

# Comparing Public Housing Revitalization in a Liberal and a Mediterranean Society (US v. Portugal)

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# Background

- Public (social) housing's bad reputation
- Growing interest in public housing revitalization in US and Northern Europe
- Up to now little attention to public housing revitalization in Mediterranean countries like Portugal.
- This paper addresses this gap

# Levels of Analysis

- Compare CityWest Cincinnati and Alta de Lisboa (field visits, analysis of published reports)
- Compare HOPE VI, USA and PER, via a literature review.

# Our goal: Compare and Contrast HOPE VI (US) and PER (Portugal)

- How the programs create good quality neighborhoods
- How the programs support the residents (i.e. promote social mobility)

# Contextual Differences

## US

- Liberal welfare model
- Social housing comprises 5% of the total
- 293 HOPE VI grants awarded between 1993 and 2010.

## Portugal

- A familial South European (Mediterranean) welfare model
- Social housing comprises 5% of total for Portugal (in Lisbon 12% in Porto 15% )
- PER = 49 000 households have been relocated between 1995-2014 in metropolitan Lisbon and Porto

# Historical background

## US

- 1930s: low-rise housing separated from the surrounding neighborhood
- 1950s and 1960s: high rise housing separated from the surrounding neighborhoods
- 1970s to present: low-rise housing integrated into the surrounding neighborhood (HOPE VI)

## Portugal

- 1930s until 1974: “economic housing” for civil servants;
- 1974-1976: more intervention in social housing (SAAL);
- 1976-1990: low investment in social housing (PIMP), targeted support for home ownership;
- 1990s to present: first an emphasis new construction (e.g. PER); followed by a shift from new construction to rehabilitation

# HOPE VI v. PER

## HOPE VI

- Large scale demolition of public housing
- Inner city
- Public-private partnerships
- Income and tenure mixing
- Place and people focus
- New Urbanism principles
- High rates of dependency among subsidized families
- HOPE VI replaced by Choice Neighborhoods

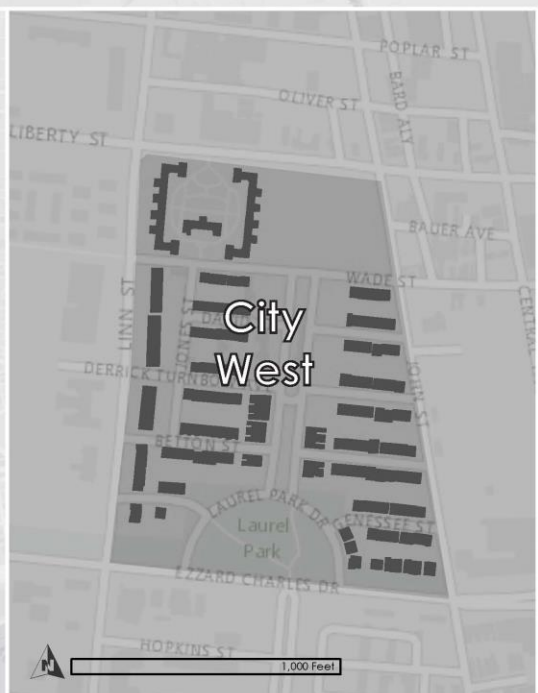
## PER

- Large scale demolition of shanties
- Often at the periphery
- Public - private partnerships
- No tenure or income mixing despite being the challenge but not implemented
- Place and people focus
- Limited application of NU
- High rates of dependency among subsidized families
- PER replaced by PROHABITA, Rehabilitation for Rent and IFRRU 2020 under the Portugal 2020

# CityWest, Cincinnati, OH

- 686 rental units: public housing, tax credit, and market rate
- West End, inner city location
- 89 home ownership units
- Developer & Property Manager: The Community Builders (TCB)
- CMHA: Monitoring of public housing and subsidy administration.





# Laurel Homes and Lincoln Court, Cincinnati



Laurel Homes



Public housing being demolished in Cincinnati

# CityWest, Cincinnati

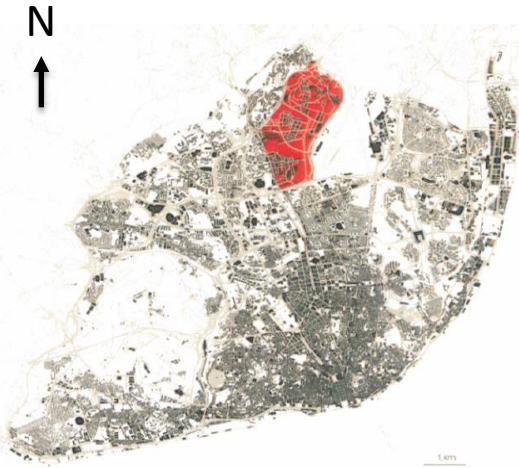


Mixture of low-income rental and ownership housing

# Alta de Lisboa

- Peripheral location
- PER - 2 948 (2 842 social rental units + 104 sold)
- 4 700 home ownership units (market)
- Developer – SGAL + Lisbon Municipal Chamber (CML)
- Property Manager – SGAL (home ownership units); Social Housing Municipal Enterprise - GEBALIS (PER)

# Alta de Lisboa (PUAL)



“ALTA DE LISBOA”  
location



## LEGENDA

■■■■ Limite da Área de Intervenção do PUAL

- Subsecções Estatísticas - Microterritórios PER
- Subsecções Estatísticas - Microterritórios Venda Livre
- Edifícios Construídos - PER
- Edifícios Construídos - Venda Livre
- Edifícios Existentes



PER and home ownership units

Souce: CML, “Proposta de alteração do PUAL”, 2013

# ALTA DE LISBOA



PER ALTA



Demolition of shanties before PER

# ALTA DE LISBOA



Mixture of low-income rental (PER) and ownership housing

# Management

## HOPE VI

- A variety of management models are used (profits & non-profits)
- Housing authorities play limited management role.
- Reliance on corporate financing (LIHTC)
- Strict, market-oriented approach used to manage subsidized housing creates tensions

## Alta de Lisboa (PER + Market)

- Two models of management are used (non-profit & profit)
- Social Housing Municipal Enterprise (GEBALIS) play an important role
- Reliance on State financing and market investment
- Municipal approach to manage PER and market-oriented for-ownership housing



# Relocation

## HOPE VI

- Relocation is the most controversial aspect of HOPE VI.
- Public housing residents generally do not move back
- Those receiving housing vouchers move to slightly better neighborhoods
- Counseling plays a key role

## PER

- Relocation is not that controversial
- All families registered by the municipalities are relocated in the PER neighborhoods
- Intra-community moves lead to better housing and neighborhood
- Counseling assists for family that move from shanty to new housing.

# Physical change

## HOPE VI (in general)

- Demolition of distressed “projects”
- New Urbanism (NU) design principles utilized
- Reinsert old street pattern
- Retail sector remains a challenge
- Impacts of branding efforts uncertain

## PER (in general)

- Demolition of shanties
- High quality but use of NU limited
- New infrastructure and green spaces
- Retail spaces remains a challenge
- Branding may create stigma

# Social change—Social Mixing (SM)

## HOPE VI

- SM does not lead to social interaction
- Renters and owners belong to separate organizations
- Homeowners do not serve as role models or provide job leads
- Proximity leads to tensions due to strict management

## PER

- SM used to promote social cohesion, but cohesion not achieved in practice
- Renters and owners belong to separate organizations, but there is an effort to work together (in the case of AL)
- Homeowners do not serve as role models
- Proximity can sometimes, lead to tension because of different lifestyles

# Crime and Safety

## HOPE VI

- New Urbanism and CPTED principles
- Work requirements not consistently implemented
- Former public housing residents resent strict management
- Incivilities more of a problem than street crime
- Crime rates have gone down

## PER

- Crime and Safety Prevention through Urban Design
- No work requirements
- Incivilities and anti-social behavior more of a problem than street crime
- Impacts of high-visibility policing has been positive
- Crime rates have gone down

# Self-sufficiency (SS)

## HOPE VI

- HUD's Family SS is underfunded and underutilized
- Many former public housing residents resent SS goal
- Chicago's case management demonstration has produced promising results
- SS efforts have fallen short due to macro-economic and social causes.

## PER

- No comparable single SS program
- SS is a goal in itself but some aspects of SS are provided from e.g. back-to-school programs, literacy courses, intensive training for unemployment's.
- SS efforts have fallen short due to macro-economic and social causes

# Conclusion

**Overall: Although HOPE VI (US) and PER (Portugal) projects differ with respect to location, ethnic makeup, and size they have more commonalities than differences with respect to revitalization processes.**

## **Management**

- Both Portugal and the US are increasingly relying on the private sector for development and management

## **Physical change:**

- Physical design and physical conditions have improved in both countries; commercial revitalization is a challenge in both countries

## **Social change:**

- In both countries greater social mix has not led to greater social interaction or to enhanced social capital.

## **Crime and Safety**

- In both countries anti-social behavior is more of a problem than street crime, however, serious crime has gone down.

## **Relocation:**

- Whereas in the US large numbers of the original residents move away, in Portugal nearly all families stay on site.

## **Self-sufficiency:**

- Although the US has a more explicit focus on self-sufficiency, there is no evidence that US programs are more effective in promoting SS.