

CITIZENSHIP AS AN ACTIVE SUBJECT FOR RECOVERY OF THE HERITAGE OF SOCIAL HOUSING IN MODERN MOVEMENT AT VALENCIAN COMMUNITY, SPAIN

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ABSTRACT

Given the complexity of the heritage project and current urban regeneration processes, citizen participation, as central point for good governance and sustainability, is of vital importance. Contributing to the knowledge of architecture of social housing in the Modern Movement requires an approach to social reality of its residents, identifying and recognizing the living heritage values from social perception and practice. That is why accession of residents as active subjects in this process is essential, but also for subsequent elaboration of strategies for revitalization, updating and sustainable recovery, environmental and social, which will not affect the preservation of existing values in this historical-cultural heritage of our cities. Likewise, participatory processes in this field of work have, at the same time, a pedagogical task, in the way of publicizing values of modern heritage in order to achieve its recognition and appreciation by society. This paper presents the approach from field of citizen participation and potential participatory methodologies that guide the research work, specifically, within the framework of the *Momovivso* research project, focused on possibilities of recovery and conservation of social housing of the Modern Movement in the Valencian Community, Spain.

KEYWORDS

Citizen participation; social housing; Modern Movement; Valencian Community.

1. INTRODUCTION

Standards of international professionalism and ethical bases for professional practice of architecture in Spain frame their commitments in a triple axis. The first, establishes the main or general function that fulfills, which is always social in the sense of working to satisfy the basic needs of the population and safeguarding the general interests of society as a whole through the administration of territory, natural resources or inherited heritage. The second, towards the direct recipients of its services and respect for their interests. The third axis can be situated in relation to the profession itself and how its exercise becomes an example, not only for other architects, but also for future professionals who are being trained.

On this triple axis are based the fundamental components that constitute the pillar of the work presented here. The inherited heritage in the field of social housing, the needs of the residents and their homes, as well as the application of participatory tools are related to it. These tools constitute part of the methodology to be implemented by the

architect in his professional and research practice, and especially in the field of revitalization of heritage values in cultural properties where there are residents.

The *Momovivso* research project,¹ directed by the Valencian group *Arquitectura del Movimiento Moderno y Contemporáneo*, focuses its work on the possibilities of recovery and conservation of the social housing of the Modern Movement in the Valencian Community, in Spain, since it constitutes part of the heritage. Recognizes that contributing to the knowledge of the architecture of social housing (generated in that period of our history) requires an approach to the current reality of its residents. The possibilities of projecting a proposal for housing recovery and conservation must unquestionably start from identify and recognize living heritage values from the perception of its residents and therefore from daily social practice. These strategies of revitalization, updating and sustainable recovery have not to affect the preservation of existing values and have to be built from the reality experienced by its protagonists, the residents. The general objective of this paper is to present the approach from the field of citizen participation and the potential participatory methodologies that guide the research work in the *Momovivso* project.

2. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, REHABILITATION AND SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE

The preservation of the heritage values of the buildings in the processes of revitalisation and recovery of the historical and cultural heritage - which constitutes the social housing of the Modern Movement - makes the incorporation of the resident neighbours as active subjects of the process fundamental.

Let us recall here that any process of urban rehabilitation and regeneration should focus on two aspects: on habitat - living space,

morphological aspects - and on inhabiting, in the sense of H. Lefebvre, insofar as it places its attention on the interrelations between the inhabitants, the dwellings they inhabit and the concrete social organisation in which it takes place. Focusing, on the one hand, on the social processes that have housing as a central axis (Cortés, 1995, p. 136) from its social significance, function and form of coexistence in the coverage of needs throughout the life cycle of individuals and families. In addition, on the other hand, incorporating the sociological notion of "appropriation" which refers to the links that are generated with the inhabited space, with the passing of time and coexistence, from the home to the street, to the neighbourhood and to the city itself.

The appropriation is materialized by individuals in a certain space and time, it is related to a very close link between the urban and daily life. It is not something that is conquered, but something that is incrementally achieved, the appropriation of space implies temporality: duration and continuity.

This appropriation can be done at an individual-familiar level, characterizing itself in the house; and at a more difficult to define level, that is part of an individual-society relationship, in the street, in the neighbourhood, in the city (Sá 2019, 1691).

Inhabiting and habitat must be seen holistically in architectural practice in general, and in the rehabilitation of social housing heritage in particular. This is why citizen participation should not be conceived as a benevolent yielding on the part of the political-technical powers, or as a result of a legal obligation.

Participation is a methodology and, as such, must be integrated into the elaboration of a strategy for urban regeneration and rehabilitation of buildings and housing. This within the framework and sense of governance, in which the resources of public power, the resources and advice of technical specialists and the potential of the social organization and

its networks. Horizontal relationships between these resources are what make the citizen an active subject for the recovery of the heritage of social housing, preserving the building heritage values and the socio-cultural values of their communities, created throughout their inhabitation. Therefore, citizen participation, as the axis for good governance and social and environmental sustainability of spaces and housing, is essential to satisfy the needs of residents, as safeguarding heritage values (Falls 2016, 61).

Community and neighborhood-based approaches are part of the policy for sustainable development of the 2030 Agenda, its goals and targets. The empowerment of communities is a transversal axis and citizen participation is the instrument to achieve it insofar as it allows to collectively building actions aimed at change, elaborated in a participatory manner within the neighborhood and with the neighborhood as protagonist.

The idea is to make the path to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) more operational by involving people and their organizations. These foundations are also present in the *Strategic Framework of the Spanish Urban Agenda* (AUE) 2019 and the housing policy that it promotes, recognizing the social function of housing and the need to incorporate a people-centered approach.² In conclusion, housing rehabilitation projects, in terms of sustainability, should not be done at the expense of the collective construction of the life that exists in them. It is necessary to adopt a humanistic perspective.

Likewise, it is necessary to underline the learning and educational function of citizen participation. This occurs in two ways: 1) for the technical specialist from the citizens, 2) for citizens from the technical specialist. Therefore, the gain is circular, typical of proximity and horizontal relations, where hierarchies and the superiority of the technical specialist die. Understanding it in this way contradicts some statements that, perhaps, limit this conception of learning:

Los procesos de participación ciudadana (...) son una forma de construir ciudadanía comprometida, ya que es una vía de comunicar, formar y transmitir los límites que pesan en cualquier proyecto (Pernás y Román 2017, 125-126).³

Who trains whom? Citizen participation is not unidirectional, where the technician is kind enough to inform about the project and try to train about it. Learning must circulate in all directions; it is part of the great synergies to which participation must give rise. Within the subject, that concerns us and based on this clarification, the pedagogical function of participation for the *Momovivo* project is essential.

Capital in the sense of publicizing the values of modern heritage to achieve recognition and appreciation, not only by public authorities, but also from the collective imagination of its residents and Valencian society. As well as discovering, throughout the participatory process, practices and social situations that may be producing positive and/or negative effects on the buildings, learning from the situation of residents and with residents, in the neighborhood, in the home. Since as Antequera (2015) points out:

El patrimonio urbano que no se hace consciente en el imaginario ni se encuentra protegido por la Administración: es patrimonio invisible, un patrimonio en riesgo (Antequera 2015, 9).⁴

Walking towards an intervention architecture, in terms of environmental and social sustainability, for the conservation and revitalization of the historical heritage in social housing, cannot attend exclusively to image and/or technical values linked to the history of the buildings, but must collect, in its performance and for it, the collective memory of the "place" and current practices. In addition to taking channels that, allow co-decision in rehabilitation actions.

3. MOMOVIVSO PROJECT AND PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGIES

As has been pointed out in previous lines, the approximation to the reality of the residents in the social housing groups built between 1925 and 1975 in the Valencia Region is of vital importance when preparing a proposal for housing recovery and conservation. It is not just about investigating the state of conservation or material deterioration of these buildings, establishing the causes and proposing the application of current construction technologies that redirect the houses and the building towards an environmentally sustainable model. The aim is to incorporate in the intervention proposal a reading of the social space that make up these housing groups, through the study of the social processes, practices and discourses that are put into play among the different stakeholders, while identifying intangible assets that are part of the collective identity, its evolution and current state.

Heritage rehabilitation and conservation, in the case at hand, must incorporate readings from the social actors who have experienced its historical process. Bear in mind that the residential building is a material part of a social space and that life flows from the private and exclusive sphere (housing) to the public space. The building is not a product, it is a place, it is a space perceived in the Lefebvrian sense (1974), where social relations are produced and reproduced, which have continuity in the public space. It is in living where architecture is completed (Martín 2015, 90) and the complexity of the heritage project for recovery of social housing.

That is why *Momovivso* faces the study of the state of the buildings and collective spaces, to develop a strategy of conservation and intervention in the social housing of the Modern Movement, in order to preserve in

them patrimonial, material and immaterial values. It works from two aspects: applying the humanist perspective not only through a participatory process giving prominence to the resident and their associations, but also from the perspective of inclusion, diversity and gender.

The existence of social stratification due to aspects related to diversity and gender, derived from the position of inequality in the scope of life possibilities and opportunities between men and women, exists in Spanish⁵ and Valencian society.

Working to achieve equality involves knowing the different realities inscribed in terms of gender and the different life cycles. In addition, taking into account that developing strategies aimed at building the caring city implies the rehabilitation of buildings, but it also involves knowing the female role in the formation of living and the needs in terms of inclusion and functional diversity.

The implementation of this view is justified by the characteristics of the case that this research project specifically addresses. The study is carried out on the *Virgen del Carmen* housing group, located in the Beteró neighborhood, belonging to the Poblats Marítims district, in the northeast of the city of Valencia. It was built in 1962 and was used entirely, at the time, for social housing within the programs developed under Franco's policy.

At present, this complex constitutes a census section classified by the Valencian Autonomous Government (GVA) as an area with integral vulnerability.⁶ Concept related to socio-spatial segregation and that draws attention to an environment in decline that has been suffering processes of downward vertical social mobility, which means that its residents have worse possibilities or opportunities for participation and integration in society.



Figure 1. Grupo Virgen del Carmen. Satellite photography. Source: (Autor, from Google Maps Satellite 2022)

11. Poblatos Marítims. Index Global

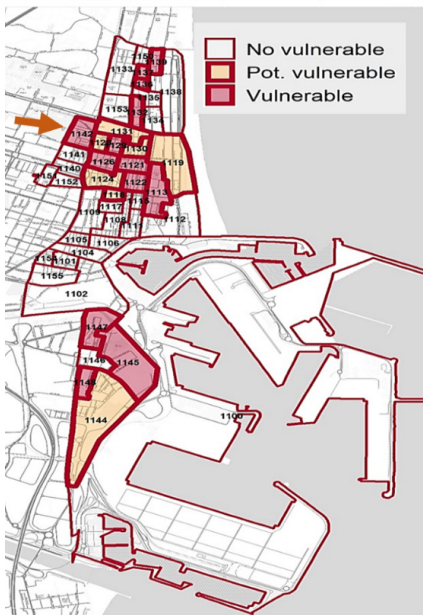


Figure 2. Census Section 1142 (RES DT 11M) Virgen Del Carmen Group and vulnerability. Source: (Àrees Vulnerables a la Ciutat de València, 2019. Seccions Censals. Oficina d'Estadística. Ajuntament de València).

El concepto de vulnerabilidad (...) es un término que se refiere a la movilidad social descendente y que viene a significarse como la antesala de la salida o caída en la exclusión social, también se suele referir tanto a colectivos sociales como a territorios en situación de riesgo o de declive, aunando por tanto el doble vínculo entre territorio y estructura social. (Alguacil 2006, 161).⁷

3.1. Participatory methodology

Citizen participation, insofar as it means building collectively, so that the different voices have place in decision-making, becomes a transversal element in all those processes that affect the way and state of living, which undoubtedly includes the urban policy from its different and multiple dimensions. Therefore, it cannot be reduced to a punctual space to contrast proposals already raised.

Within participatory processes, we move in a continuous line between conflict and consensus. Participatory work is directed by a double dynamic: we receive from the population and social agents; we return results to the population and social agents.

- Phase 1. We diagnose with the residents and from the residents. We return results.
- Phase 2. We propose with the residents and from the residents. We return results.

The citizens, owners and neighbors for that matter, become subject and object of reflection on their problems, on the proposals and their prioritization, so that a dialectic is established between them and the technicians, in order to achieve a collective construction of knowledge and actions to take. It must be a synergistic process. We start from action research where social interests are articulated with scientific interests" (Santos 2004, 38) and with technical interests.

Thus, active listening and the creation of social conversion are the axes that should guide the selection and application of participatory techniques in the Momovivso project.

The application of the tools should be oriented to collect the neighborhood experience and perception, along the following lines:

- Of the historical processes that have marked social life and the perception of changes up to the present time;
- The daily life of the neighborhood, in domestic and public spaces (from inside to outside);
- Of the relationship with social and institutional agents, etc.

The potential techniques that can be used are briefly listed in the following table. It must be taken into account that this is a selection of techniques; this selection does not invalidate many others that exist and/or are created from the creativity of the professional for each case:

PHASES	THEMATIC	POSSIBLE TOOLS
1. DIAGNOSIS	a) Social-historical process. Historical analysts	Oral histories Timelines
	b) Elements of social and cultural value	Direct and participant observation Informal and formal interviews (open-ended, semi-structured; individual and group) Focus groups Drifting Mental map
	c) Community structures and institutional relations.	Stakeholder mapping Map of social actors Sociogram
	d) Perceived problems. Actors involved	Drifting Brainstorm Talking map SWOT; SWOT with actors DRAFPO ⁸ Sociodrama Self report Themed tables
2. PROPOSAL	a) Participated proposals	Brainstorm Nominal group Flowchart Themed tables Reflective matrix Projective matrix Future scenario matrix Method EASW ⁹

Table 1. Tools for participation Source: (Authors 2022)

It must be taken into account that the phases are in a dependency relationship, as well as the themes. They are applied in a concatenated manner or with feedback between experiences and results, influencing each other. They have the characteristic of being flexible, that is, the same tool can be used to obtain information within different themes or serve different objectives. The results obtained are treated through a content analysis.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The current architectural culture must continue to grow in the incorporation of the humanistic perspective of the city, to improve its position regarding the scope of the principles of Governance contained in the 2030 Agenda and in the Spanish Urban Agenda, where community-based approaches constitute an important part of sustainable development policy. The incorporation of this perspective and within it the citizen participation, worked under principles of coexistence in diversity and gender, continues to be one of its workhorses. The *Momoviso* research project, which affects the patrimonial consideration of social housing in the Modern Movements, has a particularity or specificity compared to the proposal for the rehabilitation and regeneration of other cultural assets, and that is that these houses are inhabited. They make up neighborhood communities, that is, the building structure has produced a model of sociability and community socialization, this being one of its important heritage values. These values can be affected, modified or destroyed by public administration interventions derived from building rehabilitation or urban regeneration actions. How and to what extent?

Being able to answer such questions drives the application of participatory research strategies, whose axis are the conversational processes where the protagonist, the neighbor, ceases to be an observed object and becomes an observing subject. These techniques will allow

knowing and recognizing the existing socio-cultural values formed in the course of living, building this knowledge from the experienced reality by its protagonists. This reality transits between the home and the public space, and both should not be dissociated in research on the current state of social housing in the modern movement.

The case study that the research deals with places us in an urban space qualified, by the Valencian Government itself, as completely vulnerable, which makes it more pressing to highlight its heritage values and propose intervention strategies for its rehabilitation, elaborated with and for the host community.

We agree, therefore, that residential buildings are places, and as such, they must be treated in rehabilitation strategies aimed at sustainability from their multiple orientations. In addition, the multitude of participatory techniques that can be applied in diagnosis processes and in the collective construction of proposals is clearly shown.

The generic tools described here are being selected in relation to the objectives of the research project and will be applied throughout the year 2022. Their specification, development and results achieved will be addressed in future publications.

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NOTES

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24.11.2020 https://dogv.gva.es/datos/2020/11/24/pdf/2020_9956.pdf. Record AICO/2021/253.

² Spanish Urban Agenda, 02. Diagnóstico y síntesis territorial (Spain: Ministry of Transportation, Mobility and Urban Agenda, 2019), 37 https://www.aue.gob.es/que-es-la-aue#Agenda_Urbana_Espanola

³ Original quote in Spanish. Free translation: "Citizen Participation processes (...) are a way of building committed citizenship, since it is a way of communicating, training and transmitting the limits that weigh on any project".

⁴ Original quote in Spanish. Free translation: "Urban heritage that is not made aware in the imaginary nor is it protected by the Administration: it is invisible heritage, a heritage at risk".

⁵ The data of the European Gender Equality Index, 2021 continue to show a poor score for Spain in the variables referring to "Money -related to financial resources and economic situation- and "Time" -in relation to the performance of care activities and time dedicated to social activities-. In the former, Spain ranks 16th and in the latter 14th, both below the European average. Instituto de las Mujeres. "España ocupa el sexto lugar en el Índice Europeo de Igualdad de Género presentado en 2021". Ministerio de Igualdad. Gobierno de España, October 28, 2021. <https://www.inmujeres.gob.es/actualidad/noticias/2021/OCTUBRE/informeEIGE.htm>

⁶ Observatori de l'Hàbitat i la Segregació Urbana. Visor d'espais urbans sensibles. Ficha 3239. https://icvficherosweb.icv.gva.es/ICV/08_vivienda/05_visor_espacios_urbanos_sensibles/2020041_fichas_eus/4625011042.pdf

⁷ Original quote in Spanish. Free translation: "The concept of vulnerability (...) is a term that refers to downward social mobility and that comes to mean the prelude to leaving or falling into social exclusion, it also usually refers to both social groups and territories in a situation of risk or decline, thus uniting the double link between territory and social structure".

⁸ This is the Spanish acronym for the terms weaknesses, resistances, threats, strengths, potentialities, opportunities. It is a technique developed in Spain by the RED CIMAS, it has no equivalent in Anglo-Saxon terms.

⁹ European Awareness Scenario Workshop.

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