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Challenges of Informal Urbanization

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Synonyms

Nonformal urbanization

Definition

Informal urbanization refers to a form of urbanization that is independent from formal framework and that do not comply with formal rules and regulations. It is a quasi-urbanization driven by local economic development and market forces. It refers to informal housing, informal settlements, and informal economy. Informal settlements are areas that are not formally planned but nevertheless occupied illegally by the dwellers. Slums are the most deprived and excluded form of informal settlements characterized by poverty and dilapidated housing often located in the most hazardous urban land (UN-Habitat III 2016).

Introduction

In this entry, the challenges of informal urbanization are discussed critically. At the outset, the concept of informal urbanization is defined, and the meaning, processes, and causes of informal urbanization are discussed. There have been rapid urbanization and unbalanced growth of cities with many physical, social, economic, and environmental consequences. One of the adverse effects of unintended urbanization is marginalization of social groups and growth of informal urbanization. Informal urbanization is a challenge for sustainable urban development. Sustainable Development Goal 11 focuses on the theme Sustainable Cities and Communities under the heading "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (United Nations 2013).

Urbanization in cities is characterized by a distinct dualism: formal and informal. While formal urbanization reflects the planned urban framework with building and urban planning regulations, serviced land, and housing provisions, informal urbanization on the other hand emerges as a result of inability of cities to absorb growth within formal urban framework due to absence of serviced land and affordable housing, inadequate urban planning regulations, and exclusion of low-income populations from formal

urbanization. Much informal growth takes place outside of formal planning and administrative processes.

Informal urbanization refers to informal unregulated spontaneous processes of urbanization especially in the cities of Global South that are resulting effects of marginalization of social groups, poverty, and inequality. Informal urbanization is seen as an alternate path of city construction and takes shape of urbanization in cities when no other options exist. Informal urbanization process includes both poor rural migrants who build their home through gradual processes of informal land occupation and consolidation and developer who subdivides land without complying with urban regulations (Roy 2005). Informal urbanization is driven by local economic development and land and housing market forces. The housing and shelter needs of low-income families which are not being met in formal sector have expanded marginalization and informal settlements. Globally, nearly one billion residents reside in urban informal settlements (World Bank 2015). The majority of cities find it difficult to accomodate their residents within the formal, official and enacted plans governing the use of land and urban space (Acioly 2007).

Urban Informality and Informal Urbanization

Urban informality is a key component of contemporary urbanization, and urban expansion is being largely driven by informal urbanization. The term "informality" appeared in the literature in the early 1970s. Economist Hernando De Soto in his book *The Other Path* argues that informality causes poverty as it is a factor of exclusion from the formal market (De Soto 1989). Dovey and King (2011) noted that informality implies "a lack of formal control over planning, design and construction". The urban dualism, i.e., formal vs. informal, has a long history. Informality, once associated with poor squatter settlements, is now seen as a generalized *mode* of metropolitan urbanization (Roy 2005: 147). Two cities coexist within

a city, that is, one part of urban population that has access to land, housing, and all the basic amenities and services called formal urbanization, while the other part is deprived of similar amenities and services which is called informal urbanization. Cities thus have both prosperous and impoverished neighborhoods. These cities are variously described as "divided cities" (Fainstein et al. 1992), "dual cities" (Mollenkopf and Castells 1991), "polarized cities", "fragmented cities", and "partitioned cities" (Marcuse and van Kempen 2000) (Cited in van Kempen 2007: 15). There is a clear connection between social polarization and social inequality on the one hand and spatial segregation on the other (ibid.). The concept of dual city reflects that the well-to-do live in one part of the city, while the other part of the city is occupied by the poor. The work of Hernandez et al. (2012) provide critical perspectives on phenmenon of urban informality in Latin American cities. Urban informality is a state of exception to the order of formal urbanization, and it possesses challenges of dealing with "unplannable" (Roy 2005).

According to Roy (2005), there are two contrasting frames that dominate the current discussion on informality: (a) a category of urbanization as Sir Peter Hall and Ulrich Pfeiffer (2000) call it, "informal hyper-growth" cities. They argue that the urban poor have "built their own city without any reference whatsoever to the whole bureaucratic apparatus of planning and control in the formal city next door"; and (b) informal economy as Hernando de Soto (1989) mentioned "is the people's spontaneous and creative response to the state's incapacity to satisfy the basic needs of the impoverished masses." Both frames conceptualize informality and poverty more generally, as caused by isolation from global capitalism (Roy 2005). According to Roy (2005), informality as "a *mode* of urbanization" "is not a separate sector but rather a series of transactions that connect different economies and spaces to one another." This informal space falls outside the realm of urban planning and control. Informality, as David Gouvernuer (2015: 24) says, has to be reconsidered, "not as a problem but as a consequence of historic structural deficiencies in

developing societies." In the Global South, informality is a defining characteristic of urbanization and urban life. Rocco and Bellegooijen (2018) in their handbook on informal urbanization seek a middle ground between two opposing perspectives on the political meaning of urban informality. The first, the emancipatory perspective frames urban informality as a practice that fosters autonomy, entrepreneurship, and social mobility (Rocco and Bellegooijen 2018). The other perspective sees informality predominantly as a result of political exclusion, inequality, and poverty. Rocco and Bellegooijen (2018) ask questions: do we see urban informality as a fertile breeding ground for bottom-up democracy and more political participation? Or is urban informality merely the result of a democratic deficit caused by governing autocratic elites and ineffective bureaucracies?

The main causes of growing informal urbanization, besides others, are rural-urban migration, rapid urbanization, inadequate resources, and lack of control and urban planning. Moreover, informal urbanization in the Third World is a symptom of "subsistence urbanization" and emerges as "urbanization from below." Urban informal urbanization is applied in the case of informal housing, the economy, and service provision (Guibrunet and Broto 2015) and the informal settlement.

Informal Housing

Informal housing refers to the houses that are built by the occupants without input from planning agencies, sometimes on land that is not legally owned and deprived of basic services such as electricity, water, and sewage (Guibrunet and Broto 2015). Growing poverty and inequality pushes people into informal housing. Massive rural-urban influx and lack of serviced land and affordable housing cause informal urbanization. In informal housing, market affordability accrues through the absence of formal planning and regulation (Baross 1990; Dowall 1991 cited in Roy 2005). Informal housing is "bottom-up," "grassroots," and "a perhaps unavoidable form of urbanization" in developing countries (Bellegooijen and Rocco 2013: 1795). As cities develop, there

occurs dramatic increase in land, and property prices very often pushes poorer city dwellers to informal housing sector. However, Roy and AlSayyad (2004) emphasized that informal housing is no longer the domain of the urban poor, rather it is now a zone of transactions for the middle class and even transnational elites.

Informal Economy

The informal economy refers to productive activities that are not regulated by the state, which includes subsistence activities as well as more organized informal service provisions such as waste collection or public transport (Guibrunet and Broto 2015). Informal economy is also called "sponge," "shadow," "hidden," "black," "parallel," or "underground" economy (or sector) that absorb large rural-urban migrants and provide them employment and livelihood opportunities (Mohanty 2006). The necessity for employment to generate an income that satisfies poor's needs makes informal urban environment a fertile ground for informal economic activities and many times, illegal activities.

Informal Settlements

Informal settlements are self-constructed entities within cities and towns, the resulting effect of informal urbanization. There are various scholarly descriptions of informal urbanizations such as "shanty towns" (Beard 1920); "planet of slums" (Davis 2004); "billion squatter population" (Neuwirth 2006); and "dysfunctional urban societies" (UN-Habitat 2006), and these narratives have deep entrenched socio-spatial inequalities (Lombard 2014). The importance of the informal sector and informality in processes of urbanization is increasingly widely acknowledged (Bunnel and Harris 2012). The UN-Habitat (2003) defined informal settlements as (i) residential areas where a group of housing units has been constructed on land to which the occupants have no legal claim or which they occupy illegally and (ii) unplanned settlements and areas where housing is not in compliance with current planning and building regulations.

Informal settlements thus have a complex continuum of both legality and illegality where

squatter settlements formed through land invasion and self-help housing can exist alongside informal subdivisions formed through legal ownership and market transaction but in violation of land use regulations (Roy 2005). The term "informal" may not be equated with "illegal," "poor," "inferior," or "marginal" since increasingly middle-class families find their place to live in nonformal neighborhoods. Growth of informal settlements is spontaneous response to the rapid urbanization. Informal settlements result in undesirable urbanization driven less by economic growth and more by rural-urban migration of the poor and jobless. The growth of urban informal settlements is caused by physical, socioeconomic, cultural, institutional, political, and historical factors. The physical factors concern the nature of the land on which people build unauthorized structures. Example of such lands include marginal or less valuable urban lands that are environmentally vulnerable such as along river valleys, steep slopes, dumping grounds, abandoned or unexploited plots, and in low-lying areas, and wetlands.

Challenges of Informal Urbanization

Informality is a widespread phenomenon that poses serious social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental challenges (Huchzermeyer and Karam 2007; Porter 2011; Hernandez et al. 2012). A growing number of people come to cities from rural areas and live at lower-income level in urban standards, and the rural poor through migration is transformed to urban poor. They stay poor as Lipton (1977) said due to an "urban bias" development. Such demographic transformation is reflected in what has been called the *urbanization of poverty*. The poor have been urbanizing more rapidly than the city population as a whole. The recent pace of urbanization and current forecasts for urban population growth imply more rural-urban influx to cities in the future. Perhaps one of the most insidious effects of urbanization on poverty is the displacement of low-income city dwellers from their communities which is usually done through a process called "gentrification"

(Smith 2002; Richmondvale Academy 2016). Gentrification is defined as "the physical, social, economic, and cultural phenomenon whereby working-class or inner-city neighborhoods are converted into more affluent communities, resulting in increased property values and the outflow of poorer residents" (Richmondvale Academy 2016). Gentrification encompasses the beautification of previously undesirable neighborhoods through the construction of new buildings and other amenities, such as supermarkets and restaurants (ibid.). This hikes rents prices and draws out older residents, who are pushed again and again into undesirable areas. Besides other factors, poor urban infrastructure, insufficient housing, and weak city management causes the informal settlements (ibid.).

Challenges of Urban Poverty

The major effects of urbanization on poverty are the birth of informal settlements in terms of slums and squatters; these are the product of large-scale rural-urban influx on the one hand, a weak management of urban affairs, and insufficient and unaffordable housing on the other. Two perspectives on poverty emerge in the context of informal settlements: (1) informal settlements as ladders out of poverty and (2) informal settlements as poverty traps. Informal settlements help to lift rural households out of poverty through providing access to urban jobs. Living in informal settlements in city help people to gain access to economic opportunities and help them coming out of poverty. Living in the city seems to help people in informal settlements to gain access to economic opportunities help coming out of poverty. Informal settlements are perpetual features of the urban landscape that demonstrate low social mobility and structural impediments to progress and thus seen as poverty trap. "Urbanization of poverty" continues in cities as a continuous struggle of a growing number of poor people for land, housing, and livelihoods in a challenging urban environment (Evans 2002). While formal land and housing markets are generally dominated by economic interests of the urban elite poor urban dwellers and sometimes even the middle classes do not have the means to participate in these markets (Ehebrecht

2015). A "culture poverty" continues to exist and the urban poor migrants and squatter dwellers become deeply entrenched in politics in cities what Perlman (1976) explains in his work, "the Myth of Marginality".

Challenges of Slums and Squatters

The phenomenon of slum formation produced a variety of local settlement types (Acioly 2007). These aquire different names such as "fevelas" in Brazil, "basti" and "Zopaadpatti" in India, "ranchos" in Venezuela, "Katchi abadis" in Pakistan, "bariadas" in Peru and so on. These informal settlements are often referred as "unauthorized settlement," "unplanned settlement," "uncontrolled settlement," or "spontaneous settlements," a resulting effect of spontaneous informal urbanization. As cities grow, so do informal or spontaneous settlements. Informal settlement is also called an "auto settlement," "abnormal" and "dysfunctional settlement," "unjust settlement," and shack. The terms slum and squatter are used interchangeably; however, they differ. The UN-Habitat (2003) defined slums as contiguous settlements where inhabitants are characterized as having (i) insecure residential status; (ii) inadequate access to safe water; (iii) inadequate access to sanitation and other basic infrastructure and services; (iv) poor housing quality; and (v) overcrowding. On the other hand, squatter settlements can be defined as a low residential area which has developed without legal right to the land or permission from the concerned authorities to build; as a result of their illegal status, infrastructure and services are usually inadequate (UN-Habitat 2003). It means slums are areas where people with land ownership live in poor environmental and socioeconomic conditions and are different from squatters which are the settlements where people build houses without any legal title to land (UN-Habitat 2003). Slums in cities are commonly referred as "shanty towns," a settlement of improvised housing which is commonly known as shanties or shacks and made of plywood, corrugated metal, sheets of plastic, and cardboard boxes. A typical shanty town often lacks adequate infrastructure, including proper sanitation, safe water supply, electricity, streets, or other basic necessities to

support human settlements. Such settlements are usually located on the periphery of cities, in public parks, or near railroad tracks, rivers, lagoons, or city trash dump sites. As opposed to slums, *squatter settlements* are transitional or temporary in nature that lack land tenure. A squatting occupancy is a problem of legal dimension. A squatter settlement is located on land or in buildings that are occupied without the consent of the owner. A squatter settlement can be both a slum and a squatting, i.e., the settlement fulfills the criteria of non-compliance with the law regulating land use and of exhibition of decaying physical conditions. Amis (1984) in astudy in Nairobi found commercialization of unauthorised low-income housing involving landlords and tenants. Some characteristics of squatter settlement include illegality and informality; low residential space; unauthorized housing and temporary dwellings; inappropriate locations; overcrowding; restricted public utilities and urban basic services; poverty and vulnerability and social stress and poor health; and informal economic activities and environmental hazards and degradation.

Environmental Challenges

Informal urbanization is posing complex environmental, social, economic, and spatial challenges. Air and water pollution, lack of personal hygiene and environmental sanitation, and noise and cultural pollution are among the most visible environmental problems in the informal settlements. Informal urbanization is unsustainable in the long run, and informal settlement is a persistent challenge in achieving sustainable urban development and building a healthy city. Informal settlements with poor urban planning and management deficiencies and basic urban service and infrastructure deficits severely affect the city's livability and environmental quality. Poor people living in slums are often forced to live in environmentally unsafe areas, steep hillsides and floodplains, or polluted sites near solid waste dumps, open drains and sewers, and polluting industries. Informal settlements are located on marginal land that is exposed to the risk of storms, fire, disease, and flooding (Mohanty 2005). Informal settlement dwellers are critically vulnerable or susceptible

to various economic as well as environmental risks. Poor environmental conditions in informal settlements lead to poor health, which, in turn, aggravates poverty. City authorities face with a huge challenge of illegal dumping of waste within cities by the slum/squatter dwellers which has much environmental and health implications.

Challenges to Urban Planning, Development, and Governance

Growth of informal urbanization poses a serious threat to the local and national governments and urban governance. It puts challenges for spatial planning and urban design. Spatial planning and design are failing to deliver sustainable solutions that address the needs of citizens living in informal settlements. The rates of urbanization and demand for housing in informal sector fluctuate rapidly and hard to predict, and this makes planning for urban growth and urban service provisions for informal urbanization a challenge. Another challenge in planning for informal urbanization is that informal settlements are generally undocumented or not captured in official maps. This is because the governments usually see them as temporary or illegal. The number of informal settlements is growing uncontrollably with informal urbanization that put increased service delivery pressure upon resources like housing, water, sanitation, electricity, and health services that the civic authorities are unable to cope with. The "squatter citizens" face numerous challenges in their struggle for survival in cities (Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1989). Improving the lives of informal settlement dwellers is one of the most pressing development challenges. The major challenges of managing informal urbanization are due to shortage of land and finance which are the two critical instruments in urban planning and management. Fekade (2000) noted that the rapid growth of informal settlements is largely due to deficits in formal urban land management in cities.

Social and Cultural Challenges

Social challenges such as drug addiction, alcoholism, prostitutions, and criminal activities are perpetual problems in the informal settlements. High incidence of HIV/AID and prevalence of diseases including communicable diseases in the informal settlements are the perpetual challenges. The informal settlement dwellers are situated far away from the city's economic opportunities, with no access to basic services such as water supply, sanitation, and electricity, due to illegitimacy. The informal settlements do not have proper infrastructure that supports the provision of clean water and electricity among other urban services and amenities. Informal urbanization and informal settlements are the real threats to achieve urban sustainability.

Housing/Shelter Challenges

Poor housing and living conditions, poor healthcare options, low standard of living, lack of adequate water supply and sanitation, and poor urban basic services are the challenges of informal settlements. Environmental health issues are some of the most visible issues facing informal settlements (Harpham et al. 1988). Sprawling slums, litter, and polluted waterways are prevalent in most urban slums. The most pressing problem facing the housing sector in the Third World in so far as housing the urban poor is concerned is the shortfall of supply of adequate houses over demand. However, in some instances, construction of permanent dwellings in the informal settlement becomes problematic. Permanent structures in the informal settlement areas become a huge challenge as the areas are not legalized where building plans can be approved and implemented. Civic authorities have no choice but to demolish these buildings that lead to social chaos, and the issue very often becomes politicized. In addition, informal settlement dwellers also take illegal water and electricity connections and do not adhere to the city regulations which are a challenge to urban planning.

Informal Settlements Upgrading

On the one hand, informal spaces have been perceived as "unplannable"; on the other hand, there has been a series of attempts to improve informal spaces (Roy 2005). There has been marked shift in

emphasis from policies that sought to eradicate informal settlements or to relocate them to urban peripheries to urban upgrading strategies providing services on-site. Various urban development strategies have been adopted in the past while handling informal settlements. These strategies range from denial, tolerance, formalization, demolition, eviction, and displacement (Roy 2005). Several governments have also pursued anti-informal urbanization policies. People are evicted from inner-city informal settlements to the peripheries. Forced evictions adopted by several governments in various parts of the world put the rights of informal settlement dwellers at risk and lead to violation of human rights. The challenges are to provide effective protection against forced evictions and to provide access to basic services, public facilities, and inclusive public spaces to the evicted/displaced dwellers. It has been argued that poverty and inequality cannot be simply eradicated through demolition or eviction. Many cities adopt alternatives that formalize these areas through incremental, on-site upgrading. Slum upgrading is however different from urban upgrading. Urban upgrading is broadly defined as physical, social, economic, organizational, and environmental improvements undertaken cooperatively among citizens, community groups, businesses, and local authorities to ensure sustained improvements in the quality of life for residents in cities. Urban upgrading possesses great potential for improving housing quality in informal settlements. Slum upgrading, on the other hand, is an integrated component of urban upgrading. Informal settlement or slum upgrading is a process through which informal areas are gradually improved, formalized, and incorporated into the city itself, through extending land and services to the dwellers. It involves providing informal settlement dwellers with the social, economic, institutional, and community services in the cities. These services may include legal (land tenure), physical (infrastructure), social (e.g., education or health), or economic services. The upgrading activities also include the provision of basic services such as housing, streets, footpaths, drainage, clean water, sanitation, and sewage disposal and access to education and healthcare.

Approaches to Informal Settlement Upgrading

Various authors analysed approaches and methods of informal settlement upgrading (Pamuk and Cavalleri 1998; Abbott 2002; Amao 2012; Hermanson 2016). Two broad approaches as Amao (2012) noted have been used in urban upgrading of informal settlements: (1) community participation approach and (2) government intervention approach. The rationale behind community participation approach is that the communities know their needs better and should be consulted and carried along in the decision-making process (Amao 2012). The participation of the community in improving the quality of their settlement is also an important resource that has to be mobilized for improvement. Abbott (2002) calls for a process of "settlement transformation" in which physical interventions are supported by social and economic programmes that can improve the quality of life of informal settlement dwellers. Land sharing is an approach which has brought about considerable settlement improvement by the initiative of the people themselves (Amao 2012).

On the other hand, the two popular approaches used by the public authorities have been settlement upgrading and "sites-and-services" (Amao 2012). Settlement upgrading has been an option where a compromise has been reached by the land owner and on a sharing basis; the squatter has been allowed to continue on the land parcel, but with a significant upgrading of the settlement's infrastructure and services. Where such land compromises or sharing has not been possible, the squatters have been relocated to another location, where varying levels of "sites-and-services" have been provided, with again land lease or ownership (Amao 2012).

The common methods that are adopted in informal settlements or slum upgrading include:

(a) Self-help housing: Self-help housing (Skinner and Rodell 1983; Mathéy 1992) emerged in the 1970s. John Turner advocated slum improvements free of government intervention to allow their residents to change their living conditions by themselves (Werlin 1999). Self-help housing offers several advantages including mobilization and realization of local social capital, greater ownership and control of the housing process by local residents, greater participation by residents in the design, and potentially the achievement of more valuable housing product as a result equity and/or a more cost-effective construction process (Amao 2012).

(b) Relocations: Relocations may affect only a portion of the settlement or the entire settlement and may be temporary or permanent. The relocation of entire settlements, to worse located land relative to livelihood opportunities and other amenities, should be undertaken as a last resort (Amao 2012).

(c) In situ slum upgrading: The advantages of in situ upgrading are that these are affordable, flexible, and viable options. In situ or on-site upgrading includes conventional in situ upgrading and nonconventional in situ upgrading.

  (i) Conventional in situ upgrading: This entails the redevelopment of an informal settlement in a comprehensive and relatively complete fashion in respect to housing, tenure, and infrastructural services (Amao 2012). There are significant challenges in achieving conventional upgrading.

  (ii) Nonconventional in situ upgrading: This has become one of the most promising approaches to the housing crisis in the "Global South" (Ehebrecht 2015). This approach is receiving increasing attention given the significant constraints in achieving conventional upgrading. Nonconventional upgrading as Ehebrecht (2015) notes takes two main forms: (a) The provision of interim relief measures and/or the initiation of initial upgrading measures to address key needs such as

fire protection, basic sanitation, access to potable water, solid waste removal, basic healthcare, and improved internal access ways and (b) the delivery of a full upgrade solution but utilizing different methods and housing typologies.

Challenges of Upgrading of Informal Settlements

Informal settlements are heterogeneous entities and include urban dwellers with varied needs and interests. The primary challenges in upgrading informal settlements are achieving some kind of coherence in the community and finding solutions to a wide range of needs and interests. All of these interests must be properly assessed and brought into the planning process. The best way to do this is through negotiated development, in which people participate in negotiating their rights. Insufficient financial and human resources, burdensome regulatory rules, unclear administrative procedures, and unrealistic standards have all been reported as major challenges to successful upgrading (Amao 2012).

Upgrading of informal settlements is part of the housing programs, which aim to address the housing challenges. Responses to the housing question often remain very technical and developmental in nature. The housing sector has not been given a priority it deserves within the context of national economic and social development. A lack of proper coordination between housing and other urban services and infrastructure government agencies are very often the challenges to successful upgrading.

As most informal settlements are located in hazardous areas, thus need to be upgraded incrementally and on the same site. Incremental housing is a step-by-step process of upgrading informal settlements. Incrementalism allows informal housing to be adapted over time. There is a need to develop the incremental settlement process in such a manner that it will lead to access to integrated human settlements. The process has multiple stakeholders and requires active participation of urban citizen in the process. The

informal settlement praxis is cross border in nature, and thus the process toward incremental upgrading, complexities, and dynamism is universal. The increasing rate of urbanization especially informal urbanization and settlements are great challenges, and upgrading informal settlements to well-serviced and integrated neighborhoods poses a daunting challenge.

A lack of recognition by relevant government authorities of the urban informal settlements as part of urban fabric is a major impediment to improve the living conditions of these settlements. As a result, the informal settlements have not received adequate developmental attention. Some of the other challenges that slum upgrading programs face as Ndukui (2013) included include complexities of slum settlements with regard to tenure arrangements; lack of coordination of various stakeholders; resistance to the slum upgrading program especially by the slumlords; lack of participation by the slum dwellers in the upgrading program; residents not being aware of their roles as stakeholders in the upgrading program; lack of adequate land for slum upgrading; lack of goodwill and mistrust from the slum dwellers; inadequate budgetary allocations to the program from the government; and above all the politicization of the upgrading programs.

Slum upgrading also faces the challenge of extensive environmental degradation in the slums. Limited land space, growing demand for affordable housing, complex land ownership, and lack of urban planning of informal settlements are the perpetual challenges for upgrading informal settlements. Another daunting issue in informal urbanization planning is lack of reliable data. Information on the demographic, social, and economic characteristics of people living in informal settlements is often limited as these information are not generally captured in formal national censuses. A comprehensive knowledge about informal settlements is needed to plan for improving housing, environment quality, and quality of life in cities.

Globalizing processes have tremendous impacts on national urbanization and on the process of urban development. Much of urban development is market-driven. The debate between planning and market-driven urban process continues. The basic principle is that urbanization will continue to grow, and it is unstoppable. Forced eviction of slum or squatter dwellers to the periphery will not solve the problem. The understanding of the dynamics and complexities around informal settlements needs to be rationalized. Ooi and Phua (2007) emphasized that the city governments need to establish the critical link between economic development, urban growth and housing. The informal and formal city debate continues (McFarlane 2012; McFarlane and Waibel 2012; Hernandez et al. 2012). There is a greater need to have efforts to convert informal urbanization to formal urbanization. However, the main challenge is how to integrate informal settlements and informal urban development into a formal system.

Way Forward

Urbanization is expected to grow unprecedentedly especially in the developing countries and it is projected to grow to 1.4 billion by 2020 (UN-Habitat 2006). Informal settlements are likely to grow with growing urbanization. The informal urbanization is likely to be the dominant form of urbanization in most developing countries in the future. David Gouvernuer (2015) in his work *Planning and Design for Future Informal Settlements: Shaping the Self-Constructed City* focused on a realistic approach that recognizes the current urban realities in developing countries, and it provided useful tips for future planning and design of informal settlements rather than eliminating these settlements. Gouvernuer (2015) relies on a strategy for "guiding the growth of emerging informal settlements, anticipating that properly self-constructed cities can become balanced, efficient, accessible, and desirable urban areas." According to Gouvernuer (2015), "developed Informal Armateurs (IA) which is a design and managerial approach that fosters sustainable growth of the informal city…enhancing their positive aspects while addressing their deficiencies." The Informal Armateurs (IA) is easy to implement design and managerial approach with the ability to provide

residents with conditions that they can achieve themselves. Okyere (2016) suggests that merging of planning, design and management solutions is a way forward for the future of informal city. Informal settlement upgrading is a developmental process that needs to be part of the broader human settlement delivery framework. A comprehensive approach to upgrading slums needs to be seen as a way to foster equitable and inclusive development (Hermanson 2016). The "informal settlements can be both catalyst and vehicle for the achievcment of greater inclusiveness while fostering innovation, creating jobs and developing social capital" (ibid.).

Conclusion

Informal urbanization is an issue of marginalization, poverty, inequality, and urban planning and governance. In developing countries, the question of inequality is both social and spatial in nature. Urban design by itself cannot reduce social inequality and urban poverty; there is a need to integrate design into upgrading of informal settlements. Community participation from informal settlements and urban society at large in the process of urban upgrading is vital. There is a greater need to adopt integrated approaches to planning and management of informal urbanization. Governments need to take more positive approach to urbanization and need to have the planning tools to deal with the rapid urbanization. There is an urgent need to integrate informal urbanization in general and informal settlements in particular into formal city planning and management. Multi-scale, multidisciplinary, and structured approaches are essential to tackle the challenges of informal settlements in cities. Enabling a multidisciplinary approach to urban development particularly in the areas of housing will promote an integrated approach to the planning, design, and development of housing solutions. Informal settlements hold much promise for achieving more inclusive cities. If incrementally developed, informal settlements could achieve more socially just cities. Informal settlements need to be seen as solutions to informal urbanization rather than problems. Interventions and cooperations from government, non-governmental organization, civil society, private bodies, and communities are most needed (Mitlin and Satterthwaite 2004) to make informal settlement upgrading successful and building sustainable and livable cities.

Cross-References

▶ Inclusive City
▶ Poverty Reduction Strategies
▶ Spatial Planning
▶ Strategies for Promotion of Adequate Housing

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