

Brief contribution on Urban Settlement Policies in developing countries - planning strategies and urban management for formality

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Abstract

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What the Planning Process can not miss

What the Whole has to ensure and promote

What the Urgency determines and adds

Informality

Overview: the Informal City in the Formal Cities

“The first and most obvious thing about cities is that they are like organisms, sucking in resources and emitting wastes. The larger and more complex they become, the greater their dependence on surrounding areas, and the greater their vulnerability to change around them. They are both our glory and our bane.” (TICKELL apud ROGERS, 2001: 22)

We live in times of social paradoxes and accelerated territorial changes. According to Ismail Serageldin the globalization, homogenization and specificity claims happen simultaneously (SERALGELDIN, 1997: 11-12). From the tiny dots, on a global scale, which are the places in which we live in, to the large seams of macro globalization, the contemporary societies are today a multiple combination, often subdued to the wish of being everything all at once or desperate to return to their traditional origins and recovering their identities, which are often not authentic. The world, the so-called global village, however, produces very little local development. The competition between local and global forces, sometimes in touch and in other times apart, reveals the new sociological values of contemporary mankind and derives from the current urban grids.

We are facing a phenomenon of urban “sponginess”. Subjected to a large population, cities are soaked and saturated without being able to supply infrastructure and proper housing. “Sponge-cities”, over populated and spatially suffocated, where nothing else seems to be able to fit. However, won’t it fit? The urban phenomenon called informal growth answers affirmatively to the question. Any piece of land or ground, abandoned, or vacant, or any unoccupied construction sites, could be spaces to settle the flood of population seeking shelter. The insecurity associated with squatting, and the possible physical instability of the land, are secondary matters in regards to the high level of need. Informal settlements appear as the first answer inflicted on populations. There is always space for one more. There is no other way.



Figure 1 - Manshiyat naser, Cairo, Egipto. Source: www.flickr.com/photos/helmacron/4221369161/ (up). Favelas em São Paulo, São Paulo, Brasil (down left and centre). Dharavi, Bombaim, India (down right). Source: www.favelization.com

This urban saturation, in an increasingly urban world, holds turbulent and accelerated expansion phenomenon with serious consequences in developing countries (SERALGELDIN, 1997: 15). The administrative and political instabilities, the economic hardship, the rural migration and the population growth in these regions are prevailing factors fruitful to informal environments that expose the inhabitants to levels of extreme social and environmental precariousness. Given the lack of urban answers and housing by the formal sector, adjusted to either of the economic capacities of these populations or the taxes submitted, they are forced to find a land where they can build their houses with their own recourses, with a commitment and great effort, and outside the institutional system, which are still ways of perpetuating cycles of poverty. The question that remains is: what will the future of this population be? What will the future of these people be in these conditions, and in increasing numbers?

The informal urbanization phenomenon does not only concern the developing countries. However, despite the similarities – extreme poverty, be it where it may, is always a case of social imbalance and, very often, territorial segregation –, the scale (in the sense of the size and number of clusters), time (the speed in which they proliferate and grow) and the variables intervening in both differ.

In the poorest regions of the world the increasing urbanization was not the result of an industrial revolution. It occurs with what the sociologist Bernard Granotier called “primitive

tertiary” (GRANOTIER, 1908: 83), stated in the growth of small trade and everyday supply of services that spread through the cities of these countries with very high birth and population migration rates never seen in the urban city growth of developed countries. The European urbanity, prior to the nineteenth century, happened slower according to the progressive process at a calmer pace of the industrial revolution and the rural exodus, compared to our times. To go to a state of urbanization¹ with 8%, at a rate of 25%, it took Europe almost a century (1820/30 to 1914) while in developing countries the same process was completed in forty-five years (1930 to 1975) and with different reasons (BAIROCH, 1992: 27).

The phenomena of urban migration that occurred in developed countries in the past are nowadays challenges in developing countries. Urbanization in these regions has the characteristic of an explosion. Another preponderant agent in this urban misrule is that these factors tend to generate different urbanization processes whose growth and explosion occur in multiple and simultaneous ways. Their cities are consolidated in the continuous overlapping of urbanization phases, of hyper-urbanization, of sub-urbanization, of being peripheral, of not being urbanized, of “urban explosion from urban implosion phenomena” (AMARAL, 1988: 21), etc., and contrary to European cities where the urban expansion was mainly progressive.

The world today is faced with this unresolved issue that immerses local ruptures and emerges global tensions, in an equation composed of various domains and agents. It appears that anything so contrasting still exists in the world we live in. In the scope of these challenges and requirements there is certain responsibility for each one of us. We need to recognize that we are part of the problem and the solution.

The cities’ **modus vivendi** in developing countries exposes different and coexisting realities at the same time and place. The formal world is the informal world because they are both the same and are made with the same characteristics. This urban dualism extends from the housing to the public accesses, services, infrastructures and social life.

The formality and informality frameworks are symbiotic because they are born and grow together in a set of reciprocal and integrating influences of the urban evolution. Nevertheless, the contacts between the two realities are only established if the second challenges the first. The urban policies of developing countries are then faced when provoking the formal city with the challenges imposed by the informal city². These territorial and demographic changes correspond inevitable to social and cultural transformations, such as dismantling ways of distributing power by cutting with tribal and family ties which were the base of ruling in traditional communities (RIBEIRO, 2000: 19) or the spatial mergers forced between different ethnicities with relationships in the past that were not always amicable.

The economic structures, along with the convenience provided by the new information and communication technologies, could create an atmosphere of collective benefit. Incubators of feelings for global respect and awakening of collective and individual consciences would then be beneficial pathways for changes towards a better world. However, this has not been the path taken. And it is in developing countries that they have devastating impacts given the staggering population growth, the current paradigms of economic systems and the high rates of urban occupation.

However, sociological phenomena do not justify everything. The political and economic powers and urban policies play an extremely important role on this phenomenon – an entire urban landscape endowed with great complexity, contrast, needs and demands.

Despite the will awaken, the urban policies are still far from being able to deactivate the informal growth. From the models in which informal settlements are removed and inhabitants are relocated elsewhere, to the upgrading interventions in the settlements themselves, there have been several formal programs applied to the problem. Inhabitants, technicians, professionals, developers and other areas have proposed various approaches and strategies for its transformation. However, urban policies have had difficulties and are insufficient or ineffective when facing inherent situations to the problem.



Figure 2 – Urban intervention policies. “Planos de Marginalização: Programas de Supressão e Repressão”: suppressive and repressive policies that aim to demolish settlements and relocate population. “Planos de Desenvolvimento”: *Ex Situ* (expansion) programs, with the aim of building new formal urban settlements, through the integration, valorization and recognition of the informal areas. “Planos de Melhoramento”: *In Situ* (dissection) programs, with the integration, valorization and recognition of the well-established informal areas.

Characterized by common dominant traits throughout the many cities in developing countries we could almost reduce the informal settlements to only one type of phenomenon. However, not only do they represent distinct types among themselves as they imply, given the specificities, ways of action and individualized studies. The variety of terminologies exposed by the sociologist Bernard Granotier attests³ to the universality of the phenomenon and the precision of each case. There is no urban policy that is the formula for the solution and it appears that each terminology is, at the end, a state taken by those

who want to interpret the phenomenon, or by those who want to build and live there – a state of conformism, a state of activism and social dynamism, and a state of vulnerability.

In the first type, the settlements are antisocial groups that, excluded by society itself, have a higher predisposition for passivity, conformity and rejection. This sociological condition results in clusters with neglected and rejected physical spaces. In the second type, informality is associated with groups that are somehow more socially integrated. This feeling is conducive to individual and community dynamic and activism. These types of spaces show signs of potential innovation and seek improvement by their own initiative and account. In the third type are most of the informal settlements in developing countries, particularly in Africa. In this type, the non-recognition of legally occupying the land, transfers states of anguish, vulnerability and hopelessness to the social groups living there. The inhabitants fear an imminent public intervention and feel less stimulated to invest locally by their own initiative. What distinguishes the second from the third type are the roots created in the city generated from the allocation of property titles: the “de facto situation” ends up taking an institutional form that, over time, becomes legal, which seems worthy to be mentioned.

The systematization presented does not limit the number and diversity of informal phenomenon to the three types given – as stated by Milton Santos “(...) slums and taudis are a multiform and changeable reality according to each country and each city” (SANTOS, 1975: 31), which states other intermediate forms - however it can help the formulation of the assumptions of planning and management of urban policies. This awareness extends fields of analysis and study, confirming that for different types of informalities should match specific strategies of urban policy.

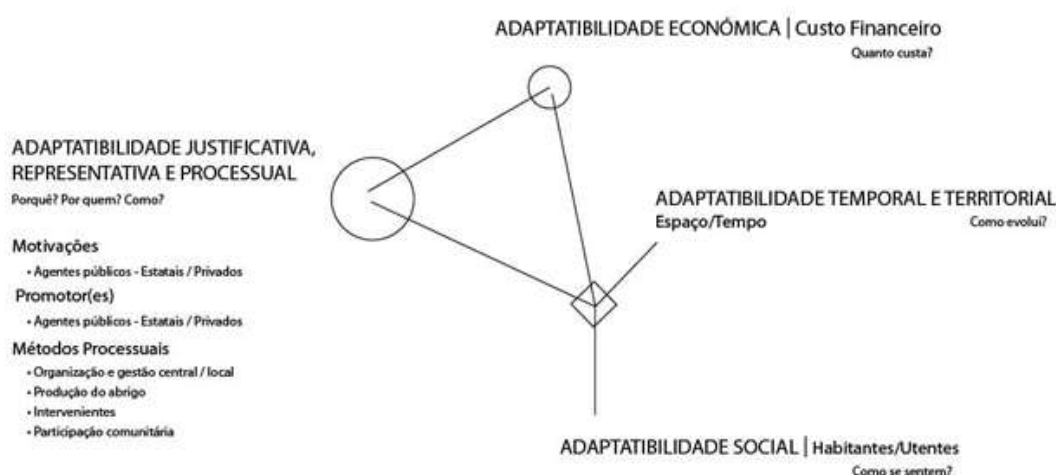


Figure 3 – World Bank Gorai, Mumbai, Índia project *Sites and Services* model, (Source: <http://urbz.net/files/2010/01/GORAIsiteandservice.jpg>)

Intervention strategies such as Sites and Services act as prevention and early operations of forming informality phenomena; the type Settlement Upgrading acts according to the attenuation and mitigation of the installed informality.

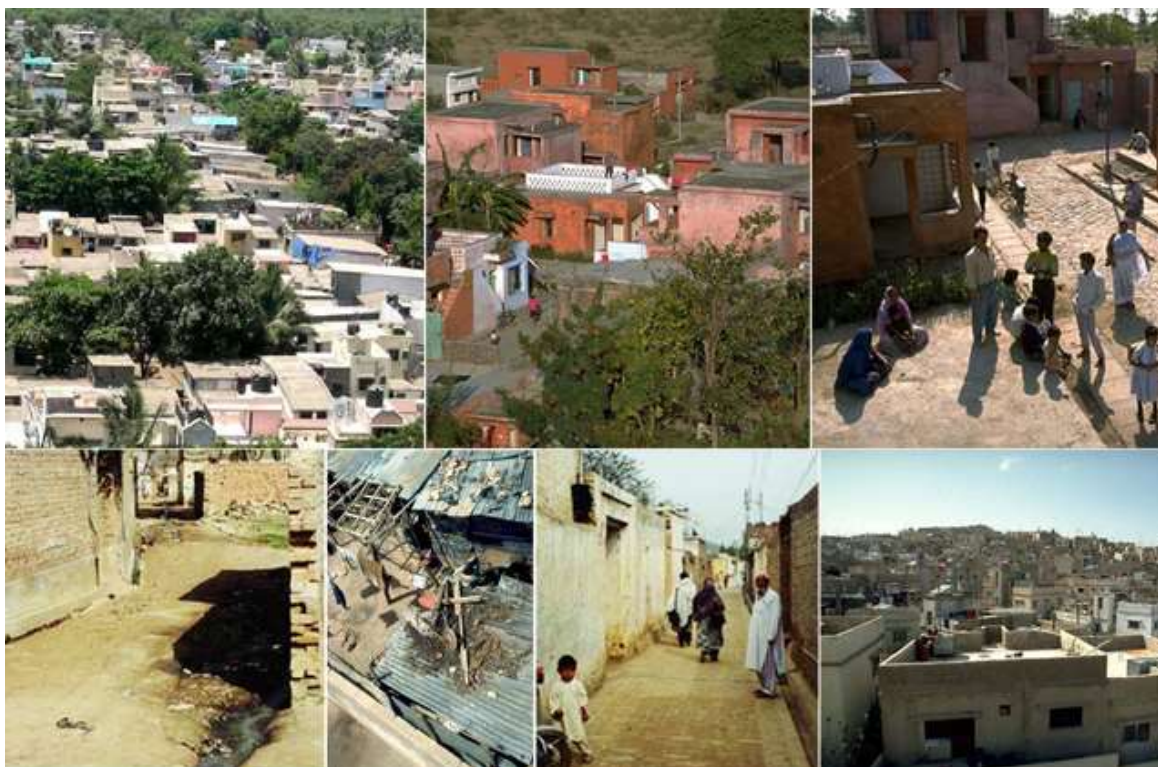


Figure 4 – Aranya Low-Cost Project, Indore, Índia. Source: http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=1124 (up left and centre). Orangi Pilot Project, Karachi, Paquistão. Source: www.schuitema.co.za/blog/?p=1357 (up right, down left). East Wahdat Upgrading Program, Amman, Jordânia. Fonte: East Wahdat Upgrading Program, Amman, Jordânia, in: <http://archnet.org/library/images/> (down centre). Kampung Improvement Program, Jakarta, Indonesia. Source: http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=63 (down right).

The basis of this approach is the importance of “Planning”: in both, the intention is to propose a framework that allows for gradual improvement. “(...) the width of your street will determine who you are.” (PORTAS, 1977: 9). The planning allows access (and therefore helps the dynamic and trade, the appearance of equipment and services, etc.), physical safety (visibility, civics), land security (property, investment), representativeness (having an address, a reference, citizenship) and helps the bonds of community and neighbourliness. Planning and social organizations go side by side, and must be thought together in urban policies (and rural).



Figure 5 – Kampung Improvement Program, Jakarta, Indonesia. Source: http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=63

Subversively plans for the construction and development of formality may become suitable fields for the resurgence of urban informality. Both Development Plan Programs and Improvement Plan programs may result in circumstances for the recurrence of the problem of informality. Naturally there is a set of sociological phenomena, beyond the scope of urban policies, partly justifying this event. However, we should acknowledge that cases related to planning and implementation processes may also contribute to such consequences.

When certain purposes do not occur – or occur partially, or according to disguised methods – the formal achievements of operations tend to have lower results. The adaptability parameters are so weak, or disarticulated from one another, that they do not meet the objectives originally proposed. The formal is now growing in new fields of informality. One is never completely immune from making mistakes, both in the diagnostic and analysis phase, as when planning the strategy, or its practical implementation. The gap in parameters can have less impact. However good intentions and willing techniques we can observe rejection and refusal indicators by the inhabitants for the spaces built, evolutionary discontinuities, or economic savings that are conducive to the resurgence of the phenomena of informal growth. What conclusions can we draw from this paradox?

The intent to solve these problems should, therefore, be a priority within the current urban policies. The programs need to find more ways that increase the social, cultural, territorial, urban and economic degrees of operability and adaptability.

Parameters of adaptability

Justification, representative and procedural inadaptability

a) There are no absolute models or imperatively wrong models. There are unsuitable applications

The urban policy trends have varied over the decades influenced by history itself and by the national and global situations. The choice of the type of plan or program applied depends more directly on local factors, in other words, the models do not mean only a way of operational, effective and inclusive application. The solution, in the context and the problem that arises, is more or less inadequate to the situation, but not absolutely wrong. The model *Sites and Services* is not feasible for an operation in a slum in Rio de Janeiro – probably such an attempt would result in a failure of economic, urban and social strategy; the model *Settlement Upgrading* in a land without physical safety also results in an inefficient option. The models themselves have their own and positive resources, and the contexts peculiar characteristics. Insufficient results may depend more on inadequate applications than on the assumptions of the models themselves.

b) The uncritical import of external models

Most import of programs and original plans in developed countries, because uncritical, tend to incur in the many territorial and social problems in contexts of developing countries. Even technicians and the agents involved in the process convert them into profitable strategies, which raise several problems in implementing them. Furthermore, those models could be felt by the population as programs that would never be applied in developed countries, introducing a sense of rejection from the outset in the process. Many of the poorest people living in these regions desire to achieve the images to which they have come to associate meanings of progress and foreign modernity.

On the other hand, applying these models tend to boil down to some kind of attempt of “Westernization” of these areas – not only a foreign posture but even locally. Easily understood, then, as the models applied in accordance with the original conceptions and the technical and political specifications of other cultures and other economic systems are inadequate to the big issues of the cities in these countries. They become undesirable cases of technical, social, economic and political failure, even when considering the difficulties of the local situations.

c) Slowness in obtaining the right of ownership – Access to the soil and Registration

Legalizing the plots of land is crucial to encourage inhabitants to enhance the temporal continuity of the territorial development and improve the quality of the habitat of their own neighbourhoods, thus stimulating the accountability, investments, maintenance and qualification of public and private spaces, at the pace of the financial capacities of these populations. Access to the soil, which means, obtaining the right of ownership of the land, corresponds to one of the essential actions for the success of these processes. The registration is determinant in these strategies. Its definition will produce stable urban transformations, will contribute decisively in the setting of future urban networks, will define individual and collective uses, and shall provide the official access to the soil legally. The importance of registering these transactions is also justified by the dynamics of safety and trust that allow owners to live with fewer feelings of transience, which eases not only the

economic investment and resources (some consolidation), as creating ties with the area of residence (identification, neighbourly and community relations, among others). The future owner can then later not only build his house in accordance with what has been established, as he would most likely want such an investment.⁴

d) Disarticulation between the various agents and stakeholders in the processes

Sometimes the public, private and volunteer sectors tend to operate in isolation rather than incorporate the fight for a common situation. This approach generates dislocations and discontinuities in procedural networks helping to failure the operations. Sabotaging the efforts of others, in a context where resources are already scarce, its optimization is crucial.

e) The reversal in the hierarchy of subordinate-Accommodation versus Urbanization

Only after solving structural problems, in other words, urban order problems, will the conditions to the solution of the problems relating to Architecture be provided.

f) The impact of certain procedural changes in the processes

To expose this parameter, take, for example, the intervention occurred in Angola in the 1970's. The planning of "Novo Bairro Golfe", which the architect Troufa Real was a part of, sought a solution to the main problems of the *musseques* (informal settlements). The strategy for the intervention foresaw the construction of a new neighbourhood built in the urban environment and developed according to evolutionary systems and participatory communities in the process of implementation (Development Plan, *Ex situ* Programs). The initiative, for purposes of *Sites and Services*, had at the beginning a very political, social, technical, economic and cultural enthusiasm. However, this process would suffer a strong modification of the objectives initially set and the disruption of its original methods. The independence led to a radical change of the context and the natural rejection of colonial processes, so the program could not survive consistently with the previous period. These external causes led to a procedural change whose results would eventually prove to be inoperative and ineffective from the classifying urban and social viewpoint (REAL, 1997: 36-37).

g) The dense bureaucracy and corruption

The level of bureaucracy in local and national government is still endless and sometimes incomprehensible. The legislation, still in force, is recurrently outdated. They are often inherited from previous colonial periods and their evaluation and revision is slow, which is one of the causes of inadequate and obsolete rules. Consequently strategies are faced with the requirement of a number of reports and with the regulatory inadequacy to the needs of current realities⁵. The bureaucracy, laborious, becomes more expensive, and therefore less accessible to economically disadvantaged classes. On the other hand, certain bureaucratic requirements seem to serve private interests. Corruption exacerbates these circumstances, benefited by inappropriate regulation, dysfunctional markets and the lack of political will.

h) The disconnection between the central organization and decentralization

The government's action is the key to an effective management of what depends on public policies for an efficient urban development. There are tasks that only the central government can exercise, regardless of the program being executed. Local management, in turn, nonetheless necessary and playing a role to which only the municipal scale can

answer more operatively. What is desirable, therefore, is that both administrations are juxtaposed and are interconnected. The hierarchy system between the both will depend on the specifications of each situation. If in a given context the organization and centralized management appear to offer bigger potential than the local administrative structures, must then elect the primacy of centralization, otherwise shall move on to an area of decentralization.

One of the government's important roles is to create appropriate legislation to regulate the right to ownership and/or, depending on national contexts, facilitating the transfer of property titles legally recognized. Another will be by adjusting, as best as possible, the financial supporters of implementing the strategies in each phase. However, management policies and centralized organization find themselves unable to carry out proximity compromises with the specifications of each family and each user, worsened by the cultural and social gap that may exist between agents and technicians responsible for the decisions and the people involved. This aspect becomes neglected by the contexts. If management is only centralized, the bureaucratic requirements tend to increase and the models used become standard, because only this way is it possible to retrain some control over the action. Even though they may wish to improve the living conditions of many people, they fail to meet the particular needs of each population and create conditions that did not come from diagnosing the referred situations, nor people's priorities.

One of the theories supported by John Turner focused precisely on one of these issues. According to the author, the centralized system, to the detriment of local management, benefited from the increase of bureaucracy attributed to the strategies.¹⁶ Despite starting from low-cost programs such policies become massively expensive, impracticable in investing in personal resources and unreachable for the users. A family who is poor is naturally segregated if the strategy uses expensive means, depends on dense bureaucracies, and implies the use of advanced technology and the use of heavy and rare equipment. As much as one wishes to make it an active and participatory process that role will be very difficult, indeed, within reach. According to the author, centralized and industrialized systems contrast with the traditional systems so common in developing countries. In these areas the operations are carried out by local contractors in direct response to the decisions of local promoters.

Turner points out that this fact alone establishes a distance between centralized administrative structures and the local self-government systems, when the latter appears to allow a greater degree of satisfaction to the population. In fact, large organizations, whether public or private, have serious difficulties in mastering the resources belonging to the realities and local people. The public promotions, fed by the dialectic between demand and supply, tend to reduce the overlapping juxtaposed actions on the real needs of the beneficiary populations. On the other hand, local organization encourages the use of technical, human and material resources available, generating degrees of satisfaction; promotes local and individual accountability, awakens self-management and establishes appropriate matrix of investment more favourable to development.

The solution to these differences depends on an evaluation analysis of resources, the discernment of uses, and political will.

Economic Inadaptability

a) Investment and economic financing

Another reason lies in the low financial funding and lack of assistance to financial systems. The lack of investment generates unattractive markets and discourages the commitment to public and private sectors. The lack of recourses to support the populations, allowing impulses without absorbing responsibilities and autonomies, limit the constructive operability and leave open spaces available to informal economic systems.

The concept of financial assistance to aid the progressive improvement of the houses is not a recent thought but was never conducted to contribute significantly to the solution. However, there are several authors who advocate the creation of credit systems that would allow the population to take advantage of financing.

The Grameen Bank⁶, the great founder of microcredit that envisioned microfinance to the poorest, is a pioneer example, and of quality, of the search for solutions to the questions. The way it managed to get to its members and the way it enabled savings and credits aimed, for example, at the housing construction or the acquisition of sanitary facilities with the “Grameen Bank Housing Program”, got such a positive result that in 1989 was given the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. It was a success for being able to conciliate economic base initiatives, with community organization, and that Architecture had a catalyst and key role for coordinating and improving living conditions.

Territorial and temporal Inadaptability:

a) The inadequate location

Another factor that is usually predominant in the choices for this type of intervention strategies is the location chosen.

The choice for LULU's⁷ Local Unwanted Land Uses – which is land use that is useful to society, but in which no one wants to live nearby) is unfavourable for a future development and is susceptible to objections by local residents, as is the case of NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard). Some peripheral urban areas, such as soils previously used for military purposes, for example bunkers, areas close to airports or areas close to landfills, are land that will be rejected by the population it is intended for. Feeling “dumped” in areas that no one else wants, the population tends to refuse the formal spaces created and adopting old patterns of informality. In turn, surveillance and monitoring the urban evolution in these areas tend to be more neglected which also favours the freedom to invest in informal growth.

The location of settlements in peripheral areas far from the city implies not only a need for investment in public access and transportation (which rarely happens), as it leaves the population in a vulnerable situation. The more isolated these areas are the more difficult it is to attract investments, private or state (investments that would help economic development), and the processes of provision of infrastructures and public services become slower. Additionally, the livelihood of these populations, recurrently the informal trade and the provision of small services, would have more opportunities in busy areas such as the proximity to dynamic urban centres, and moving to monofunctional peripheral

areas limits and prevents these livelihoods.

b) The inappropriate time management between the time of the planning and execution phase-A general problem of plans and these in particular

The most common methodological approach is based on the initial identification of the problems with setting a planning proposal for solving them. However, the intentions are not set in action remaining incomplete in the context of ideas and theories. When the execution of the program is carried out the causes analyzed have changed and the proposals made are inadequate with the social and territorial reality in force.

The original problem has changed, the needs have been transformed, and sometimes the community itself consists of other individuals. This has to do with the fact that the issues do not leave the plans established or simply carry out small parts of it. This lack of coordination may require repeating the process for a reassessment of the strategy originally drawn, which has an additional cost that are diverted from other needs. Or, committed to the original plan, certainly there will be inoperative and ineffective results.

On the other hand, some initial concerns may lead the importance of urban planning to second place, incurring in ill-conceived and neglected plans and non-viable for urban development. The immediate issues concerning administration, management or economic support, for example, can absorb the technical and political attention, diverting the prospective of the process. What was initially a realistic product becomes captive of these issues and bureaucratic procedures. In these case, if already deployed and installed, can even unable them to operate any attempt to change and improve in the future (Congresso do CIALP: 136-137; GOELHERT, 1992: 29).

c) Monitoring, surveillance, maintenance, conservation

One of the biggest causes is the lack of internal and external entities (institutions, body of associations, cooperatives, community organizations, etc.) able to continue the development purposes and original formality to interventions. The models of international aid are not the best because they provide emergency technical assistance, rather than providing technologies really adjusted to the promotion of local development. External organizations, such as some non-governmental organizations, for example, tend to disappear after the earlier stages, without stimulated and autonomous local community networks. Normally they work as external actors who enter and leave the scene, discontinued in time. Internal organizations, such as associations and cooperatives, in turn and as a rule, are scarce or are too few in number for the physical and demographic scale of such settlements. In these cases, regardless of the number in which they take place, the question still lies on the approach and role: they can not replace neither the state nor the communities, so they can not "offer" turnkey solutions, but rather to weave networks and encourage community management – a role with less visible results and longer implementation periods, and probably the most enduring results. When existing they only stand to benefit from an approach of "focus on processes, not on products" which the external entities can provide by monitoring. Monitoring and surveillance promote the continuity of healthy long-term urbanization and encourages local incentives.

Social Inadaptability

a) The inhabitants' control in decision-making processes

When talking about self-building and community participation one must suppose it also refers to self-management, self-help, self-decision. This attitude seems to be crucial. "(...) Turner's second law says the most important thing about housing is not what it "is" but what it "does" in people's lives, in other words, that the residents' fulfilment is not necessarily related to the imposition of standards. Turner's third law says the deficiencies and imperfections in "his" house are infinitely more tolerable if they are his responsibility than that of 'any other person'. But beyond the physical truths of the second and third laws, are the social economic truths of Turner's first law, from his book "Freedom to Build". When residents control the major decisions and are free to make their own contribution on the design, construction and management of their homes, the process and the environment produced stimulate social and individual well-being. When people have no control or responsibility on key decisions in the housing process, the housing environments may instead become a barrier to personal fulfilment and a heavy burden on the economy." (TURNER, 1977: 127).

Misconceptions:

- When self-building is not enough

You can be mistaken by assuming self-building, positively referred, as a romantic option that relativizes truly harsh conditions in which people live in. As John Turner warned, a strong advocate for a feasibly self-building process, you can not encourage as a model a process that will be performed by malnourished and physically exhausted people by overloading them with work. In the author's opinion what must be defended is the freedom to build and not the duty to build because of the impossibility of choice.

- When the participation is not enough

The self-help and self-building concepts are coordinates of self-solution. But community participation, which is, self-help – which differs from self-building in the sense that one does not necessarily imply the other⁸ – by its own, is not an absolute guarantee of control and decision. In other words, self-solution does not require self-management. What about the lack of management? "(...) who participates? Whose decisions are they? And whose actions are they?" (TURNER, 1977: 139).

John Turner indicates three possible levels of participation based on the space given to the degree of control in decision-making and executing the actions:

1) the promoters who decide and the users who execute, 2) the users who decide and the users who execute, 3) the users who decide and the promoters who provide. This author's first and third laws deserve to be mentioned again. If the population has no control and responsibility on the main decisions which are the foundation of the process, the residents may block the aspiration of achievement and family satisfaction (in addition to the economic burden); the deficiencies in the domestic space become tolerable shortcomings by the residents themselves when they are more a result of their action (which is, their own responsibility) and less a decision made by others. The author's two main lines of thought

point to the replacement of the decision-making for the future beneficiaries of the space. Otherwise, the identity and sense of belonging tend to be locked, inhibiting the economic, social and territorial development. For Turner the execution factors – who does and who performs the action? – is secondary. The truly authentic participation lies in managing (in self-management) the process, which is, recognizing and awarding the decision-making to the residents. The effectiveness of the administrative structures used and the presence of self-management systems will increase the desire for an active participation.

This power, however, can be critical. If the level of local control is low or nonexistent, and personal resources mobilized, there will be phenomena of social, economic and cultural failure, with expressions of rejection and even vandalism. Also, the establishment of structures that guarantee legal security and minimum economic mechanisms for the continued effort in local investments interfere in the matter and are not enough by themselves. People need social organizational structures that support invigorated and dynamic social networks. Supporting initiatives and encouraging participation, and also being promoters of maintaining order in physical structures.

b) Social signs

Community adaptability does not depend on new technical elements but on the role of the user, drawing the attention to John Turner's three levels of participation listed above. The concerns, desires, the residents' wishes – part of the social signs – can not be ignored or sent to secondary considerations. Furthermore, these populations show favourable economic conditions to unexpected transformations that require consideration. Unpredictability is a trait present: incomes vary from family to family, the family budgets vary from time to time, the personal future forecasts vary according to the circumstances and the demographic indices are uncontrollable. The priorities taken into account by the technical decisions, and according to the desirable processes of self-management, require degrees of flexibility that can allow an appropriate juxtaposition to the needs and unpredictability felt and lived by these people.

Recalling the thought of the sociologist Bernard Granotier, I stress that the disconnection between these specificities and the type of strategies that are applied contribute for the growth and social and territorial development.

Final Considerations

Current policies tend to reassess the methodological possibilities of planning and urban management in order to achieve more operability directions facing complexities and difficulties of these processes. The appropriate balance between the several parameters of adaptability seems to be part of the solution for a territorial development strategy based on the collective human evolution.

Principle of adaptation to practical tools of reality

Flexibility, Elasticity-Determination, Guidance

The technical and theoretical knowledge of planning has to adjust to the practical tools of reality, integrating them in the emerging knowledge. However, this is an extremely difficult balance. The power of definition that planning naturally encourages tends to be too present, which implies an increased and weighted attention, and particularly chargeable in the type

of methodological processes discussed. Planning, and specifically planning the type of urban policies addressed in developing countries, requires to be understood as a procedural and useful tool, indicating the strategic guidelines and actions to be implemented. It is not intended for completed and determined projects and plans, but a set of indicators and variables that will function as an array of conceptual coordinates conducive to physical materialization of operations on existing realities. The process is more important than the plan itself, the means matter more than the projects themselves. Planning is then understood as a strategic action of development and a permanently unfinished project. This strategy takes on the idea of totality in detriment of particularity and requires the exercise to be free of the ideological field.

For a technical and temporal adaptability to various contexts and resources

Creativity seems to be an essential determinant to good management and fair articulation among these four variables, apparently conflicting with each other - flexibility, elasticity, definition and guidance.

Learn to work with what you have

The gradual and progressive approaches are, therefore, methodological positions and determinant and structural techniques of these urban policies. A phased, active and operational execution, and a gradual, evolutionary and partial planning, are not only deliberately applied in the evolutionary strategies of the infrastructures, but also occur in the building process. Indeed, it is necessary to reinforce the idea that these developments – the evolution of infrastructures and the evolution of housing – happen simultaneously and interconnected. This is a strategy that allows meeting points with the reality of the resources that actually exist. The scarcer the available local resources and the bigger the constraints of ongoing situations, the more evaluative are the interventions. At the limit and the level of infrastructures, the first need to be satisfied will always be the water supply, followed by the provision of sanitation systems, then the improvement of roads, access and streets, and only at the end focused on the promotion and development of equipments.

For a certain degree of definition and guidance regardless of the contexts

The principle of diagnosis allows examining references of the situations and people's priorities. For that, in a first phase, assumptions are identified and designs prioritized (always from the population); in a second phase, includes compensation systems; in a third phase, data is submitted to assemble all the problems. Only by examining the context in itself is it possible to formulate the appropriate policies. In some areas communities require planning and urbanization plans – model *ex situ* - Sites and Services; other operations need housing *in situ* – Settlement Upgrading.

However, a certain degree of orientation is required from the technical targets in order to, at the same time, contribute to a minimization/reduction of the debilities in the results and a structure/ stability in the actions.

The extent of the need and demand, coupled with financial and technical scarcity felt in developing countries, call for strategies of applicable expansion, albeit without loss of the adaptability mentioned above. This magnitude converts limits beyond certain degrees of vagueness. The processes more comparative and cumulative than differentiated and fragmented are simultaneously more applicable on any particular circumstances.

The determination of the registration enables the operation of stable supports to the urban transformation procedures. The existence of a legal, technical and official regulation, allows, in light of the legal framework, defend the user's interests, ensuring their duties and generate favourable supports to the stability of urban transformation. On the other hand, the ability to transfer is parallel to the importance of ownership since in these types of social groups the populations may be sedentary.

However, the absence of this figure as a legal instrument is not always a problem. The civic registration, moreover, can assume a condition over the legal registration in the framework of these types of strategies. The residents may feel – even consider themselves – as the owners of spaces over which they hold no legal rights, and for that they invest and take care of their “property”.

Regulation is a variable that appears to be really important in the contexts where survival is already secured, which is not the scope of the cases covered in this study. In this type of case, and even when considered important, is taken as a secondary variable.

The division and distribution of levels of action and authority suggest that the local entities be more autonomous, although supported in basic municipal services and both on the base of regional and/or national authorities.

Local management, which should be combined with centralized management, can minimize procedural problems because it confers, given the nature of its scale, more flexibility and adaptability to urban policies, whether in the early stages, and in the long run.

Management with a high level of bureaucracy aggravates the failure of the programs. In simplified methodologies, with legal and official support, without cumbersome bureaucratic systems and extensive reports, favour the strategy because they are less expensive and temporarily more adjusted.

For an adjusted and adjustable adaptability, the technical, programmatic, methodological and procedural flexibility is necessary for the appropriate balance among technicians, professionals, strategies, locations and people-beneficiaries. The principle of assigning responsibilities, rights and duties, and clear roles, facilitates the assembly of multidisciplinary systems, preferably more operational and effective. Who does what? When? How? Ensuring the success for people can be by the redistribution of roles and functions. For the architect an effective orientation role. For the users a control role. The joint discipline is a necessity of urban policies of these contexts that should be understood as macro and hyper-system. For example: very little success will be achieved if the system of refuse collection provided do not follow hygiene education programs.

Integrated participation, and decision-making, is essential because it allows a sense of civic ownership of the space, which leads each individual to feel naturally, and pleasantly, responsible to take care of what he feels he makes and that is his.

The creation of organizational and associative entities is one of the premises to keep as a crucial response to obtaining results of effective social and territorial development. To be effectively viable they imply leadership and management skills. They mobilize community relationships, dignifying and rehabilitating their *modus Vivendi* and promote pathways to territorial development by integrating them in being responsible for their *modus operandi*.

The more effective and operative solutions are in the cities and in the beneficiary populations. Knowing how to be an architect in developing countries, likewise, is to know how to be an architect anywhere else in the world. There has to be affection, generosity, respect, recognition and empathy, as well as professional and technical responsibility for the search of solutions. This is a policy of “make doing”, of “develop developing”, of “build building”.

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¹ State of urbanization: understood as the number of people who dwell in clusters equal, or more, to 20 000 inhabitants. In BAIROCH, Paul – Storie delle Città. Dalla proto-urbanizzazione all'esplosione urbana del terzo mondo. Milano: Jaca Book, 1992, p. 52.

² The populations are not informal, the physical contexts and the matter may be. These inhabitants are the group of people who dwell in informality.

³ The applied terminology in France is taudis, in English squatters, meaning illegal occupants; in English the terms used are slum, shanty towns, substandard settlement and squatters settlement, meaning settlements of illegal occupation; whereas in German it refers to them as armenviertel (poor neighbourhoods) and in Spanish used as colonias proletarias (México), barriadas de pueblos jóvenes (Peru), subúrbios (Ecuador), ranchitos (Venezuela). (GRANOTIER, 1908: 89).

⁴ Take as an example the intervention for an expansion of territorial and social development taken place in Hyderabad, in Pakistan, aimed at a group of people without housing and in extreme poverty, in a context where the access to the land was in the hand of middle-class families. Access to the

land was a crucial premise. After the study resulting in a participatory model of evaluation which allowed identifying the poor families, they were immediately given access to the property. The inhabitants acquired a sense of dignity and recognition which would be converted in building well kept, qualified and esteemed spaces. See:

<http://web.mit.edu/urbanupgrading/upgrading/case-examples/ce-IO-jak.html>

⁵ In Egypt, the legislation regarding urbanization and construction dates from 1972, a time of strong industrial restrictions due to the political and financial crises (DITTMANN, 2001: 368-369).

⁶ The Grameen Bank, or Village Bank, was founded in 1983 by the economist Muhammad Yunus. It became the first institution to practice microcredit. See YUNUS, 2007.

⁷ The term LULU's was invented by Frank J. Popper and used for the first time in his article "Siting LULU's", published in Planning Magazine, 1981. See <http://policy.rutgers.edu/faculty/popper.html>

⁸ John Turner stresses out that self-help is not the same as self-building and that the participation central issue is to control or have the power to make decisions.