

### THE MEANING OF 'SOCIAL' IN MEXICAN SOCIAL HOUSING

This paper will explore the meaning of 'social' in Mexican social housing in an era when neoliberalism has substituted socially committed architectural trends and historic ideologies as the prevailing philosophy behind the production of the built environment when addressing the needs for housing of the working class. It will present the findings of a doctoral research thesis interested in the housing production process, including the planning, designing and construction of social housing developments, and the experience of residents with their dwellings.

The above-mentioned research, focused on 50 residents' experiences with their houses in 4 social housing developments in the city of Mazatlan, Mexico. As well, it was interested in the actors' involved in the housing production process such as Infonavit, a Mexican institution in charge of administering a housing fund for workers since 1972 that has received many critiques because of its disconnection from the housing process since the late 1980s, when law reforms delegated the construction of housing to the private sector. Private developers and construction companies, who are also part of the housing production process, have been critiqued due to the houses' decreasing material quality and size. Both Infonavit and private actors assess housing in quantitative terms, a process that tends to overlook residents' needs, tastes and expectations in regard to their homes, which leads to question the meaning of 'social' in social housing.

The aim of this paper is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the meaning of 'social' in social housing and the social impact of the built environment on the everyday lives of people, and reveal a mismatch between the values and assumptions of those involved in the production of social housing alongside policy and regulation intentions, and the needs, tastes and expectations of residents in regards to their homes.

#### **Gabriela Ibarra**

PhD candidate

Department of Urban Studies and Planning

University of Sheffield

Sheffield S10 1SB

United Kingdom

+44 783 167 8544

cgperezibarra2@sheffield.ac.uk | gabriela.ibarra@outlook.com