

The (non)planning in the Global South: (re)thinking a critique to urbanism through the theory of dependence

Thiago Canettieri

Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

thiago.canettieri@gmail.com

There are several differences in the patterns of urbanization between the countries of central capitalism and the peripherals ones, in special, the Global South. The differences are due the specific inclusion of each country in the global capitalism. The theory of dependence and post-colonialism developed this idea. One of these ideas that seem particularly special to understand is the theory of overexploitation of work in the periphery of capitalism. This line of thinking believes that international value transfer is the reason for our underdeveloped and peripheral country condition. These losses, or value transfers, have historically been offset by internal exploitation of the workforce in several expedients along the time of work favoring the accumulation of capital, either by reducing capitalists spending with constant capital or allowing reduction in variable capital. In regarding to the latter, I emphasize that there are various expedients that workers are exposed out of the work-capital (whether formal or informal) that end up favoring the accumulation; among many (such as children's informal work) housing self-constructions can be interpreted in this sense. And then is possible to understand the relationship with the urbanization phenomenon in these dependent countries. In the article I intend to discuss the relationship with the "lack" of urban planning of in certain areas of underdeveloped cities like a intentional strategy of both the government and capital, in order to ensure workforce at low cost to the appropriation of capital. From this perspective one can understand the economical factor that determines the existence of such landscape recurring in the peripheral countries: the slums and informal settlements. This form of housing provision reveals capital's need, in underdeveloped countries, to maintain part of population living at low costs as a means to guarantee the low expenditure with workforce, maintaining a network of informal economy. Such a process is named by

the Brazilian geographer Milton Santos as the inferior sector of the urban economy that in fact is essential and complementary to the higher sector. Important to note that the dichotomy between the spatial expressions of class society in the underdeveloped countries as formal city and informal city is, in fact, a relation not of duality. It represents a unity of opposites under the aegis of capital accumulation movement. Thus, we must avoid any interpretation which suggests the possibility of gradually transform informal city into the formal city, as if modernization does not carry with it the necessity to maintain the spatial expression of class segregation. I seek to emphasize in this paper the structural necessity of specific expression of peripheral capitalism in keeping such spatial forms such precarious housing like slums and the self-constructed houses in order to guarantee capital accumulation. With this observation I suggest that does not exist a lack of planning - as if what is lacking in our cities is more territorial planning. Cities are thought exactly in way to reproduce the informal city; are conceived as segregated spaces where part of people should be guaranteed to reproduce themselves as workforce at very low cost. By doing so, I seek, in the article, to question about the implied notion of planning that is recurrent on the political discourse of urbanism. I reinforce the necessity of a critique to urbanism as a way to understand what is called the development of cities and the academic discourse on it. It seems that the theory of urbanism should incorporate the various developments of the theory of dependence in order to understand how the specificities of the movement of capital in Global South is an essential element to take into consideration in urban analysis. The understanding of overexploitation through the theory of dependence allows to identify the material conditions of housing that the Brazilian working class is subject to: urban and structural precariousness of the houses are the expressions of an overexploited labor force, and the expression of urban dispossession as a strategy of capital accumulation in the global periphery.