Genesis and Transformation of Informal Urban Areas: The cases of São Paulo, Luanda and Istanbul

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Abstract
The problem of urban housing is crucial for the future of the cities and mankind. In order to influence the trends in growth of Informal Urban Areas (IUA), it is useful to study the intervention practices applied to these areas, as well as the historical developments of regions or countries that went through similar urban transition processes. It is a goal of this work to contribute to understand how the relationship between: a) the demographic and economic dynamics, and b) the definition and implementation of housing policies or urban planning and management, have been shaping the genesis and transformations of IUA. Three cities, in three different continents, were selected: São Paulo, Luanda, and Istanbul, with their own specificities in terms of origins and typologies of IUA, and of the strategies of intervention, rendering the references needed for a critical analysis by comparison. This work concludes that the IUA arise when a sudden growth of urban population meets dysfunctional housing markets and ineffective action from public authorities. Being this a general truth which applies to all cases studied, the answers diverge. Making use of a categorization system, it was observed that, for instance, the interventions in São Paulo show a bigger concern in keeping the residents in their houses. On the other side, the public authorities in Luanda and Istanbul show a preference for relocation of the residents and eradication of the existing IUA, notwithstanding the fact that Luanda shows some changes in the mindset. Further analysis of the interventions and programs reveal that the differences, while being based on ideological assumptions, will always depend on the economic situation of the nations, in terms of its sustainability and continuity.

Keywords: Urban renewal; Housing; Favela; Musseque; Gecekondu

1. Introduction
In 2012, 863 million people lived in Informal Urban Areas (IUA). According to a UN report (United Nations - DESA, 2014), that represents 33% of the world’s urban population. Even the most reliable estimates on the development of this event cannot be conclusive about its future. It seems obvious that this is an unwelcome scenario, incompatible with the expectations for the 21st century humanity.

In a context of increased growth of the urban population (due to rural migration and natural growth), many countries, especially in Asia and Africa, are still in the early stages of their own process of “urbanization of the population.” The numbers show that the problem of urban housing remains a crucial issue for the future of cities and the humanity. In order to be able to contribute to adequate urgent responses in the form of policies and practices that might help to change the supply growth trajectories of informal dwellings and urban land in these countries, it is important to study the current practices of intervention in IUA, the historical evolution paths of regions or countries that have gone through the same processes of urban transition and to learn from their successful or unsuccessful experiences.

This work aims at contributing to unveil the extent to which the relationships between (a) demographic and economic dynamics, and (b) the definition and implementation of housing and planning and urban management policies conditioned and still conditions the genesis and transformation of IUA.

For this study it is important to explore three issues:
1. What are IUA and how to characterize them?
2. What factors - specific or transversal to national realities - motivate the emergence of these areas?
3. What are the responses of organizations and public authorities, through the definition of policies, both at national and international levels, to address the problems of IUA and how do these policies work in the terrain, i.e., what are the modalities for intervention in these areas?

A comprehensive study, intending on analyzing all cities that have suffered interventions in this area, could never result in sufficient detail and depth for each one. For this reason, three cities were selected, in different contexts and at different stages of their process of urbanization, for study and comparison: São
Paulo, Luanda and Istanbul. The expectation is that their different contexts will reveal specificities, both in the genesis and types of informal urban areas, as in the modalities of intervention.

The three selected cities belong to very different geographies, with different historical backgrounds and socio-political characteristics. Due to the large differences in historical contexts, urbanization experiences, Europe, North America or even Japan will be only marginally relevant to this study. In this respect, best matches in speed and scale of urban transition can be found in South America, Asia or Africa.

To perform this analysis, a theoretical framework was formulated, focused mainly in the genesis of IUA, i.e., in the factors which motivated the emergence of these areas and how they are characterized and, secondly, the transformations, that is, what the responses of governments, academia and development agencies, and how these materialize in 'actions on the ground.' The analysis of the three case studies followed the formulation of the theoretical framework, allowing a more detailed view of each reality in the light of the ideas developed in the theoretical framework, and the comparison of the case studies, to create references for critical analysis.

Reports and other technical and scientific documents were used as generic sources, as well as information obtained by the contact with selected local realities, through visits that allowed either direct observation and informal interviews with academic, technical people and other privileged local witnesses.

2. Informal Urban Areas: a global problem

The rural-urban transition and the growth of cities

By analyzing the global dynamics of population growth, one can understand that it has been more intense in cities, which can be explained by a combination of natural growth and rural exodus. Moreover, half the world's population is already urban and it is estimated that by 2050 it will be two-thirds, with most of this growth happening in Asia and Africa (United Nations, 2014).

If this rural-urban transition is accompanied by sound economic development policies it can be positive and contribute to a faster reduction of poverty on a global level. Indeed, there is evidence suggesting a correlation between the percentage of urban population in a given country and the level of human development in the same country (UN-Habitat, 2010). Moreover, this sudden population growth presents a risk factor which may materialize in housing shortage problems and associated challenges for city development.

The shortage and provision of urban housing

One cannot say that these problems arise directly from population growth in cities. In fact, it can be seen that the negative consequences of this growth only appear if there are dysfunctional relationships between the government, the private sector and the population in need.

By analyzing these relationships, it can be found that there are no formal real estate markets accessible to the population, due to issues both on the demand and the supply side: the increase in inequality, low economic growth, low wages, informal/precarious labor and difficult access to credit, on the one hand, and real estate speculation, the costs of building, or operational problems in the real estate sector, on the other, creating a mismatch between the demand and supply prices that prevent the functioning of markets and the formal provision of housing by the private sector. In the third apex of these dysfunctional relationships, the government fails both in its regulatory functions and as a provider, not only due to poor governance (technical incapacity, financial incapacity, corruption, cronyism, etc.), but also ideology issues that impact in the setting of priorities and strategies. In short, there is no correspondence between the growing demand and the supply of urban housing, providing the basis for the genesis of informality.

The socio-spatial segregation and the right to the city

Although, in the description of the main factors leading to the formation of IUA, focus was placed on the housing problem, it should be pointed out that this issue is wider and translates into urban developing problems, with spatial segregation reflecting social segregation, being therefore not only a symptom but a problem in itself. In this sense, it is possible to conclude that the housing problem is a cause and an effect of a socio-spatial problem, of increasing "social immobility", and that the right to housing must be understood in a broader context of the right to the city as a decisive factor of change in the philosophy of interventions in IUA.

Informal Urban Areas (IUA): concepts and dynamics

The IUA are, in a broad sense, the physical manifestation of the alternatives found by a vast needy
population, faced with the constraints mentioned. However, more specific definitions can be presented, reflecting existing characteristics and allowing - in a way that minimizes subjectivity – the identification and enumeration of IUA. To this end, the operational definition of the United Nations (UN-Habitat, 2003) will be used, includes its five criteria: (1) inadequate access to drinking water; (2) inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructures; (3) poor structural quality of houses and location in hazardous areas; (4) overcrowding of housing units; and finally (5) ownership insecurity.

Using this operational definition, the dynamics are identified on a global level to understand, for example, that the total population living in IUA is increasing despite the decrease in their percentage in relation to the urban population, since the latter is increasing in absolute terms. It is also known that the regions where there are more residents in IUA are sub-Saharan Africa followed by Southeast Asia, which presents nevertheless a faster decline in population living in IUA (United Nations - DESA, 2013). Using the same indicator and comparing the three countries under study, it was observed that Turkey has the smaller proportion of urban residents in IUA - 11.9% - followed by Brazil - 22.3% - and then, Angola, with 55.5% (UNstats, 2015).

**Global agents and approaches to IUA**

For a chronological perspective on the philosophies of approach to IUA it will be useful to analyze not only government practices (analysis that is forcefully generic), but also the practices of the World Bank and UN-Habitat, as agencies with global coverage and influence to advocate and lead the change of practices with significant impact.

Until the 1970s, government practices in developing countries were merely negligent (UN-Habitat, 2003) or, in other cases, of eradication, expulsion or resettlement in inadequate state housing units. In the few cases in which the response to the housing deficit followed European examples - through formal provision of social housing - the high cost of the approach, and the corruption frequently associated, meant that the houses ended up being attributed to the middle classes and political clienteles, perverting the stated objectives (UN-Habitat, 2003).

With the arrival of the 1970s and the emergence of a stronger and more active civil society, the IUA started to be considered a structural perennial phenomenon, the previous approaches recognized as failures, and the diversity of legal frameworks and local realities acknowledged (UN-Habitat, 2003). The improvement projects for IUA (slum upgrading) and land and services (sites and services) implemented in Senegal in 1972, marked the first fundamental change in the World Bank’s housing policies. As a result, from that year to 1981, about 90% of the Bank's investment in housing would be in these kind of projects (Spence, Annez, & Buckley, 2009), marking a pivotal point and contributing to the forsaking of previous approaches by many governments (Abbott, 2002). In the same period, the United Nations organized the first conference on Human Settlements and Sustainable Development (Habitat I, Vancouver 1976), which laid the basis for the foundation of the United Nations Program for Human Settlements: UN-Habitat.

In the early 1980s, it was recognized that the improvement of the physical environment was the core element of the IUA qualification process in this new approach (Abbott, 2002). However, results failed to meet expectations. With a new president, the World Bank changed significantly its policies. The focus moved from IUA upgrading and sites-and-services projects to help real estate financing institutions. Between 1992 and 2005, investment in IUA improvement and sites-and-services projects decreased to 10% (Spence et al., 2009). The UN-Habitat went along the dominant philosophy between the mid-1980s and the second Habitat conference in 1996. By adopting policies such as the "Global Strategy for Shelter to year 2000" in 1988, the agency encouraged governments to change the focus of their policies from house building and services provision to a broader approach including regulation and incentives for "greasing" the markets and increase the number of participants in the issues of housing for the poorest (UN-HABITAT, 2013b).

In 1996, with the Habitat II conference in Istanbul, UN-Habitat entered a restructuring and strengthening phase, culminating, in 2002, to its rise to the status of United Nations Development Program under direct supervision of the Economic and Social Council, marking a shift in its policies. Currently, UN-Habitat advocates a holistic approach and the most recent reports of the agency on best practices highlight the expressions "Participatory slum improvement", "City-wide slum upgrading" and "Street-led slum upgrading". With these concepts, the UN-Habitat puts emphasis on maximizing the participation of communities; moving away from pilot projects to implementation of IUA qualification programs in the whole city as a planning unit; reinforce the importance of the street as a public space and as engines of transformation of IUA; accept the importance of sensible and participatory physical and social mapping; increase ownership security of residents; ensure services maintenance and, at last, allowing incremental improvements of IUA (Edward Miller, 2012; Mboup, Warah, & UN-Habitat, 2013; UN-Habitat, 2011, 2012, 2013 a).
Categorization system of the approaches to IUA

Despite the possible identification of a chronological progression in terms of the most common and accepted practices as "best-practices", it is possible to find currently diverse approaches to IUA. During this study, the survey of these approaches allowed the identification of sufficient differentiation factors for the proposal of a categorization system of such interventions as shown in Fig 1.

1. The first factor to take into account when considering actions on IUA is whether it is a preventive or interventional action (first level in Chart 1). Market regulation or housing provision are hardly seen as direct approaches to IUA but have a great influence on the issue of management as a whole, and not infrequently are linked to actual interventions. Within the preventive approach, the market regulation issues are extensive and their enumeration here is not justifiable, but, as an example, any historical analysis of housing policies can show the impact of measures such as the freezing of rents. The second factor is the provision of housing, including both finished housing units and other incremental building strategies such as assisted self-building programs, building plots with pre-built infrastructures (sites-and-services) and plots with expandable basic housing units.

2. With respect to the interventional dimension, one or more existing IUA are, obviously, considered. In this case there are four main categories depending on the fate of the target population in relation to their housing unit and in relation to their location within the city:
   i) If the intervention involves the displacement of the population without a set destination it is called Eviction. It can be forced or induced. It is an induced eviction if, for example, the agent provides money so the people dislodged can find alternatives by themselves.
   ii) If the intervention involves the displacement but with the relocation set for some destination elsewhere in the city, it is called Ex-situ Rehousing or Relocation. This intervention usually involves the provision of new housing units.
   iii) If the intervention involves the eviction and rehousing within the same area of intervention or at walk distance, it is called In-situ Rehousing. It can be subcategorized in total/global or partial/specific. Global in-situ relocation applies to cases where all the IUA is demolished to be rebuilt under an urban plan aiming at rehousing the population concerned, and often other people with greater purchasing power, to help finance the intervention. The specific in-situ rehousing happens when only a few people within the IUA are displaced for some reason (hill contention, environmental protection, equipment installation, etc.) and rehoused in new housing units built in or near the same area. It is very common that this intervention is carried out in the context of an intervention of the next category: Qualification.
   iv) If the intervention does not involve displacement it is called Qualification. If the focus of intervention is the improvement of existing housing units, it is called Housing Qualification. Examples of this type of intervention are the programs for making available to residents kits of building materials at reduced prices. When the focus is the public space (e.g., infrastructure, services, equipment, etc.) it is called Urban Qualification. Also considered are the components of Social and Economic Assistance, including micro-credit programs or community organization development, and Land Regularization, or any program designed to increase the ownership security of residents or to protect them from force evictions. These last two components are related to the category market regulation because, like the
latter, they do not take the form of physical interventions and are to some extent "intangible".

3. Case studies

In the previous point, a theoretical framework was presented, aiming at meeting the objectives set out in a global perspective, without addressing specific cases. The contents developed create the foundation that will be used to analyze the case studies described below. After the presentation of the case studies, a comparative analysis will be performed, using also the system of categorization of interventions.

3.1. São Paulo

About the Favelas

The IUA in São Paulo are located predominantly in remote areas and are home to about 30% of the local population (SMDU, 2012). During the years of strong demographic growth (1950s to 1980), these settlements occupied vacant land on the city fringes, invading areas of environmental protection particularly in the north and the south. Deployed without adequate infrastructure, they blindly occupied land with large physical and environmental constraints, fragile soils zones in hazardous areas of high slopes or in floodplains, contaminated soils, near landfills or garbage dumps, among others. Environmental impacts are especially negative for access to drinking water and silting of water courses.

The IUA in São Paulo are categorized in the Municipal Housing Plan (PMH) (SEHAB, 2012) as follows:

«Favela» (yellow in Fig. 1) is defined in the PMH as "occupation disregarding urban and building regulations in public or private zones, predominantly disorganized, with poor infrastructure, with buildings predominantly self-built and precarious, for low-income and socially vulnerable families."

«Núcleo Urbanizado» is "the old favela, 100% covered by urban infrastructure networks built under different housing programs, but still pending legal regularization."

«Cortiço» (turquoise in Fig. 1) is the "multi-family collective housing, consisting of one or more buildings in a single urban plot, divided into several apartments rented, sublet or let in any way; with several functions performed in the same apartment; with access and common use of open spaces and sanitary facilities; with predominantly precarious accesses and infrastructure, and overcrowded."

«Conjunto Habitacional Irregular» is defined as one that "despite having been provisioned by the government, still lacks land, legal and registry regularization."

«Loteamento Irregular» (orange in Fig. 1) is the "settlement characterized by the existence of a promoting agent and/or trader, whose type and morphology are small land plots for uni- or multi-family use, that have been deployed and occupied without prior approval by the responsible public bodies or, when approved or in the approval process, were implemented in violation of the law or in violation of the approved project."

Fig. 2 Spatial distribution in São Paulo of the settlements characterized: favelas, cortiços and loteamentos irregulares (yellow, turquoise and orange, respectively). Source: (SEHAB, 2012)

Interventions in the IUA of São Paulo

The study of the interventions in São Paulo focused primarily on the work of the Municipal Housing Department (SEHAB), the main operational agent of housing policies in São Paulo and, as such, the main player in São Paulo IUA. From their work it is worth mentioning the creation of a support operational system called HABISP, as well as three of the IUA intervention programs with greater impact (Programa de Requalificação de Cortiços, Programa de Urbanização e Regularização Fundiária de Assentamentos e Programa Mananciais) and the opening, by the SEHAB, of a tender for intervention projects aiming supporting plural and comprehensive solutions: "Renova SP."

The HABISP, the prioritization of interventions and the integrated action

The HABISP allows the aggregation and geo-referencing of all relevant information, of physical, social, economic, legal and geographic nature, making it possible to cross-reference data from various agents in order to generate important indexes to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of housing programs. Using registration data and identification of
the IUA perimeter based on aerial photography, files were created with the number of households, land ownership, urban integration, infrastructure networks, safety data (fire risk, structural risks), sanitary units, health conditions, and other relevant characteristics. Subsequently, with the Prioritization Intervention System, indexes are generated from the data collected, characterizing the precariousness of a given settlement, where the weight for each criterion depends on the housing program. These indexes are: incidence of geotechnical risk in the area, degree of implementation of infrastructure networks, São Paulo index of social vulnerability (IPVS) and health index.

Cortiços Requalification Program
The “cortiços” requalification program has been applied in buildings in the boroughs of Sé and Mooca - in the center of São Paulo - since 2005. This program “aims at requalifying multi-family houses, providing minimum conditions of sanitation, ventilation, lighting, physical and legal certainty, (...) according to the parameters established in the Moura Law (Municipal Law 10,928/91).” Under this law, any property owners of “encortiçados” who do not improve them in accordance with minimum conditions of health and safety, are subject to penalties and may have the property “sealed” by the borough. Basically, as mentioned above, the Moura Law defines “cortiços” and what are the minimum health conditions expected for them. In addition, ZEIS 3 creates an exception system for the remaining city. Besides this incentive component to the requalification of cortiços, other measures are in place, such as regularization of rental contracts, housing provision for reducing the density of cortiços and social work. To make the program operational, Sehab created coordination links with the boroughs and the CDHU that, through the “Programa de Atualização de Cortiços” financed by the BID (PAC-BID), delivers housing units for families who have to be removed (SEHAB/Habi, 2008).

Urbanization and Regularization of Favelas Program (PURFA)
This program resulted from the merger of the programs for “favelas upgrading, regularization of settlements, regularization of municipal public areas” (SEHAB, 2012, p. 119) implemented until 2009, including those applied to housing projects promoted by Sehab, CDHU or Cohab. It is mainly involved in: urban qualification of IUA, timely construction of new housing units to rehouse the residents of houses that may be removed, and land regularization of pre-existences. It is based, as much as possible, on the assumption of keeping residents in their homes. Several of the projects studied included, for example, the consolidation of slopes with the creation of public spaces and the introduction of equipment or, in another example, the protection of a water line with the creation of a park and new houses.

Program “Mananciais”
This program continues and expands the program that was implemented in Guarapiranga between the 1992 and 2000, an environmental requalification of IUA located in the environmental protection zones of the watersheds of the Guarapiranga and the Billings, the main sources of drinking water for the Metropolitan region of São Paulo, promoting not only an increase in the quality of life of the resident population but also of all the inhabitants of the region. The Mananciais program has basically the same components and objectives of PURFA, but specifically targeting IUA located in so defined macro-areas of environmental protection, which is reflected in its priorities and concrete actions.

Tender “Renova SP”
The 2011 “Renova SP” tender stood out, even being nothing more than an operational tool for existing programs, because it was autonomous in the way it opened doors to the plurality of alternatives of intervention projects in the IUA of São Paulo. It was a competition between proposals for the 22 PAI prioritized in the Municipal Housing Plan. The guidelines manual is very detailed but not restrictive of the diversity of architectural solutions. The project evaluation tool provides a scientific and specific approach to project evaluation by the jury, in addition to providing transparency in the selection process and assisting participants as a working tool. The anonymity of participants is guaranteed by using the digital system, contributing to the efficiency of the process (Barda & França, 2011).

3.2. Luanda
About the Musseques
The term «mussequê» is used to describe many of the informal settlements in Luanda and, although there is no consensus definition for its use, fits the UN definition of slum. The etymological roots of the word are in kimbundo, a dialect spoken in the area of Luanda, which means red sand/earth (DWA & CEHS, 2005). According to Pepetela (1990), the first musseques appeared in this type of land. Some slums are located in risk areas: drainage ditches, steep embankments, depressions with natural water, etc. (Raposo & Salvador, 2007). As many of them occupy clay soils, apart from the usual problems in IUA, the musseques are affected by poor drainage of rainwater, leading to stagnant pools of water which aggravate health conditions (ease
of propagation of flies, worms, mosquitoes, bacteria). A research program on the standards of informal settlements and urban poverty conducted by the NGO Development Workshop Angola (DWA) identified several typologies that allow the characterization of the urban morphology (DWA & CEHS, 2005). Among these, are those that can fitted in the category of IUA: “Bairros Populares”; “Musseques Antigos”; “Musseques Ordenados”; “Musseques em Transição”; “Musseques Periféricos.” At the end of the colonial, “bairros populares” (popular neighborhoods) were built by the state or by public companies (orange in Fig. 2), modeled in the “townships” of South Africa (DWA, 2011). Built on a large scale by building companies, their level of infrastructure and services was reduced. The construction of these neighborhoods ceased after the independence, and the subsequent deterioration of services has blurred the differences between “bairros populares” and “musseques”, leading to its abandon (DWA & CEHS, 2005). The “musseques antigos” (old musseques, light green in Fig. 2) are those that already existed since independence. Then harboring more than half the population of Luanda, but only about 40% today, they have expanded to free areas and inhabited urban areas and suffered a densification process when horizontal expansion became impossible (DWA, 2011). These musseques had been growing over the centuries, and have reached considerable dimensions during the colonial era. Their location, next to employment opportunities and utilities, makes them desirable (DWA & CEHS, 2005). The “musseques ordenados” (ordered musseques, blue in Fig. 2) resulted from the informal extension of urbanized areas along roads and service corridors, and were being legalized by the colonial administration, practice that ceased in the post-colonial administration, leading to some densification and invasion of roads and areas reserved for services. Many of the approximately 478,000 inhabitants of these neighborhoods are reticent to call their places of residence as musseques (DWA, 2011). The “musseques antigos”, which a few decades ago reached saturation levels in terms of population density, started growing up as residents turned their dwellings huts in cement buildings, sometimes with two or three floors, becoming thus the “Musseques em Transição” (evolving musseques, deep pink in Fig. 2), where about 623,000 inhabitants live today (DWA, 2011). Several of these musseques experience a process of “gentrification”, as the some poorer households sell their properties and migrate to the urban periphery. The Angolans that sought refuge in the capital, fleeing from the dangerous and unstable rural areas during the civil war, began by overcrowding the musseques antigos. Refugees in the same circumstances that arrived later were forced to find cheap land in the urban periphery, giving rise to the “musseques periféricos” (peripheral musseques, brown in Fig. 2), where 1.24 million people live today (DWA, 2011).

Interventions in the IUA of Luanda

Urban expansion and rehousing projects – “Novas Centralidades”

This group of projects encompasses several interventions for the creation of new neighborhoods, or “centralidades,” in the peripheral areas of Panguila, Sapuí, Zango and Kilamba, through the massive building of new houses. The study of these interventions revealed that they aimed, most of the time, at receiving displaced people from other areas of the city, with several reports of forced evictions. These projects are sometimes built by international consortia in exchange for rights to exploit the country’s resources.

PDGCSR

The “Plano Director Geral de Cazenga, Sambizanga and Rangel” (the Master Plan of…) aims to provide formal housing with infrastructure and public services to about 3 million residents. The preparation of detailed plans and urban development plans are responsibility of the Gabinete Técnico de Reconversão Urbana do Cazenga e Sambizanga (GTRUCS, 2012). In summary, the plan identifies “compromised areas” and areas “for urban regeneration,” the majority, and proposes to eradicate the IUA and replacing them with new houses. The plan was made in the assumption that part of the area would be allocated to “social housing” for rehousing the current inhabitants.

Development Workshop Angola

The work of the Development Workshop - Angola, the first NGO to operate in the country (since 1981) is noteworthy. Although they do not deal directly with housing, they manage a set of programs aiming at
providing urban services and support to residents of IUA.

In 1999, DWA joined three other NGO in a program to fight poverty in the province of Luanda (LUPP - Luanda Urban Poverty Program) funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). In the scope of this program, but not only, DWA has developed projects in the areas described, including basic services: water, private and public latrines, waste collection, and community nurseries; in finance: micro-credit, savings accounts, consumer cooperatives, and business development services (BDS); in civic participation: community organization and participative planning at the municipal and communal level; in research: studies using surveys, studies using GIS, and scientific publications.

3.3. Istanbul

About the Gecekondu

The modern history of Istanbul is marked by the rapid growth of its population, housed in large part illegally. The gecekondus were illegal because they either were: (a) built in public land belonging to the treasure department, (b) built on private property of third parties, (c) built without building and land occupancy permits (Baharoglu & Leitmann, 1998). Baharoglu (1996) shows how certain political and economic events, either with external causes (such as the oil crisis of 1970) or internal, affect the real estate market - especially for small investors - making it swing between formality and informality, and blurring the boundary.

From its origins as a technical term, Gecekondu evolved, in common language, to come to mean a specific typology of self-built house and settlement, occurring during the industrialization and rural migration period between 1945 and 1985. “Gece” means “night” and “kondu” means “to settle” resulting in “settling at night” (Esen, 2009). The first waves of immigrants built their own home in invaded grounds, literally overnight, with the help of family and countrymen (Baharoglu, 1996). The term has evolved to include other informal settlements and building typologies. Its use denotes a prevailing spontaneous action during this first wave of mass migration, providing housing while conventional processes or government initiatives failed (Esen, 2009). The houses were built without the usual infrastructure (water, sewers, roads, electricity, telephone, drainage, waste collection, transportation...) and the residents received lower quality services, informally or at higher prices (Baharoglu & Leitmann 1998) and organized communally and in networks for the distribution of goods and services (Esen, 2009).

After several waves of amnesties related to the illegal status and with the gradual installation of infrastructures in the gecekondu by the government, these IUA were progressively consolidated and integrated in the city. Maybe that’s why it was not possible to find an official survey of the areas considered “gecekondu”.

Interventions on the IUA of Istanbul

The study of the interventions in Istanbul focused exclusively on the work of the Housing Development Administration (TOKI) – an agency under the supervision of the presidency - and it is safe to say that all interventions in IUA result directly or indirectly from its operations. The interventions studied were grouped according to the legal basis used - which can be considered analogous to a program - and for each group some paradigmatic neighborhood interventions were described: Sulukule and Tarlabasi in the first group and Tepeüstü, Ayazma and Basibyük in the second, as described below.

“Urban Renewal” and “Preservation of Historical and Cultural Property”

The interventions in the neighborhoods of Sulukule and Tarlabasi were mainly based in the application of Law nº 5366, passed in 2005, which gives TOKI and municipalities the power to carry out renovation projects, not only in places considered degraded, but also in historical city sites, as is the case of these two neighborhoods. The most relevant article in this law gives the right to conduct “urgent expropriations”, an argument that had never been used except in cases of natural disasters or for national defense purposes (Turkun, 2015). This law, protecting degraded historical and cultural heritage through renovation and reutilization, has been used as a threat in early negotiations to persuade owners to collaborate (AGFE, 2009). The intervention consisted basically in the eviction of residents and partial eradication of the IUA – in the case of Tarlabasi - or total eradication - in the case of Sulukule - and subsequent building of new houses that are, usually, above the means of the dislodged population.

“Urban renewal” and “threat of natural disasters”

Interventions in the districts of Tepeüstü, Ayazma and Basibyük were based on the Law nº 5393, also passed in 2005, which allowed the classification of "urban renewal" areas in order to "take measures against the risk of earthquakes and to protect the historical and cultural heritage." In the specific cases of the above districts, as with they were peripheral neighborhoods of reduced real estate value, the argument used was that of security. This argument would be strengthened - as well as the obstacles to the defense in court of the rights of residents - by the Law nº 5998, passed in 2010,
and the Law nº 6306, passed in 2011 ("law of classification of disaster risk areas"), which gave the new Ministry of Urbanization and Environment, along with the Housing Development Administration (TOKI), full responsibility in decisions on urban renewal. With this law, the government won a "carte blanche" to implement, using TOKI, renovation projects throughout the country, using the "risk" argument. It became impossible to stop renovation projects in court (Turkun, 2015). The owners of "risk areas" found themselves forced to sell the land to the municipality or to demolish their homes at their own cost (Cavusoglu, Strutz, Bekmen, & Akça, 2014). These interventions resulted in the displacement of the poorest groups from the areas of renewal. The neighborhoods had complex ownership structures and, although the de jure property was kept after renovations, the de facto residents without legal property titles were evicted to other regions (Turk & Altes, 2014).

4. Analysis of interventions

In this point, the characteristics of the interventions in each of the cases studied will be confronted and what distinguishes them will be highlighted. The categorization system proposed previously will be used for this effect. Fig. 4 summarizes the results.

Considering the first level of the developed scheme, the cases studied fall into an interventional dimension, which is natural since the emphasis of the research was on direct interventions in existing IUAs. There are two exceptions: (1) the “Novas Centralidades” in Luanda, where there is new housing units built aim at alleviating the housing deficit and are not intended at displacing population from specific IUA and (2) the case of “Programa de Requalificação de Cortiços” because it is a housing qualification program implemented via the imposition of legal obligations on the owners, which can also be considered an initiative of market regulation.

Within the interventional dimension, under the category of Ex-situ Rehousing, in the second level of the scheme, a group stands out, composed by the interventions of TOKI in Istanbul (Urban renewal) and the “Novas Centralidades” in Luanda, both determined to eradicate existing IUAs, displacing its inhabitants and relocating them in other areas of the cities (almost always on the periphery) in new housing units.

A second group deserving highlight is composed of the “Programa de Urbanização e Regularização de Favelas”, the “Programa Mananciais” and the “Renova SP”, that fall in between Qualification and In-situ Rehousing.

These programs are based on the maintenance of people in place, and put an emphasis on the qualification of urban space (infrastructure, access, equipment) as well as in land regulation. However, in almost all interventions there is the need to evict some people to contain slopes, protect water lines, etc. In such cases, residents are relocated to housing units built within the boundaries of the IUA intervened or, if not possible, in the immediate vicinity.

Besides these two groups, other cases that fall into distinct categories: (i) the “Programa de Requalificação de Cortiços”, although it can be classified as a market regulation initiative as described above, it is essentially a Housing Qualification program, intent on improving

Fig. 4 Synthesis of the case-studies’ categorization
the health conditions of housing units without definitive eviction of residents; (ii) the “Plano Director Geral do Cazenga, Sambizanga e Rangel” (PDGCSR), which implies the total eradication of the IUA that fall within the plan boundaries, but provides for the resettlement of the population in social housing to be built in the

5. Conclusions
The analysis performed focused mainly on the implementation of the categorization system to the cases studied. Two large groups stand out from the categorization regarding types of intervention: 1) the intervention of Sehab in São Paulo, and 2) the “Novas Centralidades” and the TOKI interventions in Luanda and Istanbul respectively.

It was noted that the work of Sehab reflects the principles expressed in the Plano Municipal de Habitação regarding minimum displacement of inhabitants and emphasis on land regulation and urban qualification. On the other hand, the fact that, both in Istanbul and in Luanda, the option was to dislodge and displace the population suggests that the choice of this strategy depends not so much on the technical and financial conditions to ensure success - as they are very distinct from each other - but on the ideological assumptions and the political environment that motivate this choice.

At first glance, it may be argued that the government parties in Turkey (AKP) and Angola (MPLA) are located on opposite sides of the usual political spectrum (left-right) and would thus have different assumptions. But this analysis, beyond being simplistic, would ignore a common aspect that is crucial: political regimes marked by authoritarianism and by a centralized administrations organized around their presidents. Now it is natural that a strong government, when it comes to actions that affect the general population, but a weak one, when it comes to resist the influences of economic interests (domestic or foreign), might have be prone to initiatives that feed socio-spatial segregation and the eradication of IUA. The opposite behavior is indispensable to be able to create and apply the planning instruments that embody conditions of inclusion and social justice (as in the case of the Brazilian examples of IPTU, Outorga Onerosa, ZEIS, etc.)

On the other hand, the adequacy of the strategies of prevention/intervention in IUA depend on the context and the economic and demographical dynamics. If the expected growth of IUA is high (for example, if population growth is expected to be high) then the strategies should put emphasis on tackling inequalities (with redistributive policies?); while, at the same time, accommodating the IUA growth through realistic planning, that minimizes the negative aspects of informality and facilitates future interventions and the progressive improvement of these areas. If, on the other hand, stabilization or reduction of the factors that lead to the creation of IUA is expected, it would be more sensible to plan with emphasis on the transformation of existing IUA or even in eradicating them, if the rights and freedom of choice of the residents can be protected, and there is no segregation nor discrimination by the government.

In general, it is observed that the intervention in IUA is almost always framed in the context of housing policies. However, although it is understood that assistance to residents of IUA depends on sectoral policies, it is observed that housing policies focuses too much on housing itself and may not agree with the sentiment of the population. In this case, they may be counterproductive in attaining the main objective, which is to improve the quality of life of residents (if this is really the objective).

Quality of life is influenced by several factors, and each person gives them different priorities. The importance of housing is not transversal in this equation. Nor can this concern be assigned to a whole class, as if it was a single entity. Sometimes it is more important to live close to the workplace and to live cheaply than having a proper bathroom or a spacious bedroom. Consequently, a policy that imposes change in order to improve the quality of life runs the risk of spending resources to solve a problem - poor housing - and creating a greater one - segregation - thus becoming not only ineffective but counterproductive.

If it is true that in the course of this study the advantages of not relocating people stood out, it should be noted that the issue in question here is not so much that of looking at these intervention strategies as the only valid solutions – as the balance of pros and cons depends on the context. What is argued here is for the possibility of looking at interventions in IUA as an opportunity for the governments to counter the socio-spatial segregation, and for ensuring the fundamental right to housing, but on the wider context of guaranteeing the right to full fruition of the City and full Citizenship.
6. Sources:


Turkun, A. (2015). Ruthless transformaNon efforts in the housing areas of the urban poor and implicaNons for the right to housing.


