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Fernández Maldonado, Ana María

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Ana María Fernández Maldonado

Dr Ana María Fernández Maldonado is a senior researcher in the Chair of Spatial Planning and Strategy of the Department of Urbanism at the Faculty of Architecture of Delft University of Technology. Her research is focused on housing, urban transformations and urban planning in Peru and Latin America, and more recently on comparative spatial planning at European level. Her work has been published in numerous chapters of books, scientific journals and conference proceedings.

1 Present status of planning

Urban and regional planning have never been a political priority in Peru. Since the period of rapid urbanisation, the constant neglect of planning has produced serious urban problems. The Peruvian Ministry of Housing admits that: “The main structural problem facing the country in this respect is the insufficient level of urban and regional planning ... The lack of plans and instruments for land and territorial management generates high levels of urban informality. The most obvious indicators of this situation are that, on average, 70% of housing construction is informal and that more than 50% of the urban territory consists of marginal urban neighbourhoods” (Ministerio de Vivienda 2016: 37). Even when plans are prepared and approved, they achieve few concrete results of their proposed aims and objectives, due to the absence of a strategic approach.

Peruvian planning has undergone significant transformation since the 1980s. A new Municipalities Law (1984) devolved local governments’ planning powers and competences to manage their territories. The 1990s were characterised by a broad reorientation of the role of the state, and the adoption of market-oriented economic principles, relaxing land-use and building regulations with the purpose of attracting private investment. Finally, a process of fiscal and political decentralisation, which was paralysed during the 1990s, was finally initiated in 2002. Despite these substantial reorientations and transformations, the urban planning framework has not been significantly transformed and continues to use traditional top-down procedures and technical instruments (Pineda-Zumarán 2016a), evidently ineffectively.

Given the very limited municipal information systems, planning does not adequately incorporate urban dynamics. Even if local governments do have cadastre systems, they are only used for tax collection purposes (Ministerio de Vivienda 2016). Further, there is hardly any evaluation and monitoring of the planning processes and interventions. The weakness of urban planning is also related to its low financial independence, as local governments have limited resources to execute projects and intervene in urban development (Remy 2005).

A recent OECD study on territorial development in Peru (CEPLAN 2016) identified four main challenges: (i) to complete the decentralisation process, improving vertical and horizontal coordination; (ii) to promote a bottom-up approach in the design of public policies to prioritise investments and adapt them to regional needs; (iii) to incorporate a strategic approach to urban development policies and plans; and (iv) to extend and make better use of territorial data.

2 Discourses about planning

The debate about planning is focused on its weakness and limitations, and especially on the many urban problems arising from the inefficiency or absence of planning. The most frequently mentioned urban issues in the media are the feelings of insecurity due to street violence and crime, and the conflicts arising from traffic chaos and congestion in the context of disorganised public transport systems. Other relevant urban issues arise in the media from time to time, such as the lack of access to water, high levels of environmental pollution, scarcity of green areas, inefficient waste collection and evident corruption in several urban sectors such as public transport, wholesale commerce and even the management of public resources within local governments. In Lima, the Peruvian capital, the stark disregard of metropolitan authorities toward long-term urban planning by prioritising road construction projects has led to several civil society mobilisations, demanding them to undertake coordinated planning activities instead of carrying out isolated projects which only benefit the minority of residents who can afford private car ownership.

3 Theory and practice

Traditionally, there has been a great disconnection between planning theory and practice in Peru. This is linked to the significant limitation of the urban planning framework, with a strong legal and normative character, to deal with the realities of a developing country facing important urban and territorial challenges. The planning system has not adapted itself to those re-

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alities, nor has it followed the latest theoretical considerations for collaborative and communicative spatial planning.

Several reasons explain this stagnation. First, most local governments have few resources and therefore lack the professional and economic capacities to prepare and implement the several instruments required by the law for the effective operation of urban planning and management, and also to enforce the multitude of norms and regulations (Remy 2005). Less than half of local government staff have a professional degree (Torres 2005). In this context, planners deal with the most urgent short-term urban affairs, without time and resources to deal with important long-term urban issues. In such a way, municipal planning practice is limited to resolving the procedural matters of development planning and building control. Second, planning education is very insufficient in providing adequate theoretical support to tackle the many challenges of planning practice in such a developing country. Third, the lack of private and public funding for research has led to the disconnection from international literature, debates and networks. Consequently, English planning literature hardly plays a role in the Peruvian planning context, while the academic planning debate seldom appears in the few local architectural magazines, and does not connect to the latest theoretical debates.

4 *Social, economic and spatial disparities*

Peruvian society is affected by large inequalities in income and quality of life, which explain the country's widespread informality and low productivity – profound challenges for its economic development. Since 2002, Peru has experienced remarkable socio-economic progress, accompanied by a significant reduction in poverty from approximately 60% in 2004 to less than 24% in 2013 (OECD 2015). Major income and welfare inequalities have been reduced, but to a much lesser extent, through national policies and programmes for water and electricity provision, education and nutrition. But despite the evident improvements, essential public services remain very much insufficient in meeting the accumulated demand. This is related to weak governance and the low capacity of the state to promote an inclusive type of development and to tackle the huge spatial inequalities.

Furthermore, Peruvian citizens have very little confidence in the national government and the judicial system, compared to other coun-

tries in the region. Better accountability and the fight against corruption is essential to increase confidence levels and improve the legitimacy of public institutions (OECD 2015). Additionally, Peru needs to improve its planning capacity to define priorities and implement effective policies to stimulate inclusive development and improve public sector integrity (OECD 2015, 2017).

5 *Planning education*

There are no schools of planning in Peru. Planning studies are included within educational courses and qualifications in architecture. Since the liberalisation of the education sector in 1996, which led to a huge increase in new private universities, there are now 16 faculties of architecture in Lima – up from five in the early 1990s – and 45 in the country educating future planners. The liberalisation of education has also promoted the creation of a wide variety of Master's courses for professionals. Four Master's courses are dedicated to urban studies, of which two specifically address planning studies.

In the architectural education curriculum, urban planning is generally taught during the last few years of the courses on urbanism, and in many cases by means of elective courses. Consequently, architecture students are not well prepared to face not only future challenges, but also the present planning challenges of such a geographically and demographically diverse country as Peru. Practicing planners are generally architects, but also economists, lawyers and other professionals who learn the job in practice, but who lack proper theoretical support about the implications of plans and policies in the organisation of space.

The limitations of planning education are strongly related to the deficiencies in Peruvian university education, especially after it allowed the creation of for-profit universities in order to attract private investment to meet the growing demand for higher education. The number of private universities grew dramatically, but without any regulation as regards quality. Peruvian universities do not appear on global or regional rankings, while the average academic level of academic workers is basic (Cuenca 2015). Universities seldom conduct research activities and have very restricted access to international journals and networks. The huge deficiencies in planning education partly explain the weakness of planning culture in Peru, and the maintenance of a type of urban planning which “can

be regarded as top-down, non-spatial, technically oriented, non-participatory, based on rational comprehensive planning processes and rooted in zoning notions” (Pineda-Zumarán 2016b: 277).

6 Planning knowledge exchange

Good practice examples in the Latin American region – Bogotá, Medellín, Quito, Guayaquil – are well-known through professional magazines or travelling urbanists. Important transfers also come from the adaptation of successful sectoral policies, generally promoted by international development agencies. In Peru, they have led to new social housing policies, following the Chilean model, and the implementation of Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) systems, following the Transmilenio experience of Bogotá. Furthermore, in 2003, Peru issued a Participatory Budget Law, evidently inspired by the process of participatory budgeting from Porto Alegre, initiated in 1988. The law obliges regional and local governments to organise an annual participatory budget, according to a methodology advanced by the Ministry of Economy. However, the Peruvian variant includes some elements of public participation that were present in pioneer participative experiences of leftist district municipalities during the 1980s, which included consultation and participation of representatives of existing social organisations (Remy 2005).

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