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Architecture Construction City

Abstract

Diver-Cidade.

Another approach to the urbanization of Brazilian 'informal settlements'

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«It is not a slum problem, it's a city problem» Cobbett



The work here presented focuses of a specific form of 'informal settlement' in Brazil, they differ from the favelas for their initial intentions and organization. In the Brazilian academic discourse they are addressed as occupation because the organized invasion of empty public or private land by a conspicuous number of people following a leading group.

It is widespread known the amount of researches made on every typology of 'informal settlement', from Indian slums to Chinese 'urban cities'. The variety of points of view is wide as well as the professionals involved; the dynamics ruling those areas can be analyzed from heterogeneous fields. Although, despite this conspicuous amount of data and researches, the

'informal settlements' worldwide do not decrease in numbers, only in Brazil it actually increases by 5% a year [I URBFAVELAS, 2014].

This work was motivated by the paradox between the big amount of work done to solve the problem and its apparent failure. The list of unsuccessful projects is unfortunately long and it includes the work of lazy municipalities or active university professors. The reasons are diverse, but the work here presented will not focus on these previous attempts.

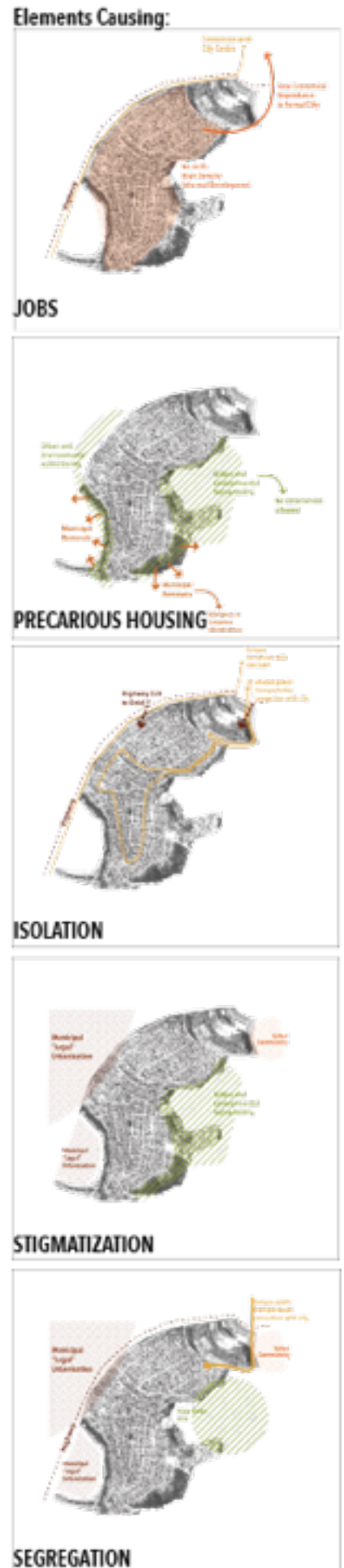
Without being pretentious, this thesis tries to seek an alternative in the approach.

Once started collecting data and information about the subject, the complexity increased exponentially. Every time I wanted to find a solution to whichever problem, more elements would come up adding complexity to the system. I then realized I was looking at the 'state of the art' with the wrong lenses, I was looking for a solution to a general blurred problem. Using Alejandro Aravena's words «there is nothing worse than answering well the wrong question» [TED, 2011], which means not only to consider the problem's components but to rephrase them, to question the formulation of the problem itself.

Globally there is a trend in trying to find the one recipe to cure every sufferings; cumulative theories that approximate all the differentiations to one possible answer. Not only nationally, but even internationally, grouping every type of 'informal settlements' in one big definition. This work tries to show how generalizing the discourses causes political impacts, as well as socio-spatial consequences.

The approach tries to include the complexity of contemporary cities by employing a multi-scalar vision, or as Brenner and Schmid write «[to] interpret the urban as a multiscalar process of sociospatial transformation» [Brenner, Schmid, 2015, pag 165]. To simplify the analysis the easiest approach was the zoom in, which is not a formal structuralism but a real attempt to completeness. The global economical choices have impacts on the local business and everyday life, as well as the historical development of the State or the town has feedbacks on the socio-spatial organization.

To conclude, instead of being a problem solver, the role I assume to have is the one of problem setter. The aim of the thesis is to show that once the problem is structured including its complexity, its facets and peculiarities, the solution comes along [Governa, 2013]. Instead of focusing on an arbitrary



solution based on approximated assumptions, the work tries to focus more on understanding the reality to pose the problem in such a way that the solution will be the last step. The aim here is not to reduce the importance of a good design and the role of the designer, but to try a different approach for the design process, being aware that the formulation of the problem influences its possible solutions.

The work is divided in three main parts: (i) the understanding of trends at different scale and the setting of methodology; (ii) an attempt to rephrase the problem on a specific area called Parque Oziel in Campinas; and finally (iii) the proposal of an action plan. The action plan is a list of suggestions coming from new problem setting, looking at the area as a complex system.

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