(Informal) Urban Expansion —

Anticipation and Preparation.

Tikvah Breimer 2015, May 28.


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1. Introduction Speaker

2. Hype cycle: containment, and a hindsight

3. Working definition for anticipation
1. Introduction Speaker
Anthropologist
(exploratory, interdisciplinary, paradigm analysis)

Specialist Land Management and Policy
(Informal urban expansion and land markets)
This is my own ongoing exploration
Based on study Central/Latin American land markets and policies
and my humble take on it

See what you can take from it
Relevant for the object of your study

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2. Hype cycle: containment
Every concept has a hype cycle
## Cycles of concepts

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**Development professional’s views**
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#### Development professional’s views

- Idea is being talked up
- A lot of energy is going into development
- Still prominent but energy going out
- Strong feeling that it was not such a good idea
- Mature reflection, seen in perspective

#### Local Government view

- Development is ongoing but with reduced enthusiasm
- Energy is waning but some momentum remains
- Reflection on past mistakes
- Seeking new ideas and approaches

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Development professional’s views

but does it make sense?

Local Government view

In the questionnaire
You got a “feel” of the hype cycle of the dominant paradigm of containment
Containment programmes can be recognised by policies and land use planning that:

- limit development of land outside the defined city boundary ("anti-sprawl", green belt, growth boundary)

- encourage infill development and redevelopment inside the urban area.

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Indeed, the containment paradigm is now *enshrined in land use planning* in many countries

And *Sprawl* – has many *negative connotations.*
Angel, Parent, Civco and Blei 2012, p. 5

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The pressing question for local government is:

“Does containment make sense?”

Breimer 2014
“There is great reluctance to engage with the prospects of urban expansion: cities are already threateningly large...”

Angel 2012, p. 4, Planet of Cities
Yet in urban areas in countries where urbanization is still in full swing...
Faced with such pressures, in reality and practice local government is incapable of protecting surrounding areas, and informal land markets flourish beyond the city boundary anyway and continue to damage the environment

Angel et al. 2011, Angel 2012, Allen et al. 2006
Angel et al. (2011) put forward an alternative paradigm:

In contexts where demographic expansion is still in full swing, a more realistic strategy is at least minimal preparation for sustainable growth and expansion of cities – rather than to constrict and contain them.

Angel et al. 2011
A hindsight
1980s 1990s : we witnessed an unprecedented acceleration of the urbanisation processes worldwide
“By far the most common approach of governments had been that of ‘muddling through’”

Furthermore

“the reliance on western models of urban planning and containment has resulted in a catastrophic failure to manage the growth of cities in many low- and middle-income countries.”

Examples such policy:

**Discourage sprawl by underinvesting in planning**

a network of arterial roads
water reservoirs
and water and sewer trunk lines
**in the periphery**

To make it **difficult** if not impossible for private sector to supply plots with adequate services.

Angel 2012, p. 61
But: preparation for urban expansion is important not only from the perspective of those who must live in human misery for years, nor merely from an ecological perspective.

It is also a pressing issue from a local government’s financial and socio-political point of view.

Fernandes 2011, Abramo Ed. 2003, Smolka and Cenecorta 1999
Opportunity costs of regularisation are high
Cost of correction ("reparation") of an irregular settlement is 2.7 times the cost of planned areas – Estimation for Bogota, (in Aristizabal and Gomez 2001 in Smolka 2003)
And, in a perverse way, a reactive approach (regularising and urbanising afterwards)

leads to a vicious cycle of informality in the land market. (the promise of regularisation, effect of that expectation on the land market)

Fernandes 2011, Abramo Ed. 2003, Smolka and Cenecorta 1999
The call for ‘anticipation’ of urbanization has been gaining momentum.
2015 – 2100: demographic prognoses
The pace of urbanisation is very high still in developing countries, but not as high as it used to be.
Professionals express new hope that actually for the coming decades local governments in developing countries and upcoming economies have the opportunity to be ahead of expansion, with proactive policy frameworks.

3. Working definition for anticipation
Local/regional governments in developing countries and upcoming economies face a huge challenge in terms of adequate and up to date data on the Peri-Urban landmarket, as a basis from which to make anticipatory policy decisions.

Allen et al. 2006
But: anticipation must be more than just monitoring.

Breimer 2014
Working definition for ‘anticipation’ in own ongoing research:

Anticipation refers to the question of how urbanization that is still forthcoming in the PUI can be anticipated through analysing the current spatial structures/patterns and land market dynamics, and trying to predict the direction of this urban expansion.

Breimer 2014
Thereby *the biggest challenge* is actually to **understand** the *land markets*, actions and negotiations that are taking place here and **being (en)able(d)** to intervene into these dynamics.

Breimer 2014
It is in the Peri-Urban Interface (PUI) that the new slums of tomorrow arise.

Breimer 2014
Peri – Urban Interface (PUI)

The fringe of the city
where both rural and urban features tend to coexist
in environmental,
socio-economic
and institutional terms

and the landmarket is characterised
by high expectation on the land.

Development Planning Unit University College London DPU 2006

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It is in the Peri-urban land market that we witness the highest speed of urbanization, often in margins of the law and planning, (or even in administrative and jurisdictional limbo) and with very high profitability.

It is because of this high levels of profitability, that we find very proactive actors here.

Allen et al. 2006
Breimer 2014

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Understanding the ground... Metropolitan area of Recife, and informal urban expansion in the fringe of Jaboatao, North East Brazil.
Analysing geo-spatial (satellite, aerial) imagery…
Would it be possible to identify these dynamics?

Metropolitan area of Recife, and informal urban expansion in the fringe of Jaboatao, North East Brazil.

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Guiding principles
and ensuring the following up of these principles
through land instruments,

may be a lot more helpful
than putting a lot of energy
in a very detailed blue print
of a plan for these areas of expansion in the PUI.

Knowing the kind of land market we want will help us know
How to undertake anticipatory action.
Most urgently the quest should be for preparatory/land market interventions that ensure

for the poor:
at least
access to affordable serviced land
and access to employment opportunities/ the city

and for the city/region:
permit and structure a sustainable growth and expansion of urban areas.

Breimer 2014

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Some ideas seem to get buried in history, but surface again later

Peter Ward, already in 1983 - frustrated with the failure of site-and-services schemes

Started to engage and encourage a strategic and more imaginative approach

(studying the unique land tenure arrangements in Mexican cities)
He argued, we may find, that **when we analyse informal settlement processes in far greater detail** paying attention to a specific city’s informal land market

There may be opportunities offered in the existing legal and fiscal structure

For intervention to achieve planning goals

In order to broaden the influence over low-cost land development processes.

- even in “informal interventions” to let informal developers/speculators contribute better to the city we want.

Ward 1983, p. 35, 47-52

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For teaching/training involved in exploring and compiling a menu of notable (preperatory/fiscal/legal) land instruments that tackle concerns over informal land markets in the PUI, coupled with international cases of how to implement them; thereby drawing inspiration from the Central/Latin American region, both in the past – failed attempts or successes – and in contemporary experimentation.

Breimer 2014
Q&A

https://instagram.com/urbanbeyondthecity/

A thinkpiece put forward in run up to Habitat III:
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