House / street, the wall to overthrow, the border to think about.

Identity, community, life and planning.

Álvaro Vázquez-Esparza

Spain

Introduction

The XXI century presents a new global context in the whole world that also requires to find new solutions and policies to face all this challenges and threats. The globalisation, the fast growing of some emergent countries ,and the consequent urbanisation of the society in a big scale highlight not only the differences between countries and continents, but also the differences inside the people who is living in a same place.   Diverse phenomena like immigration and cultural shock, the creation of megacities where displaced people accumulate in slum areas, lacking reasonable healt and hygiene conditions, etc. That situation, requires a deep study that allow the authorities and relevant associations to detect the problems in each place, in order to develop proper policies of justice and equality. All the administrations must work together for that aim, they should plan what is the way to reduce the urban divide, the best manner to guarantee a standard life conditions for everyone promoting a economic development taking into consideration de social conditions of the population and the possibilities of each place and its habitants; a right sustainable development not only in an

1

environmental level but also in terms of tolerance, respect between communities, cultures and social stratum.

1 Urban Shelter Design Development

In economic terms, the level of urbanization in a country is directly connected with its wealth.

 According to UN-Habitat *"cities can make countries rich because the high concentration of people enables industry to produce goods more cheaply. High population densities in cities reduce transaction costs, make public spending on infrastructure and services cheaper, and make the generation and diffusion of knowledge easier. In turn, these factors attract the fast growing sectors of an economy into cities.*"(State of the world's cities 2010/2011), in general terms, it is true that urbanization is a key factor when it comes to industry development in a country that can play in a global context. That situation is more serious in developing countries because the lack of infrastructures that connect all the territory, allow that all the people and industry tend to be concentrated in cities, so the city is the best place to set up and grow because it can offer : market connections, manpower, logistics and developing possibilities. That's the origin of megacities, where lots of people try to go to find new job possibilities, creating huge populated areas that cannot afford all this human pressure. In any case, the current world economy is working throughout cities, urban economic areas o economic corridors more than through countries.

   From 2008 the urban population is large than the rural one, than unusual fact until now is going to continue increasing in the future until the 70% of urban population in 2050. In the next table the current situation and the prognostication for the next decades.

Level of urbanization per region and tipping points urban vs. rural

Region	Tipping point before 2010 (year)	2010 urban (%)	Tipping point after 2010 (year)	2050 urban (%)
World		50.6		70
MORE DEVELOPED REGIONS	before 1950	75		86
Europe	before 1950	72.6		83.8
Eastern Europe	1963	68.8		80
Northern Europe	before 1950	84.4		90.7
Southern Europe	1960	67.5		81.2
Western Europe	before 1950	77		86.5
LESS DEVELOPED REGIONS		45.3	2020	67
Africa		40	2030	61.8
Sub-Saharan Africa		37.3	2032	60.5
Eastern Africa		23.7		47.6
Northern Africa	2005	52		72
Southern Africa	1993	58.8		77.6
Western Africa		44.6	2020	68
Asia		42.5	2023	66.2
Eastern Asia		48.5	2013	74.1
South-central Asia		32.2	2040	57.2
South-eastern Asia		48.2	2013	73.3
Western Asia	1980	66.3		79.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	1962	79.4		88.7
Central America	1965	71.7		83.3
Rest of the World				
South America	1960	83.7		91.4
Northern America	before 1950	82.1		90.2
Oceania	before 1950	70.6		76.4

Source: UNDESA, World Urbanization Prospect

SOWC/10/Pr7

So far, this fast urban growing, in some countries is completely out of planning, creating big human movements moving to the city from the countryside, looking for better opportunities. Since this big cities are not ready to absorb all these human tide, the newcomers are forced to settle in inappropiate places like riverbeds, railways, parks, etc. These makeshifts camps are called slums, large group of houses built without any planning and order, and with deep medical, hygiene and safety deficiencies.

   The newcomers improvise their homes with the materials they can find around, like wood, plastic, rests of building bricks and concrete, etc. but as time passes and the economical situation of the families is improving, these humble houses

start to become more stable and definitives, strengthening this unsustainable situation.

Over time, the result of these places is as follows:

-the absence of drainage networks, water supply, sanitation or waste management threatens people`s healt

- the increase of family members, the animals, the lack of urban design and planning creates shared messy spaces for everyone but without good conditions for any activity.
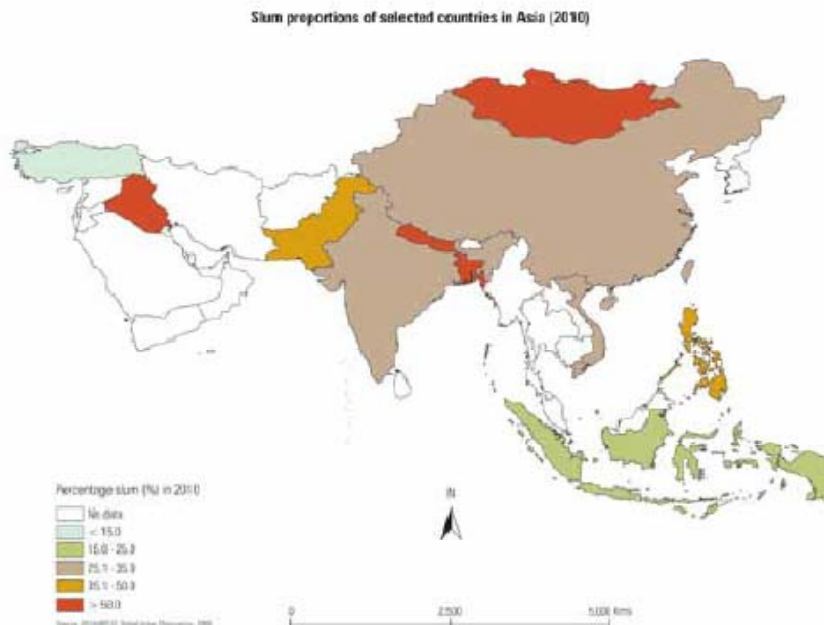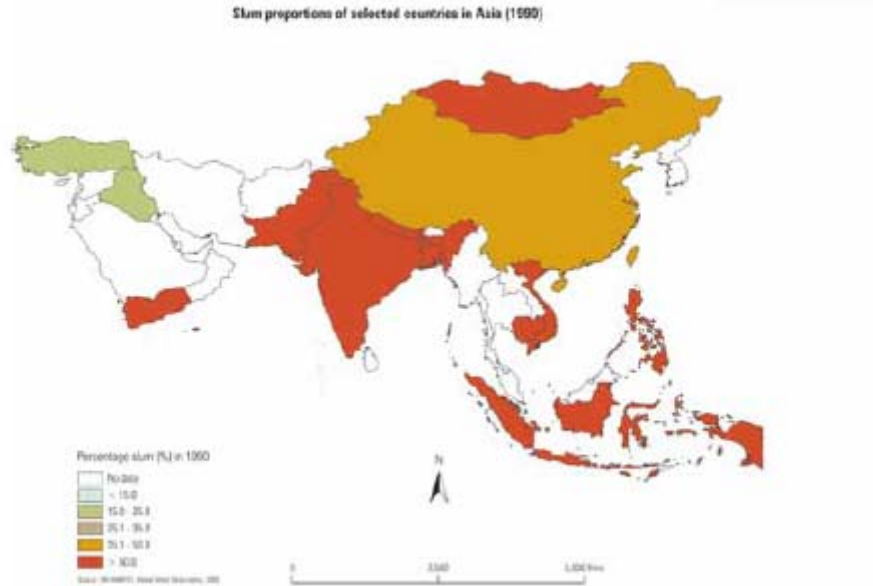
-natural disasters, floods, fires, tornadoes, etc. hit these slums because they are fully exposed to these hazards due tu their ubication, often in risk areas.

-ghettos, isolated neighbourhoods from the rest of the city that can become areas with higher levels of crime and delincuency than in the surroundings.

While this phenomenon has existed since the Industrial Revolution in many places around the world, including Europe, the actual growth rate has nothing to do with the time in which industrial development occurred in Europe. In developing countries this new reality has been overlooked for a long time and in the 2010 827,6 million of people was living in slums. (UN-Habitat. The state of the world's cities 2010/2011)

However, since the 90's, successive governments have been working to remedy this situation and give people living in slums, reasonable and better living conditions thatn they used to have. For instance, between 2000 and 2010 the number of people living in slums has been reduced in 227 million people (UN-Habitat. The state of the world's cities 2010/2011), which is 2,2 times the Millennium Development Goals, anyway he growth of the population has created that in the same period of time, 55 millions more people is living in slum conditions. That means that a lot of things have been done, but we need to do mucho more in he future.

4

   In the following maps it is showed the evolution in Asia (the continent with more important emerging countries) in terms of slums reduction from 1990 to 2010,

Slum proportions of selected countries in Asia (1990)

Slum proportions of selected countries in Asia (2010)

UN-Habitat 2010
Percentage change in slum proportions in selected countries in asia between 1990 and 2010

5

2 Factors Shaping Urban Shelter Design

In this international context of reducing people living in slums, diferent systems to provide the population decent conditions of health, sanitation and future have been used. We can talk about two main ways to do that:

- Upgrading. This process consists of maintain the people in the place they are living, because there is not risk of natural disasters or other hazards, but creating new roads, building services and facilities and providing standard life conditions to the area. More over the ownership of the land needst to be public or at least it must have been bought by the municipality

- Relocation. Another way has been to relocate people living in risky places, squatting other people land, to safer areas provided by the government or NGOs. Since these programs have in most cases the criteria to relocate the maximum number of people, in many cases (mostly the government projects) public spaces and green areas, as well as public services or the needs of the families are not really taken into account. At this point, there are two ways of working so far.

__Multi-storey building: As the name says, these kind ob buildings is composed of several storeys, so more free space can be provided and more activities, playgrounds and common spaces can be developed. With this system, it is possible to create areas near or inside the city, with more density and access to the different urban services.

__One-storey building: This system is just the oppostite pole, a single storey houses where the owner of the land is the same as the house one. In these projects all the houses that are built with the same characteristics, dimensions and matherials, more or less, occupying large pieces of land. Taken into consideration the price and the availability of the land in some countries or cities, the one-storey projects are built in general in the outskirts of the city, outside or even in closer cities that can set them. One example is Mucholote in Guayaquil, Ecuador, with more than 13.000 houses all planned in strict net of

streets without enough open spaces to develop social relations, playgrounds, etc.Another similar project is placed in Muntinlupa, south of Manila, Philippines, where again some thousands of one-storey buildings are extended without paying attention to the public spaces, the human interaction and generating a urban problem in a short term period.

Muntinlupa, Philippines, 2011

After learning from these relocation projects, it's possible to realize that there are some common features among them either in one-storey, or more. People need to create a transitional space between their homes ant the public space. They appropriate a part of public space through a grid, a fence, a new wall or planting plants or trees.

A concrete block façade that is repeated thousands of times is unworthy for any family that wants to reflect its own identity and personality in what is going to be the biggest investment of their lifes. At the same time, they try to adapt that appropriated space to the needs they have either economical or familiar. It is for that reason that, almost spontaneously, a new space between the house and the street is born, a space which is not public, and not private at all, it is a twinning space, a transitional space.

This "space in between" is the issue I am going to talk about, the limit of the house and the limit of the street not as an edge, as something else that can contribute to create something else than a random façade related with identity, economy, social relation area, as well as the need of take into consideration the people that is going to live in the houses to know what is their situation so which ones are their necessities, and try to adapt that "space in between" to each of them.

3 The Role of Architects

The role of the architect, should be without doubts an active actitude in terms of analyze the way to maximize the potential of the space existing between the housing and the public properties, from all the posible views that could really affect the urban quality of the relocation areas, or new incomming projects of social housing.

- Urban identity vs rural identity

According to Jesús Martín Barbero, *"Until some years ago we thought we knew very well what we were talking about when we said popular or when we were talking about urban. Popular was the opposite of educated, from the culture or bourgeois elite. Urban was the opposite of rural"* and he continue "*Today we are in pocess of hybridation, deterritorializations, descentralizations and reorganizations so any attempt of defined and delimitated work is in danger of excluding what might be maybe more important and newer social experiences that we are living. So it is not a matter of defining, it is a matter of understand and lean out to the ambiguity, opacity, the polisemy ot these processes that are not unique any more, and that have lost their old identity"* (Dinámicas urbanas de la cultura, 1991)

So if the traditional shelves are diluted and the current urban society is composed by lots of people coming from different cities, countries or villages, with different culture and traditions, the identities that have remained immutable must learn to live together without prejudice and learn from each other. For this to happen, it is important the way in which these interactions can take place, and the architecture is the responsible a that point and have something to say about it.

- Formal expression

If we consider the house which the relocated groups had before, that one had been built to hide and live, only with their own training, own knowledge from their homeplaces and with what they saw around them. One in their new location, the need of identity with the module each family has been assigned makes that

they develop different ways of living, building and display. Every house lean out in a different manner from private to public, showing its character, purchasing power, needs and aspirations; from the naked construction to the ornate and ostentatios facades, through all sorts of colours and materials.

"It might be thought that presenting the housing would be something similar to wear the clothes, where the barier of shelter necessity is overcame and we access to the referents of social needs, that means to appear in fron of the others without complexes or shame, to look modestly but with the decency that is socially accepted("necesidades moduladas socialmente" A.Cortina; "lo necesario que por regal de decencia ha llegado a serlo"A.Smith).

Montalban, Philippines 2011

Just as some of the houses built in slums can be considered spontaneous, the way each family adopts the space between the building and the street has something to do with that. The spontaneous house grows and is changing as the residents' needs change, so we can say that the building is shown to the others as a result of the family aspirations and possibilities. Something similar happens with the "space in between":

"The group culture offers also the elements to individualize the collective fact and appropriate by each family or each user, allowing to achieve diversity within unity"(Fonseca y Saldarriaga. Op. Cit, p.15)

- Public/private dichotomy

The conventional urban speech, establish public and prívate as contrary words, where the street is the opposite to the house and each other has its own meaning, functions and programme, without any permeability. The house as a protected place in front of the open space for circulation and meeting that the street is.

9

Anyway, the experience tell us that in the neigbourhoods these limits are not understood as two different things, and they are often transgressed and "*the street invade the house, and the house invide the street"* (Estudios Urbanos. Espacio public en la ciudad popular. 2007).

The relation between these two spaces should be something else than press the intercom, something else than a wall.

- Spaces for opportunity

The boundaries between house and street can play a definitive role in order to create activities and define what can happen in the housing immediate area.

__Activities

When we talk about activities, we can distinguish three different types: required, optional and social ones.

The necessary ones, are those carried out under any circumstances because they are part of survival, so go shopping, take the bus, go to the work, etc. are part of these activities, and they are performed in any kind of environment.

The optional, on the other hand, are totally related to the characteristics of the space where they can be developed are favourable, such as going for a walk,sunbathing, etc. So, in a poor quality environment only necessary activities occur and people seek refuge home, but if we are talking about a friendly environment, a wide spectrum of possibilities open up.

The social activities depend on the existence of more people in order to carry out them, so these sort is closely link with the optional activities, and such actions may or may not happen in a spontaneous moment.
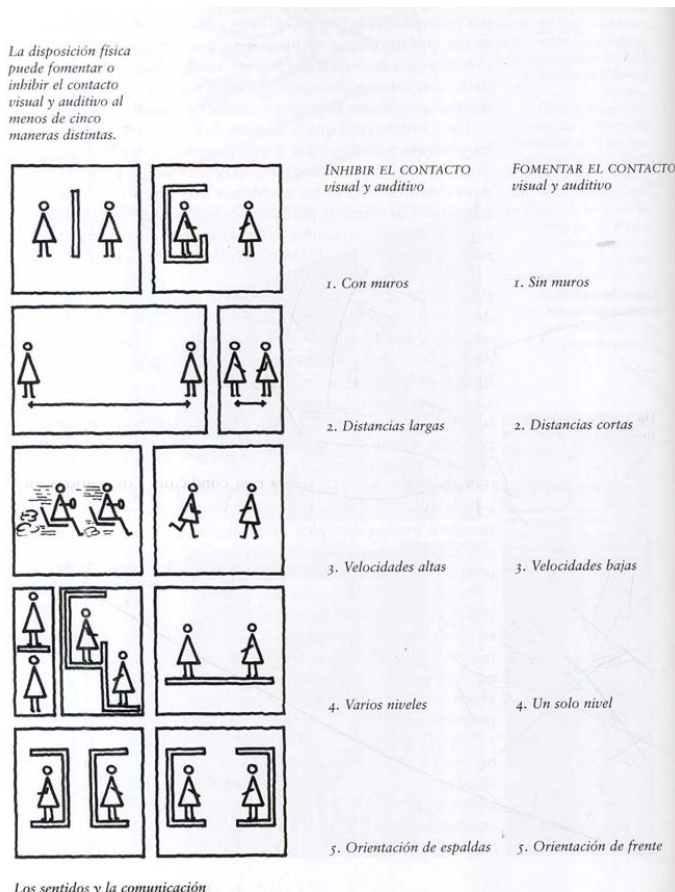
__Contact

Sitting on a bench next to a portal, walk down the street, observe, hear and receive stimulus from other people contributes to participate in the social life in an active way. Knowing how people around is, our environment, what is the behavior of our neighbours and comrades, we can establish a relationship of confidence with our closest surrounding, and share with others common details but impotents from our daily routine.

__Functionalism

Since the early XXth century, is established that homes must have natural light, sun and ventilation to provide healty living conditions for its habitants, the areas we are talking about must fulfill these requirements to support activities in a pleasant and hygienic way. Considering that we have a ventilated space, lighly and sunny, will be much easier for us to approach this place, instead of having a dity, dark and bad smelly
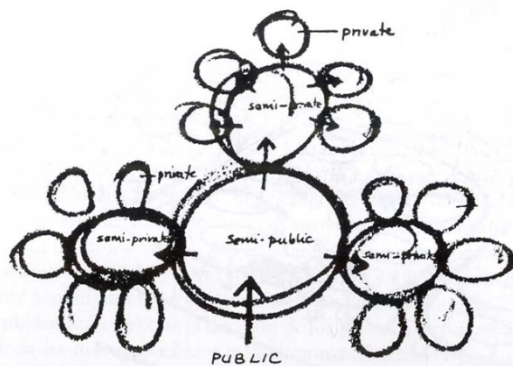
Another issues such as solar and rain protection, as well as other climatic factors like wind, are also essential to strengthen these relations.

La disposición física puede fomentar o inhibir el contacto visual y auditivo al menos de cinco maneras distintas.

INHIBIR EL CONTACTO *visual y auditivo*   FOMENTAR EL CONTACTO *visual y auditivo*

1. Con muros   1. Sin muros

2. Distancias largas   2. Distancias cortas

3. Velocidades altas   3. Velocidades bajas

4. Varios niveles   4. Un solo nivel

5. Orientación de espaldas   5. Orientación de frente

Los sentidos y la comunicación

The physical disposal can either, allow or inhibit the visual and auditory contact in a five different ways at least. (Jan Gehl, La humanización del espacio urbano, la vida social entre edificios, 2003)

11

__Sense of belonging and safety

"The establishment of a social structure and its corresponding physical structure, with common spaces on several levels, enables movement from groups and small spaces to larger ones, and from private spaces to the public in a gradual manner, offering a greater sense of security and a stronger sense of belonging to areas outside the private home. The area that someone perceives as belonging to the housing, the residential environment, can be extended far from the real property"(Jan Gehl, La humanización del espacio urbano, la vida social entre edificios, 2003).

Oscar Newman.Defensive space
(Jan Gehl, La humanización del espacio urbano, la vida social entre edificios, 2003)

Thus, if the feeling of belonging extends beyond the physical boundaries, the behavior of people changes and, for example, parents can allow more easily play outside, in the street.

"Establishing residential areas having a gradiation from outdoor spaces with semi-public spaces, intimate and familiar closer to the housing makes possible to know better the locals; and experience the outdoors as belonging to the residential area, results in a greater degree of vigilance and collective responsibility on this public space and its houses" (Jan Gehl, La humanización del espacio urbano, la vida social entre edificios, 2003).

__Edges

The transition between different places or sites is crucial to ensure that an area can be attractive or repellent, an area where everybody can or not access from the private to the public in both manners, physically and psychologically. These limits

in order to ensure a good connection, should be not just a line, but a transitional space that is neither fully private nor fully public.

When the visual level comes, this edge can act in one way or another; so that if from the inside can be seen what is happening on the street, a child, for example, can see that there are some children playing outside and he can go to play with them, otherwise if the child cannot see what is outside he is probably to stay home.

The edges, or these places close to the walls, are the most popular staying areas. The reason why these transitional areas are preferred is for different reasons like, from that areas you can see two spaces at the same time, the house and the sreet, for example. Traditionally, people occupy the edges before central spaces, either in the urban level around a plaza, or in a prairie whre people use to look for tree's protection instead of being in the middle of nowhere. One possible explanation to this phenomenon is purely biological, because in the edge it is possible to see in a better way the space around you without disturbing no one, observing without being seen too much, our vital space is reduced to a semicircle in front of us, so we can control visually without problems, our back is protected and if someone is coming to us frontally, we can react quickly.

In addition, edges are a logical place to be and interact with neighbours, either crossing the threshold or without doing it. More over, in that spaces not all the people is welcome, just the people related to the owner environment.

Many activities begin in that border and then they can continue either inside or outside, or just stay there in this "space in between". For example, children usually look for each other in their home's doors, and then they decide to move in, or go outside to play.

4 Criteria's for Design of Sustainable Shelter and Neighbourhoods

Considering all the described factors, we can draw a line with the general characteristics that social housing projects should take into account in developing

countries, just to encourage the relations between people, the quality of life, the sense of belonging and community, as well as the identity of the newcomers.

- Small scale

A sensitive and careful detailed design when it comes to spaces between the street and the housing. A well-thought planning is essential for the area potential to be developed in a better way. All social activities, large or complicated, have its origin in many other small scale daily activities. Small activities, as we have said, have started in these meeting places; for this purpose, spaces should be given to develop them, and walking, sitting, talking or listening can lead to other activities such as games, sports, etc.

The design of "spaces in between" must contain elements that make the site interesting so that people stop, these elements can be benches, trees, plants, stairs, portals, etc. and if people stop, the social relations can start.

- Links

The articulation of the indoor spaces in relation with the outdoor areas, and the manner of doing that is also important. The housing plan, must be designed so that the activities can flow inside out, and at the same time the entrances should be easy to cross, both functional and psychologically.

- Family needs

The forgotten space we are talking about, may be the piece that helps to balance the puzzle. Empirically, we know that the space in front of the buildings is developed in different ways: green areas to grow vegetables or put trees, verandas where children can play, areas that can be used for laundry or just for shelter from the sun outdoors. Places which can promote contact with the outside, people walking in the street stop and ask what they do, and in that way a conversation has started and also a social interaction.

- Extra income

Other families, however, use this space to generate extra income. They create small stores that at the end of the day are a great support to the family economy, for that reason we can see these small business everywhere, even in different storeys. Since the minimum salary in the Philippines is 385 pesos/day, in the stores they can get up to 1000 pesos/day in the best case. For that reason encourage these kind of activities in a diversified manner that can benefit as many

14

people as possible, it can be a great opportunity to develop the livelihood of the area.

Montalban,
Philipppines
2011

Thus, creating a suitable space for the different necessities, we can give the opportunity to improve the life quality according with the abilities of each family, with the purpose of generate extra income or just to be used as they need. Activities like selling pre-cooked food, offer tea or coffee, take care of the neighbours children, selling food in general, run sewing works, handcrafts, etc. are activities that can be developed by housewives for example, with a proper and flexible space pre-designed for the purpose and connected with the outside.

- Participation

Although all the relocation needs a deep survey to know the profile of each family that is going to occupy the new plots, this survey is focus very often in the economic resources they have, with the objective of organize the mortgage, repayments, etc of the house. More over it's necessary to know more about the families, like the needs they have, the people they are and their age, the abilities they can develop, etc. Once we have all the information, the housing dessigne should reflect all the diverse profiles that families present, just with the idea of adapt as much as possible the new house to the real necessities of each family, and get that the big investment that buying a new house is, can be something to be proud for the new people that is going to live there.

Conclusion

To conclude, the planing when it comes to low-income housing should imrove a lot, especially in some developing countries like the Philippines, which is the case I know more. Taking into consideration that some progresses has been done like moving from the 30% to the 40% of open spaces, but this increase of free space is useless if is not treated and distributed in an appropriate manner; large surfaces of concrete are not going to contribute to create any activities, so something should change in order to create a neighbourhood and a society with future. The deficiencies these new relocation areas have from the beginning, as time passes are going to be get worse, so maybe in a near future the area can become a new slum, but a slum planned by the government. The administration should allow professionals in an independent way, as well as thinking in a long term vision considering the opportunities of these places, and contributing to create urban conditions to permit a proper future development, integrating these areas in the city, not encouraging isolated ghettos.

Working with the "spaces in between" the house and the street, can be a solution to increase the employment opportunities for the families as well as a possible way to guarantee a new life and happiness conditions different from the random concrete cube, cubes without any outdoor space that can allow them to have a good light, sun and public connection.

The planning of these spaces with a flexible design that everyone can find them a particular use, can overturn the present appeareance of these areas, while creating job possibilities mostly for women, so they can combine the houseworks with this small business to generate extra income.

2010 UN Habitat -*State of the world's cities 20101/2011. Bridging the urban divide.*

2004 Serie Ciudad y Hábitat nº II -*Expresión formal de la vivienda popular espontánea.*

Jan Gehl

2006 *La humanización del Espacio Urbano. La vida social entre edificios.*Barcelona, Editorial Reverté S.A

ISBN 978-84-291-2109-4   translated from:

2003 Life between buildings: Using Public Space. Copenhague, Danish Architectural Press

Guillermo Takano/Juan Tokeshi

2007 *Estudios urbanos. Espacio público en la ciudad popular: reflexiones y experiencias desde el Sur.*Lima, DESCO.

ISBN 978-9972-670-81-7

¿? Citar un libro en otro?

Jesús Martín Barbero ., "*Hasta hace pocos años creíamos saber muy bien de qué estábamos hablando cuando nombrábamos lo popular o cuando nombrábamos lo urbano. Lo popular era lo contrario de lo culto, de la cultura de élite o burguesa. Lo urbano era lo contrario de lo rural*" y sigue luego del siguiente modo*"Hoy nos encontramos en un proceso de hibridaciones, desterritorializaciones, descentramientos y reorganizaciones tal que cualquier intento de trabajo definitiori y delimitador corre peligro de excluir lo que quizás se más importante y más nuevo en las experiencias sociales que estamos viviendo.Así pues no se trata de definir, se trata más bien de comprender y asomarnos a la ambigüedad, a la opacidad, a la polisemia de esos procesos que han dejado de ser unívocos, que han perdido su vieja identidad"*(Dinámicas urbanas de la cultura"1991).

"*Se podría pensar que presentar la vivienda seria algo similar a lucir la ropa, con lo que se supera la necesidad escueta o simple de abrigo y se accede a los referentes de una necesidad social, esto es poder aparecer ante los otros sin complejos ni vergüenzas, para lucir modestamente pero con la decencia que es aceptada socialmente"*("necesidades moduladas socialmente" A. Cortina; "lo necesario que po regla de decencia ha llegado a serlo" A.Smith).

   "La cultura propia del grupo ofrece además los elementos para que ese hecho colectivo se individualice y se apropie por cada familia o por cada usuario, permitiendo alcanzar la diversidad dentro de la unidad" (Fonseca y Saldarriaga. Op. Cit, p.15)

¿? Citas Gehl, poner el párrafo en castellano a pesar de ser una traducción?