

REHABILITATION AND REUSE OF THE URBAN HERITAGE. THE HISTORICAL CENTERS OF NEW SPANISH POLITICAL CAPITALS DECLARED AS WORLD HERITAGE

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With the creation of the Spanish autonomic system in 1977, the new political-administrative configuration of the State has made the new regional capitals increase their capacity to promote themselves and attract economic resources. In the multi-provincial communities, the capitals have been re-established in the regional urban system, even though they are cities with less population and activity than others in their surroundings. This fact leads to the concentration of competences in the capital.

The problems of the historical centers of these cities tend to present many common elements, such as: deterioration of buildings, precarious conditions of habitability, loss of functional vitality, demographic depletion, population aging, residential underutilization, difficulties of mobility and parking spaces, low level of facilities and services, among others. However, the existence of common problems does not imply that the intervention models should be generalized, since there is a great diversity of situations. To design and manage the urban protection and recovery policies it is necessary to keep in mind the uniqueness of each historic center and its internal dynamics. According to Troitiño (2003), there are, at least, four types of situations: historical centers that have ceased to be the economic center, but retain the symbolic and cultural centrality; historical centers where the historical and the functional aspects allow to maintain a certain centrality; historical centers whose urban identity has been lost or diffused in transformed or degraded urban structures, and historical centers that remain the center of the current city. The latter are the cases of Toledo and Santiago de Compostela, nuclei that will focus our study as examples of new political capitals.

Our article addresses the phenomenon of the renewal and revitalization of the historical centers of two capitals declared World Heritage: Santiago de Compostela and Toledo. Firstly, the study focuses on the legal measures for the protection of the Historical Heritage at national and regional levels; secondly, we will analyze the urban planning at a general and special scale in two case studies at a macro scale: the Historical Center of Santiago de Compostela and the Historical Center of Toledo, and the urban policies designed to revitalize these spaces; finally, we will end with the presentation of a selection of micro-scale projects or case studies based on the recovery of the historical heritage assets and the new offers of services associated with administrative, socio-cultural, educational, tourist and residential uses.

The rehabilitation policies focus on the conservation of an area, not only because of its intrinsic values but also, because of its potential for economic development within the framework of a comprehensive recovery program of social and functional dimensions. The rehabilitation policy, besides being linked to the protection of the historical artistic heritage is also linked to development, since the historical heritage constitutes an economic asset, and the economy of many of these cities is increasingly linked to tourism. The historical cities have become receptive centers of national and foreign tourism, attracted by history, by the architectural and urban heritages, by culture and also by the unique urban environment, which is one of the most important tourist attractions of our time.

In the case of the Galician capital, as part of the Atlantic coastal corridor and due to its good relationship with the inland Galicia in terms of communications and services, it is placed in a balancing and articulating position of the Galician urban system, reinforced by its symbolic and representative functions as the capital of Galicia and a World Heritage city, currently presenting itself as a specialized regional center with a strong presence of the public tertiary (Estévez, 2001), and with a reduced tourist space that mainly uses the concentrated heritage in its historical center (Santos, 2006).

The existence of highly specialized functions — the religious one, since the XII century; the university one, since the XVI century; the sanitary one, since the XIX century, together with being the transport and trade center of a large rural area — made the historical city of Santiago of Compostela maintain a remarkable vitality until the 1980's (Precedo, 1998). In spite of this, it occupied the fifth place in the hierarchy of the tertiary centrality of the system of cities of Galicia. From then on, certain symptoms of residential, demographic, functional and material crises can be recognized — empty houses or houses with reconstruction needs, aged population, traffic and overcrowding problems, marginal and socially degraded spaces¹ - but after its designation as a regional capital, it was soon situated in the second level of the Galician urban hierarchy (Precedo and Villarino, 1995), and it is currently the city with the greatest international projection from the point of view of cultural tourism, thanks to the marketing strategies developed around the Santiago's road.

The location of Toledo in the continuation of the industrial corridor southwest of Madrid and the existence of important cultural resources, represented great advantages

¹ Protection and rehabilitation of the historic city and integration with its natural environment (Santiago de Compostela, Spain) 26-06-2002 <http://habitat.aq.upm.es/bpes/onu02/bp205.html>

to set the headquarters of the autonomous institutions in this city. The primacy of Toledo in the Castilla-La Mancha urban network, together with Albacete, made this city a solid administrative and political center of the autonomous community (Panadero and Pillet, 1999). In the last decade, factors such as the increase in the price of housing in Madrid and the improvement of communications with the High Speed Train have caused an increase in the population of just over 20%. However, the services are directed more and more to visitors and not to the residents, and the tourist apartments are expelling the population to the suburbs built since the 60s. The historic centers of Santiago de Compostela and Toledo face profound functional and social changes; consequently, the urban planning is having difficulties for adapting the landscapes of the past to the needs of the present (Troitiño, 2003). To guarantee the operability of the urban planning, important levels of investment and institutional leadership of the public administrations are needed, especially, of the municipal one, which is the main one involved. For the management of the special planning, both cities have chosen Consortiums.

The capital of Galicia was the first to form a Royal Patronage in 1991. Later, and as imitation of Santiago de Compostela, two other royal patronages were created in Spain: Toledo and Cuenca. A year later, in 1992, the Real Patronage of Santiago is endowed with an operational instrument, that is, the Consortium of the City of Santiago, with municipal ownership, legal personality and own patrimonies. Its areas of action are focused on three sectors: -the urban recovery (houses, the commercial premises and the monuments); -study and information of the historical city and -the cultural revitalization, through the strengthening of tourism and cultural activities linked to the Jacobean itinerary.

In 2001, in Toledo, the State Administrations, the Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha, the Provincial Council and the City Council, by common agreement, created the Consortium of the city of Toledo which is the manager entity of the Royal Patronage, with public character and full capacity to act. It should be noted that among its specific purposes, in addition to serving as administrative and management support to the Royal Patronage, is to promote and facilitate the coordination of the powers of the different administrative levels.

Since the 1990s, urban revitalization policies began to be implemented in our historical centers, aimed at reversing the abandonment and emptying of houses with the generalization of actions that combined the demographic regeneration, the housing rehabilitation, the economic revitalization and the functional insertion. In Santiago de Compostela the administrations develop activities mainly linked to the service sector, some already consolidated, such as university and commerce, and others that respond to a growing social demand such as tourism, culture and those derived from the administration which, at the same time, generate a qualified industrial need for technology development companies.

In short, Santiago de Compostela is structured in five pillars: the political-administrative, as headquarters of the institutions of the government of Galicia; the educational one, by the importance of the University of Santiago de Compostela; the tourist and cultural one, which sustains the dynamism of the hostelry and restoration;

the commercial one, as the head of consumption of a wide region; and the sanitary one, due to the importance of the broad health complex linked to the Faculty of Medicine².

In parallel, Toledo became the capital of Castilla-La Mancha in 1982, and this circumstance acted as a lever of renewal for urban recovery and for growth (Campos, 2002). The reuse of unique buildings with little use for new functions, preferably cultural, administrative and educational functions, allows the rehabilitation and conservation of these buildings and the presence of activities in their environment with all the positive aspects that this entails for the city. The public sector has developed higher education institutions, such as the University of Castilla-La Mancha, which has promoted an increase in employment in the service sector and has contributed to restrain the traditional emigration of young adults that affected the region during the previous decades (Baker and Pillet, 1999).

CONCLUSIONS

The establishment of the capital cities of Galicia and Castilla-La Mancha in Santiago de Compostela and Toledo respectively, together with the urban policies aimed at protecting, renovating, recovering or revitalizing their historical centers, has produced an important physical recovery of the urban heritage. These are functional changes and socio-demographic dynamics of diverse sign. The consortiums of both cities have proven to be the appropriate instruments to design future strategies and to consolidate alliances that allow solving the problems raised and the use of the urban and cultural heritages as driving forces for social development.

In the case of Santiago de Compostela, the urban recovery has been consolidated thanks to the existence of a forum of administrative coordination and institutional cooperation promoted by the Consortium, the municipal political commitment to a cultural project of the city, the existence of adequate urban instruments, the progressive involvement of its citizens and a strategy of balance between past and present (Troitiño, 2003).

In Toledo, the Consortium has become the main dynamic element of the rehabilitating and revitalizing activities, being the reference in everything related to the enhancement of the heritage of the city, both monumental and residential. Even accepting that there is still much to be done, the situation of the historic centers of Santiago de Compostela and Toledo is notably more favorable than that existing at the beginning of the 1980's. As a whole, the cultural-tourist and university strategies, together with their condition of regional capitals, allow both cities to enjoy an excellent perspective of future.

2 http://santiagodecompostela.org/facendo_cidade/interior.php?txt=fc_futuro&lg=cas