Urban conflicts and regulation to foster social housing in central areas: the ZEIS 3 in São Paulo

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1. Brief introduction to São Paulo

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São Paulo Metropolitan Region

8,501 sqkm (10% of national territory) 39 municipalities; 2,210 sqkm of urbanised area.

19.7 million inhabitants (10.3% of national population),

11.3 million living in the capital, the MSP – Municipality of São Paulo.

Gross domestic product was US$ 421 billion, 19% of GNP (74% services and 26 % industry).

Uneven development: 63% of households earn less than 5 MW (USD 1,620) and 6% earn more than 20 MW (USD 6,480).
Uneven and segregated urban space

The middle and high incomes strata occupied the areas provided with jobs, accessibility, infrastructure and services.

The low income sectors have been “evicted” to less privileged areas considering these factors on a great level of precariousness and inadequate living conditions in central area slums, favelas and peripheral illegal settlements.
2. São Paulo City Centre
2.1 urban development and “decline”

• From 1554 until mid 19th century → little economic importance → the city was concentrated around the Historical Hill (the foundation site)

• Coffee economy (1860s-1930s) heyday of the City Centre → the rammed earth village was turned into an European style city to host the ruling elite

• Industrialisation (from the 1930s to the 1970s) a redevelopment process had occurred, following North American influence

• Since the 1960s → “urban decline” process has started → the elite and its economic activities have moved away from the central area, leaving it for the lower income strata
• From 1980 to 2000, the ten inner districts lost together about 180 thousand residents

• Almost 50 thousand vacant buildings (22% of vacancy rate against 14.5% of the city average).

• Likewise, there were 600 thousand square meters of vacant commercial floor area in the City Centre.

• With the vacancy came the abandonment.
• Some buildings have more than 15 years in municipal property tax debts, sometimes higher than their market value.

• Since 1997, housing movements have started to occupy some of these empty buildings, demanding for decent housing and public social housing programs.
2.2 City Center today

- Area → City Center 4.4 sqkm (0.2%)*
- Central Area 47 sqkm (2.1%)*

- Population → 80.5 thousand (0.4%*); 597 thousand (3%)
- 127 inhabitants per hectare (51 inhabitants/acre)
- 20% children, 70% adults and 10% elderly
- Income per capita R$ 1,950 (USD 928) (2.9 MW)

- Jobs → 370 thousand (4%**) (just City Centre)
- 820 jobs per hectare
- 14% of the Financial**
- 12% of the Public Sector**
- 10% of the Specialised Services**

- Trips → 1.4 million daily (just City Centre)
- 61% public transport (37%**)
- 19% private transport (29%**)
- 20% non motorised (34%**)
- * on metropolitan urbanised area
- ** on the Metropolitan Region figures
3. The ZEIS 3

- In 2001, the Suplicy municipal administration (2001-2004) launched the “Plano Reconstruir o Centro” (Rebuild the Center Plan) defining social housing as an important strategy to revitalize the center → “Programa Morar no Centro” (Living in the Center Program)

- The 2002 São Paulo Master Plan defined the ZEIS 3 planning tool in accordance to the plan

- The ZEIS 3 – Social Interest Special Zones is a special zoning defined where there is significant vacant land and buildings in the central area. New developments shall produce a certain amount of social housing (directed from 0 up to 6 MW families) and popular market housing (directed from 7 up to 16 MW).
FAR = 4:1

New developments in plots bigger than 500 sqm
40% Social Housing
40% Popular Housing
20% other uses

Shared management
management council

Urbanization Plan
• There was a regress in the next two administrations Serra/Kassab (2005-2008) and Kassab (2009-2012)

• Social housing was no longer a major aspect of public programs

• The **Nova Luz Project** focused on the renewal of 22 blocks around Luz rail station, pejoratively known as “Crackland” to attract big investors

• Police force has been used to coerce drug traffic and consumption and also to evict low income dwellers that occupied empty buildings
In 2009, a public competition chose a team to develop an urban project for the region.

The winning consortium is composed by Brazilian firms and AECOM Technology Corporation (designers of London Olympic Games).

In 2011, the Consortium presented the urban design based on the concepts of "New Urbanism", but disconnected from the area reality.
4. Housing production in the City Center

• According to Instituto Polis, since the 1990s, there were 44 occupations of empty buildings, hosting almost 10 thousand families in the central area.

• However, the government response was 3 times smaller than the problem:

• Since 2001 it has produced almost – 2,833 housing units (709 being financed by CEF – a federal bank, 858 by CDHU – São Paulo state Housing and Urban Development Company and 1,266 by the municipal government).

• There are also some old buildings refurbishments carried out by small contractors for low income population (Kara José, 2013).
Samora & Hirata (2013) found that:

- Between 2001 and 2010, 10,317 units were launched with up to 1 car garage, 70 sqm of floor area and maximum price of USD 2.000/sqm in the central area.

- Of this total, 3,567 units were located in ZEIS areas, ie 35% of the total.

- The highest concentration of ZEIS 3 releases occurred between 2006 and 2010, when it were launched 2,673 units, 56% of the total period.

- Districts where there was an increase in the number of units, suffered also an increase of resident population as in 2010 Census.
• Private new developments follow middle class models:
  – 90% of the buildings constructed are tower blocks (more than 10 floors)
  – 44% of the buildings present ground parking areas
  – That means that the lower income population has not been attended.

• Public developments follow traditional social housing patterns
  – 44% are up to five storey high to avoid lift costs
5. Final considerations:
market production and social movements struggles for the right to the city

- ZEIS 3 – 1 million sqm

- 51% of the area was developed:
  - Only 23.8% social housing public development
  - 22.1% popular market private housing development
  - 22.2% high income private development
  - 31.9% social facilities
• There has been a municipality omission resulting in no effective enforcement of the ZEIS 3 tool, specially to attend the lowest income strata (0 to 3 MW).

• City center social housing continues to face many threats

  – PMCMV - a major federal housing financing program is now threatening private and public social housing developers as credit caused skyrocketing land prices all over the city and the country (land values tripled in five years).

  – A new housing PPP was launched by the State and the Municipality in which only 16% of the 20,221 units predicted are aimed at the lowest income strata.

• Up to now, it seems that this population struggle is the only way to assure their right to remain and fight for decent house in the central area.
References


Thank you!
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