

## **PLANNING IN A MORE GLOBALIZED AND COMPETITIVE WORLD**

Mexican Chapter of the International Society of City and Regional Planners  
and Desarrollo Territorial Sustentable (DTS in Spanish) (Sustainable Territorial Development)  
for the 39<sup>th</sup> International Urban planners Congress in Cairo, Egypt,  
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This participation incorporates some points of view given by Mexican urban planners in the Seminar on the topic, held in the headquarters of Desarrollo Territorial Sustentable A.C. in preparation for the 39<sup>th</sup> International Urban planners Congress in Mexico City, on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2003.

There are many ways of approaching such a wide and complex topic, which this International Congress addresses today. The intention is to invite you to explore the globalization as another stage in the development of the world history, with the inevitable contradictions that make up the challenges to city planners.

Challenges that are inserted in a globalized world, we will have to face them for the benefit of each of our nations. The proposal we make is from the standpoint of a developing country from the south, where the globalization sometimes generates effects opposing economic development.

Much has been commented on the negative impacts that this phenomenon, based on an economic model, has on identity and into the poorest social strata of the nations, especially of those in developing process. However, little thought is given to the need, importance and positive effects arising from a globalized city.

During the UN International Conference on Human Settlements, "Habitat", which under the title of " An urbanized world " took place in Istanbul, Turkey in 1996, cities were presented as growth machines. Today, the trend to urbanization remains, though interlaced with globalization; and the role of the cities must be of " agents of change "; changing to current reality.

Some analysts emphasize the need to acknowledge that even cities in the third world should be taken as a source and driving force of employment, and in general, the best mean for increasing living standards for the majority of the inhabitants.

Along these lines, the concept of globalization we referred to, implies a particular growth in the cities, whose characteristics in general terms are, among others: concentration of the population, enterprises, services and institutions; -and an agile, efficient and complete system of communications; particularities which makes evident its description as global.

As we know, these characteristics don't appear easily, therefore, there are only a few cities at world level which we can considered as globalized.

The Globalization as part of a world market, described as: a process of integration of national economies within world markets; is not only an economic phenomenon, it includes different structures and social, technological, political and cultural processes with relevant effects on the territory.

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It is convenient to distinguish two kinds of globalization: the fundamental one, which takes place in the sphere of production and the one belonging to the sphere of consumption.

Territorial planning as a career is affected by globalization. It can be said that the cultural identity of the cities is disappearing due to globalization, especially when they don't have historical background, and import of international cultural patterns is speeded up where there are already no differences in globalized cities.

One of the tasks of the planners is to preserve major values of the cities and citizens' culture, and turn into an advantage the increasing competition among cities, through schemes of regional planning that have as principle: the suitable shared exploitation and keeping up of regional resources, which allows sets of cities to play a complementary role without inhibiting their potential.

City planning takes place at local level, city planners collaborate: with other colleagues who are facing the process of globalization, with cities' networks, with planners' networks, with citizens' networks, and with federal governments as links among local governments, where the capacity of the local authority to face settlements patterns, design and production of the globalized enterprises is lost in inequality

The most relevant projects for the countries with poor economies and their cities are those promoted by multilateral banks, that are among others:

- The fight to lessen poverty vs. generating productive activities.
- Resources aimed towards a welfare policy with international indebtedness.

Nevertheless globalization shows firstly in the economic activity, mainly in industrial activity and is identified by the fields and location of the industries with bigger rate growth and productivity in a town and a country.

The implant of components and characteristics of the global net have effect on planning and managing cities, and on the infrastructure and services systems.

The mobile telephone system started 15 years ago, it not only modified the mobility of people but also the wireless infrastructure. The hydraulic, public health, gas, electricity, solid waste networks infrastructures have been privatized and therefore have modified the connections of use and appropriation of public urban space. The hotel service has been modified; hotel operation has been transformed by global enterprises linked to air transportation or sea transportation such as cruise enterprises. Other modified fields are goods and freight transportation.

In our planning work in developing countries, we must form a united local and regional front in regards to: economic, technological and environmental large scale transformations, through becoming aware and taking a stand concerning:

- Environment protection and appropriation of natural resources with extraterritoriality, modifying and preparing the local legislation and its insertion into the international legislation.
- Handling of capitals that appropriate themselves of resources, and productive companies that extract profits and concentrate them in globalized enterprises.
- The acquisition of marketing companies by big consumer chains through new schemes, which allow current trade to be better organized and competitive.

## **Places where Globalization takes place:**

The city globalization nodes in Mexico show up in:

- Production framework, in cities with greater industrial activity, in the case of Mexico, the automobile industry stands out and is focused on the USA market; therefore the plants are located in cities with access to this country.
- Consumption framework, it shows up: in cities with large population, in regional services such as airport systems, basic hydraulic and public health infrastructure, solid waste , energy (gas), telecommunication networks recently privatized or in the process of privatization; on the other hand in supplying and trading in cities with purchasing power, through opening of franchises (Starbucks) and shopping malls (Wall Mart), banks, amusement parks which have made effect on major cities and regions.

Among the effects is the dynamism of the economy for constructing new facilities and opening of new developments, which offer “Better” fulfillment of needs, which in turn displace the previous “inefficient” forms, resulting in drawing resources towards the central city.

The impact of globalization on the urban scheme of developing countries is evident. An specific case is the program: “100 ciudades” (100 cities) promoted by the Federal Government in the 90's; In Sonora, (a city in Mexico's northern border) in Hermosillo state, a Ford export assembly plant was established in the east sector of the city and widening of Luis Donaldo Colosio boulevard in the western sector of the city, favoring a booming real estate business in the city, which gave room for establishing a number of franchises in the city, and modifying the urban image and restated the role of local capitals. The same thing happened in Culiacan, Sinaloa with the Three Rivers project and in Mexico City with Santa Fe project.

## **Changes in social and urban morphology, caused by globalization.**

The new social and economic actors appropriate themselves of the urban space, supported by banks and multinational agencies or companies of global nature: the Mexican case with the commercial opening and the economic problems allowed Mexican banks to be acquired by international banks. Marketing product and food through wholesale and local markets switched to a volume marketing system, self service style ( Costco and Wall Mart). Privatization of infrastructure and services has generated new actors in the life of the cities.

Marginal and polarized forms are characterized by fragmentation in the cities with extreme poverty, where great inequalities become evident; where privatization of infrastructures and services leave out poor areas in the cities from minimal levels of attention, which normally has an effect on political citizens' awareness and high rates of urban insecurity.

Due to the high rate of inequality, the aforementioned has required programs to mitigate poverty with the participation of local, state and Federal Governments.

It is convenient to acknowledge that citizens have surpassed governments, the solidarity participation, as in earthquakes or catastrophes where networks of NGO and Civil Society Organizations (OSC in Spanish) take a leading role.

### **The floating population in globalized cities.**

- Large masses of population settle themselves in the metropolitan areas of: Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Puebla, Tijuana and Cd. Juárez (29)
- Exceeding the response capacity of governments and society.
- The mobility of population and goods within the area of influence of these metropolis is complex, generating imbalance and control conflicts to the government.
- The extension of productive activities and changes in labor markets.
- Wage-earning jobs are concentrated in multinational capital companies, which at any rate are limited.
- The era of wage-earning jobs ends, and self-employment increases, along with increase in tertiary sector and trade in public spaces.

#### Alternative models:

- Local and sustainable development and appraisal of social networks for a globalization "from the bottom to the top".
- In the Mexican case it stands out the role played by the urban popular movement and some civil organizations that have roots in specific communities, as in the case of groups linked to the Habitat Coalition and the civil participation councils in the state of Jalisco.

In terms of territorial planning, it's necessary to point out that for many activities, as the informal trade, the existence of rules of formal behavior are inconvenient, but these factors of uncertainty affect the real estate market and require certainty for the future of their investments, which they can only acquire by means of physical planning with clear rules or with corruption mechanic where the authorities themselves protect and monitor "their investments "

On the other hand there are examples on how Mexico can break away from the traditional public-private relationship, beyond the purely regulatory planning, these are:

- Active participation and shared budget: Mexico City Government (GDF in Spanish)1997-2000 in which 31 partial programs were made with the participation of the population in the diagnosis, proposals and projects for improvement of their neighborhoods.
- Agencies of Urban Development, as instrument of a joint public-private responsible participation, in the framework of the program HABITAT from the federal Government in the *Secretaria de Desarrollo Social* (SEDESOL in Spanish)(Social Development Ministry).
- Program for improvement of impoverished neighborhoods, with support from the World Bank, also from the program HABITAT from SEDESOL, applied successfully in: Juárez, Chihuahua and León, Guanajuato.
- Instruments of participation: such as: public-private performance systems in GDF, based on the legislation of urban development, it is the only state that allows this modality, under which important road works are being done, such as bridges linking Santa Fe with Av. Centenario in the western area of Metropolitan Mexico City.
- Performance accountability areas to modify the location of soil use density, within the limits pointed out in the urban planning instruments.
- Transference of potentials, as instrument of promotion for restoring patrimonial monuments.
- New forms of government behavior for cities with the participation of several levels of government.
- COMETHA (Gobierno Metropolitano Asociacionismo municipal) (Metropolitan Government, Municipality Association)
- New planning scenarios.

Instruments of compensation: between states, between environment and urbanized area, between socioeconomic levels in urban areas.

Another planning scheme in which Mexico is progressing is regional development, in relation to globalization. As an example of this, we mention the following project:  
Intercontinental port system Chetumal – Salina Cruz

Mexico's geographical position in the central meridian of the world and in the border between the countries of the south and north make it be the ideal link between: the countries of Asia Pacific Rim and the European Community, and between the developed countries of North America and the other Latin American countries.

The current technology allows merchandise trade between the Pacific and Atlantic through ships reaching ports on both shores and transporting goods in containers from one ocean to the other by means of a railroad.

This proposal considers the port of Salina Cruz in Tehuantepec Isthmus, a future port in Chetumal and a railroad track linking both ports. From these ports goods would be shipped to the European Community and the countries of Asia Pacific Rim .

The bay in Chetumal is a natural shelter and requires basic infrastructure works, beginning with dredging of a channel for ships with deep draft as a first step.

The railroad track to Chetumal could be extended south to connect with Central America countries.

The project would allow building an assembly plant corridor in the southeast, which would help ease the tension, political, economic and social unbalance facing the region.

Facing the new millennium it would be the most modern sea route between European and Asian countries.

It would turn Quintana Roo into the international geographic center of the Maya world with countless benefits for tourism.

It would be the core project, which would trigger the integral development of the south east of the country.

From the standpoint of safety, it would be a very valuable tool in providing certainty to our southern border, and on the other hand, strengthening communications with Central America countries.

The country would have a valuable tool for strengthening its trade relations with our North America partners, with our European Community partners, our brother countries of Central and South America, and Asian countries in the Pacific Rim.

The railroad axis that would join the Chetumal ports and the international trade treaties which Mexico has executed with Canada and United States as well as with members of the European Community.

## **Conclusions**

As a conclusion we pointed out that in a globalized world, the cities will have to innovate and to compete for the best utilization of their resources.

The key elements for innovation are the talent of the people and the capital, to attract them it is fundamental the education, public services and quality of life.

The economic future of the countries will continue to depend mainly on the efficient performance of the economic activities in the cities and its area of influence.