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Diffuse urbanization of the secondary circuit of capitalist accumulation: Toledo (Spain)

The capitalist urbanization of recent decades has been driven by the so-called secondary circuit of accumulation. The city becomes a machine of growth and economic benefit for certain groups of power or lobbies. Construction and real-estate speculation lead to a model of intense and diffuse urban expansion. And this has happened in Toledo. This historical city is characterized today by a fragmented urban structure, with big interstitial spaces. It has been due to recent commercial, speculative and capitalist urbanism. Only 25% of the buildings in the city were built before 1980. A deductive methodology is applied in this essay. Bibliographic work, direct observation and the source of the urban real estate cadastre are used to understand the diffuse urbanization of Toledo. It is concluded that determining urban growth by private construction and speculation, the concentration of ownership of the land, planning in the service of the secondary circuit of accumulation, capitalist and illegal or irregular occupations have been the specific factors of this process.

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid pace of growth of the contemporary cities has produced a network of cities composed of formal and functional zoning. This has given rise to the fact that each urban area tends to the internal homogeneity. In addition, these units increase quantitatively and are extended through the territory. The final result is a dilatation of the space of the cities by the dispersion of

urban functions. In this way, there is a growing specialization with a poor correspondence between places of residence and places of work, shopping and leisure, and this obliges the citizens to large displacements, requiring high consumption of energy and a significant loss of time. This is the diffuse city or, as Muñoz prefers (2010, p. 49), dispersed urbanization. This urban sprawl increases the medium distances and entails a significant economic and ecological impact (Lucio López, 1993, p. 200).

Given this evidence, the research raises the following major questions: how has Toledo become such a fragmented city? Which factors have led to this result? Is it a process with a deep global basis? Are there local elements also? It is considered that an answer to these questions, i.e., an understanding of the process of urbanization and the urban structure of Toledo, should be allowed in order to avoid the errors already committed in the future and in order to facilitate the correction of the problems generated.

The articulation of this article fits the research questions and its objectives are within their responses. In this way, after this first paragraph of introduction, the next two are dedicated to establish a theoretical framework and give details of the methodology used. Then, the results of the article are developed: a first chapter for the synthetic and theoretical understanding of the fragmented and dispersed urban structures of the secondary circuit of capitalist accumulation; and the rest, for the case study of Toledo, defining it as a dispersed city with ample interstitial spaces, analyzing its natural and historical condi-

tions and, fundamentally, the factors that have given rise to the current diffuse urban structure. Finally, a conclusion is included.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For decades, the cities have been objects of special interest to a wide variety of disciplines. The study of cities has extensive experience in Geography, which has persistently paid attention to the dynamics of urban growth (Lois, Piñeira and Vives, 2016, p. 2). The spatial and functional structure of the cities and their evolution in the urban geography has always been a field of research (Mierzejewska, 2017, p. 117). We consider the urban structure as different formal and functional items, essential in the formation of a city and its immediate periphery, interrelated and forming part of a whole. It must be regarded as the result of processes of production, consumption and exchange materialized in different socio-economic formations and in different historical periods (Zoido et al., 2000, pag.159). His study has two approaches: the sociological and the geographical approach (Mierzejewska, 2017, p. 117).

At the same time, the urban structure has been widely studied at different scales. Focusing, for example, on a national scale, and in the recent scientific literature we find different researches (Cusin, 2016; Hofmeister, 2004). This is the case of Spain, where the example in this article is located, and where there is a clear academic interest in these topics.

III. METHODOLOGY

A deductive method with a reasoning consisting on reaching particular conclusions from general principles has been applied in this work (Higueras, 2003, p. 332). For this reason, once the particular object of research has been set up, we began a bibliographical analysis of the existing literature on the theme to pursue general principles. Hence, we carry out a case study based, firstly, in the author's own experience and observation, with 15 years of residence and teaching in the city, and, again, based in the consultation of the works published on the Urban Geography of the treated core. Subsequently, the analysis of the city of Toledo is diachronic, since we investigate its urbanization process, and synchronic, since we analyze the urban structure.

IV. RESULTS

In the 21st century, since the 1990s, and until the crisis of 2008, Spain has known a real estate boom with an unprecedented acceleration of urban expansion and the dynamics of artificialization of the soil (Lois, Piñeira and Vives, 2016). It is growth that is not related with the industrial but the post-industrial development, where the urban actors and the real estate market are essential (Capel, 2013).

The main urban expansion of Toledo is located in the period of 1980-2010, characterized by the development of the residential urban fragments (Peremiquel, 2016, p. 141) under a model of capitalist urbanism. Toledo does not reach 45,000 inhabitants in 1970 (INE, 2017). It experiences a strong growth in the last quarter of the 20th century and, above all, in the first decade of the current century. The age of the buildings of the city is mainly between 1980 and the current days, according to the data from the Digital Atlas of the Urban Areas of Spain (Ministry of Public Works, 2017).

The percentage of the buildings built in the last decades of the last century and the present century exceeds the Spanish average. Toledo is undoubtedly a city with a remarkable historic centre, heritage of Unesco since 1986; but it cannot be described as a former city, given that three-quarters of its buildings are less than 40 years old. Even more, stating the age of the buildings for decades since 1950, two stand out above the rest, according to the data of the cadastre (Ministry of Finance and Public Function, 2018): 1990-99, 18,541 constructions, 28.25% of all of the city, and 2000-09 with 17,882, 27.25% (from the year 2010 and later only 3,664, 5.58% have been built, product of the slowdown resulting from the economic crisis of 2008). I.e. more than half of the buildings in the city of Toledo are identified with the recent years of high intensity construction and real estate activity in Spain, and they are the product of the secondary circuit of capitalist accumulation.

The real cause of the dispersion of Toledo is not local. It is due to capitalism and the logic of the secondary circuit of accumulation. Urban action operations have used the territory to achieve objectives of economic profitability (Zárate; 1998, p. 165). However, to understand the final result, the diffuse urban structure of Toledo, we must also take into account the internal dynamics. In fact, the reasons for expansive urbanism are associated with structural factors and local logics of cities (Pozo y Cebrían, 2016, p. 252).

A number of physical factors has been considered the direct cause of the complexity of the urban structure of

Toledo (Barrado and Vázquez, 2014, p. 92; Zarate, 1998, pp. 183-184, and 2016, p. 36). These factors have been, in fact, conditions for the urban growth of Toledo or, as Álvarez (2017, p. 24) qualifies them, important conditions that the city has had. The urbanization process has resulted in the dispersion of Toledo with these conditions, but they are the strategies of the capital, which has opted for a dispersed and not concentrated model. It is the role of the city within the secondary circuit of accumulation of capital, which has given rise to the current fragmented structure.

The fragmentation of Toledo is caused by several factors resulting from a process of urbanization of the capital, which fits the logic of the secondary circuit of accumulation. They are as follows:

- a) An urban growth determined by private construction and speculation.
- b) An urban planning at the service of the secondary circuit of capitalist accumulation.
- c) An urban growth with irregular or unregulated occupations.
- d) Landownership concentration.

V. CONCLUSION

The main conclusion of the article is that disjointed urban structure of Toledo is a product of a capitalist commercial urbanism that responds to the so-called secondary circuit of accumulation. The capital finds refuge and opportunity for productivity and profit in the real estate sector and activates a process of urbanization based on the parameters of speculation and profit. The city becomes a growth machine, and under that logic, and not under logic of planning and articulate a rational urban structure, it expands from the last quarter of the 20th century until 2008. In that context, the city has seen its urban structure fragmented in a number of neighborhoods away from the centre and among each other, with multiple intermediate gaps. A determined urban growth by private construction and speculation have been key factors, urban planning at the service of the secondary circuit of capitalist accumulation, an urban growth with irregular or unregulated occupations and landownership concentration. It is the combination of these four causes in the context of urbanization of the capital, what gives rise to the scattered and disjointed urban core, which is the current city of Toledo.