

TRIALOG 78

Social Production of Habitat in Latin America

by Eike Jakob Schütz / Klaus Teschner

The journal focuses as usually on a series of local perspectives and case studies on the theme. While its predominant language is English, the majority of the articles is also available in Spanish at the website of the journal (www.trialog-journal.de)

From the Editorial:

The Habitat International Coalition (HIC) global network and its Latin American Secretariat (HIC-AL) can be credited with having systematised the many concrete experiences with self-determined approaches in housing and urbanism and to have incorporated them into a theoretical concept: the “Social Production of Habitat.” A relevant number of local processes that have shaped this concept were sponsored by church development cooperations, i.e., by Misereor/KZE and CEBEMO (now CORDAID).

A survey of these local processes could be the starting point for an intercontinental debate on alternative models to the neo-liberal approach. We therefore consider it appropriate to present Latin American experiences in this volume of TRIALOG (only some of them, of course) and to urge for the systematisation of experiences from other continents as a means of ensuring the on-going development of such a concept.

Contents:

1

The introductory article by Eike Jakob Schütz refers to the context in which the idea of “Social Production of Habitat” developed and - taking Chile as an example - also describes it as a form of resistance against neo-liberal tendencies in housing and urban politics.

2

Gustavo Romero explains how the individual and collective self-production of dwellings challenged failed public housing policies as far back as the 1960s and 70s.

3

Carlos Escalante presents a proposal for a decentralised support system of housing and settlement improvement, designed by Peruvian NGOs and inhabitant organisations.

4

Silvia de los Ríos describes the El Chaparral housing experience in the centre of Lima as an example of urban renewal policies controlled by the inhabitants.

5

The strengthening of grass-roots organisations through processes produced by the inhabitants themselves also leads to a heightening of women's confidence and awareness, as can be seen both in El Chaparral and in the UCISV housing cooperative in Veracruz, Mexico, presented by Cristina Almazán.

6

The report by Néstor Jeifetz and Carla Rodríguez deals with squatters and the inner-city grass-roots movements in Buenos Aires that succeeded in bringing about a favourable change in the law and in developing cooperative projects arising from the squats.

7

Presenting a future prospect, Enrique Ortíz outlines the conditions under which the “Social Production of Habitat” concept could contribute to changing basic living conditions for a majority of the population.

8

The southern NGO consulting organisations involved in these processes often find themselves in a contradictory situation, as Alexander Jachnow keenly points out, where their critical-autonomous

self-understanding is forced to contend with their obvious dependency on donor guidelines.

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