

CO-EXISTENCE IN URBANISM

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ABSTRACT

Growing slums are a constant issue that most architectural organization have been discussing and working over. Its concerns are associated with surrounding Metropolis skyline, Political agendas, commercial growth and labor sector housing. Usually the slums undergo a redevelopment project whilst monitored by the government and accomplished by an NGO. When neither looks into it the slums simply undergo demolition.

This paper discusses an in-between path for addressing Slum concerns. Where demolition is ruled out, Skyline is protected, Commercial growth is answered through existing slum development and Labor of the city stays in its place. In order to elaborate on the idea of Co-Existence a Favela-Bairro project of Rio de Janeiro by Architect Jorge Mario Jauregui is studied and discussed.

Key Words: *Urbanism, Slum Redevelopment, Favela Bairro, Jorge Marrio, Co-existence*

INTRODUCTION

How ironic that from the urban theorists of 20th century - CIAM (*The Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne*) to the American urban theorist and political activist of 21st century - Mike Davis, face the same issues of informal settlements (*high density housing, lacking infrastructure and clean habitable conditions due negligence and constant deterioration*) in urbanism.

Today though we are facilitated with numerous methods suggested and recorded by pioneers of overcoming the crisis, yet the quest continues.....

Demolition and re-establishing the inhabitants of informal settlements to serve Political Urbanism (*developing an urban space in a city to express its political competence on the international scale*) seems harsh for the relocated masses, considering the aspect of settling on new site away from the existing. Hence political urbanism smashed the face of social urbanism (*developing the urban poor*) adding to more fragmented new informal settlements on vacant plots in the vicinity. When the aspect of commercial urbanism (*urban development for monetary growth of city*) entered social housing, site was

no longer an issue because some part of the redeveloped housing on the existing site of the settlement was awarded as sale component, satisfying the government and developers. But unfortunately, newly introduced commercial component illegally ate on the social component, leading to commercially successful but socially failed projects.

The consistent debate between political commercial and social urbanism has led to increasing urban poverty, since the biased political or commercial development overlook the social face of Urbanism. These conditions force us to question the tactic of demolition, considering the fact that the settlements lack only infrastructure, which can be provided without demolition. Why can't an Urbanism contain, the political, commercial and social developments simultaneously?

HAUSSMANN'S PROPOSAL

Napoleon III's project for the rebuilding of Paris executed by Haussmann represented Political urbanism. The plan proposed cutting of streets and providing large parks in the city overwriting the existing urban fabric. Though Haussmann's intention was to eliminate the cramped residential alleyways at the heart of the city, he failed to provide a permanent solution because of political and aesthetic interests in large scale interventions that made him overlook the micro details. If the government had to cater to the social strata requirements also, then such boulevards could not have been drawn on map that would require a crawler to draw them on land. Yet in an attempt to address the political, commercial and social urban development, Haussmann's new housing accommodated all. The top two floors contained smaller rooms with low ceiling height for the labor class, the lower three floors with more spacious apartments were for the upper middle class and Shops at the ground floor and workshops on mezzanine floor comprised the commercial blanket of the society, hence cramping the social and commercial element in the same structural skeleton but concealing it with a uniform front façade to celebrate the modern face of the city and hence only politically developing the urban fabric.

Similar to Haussmann's dual faced façade, the rapidly growing urban population today introduces the wall in Lagos (*informal developments of Nigeria*) to serve as division between the two contrasting worlds of urban poor and bourgeois class. The three to four feet depth of the wall and the pavements on the street, are used as a market place; crowded with hawkers, food merchants, mechanics, tailors etc. whilst the flip side of the wall ironically overlooks the colorful gardens of the upper class housing. The wall is not just a boundary but a barrier between the plot and the street that separates the two faces of the society, which are brought together because of monetary growth and urban space issues. If the stark separation is instead treated with integration considering the concept of co-existence it will

simultaneously serve the political agenda of urban development, issues of economic growth through the development of commercial belt and socio-cultural issues by development of urban poor to coexist with the upper class.

FAVELA-BAIRRO PROJECT

Jorge Mario Jauregui an architect and urbanist, known for his effective interventions in informal settlements after the Favela-Bairro project of Rio de Janeiro in the mid-1990s puts forth the solution of co-existence of informal settlements and the planned city, through his integration scheme of Favela-Bairro project. The firm identified ten favelas to be developed, and integrated them at micro and macro level without overwriting the existing, whilst maintaining the individual identity of the favelas. Unlike Francisco Pereira Passos' (*engineer and mayor of Rio from 1902 to 1906*) central Rio planning, inspired from Haussmann's Paris, which initiated an era of great political urban renewal led to similar consequences like in Paris of increased fragmented informal settlements. One of the significant morphological transformations of the city's urban fabric in 1902 was the opening of the Central Avenue (*Avenida Central*). The widespread demolition to serve the political development led the evicted population to resettle on the vacant surrounding hills of Rio forming the existing favelas of the city, hence conforming that the urban poor are local nomads in perpetual state of relocation driven by political Urbanism.



The Paris Boulevard [*fig. on right*] of 18th century identically reflected in The Avenida Central [*fig. on left*] at Rio in 20th century.



Only when the favelas affected the booming rates of real estate, the military razed 80 favelas and evicted almost 140,000 people from the hills overlooking Rio in 1950. Yet remaining favelas continued to exist. Democratic rule in Brazil and soaring crime rates in the crowded favelas in 1990s caused urban planners to work with sociologists and activists on project Favela-Bairro (*slum neighborhood*). After the Favela-Bairro project the estate prices rose almost 30% in the neighborhoods of some favelas, particularly those with stunning views of the city; Vidigal – (*Leblon beach on the north and the city beyond, south view to the Sao Conrado beach and Atlantic to the east*), hence serving the political agenda also.

The Favela-Bairro project aimed to enliven the settlement by strategically resolving the social issues through architecture. \$600 million was committed to The Favela-Bairro project, for providing infrastructure, sanitation and socio-cultural developments to the favelas. The proposal introduced infrastructure while limiting demolition to 5% of the existing. Local material and labor was used for the new structures of housing and Public Square (*administration buildings, entertainment centers, employment structures, socio-cultural gathering spaces*). The transition between the new development and the existing by introduction of; The exposed I section frame along the exposed brick gateway to the public square at Fuba-Campinho junction, the red and yellow handrails along the new pathways and the Ms roof for the Soccer field at Salgueiro maintained the socio-cultural identity of the settlements through architecture, whilst also providing a functional dimension to it.

It had become extremely dangerous for people to walk the streets or stand near windows since the favelas had its main linkages as the Death Avenues. Also the unplanned cramped houses did not provide access for fire and ambulance crews to get around, ensuring disaster and loss of life in case of catastrophe. These details accounted for a solution to social problems, which are more critical than political and aesthetic issues. The Safe and accessible walkways, ramps and steps carved in-between the dense settlements check the growing crime. One strategic interconnection of Rio city and favelas was the development of the Faria river – a crime core at Fernao Cardim Favela (*home to 850 families*). The river was cleaned, a sewer system was installed, rails and benches were provided at the edge and new roadway was developed. The bridges across the river connecting two sides of the Favela provide natural surveillance similar to the spine path introduced in Vidigal Favela. The new path runs throughout Vidigal checking the daily activities at every point and disturbing the crime spots by intertwining. Similarly Haussmann's Boulevards served the military purposes of the city, controlling crime according to the political plan, unlike the Favela-Bairro project that architecturally resolves social and crime issues locally and hence controlling the rising crime of the city at overall scale too.

CONCLUSION

Integration spaces like the large public square at Fuba-Campinho in the favelas serve as platform for entertainment, commerce, learning, socio-cultural gathering and interconnection. The artificial lakes, grottoes, and greenhouses of Haussmann also connected important places of the city accomplishing only political requirement of axis development, But Favela-Bairro while serving socially, also develops the settlement to suffice political agenda of interconnection of favelas with rest of Rio. The remodeling of the theatre at Vidigal also encourages interaction. The Samba Hall at Salgueiro is intentional development to serve as centre for carnival rehearsal, [*a culture of Rio from 1723*]. Residents of Rio

from outside the Favelas visit it for Carnival performances and classes, hence binding the two faces of the city culturally and strengthening the argument of co-existence.

Demolition of sprawls could be a requirement if integration seemed impossible, but the Favela-Bairro project defines the settlement into an imaginary parameter that is accessible and acceptable to the rest of the city, therefore overcoming the political, commercial and social issues of urbanism through single approach in development - Coexistence. This approach also maintains individual identity of the settlement, by abandoning the concept of demolition instead developing them by providing infrastructure.

Hence architect Jorge Mario Jauregui's future city of co-existence will have the modern skyrocketing glazed curtain wall buildings overlooking the vernacular housing of brick and hatch; successfully functioning as part of same frame work, proudly benefiting from each others' existence.

It is now for the new planners to adopt or reject one of the most balanced proposals of its time.

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MIJ