

## **URBAN PLANNING POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR REVITALIZATION: AN OVERVIEW AND COMPARISON OF EXPERIENCES**

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### **1. ABSTRACT**

This paper explores the urban planning framework with particular reference to approaches and strategies for revitalization as a key tool for intervention in derelict areas, especially when local government has a low budget for managing urban growth. From an international development perspective, south-south, south-north and north-south information exchanges can help inform better policy making. As such, an overview of the effectiveness of planning policies, with particular reference to the experience of developing countries, can act as a starting point. Through international comparison, the paper takes a look at current policies, strategies, and trends within the field of planning and seeks a greater understanding of the reasons for their failure within developing countries. This paper, then, begins a review of the impact of certain policies and attempts to initiate a dialogue for discovering the best practices currently being applied within metropolitan areas, particularly those in developing regions, and seeks an understanding the important implications for urban management. In order to draw some conclusions, a closer look is taken on two examples, i.e. the experiences of Jakarta (Indonesia) and Greater Resistencia (Argentina).

### **2. KEY WORDS**

**Planning, policies, strategies, revitalization**

### **3. INTRODUCTION**

This paper relates to previous research undertaken in the United Kingdom combined with more recent information as part of the Network Project 'Policy Review of Revitalization metropolitan areas: A comparative view of experiences in countries of this network' approved by the Secretaría de Políticas Universitarias del Ministerio de Educación de la Nación by Resolution 4426/14.

Jakarta is a densely populated city when compared with Greater Buenos Aires and Greater Resistencia, however this study is focused on the experiences of the regions within the Network Project and the challenges faced for the project given such different histories, cultures and religions. Despite such differences, belonging to an underdeveloped region leads, in general, to similar problems, particularly in relation to planning issues. Both regions have a long tradition of plans conceived at different scales that have never been implemented or others that have failed to achieve expected results. Meanwhile, programs such as 'KAMPUNG' (Indonesia) or ProMeBa (Argentina) have both aimed to organize informal settlements and with funding from international agencies, such as the World Bank and the IADB, have accomplished a great deal (Schneider, 1999). It is clear that both cities have similar problems to be tackled, according to appropriate methodologies based on the financial and human resources available; the 'key challenge', then, is discussion for, and coordination of, suitable policies according to the particular realities faced by the respective populations of the cities.

## 4. BACKGROUND

### Urban sprawl and planning trends

'Urban growth' can be seen as a general phenomenon with over half of the global population now living in urban situations. Whilst rapid urban growth is not only a concern for developing countries, urbanisation has become much more acute in less developed regions. Many cities are growing to join other nearby cities to form 'mega-urban-regions' containing on average 19 million people; this phenomenon is a new trend in urban growth throughout the world and has become common place. Extended metropolitan development tends to produce an amorphous and amoebic-like spatial form, without set national boundaries, with their extent sometimes stretching 75 to 100 Km from the urban core. Such a territory comprises the central city, the developments within the transportation corridors, satellite towns and other housing projects in the peri-urban fringe and, along with outer zones, a city emerges as a single economically integrated 'mega-urban region or extended metropolitan region'.

The ASEAN region, composed of Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Indonesia, is experiencing the symptoms of *mega-urbanisation*, with growth beyond the city and metropolitan boundaries. Metropolitan regional growth tends to sprawl along major expressways and railroad lines radiating out from the urban cores, and leapfrogs in all directions, putting down new towns, industrial estates, housing projects and even golf courses in areas that had hitherto been agricultural and rural. Back in the 1960s, most developing country governments showed little or no interest in spatial matters, however the relentless growth of national populations and the tendency for people to concentrate in ever larger cities have generated much more concern over the patterns of human settlements. Urban areas are growing at a very fast rate in the developing world compared to the developed world and the neglect of urban issues has led to significant social and environmental costs. The scale of the urbanization, with its current implications for the meeting of the needs of those at relatively low levels of income, is unprecedented. Cities in developing countries are frequently unable to provide the basic infrastructure and services needed and 30-60% of people in many of the larger cities are living in squatter settlements.

Urbanization, when it is well managed, is an important facilitator of sustained economic improvement and thereby a potential ally in promoting broad-based social welfare gains. Thus, the challenge for government and municipal authorities will be how they can manage it, and how they can cope with the negative impacts on human health and well-being and economic performance. It has generally been seen as the role of the state to protect the poor from being further disadvantaged by the operations of the market, and to address at least some of the inequalities in income and wealth. The question emerges, however, of whether governments have the skills and abilities to intervene in the urban development process in a way that can produce a better outcome and can resolve the problems created by market failure.

### Planning trends at UK

The UK is known as being one of the first countries in the world to have a state level approach to intervention in urban planning. Following the rapid urbanization in England with the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, numerous philanthropists began to provide social housing and parks and there was increased political pressure to alleviate the suffering of the poor living in slum housing. Urban planning, then, had its origins in the public health movement as municipal authorities increasingly sought to ensure adequate infrastructure and housing for workers who had migrated for work in the factories of towns and cities such as Manchester, Liverpool and Preston in the north west of England which were, in the mid to late nineteenth century, at the heart of the Industrial Revolution. The first university department in the world dedicated to the field of town planning is, in fact, in the north west of England in the Department of Civic Design, established in 1909 and still a part of the University of Liverpool.

A major landmark for planning in the UK came with the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. Established in a period of post-WWII optimism, the Act required local authorities to prepare development plans for areas under their jurisdiction and required developers to acquire planning permission from local authorities for the development of land. The 1947 Act and subsequent Acts and amendments, such as the General Development Procedure Order and the General Permitted Development Order, have acted as a basis for a system which, by and large, many consider to have been successful. Successive governments have, however, sought to use the planning system as a 'political football', with shifting emphases from regeneration of dilapidated housing to protection of green belts to enticements for industry.

Whilst previous concerns about widespread slum housing have been consigned to history, nowadays the planning system is at the heart of debates over the release of land for housing and broader considerations for sustainable development. Neo-liberal policies have, however, tended to favour private developers and led to local authorities working to ever tighter budgets in seeking to act in the public interest. Since the attack on the public sector began with the government of Thatcher, there has been much less provision of council housing and home ownership has gone beyond the reach of many young families. Another major shift for the UK economy, now symptomatic throughout the world, has been the rise of the motor car. Since the 1960s, the planning system has played a huge role in facilitation of the movement of cars around towns and cities, often to the detriment of public health and the environment. More recently, however, the UK government committed to a low-carbon economy with the Climate Change Act of 2008 and the planning system is now seen as playing a central role in working towards sustainable development.

### Planning trends in developing regions

The planning experience in Argentina and Indonesia shows extensive attempts to address urban growth without implementation. There seems to be greater success in the different programmes supported by the assistance of donors, such as the Kampung Improvement Programme in Jakarta or the Improvement Neighbourhood in Resistencia, however these programmes need to be coordinated into a framework supported by political will and proper legislation. In those cases where plans have been implemented, there have been shortcomings and they have not been successful in relation to their aims and objectives, which could be as a result of the institutional inability to implement the plan, and low political commitment. Programmes, on the other hand, seem to have had more success on the ground, mainly because of the greater pressure from donors when compared to that of the government. Governments can easily avoid donor regulation over the systems for loans.

The roles of urban planning and management must be designed plan making, policy formulation and management (implementation and operation) and to make them more effective. In unpredictable, rapidly changing, messy and complex contexts, a single blueprint is unlikely to be either desirable or feasible. Urban growth, however, is a key issue of concern for decision making. Recently, and following more sustainable trends at the global scale, urban managers have begun to conceive policies for the revitalization and renewal of built up cores and the intensification of land uses, rather than the promotion of urban sprawl. The purpose of this paper is to look at those experiences and assess their performance.

### 5. OVERALL OBJECTIVES

- To review the performance of urban policies and practices among developed and developing regions
- To look at the experiences in revitalizing metropolitan areas of developing regions, i.e. the members of the Network Project

### 6. METHODOLOGY

This research has been developed through various stages:

1. Literature review and an analysis framed around urban planning policies and experiences in implementing current policies and practices at a wide range of scales
2. A general overview of approaches to revitalization, with particular reference to the chosen examples.

The research has also used information gathered from a number of sources, such as:

- Information produced by researchers at the Institute of Urban Planning and Regional- FAU–UNNE (Argentina), from Jurusan Arsitektur Fakultas Teknik- Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta (Indonesia), from Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine / University of Liverpool (United Kingdom) and from urban managers of Resistencia City Council.
- Data collection and revision of bibliography.
- Selection and analysis of reference cases, regulations and processes developed to address similar problems.
- Analytical stage, i.e. the processing, systematization and analysis of relevant information.
- Conclusions and final recommendations

## 7. REVITALIZATION APPROACHES

As Purwastiasning (2014) pointed out, revitalization has been regarded as activities or efforts to revitalize an area within a city, or part of a city, back to its previous vitality. An area needs to be revitalized when it has suffered socially and economically as well as having encountered degradation to its infrastructure and utilities. The process of revitalization includes improvement to physical, economic and social aspects. Sound revitalization approaches must be able to recognize and exploit the potential of the environment (history, meaning, unique location and the image of a place) that supports the local wisdom of an area or region. An effort at revitalization will support the identity of a city. The activity of building or revitalization of an area can be implemented through various aspects, either physical or non-physical. Physical aspects can include the form of rebuilding itself and the infrastructure within it, and non-physical aspects can relate to social aspects, economic aspects and cultural aspects related to communities that live in areas surrounding historical sites. Some of the important aspects to revitalization are expanded upon briefly below.

### Physical intervention

Physical intervention is an initial physical revitalization activity and can be implemented in stages to cover the improvement and enhancement of the quality and physical condition of buildings, the green line, the transportation system, signage and open spaces within historical sites. As the image of an area is related to the visual condition of its historical sites, physical intervention will be needed to attract visitors. The issue of environment, particularly sustainability, has become an important consideration and so physical interventions should have concern for the environmental context.

### Economic rehabilitation

Revitalization that has been initiated through a process of rejuvenation of urban artefacts should be supportive of an overall process of economic rehabilitation. The improvement and enhancement of physical areas in the short term should accommodate either informal or formal economic activities (local economic development). These economic activities should enhance the value of an urban area. In the context of revitalization, mixed use functions should be delivered within historical sites that can support economic and social activities (new functions or new vitality) within the area.

## Social revitalization

An indication of successful revitalization could be environment itself, as such the environment should be a livable place for the community surrounding a historical area and the environment should become an interesting place to visit. Revitalization should not necessarily have the making of a beautiful place as a target; instead revitalization should aim to bring forward the identity of a city in a way that can bring about positive impacts for the quality of life of the community in social and/or economic terms (Purwastiasning, 2014).

## 8. DISCUSSION RESULTS

### Jakarta experience

As Purwastiasning (2014) has pointed out, revitalization in Indonesia could be perceived as activity to preserve cultural heritage without development involving any changes; for example, revitalization activity in Indonesia can be seen in the revitalization of Prambanan Temple in Central Java. Due to the impact of natural disaster in 2006, i.e. the earthquake, the revitalization activity for the Prambanan Temple was aimed at restoration of the authenticity of its cultural heritage. As well as the technical effort involved in the strengthening of the structure, archaeological aspects were also taken into consideration to ensure preservation of its cultural and historical heritage. In implementing for revitalization, consideration is not only related to buildings themselves, but also to the surrounding area and environment which can be linked through holistic approaches to urban planning (Purwastiasning, 2014).

Purwastiasning has been developing comparative studies of degraded areas located in Clarke Quay and Boat Quay (Singapore), Albert Dock (Liverpool, England) and Sunda Kelapa Port (Jakarta, Indonesia) using methodologies to analyze successful rehabilitation of areas with high historical value. The experience of revitalization in Jakarta is related to conservation of important buildings. Today, Sunda Kelapa is known for tourism with numerous attractions delivered within the area. The Sunda Kelapa area has several places of interest such as Menara Syahbandar (harbour tower), Museum Bahari (Maritime Museum), Sunda Kelapa Port Area, Galangan VOC (VOC Dock) and Masjid Luar Batang (Mosque). These old buildings have been designated as listed old buildings within Jakarta Old Town Area and the condition of them is relatively bad; physically these buildings need to be revitalized. Several proposals have been submitted to government from either an NGO concerned with historical sites or the private sector who but, as yet, no significant action has been implemented.



Figure 1: Large plaza in front of Eatahillah Museum

The local government of Jakarta has been encouraged to enhance the quality of Jakarta Old Town Area by providing a comfortable place for tourism. One solution has been to create a pedestrian area within Jakarta Old Town Area, for example, with provision of a large plaza in front of Fatahillah Museum, formerly known as the Stadhuis (Government Office). Furthermore, there are now pedestrian routes from this plaza to other interesting places within Jakarta Old Town. Tourists can now reach all the attractive places within the area on foot from Farahillah Museum.

There are several reasons why local government had been encouraged to enhance the quality of the environment of Jakarta Old Town Area; these can be listed as follows:

1. Poor image of the area following years of neglect;
2. Lack of vitality within the area, which acted to discourage business investment;
3. Lack of infrastructure and facilities within the area;
4. Poor and uncontrolled traffic conditions;
5. Significant degradation to the quality of the environment;
6. Lack of integrated regulations between local and central government



Fig. 2. The process of revitalization of Jakarta Old Town Area, including the provision of a

Local Government has, therefore, been willing to develop the Jakarta Old Town Area by:

1. Strengthening existing activities within the area and encouraging the development of new business and economy activities;
2. Implementing a conservation and revitalization concept in the development of the Jakarta Old Town area;
3. Enhancing the infrastructure and facilities in the area in developing and preserving of the Jakarta Old Town environment;
4. Encouraging a variety of social, art and culture activities within the area;
5. Revitalizing the function of the area as a residential place with many activities for the community by adopting the concept of '*Living In The City*';
6. Developing a Public-Private partnership through the authority and legal systems as well as the system for urban management

To conclude, the local government of Jakarta has delivered a strategy to tackle the problems within Jakarta Old Town Area, as follows:

1. By initiating creative community and creative economy industry;
2. By implementing a concept of adaptive re-use;
3. By implementing a concept of function infill/ new activities within public spaces;
4. By implementing an improvement to heritage facades.

### **Greater Resistencia experience**



Municipalities have shown renewed interest in absorbing urban growth by increasing the density of central districts that already have infrastructure and full services. This has been the case for the City of Greater Resistencia (Argentina), which is an urban conglomeration of 385,726 inhabitants. It is located in a flood plain which has led to successive flooding catastrophes and for this reason the city is surrounded by an area of flood protection with a strong internal control. Through design and operation of the Flood Emergency Plan, local government ought to address the growth within these limits to an appropriate level. As such, since 2001, the Municipality of Resistencia has taken the initiative in implementing a policy that promotes growth in the height of buildings and the inclusion of complete infrastructure in central districts through Ordinance 5403/01-High Density (Schneider, 2014).

According to Falcon (2007), the compact city model is characterized by buildings of height concentrated to medium to high-density within a greatly compacted built-up core. It is a sustainable model though it has also been linked to a decreased quality of city life due to the lack of private space. As such, the supply of greenfields should be increased and it is, therefore, essential that the compact city model is supported by services and infrastructure and by ensuring the availability of greenfields (Perez and Schneider, 2011). In Greater Resistencia, however, existing green open spaces in the central districts are insufficient. Until the riverine areas that have been reserved by Resolution 1111/98 are formally incorporated, it is necessary to review the provision of spaces for recreation purposes that developers are offering in different types of towers.

Since the implementation of Ordinance 5403/01- High Density, a total of 700 buildings have been built in Greater Resistencia. Most of these were designed as residential properties, though minorities of them were built for business purposes. Building construction has increased by 80 percent over the past eight (8) years, and in less than a decade the number of buildings in Greater Resistencia has almost doubled. The reasons for this phenomenon are, in part, due to the implementation of the regulations being considered, coupled with central government incentives for the construction industry and federal operatives coinciding with a period in which savers focused on bricks and mortar as one of the safest investment prospects.

According to information obtained by Klees (2013), between 2002 and 2009, the city received the equivalent of a cash injection for property investment of US\$17,916,666; this amount was spent on the construction of 40 buildings that were completed during that period (Schneider, 2014). Since the local government decided to promote the intensification of land use in the built-up core of Resistencia, the policy has still not had an influence on the social displacement of low income households; a large majority of society (62% of the total number of inhabitants of Greater Resistencia) continue to reside in under serviced areas and on plots that are prone to flooding. This situation is linked to the context for the city where, since the early twentieth century, the first serious floods were recorded (the year 1905 to be precise). Over the decades, there has been further serious flooding and, following the catastrophic floods of 1982 to 1983 that flooded 70% of the urban area and affected 30% of the population, the government decided to take concerted action to protect the city, its citizens and their properties. It is, therefore, less likely for the upper classes to easily give up the privileged lifestyles afforded by life in the protected city centre and so residency in the urban core is still made up of a high proportion of middle and high class owner-occupiers (Schneider, 2014).

### Urban renewal process

Given the lack of consideration for the physical environment and social issues, and the lack of adequate planning, the city has experienced a great deal of urban sprawl. Nowadays, images of the city look very different from twenty years ago as a result of the implementation of Ordinance 5403/01, complemented by Ordinance 8775/07 Medium Density. The business of constructing towers has enabled the central area to be renovated and promoted a partnership between private entrepreneurs, composed of real estate, shareholders and landlords, working together in the formation of a trust to support the construction of towers. This process has been encouraged by the local government along with the promotion of the revitalization of commercial areas and their transformation through the use of a pedestrian strategy.

### Pedestrianization of Main Street, Resistencia

With comprehensive intervention for Main street, Resistencia, the City Council has developed a pedestrian promenade of 400 meters in length that is characterized by its amplitude (width) of open views, facilitated by the removal of 'visual contamination' from excessive advertising canopies and bus shelters and the renewal of infrastructure and installation of underground wiring. Design solutions that have been established include, for example, improved pavement circulation, better drainage, the creation of leisure spaces with street furniture ideal for social meetings, redesign of shops to improve access for ambulances and fire engines, and the provision of traffic lights to cater for blind people. As noted in the *Datachaco Newspaper* in March of 2014, the centre has become "a nice place for meeting, walking, shopping, cultural, social and political events".



Figure 3: Pedestrianization of Main Street in Resistencia city

(Source: Scornik, C. et al. (2011) 'Los Servicios Comerciales en la Región Metropolitana Gran Corrientes - Gran Resistencia'. IV Seminario Sobre Políticas Urbanas, Gestión Territorial y Ambiental para el Desarrollo Local. *IPUR – FAU (UNNE)*, Resistencia, 03 y 04 de junio de 2011)

There are numerous reasons why the local government wanted to enhance the quality of the environment of the Main Street of Resistencia, as follows:

1. Poor image of the area and significant degradation of environment quality;
2. Excessive overhead wires and advertising canopies which threatened citizens;
3. Deteriorated infrastructure, such as drainage pipelines and storm drains, and a general lack facilities within the area;
4. Traffic congestion that interfered with shopping activities and threatened citizens as they walked by;

### 5. Noise and contamination fromsmog.

As a result of the Pedestrian Revitalization strategy, the local government has:

1. Strengthened existing commercial activities within the area and enhanced both the environment and the economy. Commerce remains the major income for Resistencia;
2. Implemented a revitalization concept that has developed the Main Street area of Greater Resistencia;
3. Improved facilities, amenities and infrastructure contributing to an enhanced environment and making the city livable and an attractive place for tourism and cultural/social life;
4. Encouraged a variety of social, art and culture activities within the area.





Figure 4: Pedestrianization strategy applied to Main Street, Resistencia by the City Council to enhance the economy and the environmental quality of the area and to establish a range of social and cultural activities.

(Source: image 1: [www.taringa.net](http://www.taringa.net); image 2: [www.neerd.com](http://www.neerd.com); image 3: [www.prensachaco.gov.ar](http://www.prensachaco.gov.ar))

An assessment of revitalization strategies, applied through regulations of the local government of Resistencia, can be summarized as follows:

1. Intensification of land use within the built-up core, where infrastructure and services have been completed, through promotion of a partnership between public and private developers to fuel the economy;
2. Implementation of an urban renewal concept in key areas of the city that has enhanced the environment and improved social and tourism activities;
3. Implementing a concept of protection of greenfield areas, especially those associated with wetlands, with improvement, re-use and infilling, and the introduction of new activities within public spaces.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

An assessment of planning practices in both countries has shown there to be similar performance; there seemed to be a lack of political will to implement the structure plan that should have framed, and been used as reference for, the coordination of other operational programmes and approaches. The Resistencia experience can be analyzed through three stages of revitalization: intensification of land use at the built-up urban core; local government achievement of economic improvement through the formation of a partnership of different stakeholders to finance the construction of towers; and the investment of Resistencia City Council in turning the main street into a pedestrian area, and enhancing the surrounding areas to offer new options for social, cultural and political activities. Both programmes implemented by the central government and revitalization approaches implemented by the local government seem to have been successful. This success could be associated with the scale of the plan and the complexity of issues being tackled and the links made between medium and short term goals.

Finally, from overall overview of current planning trends on developing and developed regions, they tend to achieve sustainable development. The approaches to revitalization have tended to be sustainable and yet, taking a wider overview of the focus taken to planning, it is fair to question whether sufficient concern has been given to the protection of the poorest in society from market failure. Given the limited development resources available, policy choices can divert investment from other major needs. As such, further thought needs to be given to whether certain plans benefit some people more than others or even benefit a few people at the expense of many more.

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