

ABSTRACT: Cities with a growing population are faced with the challenge to offer sufficient and adequate living space to all income groups. Those with medium to high incomes and a certain financial flexibility have of course bigger prospects to choose from a wider range of available housing offers within the cities. In contrast, for inhabitants with low to medium incomes, it's getting increasingly complicated to have access to affordable rentals, since the increasing demand for housing, e.g. because of the raise of single households, leads to rising prices and to a shortage of low-cost rental apartments. Further, increasing income differences and a large influx of refugees put extra pressure on the sector.

That trend is well known to decision makers in housing policy in almost all European countries. In order to develop appropriate housing conditions for all inhabitants and to ensure equal living space conditions, housing policies are formulated on federal and state level. For instance, suppliers as well as demanders of rental apartments get support by financial subsidies like housing benefits or tax amortisations. Furthermore, the cities are requested to implement housing policies into their urban residential planning documents.

In this context, growing German and Swedish cities are comparatively investigated. It is examined how housing policies get implemented and reflected in the planning documents of the cities of Munich and Heidelberg in Germany as well as Stockholm and Gothenburg in Sweden. It is also analysed if the defined concepts of the case cities could be applied in realised housing projects. Particularly, new rental housing projects are in the centre of the study.

As results, it should be ascertained if the investigated cities in Germany and Sweden achieve the federal and state housing objectives and which difficulties possibly occur. A further aim is to evaluate which instruments can be considered helpful in the realisation of implemented housing policies in planning documents. The comparison of German and Swedish cities can help to supplement existing deficits through good practice examples from the other side and probably lead to a mutual improvement of the provision of adequate and affordable housing for inhabitants with low to medium incomes.

515 | URBAN REHABILITATION AND QUALIFICATION FOR SOCIALLY DEPRIVED RESIDENTS

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ABSTRACT: The strong real-estate pressure in city centres that gradually triggers sharp price rises, questions the social and cultural identity of less-favoured residents. This happens not only due to the strong deterioration of buildings and dwellings where they live, but also because their economic and social vulnerabilities endanger their permanence in the places where they have always lived and where they feel included both at social and cultural grounds.

This article presents the goals, methodologies, results and conclusions of a socioeconomic, financial and technical study undertaken for the Porto municipality (Portugal). It characterizes (from physical, sociologic, historic, economic and cultural perspectives) the Porto's typical islands that consist in ranks of four or more short houses that occupy lots sharing the same door number, that were built from the beginning of the 19th century, and aimed at responding to the social needs of workers that increasingly arrived to the city, attracted by the industrialization. It then tackles the problems of the inhabitants in the presence of the urban renewal interests and strengths. The case study herein presented specifically centres in S. Victor islands, located in the Urban Rehabilitation Area of Bonfim, just by the side of the historical centre classified as worldwide heritage by UNESCO.

The study begins by the analysis of the problems involved in these islands, concerning, namely, buildings' and dwellings' physical deterioration, accessibility shortcomings, isolation and safety shortages. This characterization resulted from local visits, population surveys and interviews. Then a rehabilitation intervention is proposed, which consists in the rehabilitation of the current dwellings, doubling their liveable areas, and remodelling them so to increase their residents' comfort levels. Finally this rehabilitation proposal is supported on a cost and profit assessment that justifies its feasibility, resorting to available financial instruments. Besides proving the economic and financial sustainability of this intervention, current citizens are deep involved in the improvement of their houses and neighbourhoods, what stresses the importance of public-private agreements to solving the problems of the most deprived residents - social exclusion and economic, social and cultural collapse.