

Southern European Housing Policies in the 2020s: the farewell to residualisation?

Housing needs in the Porto Metropolitan Area and Local Housing Strategies

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Demographic concentration trends in cities have contributed to a significant worsening of housing problems, making access to decent housing more difficult. With the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and the successive lockdowns, housing gained increased relevance for families, sharply impacting social inequalities. Habitability conditions and housing quality undoubtedly proved to be conditioning variables for public health measures, refocusing the debate and the urgency of public policies on housing. In Portugal, housing problems have never ceased to exist, despite the successive policy instruments aimed at solving the most serious situations of housing shortages. In recent years, the Porto Metropolitan Area (AMP) has gained external visibility, in terms of tourism, the attractiveness of new residents and real estate investment. This situation generated a significant increase in housing prices, increasing the difficulties of access to housing for different population strata and socio-spatial inequalities. Thus, in recent years, the socio-housing polarization has expanded and new forms of housing deprivation have emerged. Starting conditions are uneven and the crisis has asymmetrical effects. Public policies aim to create “equal conditions”, but this implies reflecting on different paths. If we want a liveable city, we have to deepen the diagnosis of the multiple problems, reflect on their territorialities and discuss scenarios to explain the various public policy options. The 1st Right Programme, included in the New Generation of Housing Policies (approved by the government in 2018) and in the Portuguese Recovery and Resilience Program (2021), intends precisely to provide a global and integrated response to the diversity of housing challenges, problems and shortages, which were aggravated with the pandemic. In order to apply for the 1st Right, the Municipal Councils had to draw up their Local Housing Strategies, it being essential that these include the territorialization of housing problems and solutions, as an essential work axis for the implementation of the strategy. The problems to be territorialized include, among others, situations of housing shortages, areas of concentration of urban and social problems, as well as areas of greater real estate pressure. Taking this brief context into account, this communication aims to identify the Porto Metropolitan Area housing profiles and the challenges facing the right to decent housing. For that, in methodological terms we will: first, evaluate the intensity of the problems from the statistical information available; then identify profiles of problems using a multivariate analysis. Then we will evaluate the need situations and the housing solutions to be implemented by the municipalities of the AMP, based on the analysis of the Local Housing Strategies carried out.