

Segregation, forced evictions and violation of the right to the city: the return of large housing estates

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Fortaleza, with about 2.6 million inhabitants, is the fifth most populated city in Brazil. Its urban structuring process is associated with residential segregation, which is in turn linked to the higher income classes in areas better served by infrastructure and to the placement of huge housing estates in other diametrically opposed directions. Similarly noteworthy is the spread of slums occupying residual spaces and creating a form of resistance and survival of the poor, whose needs are rarely met by public policies and who cannot afford to enter the real estate market. Since the last decade new urban tools have been incorporated by the municipal urban policy aiming to combat property speculation and promote land tenure. However, the greater influence of the real estate market, which dominates the city, occurs noticeable through the implementation of interventions for urban mobility as well as great equipment related to tourism. Some of these projects have resulted from Fortaleza being chosen a host city for the World Cup in 2014, and have been mainly implemented in the most valued neighborhoods. Such reveals the predominance of the neoliberal city, closely associated with the construction of large urban projects at the expense of town planning processes. In that sense, the building of large peripheral social housing estates indicates that public policies rather than aiming to meet the growing deficit focus mainly on communities affected by these projects and try to meet the pressures of organized social movements. Therefore, they end up favoring urban developers, further enhancing the private investment target areas, with the displacement of the poorest portion of the population to the outskirts in precarious conditions of urban insertion and thereby expanding the spatial inequalities and triggering new social movements. In this article, we will use the example of the Light Rail Vehicle (LRV) project, which consists of the implementation of 12.7 km of railway, with forecasted federal investment of R\$ 307 million. The railway is to link two (sub) centralities that have received public and private investments in recent years: the Parangaba hub and the surroundings of the Port

of Fortaleza. Despite being considered essential to the World Cup 2004, it is unfinished to date and does not include in its pathway any area of the city whose population demands swiftness and greater resources to get to work. Among other impacts it features the removal of hundreds of families who have for decades occupied the railroad right of way and the real estate valuation process of the surroundings, characteristic of the Brazilian urban development model which mainly concentrates income. Regarding the government actions we have identified a pattern of lack of information and lack of social control over interventions that violently impact poor communities. A situation that led to the rise of a reaction of communities that promotes the articulation of political actors against the negative impacts of the works for the World Cup 2014 and, most notably, the LRV. Such articulation was successful in delaying part of the removals and allowing the creation of a scenario for negotiations for the acquisition of land close to such communities, none of which have been closed. In addition to the low compensation amounts offered, the only resettlement alternative built so far has been the *Residencial Cidade Jardim*, a housing project of the Federal *Programa Minha Casa Minha Vida* with over 5,000 housing units. We emphasize that this project was built in an outlying district, in an area ranked by the City's Master Plan as Restricted Occupation Zone – characterized by sparse occupation, lack or absence of infrastructure and public facilities, and incidence of unused plots and land – among whose objectives is the restraint of urban expansion and occupation. Thus, in addition to not complying with the municipal law, we can highlight various problems such as: poor access to education and public health facilities due to the distance and lack of vacancies; failures in water supply and sewage system, where you can often witness blown tanks with open drains and reports of weekly failure of water supply; great distances to workplaces and to trade and service centers; aggravated by inefficient coverage of the public transport network. In the case of families coming from removal areas, the distance forced the breakdown of previously existing social relations, very significant to low-income families. Furthermore, besides the issues regarding urban integration, there are many others related to the architecture of the houses, insufficient to solve the problem of increased density, among others. In addition, due to restrictions of the program, no productive activity can be carried out in the real estate, which affects the income generation of many families. Thus, we have observed that the investments made by the government in Fortaleza have not been able to guarantee access to decent housing and the right to the city.

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