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Socio-spatial change in the world heritage site Valparaíso

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Abstract

Valparaíso's old town is one of five world heritage sites in Chile. Its districts of Puerto and Financiero on the coastal platform, together with the surrounding hills of Cerros Concepción and Alegre make up 0.9% of the total urbanised area. The unique urban ensemble with its heritage of early industrialisation, the harbour installations and the many wooden funiculars have led UNESCO to make these districts a protected area. However, protection does not only mean conservation. Many morphological, functional and socio-spatial changes have taken place since the declaration as a heritage site. Some of them are due to the effects of natural and man-made disasters, but many are a result of the new function as a heritage site. Based on a morphological and functional analysis and a deeper look at the socio-spatial changes, the study returns contradictory results. Initial trends of gentrification can be observed, which may favour the conservation of the built environment, but weaken the social situation. A more severe degradation of the building stock has been halted; however, in many respects dilapidation has only been slowed down. The negative demographic trend has been exacerbated by the activities of ruthless developers who have bought up buildings with speculation in mind. Such activities have a long-term destructive effect on the immaterial cultural heritage, i.e. the vibrant and locally specific urban life in the old town. The main question is how the declaration as a world heritage site has influenced the social and economic fabric of the old town, and how the changes can be evaluated. This paper investigates the socio-economic changes, social transformations and other processes of change.

Zusammenfassung

Die Altstadt von Valparaíso ist eine von fünf Welterbestätten Chiles. Sie umfasst 0,9 % der bebauten Fläche und die Stadtbezirke von Puerto, Financiero auf der Küstenplattform sowie die umgebenden Hangbereiche der Cerros Concepción und Alegre. Das einzigartige städtische Ensemble mit seinen Zeugnissen der frühen Industrialisierung, der Hafenanlagen und der vielen hölzernen Schrägaufzüge waren ausschlaggebend für die UNESCO, diesen Bereich unter Schutz zu stellen. Aber Schutz bedeutet nicht nur Konservierung. Viele physiognomische, funktionale und sozialräumliche Veränderungen können auch nach der Unterschutzstellung des Welterbes beobachtet werden. Einige gehen auf natürliche (Erdbeben und Tsunami) und anthropogene Effekte (Feuer) zurück, dennoch sind viele auch eine Wirkung der neuen Funktion als Welterbestätte. Auf der Grundlage einer stadtmorphologischen und funktionalen Analyse auch der sozialräumlichen Entwicklung (unter Anwendung der von den Verfassern entwickelten IDS-Methode) erbringt die Studie gegensätzliche Ergebnisse. Die früher starke De-

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gradierung des Gebäudebestands wurde zwar verlangsamt, aber nicht gestoppt. Der Trend zur Bevölkerungsabnahme steht im Gegensatz zu den Aktivitäten des Immobiliensektors, der aus Spekulationsgründen Gebäude aufkauft, sie teilweise (noch) nicht saniert oder dies tut, um sie an aus anderen Stadtbezirken oder anderen Gemeinden zuziehende Yuppies zu verkaufen. Diese Tätigkeiten haben auf lange Sicht einen destruktiven Effekt auf das immaterielle kulturelle Erbe, d.h. auf das lebendige und lokalspezifische Leben in der Altstadt.

Keywords World heritage; urban development; social change; Valparaíso; Chile

1. Introduction

Latin America currently holds 121 UNESCO world heritage sites, 90 of which are in South America (*Albus* et al. 2011). Chile has five world heritage sites, including Valparaíso old town, which was designated in 2003. The others are Easter Island (1995), the wooden churches of Chiloe (2000), the saltpetre mines of Humberstone and Santa Laura (2005) and the copper mining town of Sewell (2006).

World heritage sites are chosen for their global uniqueness, authenticity and integrity. UNESCO's principal aim is to maintain such sites for humanity as well as possible (UNESCO 2009). However, the protective designation does not guarantee that the site will be free from subsequent impacts. On the contrary, often the designation triggers more intensive tourism. In cases where certain districts are protected, this has noticeable effects on the real estate market and the socio-economic and functional patterns.

Taking Valparaíso old town as a case in point, we want to investigate the socio-spatial and functional change that has taken place there within the last decade. It is the centre of a major port, where global and national processes manifest themselves more quickly because of this function. Few studies have been published on this issue to date. Caravaca et al. (1997) examined the impact of the world heritage designation on regional development, Scarpaci (2004) did this for Latin America. *Cano* (2009) analysed the phenomena with regard to the historic centre of Loreto, Baja California, Ceballos (2006), Jaramillo (2006) and Lulle and de Urbina (2010) for the world heritage site Bogotá, Hayakawa (2008) for Latin America as a whole. Carrión (2005) looked at the impact of historic centres as centres of attraction. For Valparaíso there is a paper by Lavaud-Letilleul et al. (2005), which focused on the tourist function, as well as a paper by Jiménez and Aguilar (2010) on the real estate sector in the city centre. Serrano (2009) and Trivelli and Nishimura (2010) investigated the sustainability of the world heritage. *Hi-dalgo* and *Borsdorf* (2005) and *Muga* and *Rivas* (2009) have written on the socio-spatial transformations within the greater area of Valparaíso. There has not yet been any study to analyse the effects beyond tourism and sustainability on social space, function and the real estate market, and this essay aims to fill this gap. After a period of ten years since the UNESCO designation, it should be possible to measure initial effects.

The municipality of Valparaíso is responsible for managing the world heritage site. However, because of its dependence on financial support from the central government, there are no specific funds earmarked for the management. The neoliberal paradigm observed by the Chilean government also weakens the influence of state, province and city government, as the economic power of investors and firms surpasses the possibilities of the urban authorities. This is why a clear concept, defining the objectives, measures and instruments to guarantee the conservation of the world heritage site, is still missing.

2. Methods

Methods used in this study include the analysis of satellite images that show the changes in the urban morphology of the city. In addition, we mapped the urban fabric in terms of land use and complemented this with data on the year of business establishment which obtained from the urban administration. As the data of the latest census are not yet available, we had to make do with those of the previous census for the socio-spatial analysis and have added some observations and surveys of our own. These were then classified using the socio-economic development index (IDS) prepared by us. In addition, we mapped buildings and other urban elements of cultural heritage as well as new developments and cleared plots. These maps are based on local inspection. For each plot we registered type of use, height of building, type of building and other qualitative features. The main indicators of change are listed below, followed by the methods used in brackets: urban morphology (mapping), functional fabric (mapping, data interpretation), socio-spatial change (mapping, data analysis, classification by IDS), new developments (mapping). These indicators were chosen because of their relevance in demonstrating the socio-economic change and social transformation in the city centre of Valparaíso. Wherever possible, mapping was based on building plots. This is not feasible for IDS mapping as data are only available at the level of census districts.

We integrated existing census data with those of our survey to assess the socio-spatial dynamics, using the IDS method. This index was developed from the Human Development Index initially created by UNDP to measure prosperity. The index of socio-economic development (IDS) is made up of the following variables: household equipment (shower, TV [colour, cable, satellite], refrigerator, washing machine, heating, car, PC, internet), level of education (years of schooling, higher education) and residential quality (*Hidalgo* et al. 2008).

Services and distance to them were also included and subdivided into: leisure amenities (park, theatre, mu-

seum, cinema, sports venue), health and social services (hospital, surgery, prison, nursery, cemetery), education (school, university), other services (fire service, police, public transport stop, market, library), living and working (residential quarters, offices, industry).

We used the figures provided by the municipal administration and the respective ministries and filled any gaps with results from surveys of our own. On this basis we were able to create maps of investment activity.

Our methodology is presented in Fig. 1.

3. Theoretical framework

A world heritage site is defined as a complex of tangible assets (urban built environment, museums, works of art, books, documents, collections and other cultural objects) and intangible assets (customs, urban life, festivals, music, cuisine, literature etc.), whose emotional connotations imbue them with a unique identity that is perceived by outsiders as location-specific (*Krebs* and *Schmidt-Hebbel* 1999; *Hayakawa* 2008; *Rössler* 2003, 2009). The designation is meant to preserve and strengthen financial, nat-

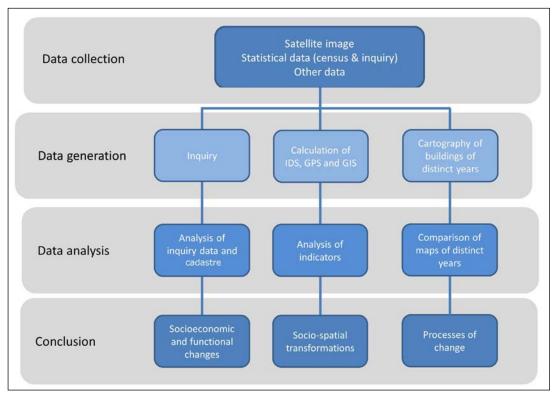


Fig. 1 Methods applied in the Valparaíso study

ural, human, social and material assets (*Caravaca* et al. 1997) and to improve the infrastructure (*Pfeifle* 2010). When a city or an urban district is designated as a world heritage site, the character of a living city is to be retained. The legitimacy of the world heritage designation thus rests on the three pillars of authenticity, preservation and enhancement of public space, and encouraging development.

Within the city as social space, several actors impact on the functional structure and on urban development: house owners, the actors of the real estate segment, retailers and service providers, architects, public authorities and the inhabitants. The interests informing their actions, plus their desired and undesired consequences, determine the structure, functionality and development of the city and urban life.

In an earlier study on the central districts of Santiago de Chile, the authors demonstrated that gentrification processes are in some cases related to neighbourhoods where ethnic minorities have established themselves (Borsdorf and Hidalgo 2012; see also Taylor 2010, Cahill 2013). This is not the case in Valparaíso, where people with lower incomes have been concentrating in the city centre. Because of their low purchasing power, these people live in "subleased parts of old houses from the early twentieth century, reviving the importance of the tenements as collective rooms prone to overcrowding" (Hidalgo and Torres 2009: 323). However, with the immigration of young urban professionals, the life cycle of the built environment is changing to "an initial stage of construction, followed by successive regimes of use and maintenance, disinvestment and decay. Thereafter, a process may emerge triggered by new revitalisation investments. This is due to the gap created between the current rent and the rent expected after revitalisation" (Diappi and Bolchi 2008: 7f.). Before this, capital had moved to the suburbs where the return on investment was more attractive, producing a lack of concerted investment in the old core which caused a long period of deterioration and lack of new capital in these areas (López-Morales 2009, 2010).

At some point in this situation of disinvestment and devaluation, the interests of the operators revert to reinvestment through rehabilitation and renovation of these areas. This process of disinvestment and reinvestment has been called gap of income (rent gap) in the literature (*Smith* 2010, 2002, 1996; *López Morales* 2008). Land agents begin to

develop strategies for renewal, rehabilitation and refurbishment of these deteriorated areas. This urban renewal leads to gentrification (Davidson and Lees 2005, 2010), following the growing real-estate development from the 1990s onwards (Contreras 2009, 2011; Inzunza-Contardo 2011, 2012). Normally, there are five phases of gentrification. In the first phase, pioneers complement the existing population. They, too, accept to live in precarious conditions and often live without a secure income, as artists or students, mostly unmarried, either as singles or with a partner or in shared flats or houses. In the second phase, the share of pioneers increases, the composition of retail units and services changes. Bars, second-hand shops and antique dealers even attract people from other districts, an incumbent upgrading (Clay 1979) may follow. During the next phases, gentrifiers move in, with higher disposable incomes. Their motive is the urban and vibrant lifestyle and they benefit from the short distance to their places of work.

Janoschka et al. (2013) have recently explained the notable differences of the discourse on gentrification between the anglophone countries and Latin America. Spanish and Latin American researchers brought in new and emancipating perspectives, which differ from studies in the social and economic environment in U.S. cities. Castells's early work (1974) with its Marxist perspective focused on the conflictive transformation of urban space and set the guidelines for emancipatory urban research which since then has been undertaken by Latin American scientists, whereas the reception in Anglophone countries started later and has been less engaged. In Latin America, urban researchers are often much more critical towards exclusionary renewal schemes, show strong empathy with the existing urban environment and develop critical approaches to urban politics absent in the mainstream discourses about revitalisation and renovation elsewhere (Janoschka 2011). Neoliberal politics, not only in Latin America but also in Spain, has resulted in a specific model of urban development during the last decades (Borsdorf and Hidalgo 2010). Entrepreneurial and state-led urban policies that target gentrification are conditioned by common path dependencies (Cuenya and Corral 2011; Janoschka et al. 2013: 5). In contrast, many U.S. researchers, like Jones and Bromley, have stated that "conservation is not a sufficient condition to produce gentrified urban landscapes" (Jones and Bromley 1996: 375) and Ward (1993) or Ford (1996) expected the Latin American city centres to lose their affluent residents to suburban areas.

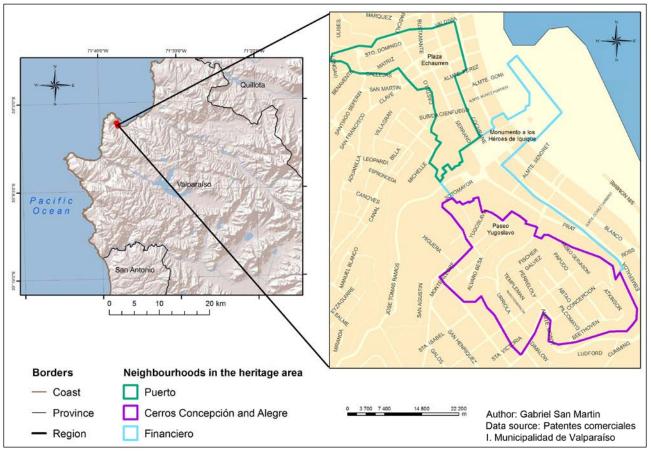


Fig. 2 Study Area

On the contrary, the restauration of Latin American city centres has been the starting point of gentrification, often steered by developer-led investment into the habitat, retailing and consumption, after realestate companies explored new markets. This process is codified through the implementation of governance schemes developed in cooperation with the UNESCO world heritage offices (Janoschka 2013: 14). In some cases gentrifiers are a transient group made up by foreign tourists or business people from abroad. This debate is strongly related to leisure-oriented mobility and transnational amenity migration (Borsdorf and Hidalgo 2009). Thus, street vendors prepare central cityscapes for gentrification. On the other hand, in the process city centres somewhat lose some of their charming elements leading to a musealisation of world heritage (Nelle 2009). With increasing attractiveness for well-off residents in the gentrification process, the traditional city centres lose population and density, and during the operation of real-estate companies many buildings remain derelict and are not used until the renewal starts. On the other hand retail trade, services and the restaurant sector get a huge impulse.

4. Results4.1 Morphological and functional change

Valparaíso old town is a valuable example of late 19th century architecture. Embedded in a natural amphitheatre, it presents itself as a well-preserved urban ensemble, with the hillside developments along the contours of the escarpment contrasting with the geometrical pattern of the streets on the narrow coastal plain. The harbour installations, numerous churches and the evidence of early industrialisation, including the many wooden funiculars, turn the city into a unique urban place. A total of 23.2 ha are protected as world heritage site, that is 0.9 % of the total urban area. The protected part covers the districts of Puerto, Financiero and Cerros Concepción and Alegre (*Fig. 2*). The city centre is also the space of street vendors, small cafés and restaurants, transforming it into a vivid environment of great attraction for tourists.

At the last census, in 2002, the municipality of Valparaíso had 274,141 inhabitants. Between 1992 and 2002 it lost 6,566 inhabitants or 0.2 % per year (*Trivelli* and *Nishimura* 2010). In 1992, 4,396 people lived in the

	2003		2011		Change 2003-2011	
Type of land use	Abs. number	%	Abs. number	%	Abs. number	%
Public administration	13	3,47	11	2,93	-2	-0,53
Commercial	16	4,27	76	20,27	60	16.00
Commercial-residential	34	9,07	30	8,00	-4	-1,07
Religion	7	1,87	8	2,13	1	0,27
Culture	1	0,27	8	2,13	7	1,87
Education	10	2,67	8	2,13	-1	-0,27
Public space	4	1,07	5	1,33	1	0,27
Parking	5	1,33	3	0,80	-2	-0,53
Residential	239	63,73	147	39,20	-93	-24,80
Office	32	8,53	32	8,53	0	0
Equipment	5	1,33	4	1,07	-1	-0,27
Health	1	0,27	2	0,53	1	0,27
Abandoned lot	8	2,13	4	1,07	-4	-1,07
Without use	0	0	29	7,73	29	7,73
Damaged building	0	0	8	2,13	8	2,13
Total	375	100	375	100	0	0

Tab. 1 : Changes in the world heritage site Valparaíso, number of plots and their use in 2003 and 2011 (authors' survey)

world heritage area, by 2002 there were only 2,938, a decline in residential population of one third. Reasons for this include the construction of the satellite town of Curauma as a gated city or ciudad vallada (*Borsdorf* and *Hidalgo* 2008) in Greater Valparaíso, out-migration to the neighbouring town of Viña del Mar (*Borsdorf* and *Hidalgo* 2013) and the designation of so-called "pleasure lots" (generous plots of at least 5000 m²) in the wider region (*Borsdorf* and *Hidalgo* 2009).

More recent figures are not available, therefore we must deduce inner-city transformations from the morphological changes in the old town. In doing so, one has to bear in mind that the city, and especially its historic centre, has experienced severe natural and man-made disasters since the UNESCO designation. These include the large fire in Calle Serrano in 2004 and other fires in the old town, as well as the earthquake and the tsunami in 2010. *Table 1* lists the structural changes between 2003 and 2011 by type of land use.

The changes affect the residential function most, it shrank by one quarter as is evident from the juxtaposition of the functional maps for these two years (*Fig. 3*).

Cerros Alegre and Concepción are still the main residential quarters. At the same time, these are the areas most affected by changes. Many buildings are vacant,

Licence	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Alcohol	75	66	123	92	47	27	37	5	472
Commercial	654	647	680	732	606	610	1025	25	4979
Industrial	18	14	16	9	8	9	8	0	82
Office	6	8	6	7	6	11	13	3	60
Artisan	133	157	153	167	143	141	87	1	982
Advertising	3	7	4	7	1	1	1	0	24
Tourism	49	43	56	47	37	37	51	7	327
Total	938	942	1038	1061	848	836	1222	41	6926

Tab. 2 Licenses granted in retail and services 2003-2010 in the study area (2010 first half only, authors' survey)

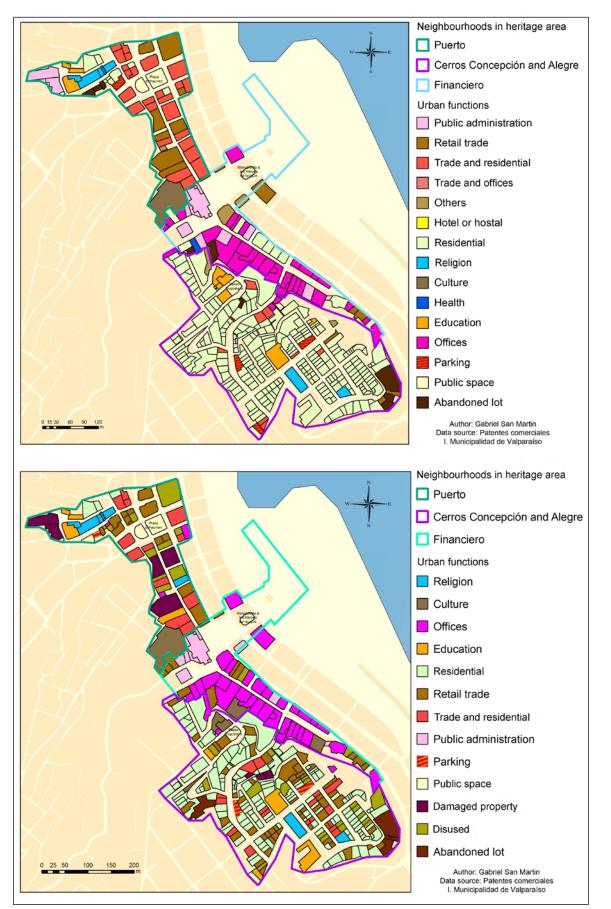


Fig. 3 Functional changes in the world heritage site Valparaíso 2003 (top) and 2011 (bottom)

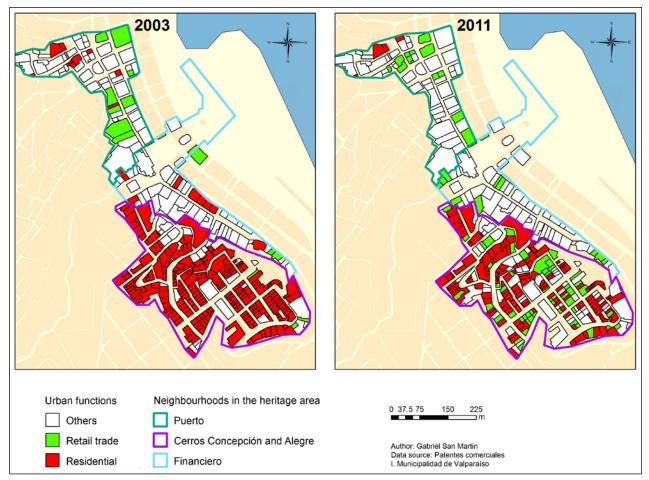


Fig. 4 Change of residential and retail functions in Valparaiso 2003-2011

offices and retail now occupy former residential buildings. In Barrio Puerto many buildings which were formerly exclusively residential took on additional retail functions. Today, these make up 43 % of building space. With 29 plots this is also the area with the highest proportion of empty buildings and derelict plots.

Retail and services have experienced a dramatic boost. Between 2003 and 2011, a total of 6,926 new licenses were granted. Retail leads with 4,949 licenses, followed by offices and licenses to sell alcohol (*Tab. 2*).

Overall, there is evidence of a severe decline in the residential function of the world heritage area: In 2003, there were 239 plots that could be attributed to this function, in 2011, there were only 150 such plots left – a 40 % reduction. There is no residential function left in Barrio Financiero at all, and in Barrio Puerto it is reduced by 44 %, in the traditional residential hillside areas the reduction is 31 %. At the same time, retail increased by 16 % and even by 18.8 % on the hillsides. The districts on the coastal plain were severely affected by the tsunami. Most of the abandoned buildings and derelict plots are situated there. *Figure 4* shows the change in residential and retail functions since 2003.

4.2 Socio-spatial change

The metropolitan region of Valparaíso-Viña del Mar is characterised by a distinct disparity between the 'rich' city of Viña del Mar and the 'poor' city of Valparaíso, as shown in *Figure 5* using the IDS method. On the basis of the census data of 2002, the world heritage area ranks at a medium to low development level. For the plot-byplot analysis in *Figure 6* we have added the changes in the cultural heritage area. What emerges is a marked decline in socio-economic level. This is especially true of the Puerto district where formerly upmarket buildings have experienced a rapid deterioration, while the changes on the hillside are less dramatic (*Fig. 6*).

Against the general decline in development level, it is worth pointing out that the disparities between qual-

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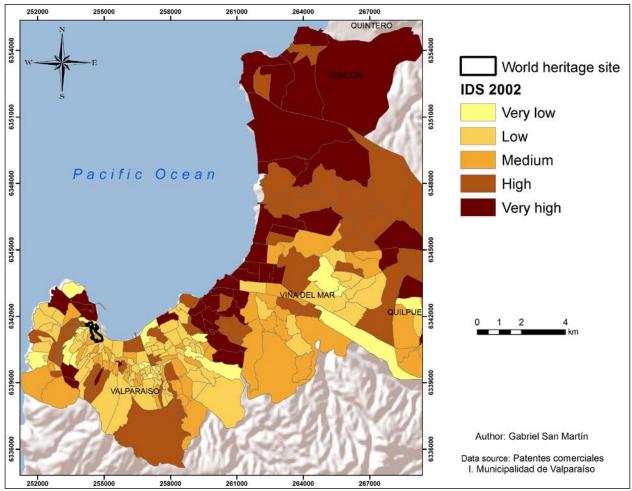


Fig. 5 Socio-economic development level in the metropolitan region of Valparaíso-Viña del Mar in 2002

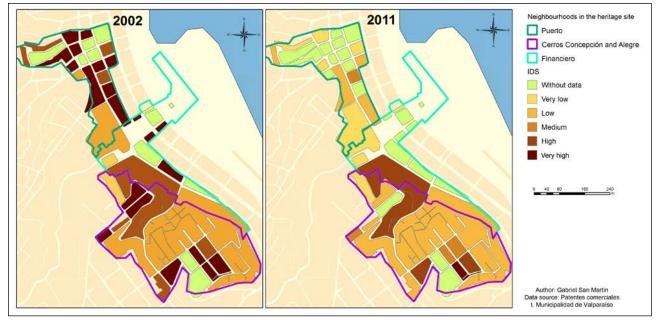


Fig. 6 Changes in socio-economic level (IDS) within the world heritage site

ity of life on the hillside, where gentrification started early and still remains stronger, and the deteriorating residential quarters of the lower city have increased. In Barrio Puerto there are residential units inhabited by up to ten families, with an illegally tapped electricity supply in some of them. As a result, there are serious security problems in the district.

The situation has developed in this way despite the subsidies for the improvement of the buildings provided by the ministry in charge (Vivienda). However, of the 280 applications submitted between 2003 and 2007, only 30 were granted.

5. Discussion

Protecting Valparaíso old town by means of a heritage designation was undoubtedly justified. However, we should not overlook the fact that this designation did nothing to alleviate the socio-spatial problems – on the contrary, it exacerbated them. The slow but persistent out-migration from Valparaíso, especially from the city centre to other cities in the agglomeration, plays an important role in this process. It has led to a marked deterioration of the socio-economic status of the inhabitants of the old town.

Cities cannot live on the status of world heritage site alone, what is also needed are continuous efforts to provide prospects for the inhabitants and improve their quality of life (Serrano 2009). This is true of all historic centres (Whitehand 2010). In Valparaíso, on some plots, particularly those on the hillside, there is evidence of gentrification processes. Small hotels and bars have sprung up in refurbished buildings, some residential buildings have been bought up as main or secondary residences by foreigners, intellectuals and other incoming residents (Tivelli and Nishimura 2010). In terms of maintaining the buildings, this may be seen as most welcome; and many real estate companies have started to refurbish older buildings. Recently parts of Valparaíso old town have become the focus of these firms and the former inhabitants have been driven out. This has had an impact on the protected urban ensemble. Supermarkets and malls have displaced even protected buildings such as the installations of the old gas company.

It remains to be seen if the processes described above have already led to gentrification in the sense Latin American authors understand it. This affects still more the hillside quarters, whereas the coastal platform quarters are mostly frequented by tourists, and by bohemians at night. The latter still shy away from moving into the inner city permanently. Rents and real estate prices there remain low, the quality of new buildings is as yet not very good. The inhabitants are still the people who have lived there for a long time, on low or middle incomes, i.e. essentially students and immigrants. Within the agglomeration, it is still mainly the lower-income bracket of the population that is enticed by the 'alternative atmosphere' to move into this area, which means that what we are observing here is still a very early stage of the gentrification process.

There are precedents for similar trends in other world heritage sites. In Cartagena de las Indias, Colombia, a free trade zone with modern malls was opened in the La Candelaria district under the title of improving the quality of life for the inhabitants (*Scarpaci* 2004). Similar to Valparaíso old town, La Candelaria was a district of poorer people in precarious residential arrangements. In Bogotá's world heritage site it has been shown that cautious regeneration has a less detrimental effect on the urban ensemble than large investments (*Ceballos* 2006, *Jaramillo* 2006, *Lulle* and *de Urbina* 2010).

Thus, some of the ongoing processes in the area of Valparaíso's world heritage site may be seen as a problem, at present and for the future. Gentrification supplants the traditional inhabitants and changes the socio-spatial context. Land speculation leaves some plots and buildings derelict or unused and interferes with the reconstruction of some of those buildings destroyed by the earthquake, tsunami and other disasters. New economic activities influence the traditional economic structure, sometimes for the better, but mostly destroying the old, intricate structure of consumption, communication and neighbourhood life. Main causes of these processes are the neoliberal paradigm ruling in Chile and weakening the possibilities of urban planning and policy. The poor use of subsidies by the inhabitants illustrates these problems. What is the way forward? More - and more effective subsidies for maintaining and refurbishing the buildings, paid out to existing inhabitants, might encourage them to stay and thus maintain both the material and immaterial culture of the old town. Another priority would be to clear away the debris left behind by the earthquake and tsunami of 27 February 2010 and to fill the derelict plots with buildings that fit in with the urban ensemble as a whole. Attention should be paid to making sure that such investment might foster the residential function which, in turn, may counteract the out-migration trend. Participative processes could enhance people's ties to their district and strengthen a sense of identity and responsibility. This will only come about through stricter management of the world heritage site, through governance characterised by an improved participation of the inhabitants in planning and implementation. The main objective of the authorities managing the heritage site should be to maintain the unique urban morphology, fabric and functional diversity which were the reason for declaring the old town of Valparaíso a world heritage site in the first place.

6. Conclusion

The study of the morphological and socio-spatial change in Valparaíso's world heritage site has shown that natural and anthropogenic processes have triggered dramatic changes in the urban ensemble of Valparaíso old town and the neighbouring hillsides. No one could have foreseen the 2010 earthquake, but proactive planning and an improvement of the infrastructure (esp. electricity supply and funiculars) could have prevented man-made hazards (fires), out-migration and the degradation of the socio-economic development level.

The analysis of Valparaíso's world heritage site thus returns contradictory results. On the one hand, the designation has halted an even more severe degradation of the building stock, on the other hand, it has become clear that - at least in the city centre - such degradation has only been slowed down and by no means stopped. In addition, first signs of gentrification can be observed, especially in the hillside quarters. This process cannot be compared with experiences in U.S. cities and has to be seen in the context of Latin American gentrification. However, under this perspective, Valparaíso shows similar trends to those observed in Santiago de Chile and other Latin American capitals and intermediate cities. It can be stated that the gentrification was - if not initiated strongly supported by the declaration of the area as UNESCO world heritage site. The old town, and even more the hillside quarters, became interesting objects of real estate companies. We are concerned that the negative demographic trend has been exacerbated by the activities of ruthless developers who buy up buildings with speculation in mind, leaving them vacant, or refurbishing them only to sell them

to incoming yuppies from at home and abroad. Such activities have a long-term destructive effect on the immaterial cultural heritage, i.e. the vibrant and locally specific urban life in the old town.

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