



POLITECNICO
DI TORINO

Honors thesis

COURSE OF ARCHITECTURE CONSTRUCTION CITY

Abstract

Poblado de Absorción Fuencarral B
Stories and prospects of a popular neighborhood in Madrid.
The public intervention facing an unstable equilibrium.

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by

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The residential issue is inextricably linked, in the social and urban context, with the combination of many factors: politics, economy, ideology, ecology and many others. Each of these fields is embodied in some agents who, over time, add a piece to the puzzle of the city. They thus take part to the creation of the urban space in a more or less personal and relevant way. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how the interactions between agents affect the physical space. The attempt is therefore to understand the function of the interweaving of opinions, initiatives and interests in the evolution of the delicate and complex balance that is the urban reality.

On the one hand the analysis approach is as much as possible interdisciplinary, granting attention to contributions of various kinds, both practical and theoretical. Even the selection of sources and witnesses aims at the highest achievable heterogeneity.

On the other, the proposals developed are referred to a particular stakeholder: the public authority. The traces of its work testify an attitude incompatible with the present situation. Prospects are uncertain and shaky. What is the role that public housing can then play in the complex ecosystem of the city?

This methodological approach was tested in a concrete urban reality, located in the northern outskirts of Madrid: the former Poblado de Absorción Fuencarral B (about 6.5 hectares for 440 residences). At least three reasons make this district of particular interest for the purposes of this research. First, the origin of the neighbourhood: it is an example of promotion and construction of public housing. Additionally, despite the state residential policy of progressive disposal of assets, Fuencarral B is still managed by the Instituto de Vivienda (IVIMA). Second, the location. The district is bordered by the site chosen for one of the largest urban operations planned in Spain, the so called Distrito Castellana Norte. It consists of a project of urban and infrastructural development which has been discussed for more than twenty years now. The ping-pong back and forth between various legislatures (and judiciaries) and the hunt for funding has prevented the project to see the light until now. Finally, the current partial incompleteness of Fuencarral B. Urbanization and facilities are uncomplete. Moreover, the recent operation of relocation of the residents in buildings with a higher density generated a surplus of land that is in a state of disrepair and neglect. This area is potentially suitable to host new constructions, but it is held in abeyance, waiting for the outcomes of the Distrito Castellana Norte.

The narration is divided into three main chapters.

The first consists of a historical and sociological research on the district. The thesis recounts the fundamental stages of the transformation of Fuencarral B. The original rural context, the project of Alejandro de la Sota developed during the Franco regime (1956), the urban regeneration started in the 90s and consisted in total demolition and reconstruction of the district, up to the current conditions. The dramatic and troubled social and spatial changes in the neighbourhood occurred with surprising speed, thus enabling the retrieval of many direct and indirect testimonies.



Figure 1_Fuencarral B in 1956



Figure 2_Fuencarral B in 2015

The second chapter is devoted to the proposal of a methodology. It is investigated the potential of Game theory as a tool for analysis and support to urban decision-making. This part of the work was formalized in a board game that simulates the negotiations between the stakeholders responsible for urban development. This allows mathematical modelling to be translated into simple terms easy employable and the suggestion of solution as a condition of balance formulated by the mathematician J. Nash.

The third, and last, macro-chapter draws the conclusions from the two previous parts, and suggest an organizational and procedural proposal for the future of the district. It is selected the point of view of the IVIMA (the public entity that owns the land and buildings, as well as the main responsible of public housing in Spain from the 50s to today), and it is proposed the establishment of a Community Land Trust (CLT) of public initiative in Fuencarral B. It consists of a non-profit, community-based organization, which aims at the construction and management of assets in a given area, in a manner such as to safeguard housing accessibility in response to the market dynamics. The CLT is also responsible for promoting activities and local initiatives through democratic and egalitarian collaboration of a mixed representation of the stakeholders involved.

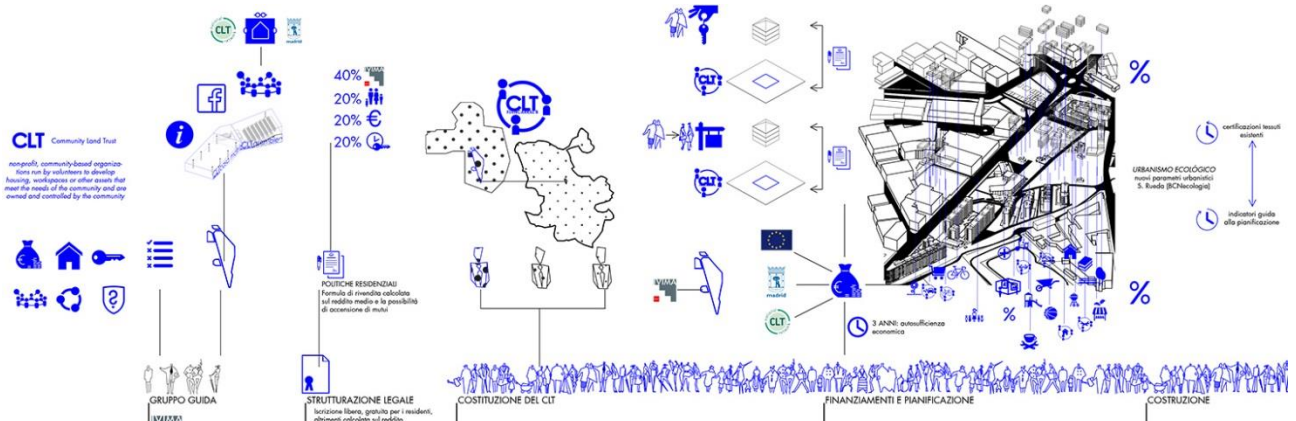


Figure 3_Organizational scheme of the CLT of Fuencarral B

The methods of analysis of the dynamics and agents proposed in Fuencarral are considered effectively reproducible in numerous other contexts.

The project proposals rise as a response to the specific circumstances of the district of Madrid under study, but they can be a useful reference in similar urban and social conditions.

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