the participants explained that the garden, as the "lungs of the city," provided health benefits to the local population and that these employees were in an ideal situation to educate the public on the benefits of green space. This group began to make plans to create workshops, booklets, and flyers and seek additional assistance from local universities. Lastly, the education group also planned for a special awards ceremony that would recognize leaders in the community that had done an exemplary job in helping to keep the garden clean.

Discussion and conclusion

This case study has revealed that community-based participatory research methods can work in the context of conserving an historic botanical garden, even when there are significant differences in the socioeconomic background of participants. Community-based participatory research methods can help to bridge the meaning gap between conventional and civic experts, but they are not a panacea. Where time and resources are available, this method provides a useful way to address conservation issues of natural and cultural heritage, especially when there is a desire to gain more community buy-in and ownership. But to expect any results quickly is a recipe for disappointment. Overall, the process worked as intended, and there was evidence of community empowerment. The participants were able to successfully identify values and issues associated with the garden and, at least in one case, develop a plan to self-address some of these issues. Perhaps most useful is that the civil experts went from thinking that government had to do all interventions with

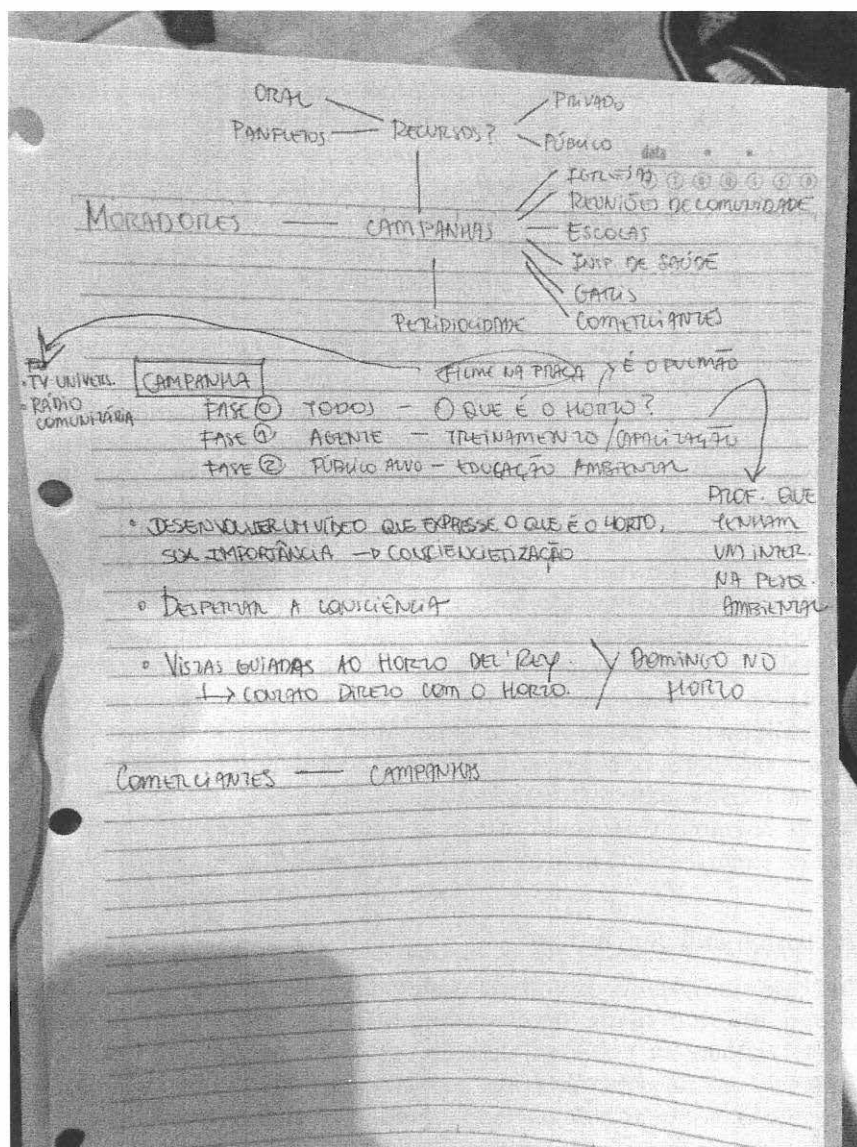


Figure 11.8 Draft educational work plan created by participants. (Photo by Ana Ísis Moura)

the Horto d'El Rey to the idea that the community, working independently, could actually take actions on their own and involve the government on their terms. Perhaps surprisingly, no significant conflicts between civil and conventional expert meanings occurred during this study, although it seems likely that the probability of such an event would increase the longer the study

remained active. Most critically, however, is that the number of and depth of meanings shared by civil experts helped the conventional experts create new connections to existing policy while questioning taken-for-granted aspects of practice. By understanding the depth of experiences associated with the Horto d'El Rey, conventional experts became stronger advocates for the civil expert's values. As of December 2015, when the primary author left Brazil to return to the United States, the neighborhood participants were still working on the ideas that they had begun to discuss and plan.

The total length of this project was five months, which was not really sufficiently long to see a community go from the identification of problems to actively addressing them, based on the experiences related here. Realistically, in a professional planning context, participatory methods like this need at least a year, or possibly more, of active facilitation to be able to start seeing results. While it is hoped that the participants in this particular study will continue to work independently, based on the results of phase 2, in all probability additional facilitation would be necessary to keep the projects moving forward. One area that could make a difference would be to build in more time to train the civil experts on work planning efforts and ways to build partnerships with others, including organizations that have key resources. While no assumptions were made of the capability of the civil experts in conducting this study, in retrospect, education should have formed a larger part of the facilitation efforts in this study, especially considering that self-organization on the part of civil experts cannot be assumed.

This study also raised some difficult issues about the role of conventional experts in heritage and natural conservation efforts. While, ideally, civil experts need to play a central role in solving problems, conventional experts often stepped into familiar roles in the work planning process. A challenge, therefore, is how to enable civil experts to take leadership roles in an environment where the conventional experts facilitate rather than assume the efforts of these civil experts. Again, education could address this problem in that both conventional as well as civil experts need to understand more about the overall process of community-based participatory research. Setting aside some of these issues, there is evidence that the facilitation process did work in this study. The students carefully listened, were respectful, and played a critical role in helping the participants to produce useful results. It was, however, difficult for the primary author as well as the students not to drift into the role of the conventional expert away from being a facilitator. This happened quite consistently where a participant or group of participants lacked knowledge about a certain aspect of the garden, a process, or potential solutions. The question that remains to be answered is how can an educator also be a facilitator? An oft-stated maxim is that knowledge is power; so how can knowledge be conveyed in a way that still gives power to those receiving this knowledge? These questions remain largely unanswered.

In framing the results of this study, it is important to emphasize that the goal was to balance the values of conventional and civil experts and not replace expert values with laypersons' values. All values, regardless of

expert or non-expert in origin, should therefore be considered on their own merits (Gibson and Pendlebury 2009, p. 1). Community-based participatory research recognizes, as John Schofield (2014, pp. 7, 8, 112) asserts, that “we are all heritage experts [where] everyone has a view, and everyone has expertise” because “the everyday, the everywhere” is most valuable to civil experts as opposed to the rare, unique, or monumental. Tim Winter (2013, p. 533) expresses concern that the critical heritage studies movement will “become a marginal endeavour, by (further) alienating those working in the heritage sector outside academia” unless it seeks to better relate to conservation practice. It is therefore hoped that this study may provide a pragmatic template for practitioners to use in everyday conservation planning processes by connecting critical heritage studies theory with practice.

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Note

- 1 The term “civil expert” is derived from participatory research methods that recognize that individuals who are not trained as conventional experts, and thus knowledgeable about a specific discipline/field are, nonetheless, experts in local, contextual, or situated knowledge. Civil experts can therefore know more about certain topics, and in more depth, than conventional experts. Civil experts can also be described as lay people with situated/local knowledge that represent the vast majority of stakeholders. For more details, see Fortman (2008).

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