Old and new peri-urban zones: questions and challenges from the Latin American experience

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The LA urbanisation: two movements, similar model

- Older peri-urban zones
- More recent peri-urban zones
- Dynamic areas and communities, but unsustainable development model
- Land governance crisis
Older peri-urban zones

• Urbanization long consolidated: 80% (Brazil 84%)
• Metropolitanization (primary and others)
• Pattern of sociospatial segregation
• Huge housing deficit + serviced vacant land + empty/under-utilised private and public properties
• Concentration of infrastructure, services and equipment
• Backlog of urban-environmental problems: sanitation, transportation and mobility, urban security
Urban development as informal development

• Structural informality: rule, not exception
• Peripheral informal settlements (unlike US suburbs) and sometimes also central (favelas)
• More and better opportunities of access to land and housing than public policies and official markets combined
• Dynamic areas and communities, but insecure tenure and high socioenvironmental, political and economic costs
The post-industrial LA city

- Increasing commodification; capitalist production in the city and of the city
- Growth of construction sector
- Growing penetration of national and global land and property capital
- Record-breaking land/property/rental values in formal and informal markets alike; speculation
- Old centers losing population
- Further peripherization of the poor (even favelas)
- Peripheral gated communities: rich and poor dispute space
The eviction game is back

- Eviction by landowners
- Eviction by public authorities – large-scale projects, infrastructure, sports events, urban renewal
- Eviction by the market – gentrification, regularization programs, infrastructure, services and equipment, governmental subsidies
More recent developments: the new peri-urban zones

- Declining urban growth rates, though still high
- Changes in migration pattern: growth of middle-sized and small cities
- The new frontier: the Amazon
- New system of cities with different logic
- Expansion of new peri-urban zones
Migrants’ New Paths Reshaping Latin America

• Many Mexican migrants now shun the border for Mexican towns like Santa Maríá Atzompa. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/06/world/americas/migrants-new-paths-reshaping-latin-america.html?_r=1
Main causes

- Economic, sociopolitical and cultural rural-urban, urban-urban, national and international migration
- Changes in agricultural production
- Search for mineral resources
- Better infrastructure
- Information technology (youth)
- Industrial relocation strategies
- Displacement by conflict
- High land prices
- Money laundering...
Growing disputes over use of land

• Water reservoirs
• Vegetation and green belts
• Food production (encroaching of farming land)
• Impact of infrastructure projects (airports)
• National and international public, communal and private land grabbing
• Acquisition of coastal land
• Unlicensed industrial activities
• Costs of transportation and mobility
• Environmental impact – man-induced disasters
New informal development processes

• Significantly, if not largely, informal
• Poverty does not explain it all
• Rates higher than urban and poverty growth
• Lack of functioning land supply mechanisms
• Lack of adequate land administration and demarcated central areas for social housing
• Lack of adequate public housing policies
• Lack of options by formal developers
The new peri-urban zones

- For all their dynamism, unsustainable model
- So much for the aspiration of compact cities
- Take a leaf out of Solly Angel’s book *Making Room for a Planet of Cities*
- While trying to contain/divert process, anticipate urban expansion and prepare for it
Peri-urban zones: no one’s land

- No legal-technical treatment of urban expansion
- Manipulated perimeters to generate tax revenue
- No territorial control or licensing of activities
- Lack of local administrative capacity to act
- Authority conflicts and interference from higher governmental levels
- Governance voids and representation failure
- Legal grey areas and corruption
- Need for integrated land governance legal framework
A land framework

• Democratize access to serviced land and housing and provide security of tenure
• Articulated territorial order: preventive and remedial land, urban, housing, environmental, fiscal policies in light of inclusive socioeconomic and socioenvironmental development; social function of private and public property
• Rural – “rurban” – policy
• Urban planning revival – different bases, not merely regulatory, but inducing land market movements
• Learn from dynamic informal markets
A governance framework

• Local capacity building
• Intergovernmental articulation
• Metropolitan apparatus and regional scope
• Involvement of private and community sectors in land management
• Popular participation in decision- and law-making
• Financing urban development: traditional taxation and other forms of surplus land value capture
The challenge of a new social contract

• Peri-urban zones require a new sociopolitical pact to recognize positive dimensions and minimize negative ones, promote sociospatial inclusion and fairer distribution of costs and benefits of urban development

• *The Right to the City*