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To cite this version:

Thomas Aguilera. Normalizing and regularizing slums: what explains the sidelining of onsite interventions in Europe? Comparing Paris and Madrid. Rethinking Precarious Neighborhoods, Agence française de développement, pp.161 - 176, 2016. hal-03470000

HAL Id: hal-03470000

https://sciencespo.hal.science/hal-03470000

Submitted on 8 Dec 2021

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Normalizing and regularizing slums: what explains the sidelining of onsite interventions in Europe? Comparing Paris and Madrid

Thomas AGUILERA

Introduction

Raising the question of normalizing, upgrading or regularizing slums[1] in Europe could be seen as provocative at a time when all local and national governments are very often doing everything they can to raze slums – perceived as the shame of this twenty-first century's civilized world and as a reflection of housing policy failures since the 1950s, and when associations that support slum dwellers and ensure their daily survival have been campaigning for years for the implementation of integration projects to promote housing and jobs.

Yet, this question deserves to be asked for two main reasons, especially so in this book on informal settlements in the Global North and Global South. First, the option of onsite slum normalization or regularization resurfaced in the early 2010s in the Paris and Madrid regions, which serve as case studies for this chapter.[2] In both cases, given the seeming impossibility of rehousing all of the slum dwellers, these "soft" intervention methods are being discussed and debated. Second, for the comparatist researcher, it is surprising to see such a contrast between North and South. Certainly, in the major global cities of the southern hemisphere, onsite interventions are plentiful and help regularize whole neighborhoods, while international bodies advocate various forms of legalization and upgrading programs.

[1] Normalization may be defined in several ways. It can be physical or legal (Larson, 2002: 146). Normalizing may refer to upgrading programs, i.e., improving slums by building surfaced roads, or helping to consolidate a building's structure, as well as providing connection to water and electricity networks. Regularization refers to legalization by granting or selling property titles, or by changing the use rights of land initially designated as non-constructible.

[2] The empirical data used in this chapter are drawn from a doctoral research project carried out in France and Spain between 2010 and 2014 (Aguilera, 2015). The chapter also reworks the ideas presented and discussed at the "Should slums be normalized?" workshop, co-led with Grégoire Cousin during the one-day study session, "European cities: contemporary slums and their economy," on 15 April, 2016 (MSH – Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris-Nord).

Besides the fact that the sizes of slums in the Global South and Global North are not comparable, what can explain why European city governments choose (or not) to normalize or regularize slums? In this chapter, we will attempt to explain why this option is sidelined, drawing on a comparative analysis of the situation in Paris and Madrid, and contrasting these with experiences in the Global South.

In Section 1, we set out the main research and debates on slum normalization, regularization, and upgrading policies in the Global South in order to outline the main issues – opportunities and risks – that undergird such policies. We then present the Paris and Madrid case studies to show why, since the 1960s, normalizing and regularizing slums have not been considered as a mode of large-scale action: national and local officials have consistently ruled out the idea of onsite consolidation, preferring to constantly displace these populations, designated as "undesirable," through partial rehousing or eviction. Yet, some experiments have been undertaken by associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working to help these populations survive and temporarily improve their living conditions in slums that time after time are destroyed (Section 2). Finally, we discuss the most recent debates that seem to be emerging in Paris and Madrid, against a backdrop not only of budget cuts that constrain rehousing capacity, but also social movements that support the idea of softer interventions on slums, which are after all places where people live (Section 3).

1. Insights from the Global South: implementation, effects, and debates around slum normalization and regularization

All over the world, slums are routinely cleared by force (Leckie, 1994), and the slum dwellers, left vulnerable, are pushed out to the city fringes (Dupont *et al.*, 2013). Although these policies are accompanied by rehousing programs, they are often limited and selective, and do no more than disperse the slum communities, destroying their solidarity and local ties (Dupont, 2010; Bhan *et al.*, 2013). The same findings hold true for European cities (Vitale, 2009).

This type of intervention quite often comes with forms of tolerance that open the way for the consolidation of informal settlements (Clerc, 2005). Tolerance may be the result of government failures (Maccaglia, 2009), but it can also be used as a strategy by some governments seeking to speculate on land (Smart, 2001). The fact of tolerating informal settlements also helps forestall the emergence of social movements and maintain patronage networks (Varley, 1998). In this respect, similar strategies are seen in Europe, where tolerance is usually associated with police harassment and social emergencies (Fassin *et al.*, 2014; Aguilera, 2015).

Finally, the debates crystallize around regularization policies, which for many years have accounted for most slum interventions in the Global South, under the intellectual authority of the liberal economist Hernando de Soto, whose tenets have been relayed by international bodies such as UN-Habitat and the World Bank. According to de Soto, granting or selling property titles to slum dwellers gives them the incentive to improve their housing and

facilitates the construction of infrastructure (de Soto, 2000). A second option, based on soft interventions, is to improve living conditions in slums so as to gradually normalize the situation.

Yet, these virtuous circles are not linear and may even be empirically limited or invalidated (Varley, 1987; Durand-Lasserve *et al.*, 2009). Some studies even show that such policies do not necessarily benefit the poorest inhabitants (Gilbert, 2002; Gulyani *et al.*, 2012) as they contribute in some way to their "silent eviction" (Burgess, 1982; Desai *et al.*, 2012). In fact, the policies implemented have not eradicated slums according to the United Nations, which admits that the estimated number of slum dwellers worldwide has continued to grow over the past decade (UN-Habitat, 2010).

This detour via the countries of the Global South provides a contrast for the cases found in the Global North and informs currently emerging debates, especially those in France and Spain.

2. Onsite interventions sidelined by slum policies in Ile-de-France and Madrid

The European cases differ from experiences in the Global South. To begin with, the reported sizes of slums are smaller. Next, the policies targeting slums in the 2000s were institutionalized to a lesser degree in the Global North, with the exception of Madrid, hence the need for comparison. Finally, when policies do exist, they prioritize soft onsite interventions, but alternate between systematic eviction of slum dwellers and slum clearance that selectively rehouses families outside the slums.

2.1. Madrid's Franco legacy: policies for clearance, rehousing, and social support

While slums were already present in the Madrid of the early twentieth century (Vorms, 2013*a*), these became established in the capital's southern and eastern outskirts following the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930s, under the combined effect of a massive rural exodus (Cabo Alonso, 1961) and city-center regeneration policies that were partly responsible for ousting the poorest households to the peripheries (Castells, 1977; Vaz, 2006; Vorms, 2013*b*). The *chabolismo* (*chabola* translates as "shanty") became a mass phenomenon. As a result, 16% of Madrid's population (i.e., 250,000 people) were living in slums in 1950 (Castells, 1977: 51).

Effective slum policies were introduced in the form of housing policies by Franco's Government not only in view of co-opting internal opposition to the regime and nascent social movements in the capital's slums and squats, but also of freeing up land for private developers highly subsidized by the State (Castells, 1979). Some squats were legalized, but it was primarily the launch of major national rehousing schemes that propelled most of the slum clearance between 1960 and 1980 (Vorms, 2013*b*: 53).

However, when the Autonomous Community of Madrid (CAM) – created at the regional level in 1983 – was confronted with the Government's withdrawal from housing policies, there were 3,000 families still living in slums (Nogués Saez, 2010: 104). As these families had not fulfilled the socioeconomic criteria to obtain the proposed dwellings, they had not been rehoused and

were categorized as both *gitanos* (gypsy) and marginal. This meant that the issue of inadequate housing was being ethnicized (not unlike in France), leading to the notion that when dealing with distinct groups such as *gitanos*, whose lifestyle is perceived as unsuited to life in an apartment, specific policies need to be implemented.

To set this in motion, a new institution in charge of slum clearance was created in 1986, the Consortium for the relocation of marginalized populations (Consorcio para el Realojamiento de la Población Marginada – CPM), under the joint supervision of the Madrid Mayor's office, the CAM, and the Government Delegate's office. The rehousing procedure comprised three main measures. More than 1,000 families (the most comfortably off) were rehoused in local authority apartments between 1988 and 1991 (CPM, 1986). Just over 250 families were relocated to outlying neighborhoods hastily built on slum sites (Barrios de Tiplogía Especial [BTEs] – Neighborhoods of special typology) (Franco, 2004; Lopez de Lucio, 1999). Finally, the poorest families were relocated to "temporary camps" intended to serve as an airlock on the way to towards more permanent housing. But, like the camps, the conditions in the BTEs deteriorated and rapidly became drug trafficking hubs, which prompted some families to sell their houses and return to the slums (Sevilla Buitrago, 2003).

Faced with what amounted to the failure of public policy, and after the changeover to a right-wing regional government (Alberto Ruíz-Gallardón of the People's Party [Partido Popular] criticized the slum policies of his predecessor Joaquin Leguina of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party [Partido Socialista Obrero Español]), in 1996 the CAM proposed the destruction of the BTEs and camps over the medium term, as well as the creation in 1998 of a new agency dedicated to slum clearance: the Rehousing and Social Integration Institute (Instituto de Realojamiento e Integracion Social – IRIS).

According to official figures, IRIS had to deal with over 1,400 families living in slums in 1998. The decision was taken to rehouse the families, spreading them out across the housing stock so as to limit the risk of ghettoization and avoid resettling already very vulnerable populations far away from the city. Social and educational programs were also key to supporting the relocation (Tejedor, 2002). The agency's annual budget averaged 26 million euros between 1999 and 2012 (Aguilera, 2015: 133). In 2012, IRIS owned 2,388 apartments, while its social workers dealt with more than 9,000 families and helped rehouse 2,030 families over a thirteen-year period. In July 2015, IRIS finally lost its autonomous status as an agency when the new CAM President, Cristina Cifuentes (former Government Delegate for Madrid) merged it with the regional social housing agency (Instituto de la Vivienda de Madrid – IVIMA).

These slum clearance policies pursued since the 1970s have fueled the growth of Europe's largest slum, Cañada Real Galiana, which hosts 11,000 people and where families not rehoused by the CPM and IRIS have found shelter (Aguilera, 2015): since the late 1990s, it has become home to Spanish *payos* (non-gypsies), *gitanos*, Moroccan and Latin American migrants, and precarious populations. The slum occupies a 70 m-wide former livestock trail, stretching for 16 kilometers. It is divided into six sectors, from north to south, going from the most comfortably off to the most precarious. One of its central sectors is also a major drug trafficking hub.

The stretch of territory raised a highly complex legal situation, as it straddles three municipalities (Madrid, Rivas and Coslada). This limited the public authorities' intervention, while responsibility for clearance was passed back and forth among the municipalities concerned and the CAM. Moreover, the slum had been tolerated strategically as it served the dual function of safety valve for the slum clearance policies pursued in the center of Madrid, and informal settlement area for the families not rehoused. Under pressure from social movements and in order to recover land for major urban projects, the CAM finally passed a specific regional law for Cañada Real Galiana in 2011 that launched consultation procedures aimed at crafting an overall clearance program.

2.2. Policies, omissions, and "tinkering" in the Ile-de-France/Paris region

The first slums in the Ile-de-France region sprang up in the 1930s when the French Government, pressured by business leaders, called on a large workforce from Spain, Portugal, and Italy (Viet, 1998). In the 1950s, new slums then emerged to accommodate the Algerian workforce. However, at the time, slums were not perceived as a housing issue, but rather as a security and migration issue. State action took the form of police violence in the authorities' search for the independence activists of the Algerian National Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale – FLN) (Gastaut, 2004: 7) and in their fight to prevent consolidation of shack settlements (Lallaoui, 1993: 53).

On the other hand, an "assistance sub-market" (Tricart, 1977: 606) had been developing. Municipalities and social housing agencies relocated some families in old rundown dwellings or built new housing to less stringent standards. Some 100,000 temporary dwellings were also installed in disused army barracks, and the State provided loans to the first *cités d'urgence* (emergency prefabricated housing complexes). The idea of transitional rehousing emerged in the social movement that mainly mobilized squatter groups. But it was as a result of Abbé Pierre's appeal on 1 February 1954 that Emmaüs set to work building emergency shelters: tents and "igloos" were erected, notably by self-build groups such as the "Castors."

Drawing on these association-led experiments, the State launched the larger-scale production of emergency housing, initially dubbed "family promotion housing" then "transitional housing": 12,000 units were thus constructed in 220 French towns at a total cost of ten billion euros (Lallaoui, 1993: 26). Sonacotral,[3] created in 1956, was responsible for overseeing the resettlement operations (Bernardot, 2007).

In 1966, a national survey by the Ministry of the Interior reported a total of 75,000 people living in slums, 47,000 of whom were located in the Ile-de-France region across some thirty slums (Ministry of Equipment and Housing, 1966). A confluence of three factors led Parliament to consider introducing a national slum clearance program in response to pressure from (i) the media (it was journalists who produced the first maps of slums and the surveys inside slums

[3] Sonacotral: Société nationale de construction pour les travailleurs algériens – National company for construction of housing for Algerian workers.

from 1965), (ii) various local elected officials (following various fatal accidents, mayors called for state intervention) and members of Parliament (the subject came up several times on the National Assembly agenda between 1964 and 1972), and (iii) social movements.

Yet, these programs initially amounted to "tinkering"[4] rather than planning. Moreover, while they enabled the rehousing of Spanish, Portuguese, and French slum dwellers in apartment blocks (Tricart, 1977: 617), Algerians were rehoused in transitional housing complexes (Blanc-Chaléart, 2006: 7), a situation that persisted until the late 1990s (Cohen *et al.*, 2012). The last slum was officially demolished in Nice in 1976.

Slums reappeared in the late 1990s, driven by the influx of migrants from Eastern Europe following the collapse of the communist bloc (Reyniers, 1993). As political refugee status was being increasingly denied to these migrants, they settled in the urban cracks of the Parisian "red-belt" (communist suburbs) (Jaulin, 2000). However, as in the 1950s, the foremost issues raised were not housing, but rather immigration, security, and public order. The State kept well away from the issue of poor housing conditions, preferring to discuss the problems posed by the so-called traveller communities – who did not even live in slums.

For nearly twenty years, migrants living in slums – then labeled as *Roma* in the public debate – were regularly evicted once or twice a year.[5] Families lived in confined spaces but, given the repeated evictions, had no time to consolidate their homes, while children were unable to follow a stable educational pathway (Thiéry, 2014: 28). Living conditions in the slums were highly precarious and presented significant health issues (Médecins du Monde, 2010). This reflects a political orchestration of "deterioration" (Fassin, 2014), through police harassment, non-removal of rubbish, and denial of access to drinking water and electricity, a decision taken by city halls for the sole purpose of pushing residents to depart on their own initiative (Romeurope, 2012; Amnesty International, 2014). A self-eviction policy was setting in (Fassin, 2014).

Municipalities on the left and right of the political spectrum systematically sent families on to neighboring municipalities and called for state intervention to evict or rehouse them, more often than not outside their own territory (Costil, 2011). National governments, both left and right, persuaded European authorities to regulate migratory flows. In a situation where the various competing bodies of territorial governance and public inaction systematically passed on the blame, humanitarian organizations and local authorities necessarily had to mobilize significant human resources to ensure the slum dwellers' survival.

Here and there, local authorities set up alternative projects that recycled existing mechanisms. From the late 1990s, some municipalities rehoused families following evictions. But it was particularly from 2005, taking advantage of subsidies granted under the MOUS (Maîtrise

[4] "Tinkering" refers here to an incremental, experimental, and often chaotic notion of public policy, as opposed to the barely credible vision of a hypothetical rational and planning-oriented decision-maker.

[5] Several surveys have attempted to estimate the number of slum clearances carried out, particularly since 2010 (Goossens, LDH – Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, 2010–2015).

d'œuvre urbaine et sociale – Urban and social organization program) scheme that around ten towns in the Ile-de-France region began to experiment with *villages d'insertion* (inclusion villages), following in the footsteps of the Municipality of Aubervilliers (Legros, 2011).

The implementation of these projects systematically follows the same pattern: a town finds itself having to deal with large slums, an accident (e.g., a fatal fire) unleashes the media agenda, and municipal teams then mobilize associations and institutional partners. The purpose of these "villages" is to temporarily settle some of the slum families in specific areas (Bernardot, 2007). But all of these projects are selective: families are chosen based on social, economic, and health criteria relating to their "capacity to integrate." The projects impose constraints, with strict internal rules governing everyday life. They are exclusionary and justify the eviction of most of those who are denied access to the project. In the Ile-de-France region, nearly 1,500 people participated in these inclusion projects between 2000 and 2011, but over 4,000 others were not entitled to participate (Aguilera, 2015: 215). These non-beneficiary families have been repeatedly dispersed across different municipalities by municipal and prefectoral orders.

Since 2012, the State has nonetheless sought to regain leadership in slum governance, channeling this through two conduits. On 26 August 2012, the French Government issued a circular urging prefects to coordinate social support schemes in tandem with evictions, which were expected to rise. The circular, supervised by DIHAL (Délégation interministérielle à l'hébergement et à l'accès au logement – Interministerial delegation for accommodation and access to housing), has however remained a dead letter and done no more than facilitate police evictions by providing social survey tools. The second conduit for state action is the "Plate-forme d'accueil, d'information, d'orientation et de suivi," AIOS (platform for reception, information, counseling and monitoring), created in 2015 under the auspices of the regional prefect. Again, this platform has been a disappointment to associations, as they are neither consulted nor convinced by political leaders, who still refuse to speak of "slums" and prefer to talk of "illicit encampments."

3. Onsite interventions: an option left by the wayside

The comparative analysis over time of the Paris and Madrid case studies points up two invariants. The policies for both of the city regions have always given priority to clearance, which involves razing slums and relocating families either by rehousing them or by evicting them towards new slums. In rare cases, normalization experiments have been carried out, but these have often been undertaken by the third sector, while local authorities refuse to stabilize the situations of the slums within their municipalities.

3.1. Rare onsite normalization experiments: the third sector steps in to upgrade living conditions

The onsite interventions carried out are few and far between, and very often implemented by associations and NGOs rather than by the public authorities. In fact, NGOs are always the first to intervene in slums, launching pilot projects that were able to serve as the bedrock for larger-scale institutionalized public policies, as was the case in the 1960s in both cities: squatter

and self-build movements gave rise to "tinkering" approaches which became systematic and subsequently mainstreamed into regional policies.

The 2000s also saw this type of local experiment, which filled the void left by public inaction. The largest slum in Madrid, Cañada Real Galiana, has hosted a large number of architect, activist and student collectives that, over the past decade, have conducted social and urban-planning diagnostic analyses in order to contribute to the slum dwellers' indigenous knowledge. On the one hand, this meant producing counter-diagnoses by mobilizing knowledge as a weapon to resist institutional urban projects (Appadurai, 2012; Deboulet *et al.*, 2013). On the other hand, these diagnoses often gave rise to participative self-build projects that brought together architects and residents. Volunteers working for the association Architects Without Borders (AWF) supported residents in the slum's Sector 5 for the construction of a community center on abandoned land (Carriot, 2014). Likewise, a young architects' collective, Todo Por la Praxis, had produced counter-proposals for the development of Cañada Real Galiana in 2011.

In the Ile-de-France region, the larger NGOs such as Médecins du Monde – highly active through its Roma Mission – and the Catholic Relief Services have maintained an everyday presence to ensure the bare essentials and prevent the spread of epidemics. Moreover, each time a slum springs up local support groups are created. These may or may not belong to the local Romeurope collectives that are dotted around the Ile-de-France region with support from various antennas coordinated by the National Human Rights Collective Romeurope. These collectives provide consumer goods and occasionally healthcare, and may physically intervene to improve living conditions by helping build dry toilets, provide waste collection or carry out maintenance on shacks. Recently the association Convivance successfully negotiated a no-cost lease agreement for a plot of private land to develop a self-build project with the residents of a slum in Ivry-sur-Seine, south of Paris.

At the margin of the *villages d'insertion* set up by municipalities, architect collectives and urban planners have turned slums into land hosting self-builds. This was the case in Saint-Denis (north of Paris) following the eviction of the Hanul slum dwellers in 2010, as well as in Orly (south of Paris) in 2011, where the *village d'insertion* aimed to have the future residents participate in building their wood cabins. One association, PEROU (Pôle d'exploration des ressources urbaines – Pole for the exploration of urban resources),[6] has attracted attention due to its drive to "de-culturalize" the Roma question by intervening in slums at an architectural level to open them up to the world, but above all to improve the residents' living conditions. For example, the association built a communal wooden building in the heart of the Ris-Orangis slum south of Paris as a venue for Christmas parties in 2012 (Thiéry *et al.*, 2013).

These interventions may seem derisory compared to the repeated evictions by the prefectures in the Ile-de-France region, or to the massive rehousing carried out by IRIS in Madrid. They

[6] For more details of this organization, see their website: http://www.perou-paris.org/

nonetheless demonstrate that actors are envisaging upgrading operations that avoid the immediate removal of families, and these interventions may well, as in the 1960s, percolate into decision-making spheres and lead to experiments on a larger scale.

3.2. The return of onsite interventions? How the economic crisis affects the reshaping of local slum policies

The idea of onsite interventions seems to have resurfaced in Paris and Madrid as from 2010. The revival of this idea in Europe may be due to the fact that associations and some elected officials have observed that the policies formerly pursued have not necessarily borne fruit, and that the slums are still there, and even growing. The economic crisis could thus confirm the need to find intervention methods that are softer, more gradual, and thus less costly for public authorities. This could open up a window of opportunity for associative actors to promote modes of action that are more respectful of the social and territorial roots of slum families and facilitate more stable paths to inclusion.

As clearance proves impossible, the legalization option is considered in Madrid

IRIS had been clearing slums in Madrid since the late 1990s. But after 2007, the agency's annual budget tumbled (40 million euros in 2007 compared to 20 million euros in 2012). Its wage bill also declined, as did the budget earmarked for housing (Aguilera, 2015: 133). In July 2015, the CAM – announcing the end of slums, but above all no longer able to fund an institution subject to debate – decided to merge IRIS with the regional housing agency (IVIMA) to create a social housing agency in charge of promoting and managing public housing, but also responsible for the Cañada Real Galiana dossier. This merger spelt the end of the clearance policy and heralded a new instrumentation of slum policies.

As soon as the 2011 regional law was passed, the CAM formulated alternative proposals to cope with the excessive volume of people to be rehoused in the event that an IRIS project were implemented. One proposal that falls under the framework agreement pursuant to this law is to "consolidate as many inhabited houses as possible, if they comply with residential zoning and if they are integrated into an urban fabric" (CAM, 2014: 6) Priority is to be given to the residential use of the spaces due to be normalized: "single-family" homes are targeted by the agreement, which clearly aims to seize the opportunity to demolish businesses, workshops and hotels, all with a view to producing a uniform urban morphology. Yet, this measure does not apply to Sector 6, the poorest and most rundown area of Cañada Real Galiana. The third goal concerns housing and advocates "access to ownership for as many people as possible"(*ibid.*: 6) Only those families enumerated before 2012 would be eligible for this, while the others would be excluded from the process and relocated to temporary housing. Finally, a review of the hitherto inalienable legal status of the land occupied by the slum would be considered so as to allow the sale of property titles and servicing.

The framework agreement thus makes proposals in line with the normalization, then onsite regularization of Europe's largest slum. Yet, this Law remains differential,[7] as it fails to cover the most precarious areas. It has also been subject to diverse criticisms from municipalities and associations.

Firstly, the framework agreement only applies to homes that lie strictly within the perimeter of Cañada Real Galiana: homes clustering around the slum would be demolished. Second, while the option of granting land titles seems to suit the dwellers, the idea of sale has sparked debate, particularly with regard to the selling price per square meter and the valuation of the sales price of houses. Although the prices are in line with those proposed by associations in the most comfortably off northern sectors, they are too high to give the poorest families in the southern sectors a chance of ownership. The question remains open-ended, but it is safe to conclude that at least part of the slum will be legalized.

The French debates on normalization

In France too, the debate on soft onsite interventions has begun to spread and, given the cost of an eviction (400,000 euros[8]), owners and public authorities may well find that this approach offers advantageous modes of conflict resolution.

Among those who support such ideas, the Fondation Abbé Pierre (FAP) advocates forms of "soft clearance" (Huyghe, 2016). This involves intervening discreetly to gradually transforming slums into towns, and step by step bringing the slum dwellers closer to common law arrangements, with social housing as the ultimate goal. Occasional physical interventions are carried out (street furniture, children's games), while self-build projects are set up through cross-funding (especially municipal funds). Yet, support is not always the order of the day. In September 2014, the FAP and Médecins du Monde managed to design a project that aimed to progressively improve the living conditions inside the large Le Samaritain slum in La Courneuve (north of Paris), and in the long run rehouse the families and provide social and medical support. In the end, however, the municipality refused to pursue the project and subsequently ordered the eviction of the slum dwellers in August 2015.

In this case, normalization is only temporary and does not entail legalizing the slum but rather stabilizing situations for a while in order to facilitate social work, job searches, and children's schooling. A recent study by Association Trajectoires, commissioned by DIHAL, confirms that slums are a stepping stone, a base that helps to sustain solidarity and stabilize relations with associations, but also, despite the sometimes difficult living conditions, it help the residents to save income with a view to subsequently accessing social housing (Association Trajectoires, 2016).

[7] By "differential," we mean unequal public treatment of social facts that are a priori subject to the same rules. This differential character is the result of mechanisms that categorize, classify, and prioritize social practices or groups.

[8] Several studies have been conducted to assess the cost of evictions (Cousin, 2013; PEROU, 2014).

The debates then turn to how this normalization is to be conceived and what time lines will be involved. The Romeurope Collective accepts these forms of stabilization, but refuses any notion of permanence. Stabilization must be considered simply as a form of aid to leaving the slum. As in the 1960s, the collectives now envisage departures from slums as being gradual, measured, and adapted to individual and family situations, and thus based on social and health diagnostics.

As in Spain, the idea of onsite stabilization rather than a direct exit from the slums has made its way into the debates and prompted alternative experiments at a time when traditional public policies seem to have proved ineffective.

The reticence of local officials in a context of competitive governance

Cities are competing to make territories attractive (Brenner, 2004), and local officials are positioning themselves in a context of competitive governance. They voice their reticence to the idea of normalization for three main reasons. One of their key concerns about the slum issue is the "pull factor." The imagined outcome of a dependency on handouts is systematic: offering help would attract more potential beneficiaries and thus create an unmanageable situation. This argument serves as justification for all slum clearance policies to be selective, as many related public policies indeed are.

A second apprehension relates to public order. Local elected officials are accountable to their constituents, and they hold the issue of public nuisance as a primary concern. Even if a slum's closest neighbors do not complain (Windels, 2014), local officials are sensitive to complaints and the image of their municipality. A slum inhabited by migrants, even if normalized, still represents a stigma for the municipality. The officials – who here see eye to eye with associations – fear forms of "ghettoization" and never-ending projects located far from urban resources or transportation, as was the case in the 1990s in Madrid. Finally, even though soft onsite interventions are inexpensive, the question of operation cost is presented by city mayors as a major hurdle to setting up long-run projects.

To these obstacles stemming from the fears of local officials, we would add one final factor identified by our comparative analysis. Social movements and organizations that support slum dwellers mobilize conventional and legalistic resources that do not disrupt the public and political order. In the 1960s, in France and Spain alike, support for squatter or protest movements opened up greater windows of opportunity, and finally led to rehousing. Similarly, a comparison with the squatter movements of the 2000s shows that, when protest-driven actions or even illegal actions are employed, this pushes local officials to rehouse more quickly (Aguilera, 2015: 600).

Lastly, our comparison should be extended to pinpoint the conditions that have led to a greater number of onsite normalizations, as was the case in Italy, and particularly in Rome, Milan, and Turin, where the local authorities financed connection to water and electricity networks (De Salvatore *et al*, 2009).

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was not to deplore the lack of attention given to potentially miracle-producing options. As we have seen, onsite interventions have not eradicated poor housing conditions in the Global South, where the question spurs debate, as it does in Europe, even among those who take up the defense of vulnerable populations. The aim was simply to empirically and theoretically substantiate the causes of the differences between intervention models in a Global North and Global South faced with the same issue. Slums certainly vary in size, but they raise similar problems in terms of poor housing conditions and public management of urban informality.

The comparative dual-lens (North-South, Paris-Madrid) highlights the extent to which forms of public intervention and tools for action may be considered in certain cities, at certain moments, whereas in others they are not. It helps inform debates and gives insights into how the actors mobilize ideas and identify risks.

A comparison and analysis of the arguments around normalization in both the Global North and Global South raise a final debate on the issues of slums and poor housing conditions in general: the debate on security standards and norms. Most often, if not always, squats and slums are evacuated by prefectures in the name of the safety and health of their inhabitants. Yet, just as often, activist architects show that some sites are not as insalubrious (for transitory periods) as the eviction orders state. There is thus the need for a debate on the high safety standards that sometimes hinder experiments for gradual inclusion through informal settlements, without implying however the design of multi-speed normative systems (Delgado, 1997; Larson, 2002).

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