

THE ROAD TO LIBERATING CITIZENS WHILE GOVERNING THE URBAN AREAS. THE TALE OF TWO CITIES: CAIRO AND BUENOS AIRES¹

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Abstract: The relation between the political agenda, the social and economic policies, and urban planning and fabric of cities as a product cannot be missed. And as cities are centres of national economic growth and given that the future of the world will be urban it is thus ironic that the majority of the population of almost all cities in almost all developing countries lives in houses that are below standards, in areas that lack services and basic infrastructure. Furthermore, the people who live in these areas suffer from high present of socio-economic problems such as unemployment and literacy. The poorest of the population have to pay more for their houses, service and infrastructure provision. And they lack access to formal credit and thus to opportunities (Sirry 2004). The cities have become places of frustration instead of places of hope and opportunities. It is not thus surprising that the world is witnessing a wave of upheavals all over its' cities. In the two case studies the article will try to discuss the background of the country and the political, social, and economic conditions and the physical outcome that is manifested in the image of its cities specially the capital city and how can the change towards democracy help the country, its cities and the urban population. The period covered is called by many the contemporary period, it starts in 50's in Egypt and 70's in Argentine.

Keywords: cities, poverty, citizen participation, democracy, public space.

INTRODUCTION

The relation between the political agenda, the social and economic policies, and urban planning and fabric of cities as a product cannot be missed. And as cities are centres of national economic growth and given that the future of the world will be urban it is thus ironic that

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the majority of the population of almost all cities in almost all developing countries live in houses that are below standards, in areas that lack services and basic infrastructure. Furthermore, the people who live in these areas suffer from high present of socio-economic problems such as unemployment and literacy. The poorest of the population have to pay more for their houses, service and infrastructure provision. And they lack access to formal credit and thus to opportunities (Sirry 2004).

The cities have become places of frustration instead of places of hope and opportunities. It is not thus surprising that the world is witnessing a wave of upheavals all over its' cities. In the two case studies the article will try to discuss the background of the country and the political, social, and economic conditions and the physical outcome that is manifested in the image of its cities specially the capital city and how can the change towards democracy help the country, its cities and the urban population. The period covered is called by many the contemporary period, it starts in 50's in Egypt and 70's in Argentine.

Our research questions are: *a)* Buenos Aires and Cairo: whose city is it? *b)* Tahrir Square and Plaza de Mayo: are they public spaces symbols of freedom and democracy? *c)* Urbanization and globalization: can they coexist? *d)* Urban management and local government: how can these spheres of authority combine? *e)* Which are the paths of citizen participation?

NEW GLOBAL GEOGRAPHIES

In the reading of Saskia Sassen and other authors, there are two distinct sets of dynamics driving globalization. One of these involves the formation of explicitly global institutions and processes, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), global financial markets, the new cosmopolitanism, and the war crimes tribunals. The practices and organizational forms through which these dynamics operate are constitutive of what is typically thought of as global scales. But there is a second set of processes that does not necessarily scale at the global level

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as such, yet, but is part of globalization. These processes take place deep inside territories and institutional domains that have largely been constructed in national terms in much of the world. This is the case of Egypt and Argentina. What makes these processes part of globalization even though they are localized in national, indeed subnational, settings is that they are oriented towards global agendas and systems. They are multisided, transboundary networks and formations which can include normative orders; they connect subnational or “national” processes, institutions and actors, but not necessarily through the formal interstate system. Examples are cross-border networks of activists engaged in specific localized struggles with an explicit or implicit global agenda, for example, human rights and environmental organizations; particular aspects of the work of states, for example, certain monetary and fiscal policies critical for the constitution of global markets now being implemented in a growing number of countries; the use of international human rights instruments in national courts; and no cosmopolitan forms of global politics that remain deeply attached to or focused on localized issues and struggles (Sassen 1995, 2014; Collier and Dollar 2002).

We will try to use history to develop an analytics of urban change. We need to understand the transformations involved after the revolutions in both countries and be conscious about the level of complexity of the process. We consider the importance of the consolidation of the democracy as other variable in the process of urbanization. When we talk about the consolidation of democracy, we are not dealing with liberalized nondemocratic regimes, or with pseudo-democracies, or with hybrid democracies where some democratic institutions coexist with nondemocratic institutions outside the control of the democratic state. Only democracies can become consolidated democracies.

It is necessary also to say a few words about three minimal conditions of democratic consolidation. First, in a modern polity, free and authoritative elections cannot be held, winners cannot exercise the monopoly of legitimate force, and citizens cannot effectively have their rights protected by a rule of law unless a state exists.

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Second, democracy cannot be thought of as consolidated until a democratic transition has been brought to completion. A necessary but by no means sufficient condition for the completion of a democratic transition is the holding of free and contested elections (on the basis of broadly inclusive voter eligibility) that meet the seven institutional requirements for elections in a polyarchy that Robert A. Dahl has set forth. Such elections are not sufficient, however, to complete a democratic transition.

Third, no regime should be called a democracy unless its rulers govern democratically. If freely elected executives (no matter what the magnitude of their majority) infringe the constitution, violate the rights of individuals and minorities, impinge upon the legitimate functions of the legislature, and thus fail to rule within the bounds of a state of law, their regimes are not democracies (Linz and Stepan 1996).

“Urbanized cities in democracies in a global world”: This interpretive stance brings with it a methodological concern about including informal, or not yet formalized, institutional arrangements and practices in the analysis of change. That which has not yet gained formal recognition can often be an indicator of change, of the constituting and inserting of new substantive logics in a particular domain of the social – economic, cultural, political, discursive, subjective – which is thereby altered even though its formal representation may remain unchanged, or, alternatively, altered even though it remains informal, or is not yet formalized. These informal logics and practices can be shown to have contributed to historical change even though they are often difficult to recognize as such. The fact that informal logics and practices are one factor in historical change also contributes to the lack of legibility that is frequently a feature of major social changes in the making.

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THE COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO CITIES: CAIRO AND BUENOS AIRES

Egyptian background: the building up of the revolutionary wave

The question of what caused the revolution in Egypt, is not an easy one. And it is important to keep in mind that this revolution was decades in the making. The revolution and urban patterns that were created during the last years before the revolution and in the transition period can only be understood within the economic, social and political national context, as well as international or global context.

The reason behind the revolution include the adoption of neoliberal political agenda, demographics, foreign policy, economy, legitimacy of the state, torture, corruption and technology. Some factors have been growing for decades and some are more recent. The paper will start by giving a historical context background of Egypt. The paper will cover the period from 1952 revolution to 2013 giving more emphasis to the last 30 years of Mubarak regime.

Nasser regime 1952-1970. Under Nasser, Egypt followed a socialist approach to economic and social development, which involved extensive government intervention. The government adopted industrial development strategy; the industries created were almost all located near big cities such as Cairo or Alexandria. These strategies caused the migration of large number of people from rural to urban areas, causing unprecedented urban growth. The government tried to answer the demand on housing, services and jobs through direct provision. During this era the state adapted the strategy of free education for all citizens up to university education, a strategy that had its effect 40 years later.

The demand on public goods was never met by the public supply. Laws of rent control and policies to provide subsidies to food items, building material and housing among others were introduced.

During this period many large scale public housing projects were constructed for both low and middle income groups. Under socialist

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ideology the urban planning strategy was to mix different income groups within public housing projects and to include these public housing neighbourhoods within the city and in relation with other housing neighbourhoods. The location of housing projects in many cases had a correlation to industrial zones and during the 1950 and 60 the Public housing and Construction Company was the main player (Shalala 1991). This period also witnessed some rural development programs specially related to education and health.

Sadat regime 1970-1981. Under Sadat regime and following the 1973 war the country followed an “open door” policy, although significant levels of government involvement continued. In the late 1970s rent control was released a little and other forms of tenure were introduced to the market. Subsidies to low income groups were also reduced. New projects of site and service and core housing were recommended and implemented with international agencies assistance in many Egyptian cities, it meant a change in the government role from provider of housing units to enabler. By mid-80 under Mubarak the site and service program became questionable due to management and administration costs and construction process. Thus the government by late 80’s concentrated on the production of housing units for low income groups of the population. (Shabaka 1991).

During this period new so called “informal” districts emerged especially in Cairo as a consequence of extreme population growth that started in the 60’s. These districts were built by the private sectors and developed mostly outside of and without regard of state building laws. Those new informal areas were not planned but informally consolidated themselves as part of the city (El Batran and Arendel 1998).

Sadat adopted a new policy for creating new urban communities in the desert outside of the Nile valley. Incentives were given to the private sector to develop these new towns.

Mubarak regime 1981-2011. After Sadat’s assassination Mubarak came to power, following the same open door policies. Which were translated to less government intervention in the market, less subsi-

dies, more private sector involvement in the provision of goods and services? And during this period the national government started to neglect rural development and the national budget was unevenly distributed between regions.

During the period 1980-1982, a National Urban Policy Study (NUPS) was prepared with the objective of proposing a strategy of a more balance growth among cities of different sizes and across regions. It proposed different scenarios of spatial distribution of population and economic activities, and evaluated the costs of such of each scenario. Evaluating the study years later few of the recommendations were ever implemented.

As the government ideology changed in the 80's towards only providing housing for a small part of low income groups and as central locations became scarce and were too expensive for the government to use for public housing more peripheral locations were chosen for public low income housing and the quality of the housing units and area was reduced.

As a consequence of rapid urban expansion, high population growth rates and government ignorance of housing demand, informal areas that appeared since mid-60's grew rapidly. Also the immigration of Egyptian to gulf states that started in the 70's and increased in the 80's and 90's had its effect on the socio-economic and cultural identity of Egyptian cities. In the 80's the per cent of informal areas in Egyptian cities became significantly big between 40-60 per cent of all urban areas (Sims 2003). In 2005 it was estimated that informal areas were providing shelter for 6.2 million inhabitants in Egypt and that 59 per cent of these are located in Greater Cairo region (Abdelhalim 2010: 3).

In the 90's several studies conducted by international agencies indicated that the way responsibilities are assigned to different agencies and departments within the government in Egypt directly affect the quality and efficiency of the delivery of service and the provision of infrastructure and the urban development of cities as a whole. Thus IMF and World Bank recommendation were that the government needs to undergo structural reform and to shift to new forms of pri-



vatization and public private partnership in provision of service and infrastructure. These policies meant higher prices of service, and housing especially for the low income groups.

The government of Egypt has embarked in a structural economic adjustment programme and was seriously committed to lift the barriers that hinder private sector participation in the development of the country. Privatisation programmes resulted in the gradual withdrawal of the Egyptian State from several sectors. The public utility sector and particularly the water and drainage as well as solid waste management undergone privatisation and restructuring of the role of the public sector. Also during this period, the government continued the policy of creating new urban cities, with more than 20 new cities. The developers started developing new housing compounds, mostly gated in new towns and along the Egyptian coasts (USAID 2006).

In 2005 within many political and economic “so called” reforms and for the first time a presidential election took place. In his presidential campaign Mubarak promised to build 500,000 housing units over six years, and although much of that number of units were to be built by the private sector and the inhabitants themselves, that target was never achieved (Ministry of housing 2012).

The effect of all these policies on the urban fabric of the Egyptian city, as well as, on the socioeconomic fabric was evident. The city started to split between different citizens according to socio-economic factors and cultural values. As indicated in state of the world’s cities report, Bridging the urban divide (UN-habitat 2011) this division in cities is a global phenomenon that stems from inadequate policy making and planning by local authorities and central government alike.

Waves of revolution

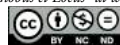
Citizens taking the streets of cities in Egypt is a contemporary phenomenon. In this part of the paper we will give snapshot of the waves of protests when Egyptians went to the street to express their

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opinion, the growing frequency and intensity of such waves in recent years was an indicator of growing dissatisfaction.

Since 1952 during Nasser regime, the Egyptians only went to the street once in 18 years. When Nasser resigned after the defeat of 1967, popular demonstrations called for his reinstatement. Although it can be said that they went to the streets once more to give Nasser the largest funeral in history in 1970.

In January 1977 during Sadat's regime a series of bread riots took the streets of Cairo in protested to Sadat's economic liberalization policy and government decision to lift the price controls on basic necessities. It lasted for two days and several buses and building were destroyed. The riots ended with the re-institution of the subsidies/price control and deployment of army². So this can be seen as the first test of public power over the state after the 1952 revolution.

On February 25, 1986 soldiers of the Ministry of interior went to the street of Cairo to protest against the rumour that their three-year service would be prolonged by one additional year. Again for several days Cairo witnessed riots and several hotels were burnt, these luxuries hotels and their occupiers were see as the contrast to how the ordinary Egyptian lived. The army was on the streets again to try and bring order³.

Starting year 2004 and during the last 5 years of Mubarak regime Egypt witnessed several protests and upheavals that increased in number, in size and started to cover more cities beside Cairo.

In 2004 and 2005, an umbrella group of 26 human rights and civil society organizations established originally to protest the US. Occupation of Iraq, protested its bold message to the streets of Cairo and the world: "enough to Mubarak" and "no hereditary rule". They later constituted a movement the "Egyptian movement for change Kifaya", the Arabic word for enough, which became its nickname since 2005 (El-Dein 2004).

During the following years labour movements, women, Nasserist and Muslim brotherhood forces were able to gain some ground in the streets. Theses opposition forms can be seen as the third wave of dissatisfaction in the last 40 years. It shed light on the economic power

structure in urban areas especially in the major cities. Workers dissatisfied with wages and privatization policies. The most famous labour protested happened in Mahala city on 6 April 2008. Activists later formed a movement called 6 April movement which was one of the callers for 25 of January 2011 protests (Singerman 2009: 9).

Citizens protested against development projects that will relocate them for the benefit of the private sector such as Maspiro downtown project and Kasrawia island project. They protested in front of Cairo governorate against unfair compensation, and corruption in distribution of housing units for the relocation of residence of Doweka informal area. Women demonstrated to express dissatisfaction with government policy towards harassment, to name a few.

The state had criminalized the political voices of its citizens by crushing NGO's and social movements by using anti-terror laws and emergency provision to justify the arrests of journalists, scholars and activists (Singerman 2006: 5).

But these movements have established visibility and were ready for the next phase the revolution which happened on 25th of January 2011. The final trigger being the November 2010 parliament election which was seen by Human rights groups as the most fraudulent poll ever in Egypt and also the Tunisia revolution.

The January 2011 revolution witnessed thousands of citizens, strangers to each other within just a few days collaborated to build an organized community or a miniature city or village in Tahrir square, with camp sites, rubbish collection system, food stalls, clinic, toilets, artwork galleries, lost and found desk and even some kind of kinder garden. They collaborated after the resignation to sweep and clean the square. Other squares within Egyptian cities had similar arrangements of tasks to provide liveable conditions and to coordinate between different citizens efforts to reach desirable ends. Citizens, men and women, young and old, Muslims and Christians were all involved no exclusion or marginalization. Many thought this is the Utopia city we all want to live in. But unfortunately after the removal of Mubarak the dream came to an end. Citizens were waiting for the birth of democracy.

Demographics background

So what happened to the Egyptian people during the contemporary period? The population of Egypt grew from 22.56 million in 1952 to 30.083 million in 1966 to 36, 342 by the end of Nasser's regime. In 1981 they reached 45.946 million. In 2010 the average population of Egypt was 78.685 million. Two-thirds of Egyptians are under 30 years. It is also estimated that 2.7 million Egyptians live abroad 70 per cent of them in Arab countries as of 2009⁴.

This explosive mix of high population growth, leading to a "youth bulge", combined with urbanisation, jobless growth partly linked to structural adjustment, and the rapid expansion of university education has produced what the BBC's Paul Mason calls "a new sociological type, the graduate with no future", and each year 700,000 new graduates chase 200,000 new jobs⁵.

The vast majority of Egyptians live in the limited spaces near the banks of the Nile. In late 2010 around 40 per cent of Egypt's population of just fewer than 80 million lived on the fiscal income equivalent of roughly US\$ 2 per day, with a large part of the population relying on subsidized goods.

Egyptian transition towards market oriented economy together with rising inflation contributed to the widening of income differentials. Father's background and geographic origins had the largest effect on earnings although the impact of mother's education has risen in recent year. The inequalities of opportunities defer between groups especially in between rural- urban⁶.

These demographics along with other physical indicators such as indicators of per cent of population living in adequate housing or per cent of population that have access to potable water, sewage, or service such as schools, and health care clarify the physical environment problem. As Ben Nefisaa puts the term "negligent governance" "to describe the incompetent and indifferent state that had limited success in improving the physical environment and basic service provisions" (Singerman 2009: 8).

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New suburbs in new cities around Cairo such as New Cairo and 6 of October received strong support from the government and elite businessmen as well as a group of members of the national democratic party⁷. Public resources that should be used to guarantee the well-being of all inhabitants by providing public services, infrastructure and urban development projects that prioritize social, cultural, and environmental interests of the community has been used instead to pave way for private sector projects in these new cities with its new gated communities or private development. The national Budget items of spending has several bias, urban bias, formal/informal bias, military bias as well as less spending on education, research and health. This was translated into city fabric and the village Fabric as well.

The city / the physical environment

The city can be seen as a text that is continuously being rewritten and reconstructed. It is the image or face of political and economic policies. It is a place where every change in the political, social economic factor gets manifested. And given Kevin Lynch's image of the city is formed by paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. We can see the changes in the image of a city like Cairo through the changes in the components of the image. The paths or streets and sidewalks dominated by cars, motorcycles, tok tok, and minibuses and sidewalks occupied by informal uses and activities. Physical expansion changing patterns of neighbourhoods. No clear edge to the city or between neighbourhoods forming rural urban continuum. Great squares and land marks of past eras are neglected new landmarks of different group of citizens is introduced to the scene mainly shopping malls and high rise commercial building. Thus the image of Cairo city has changed to reflect the changes of the community. The product of such demographics and economic policies is the expansion of mega cities such as Cairo. And the growth of dissatisfaction with government among urban dwellers. And as Hirschman states in his book *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*, citizens were loyal and patient with the state then they tried

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through protest to express their feeling of dissatisfaction with bad governance for the last several years, then they exit the system discard the government laws, regulations and take things into their own hands. Egyptian urban areas and to a less extent the rural areas are witness of citizens exiting the state or discarding its laws. This is manifested in the growth of informal areas, informal economy, commercial activities occupying streets, and sidewalks. Informal practices include encroachment of sidewalks such as cafes, tea stands, food stalls; extension to shops outside their premises, temporary street vendors and informal use of parking lots (Ravazzoli and Torso 2013: 4).

Cairo old CBD areas around the famous Tahrir square surrounded by famous French style buildings lost its importance as centre. Losing many of its multi-use, dynamic spirit. Many commercial, business and many of its residence immigrated to the more suburban centres, leaving behind only less expensive commercial uses and some industrial use and leaving the streets to whoever wants to occupy them. Cairo CBD started to transform from a vibrant all day centre that attracted all classes of citizens to a centre that attracts low income groups and that is almost dead at night. The right to the city was translated into the right to do what you want outside the sphere of the state rules and regulations especially in informal areas.

On seeing the change and releasing the real estate potential of Cairo CBD the government adopted a strategic urban development plan for greater Cairo region, called Cairo vision 2050. The vision was to transform Cairo into a global, green and connected city. And to resume the city's physical and architecture splendour and to eliminate slums⁸. The plan was seen by its critics as a gentrification approach to Cairo's development. And that it was one of the roots of the revolution. As the urban plan if implemented would have meant thousands of low income groups being relocated from inner city to marginal locations.

Cairo is a city of contrasts, a city contested; Singerman in her book by the name *Cairo contested* tries to understand what happened to the city and to underline the fact that the process of neoliberalism provokes struggle and increase stratification, inequalities, hierarchies,

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and differences among Egyptians. And that in the last 30 years the growth of the private sector enhanced by the favourable regulatory framework has increased the value of land and real estate and thus increased also speculation (Singerman 2009: 6).

Egyptian cities in the second millennium are dominated by marginalized areas, marginalized citizens. Citizens that face the dilemma of survival and solidarity. They see the non-existence of legal way to face government decision with regard to relocation, housing, equity in jobs, and equitable subsidy. Through the media they see ads- brochures of gated communities reflecting neoliberal new community norms and social values which add to their frustration. A city that on one hand lacks adequate housing and on the other has empty housing units that lacking residence⁹.

So who's city it is, that of the dominating elite or the majority of citizens. Whose judgment of taste and whose definition of social accepted behaviour or urban accepted norms should the politician and planners adopt for the city. It is now unclear. But the revolution indicated that both planners, politicians cannot go on business as usual.

As one of the questions that is raised by the paper is how to liberate the citizens but still govern the city and not reach the point that citizens exit the system, discard laws and the state has no power over the urban fabric whether buildings or streets.

As to public space the birth place of the revolutions, were it is Tahrir Square, or other open spaces chosen by city residence for their protest, as a symbol of freedom and democracy. Will planners and politicians plan for the continuity of existence of such public open space as an agora for the citizens in a democracy or will they try to avoid the existence of such places that can accommodate hundreds or thousands of citizens.

What about the international dimension of any city in a globalized world? Modernity versus vernacular, two cities, what should the future democratic city be like.

As Jan Jacobs argued for the importance of diversity in public life of the city, it is the most effective place for socializing future generations and for the exchange and contrast of knowledge, experience and

information with other diverse social groups which also could perpetuate trust and unity. She sees diversity as the key factor of success of a city; she argues that urban diversity provides a more favourable environment for economic development than urban specialization (Jacobs 1961: 6).

The researcher agrees with Jan's opinion but only when there is a democratic rule, were each citizen feels he has equal rights and obligations only then can diversity be a positive experience and mean for innovation. And as Egypt during the two transitions period has not witnessed this yet, so the city is out of control. Everyone is taking advantage of the collapse of state's authority were it be citizens who want to build houses, drivers who want to park, drive in streets, merchants who want to use the street to sell their products and so on. For year the Egyptians were detached citizens, but since the revolution and after their participation in the protests, they all became involved. The number of movements, parties, Ngo's formed since 2011 is striking.

The question is then how to have good governance and citizen's participation in city management. Under dictatorship regime central governments rule the nation and its cities little is left for even local government, let alone citizens. As Egypt has a long history of centralized government any attempts to decentralize the government has been UN effective. But after the revolution many argue that good governance should start by decentralization give more power to local elected government that can be accountable to its citizens.

In the state of the world cities report it is stated that the remedy to bridging the city divide is in eliminating the barriers preventing the access to land, housing, infrastructure and basic services and facilitating the participation of citizens, and the paper can't agree more (Unhabitat 2011).

We need the city created in Tahrir a city of equality, responsibility, freedom and justice. Taking from the right to the city charter that tries to identify; the principles and strategic foundations of the right to the city, the principles that deal with planning and management of the city. Along with the principles of sustainability and right to public information. These principles safeguard the full exercise of citizenship

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and democratic management of the city and ensure equality fights discrimination (World social forum 1995).

Buenos Aires background: authentic citizen participation

Argentine background: the symbolism of public spaces during the military and democratic governments. Traditionally, in Argentine cities such as Buenos Aires, the public space was conceived as a place for expression and social appropriation par excellence. It is the space that houses the passing of everyday community life and gives identity and character to a city, which allows to recognize it and to live in it. It is the site that preserves the memory of its inhabitants in their natural, cultural and heritage sites.

These spaces have variety of shapes, sizes, functions and environmental characteristics. However, the public space is perceived as an empty shape, i.e. formed by the buildings and elements that surround it, where people circulate meet and interact, etc.

In Argentina, since the birth of the nation, one public space took on a special meaning: Plaza de Mayo. From the 25th May of 1810, when the Patriots clamoured for independence from Spain until 17th October of 1945, when the “people” demanded the return of their leader Juan Domingo Peron. Over time, this public space became important as a measure of claim against the military government (in 1955, 1966 and recently in 1976), following the outbreak of the social movements of “Madres de Plaza de Mayo” and “Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo”. It is also a place where the citizens showed their disagreement with the military governments and the economic measures that increased inequality in Argentina. From 1983, the arrival of a democratic government allowed the citizens to give another role to the public space. It was a place of manifestation of common interests and the appropriation of an iconic identity that interacts with the construction of a new nation, a people’s movement and human rights claim. This is an interesting example of the institutionalization of the social space that contributed to the construction of Argentine identity.

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Waves of revolution: military coups. In 1955 Peron was defeated by a military revolution. A few years later, in 1966, after a brief democratic period a new “coup d’etat” introduced a new military government. Under the Juan Carlos Onganía government, the violent civil conflict haunting the country increased. In 1969, there was severe unrest in the city of Córdoba, the “Córdobazo”, an uprising that heralded the end of Onganía’s presidency. In 1970, General Alejandro Agustín Lanusse seized power and opened the country to free elections, which were held in March 1973. Juan Domingo Perón, who had already been president of Argentina from 1946 to 1955, was re-elected after he returned from exile in 1973. After his death in 1974, his second wife Isabel occupied his office until she was deposed in a coup by officers under the leadership of General Jorge Videla in March 1976.

In the “Dirty War” of this new regime, a campaign of destruction began against so called left-wing workers, unionists, critical intellectuals, and journalists. Many students were also targeted. When their mothers protested on the central “Plaza de Mayo,” demanding information on the fate of their children, they exposed themselves to mortal danger.

According to official statistics, around 13,000 opponents of the regime were killed or disappeared without trace under the bloody military dictatorship. It is the “Process of National Reorganization”, which ruled from 1976 to 1983. Rather noteworthy is the fact that nearly 70 per cent of the disappeared were abducted in the privacy of their homes or while peacefully assembled at work.

The Argentine regime subscribed to a doctrinaire version of monetarist or free-market economics found throughout the Southern Cone region of Latin America at the time but by no means universally adhered to elsewhere (Sheehan 1987; Vergara 1984). The Argentine military’s monetarist economic team, like most in the region, was obsessed with what they perceived to be the excessive expansion of the state’s economic functions. The state, in their view, had wrongly assumed the burdens of subsidizing poorly run firms, retaining unprof-

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itable state owned enterprises, and preserving and expanding public sector employment sanctuaries.

In this context, urban processes initiated under military dictatorship or urban effects of many policies of the dictatorship, are interpreted by many authors as a bad policy regarding ways of intervening in the city previously.

Torres (Torres 2006) identifies major periods of economic, demographic and social change in the processes of spatial structure of the city of Buenos Aires. For him, 1980 is a time of changing urban trends in several ways. The context of structural crisis of the eighties means “new strategies to overcome the crisis in which the local (municipality, neighbourhood, square) is privileged, the operational (requiring little investment ventures) and the person managing (new actors, self-help groups)” (Torres 2006: 13). The contrast with the previous period, characterized by elaborate on big plans unrealized, occurs in the actual application that had these instruments. Periodization of Torres seeks to explain major socio-economic periods that involved different structuring of urban space, in this sense his periodization does not conform to policy temporalities.

Meanwhile, Oszlak (1982, 1991) analysed a series of urban policies carried out by the last dictatorship from different government spheres revealed the enactment of a new conception of the hierarchy of urban space from manifest expulsion of sectors popular (eradication of villas and holiday liberalization). The aim was to shape the city as residential services, driving industry, prioritizing and implementing automotive movement a lot of green space. In this line, Oszlak (1991) points out the conception of social order that sustained the dictatorship, as one of the great political guidelines that apparently isolated and organized various measures immediate purposes. Old projects could be executed, while the sectors that historically have slowed lost responsiveness in the context dictatorial.

The period of the dictatorship is characterized by a certain architectural language, linked to repression and control, dislocating the works of their own traditions. There is another point of agreement linked to the ability of the military government to realize a lot of pro-

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jects that produce drastic changes in the urban space, which came to fix old problems. There was a change in philosophy of the urban space from the ambition of an ordered and hierarchical city of the dictatorship to a city open to participation during the democratic period.

The return of democracy. Democracy returned to Argentina in 1983, with Raul Alfonsin of the country's oldest political party, the Radical Civic Union (UCR), winning the presidency in elections that took place on October 30, 1983. He began a 6-year term of office on December 10, 1983. The UCR-led government took steps to resolve some of the nation's most pressing problems, including accounting for those who disappeared during military rule, establishing civilian control of the armed forces, and consolidating democratic institutions. However, inability to resolve endemic economic problems eventually undermined public confidence in Alfonsin, who left office 6 months early after Justicialista Party (PJ) candidate Carlos Saul Menem won the 1989 presidential elections.

President Menem imposed peso-dollar parity (convertibility) in 1992 and dismantled a web of protectionist trade and business regulations and reversed a half-century of statism by implementing an ambitious privatization program. These reforms contributed to significant increases in investment and growth with stable prices through most of the 1990s. Unfortunately, persistent allegations of corruption also accompanied many of the reforms, eventually undermining public confidence in the government and economy. Neither Menem nor his successor President Fernando De la Rúa, who won election in 1999 at the head of a UCR-led coalition of center and center-left parties known as the "Alianza", were able to maintain public confidence and the recovery weakened. After a 4-year depression, the country ended in a financial panic in November 2001. In December 2001, President De la Rúa resigned.

After a period of political turmoil and several provisional presidents, a legislative assembly elected Eduardo Duhalde (PJ) President on January 1, 2002 to complete the term of former President De la Rúa. Duhalde – differentiating himself from his three predecessors –

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quickly abandoned the peso's 10-year-old link with the dollar, a move that was followed by a sharp currency depreciation and rising inflation. In the face of increasing poverty and continued social unrest, Duhalde moved to bolster the government's social programs and to contain inflation. He stabilized the social situation and advanced presidential elections by 6 months in order to pave the way for a new president elected with a popular mandate.

In December 2001, Argentina experienced a decisive crisis. A financial collapse accelerated: a massive flight of capital and a popular insurrection forced the resignation of national authorities. This insurrection opened a space for the reinvention of the politic, the "asambleas barriales" constituting one example of this. They occupied the public space to discuss and find a solution to economic crisis. The revolution and urban patterns that were created in the period can only be understood within the context of increased economic and political and social polarization marginalized areas/marginalized citizens.

In 2003, Nestor Kirchner won the elections and focused on consolidating his political strength and alleviating social problems. He pushed for changes in the Supreme Court and military and undertook popular measures such as raising government salaries, pensions, and the minimum wage. His "national and popular" government put its axis in employment to end poverty. But he could not finish with their plans of social welfare. A great part of the Argentine urban population remains in poverty. Social housing was built but it was not enough. Argentina's population along with thousands of Latin American immigrants (mostly from Bolivia and Paraguay) settled in the "slums" spaces that became a labyrinth where only a few could enter, without any urban control. Sometimes in the city center (i.e. Villa 31 in Retiro).

Kirchner announced in July 2007 that he would not seek re-election and backed his wife, then-Senator Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, as the candidate to succeed him. Fernandez de Kirchner won 45 per cent of the vote in the October 2007 presidential election and was overwhelmingly re-elected on October 23, 2011, winning 54 per cent of the vote. The autonomous city of Buenos Aires was led by

Mauricio Macri, from the PRO, a force of the opposition to Fernández de Kirchner.

Demographics background in Argentina

The city of Buenos Aires can also be seen as a text that is continuously being rewritten and it is the image of political and economic policies. Argentina has a real people's concentration in cities. According to the latest census, 9 out of 10 people live in cities (92 per cent).

In Argentina since the '80, especially the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires significantly grows their population. The city of Buenos Aires recorded the fastest growth in 40 years, more than 115,000 new residents, having lost nearly 200 thousand in the previous decade, says a report by the Local Urban Observatory Buenos Aires Metropolitan of the University of Buenos Aires.

A point of concern is land use. In Buenos Aires there are 390,000 empty homes. And the housing deficit is 130 thousand households, an absurd inequality. There's a predominance of investments in highways and towers. The resources are focused in these enterprises that form a network of very selective range neighbourhoods. Buenos Aires grew in population, especially low-income, and those people needed houses to live in, a problem not solved.

This city was historically shaped like an European city, with a "compact" (Prévôt 2002) or "intensive" growth (Tella 2005: 6), where the population groups of middle and high income were located in the central areas. However, this growth trend was modified from the last quarter of the last century and particularly in the "nineties", a period in which the European growth model of "open city" was replaced for the American model of "closed city" (Svampa 2001: 14). For example, the increasing expansion of urban land which is organized from major highways (Ciccolella and Mignaqui 2009) and by producing "spaces of capital accumulation".

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The city / the physical environment

The city of Buenos Aires is a place where every change in the political, social and economic spheres gets manifested. There is general agreement in the field of urban studies in the last fifty years that the city of Buenos Aires has undergone profound changes. This perception is consistent with an international process of transformation of cities, the entry of an “expansive” or “developmental” crisis from industrial processes (such as relocation of urban population because of increasing migration), and the new ways to intervene in the city. (Pando et al. 2004; Novick 2003) This process of urban transformation is closely linked with the economic role of the state and that occurs on an international restructuring level. These restructurings involve changes in the economic role of cities and changes in the welfare state own planner role, particularly visible in the area of urban planning. (Jajamovich 2009).

Buenos Aires became a complex city model. The new structure of the city integrates the Rio de la Plata and the Riachuelo to the city and the peri-urban area.

The Urban Environmental Plan outlines six themes around which the territorial lines were organized: metropolitan structure and centrality, habitat and housing, public transport and mobility space, production and employment and urban heritage.

Public space is conceptualized as a field of social, economic and environmental value that enables urban integration of the entire City. It is the main tool of urban transformation. From this approach, the public space takes the role of Territorial Model that generates environmental services and integrates urban diversity of uses and needs.

Territorial Model strategy is the incorporation of new public spaces, brought from qualified and innovative approaches that give an answer to environmental indicators and the accessibility needs the population. The desired objective is the generation of a network of non-traditional public green spaces that interconnect with each other, and in turn interconnect the city and the metropolitan area with the peri-urban area.

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Buenos Aires in recent years has advanced in citizen participation through quality management and decentralized policies. The state also has tried to reduce the gap between what the citizen expects and what services the state actually gives. Considering social stratification (as the combination of education, qualification required for employment, poverty and housing), statistics show that 11.8 per cent of the city is low stratum, 27.1 per cent of medium-low stratum, 27.9 per cent of middle level, 22 per cent of middle level-high and 11.3 per cent higher stratum. This data shows obvious imbalances between the decile of rich people and the poorer people in nearly 29 times.

Residents of the city of Buenos Aires have been consolidated and become actors through processes of decentralization that have allowed them to feel like true citizens whose voices are heard.

So whose city is it, that of the dominating elite or the majority of citizens? Whose judgment of taste and whose definition of social accepted behaviour or urban accepted norms should the politicians and planners adopt for the city? It is now unclear. But the revolution indicated that both planners and politicians cannot go on business as usual.

CONCLUSIONS

The city is a text that is continuously being rewritten and reconstructed – physical expansion, changing patterns of neighbourhoods, rural/urban continuum, the dilemma of survival and solidarity, relocation practices and urban growth, are all challenges that cities face.

Who's city is it: domination and succession. The definition of social accepted behaviour or urban accepted norms is now shaken or unclear – accepted by whom or where and when (the time dimension). What was not accepted in the CBD in the past is now generally accepted.

Tahrir Square. Tahrir Square, as a symbol of freedom and democracy, has also become a magnet for tourists/Plaza de Mayo square too. But are new democratic governments in both cities willing to still

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make the access to public open space possible and open new open space for citizen to express their opinion or will the close such public spaces.

Urbanization and globalization. A critique about modernity – two cities – city divided – disparities compounds/informal areas. Even when the disparities exist, in Buenos Aires, the proposed model for Territorial Structure and centralities is composed of the following elements: *a) agglomeration economies:* Agglomeration zones of economic activities, characterized by complexity, density and diversity of products, important for employment, attraction and urban activities; *b) economies of specialization:* Conurbations with predominant activity specific items, which will prioritize the generation of local employment; *c) area of transport and mobility.*

The strategy proposed in the Territorial Model promotes the necessary shift towards a more efficient model that responds sustainability guidelines on economic and social need for increased territorial link with new ways of circulation trend of incorporating alternative paths through a mesh that reinforces the multimodal connection.

Cairo new vision also proposes physical changes and promoting accessibility but to a less extent social and economic activities are taken into consideration.

Urban management and local government. Spheres of authority/out of administrative sphere of influence. The city of Buenos Aires has at least three subjects that improve any day: *a) Political jurisdictions:* jurisdiction community level in the City of Buenos Aires and limits of matches in the Metropolitan Area, areas of influence of political centralities and different levels of economic agglomerations; *b) Centralities policy:* political headquarters of communes, where administrative and political activities of scale develop community, with the property of generating agglomeration economies that contribute to the concentration of various economic activities; *c) Centrality policy civic center:* new civic centrality given to the south of the city, characterized by the

transfer of a significant number of administrative and political functions of the city, currently scattered in the center.

Citizen participation: avenues of participation – building up participation – forces at work. Following Tarrow (1994: 6), we believe that while changes in political opportunities create the incentives that may trigger episodes of popular collective action, the sustainability, magnitude, and duration of these actions depend on organizing people through social networks and discursively mobilizing them around symbols drawn from repertoires of contention and cultural frames of meaning. Buenos Aires has set a target, implement policies designed to achieve a modern city with a according to the same public administration, involving citizen participation and bringing the government to the citizens of the City, provided a framework long-term action. With these objectives in mind, the current administration intends to delineate a series of actions, programs and projects under four axes basic: improved procedures, information, citizen participation and human capital.

And as democracy returns to Argentine or being born in Egypt, and from the study of the two cities we can conclude that social policies and inclusion of all urban citizens, integration of urban planning strategies with social and economic programs is the backbone for any stable and democratic state.

END NOTE

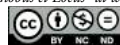
We want a city with social justice. Where people can have a good life and where their voice could be listen to. Iris Marian Young (1990), a philosopher who has attempted to reconcile the politics of difference with ethical precepts regarding justice, is frequently cited within the geography and planning literature. She outlines a vision of the good city within the framework of a group-identified society. For Young differences among groups give the city its character, while acceptance of difference provides the moral basis for urban life. But we

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could say that each group must have their rights and capacities solved (housing, food, education, health, transportation, leisure). Castells (1977) deliberately offers us little assistance in answering the question of whether we can make the cities we want: this means coming to grips with globalization, increased spatial and economic inequality, identity politics, and the contested role of the state as agent of reform. It particularly means that arguments concerning planning and policy processes should not be made in isolation from analysis of the urban and regional system. Anyway, the only solution appears listen the voice of the own actors: the citizens.

APPENDIX



Fig 1. *Housing projects in new cities*

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Fig. 2. *Informal areas near Cairo*



Fig. 3. *Rehab city gated community, available Villas range from 221 m² to 660 m²*





Fig. 4. Shakes on Sudan street (Mohandessen middle class area) overlooking the railway

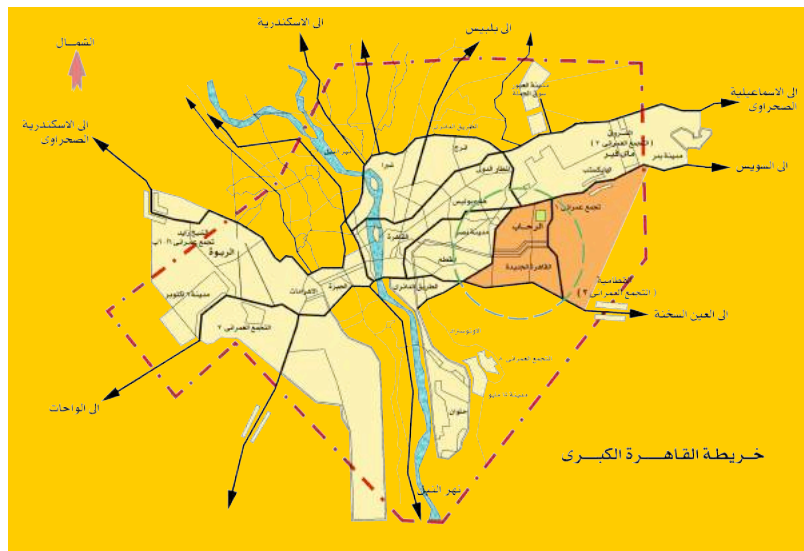


Fig. 5. The growth of greater Cairo region 2013

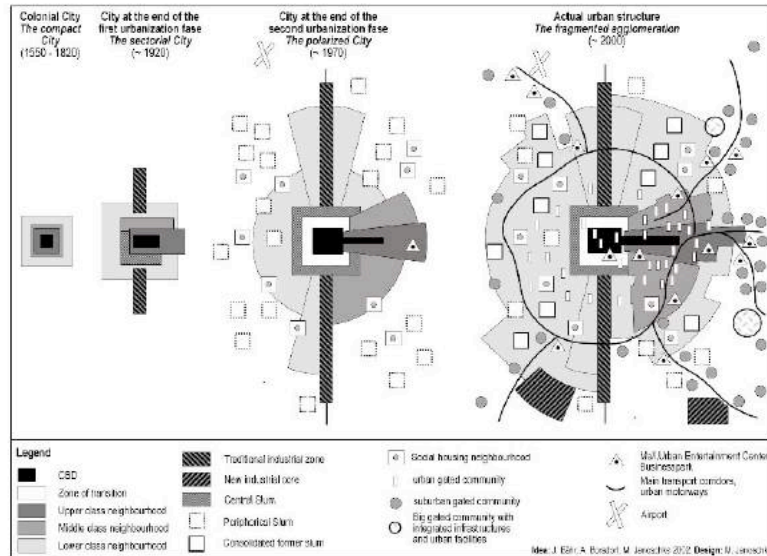


Fig. 6. Model of Latin American structural development

Source: Borsdorf, Bahr and Janoschka; adopted by A. Borodsdorf and R. Hidalgo, *The fragmented city changing patterns in Latin American cities*, 2009

NOTES

¹ This article is based on a paper elaborated by both authors and presented by Azza Sirry in 2014 ACUNS Annual Meeting: "Global Governance: Engaging New Norms and Emerging Challenges", in Kadir Has University, Istanbul, Turkey, 19-21 June, 2014.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anwar_Sadat, accessed 12 Feb 2014.

³ http://articles.latimes.com/1986-02-26/news/mn-5_1_security-forces, accessed 10 February, 2014.

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Egypt, accessed, 13, Jan.2014.

⁵ <http://theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/feb/17/what-caused-egyptian-revolution>, accessed 3 February 2014.

⁶ <http://wber.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2011/10/27/wber.lhr046.short?rss=1>, accessed 10 December 2013.

⁷ It is important to note that many of the businessmen and politicians that are on trial the main charge they are facing is related to land in new communities, and abuse of power.

⁸ Cairo vision 2050, http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/8635_42944_AymanEl-hefnawi.pdf, accessed 12 January 2013.

⁹ Estimates of the number of vacant units vary between 4-6 million empty housing units.

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