CAPITALIZING UPON AUTHENTICITY

ARTISTS AND REAL ESTATE PROJECTS IN URBAN RENEWAL[1]

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To what extent can private urban renewal enterprises foster a growth in cultural resources and collective patrimony? Two cases in Santiago set the stage for a discussion about the nature of successive deterioration and growth cycles in the city.

Urban regeneration projects have been implemented in the downtown areas of many Latin American cities. Studies done in Santiago, Chile's downtown areas show that since 1990, when urban renovation subsidies began and an interest in real estate picked up, the amount of housing space on the market has increased five fold[2] . In addition, repopulation of downtown Santiago is taking place (Greene et ál., 2009).

Real estate projects resulting from urban renewal plans tend to be isolated towers of more than 14 floors, set amongst and sometimes adjoining traditional one or two-story buildings. In renewal areas, this process has caused visual deterioration, diminished sunlit areas and has ruined the environment's quality and identity (Greene, 2007). In the most extreme cases, these real estate operations can produce 24+ story buildings on 3,000 square-meter lots, causing a density of 2,500 inhabitants per hectare (Froimovic, García, Lepori y Vergara, 2006), ten times the average per city block in the downtown area. In these areas, land market behavior similar to that described by Ingram (2006) is observed in terms of metropolitan development patterns. High-cost downtown land requires high profits and, in downtown Santiago, this implies that residential buildings must be as densely populated as possible. If this goal is not achieved (residential project density), then it becomes necessary to open businesses on the ground floor in order to make projects profitable (Ingram, 2006). This occurred in one of the cases we will analyze in this article, *Patio Bellavista,* a project with touristic, cultural ends[3]. Initially, this project's business manager wanted to follow the typical model of high-density residential buildings (part of Santiago's urban renewal pattern), demolishing continuous-facade buildings in order to construct a commercial level and 20-story towers. However, a different solution was decided upon.

This case typifies a phenomenon occurring as neighborhoods develop worldwide. Essentially, the business strategy behind *Patio Bellavista* is the same as that behind the projects *Hackesche Höfe* in Berlin (Bernt, et ál. 2002; Liebman, 2002) and Camden Lock Market in London. Both, located in artistic, cultural and bohemian neighborhoods, convert patrimonial buildings in order to create a primarily gastronomic-touristic project that includes clothing and design stores. There, as in SoHo in New York, Little Italy in Toronto and Hoxton in London (amongst many others that have been extensively studied), business projects take on a predictable cycle that has been described by experts from a variety of disciplines (Freeman, 2006; Lees et ál., 2008; Solnit and Schwarzenberg, 2000). We can prove beyond the shadow of a doubt the existence of this cycle in two Providencia neighborhoods: Bellavista, in its North West area, and *Barrio Italia* in the South West.

The first stage of this cycle is the construction of an upscale neighborhood characterized by architecturally and spatially high-quality public spaces and buildings.

In the second stage, people from a lower socio-economic level inhabit the neighborhood. The area is used sometimes for non-residential purposes such as production and industry.

During the third stage, the neighborhood is taken over by artists who value underappreciated areas in the city, not only for their aesthetic qualities and reasonable prices, but also for the freedom they allow, a requirement for people who take up this way of life. Artists are also open to breaking convention, living and working in places that most people consider uninhabitable, as occurred in SoHo warehouses in New York or homes abandoned by the previous century's elite.

In the fourth stage of this cycle, the artists, along with other residents, old families and local business owners, play a vital role in increasing the neighborhood's value and creating the neighborhood's cultural identity. The "stylish neighborhood" connotation attracts new investors and higher-income residents.

Barrio Italia is quickly entering the fourth stage of the cycle, but its effects are still unknown in terms of its property structure. With the hopes of understanding what might happen there in the future, we also analyze a block in Bellavista, which demonstrates the inverse impact of the last two stages, that is to say, the merging of properties. In the case of *Barrio Italia*, the area we have considered in greater detail, we analyze the cycle's four stages. In this way, we will analyze one neighborhood which has recently begun to appreciate and another which is already well on its way.

THE FIRST STAGE: THE UPPER MIDDLE CLASS SETTLES BARRIO ITALIA

Public spaces and buildings in *Barrio Italia*[4] are today recognized as remnants from the urbanization project "Población Juan García Ballesteros" from 1896 (De Ramón 1985; Palmer, 1984). Its main avenue is Italia, a local, North-South-running street with little traffic. The street is lined by wide sidewalks and has a tree-lined boulevard. The homes running along it create a continuous façade. They were originally *quinta* homes (large estates, gifts from the Spanish throne) with plots of land 36 meters across and 60 meters deep, constituting two thousand square meters total[5], according to real estate advertising featured in local newspaper *El Heraldo* in 1895. Italia Avenue's buildings were constructed in a row with a continuous facade and we can assume that, overall, they are made up of two patios with a main entrance on Italia

Ave. On the lot we studied, a large portion of the land, both to the sides and the house area at the end of the lot, was used for crops and orchards. At the far end of the lot there was an exit onto Girardi Street, located north of Italia Ave.[6]

Historians, who refer to this urbanization, would regard this as an upper-middle class's lot (Recabarren, 2008; De Ramón, 1984). According to our research, a family of eight and their three servants lived on the lot originally.

THE SECOND STAGE: THE DECLINE OF BARRIO ITALIA

During the 30's and the 40's, Italia Ave. lots successively began to be subdivided. At first, this process divided them into thinner lots, which were still connected to both streets – Italia and Girardi. Later, they continued to be divided, this time into lots that faced Italia and lots that faced Girardi (according to the Municipality of Providencia's Archive Catalogue). By 1950, the *quinta* mentioned before had already been subdivided into six lots. Simultaneous to this property subdivision, land use and activity in the area began to change. Residential homes began to disappear in the 1950s, making way for charity institutions, industrial warehouses, printers and mechanic workshops (Municipality of Providencia's Archive Catalogue). These activities arose due to lower property and rental values.[7]

THE THIRD STAGE: ITALIA AND BELLAVISTA NEIGHBORHOODS ARE TAKEN OVER BY ARTISTS[8]

Barrio Italia and its surroundings were taken over by artists during the 1980s. Amongst the first to arrive to the Infante Street area were painters Anton Birke and Francisco De la Puente. During the 90s and the current decade, the flow of artists into the neighborhood has been consistent: today more than 50 visual and performing artists live or work in the area. They have moved into old buildings, which were once residences, printers, supermarkets and storage spaces.

In contrast to *Barrio Italia*, artists moved into Bellavista during the 1940s, a time during which Chilean painters Camilo Mori and Nemesio Antúnez, poet Pablo Neruda and sculptress Marta Colvin lived there (Klein, 2007). They all lived around the plaza at Constitución and Dardignac, which today is named after Camilo Mori. Pablo Neruda lived at his house "La Chascona" which is open today as a museum. In 1985, Nemesio Antúnez founded the mythic *Taller 99* at Bellavista 0182 (at the *Calle Larga* Cultural Center) that moved in 1990 to Melchor Concha y Toro Street (Klein, 2007). In addition to those artists mentioned, a large group of creative types inhabited Bellavista from the 1970s on, according to *Guía de Patrimonio y Cultura de La Chimba* (2007) (a guidebook) and by 2007 around 50 artists were settled in the neighborhood.

During the 80s, the block which is home today to *Patio Bellavista* consisted mainly of continuous facade one and two-story homes constructed between 1910 and 1930. *The Aguas Andinas* Catalogue Archive shows that these buildings were still occupied by long-standing residents from the 40s and 50s, but that there were also new residents such as artists, tradesmen and wood and metal workers. Property subdivisions had not yet occurred and entire lots still belonged to individual owners. New inhabitants and new commercial activities in the area occupied the original structure of old homes built around patios without modification. But during this period one can also observe subtle transformations on some of the blocks in the area. According to information found in the *Estudio de Títulos del Conservador de Bienes Raíces*

de la Municipalidad de Providencia (Study of Property Titles for the Municipality of Providencia), particularly on the *Patio Bellavista* block, there is a change in 1987 when four new properties were added to two that housed a printing studio, creating a property that took up practically a quarter of the block. This enormous property dedicated to semi-industrial activity functioned side by side with residential neighbors, artist studios and offices. This precedent of joining several of the block's properties in order to increase productive activities was key to the business activity undertaken shortly afterwards (see Stage 4).

In both Italia and Bellavista neighborhoods the artists' gathering spots would define the area's history. *Rapa Nui*, a place where mechanics and artists shared home-cooked lunches, was this spot in *Barrio Italia*. In Bellavista they originally met up in the Camilo Mori Plaza when Neruda and Mori were around. Later, in the 80s and 90s, local restaurants serving homemade meals (like *Venecia* and *Galindo*) became the hot spots (Arriagada, 2003).

The artists were in consensus: what attracted them to these places, in both cases, was the "neighborhood life", the tranquility and diverse neighbors (mechanics, families with children, old and newly arrived neighbors), the presence of other artists, a central location and accessible property and rental prices. They also mention that these encouraged an alternative lifestyle to that of their corresponding socio-economic levels or status as creative professionals.[9]

Coexistence amongst residential neighbors and industrial activities was not always harmonious. However, as the Municipality of Providencia's archives show, problems with noises emanating from mechanics' workshops were solved by way of agreements draw up during Neighborhood and Municipality Meetings. Today, the artists' and residents' greatest concern is the rising number of alcohol licenses and the noise caused by the area's thriving nightlife [10] (Arriagada, 2003).

THE FOURTH STAGE: ITALIA AND BELLAVISTA ATTRACT NEW INVESTMENTS

Barrio Italia's physical transformation and changes in population have been evident since 2005. From that time, a substantial increase in commercial business has been noted in the area: while between 1990 and 1995 only eight licenses were solicited (the majority of which were for mechanic shops and warehouses), between 2005 and 2009, 24 new licenses were solicited.

The Municipality of Providencia's License Division registers that the area's emerging businesses are primarily exclusive restaurants, design offices and furniture, craft and art salesrooms-workshops. The transformation has had an effect: recently opened businesses have clientele from a higher socio-economic level so rent, like property prices, has increased. According to the document *Plano de circuito Barrio Italia 2011 –2011 Barrio Italia Circuit Plan–* (created by *Barrio Italia's* business organization) and studies in the field, the target audience of these new businesses is clientele that purchase designer clothing/objects and "luxury" items and who spend their spare time visiting art galleries, cafes and restaurants that offer international cuisine.

Given that *Barrio Italia's* transformation is still underway, the increase in luxury and designer products has only recently shown signs of taking over the area's traditional business activities. The number of artists who own their home-workshops does not appear to have decreased. The mechanic shops and warehouses in the neighborhood appear to be self-sustaining. Social diversity can still be observed in restaurants that offer lunch: trade workers and mechanics that have been there for decades mix

with new residents. Property sales and rental prices in the area are rising overall. Until now, most of the cafes and new shops replacing residential uses concentrate along Italia Ave. itself.[11]

On the other hand, changes in Bellavista happened before those in *Barrio Italia* during the mid 80s. During this time, nightlife in the area became more active and several cultural centers cropped up like the *Café del Cerro* (Arriagada, 2003). At the end of that decade, street and nightlife in Bellavista was very active. The initiative of the area's mayors during the 80s and early 90s was crucial to this change. The mayors, by indiscriminately making available alcohol licenses, explicitly promoted bohemian life and the installation of several television channels and some theaters in the area (according to the Municipality of Providencia's archives).

Consequently, during the 90s, the area around Pío Nono Street began to be populated with bars and dance clubs (Arriagada, 2003). The increase in nightlife in the area during those years resulted in conflicts within the neighborhood; rough nightclubs ("dive bars") took over the same blocks on which residents lived. Excessive noise carried into dawn, alcohol-induced brutality in the streets and street brawls transformed "neighborhood life". This transformation was not only a problem for residents, but also for more elite businesses, like restaurants dedicated to international tourism and upper-end shops.

Local and regional governments implemented a "critical neighborhood intervention" in order to insure order and security in areas with high crime indicators. The neighborhood of Bellavista was the first "commercial" area to have a strong police presence and the participation of city inspectors, health auditors and Internal Tax Service personnel.

The most important change on the block that was to become *Patio Bellavista* began in 2000 when the owners of the printing house, which occupied nearly a quarter of the block, rejected the idea of a real estate project that consisted of a ground floor commercial center and residential towers (Ducci, 2011). Instead, they agreed to an idea presented by consultants from the organization *Ciudad Viva*, architects Tomás Carvajal and Sergio González, who conceived of a place of *flaneur* and leisure inspired by urban, European life, the architects' main influence for *Patio Bellavista* which was to be developed later (Jadue, 2007).

As appears in the Municipality of Providencia's Title Deeds Archives (2011), in 2004 and 2005, the printer acquired six more adjacent lots. In 2005, the *Patio Bellavista* Project was entrusted to the architects Vergara, Durruty, Decarolis and Schliebener. This project reconverted some existing buildings of patrimonial value (hotels and restaurants), included a variety of new, smaller buildings and set up several kiosks and stands for selling crafts and souvenirs along the periphery. The project's overall plan was to open up the block to provide an East-West route across it and to conserve most of the pre-existing building's facades on Pío Nono and Constitución Streets. The project in part utilized existing buildings of patrimonial value and built new spaces, maintaining the continuous facade line that characterizes this patrimonial area, never exceeding the area's limit of two stories.

The second part of *Patio Bellavista* was started in 2008. This stage's conversion strategy, designed by Plan 3 Arquitectos, was different from the preceding one. Essentially, only pre-existing facades were restored, not the buildings themselves. The argument for demolishing the rest of the pre-existing building was the "bad condition and limited architectural quality" of the pre-existing buildings which are mostly semi-industrial spaces; warehouses and storage spaces for the old printing house[12].

Although the main work on *Patio Bellavista* took place within the block, the area streets also changed. Constitución Street, which began as 28 lots designated for homes, today has almost thirty restaurant licenses (with permission to serve alcohol), nine artisanal craft stores, three coffee shops, three music stores, five offices, a printing house (completely separate from the original one), a bookstore, a clothing store and a esoteric store. In 2007, some of the artists living in Bellavista rented or were owners of lots located on the *Patio Bellavista* block on Constitución Street. In 2008, the last artist left her home-workshop on this street (according to Municipality of Providencia archives).

Other streets in Bellavista, such as Melchor Concha y Toro Street and Antonia Lope de Bello Street, have had different destinies. As mentioned in the *Guía de Patrimonio y Cultura de La Chimba* (2007), these places are now home to a large number of resident artists and families newly arrived to the neighborhood. Amongst the artists that have worked for some time in the area are María Inés Solimano, who arrived in the 80s, and those who founded Taller 99 in its current location in 1990. All of them, along with new resident families, have undertaken an important task for conservation of the neighborhood's character, supporting the Municipality of Providencia's restriction on restaurant licenses on Melchor Concha y Toro Street. According to the Municipality of Providencia's Licensing Department (2010), currently, the buildings in this street are primarily used as offices and remodeled private residences.[13]

capitalizing on genius loci and milieu

Although in Santiago's urban renewal the most notorious entrepreneurial projects (those about which the most has been written) concern high-density residencies, one can't overlook important commercial developments occurring with regards to cultural, artistic and bohemian places. Privately initiated, spontaneous advances, which haven't been influenced directly by government urban development policies, predominate. In some cases, because these advances tend to be located in valuable cultural heritage areas where citizen organizations are already at work, residents carry out an important role in auditing and assessing them. These entrepreneurial projects have added value for the neighborhood, given the patrimonial value of their architecture and their bohemian-artistic identity.

6 Some of this information was taken from an interview of León Villalón Manzano, neighborhood resident from 1922 to 1940, and some from the Municipality of Providencia's Archive Catalogue.

7 Some of this information was taken from two 2009 interviews of Elodie Fulton, signature architect of Samy Benmayor and Carlos Villalón's studios, business owner and neighborhood mechanic workshop owner since 1979.

8 This information was complied from several interviews of Carlos Marturana, aka Bororo, a visual artist that has had his studio in *Barrio Italia* since 2005, Hugo Marín, María Inés Solimano, Juan Pablo Langlois, L.ake Sagaris and Joan Morrison.

9 María Inés Solimano referring to her former life in an upper class neighborhood in Las Condes and Carlos Maturana referring to the upscale gallery district on Alonso de Córdova Street.

10 Information compiled from the unpublished document "Catastro de artistas residentes en el barrio Santa Isabel" ("Catalogue of Artists Residing in the Santa Isabel Neighborhood") by the *Barrio Santa Isabel* Artists' Union, Santiago, 2009.

11 From interviews to Fernanda Lizana in 2009 and 2011.

12 According to Giuliano Pastorell in the article "Patio Bellavista Segunda Etapa / Plan 3 Arquitectos". Plataforma Urbana, 2010. http://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/2010/01/14/patio-bellavista-segunda-etapa-plan-3-arquitectos/

13 Some of this information was taken from interviews to María Inés Solimano and Lake Sagaris.

14 The word "milieu" is understood here in the way Hippolyte Taine uses it in his contextual study of art: a group of people brought together by a common interest or activity.

That is to say that genius loci and milieu are capitalized upon[14]. On the other hand, businesses of these types also have other consequences. Amongst the positive is the increase in property values and demand for property in the neighborhood. New investments in the area translate into more investment from the municipality into the neighborhood's infrastructure, resulting in renovation of old buildings. Amongst the negative consequences is the spatial overexploitation of a neighborhood whose commercial end can be incompatible with neighborhood life and the exodus of renters who can't afford to stay. Given these conditions for entrepreneurial projects in cultural, artistic and bohemian areas, it is necessary to look ahead and put into place strategies that will insure renovation of the neighborhood over the long term. Overexploitation of an area can cause it to lose what makes it attractive in the first place. Until now, local governments have not considered consequences of development of this type. Soon, this way of urban renewal will become more common and we will have to ask ourselves who should be in charge of these benefits and costs. This means that the issue must be looked at on different levels and from different points of view: from different levels because it is no longer a problem that an architect can solve alone with a client; from different points of view, because we must see that everything we do is affected by cultural and global phenomena that are invisible upon first glance. Undertaking an entrepreneurial project in an artistic-bohemian neighborhood and contributing new values to the city are not simple tasks. Given their complexity, we wish to present three views that consider this issue from a variety of perspectives: first, the city's culture; second, the gentrification of the city; and, finally, the authenticity of the city. These issues are recurring international debates regarding the opportunities and limitations of developing artistic-bohemian neighborhoods during urban renewal.

CULTURES IN THE CITY

After a decade's experience with renewal in European and other world urban centers, implementation of cultural strategies in urban renewal is widely discussed today (García et ál. 2008; Martínez Rigol, 2010; Judd, 2003). According to Zukin's theories about culture in cities (Zukin, 1995), Degen (2008) argues that in some urban renewal processes one "culture" is imposed upon another. For example, a culture of leisure is imposed upon an industrial culture, and this is reflected in the city's spaces. Degen argues that in the case of Barcelona, the cultural codes implicit in renewal were imposed with the desire to position the brand "Barcelona" on a global level. However, in a few instances this eclipsed the "culture" that Barcelona's residents wanted to see prevail (Degen, 2008). A variety of renewed spaces in Barcelona have been capitalized upon to generate a certain culture and have transformed into what some call "the aesthetics of cultural heritage made fashionable" (Degen, 2003). In other areas, however, this city's renewal has been a shared process; cultures have melded due to daily common use of space and residents' urban experiences.

A discussion regarding the culture of each area is relevant for architects who consciously manage aesthetic codes, manipulating the way spaces are perceived by the senses. For this reason, even the smallest decisions taken regarding the construction of a project like *Patio Bellavista* or the remodeling of a bar can include or exclude cultural codes, building or destroying specifically determined cultural environments.

CONCIOUSNESS REGARDING THE SIDE EFFECTS OF GENTRIFICATION

In discourse regarding gentrification there is consensus that renewal has two faces: one is the renewal or modernization of places; the other, the expulsion of those residents who can no longer afford the higher cost of living or who leave due to changing quality of life conditions in the neighborhood (Atkinson et ál. 2005; Altrock, 2003). The renewal of a neighborhood brings in new residents and activities that overtake those that preexisted. Success in renewal projects is related to the ability to manage good quality of life in the area, avoiding allowing new uses to entirely replace those that existed before.

A variety of people in the city are responsible for making this a reality and promoting its development; first of all, those who are in charge of urban planning. Every day there are more urban designers who specialize in strategies to minimize expulsion. Amongst these strategies are subsidization of rents for preexisting residents, subsidies for price increases, funds for organizing neighborhood guilds and differentiating taxes imposed on locals and visitors (Altrock, 2003; Martinotti, 2008). In such a case, this would promote balanced development which would allow, for example, antiques and traditional furniture restorers to remain in *Barrio Italia*, encouraging at the same time the development of new businesses related to contemporary design.

Also, the "affected" can organize efforts regarding their neighborhood's transformation. In some cases they unite to "defend" themselves or, in more proactive cases, to propose changes in collaboration with the neighborhood business people (Solnit et Schwarzenberg, 2000). We have observed the latter in Bellavista with consultations carried out by the citizen's organization *Ciudad Viva* regarding *Patio Bellavista* and in a variety of negotiations residents have had with a clinic that is newly arrived to the area in order to maintain neighborhood quality of life.

Finally, wherever gentrification takes place, there will always be some promotors who are sensitive to the changes they trigger in the area. They organize in hopes of preserving their neighborhood's social characteristics and authenticity, avoiding an exodus of residents, preventing a restriction in space due to new activities and keeping residents from loosing influence over the destiny of their neighborhood. This activity is motivated, in part, by the desire to be seen as good new neighbors by preexisting residents within a context where "gentrifiers" are already very stigmatized by society (Brown-Saracino, 2009).

AUTHENTICITY: AN EXPLOITABLE QUALITY, A DYNAMIC PROCESS AND A LIMITED RESOURCE

The idea of the authentic, that which is real and true, as mentioned by Zukin (2010), is a key factor in the development of a city. The concept of "authenticity" refers to characteristic places such as "corner bars" those that are small scale, very local in character and have been located in old buildings for a long time. The concept also includes people who are characteristic to the neighborhood, like the owner of the kiosk on the corner or the baker. According to Zukin, all of these special and irreproducible elements in the neighborhood constitute what attracts artists. This authenticity is also what attracts "gentrifiers" and real estate investors later on.

Zukin proposes that real estate project capitalization poses two risks to authenticity: Firstly, problems arise when project managers function according to a large-scale logic, a modality which enters into conflict with the small-scale logic so characteristic of authentic places. The danger in this is that the char-

Propiedad en calle Constitución 60. Barrio
Bellavista, 2002.

Property at 60 Constitución St., Bellavista,
2002.

Propiedad en calle Constitución 60. Barrio
Bellavista, 2011.

Property at 60 Constitución St., Bellavista, 2011.

acteristics that were originally attractive will be mass-produced and standardized. Secondly, once authenticity is used to increase the investors' property values, a resident expulsion process will begin, a process that can end up forcing out the very people who made the place authentic in the first place.

The arrival of new residents, who usually come from more comfortable socio-economic situations than the original residents, will inevitably change the neighborhood's dynamic as they coexist amongst original residents. In this situation, it is evident that the new arrivals must participate in constructing the neighborhood's identity. In this case, it is not that the place's authenticity is in danger, because authenticity is not a static state, but rather that it will depend upon the way that each generation constructs and updates the neighborhood's characteristics. Legitimacy is, therefore, according to Zukin, a mutable, changeable aesthetic, that allows a variety of actors to claim authority and ownership over the city.

Regarding New York, Zukin says that although the city honors its past with conservation initiatives and looks to the future with economic development, it does not encourage the protection of its residents –the workers, small business owners, poor or middle class people– so that they can stay in their neighborhoods. This social diversity, and not just the diversity of the buildings and their uses, constitutes the soul of the city (Zukin, 2010). The author suggests that a place's authenticity is not just a value to be exploited, but also a fragile situation, a limited resource whose survival will depend on the preservation of the cultural right for all people to stay in the city that they helped build.

CONCLUSIONS

As long as we practice "capitalization on authentic places", we will continue to run into the same old truth: there are many opportunities and resources in the city that should be carefully managed to insure their stability over the long term. A city's resources are physical (constructed from the urban fabric and urban spaces) and, at the same time, are immaterial, that is to say, constructed by the communities, their social networks and culture. Renewal of spaces within the city should consider not only the exploitation of these values, but also their maintenance and even their enhancement for the benefit of the city as a whole. In this sense, citizen's movements arising in artistic-bohemian areas teach us a valuable lesson. These movements should encourage urban renewal while resolving conflicts of coexistence generated by diversity that is its result. Until now little has been done to understand their important role so that exploitation of urban values can be beneficial to the city, not just to those who exploit it. The city's residents give the city its authenticity and, for this reason, they have the genuine right to live along side real estate developers and other businesses in the city. ARQ

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