Urban Transition: hopes and challenges
(Brazilian and other Latin American References)

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INTRODUCTION

Latin America is one of the most urbanized regions in the world. By the mid-21st century 91.4% of the Latin American countries’ populations will be living in cities, followed by Europe (90.7%) and North America (90.2%).

A new urban transition is in evidence, derived from the acceleration of demographic transformations and resumption of economic growth related to income redistribution within a democratic consolidation process.

THEN, HOPES AND CHALLENGES OF THE URBAN FUTURE.

In this sense, it is worth reproducing one of the optimistic conclusions drawn from the referred UN-Habitat report regarding the future of the cities on the Latin American continent.

“There is no doubt that in Latin America and the Caribbean – a global laboratory for many innovations related to urban planning and management – the resources and the capabilities to promote new models of urban development for the twenty-first century are available; models that are simultaneously centred on the welfare of people and their inclusion in society; models that favour local employment, social and cultural diversity, environmental sustainability and the reaffirmation of public spaces.” (p. XIV)
URBAN TRANSITION FEATURES:
demographic changes

1. Urbanization in the past occurred with very fast, intense migration from rural spaces to the cities.

2. A drastic decrease in rural-urban migration has taken place.

3. Cities have benefited from demographic dividends.

4. Opportunities have arisen to expand investment supported by a working age population with a higher growth rate.

5. Overcoming cycles of stagnation, debt and inflation in national economies, which emerged on the continent in the 80s and 90s, has created conditions for cities to drastically relieve their structural suffering.

6. Emergence of public policies, focused on social protection, income transfer and social minimum guarantees, that have also positively affected cities by reducing poverty and social inequality, and increasing social life stability.

URBAN TRANSITION FEATURES:
macroeconomic and political changes

5. Overcoming cycles of stagnation, debt and inflation in national economies, which emerged on the continent in the 80s and 90s, has created conditions for cities to drastically relieve their structural suffering.

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7. Faster growth of the central cities located in large metropolitan agglomerations: economic and demographic decentralization process, reducing the pressures and problems of megacities.

8. Shantytown (or “favela”) urbanization and land legalization policies have emerged in many countries on this continent.

9. The share of urban population living in slum conditions decreased by nine percentage points (from 33 to 24% per cent).

10. But this was not enough to reduce the absolute number of people living in these conditions which increased from 106 to 111 million.
URBAN TRANSITION: MEDIUM-TERM CHALLENGES

1. Trends of urban sprawl

2. Legacy: inequalities and urban segregation.

1. TRENDS OF URBAN SPRAWL

CITIES HAVE GROWN PHYSICALLY 2 TO 3 TIMES MORE QUICKLY THAN THE POPULATION BECAUSE OF 3 FORCES:

1. Increase in the price of land located in central areas due to speculation.
2. Resumption of vigorous central government policies regarding social housing construction in the outskirts of large cities.
3. Adoption by part of the upper middle classes of the American model of urban enclaves in the outskirts of large cities.
**Conjunto Nova Sepetiba Social Housing**, in Rio’s West Zone: this social housing estate programme lies on a 1.9 million square metre site, reserved for 626 housing units, located next to an ecological park.

### 1. TRENDS OF URBAN SPRAWL

It is important here to mention three consequences of these urban sprawl forces:

1. They tend to **raise the cost of maintenance and expansion of urban services**;

2. They contribute as well to **forcing the poor out to areas far from the richer urban fabrics**, which hinders the possibility of social harmonization through urban equity;

3. Concerning the lack of public policies for mass transportation, the urban sprawl process also tends to **make cities even more dependent on roadways and private urban mobility systems**.
1. TRENDS OF URBAN SPRAWL

Other consequences of urban sprawl.

5- New type of inequalities: the ability to move from one place to another. Living in peripheral areas of the city imposes excessive costs in terms of money, time and energy on the poorest people.

6- Urban sprawl also produces new urban morphologies characterized by a polycentric pattern and spatial dispersion.

These maps present the trends towards urban dispersion to which many of the continent’s cities are submitted. The first two indicate peripheral expansion process of Buenos Aires and Mexico City metropolises.
I. TRENDS OF URBAN SPRAWL

- The tendency toward the formation of 9 city-regions in Brazil as a consequence of the urban dispersion trend in the metropolises of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Brasília, Porto Alegre, Curitiba, Salvador and Recife.

- 46% of Population
- 46% of National GDP
- 47% of Employed Population
- 60% of Household Income,
2. LEGACY

- The quantity and quality of available housing, which is insufficient to ensure adequate living conditions for all households.

- **Inequality**: viewed in aggregate, the region’s cities remain some of the most unequal in the planet.

- **Segregation and division in the territorial social organization**.

- This legacy of urban problems is in itself a challenge for the future. But they pose other challenges beyond the problems of the city. They generate societal challenges, particularly those concerning the overcoming of social inequalities.
Inequalities and urban segregation.

Deprivation in terms of poor quality housing and urban segregation affects families' living conditions and the scope of their social lives (Katzman, 2011; Ribeiro & Katzman, 2008).

SOME EXAMPLES: RIO DE JANEIRO METROPOLIS.

Inequalities and urban segregation.

In Rio de Janeiro metropolis, white children are 23% more likely to have access to a quality public school than a black student. However, when white children live in a high status neighborhood, this chance increases to 50%. (Ribeiro et al, 2014).

Research on housing deprivation and educational performance in Rio has shown the probability of underachievement of poor children enrolled in the 4th Year increases by 75%; this percentage increases by 42.6% if they live in high density homes. (Heredia, 2013).
URBAN TRANSITION:
LONG-TERM CHALLENGES

1. Metropolitan Governance.

2. Quality urban welfare.

3. Fragmentation of Knowledge.

1. THE CHALLENGE OF METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE

TO BUILD THE METROPOLISES AS POLITICAL SPACES.
1. THE CHALLENGE OF METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE

Paradox: the metropolises increased their relevance in relation to national economies in Latin America. However, these territories don’t have a real ability of urban governance.

- There are several reasons to explain the basics of this paradox. One of the most important is certainly the non-existence of political representation in the political system.

- The political system has two features: on one hand, the under-representation of metropolises in regional and national parliaments; on the other, a strong presence of parochial patterns of political representation in the metropolises.
1. THE CHALLENGE OF METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE

- In BRAZIL, whereas 33% of Brazilian voters are located in metropolitan regions, these regions have been electing only 22% of the congressmen.

- As a consequence of the absence of political representation of metropolises at different levels of government, the pattern of public policy is fragmented:
  a) in sector action (housing, sanitation, transport, etc.) and;
  b) in the intervention at the various government levels (federal, regional, municipal)

1. THE CHALLENGE OF METROPOLITAN

- It’s crucial to promote a reform of the political system of Latin American countries targeted by towards construction of political representation of metropolises.

- However, there are many resistances that block the reforms of the system of government in Latin American countries.

- The more important are the long-term effects of path dependency in the formation National States and their political geographies.
1. THE CHALLENGE OF METROPOLITAN

- So, the cities new urban forms will remain basically unchanged for a long time territory by a predatory capitalism.

- It is not a coincidence that the mobilization of protests and political struggles emerge in major cities around metropolitan problems.
2. THE CHALLENGE OF QUALITY URBAN WELFARE

To build the concept of URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

The signs of urban society foreseen by Henri Lefebvre are emerging, becoming a global reality. Such transformation has generated new impacts and challenges for the future of nations and whole continents,

Many authors have been talking about the strong evidence of the trends to extend and concentrate the urbanization forecast by Henri Lefebvre as an implosion-explosion movement created by the new territorial forms of capitalist development. These trends require new theoretical approaches to urbanization processes and their morphologies
2. THE CHALLENGE OF QUALITY URBAN WELFARE

Reproduction of the life of individuals and collectivities, in their multiple dimensions, is strictly dependent on the resources and conditions provided by the built environment on the large city.

2. THE CHALLENGE OF QUALITY URBAN WELFARE

We have entered that historical phase anticipated by Robert Park: the growing dependence of future societies on their capacity to create the type of collective welfare inherent to the urban way of life,
THE CHALLENGE OF QUALITY URBAN WELFARE

“... Man's most successful attempt to remake the world in which he lives in accordance with his heart's desires. But, if the city is the world that Man has created, it is also the world in which he is condemned to live from now on. Thus, indirectly, without having any clear notion of the nature of his task, in making the city, Man has remade himself”

Robert Ezra Park (February 14, 1864 – February 7, 1944) was an American urban sociologist who is considered to be one of the most influential figures in early U.S. sociology. Park is noted for his work in human ecology, race relations, migration, assimilation, social movements, and social disorganization.

NEW URBAN TRANSITION: LONG-TERM CHALLENGES

2. THE CHALLENGE OF QUALITY URBAN WELFARE

Urban Welfare Index ↔ Human Development Index

Based on a URBAN DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT:
Collective conditions of social reproduction in urban society.

Based on HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT:
Life expectancy, education and income indices from viewpoint an individual perspective.
This challenge has particular importance in countries featuring late industrialization, as they evolve urban society with gigantic metropolises that are precarious, informal, unequal and environmentally unsustainable.

Observatório das Metrópoles has devised an Urban Welfare Index – IBEU.

IBEU has been designed as an experiment to promote monitoring of the urban dimension of social welfare in Brazil's 15 main metropolises, expanding the concept of Social Welfare.
THE CHALLENGE OF QUALITY URBAN WELFARE

The IBEU has five urban dimensions:

a) mobility;

b) environmental conditions;

c) housing conditions;

d) collective services and health care; and

e) infrastructure.

http://www.observatoriodasmetropoles.net/download/indice_bem_estar_urbano.pdf

THE CHALLENGE OF KNOWLEDGE

TO OVERCOME THE FRAGMENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE.
THE CHALLENGE OF KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is fragmented by:

a) Conceptions of what constitutes knowledge;
b) Fields of knowledge;
b) Disciplinary areas;
c) Themes.

Nowadays, studies about the metropolises are limited to the areas of Urban Planning, Architecture & Urbanism and Demography. However, there are plenty of other fields and areas that have been studied but not always included in a comprehensive conception of the subject.
The Challenge of Knowledge

Success has not resulted from the experiments to overcome this fragmented state through the creation of knowledge fields in the training of professionals, based on the perspective of:

a) pluridisciplinarity;

b) interdisciplinarity;

c) transdisciplinarity.

The reasons for these failures are various, among which one can mention resistance to changes arising from:

a) the theoretical and methodological traditions of the disciplines;

b) the forms of university organization;

c) the sectoralist conception of public policies.
The knowledge necessary to urban society requires the reunification of the principles by which the social world is thought.

“The Truth ➔ Science

Moral Goods ➔ Philosophy

The Beauty ➔ Art

The Know-How ➔ Technical

“Neither the separation of fragments and contents, nor a confused reunion can define (and thus express) the urban phenomenon. It depends on a total reading together with aspects of a geographical, demographic, economic, sociological, semiological, lexical, etc, nature. The urban phenomenon may not be defined as an addition nor as a synthesis, not even through its superimposition.” (Lefebvre, 1999 [1970], p. 157).
Thank you!

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