



# URBAN UPDATE

## Organization and Poverty Reduction

RESEARCH AGENDA AND BEYOND

July 2006 NO. 9

### JORGE WILHEIM

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Jorge Wilhelm Consultores Associados, São Paulo; Planning Secretary, City of São Paulo, 2000-2004; Deputy Secretary General, UNHabitat II, Istanbul, 1996; Environmental Secretary of São Paulo State, 1986-1989; Lead Consultant for the master plans of Curitiba, Campinas, Goiania, Nova Lima and many other Brazilian cities.

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### THREE PRELIMINARY COMMENTS

Humankind is currently living through a period of *mobility*. The process of acculturation of Europe, which is reproducing their population, but are receiving large numbers of immigrants from their former colonies and from poorer eastern European countries.

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and limits on its power. One has to recall the fact that “capitalism” is not the same as “market economy”; the latter existed many centuries before capitalism was invented, although the former has been an efficient operator of the market since the mercantilism of the XVII century. During this century I believe that the link between the market and capitalism will have to adapt to the globalization of the economy, the acceleration of all processes and the new social paradigms of global connectivity and an eventual “knowledge society”. The necessary transformation of capitalism might result in some kind of regime called “social capitalism” or “free-market socialism”!

For the present time, the efficiency of the global economy, as it is applied, has created new poverty problems and also a mounting assault on the Earth’s non-renewable natural resources. This brings me to a third comment: what does *sustainable development* mean? “Sustainable” was an adjective applied to the noun “development” as a reminder that economic growth based on the dramatic depletion of natural resources would have a short life. Thus, the term received a *green* coloring that remains today. In the current context we must admit that the sustainability of development also depends on the permanence of other factors, like employment or simply decent work. In order to develop strategies for poverty reduction, we should remember that with no forests we shall have no water, without labor we shall have a different society, and

without oil we shall have to establish a post-petroleum civilization. In other words: *the long-term challenges and aims are very significant for short-term strategies.*

When one has governmental responsibilities it is easy to plot the *urgent demands* of people; and government has to tackle these diverse issues. However, they are not necessarily *fundamental issues* for development that designs the future

life and opportunities of those same people. Governments should deal with these issues too. This is true for policy considerations that address poverty. Although the reduction of poverty means the design and implementation of necessary actions, these actions should be strategic to the incremental transformation toward the end of (f)10(o)10(r)-35(m)10(a)10(t)10(i)10(o)10(

health facilities, new modern schools with cultural and sport activities, computer centers, reduced price 2-hour bus tickets, special zones for popular housing markets, and the setting up of productive units in the periphery. The programs intended to achieve inclusive results were deployed mainly in those areas previously deemed by an academic report as “districts of exclusion”. The strategies were clearly meant to combat inequity, violence and poverty.

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level, quite substantial. And it even reflected on the local business: in those districts of exclusion small commerce was enhanced and corresponding taxes increased.

### SUGGESTING SUBSIDIES FOR A RESEARCH AGENDA

The initial comments and the examples from São Paulo are put forward as a subsidy to the debate that should feed decisions concerning research objectives for the coming years, on the issue of poverty reduction and the UN goals for the Millennium.

Those dealing with urban issues should address the problem of urban social exclusion in order to set all poverty reduction studies and research in the long-term perspective of a more equitable society. In other words: our main interest relies on reaching a more just society in which poverty would come to an end.

For this purpose several themes could be listed, not only analyzing the local experiences of short-term strategies, like the São Paulo case, but also researching theories and general ideas generated with the aim of a more just society. In order to debate this perspective, I will list some possible topics:

- Regional cultural character of urbanization and its effects on poverty
- Free-market and new capitalism: new frontiers and regulation
- The 21st century sustainable development: environment and decent work
- Towards a post-petroleum civilization
- Labor and decent work in global and local economies
- Long-term planning C ( )222(L) environment and decent

