SOCIAL HOUSING AND THE HISTORICAL CENTRE OF SÃO PAULO

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INTRODUTION

In recent decades, large and medium-sized Brazilian cities and their metropolitan areas grew with very similar socio-spatial dynamics - there was a general decline in population growth in the central areas and a significant increase in peripheral neighbourhoods. As a consequence, São Paulo is nowadays a segregated and barely functional city that suffers from problems related to traffic, environment and housing.

Currently, most of the population live in the suburbs and moves daily to work in the downtown area. Although the urban centre remains as a region of high concentration of jobs, it has a significant number of unoccupied buildings.

As a result, social movements have drawn attention to the theme of urban regeneration and housing. Also, professionals have been calling for action to face the urban problems of the peripheries. Their main objective is to establish the right to live in central areas and to see implemented a housing policy that reverses the logic of settlement of low-income population in the periphery (Polis Institute, 2009).

Meanwhile, there have been some experiments on development projects for social housing in central areas, including the occupation of empty buildings by popular movements and the building of housing through public programs (reform of old buildings, new construction, intervention in slums). However, in São Paulo, the struggle for social housing has lasted for more than ten years, and it should be pointed out that the scale of construction is still very small considering the problems that need to be faced (Polis Institute, 2009).

Taking into consideration the facts discussed previously, throughout this work it is intended to study the feasibility of implementing an urban policy based on urban redevelopment and the creation of social housing as a way to solve both problems: the low-income population may obtain appropriate housing infrastructures while they can contribute for the redevelopment of central areas.

CONTEXTUALIZATION

Urban space is a social product and because of that it is inbuilt with history. In this context, the evolution of urban space in Brazil is closely related to the economical models that were adopted, especially associated with colonization, independence and consolidation of national state.

Social exclusion, unbalanced distribution of wealth, the increasing rural-urban migration, insecurity and lack of infrastructure, privatization and fragmentation of spaces, the abstention from government in actively regulate the development of the city, the lack of land and housing policy that could effectively propitiate access to land and housing for the disadvantaged, the extreme heterogeneity of the urban structure spatial concentration of the most prized locations in the city are the major causes for the housing deficit and high concentration of subnormal agglomerates in the current Brazilian metropolis. In this way, together with the recent changes in urban areas, including the abandonment of historical centres as a result of the phenomena associated with "restructuring process", are the evidences for the need of an urban development policy focused on social housing and regeneration of urban areas.

The housing policy aims to guarantee to the population, especially to low-income groups, access to decent housing. The concept of decent houses requires both the right to housing and the right to the city, thus highlighting the importance of urban infrastructure along with social housing developments. On the other hand, the urban regeneration aims to find a new balance in the across physical, social, environmental and economic aspects of certain areas of the city that were subject to change or abandonment. This is aimed with a comprehensive and integrated strategy.

In Brazil there were important progresses in urban policy towards a fairer society, namely with the introduction of the social function of property and the "Estatuto da Cidade", approved in 2001. These instruments provide municipalities with conditions to acquire underutilized urban land and appropriate them for social purposes. However, it should be emphasized that urban instruments were born with the rise of the Welfare State in Europe while in Brazil it was imposed in a society that have been established in an unequal manner.

THE CITY OF SÃO PAULO

The Brazilian urban irregular distribution remains unchanged, and São Paulo is a reflection of that. In spite of currently being one of the five largest cities in the world, it still reflects the historical pattern of urbanization in Brazil and expresses the disputes and conflicts of a capitalist city - it is a sprawling and poor urbanization which is strongly linked to strategies of real estate speculation and development of large industrial plants and urban facilities (Karin Matzkin, 2006).

As a result, the historical city centre endowed with an exceptional infrastructure comparing to the remaining areas of the city have suffered a significant degradation - it is located in a general context marked by the emergence of new centres in the city and the deterioration of various urban facilities - while the periphery grows extensively with successive breeding of slum population with low income (Figure 1). This trend runs in opposite direction to a more rational and appropriate guidance for urban development since the horizontal extent of the network infrastructure is more expensive in big cities. In relation to the population, the citizen's circulation becomes very complex and imposes heavy burdens on workers who live on the periphery.

a) The revitalization of the historical centre

Today, we witness a constant demand of the working class to have access to housing in the region and an urban regeneration policy that places strong expectations about the potential of urban planning instruments to ensure the social function of property. On the other hand, the elites believe that the centres cannot remain in the same situation, arguing that it is necessary to "revitalize" it. This view implies essentially exclusionary interventions and enforces the private sector as a form of financing.

The uncertainty, coupled with the certainty that action is required prompted the promoters of Brazilian projects to meet European models, supposedly with positive proven outcomes These models clearly raise awareness for the need to preserve a heritage that goes back to local culture, revitalizing the town in a sustainable way ,well administrated, etc.

Código	DISTRITOS	1991 - 2000	% 1991 - 2000	TGCA
57	PARI	-6.475	-30,40%	-3,95
9	BOM RETIRO	-9.538	-26,39%	-3,35
	SE	-7.071	-26,01%	-3,29
10	BRAS	-8.378	-24,98%	-3,14
34	ITAIM BIBI	-26.041	-24,22%	-3,04
14	CAMBUCI	-8.352	-22,53%	-2,80
63	PINHEIROS	-15.647	-18,90%	-2,43
49	LIBERDADE	-14.370	-18,85%	-2,29
26	CONSOLACAO	-12.068	-18,12%	-2,20
67	REPUBLICA	-10.079	-17,44%	-2,11
71	SANTA CECILIA	-14.650	-17,07%	-2,08
54	MOOCA	-8.719	-12,11%	-1,41
7	BELA VISTA	-8.635	-12,02%	-1,41
2	ALTO DE PINHEIROS	-5.897	-11,71%	-1,37
92	VILA MARIANA	-6.139	-4,88%	-0,79
77	PERDIZES	-6.395	-5,88%	-0,67
93	VILA MATILDE	-6.088	-5,58%	-0,64
77	SAO MIGUEL	-5.591	-5,43%	-0,62
29	FREGUESIA DO O	-7.749	-5,08%	-0,58
82	TATUAPE	-2.459	-3,00%	-0,34
37	JABAQUARA	-255	-0,12%	-0,01
30	SAO MATEUS	4.086	2,71%	0,30
64	PIRITUBA	9.491	6,23%	0,67
23	CIDADE DUTRA	22.368	13,37%	1,40
52	ITAQUERA	26.146	14,91%	1,56
24	CIDADE LIDER		20,00%	2,05
31	GUAIANASES	17.173	21,10%	2,15
11	BRASILANDIA	45.737	22,69%	2,30
15	CAPAO REDONDO	47.296	24,44%	2,46
35	ITAIM PAULISTA	49.464	30,30%	2,98
83	TREMEMBE	38.728	30,96%	3,04
42	JARDIM ANGELA	67.432	37,80%	3,63
52	MARSILAC	2.412	40,25%	3,83
59	PEDREIRA	41.424	48,17%	4,47
62	PERUS	24.388	52,67%	4,81
41	JARAGUA	52.715	56,57%	5,11
32	IQUATEMI			
30	GRAJAU			
85	VILA ANDRADE			
56	PARELHEIROS			
25	CIDADE TIRADENTES			
3	ANHANGUERA	26.519		

Legenda
Limite_distritos
Região central SP
Município de São Paulo
TGCA - taxa geométrica de crescimento anual - 1991 a 2000
Sem Identificação
de -5,00 a -2,00
de -1,99 a 0,00
de 0,01 a 3,00
de 3,01 a 6,00
de 6,01 a 9,00
Acima de 9,00
Fonte: IBGE Censo 1991 e 2000

Sub-prefeituras com maior concentração de empregos

Código	Sub-prefeitura	Empregos	% em relação ao MSP
1	Sé	765.972	19,61%
2	Vila Mariana	688.890	17,64%
3	Pinheiros	347.805	8,91%
4	Lapa	269.716	6,91%
5	Santo Amaro	262.379	6,72%
6	Mooca	208.283	5,33%
	Município de São Paulo	3.905.101	100%

Fonte: RAIS - 2006

Legenda
Limite_distritos
Limite_Subprefeituras
Município de SP
Concentração de Empregos
até 40 mil
de 40,1 mil a 120 mil
de 120,1 mil a 260 mil
de 260,1 a 3,9 milhões
Fonte: Dados CEMPRE, 2006.
Referente pessoal ocupado assalariado

Domicílios vagos nos distritos centrais

DISTRITOS	Total Domicílios	Domicílios vagos	% de domicílios vagos
Bela Vista	33.848	5.479	16,19%
Bom Retiro	10.807	1.821	16,85%
Brás	11.622	2.789	24,00%
Cambuci	11.370	1.910	16,80%
Liberdade	29.392	5.283	17,97%
Pari	5.817	1.223	21,02%
República	30.849	7.007	22,71%
Santa Cecília	36.171	6.343	17,54%
Sé	11.410	3.055	26,77%
Consolação	29.577	3.694	12,49%
Total Centro	210.863	38.604	18,31%
Total São Paulo	3.372.166	402.807	11,95%

Fonte: Dados IGBE; SINOPSE, 2000.

Legenda
Limite_distritos
Região central SP
Município de SP
% de Domicílios Vagos
0,87 - 9%
9,1 - 11%
11,1 - 13%
13,1 - 15%
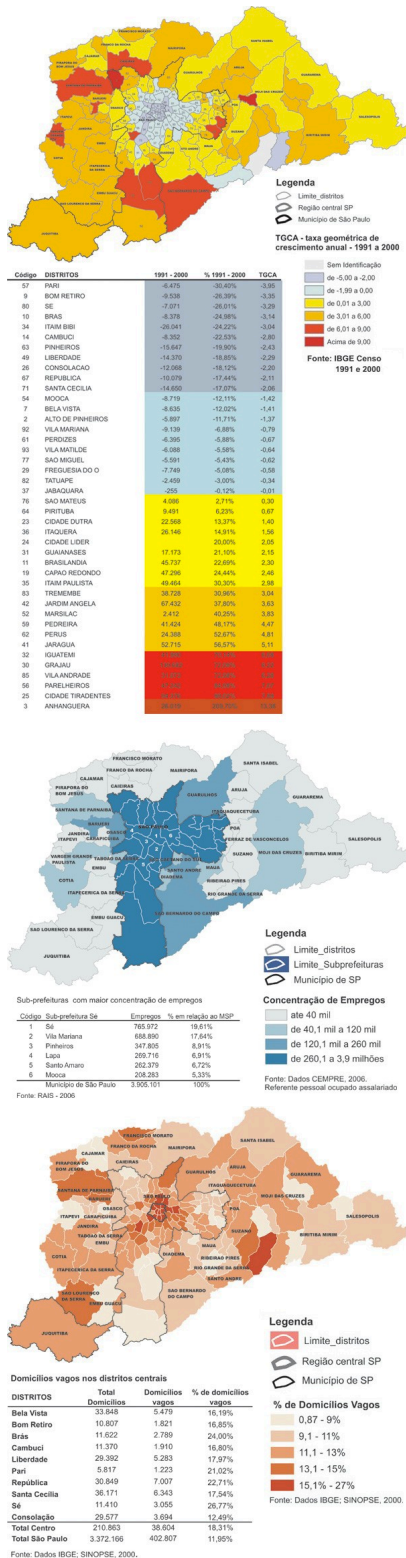15,1% - 27%
Fonte: Dados IBGE; SINOPSE, 2000.

Figure 1 - The metropolis of São Paulo: population dynamics between 1991-2000; concentration of jobs in 2006; percentage of vacant homes in 2000. (Instituto Polis, 2009)

(Rivière d'Arc, 2006). However, among certain urban planners reside the opinion that the diversity obtained from the downtown redevelopment is justified - the centre is the only place that had any chance to hold up - "is a mistake to accept both its gentrification and consolidation of its current character as a popular settlement zone" (René Coulomb, 1999).

Thus, many questions arise such as ensuring a social "mix", attracting the middle class and increasing the supply of social housing itself with consequent valorisation of the property - it is known that ensuring the right to the city for the disadvantaged is a challenge, however ensuring this right in a prestigious area for redevelopment becomes even more difficult (Maricato, 2001: 144).

b) Social housing and the revitalization of the historical centre

The answer to design and upgrading social diversity lies on imposing a policy of active social housing, safeguarding that the centre is accessible to poorer social classes. This action, in addition to reducing social exclusion also contributes for a less segregated city. Moreover, living and working closer reduce costs and the tiredness of the population as well as the city become more balanced concerning housing and work accessibility across all regions - "Only with this action a megalopolis with 18 millions inhabitants can become viable and operate in a more integrated manner and with better quality of life" (Nabil, 2005).

This view is supported by the large housing stock available in the centre, more specifically the large number of unoccupied buildings that will hardly be adequate for other use than social housing. Not to mention that the rate of population growth and, especially, the urbanization rate, indicate that the production of new housing is still the main housing program to be implemented.

Considering this analysis, it is up to the government to establish a democratic and participatory policy, guided by the interests of the majority. Thus, making use of urban management instruments that guarantee the fulfilment of the social function of property, more equitably distributing public investment in urban infrastructure and reducing the value of land it is possible to, even if partially, reverse the cycle of permanent expulsion of poorer to the periphery (Ferreira, 2005).

Nevertheless, there are some cultural and economical barriers. With respect to the lines of public funding, inconsistency is noted at municipal,

state and federal level. It would be more logical to create specific lines of funding for the redevelopment of downtown areas. It thus becomes imperative to know the payment capacity of the population to define the amount of subsidy required.

On the other hand, one of the unexpected outcomes that resulted from the research was that the cost to recycle buildings constitutes a major obstacle to the construction of projects of social interest housing. This aspect can be improved with the development of technology and a possible strengthening of specialized companies through incentives and technical training (Silva, 2007). In fact, one must rely on a technological policy for the supply chain of construction since the reform of buildings requires new building components, new equipment and new materials (Maricato, 2001: 146).

<center>c) Study cases</center>

During this work, two empirical evaluations were applied in order to understand the profile and motivations of the key stakeholders involved in the question of social housing in the historical centre of São Paulo. More specifically, the militants of popular housing movements and the residents of social housing that are already built.

The main purpose of the assessment performed to the housing movements was to achieve a better understanding about popular organizations that defined strategies concerning the housing shortage. More specifically, to look for a generic profile of the supporters with emphasis on recruitment patterns and meanings of participation. Also it was aimed to recover part of the history of practices and routines of these movements as well as the level of adherence to their ideas in order to discuss the importance of strategies for occupancy, institutional participation and the struggle for housing in downtown.

Figure 2 - Prestes Maia Building.(Author)

Regarding the methodology adopted, the study was based firstly on an interview that took place in July of this year to Ivaneti de Araújo, coordinator of the Movement Homeless Center (MSTC), and secondly on the academic study done by Paterniani et all entitled "Occupy, claiming participate: on the repertoire of action of housing movement in São Paulo", that was based on interviews with activists applied to the 11th Meeting of State House of People's Union of housing Movements (UMM). The interview

Figure 3 - Vilinha 25 de Janeiro. (Author)

Figure 4 - Riskallah Jorge Building.
(https://blogcasasbacanas.wordpress.com/2014/10/07/ri
skallah-jorge/)

Figure 5 - Brigadeiro Tobias Building. (Integra, 2004).

to the coordinator of the referred movement took place in the popular occupation of Prestes Maia building (Figure 2), enabling to learn in first-hand the reality experienced by the people who live there.

The second assessment, the one related to the post-occupancy developments of social housing, aimed to study the relationship between housing units and residents. It helped identifying and analysing the positive and negative aspects of the building environment as well as provided a better understanding of characteristics and behaviours of the residents.

The methodology adopted was based on visits to the projects and surveys to their residents. The questionnaires were administered at the homes of the respondents during the day at varying times during the period of July. The selected buildings were "Vilinha 25 de Janeiro" (Figure 3), the "Riskallah Jorge" (figure 4) and "Brigadeiro Tobias" (Figure 5). The first was a project built from scratch to social habitation and the other two correspond to rehabilitated buildings. Regarding the questionnaires, were conducted based on existing studies in academia Salcedo et al.

Regarding the surveys it could be concluded that it is interesting to promote residential use in the historical centre supporting the idea that it is feasible to implement a policy of social housing. It was also found that in addition to overcome idleness and abandonment, people like to live there, not only by the wide availability of infrastructure, but mainly because, in general, they have had a marked improvement in their life quality.

Furthermore, housing movements are central stakeholders concerning the disputes over the right to have decent housing, demonstrating a great capacity for mobilization and pressure on the government. One of the justifications for the strength of the movement lies in its ability to learn from the experience of conflict interaction with the state, varying their strategies according to the opportunities and constraints imposed by the environment (Cardoso, 1983; 1987 cit in Paternini et al).

CONCLUSION

Social housing policy is one of the most complex fields of urban planning and it obeys to principles and guidelines that are primarily intended to ensure to the population, especially with low income, access to adequate housing (Fagnani, s.d.). To ensure its effectiveness, it is necessary to take into account a number of variables, including demand and supply which is reflected in the diversity of stakeholders and policy makers involved in the promotion of housing, in terms of present and future.

On the other hand, historical centres should be considered as living urban areas and fundamental parts of our cities. An integrated strategy is essential when trying to recover urban centres while looking back at its origins but without forgetting the current needs. Basically, a balance between the past and the present should preside over the formulation of innovative urban policies and guide the direction of interventions. In addition, it is important to also focus on the idea that functional improvement and improved quality of life should be priorities for intervention and management of the centres, such that it represents both citizens and promotes a distributed economic development.

Lastly, this dissertation is only a contribution to the thoughts of practitioners and theorists who advocate the creation of "fairer cities" based on social inclusion, establishing it as one of the main guidelines for urban planning.

However, it is known that it is somewhat impregnated with subjectivity. In this sense, it is noted that the theme has developed a clear affinity with Marxist/socialist ideals based on the explored bibliography. Thus, it would be interesting to understand other theories and thoughts that also guide urban planning of cities. An example are the prospects related to the economic performance of urban areas since we live in a capitalist society. Moreover, we know that to fund social policies, particularly the development of social housing, cities need investment and this is intrinsically related to policies aimed at urban productivity. These aspects highlight the importance of understanding the economic side of the question.

In addition, the study also used bibliography that was mostly written before the proposed redevelopment of the historical centre and because of

that there are not many evidences of their practicability and success. However, according to the Census of 2012 of IBGE, we can see that the growth rates of the region turned to positive levels, leading us to question whether these observations are a result of the new policies implemented.

Regarding the evaluation models which were aimed to a rather solid basis to the work, it is considered that it would be relevant to also address higher classes as a way to analyse their interests and the possibility of living in the centre.

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Ferreira, J. (Outubro 2005). Ferreira,Impactos da implantação dos instrumentos urbanísticos do Estatuto da Cidade nas dinâmicas de valorização fundiárias e imobiliárias da área central de São Paulo. *1º Fórum de Pesquisa da Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade Mackenzie.* São Paulo.

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