

CRITIC TO POSTMODERN CITY

The application of neoliberal strategies in Madrid metropolitan area

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Abstract

In 1992, it was promoted a set of operations of social housing build on the metropolitan area of Madrid called 'Programas de Actuación Urbanística, P.A.U.' [Urban Development Programs]. Initially, these programs had two main objectives. On the one hand, expanding the affordable housing supply in Madrid town area, in a context of a strong increased of cost and demand; and on the other hand, promoting the recovery of housing market as a solution for boosting the local economy, within an overall situation of financial crisis.

However, the initial approaches were perverted throughout the management process. It was set a very low densities (31.08 dwellings per hectare on average for all cases), it was liberalized a percentage of all built housing much higher than the originally planned and it was created land assessment procedures that promoted the speculation and the artificial rise of prices. In all PAUs, the road system was entirely built, maximizing so the profits of companies responsible for their construction. By means of these operations, aimed at promoting the interests of large building companies and landowners, it was driven the production of an urban space dominated by neoliberal logic, which key objective is the immediate financial profit.

Nowadays, PAUs are a clear demonstration of contradictions between the criteria of market and the principles of accountability in the common resources management that should lead urban design. When it has passed enough time to verify their failure, we consider it is necessary to analyze the different factors that were involved in their creation. Thereby, we will able to extract guidelines, solutions and strategies which allow us amend the problems arising from these development models, as well as finding urban design alternatives to overcome this kind of approaches.

Keywords: Architecture, City, Land-policy, Urban-planning, Public-space

The traditional city has died, killed by rampant capitalist development, a victim of the never-ending need to dispose of overaccumulating capital driving towards endless and sprawling urban growth no matter what the social, environmental, or political consequences. Our political task, Lefebvre suggests, is to imagine and reconstitute a totally different kind of city out of the disgusting mess of a globalizing, urbanizing capital run amok.

D. Harvey (2012, pp. XV-XVI)

In order to contribute to human habitat improvement, urban design should be interwoven with social needs of its time. This was known by 'Modern Movement's founders' when they pointed that "Architecture is the will of an epoch translated into space: living, changing, new", "the new architecture is the inevitable logical product... of our age", or "the architect's task consists in coming into agreement with the orientation of his epoch..." ["La arquitectura es la voluntad de una época traducida al espacio: viviente, cambiante, nueva", "la nueva arquitectura es el inevitable producto lógico... de nuestra época", o "la tarea del arquitecto consiste en ponerse de acuerdo con la orientación de su época..."] (quoted in Rowe & Koetter, 1981, p. 32). These statements that correspond respectively to Mies van der Rohe, Gropius and Le Corbusier, reveal the solid conviction of the old masters in the symbiotic relationship that must be given between historical needs and architectural embodiments in each epoch and place.

Meanwhile, the next generation was even more ambitious and set out the necessity to move the demands and aspirations of its society to urban project. Architecture not only must be a reflection of its epoch, but should also contribute to its progress. The architects of the 'third generation of Modern Movement' assumed the task, as Smithson remarked, "to help to society to achieve its objectives, enrich the community life as much as possible, aim to the current utopia" [ayudar a la sociedad a alcanzar sus objetivos, hacer la vida en comunidad lo más rica posible, aspirar a la utopía presente] (quoted in Montaner, 1993, p. 32).

In the mid-fifties emerged throughout the West, especially in European countries, streams of thought that claimed complexity of urban fabric and overlapping functions –housing, commerce, industry, leisure, and etcetera– as necessary issues to ensure the full development of community life. It was not by chance that these ideas appeared, coinciding with the development of Welfare State. Western societies, which were requiring civil and political rights, also demanded improvements in the living conditions and in their habitat. So, there were implemented plans and projects of urban development that, in addition to providing decent housing to people, took a great care in design of endowments and public spaces, thinking always on welfare of citizens.

This social, economic and cultural context made possible, between 1945 and the beginning of seventies, the golden age of the urban planning.

Complexity, richness and urban quality of British *new towns*, Dutch neighborhoods and Nordic satellite cities were largely due to the historical situation in which they were built. Paradoxically, many of these projects offer, even today, much higher residential and urban quality than a lot of contemporary developments. So, one wonders what facts have led to the pushback suffered by urban planning in recent times.

Lefebvre (1976) showed that the space is not a scientific object; it is, and has always been, political and strategic. Thus, to understand the reasons behind the transformation processes of urban design over time, it is necessary to know the circumstances that have influenced its development. However, in recent decades it seems that architecture has given up theorizing the causes that determine the

production of city, promoting the construction of a collective imaginary in which it appears as a neutral backdrop where, almost by accident, happen social, psychological, cultural and financial processes that are not considered inherently urban yet (Soja, 2008).

Although these approaches seem much consolidated, are actually relatively recent. They began to be enacted in early seventies, coinciding with the deregulation process of the economy that was launched in most Western countries at that time. This situation changed substantially the production of urban space. Until then housing had been subordinated to factory (the better living conditions of workers, the greater their productivity), but thereafter it became an autonomous object of investment (Lefebvre, 1969).

This structural change drove an increasing privatization of both soil and housing which has led to a sharp rise of both. The search for cheap terrain has led to a gradual shift away from the central cores of cities and, consequently, to an unlimited and uncontrolled expansion of urban fabric. The overall planning has been replaced by a patchy and discontinuous development, whose logical is just to achieve the maximum benefit in the shortest time.

This approach has become hegemonic in recent times, founding in *neoliberalism* (in the political economy) and *postmodernism* (in the aesthetic) its legitimation and ideological support.

Covered by the mantra that the market is the most effective instrument for distributing resources, governments supported the commodification of housing, leaving in the private domain. However, throwing over the most elementary principles of liberalism, governments did not withdraw from housing market, but had an active role in both soil management as well as in drafting of laws and urban development plans aimed to benefit the particular interests of large landowners and building companies¹.

Upon taking control, the private sector focused its activity on production of those assets that have a direct influence in dwelling's price, leaving aside everything else. Thus, housing definitively took the status of merchandise and what until then had been residential and urban issues became to production and consumption issues. *The exchange value* was displaced by *the use value*, and the city succumbed to the financial interests at the same time that would turn users and architects in pawns².

In Spain's economy, where the construction historically has had much weight due to the underdevelopment of industrial sectors, the implementation of neoliberal ideas found much lower institutional resistance than in more advanced European countries. Thus, in the early eighties, the country witnessed the bursting of a building maelstrom, as well as a gradual dismantling of architectural debate and reflection about city, which even had kept up in forties and fifties at the darkest time of Franco's dictatorship.

With the Royal Decree-Law 2/85 of 30 April (1985) enacted by Minister of Economy Miguel Boyer on measures of economic policy and other similar provisions got buried the Social housing policy. Also, from several spheres of power were launched the neutralization of participation in public life of neighborhood associations (Miquel, 2003). Thereafter, common interest was definitely subordinate to particular interests of building companies and large landowners, who used the state to increase their profits, faithfully following neoliberal ideology³.

In Madrid, this process coincided with the promotion of a set of operations of expansion of the metropolitan area that were called "Programas de Actuación Urbanística (P.A.U.)" [Urban Development Programs]. These were a planning tool introduced by law of soil from 1976 in order to make possible the urban developments on so-called "suelos urbanizables no programados" [developable unscheduled soils]; i.e., on those soils in which is possible to develop urban projects

that, due to their size or special features, have no accommodation in soils which execution is scheduled, temporally or financially, in the general town planning (Ezquiaga, 2013, p. 308).

In 1985, it was approved a new General Urban Plan of Madrid [Plan General de Ordenación Urbana (P.G.O.U.M.)], which, although included the develop of some Urban Development Programs (PAUs), did not initially foresee making the specific projects that later became known as PAUs: “Arroyo Fresno 2”, “Monte Carmelo”, “Las Tablas” y “Sanchinarro”, located on the northern edge of the city; and the enlargements of “Villa de Vallecas” and “Carabanchel”, located in peripheral areas of the southeast and southwest of the city (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Plane of Madrid indicating the location of PAUs. 1. Arroyo Molinos, 2. Monte Carmelo, 3. Las Tablas, 4. Sanchinarro, 5. Ensanche de Vallecas, 6. Ensanche de Carabanchel

These projects were originally approved by City Council on 26 February 1993, affecting a total of 2258.8 hectares of land distributed among the six (Table 1). This was the first step to development of the largest municipal project for preparing urbanized soil that has been carried out in Spain. The proposal includes the construction of 70,198 households, of which 66.7%, 46,443 units, had to be subsidized (called *Vivienda de Protección Oficial*, VPO, in Spain) and the rest, 23,755 units, free (called *Vivienda Libre*, VL, in Spain).

Table 1. Housing program resulting from the amendment of PGOUM, approved provisionally on 26 February 1993 (Source: Ezquiaga, 2013, p. 309)

Designation	Soil area	Buildability			Gross building area index (m ² /m ²)	Number of housing		
	(ha)	Total	Residential	No residential		Total housing	Subsidized housing	Private housing
PAU II-1 Arroyo de Fresno	146,2	374.000	324.000	50.000	0,26	3.240	1.800	1.440
PAU II-2 Monte Carmelo	255,8	991.300	854.700	136.600	0,39	8.547	4.950	3.597
PAU II-3 Las Tablas	362,3	1.500.000	1.198.868	301.132	0,41	12.426	8.500	3.926
PAU II-4/PE 18/7 Sanchinarro	401,7	1.571.347	1.418.000	153.347	0,39	13.685	9.390	4.295
PAU II-5 Vallecas	726,4	2.484.050	2.111.900	372.150	0,34	20.950	14.353	6.597
PAU II-6 Carabanchel	366,4	1.489.502	1.150.931	338.571	0,41	11.350	7.450	3.900
TOTALS	2.258,8	8.410.199	7.058.399	1.351.800	0,37	70.198	46.443	23.755

PAUs are defined in the Madrid City Council strategy, aimed to expand the housing supply in the city and avoid, thereby, the exodus of people to ‘dormitory towns’ that were spread around the city. Thus, the seeming origin of the operation was the necessity of developable soil respect the 1985 Plan, in a context of a sharp increase in the price and demand of dwelling (Ezquiaga, 2003).

Another argument which also was used to promote PAUs was the relaunch of housing market as mechanism to boost the regional economy, within a general financial crisis context. (Urbanística: A la sombra de los Planes (V), 1997).

Therefore, PAUs was raised as “emergency operations” driven, accordingly with their promoters, to the need to expand the subsidized housing supply in Madrid through a significant increase of developable soil, and promote job. Despite the magnitude of the operation, it was dealt with a matter of urgency in order to avoid its inclusion in the PGOUM discussion, which was being revised, arguing that including PAUs in Plan discussion would suppose a delay in its implementation. So, PAUs were managed as «specific amendments», although they really were a whole amendment to entire

Plan, because of the operation involved the reclassification of more than 2,000 ha.

To implement this huge urban intervention, it was necessary the agreement between municipal and regional governments, in the hands of PP (Conservative Party) and PSOE (Social Democratic Party) respectively. Both shared the need to increase the area of residential ground scheduled in PGOUM by the reclassification of soil. However, each government had a different approach in operation's tackling. While City Council was only worried in reclassify soil to increase, theoretically, the housing production; Regional Government focused its interest on ensuring the purpose of reclassified soil to construction of subsidized housing, thereby ensuring its destination to satisfy Madrid's population housing demand (Ezquiaga, 2003).

Another great difference between the two administrations lay on the way of carrying out the soil management. Regional Government considered that «expropriation» was the most appropriate procedure (also, it was the commonly used in these situations) and, by contrast, City Council preferred the system of «compensation»⁴. While *expropriation* procedure ensures the public control of operation, the *compensation* limits significantly the ability of intervention of government, giving a large autonomy to private companies to act on their own interest.

Regarding to the distribution between *subsidized* and *private* housing, although there apparently was not a discussion about original percentages (66.7 and 33.3 respectively), City Council invented a legal mechanism to privatize much of subsidized. Thus, during the negotiating process of PAUs, it was created a new category of subsidized housing, called "Vivienda de Precio Tasado (VPT)" [Housing of Appraised Price]. A kind of dwelling whose price was adjusted in the limits laid down by Administration, much higher than *VPO*, receiving bonuses and aid to satisfy this requirement⁵. So, this type was like a covert *private housing model* whereby City Council could reduce one third the total the percentage of *subsidized*, without suspicion.

The negotiation process between municipal and regional governments lasted for more than two years, from 1993 to 1995, and it was concluded, with an agreement between the two parties signed on February 10, 1995 (Table 2), few months before the elections that would place to *Partido Popular (PP)* commanding the both Administrations. This document included the development of four of the six PAUs originally planned (*Monte Carmelo, Las Tablas, Sanchinarro* and *Carabanchel*) as well as referral to New General Plan, still under discussion, of PAUs of *Arroyo del Fresno* and *Vallecas*, because of their singular environmental and infrastructural conditions. More than 37,000 houses scheduled in the agreement (corresponding to four PAUs approved) were distributed to a third between *VPO, VPT* and Private.

Table 2. Housing program resulting from the first agreement between municipality and regional governments of Madrid, signed on 10 February 1995 (Source: Ezquiaga, 2013, p. 310)

Designation	Soil area	Buildability			Gross building area index (m ² /m ²)	Number of housing			
	(ha)	Total	Residential	No residential		Total housing	Subsidized housing	VPT*	Private housing
PAU II-2 Monte Carmelo	255,8	991.300	854.700	136.600	0,388	8.547	2.850	2.850	2.847
PAU II-3 Las Tablas	362,3	1.500.000	1.100.000	400.000	0,414	10.360	3.450	3.450	3.460
PAU II-4/PE 18/7 Sanchinarro	401,7	1.648.000	1.153.000	495.000	0,410	1.500	3.500	3.500	3.500
PAU II-6 Carabanchel	366,4	1.544.750	994.750	550.000	0,422	7.900	2.650	2.650	2.600
TOTALS	1.386,2	5.684.050	4.102.450	1.581.600	0,410	37.307	12.450	12.450	12.407

* As we can see, VPT housing is already included in this agreement.

On the other hand, regarding to soil management, regional government ensured the expropriation system, which had already implemented in many of deals processed; but the City Council got the exclusive attribution in manage of expropriation procedures (Ezquiaga, 2003). This was another example of the impotence of Social Democratic government at the head of regional administration.

To manage the agreement's compliance, it was decided between acting governments the establishment of a Development Consortium, which should also resolve the adjudication competitions of infrastructures and the selection of subsidized housing promoters (Ezquiaga, 2003). However, after the elections in 1995, which gave to Conservative Party (PP) the regional and municipal governments; it was approved a new agreement between two Administrations, signed on December 12, 1995, which practically returned to numbers contained in documents approved by County Council at the beginning, which was initially rejected by regional government. The conditions of the latter agreement are shown in table 3, where we can note that the percentage of private housing rises to 44%; and adding the VPT, the total percentage exceeds 70%⁶.

Table 3. Housing program resulting from the second agreement between municipality and regional governments of Madrid, signed on 13 December 1995 (Source: Ezquiaga, 2013, p. 312)

Designation	Soil area	Buildability			Gross building area index (m ² /m ²)	Number of housing			
	(ha)	Total	Residential	No residential		Total housing	Subsidized housing	VPT	Private housing
PAU II-2 Monte Carmelo	362,3	1.500.000	1.198.868	301.132	0,414	12.272	3.450	3.801	5.021
PAU II-3 Las Tablas	384,2	1.555.500	1.291.602	263.898	0,405	12.718	3.837	3.759	5.122
PAU II-4/PE 18/7 Sanchinarro	726,4	2.495.150	1.837.150	658.000	0,343	20.975	5.865	5.281	9.829
PAU II-6 Carabanchel	366,4	1.489.502	1.150.931	338.571	0,407	11.350	3.386	2.740	5.224
TOTALS	2.095,1	8.031.452	6.333.251	1.698.201	0,383	65.862	19.388	17.396	29.078

If the huge reduction in subsidized housing clearly contradicted the original proposals of PAUs operation, there were other two facts radically opposed to any previous criterion. On the one hand, it was changed the system of soil management (one of the points of negotiation that had waived by County Council), in an exceptional and unjustifiable decision from the point of view both legality, because it was unscheduled soil, and efficiency, due to a third of terrains had already been managed through expropriation proceedings. On the other hand, the City Council decided to pay a large portion of external development charges, which should have been unquestionably assumed by the private promoters as it can be seen comparing the two versions of institutional brochures entitled "PAUS, Programas de Actuación Urbanística" [Urban Development Programs] that were edited by City Council in December of 1995 and 1997 (Marcos & Ruiz, 2003).

Since the launch of compensation procedure, soil management became totally opaque, firing the fraud and the speculation. As agreed with soil owners a transfer of their ownership to Administration in exchange for buildable square meters (0.125 per square meter of soil), the terrains began to pass from hand to hand, generating quickly very high capital gains that avoided the administrative and legal controls as well as other regulatory mechanisms (Urbanística: A la sombra de los Planes (V), 1997).

Thus, the last agreement signed between municipal and regional governments showed quite clearly what was already an open secret: the arguments used to carry out the operation of PAUs were only justifications aimed to mask the real motivations that drove this urban intervention.

The procedure of "urgency" was not intended to expedite the processing to resolve as soon as possible the housing deficit in Madrid, but avoid that PAUs were part of the debate on General Plan.

Furthermore, they were held a set of operations that clearly show that collective welfare was not among the concerns of the promoters of PAUs: the change in soil management produced by the introduction of compensation system, which severely limited the public control over operation; the incorporation of mechanisms of soil reclassification that encouraged the artificial rise in prices and the speculation; the assumption by Administration of a lot of costs that unquestionably corresponded to private sector; and the creation of *VPT* housing to reduce the percentage of *VPO*. Hence, by gross as it may seem, governments played a key role in facilitating the breach of the law. It is difficult to find a clearer example of public governance so against to common interest.

Thus, although the origin of Spanish property boom is often placed on the approval of the Land Law of 1998; PAUs were actually the beginning of a development model based on *property bubbles* and *urban speculation*.

As it can guess, the morphological results of an operation with these characteristics, raised on basis of soil speculation and housing commodification, were disastrous.

At morphological level, PAUs are heirs of the previous generation of new enlargements of Madrid. Urban developments of “Valdebernardo” and “Ensanche del Este” [Eastern enlargement] are its closer antecedents (Figure 2). However, far from raising a critical regard to their reference models, PAUs collected and even deepened into all their faults.



Figure 2. Model of the *Valdebernardo* project

First, they have an average density of 31.08 dwellings per hectare (dwe/ha) (Nasarre & Rodríguez-Avial, 1995), far below from 56.7 of *Valdebernardo* and 59 of *Ensanche del Este* (Palomero, 2009). This value is totally insufficient to ensure the proper development of urban life. Consider that, as noted Nasarre & Rodríguez-Avial, “densities between 0.50 and 0.55 m²/m² are considered normal and common in similar operations made in many cities in Europe and North America. Regional

government of Madrid also has accepted densities upper than 0.70 and 0.80 m²/m² in the new developments of the metropolitan area” [densidades de 0,50 y 0,55 m²/m² se consideran normales y generalizadas en operaciones análogas de ciudades europeas y americanas. Asimismo, la propia Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid, en nuevos desarrollos aprobados en municipios de la Corona Metropolitana, está aceptando edificabilidades de hasta 0,70 y 0,80 m²/m²] (1995, p. 13). So, it is a fact that the optimization of the urban soil was not one of the objectives of PAUs developers.

Secondly, when functional segregation in cities seemed overcome, PAUs emerge as urban areas almost exclusively residential, which have a highly homogeneity of functions as well as a low endowment of facilities and services. These neighborhoods also show a lack of small ‘street commerce’, as a result of its concentration in a large shopping center that usually occupies an isolated situation at surrounding urban fabric. The urban structure of PAUs is also result from their management system. Its morphology emerges from a previous road system, clearly oversized⁷, and a subsequent parcel subdivision that establishes an administrative land occupation and a programmed uses within the resulting urban fabric, which are only determined by a more or less arbitrary division of functions (Figure 3).

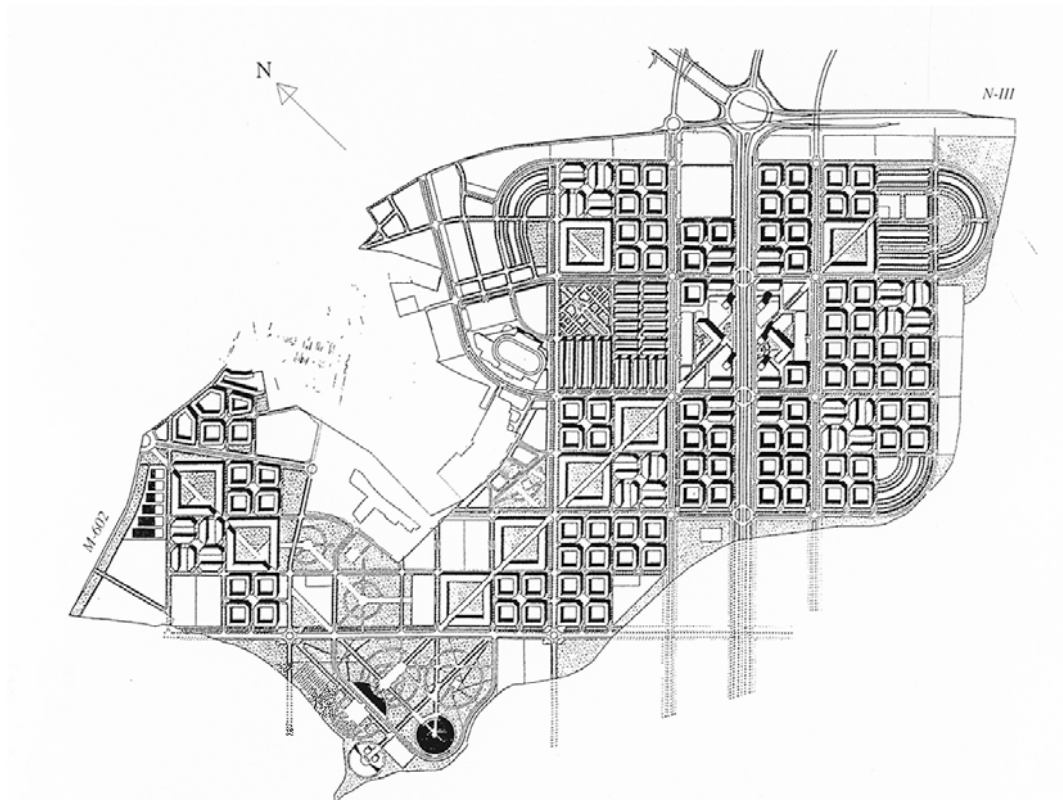


Figure 3. PAU of Vallecas. General plan with representation of typology of blocks

This way to proceed resulted in very poor quality urban environments (regarding to urban structure and not to buildings that shape it, among which there are many brilliant models), whose morphology does not arise from a unitary idea but from overlapping of disconnected processes.

Third, it is observed in all these new enlargements, although with different intensity in each, a hardly

justified bet for typological homogeneity and closed block. The use of block as the repetition of a particular building type can certainly generate high quality urban fabrics if they respond to a strategic approach focused to solve a programmatic and territorial casuistry. However, it seems that this is not the case of PAUs. The excessive size of blocks (which, for example, in Sanchinacho almost double the average block of *Ensanche de Castro* [Castro's Enlargement]) as well as the excessive conventionalism of their residential types, seem to respond, respectively, to the interest of speculators to increasing the soil occupation and the business criterion to produce only known products, easily to manage and sold.

This kind of procedures, understanding from the conservative postulates of private sector, prevented that PAUs would have been able to an opportunity for researching and implementing contemporary ways of living as well as strategies of territory occupation⁸.

In the end, it is a common feature of PAUs the huge devaluation of public space, which is the main victim of these operation set that we have pointed (Figure 4): empty and disproportionate streets; minimal or no presence of 'small street commerce', the authentic driver of life in cities; insufficient densities to create an appropriate conditions of urban vitality; controlled routes that reduce significantly random encounters and casual conversations; deserted squares, and etcetera. In short, an urban environment resulting from juxtaposition of processes, interests and disconnected fragments, which are only linked by a chain of bureaucratic-financial transactions that have led to this result instead of any other.



Figure 4. Main boulevard of PAU of Carabanchel.

It is not exaggerate to remark that PAUs show starkly the contradictions between the market criteria and the principles of accountability of common resources management that should lead urban design.

A truly useful dialectic of analysis must contrast all interests at stake. In the case of PAUs, we have been able to confirm that the public management was at the service of interests of big landowners and builders, in exchange for harming the access to housing and denying the right to the city to many people.

This way, one of conclusions that this paper throws is that, when we think about the city, there is a strong relationship between architectural practice and other supra-disciplinary interests (social,

financial, political and cultural) which drive it. Thus, architecture, and more if we talk about urban design, is not only a neutral discipline free from ideology. It is, and always has been, a reflection of the social conflicts in each historical, geographical and social context. Architecture, therefore, have a high political content which requires that specialists take a position on what model of society, political system or financial scheme should be developed or defended.

On the other hand, the study of PAUs lets us to end up with two myths repeated insistently by dominant stream-thought. Neither private management is more efficient than neither public, nor private investment benefits to society. The latter can be checked clearly in case of PAUs due to the only thing that the increase of investment was to enlarge the speculation, hindering the access to housing and boosting an exponential increase in prices. Turn, the private management, instead of simplifying the processing, was a significant delay. It took three years riding the compensation system (with one third of soil dealing by the expropriation process) and it spent a decade since operation was launched until the first home was finished (Marcos & Ruiz, 2003). The increase in capital gains derived from speculation and the juicy profits resultant by compensation system, combined with the lack of public control over the process, let to private developers tried to extend by all means the process of building of dwellings in order to maximize their profits.

In the end, it is necessary to note that the best defining feature of PAUs is an almost total lack of street life. Soil deregulation, uncontrolled sprawl and the return to an inchoate functional segregation, which has removed the street commerce for creating commercial nodes completely oblivious to their surroundings, have led to suppression the city collective functions, which are not compatible with these procedures.

In some PAUs, the resulting low urban quality was attempted to hide itself by means of a representative element that, by its singular features, would be able to distract the attention regarding to the many problems arising from urban design. Thus, we have the Zaeras' '*bamboo housing*' in Carabanchel, the *eco-boulevard* in Vallecas or *belvedere building* in Sanchinarro as the three clearer examples of this way of doing (Figure 5).



Figure 5. From left to right: *Bamboo housing*, *Eco-boulevard* and *Belvedere building*

Therefore, PAUs, as paradigms of postmodern city, which are merely a temporary overlapping of fragments, are ultimately reduced to milestone; to its more symbolic fragment.

David Harvey defines postmodernism precisely as “the veneration of fragments” [la veneración de los fragmentos] (2007, p. 138). The Project has disappeared, and together, the Architect figure. It is just following the trail of financial transactions how it can be reconstructed the process of design. In postmodernity there are no metastories; or being more precise, the postmodern metastory is the absence of metastories. Therefore, there is no place for truth, justice and politics, latter understood as collective project. And without policy, there is no *polis*.

Consequently, the postmodern (or neoliberal) city is, above all other considerations, the denial of city; the “non-city”. The best way to overcome the neoliberal strategies of occupation of soil and recover the unitary urban project is claiming, without complexes, the direct intervention in urban planning of those institutions that legitimately represent the common interests of society.

So, to rescue the city from the rampant capitalism that Harvey denounced at opening of this paper, it is necessary move towards comprehensive metropolitan planning. Not only as management tools, designed to perpetuate existing organization of property and use of land; but programs oriented ensuring “a city capable to increase relationships between human beings” [una ciudad capaz de multiplicar las buenas relaciones entre los seres humanos] (Miranda, 2008, p . 217).

As usual, we should choose. A market to serve the human’s needs or the human’s needs serving the market.

Notes

¹As Harvey says, Lefebvre emphasized the necessary intervention in “urban space by state bureaucrats and technocrats to facilitate the reproduction of capital accumulation and of dominant class relations” (2012, p. 138).

²This argument does not try to exempt to architects of their responsibility in the urban aberrations made in recent years (isolated housing colonies, endless rows of terraced houses, mono-functional neighborhoods organized throughout a road network oblivious to territory, etcetera), whose failure can be checked touring the outskirts of our cities. What it is said, however, is that architects, despite being necessary collaborators, have always played a subordinated role in the investors objective of profit increasing.

³In opposition to the idea put in a large part of population, especially in left people, the main goal of neoliberalism is not to cut the state involvement in economy, but place the surplus generated by this intervention on private hands (Harvey, 2012).

⁴In this system, the owners have to manage all urbanization and provide the corresponding of compulsory soil cession, with solidarity of benefits and burdens (art. 126.1 T.R.1976 and 157.1 R.G.U.). The implementation of compensation procedure requires that owners who choose this system, or are in agreement with it, must hold together a minimum percentage over the whole urban area affected, which Spanish legislation set at 60%. Therefore, this is a private system of urban management in which the property must pay for urbanization, something that happen in any system which involves the maintenance of private ownership of the soil affected by planning, and to carry out the execution process. Nevertheless, public authority can take the control of process if deem appropriate.

⁵While *VPO* was intended for people with incomes between 2.5 and 5.5 times the minimum wage (SMI); to access *VPT*, the incomes should be between 4.5 and 7.6 times the minimum wage (Nasarre & Rodríguez-Avial, 1995). Thus, this kind of dwellings is not aimed to social sectors with difficulties to get housing.

⁶Throughout the procedure, the proportion of subsidized housing was progressively reduced from 75%, equivalent to other consortia of regional government, to not reach 30%; inverting practically the initial percentages of subsidized and private housing.

⁷In Sanchinarro’s PAU, there are many street with three and four traffic lanes in each direction and sidewalks wider than 16 meters (Palomero, 2009).

⁸Nonetheless, some building from public competition can consider as a relevant examples both nationally and internationally. The block designed by Alejandro Zaera in Carabanchel’s PAU is a paradigmatic case.

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Biography

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