

PUBLIC POLICIES AND SPATIAL JUSTICE: THE WEST DISTRICT IN ROSARIO

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ABSTRACT. Macroeconomic policies excluded a great number of the population from formal labor market; urban policies accompanied the process of exclusion by concentrating the poor in specific sites on the edges of the city. Thus poverty nucleuses have been formed and now they are a very complex problem that hinders their inclusion to the city. The urban policies implemented, beyond they contribute to solve the housing demand and the access to some urban facilities and services, ended up promoting a process of socio-spatial fragmentation and accentuated situations of spatial injustice.

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INTRODUCTION

The polarization in the process of recent urbanization which is taking place in Rosario and its metropolitan region is the result of a complex process combining various factors, including the progressive impoverishment of large sectors of the population: locational trends of migratory movement (immigration and migration), lack of specific policies with respect to urban land, features of housing policies, trends of concentration of real estate capital, and investments in public works.

This polarization acquires features of segregation (social and functional) of urban space; segregation understood as "divisions in the social fabric and the weakening and even disappearance of social ties among different socioeconomic groups, as well as limited social mobility" [1]. And also fragmentation, with the creation of hermetically sealed spaces that establish asymmetric relations between the sectors where high-income population lives and those where lower income population resides. Social fragmentation of urban space understood as isolation, exclusion, separation and "archipelization".

This article, as part of a work in progress on the formation of these enclaves of exclusion (in this case, from the lowest-income population) in the West District of Rosario aims to investigate mainly in the role of public policies (urban, social policies) in the process of construction of the city. Official information (public housing, public works) and interviews with technical teams that carry out the implementation of social policies in the district were taken into account.

The West District in Rosario

The West District is a portion of Rosario's territory where a lot of deprived population with unsatisfied basic needs is concentrated. It is the sector of the city with the largest number of poor families. The configuration of this sector of the city clearly expresses the process of social fragmentation of urban space in Rosario, a process that has manifested itself most strongly in recent decades. Functional and social issues explain the configuration of ghettos inside this district.

The West District is one of the districts of the city's most recent development. According with its physical and functional organization, it has five main features that distinguish it clearly from the other districts of the city:

- Large rural lots, both with rural uses or without any activity (two-thirds of its whole area);
- Significant presence of informal settlements (42 of the 90 informal settlements in the city);
- Concentration of public housing neighborhoods (family and multifamily housing complexes);
- Industrial concentration along the main roads; and,
- Significant growth in open and out of law dumps.

Meanwhile, social features reveal dramatic situations, among the most striking a resurgence of problems of violence and addiction, as it is perceived from the municipal health centers. These are issues that were always present, but in recent times become increasingly visible acquiring very high levels of criticality. Cases of violence are more frequent and more severe.

The articulation between process of urbanization, public policies and social exclusion in the West District gave place to a circuit perverse: informal settlements begin to grow from the years eighty; the landowners of the orchards located in that place feel threatened; they abandoned and sold them to the municipal or provincial government; public housing complexes were built to locate population of informal settlements of others districts. In this way, little by little, sectors where only informal settlements with public housing can be found were arisen in the West District. This is the situation that is described below.

LITERATURE REVIEW

During the nineties, the concept of fragmentation was used to explain and understand the processes of physical shaping of the city. Already at the early 21st Century, Prévôt Schapira uses this concept in his analysis of the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires to explain the relationship between the spatial components of the city (physical disconnection and spatial discontinuities between different zones), the social component (exclusive and exclusionary logic of housing) and its political component (actors dispersion and fragmentation of urban regulation devices). In this way, and following with the same author, the term began to be unfolded in three big directions: the study of public policies and new modes of governance; the characterization of the economic transformations related to globalization and new business strategies and, finally, to the analysis of the relationship between social change and the evolution of the urban structure. [2].

Meanwhile, also in the last decade, Sabatini, Cáceres and Cerda, studied the Chilean cities from the term "segregation" defined "as the degree of spatial proximity or territorial agglomeration of families belonging to the same social group (defined in ethnic terms, age, religious or socioeconomic preferences, among other possibilities)." Their study concerned the spatial segregation of socioeconomic groups, noting that "the greater the size of homogeneous areas in poverty, urban and social problems for its residents also worsened ". [3]

The change of the geographical scale, the rupture of the pattern of traditional segregation, and the homogenization of areas of poverty of Latin American cities, can also be seen

developed in the work of Ramirez Saiz and Safa Barraza, who observed the trends on three Mexican metropolitan areas (multiculturalism, inequality, fragmentation, public insecurity and controversial city projects). For these authors, "at the beginning of the 21st Century, the social disorganization observed in the Mexican cities returns to be a topic of interest not only for contemporary urban research, but also for the public policies, as a challenge to governance and democracy". [4]

Also in this same direction, Gérard Althabe said that "the thought of the radical right has gone from the old assertion of ethnic hierarchies, justifying the domination, to the exaltation of the unique ethno-cultural identities, and has taken up self-serving the progressive slogan of the 'right to difference' for all ", "... , yes, but if everyone stays on the site to which it belongs". [5]

To these interpretations about the processes of urban transformations we have to add the idea of social justice in the city. In this regard, the Western District is one of the places in Rosario where situations of social injustice are recorded. Marcuse says that there are two basic forms of spatial injustice: the confinement of any social group to a limited space without having chosen -segregation, ghettoization- and unequal distribution of resources in the territory. In the Western District we find both these two situations: the denial of freedom to choose a sector of the city to live and injustice in the distribution of services. [6]

METHODOLOGY

The study focuses on an interpretive analysis of one of the six boroughs of the city of Rosario, the West District. Based on a conceptual framework on socio-spatial fragmentation., it aims to see how the various public policies (mainly social housing policies, and the complexity of their relationships, are shaping in this sector of the city an area with a high degree of physical and social vulnerability.

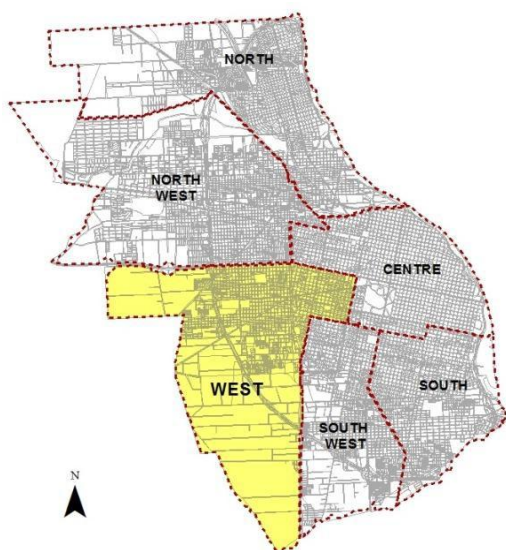
The work presented was developed with the following data sources, 1- Primary sources (official documents, maps, satellite images and aerial photographs, census statistics). 2- Secondary sources such as direct observation, interviews with key stakeholders (officials from government agencies, leaders of social

organizations, residents of different neighborhoods within the district). The study corresponds to an approximation of the type "case study" where the objects of study consist of internal sectors that make up the Western District. In those portions of the territory features related to the formulation and implementation of urban policies and the implementation of projects and their impact in shaping the Western District are analyzed. To this end, three "analysis dimensions" were developed; the first related with public policies implemented in the district (land use planning, public housing, infrastructures, mobility and public transport, socio - communitarian development, children and adolescents living conditions, socio - economic development); the second related to the transformation processes (physical - functional and socio- demographic trends) and the third works the articulation of policies in the territory (urban settings of Western District).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

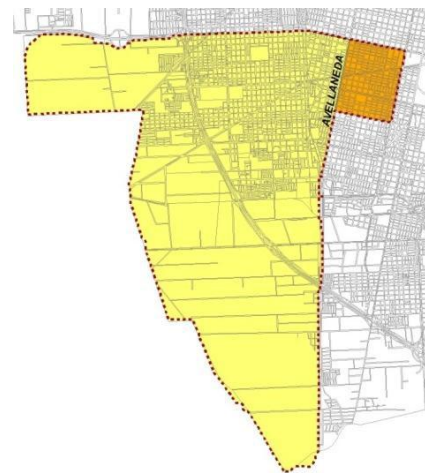
The West District: enclave of poverty in Rosario

The West District is the second district of the city according to its surface (40.42 sqkm) but most of it remains still as rural land: only one third of its surface is located within the urbanized areas (13.03 sqkm). In 2001 the district had 125,387 inhabitants (13.78% of the population of Rosario), an increasing percentage that has not been substantively altered (136,748 inhabitants in 2001, 14.28% of the total population).



Source: Bragos; Güizzo, 2016
Figure 1: Rosario's six Municipal Districts

Within the West District two sectors can be clearly identified according to their levels of consolidation and mainly to the social situation. East of Avellaneda Boulevard, a major thoroughfare that crosses north - south the city, there is an urban area bordering the southern edge of Centre District, which has similar characteristics (building, infrastructure, social composition). To the west of the Boulevard Avellaneda unfolds one of the poorest urban areas of the city concentrated in "poverty nucleus", an expressive manifestation of the process of deterioration of a significant portion of the population and also the process of socio-spatial fragmentation that has been intensifying in the last fifteen years.



Source: Bragos; Güizzo, 2016
Figure 2: The West District

In the entire town, as can be seen in following tables regarding the socio-demographic features, a clear division it is observed between the Central District and North District, both two with the best records, and the rest of the districts with the worst records.

From a demographic point of view, the Western District is distinguished by being the "youngest" city district because in 2010 had the highest percentage of younger population and consequently, the lowest percentage of older population. The birth and fertility data from the 2010 census partly explain this particular condition of "young" district.

Table 1: socio-demographic features in municipal districts of Rosario (2010)

DISTRICT	Population 0 – 4 years	Population 5 – 25 years	Population + 60 years	Birth rate	Fertility rate	Mortality rate
North	6,8 %	17,4 %	18,9 %	14,4	59,5	10,9
Centre	4,5 %	17,3 %	23,4 %	13,2	50,3	12,9
South	6,7 %	18,2 %	17,8 %	15,4	62,1	10,9
South West	8,3 %	18,9 %	12,3 %	19,5	77,4	7,9
West	9,3 %	19,0 %	11,5 %	21,8	86,6	8,3
North West	8,3 %	18,4 %	14,3 %	18,8	74,9	9,3

Source: Bragos et al., 2015. [7]

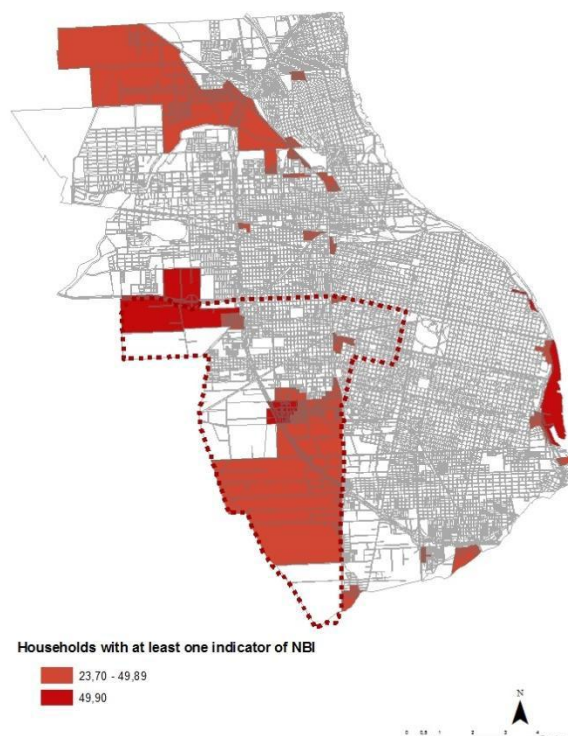
If we consider data illustrating about the social situation of the population in Rosario, the West District is highlighted by presenting:

- The highest percentages of families with unsatisfied basic needs (incomes, housing and sanitary conditions, education).
- The highest percentage of families living in overcrowding conditions.
- The highest rate of illiteracy

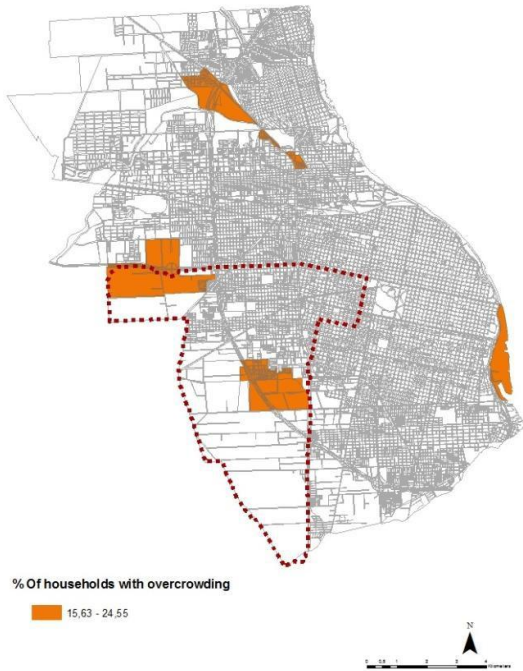
The National Census of 2010 recorded of 9.1% of families unsatisfied basic needs nationwide. The West District of the city of Rosario, in some of those “poverty nucleus” (figures 3 and 4) recorded almost 50 % of families of this condition; that means that there is a high percentage of population living in structural poverty.

The main consequence of overcrowding is the generation of an unsuitable environment for satisfactory living conditions. Overcrowding is a condition that expels the families outdoors; to an unsafety environment, especially for children and teens who “choose” to spend much of their time outdoors in more vulnerable situations. Hence it is a relevant indicator in terms of quality of life and social risk.

As regards the educational situation, it was decided to work with the rate illiteracy. Illiteracy is one of the most serious expressions of a process of social exclusion and marginalization. The policies that have been implemented to ensure its eradication and the trend towards universal basic education have affected a continuous process of reducing the rate nationwide. However, these efforts are only palliative in a context of increasing inequalities and accentuating social fragmentation.

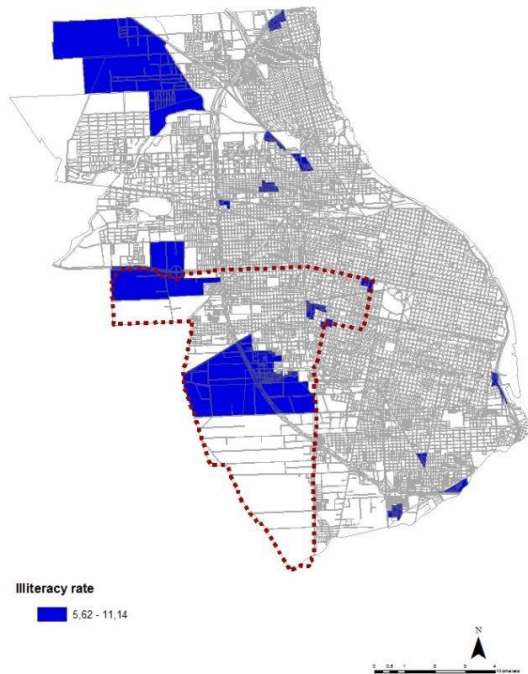


Source: Bragos; Güizzo, 2016
Figure 3: NBI households in Rosario



Source: (Güizzo, 2016)
 Figure 4: Households with overcrowding

In the West District, according to the 2010 Census, an illiteracy rate of 5.62% is recorded. This index is well above the national average of 1.9%.



Source: (Güizzo, 2016)
 Figure 5: illiteracy rate

The unfavorable situation, in which the West District is located, in relation to other districts of the city, is also related to the data of levels of education and schools:

- The large number of population of school age by number of establishments, surpassed only by the Southwest District.
- Highest percentage in the city of illiterates in relation to the total population of the district
- Highest percentage of young people who have no formal education or only incomplete primary education.

As for the housing conditions of the West District, this district is distinguished by very negative situations, with values that far exceed the values recorded in the other districts:

- The highest percentage of substandard housing relative to the total housing in the district.
- The highest percentage of households with inadequate sanitation facilities (bath and sewage).
- The highest percentage of homes without connection to the network of drinking water.
- The highest percentage of households using gas containers for cooking and heating and therefore lower percentage of households connected to the network of natural gas.
- The highest percentage of homes that have deficient structural conditions.
- The highest values of overcrowding in homes.

Table 2: housing conditions in municipal districts of Rosario (2010)

DISTRICT	Housing without infrastructure	Housing without drinking wáter	Housing with gas cylinder	Very poor housing	Poor housing	overcrowded housing
North	7,0	4,0	28,0	1,6	9,2	2,6
Centre	1,1	0,6	5,6	0,1	1,3	0,4
South	9,1	4,6	33,2	1,6	11,7	2,9
Southwest	14,6	7,0	50,0	2,4	17,2	5,1
West	19,2	9,8	55,6	3,5	22,0	7,6
Northwest	11,0	5,7	41,8	2,8	17,1	5,1

Source: Bragos et al., 2015. [7]

The situation of poverty that is concentrated in the Western District of Rosario is closely followed in this ranking of pauperization by its neighbor South District. These situations of neglect and poverty are concentrated, in turn, in particular sites, called "squatter settlements"; nonexclusive situation of the West District, but that is part of everyday life, as stated from the Municipal Center District: "Although all districts have squatter settlements, this district is crossed by all the problems, from infrastructure issues up safety, cultural, water, housing issues and land usurpation where we had to mediate although we are not the justice ...".

The Western District has been, and still is, the sector of the city that has the highest values of these situations of poverty, where more than 40% of the district's population lives in squatter settlements.

- One third of the squatter settlements of Rosario are located in the West District.

- 45% of houses located in squatter settlements of Rosario are concentrated in the West District.
- One third of the population living in squatter settlements of Rosario is located in the West District.
- One third part of the area occupied by squatter settlements of Rosario is located in the West District.

The most vulnerable sector of the West District is also distinguished by the escalation of situations of violence of various kinds, from the familiar to the linked to criminal economies, "here in Villa Banana, we recently had the rape of a father to his daughter and all family conflict that triggers, people killed in armed clashes by drug issues, so I say that the West is a complex territory", says a civil servant working at the headquarters of the Municipal District Center.

Table 3: squatter settlements in Rosario (2008)

District	Squatter settlements	Houses in squatter settlements	Population in squatter settlements	Surface of squatter settlements (hectares)
North	11	3.664	18.320	46,0 He
Centre	4	700	3.500	9,5 He
South	16	6.070	30.642	78,5 He
South West	13	4.197	21.679	54,0 Ha
West	28	16.366	53.174	108,5 Ha
North West	21	4.960	38.853	62,5 Ha

Source: Castagna, Woelflin & Raposo [1]

Public Works Policies in the West District

In the analysis of locational trends of municipal budget for public works in the West District it was taken into account:

- Public spaces (large urban parks, squares and promenades);
- Buildings (administration, culture, health and social buildings);
- Infrastructure (drainage and gas);
- Roads (new streets, pavements)

The amounts approved by the City Council for the execution of public works projects in the West District during the last decade of 21st Century grew significantly, starting from 0.4 % of the total amount for the entire city between 1984 and 1989 up to 29.3 % in the period 2000 - 2003. From occupying the last place among the six districts, West District was positioned in the first place at the beginning of the new millennium. From then it began to fall to a fourth place in the 2008 - 2011 period, getting only 14.5 % of the total approved amount for public works.

During the period 1996 - 1999 and 2000 - 2003, the West District reached a leading position in terms of public works authorized by City Council: 21,8% of the amount approved for the entire city in the first, and 29.3% in the second . The amounts allocated for the headquarters of the West District Municipal Center and the new Emergency Hospital explain the high values obtained in those two periods. The West District Municipal Center was the first building built especially to house the municipal offices in accordance with the Municipal Modernization and Decentralization Program, launched by the municipal administration. The site chosen for its construction was the heart of one of the most degraded areas of the city: the squatter settlement known by the name of "Villa Banana". For its part, the new Emergency Hospital is a health center for the entire city (including nearby towns) located at the northeast end of the district, more consolidated and more away from the most vulnerable and degraded sites the district.

Among the most significant works budgeted for the West District they are:

- Period 1984 - 1989: extension of networks of infrastructure services, restoration of hierarchical road system; new public spaces (West Park) and housing for the Qom Community.
- Period 1990 - 1995: the emphasis was placed on improving the infrastructural

network of the district (drainage in various neighborhoods) and construction of new facilities for recreation.

- Period 1996 - 1999: continuation with the infrastructure networks started by the previous administration. The construction of public housing in different neighborhoods of the West District is also highlighted. Iconic works that will distinguish this administration started: the West District Municipal Center and new Emergency Hospital.
- Period 2000 - 2003: continues with the extension of infrastructure networks, the completion of works in public spaces which started in previous administrations and the emblematic work of new emergency Hospital.
- Period 2004 - 2007: construction of buildings of community facilities; It continues with infrastructure and public and recreational spaces, mainly the new emergency Hospital.

Municipal social policies in the West District

The participatory budget (2001) and "neighborhood boards" (2013) are two of the devices offered by the municipality, with the purpose of defining actions and projects to solve problems of the district along with the neighbors.

Participatory budget

The participatory budget (PB) is the mechanism of participation which is used to incorporate the debate among neighbors, seeking the agreement as a tool that allows to allocate a part (very reduced by the way) of the municipal budget to the implementation of proposals and projects that neighbors considered necessary for their neighborhood. The dynamics of the participatory budget is defined in each one of six districts within a general orientation for all of them.

The projects are discussed and formulated by the neighbors in weekly meetings being held at the headquarters of the Municipal District Center. Due to the large gaps of the population living in the most vulnerable sites in the district, most of the projects have to do with actions and works that should be resolved with current budgets. So, works that are not considered in current actions of the local government such as the street lighting, traffic lights, cleaning and ditching, are formulated by neighbors as participatory projects; and these projects have to be supported to ensure its realization. As the

projects are selected according to the number of votes obtained, neighbor stakeholders have to "activate" for these minor public works projects.

In the past six years, 170 projects were included in the wet District, and they correspond to the four sub-areas in which the district is divided. The required works included in the projects correspond to improvement of streets (55 projects), infrastructure (49 projects), public space (45 projects) and equipment (21 projects). There is a considerable delay in the implementation of projects, although annually the appropriate headings are assigned.

Neighborhood boards

The neighborhood boards are intended as a mechanism that allows "the State go to the territory", as an official of the Municipal District Center explained it. According to the information provided, "there are boards in other municipal districts, but all of them work differently; "they were created as a democratic device of the municipal State to have a direct contact with neighbors of vulnerable and more complex urban sectors". Neighborhood boards appear in those sectors of the city where a large number of problems are registered; problems that define a complex situation to be solved and which require another form of articulation between the neighbor and the local government.

The neighborhood boards meet monthly in an institution of the neighborhood (club, school, community center); all the stakeholders of the district are invited, governmental and non-governmental, to discuss their concerns. There are five boards in the West District, in neighborhoods of public housing and squatter settlements: Villa Banana, Villa Pororo, barrio Santa Lucía, barrio Toba and La Lagunita.

Occupations or seizures are one of the most frequent and most recent topics to be attended. And on this there is a positive resolution (hitherto not very known) of one of these cases that corresponds to the settlement of "Los Humitos". A dispute between usurpers and landlord emerged. After municipal mediation it was agreed the sale of the land to the occupants through an affordable payment. According with the agreement, a new land subdivision was defined in order to correctly locate the existing housing. With this reorganization a larger number of plots were got and then offered to other residents of the area. This is the kind of the problems with

which the public sector has to face in these complex and vulnerable areas. Fragmented territories that demand concentrated and integral public intervention to give solution to those demands.

CONCLUSION: BUILDING A FRAGMENTED CITY

The most vulnerable sectors of the West District, some new, others increasingly dense, are not the result of chance. They are the result of an economic policy that does not include large portions of society, despite the policies deployed mainly from the national government to improve the living conditions of these sectors of the population.

As seen, state intervention is significant by the multiplicity of actions carried forward -and that not all were exposed in this work, among them inclusion policies such as labor capacitation, health, cultural and recreational and mediation in land conflicts- as is also significant the progressive deterioration of the socio-environmental situation.

From different experiences of construction of the so-called "social housing", today there is a wide recognition about the negative effects of public housing complexes, in particular for sectors of the population of lower resources that emerge in peripheral areas, segregated from the rest of the city. Social costs in terms of residential segregation arise from the construction of such neighborhoods that end up being dysfunctional. This seems to be the situation that was described in the West District of Rosario.

The complexity, size and diversity of problems that occur in urban areas such as the West District, demand for joint actions of the three powers of the state. In this regard, said an official of the Municipal District Center: "One must understand that there is a basic need and a right that are not guaranteed and the state - national, provincial and municipal- never gets to solve in part because it does not work in an associated way. We are in an urban sector of the second or third largest city in the country and where, in addition, there is an influx of people from other cities, other provinces and other countries city. We have communities that come from Paraguay, Peru and Bolivia and as they do not find a solution to their poor living conditions in their home come to this city."

But the confluence of policies in a portion of the territory is not such or its effects do not

result in the construction of a quality urban space, when they are independently formulated from each other, despite the intention of approaching from different angles a problem so complex. In this regard, M -F. Prévôt Schapira (2001) points out that often the notion of urban space fragmentation is associated with the creation of particular sites where social policies are unfold whose target are specifically the more poor communities.

The concentration of housing for very low income population does not seem to help social inclusion, beyond offering a concrete answer to housing demand. However it has been insisted on this policy. The challenge is then how to intervene on these degraded and segregated sites of the city, how to improve the quality of public space, which urban interventions are, needed to incorporate these sites to the rest of the city. And all of these in the frame of a strategy comprehensive approach in these marginal territories.

Acknowledgement

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