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

Source: CML, “Proposta de alteração do PUAL”, 2013
ALTA DE LISBOA

PER ALTA  Demolition of shanties before PER
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 families 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 done.

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.