Good Urban Governance of Informal Settlements in Metropolitan Areas: Case Study of the Informal Settlement of Ezzbet Al-Haggana, Cairo-Egypt

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Abstract: *Urban Governance of Informal Settlements in Cairo has become a critical challenge facing the Egyptian government Identification, integration and collaboration of relevant stakeholders becomes crucial. Consequently, this research aims at investigating new and adjustive governance models that imply effective participation of stakeholders. Three Methods were utilized; literature review to investigate norms of good urban governance and informality. Afterwards, political transitions in Egypt were traced in correspondence to spread of informal settlements in Cairo. Finally, the informal settlement of Ezzbet Al-Haggana in Cairo is particularly studied, as live evidence on the absence of collaboration between different stakeholders in a responsive framework. Site visits and interviews were conducted at this latter stage, which will be further explained within the paper. The research ends up with a conclusion that formal sector is incapable of providing adequate housing and services to everyone independently. Thus, all relevant actors should collaborate in efficient governance model.*

Keywords: ***Good Urban Governance, Metropolitan Area, Informal Settlements, Egypt, Cairo, Ezzbet Al-Haggana***

Insight on Governance and Urbanism: Conceptual Framework

The term governance was literally introduced for the first time in 1989 during The African Study for Sub-Saharan countries as *"the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs"* (Maldonado, 2010). The United Nations Development Programme provided in 1997 a more explicit definition for governance as *"The exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences."* (The world Bank, 2013). In this respect, the United Nations for Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific UNESCAP identified characteristics for governance to be good. Subsequently, the United Nations Centre for human Settlements UNCHS proposes set of indicators to measure the success of Governance within the urban context. The following diagram brings the two frameworks together as shown (see figure1), where the good governance would act as a trigger (Cause) for better urban performance (Effect).

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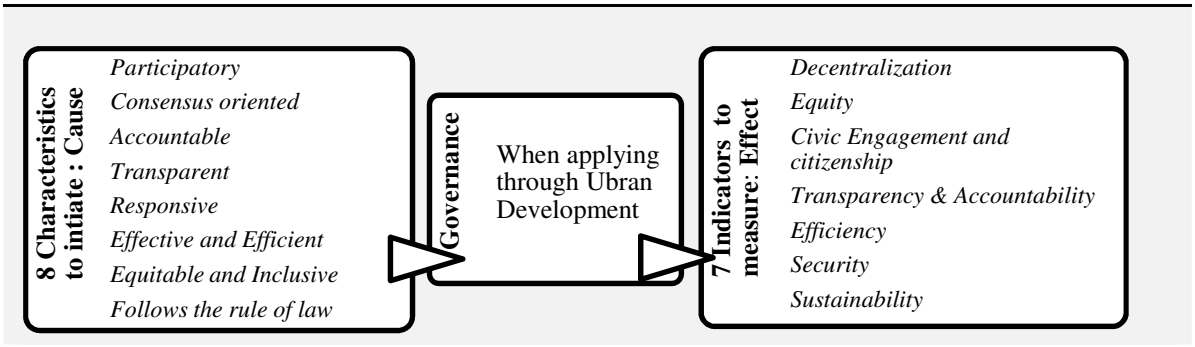


Figure 1 co- relationship between UNESCAP 8 characteristics of Good Governance and the UNCHS 7 indicators used to measure the effectiveness of the process in the Urban Context (Authors)

In order to achieve successful governance process, the voices of different actors should be represented even the most vulnerable groups. Thus, there should be a preliminary step for 'Stakeholders' identification' in relation to any proposed urban development, even if some of these groups could have non uniform preferences (Rai, 2004)**.** Subsequently, there is always a common classification of actors under three main groups illustrated as follows in Figure 2

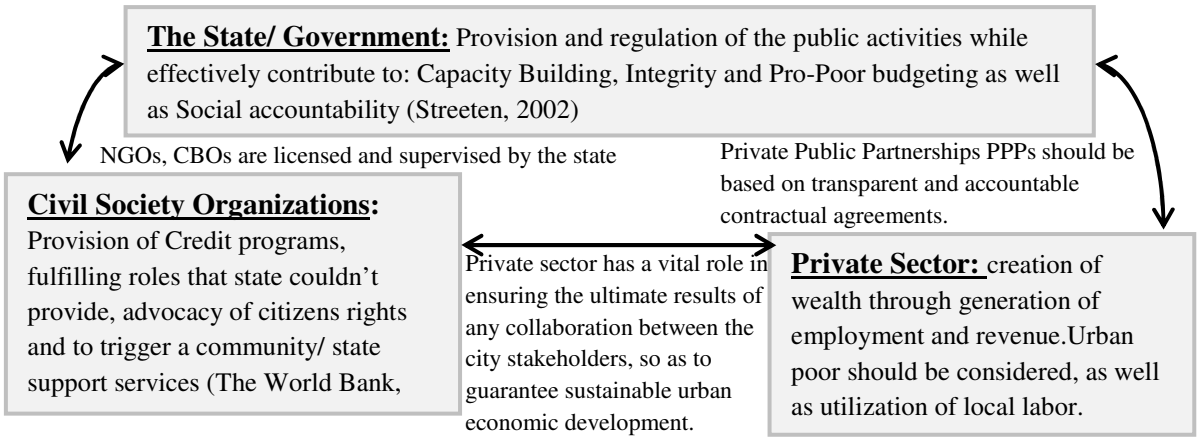


Figure2 shows the cross relations between three main stakeholders within the urban context (Authors)

In light of the previous diagram, these interactions and roles should be defined and questioned accordingly within different urban development stages.

Urban Informality in Metropolitan Cities[4]

There are 200,000 of Informal communities around the world, most of them in or around cities (United Nations for Human Rights), in which UN defines the Informal settlements as: "*1. areas where groups of housing units have been constructed on land that the occupants have no legal claim to, or occupy illegally; 2. Unplanned settlements and areas where housing is not in compliance with current planning and building regulations (unauthorized housing)"* (UN-HABITAT, 2007)**.** According to UN-habitat the informal Settlements term is

[4] The general concept of a 'Metropolitan Area' or 'Metropolitan City' is that of a core area containing a large population 'nucleus', together with adjacent communities that have a high degree of economic and social integration with that core (Bahl, Linn, & Wetzel, 2013)

usually associated with the urban poor, who have no other alternatives for getting a shelter except in a deteriorated and illegal context.

Inhabitants of such settlements suffer from shortage of basic urban services and limited life chances; some of them are not able to obtain formal-sector jobs due to their weak social and educational capacity. Hence, these informal communities are physically isolated from the rest of the formal administrative units in addition to social class significance (UN-Habitat U. N., 2003). Thus, certain reforms should be set towards integration of all stakeholders within the existing urban governing system; so as to increase chances of such informal communities for better living conditions.

This will be investigated below in Egypt, in which informal settlements are considered to be the dominant mode of urbanization, spreading on urban fringes, either on privately-owned agricultural land or on state-owned land in desert areas.

Transitional Political Influences on Urbanism in Cairo

Governance of Metropolitan cities such as Cairo is subjected to global trends and changing ideologies**,** in which around 60 percent of Metropolitan Cairo's residents live in informal settlements, (Sims, 2011). In light of this percentage, one can relate the Greater Cairo's political and economic transitions to its present urban configuration and the spread of informal settlements. This argument is further classified into time frames below in table 1

		National Policies	Urban Reflections	Informality
1952-1967	"The Republic Declaration"	Nasser's Regime: Socialism and the **Industrialization** policies were embraced by the new governing powers in Egypt.	The first master plan of Cairo (1953-1956), in which **Six satellite industrial zones** were proposed to receive 50 % of the investments	**Expansion on agricultural land** as their sale for building was more remunerative (Al-Kadi, 1987). **First informal occupancy was by the state in Manshiet Nasser** to relocate people from slums in Al Drasa and Al Azhar. (Sims, 2011).
1967-1973	"The Transition" from Nasser to Sadat:	After Nasser's Death in 1970, Anwar Al-Sadat succeeded him in the presidency. In 1971. Egypt had a new Constitution towards a powerful parliament and new legislations[5]	Late 60s there were Public **Evacuation from Suez Canal** cities due to 'Egypt-Israel' war	Internal migration; around one million people to be in Cairo in Manshiet Nasser (Sims, 2011). At the end of 1960s **Nasser ordered to extend water and power** for them.

[5]The 1971 Constitution remained in force - with few amendments in 1980, 2005 and 2007 – until its dissolution in February 2011.

Post 1973 -1980	"The Victory, Peace and Aspirations"	Sadat launched economic policies of "**open door policy**" or "Infitah for "gradual economic liberalization". Hence, **land prices sky-rocketed** (Sejourne, 2009)	In 1977 "**New Towns**" policy was proposed to relocate the buildings growth on agricultural land into **public housing on the desert fringes** of the city.	Most of these new towns **were not successful to grab inhabitants** and informality just kept spreading (Sejourne, 2009).
1981-2011	"The Stabilization"	Mubarek Regime: This time has witnessed Capitalism and privatization of public sector.	First appearance of **upper class segregated desert compounds** (Cairo Observer, 2011). On the other hand low income and urban poor found themselves obliged to live in **low cost informal housing**. Proposing **Cairo 2050** project in an attempt for **displacement of informal inhabitants** all over Cairo	Egypt's Planning Law No. 3 of 1983 prohibit local authorities from connecting infrastructure to illegal housing units (World Bank, 2007).This law was formally violated to accommodate the **needs of informal inhabitants and grab them politically.** **In 2008, Establishment of the Informal Settlement Development ISDF**[6] after the collapse of the unsafe cliff of Al-Dwika in Cairo, and the death of many informal inhabitants (isdf.gov.eg, 2008).
2011-Present	"The Public Revolution"	Egypt has witnessed a public uprising on the **25th of January 2011 for more democratic reforms**, since then two presidents (Mubarek and Morsi) were ousted by the military and two constitutions were cancelled. Former Elected councils were dissolved (Two Parliament , local popular councils)[7]		Absence of updated Urban framework in which Informal settlements exponentially Expanded after the revolution. **Lack of law enforcement due to absence of Police role against thugs and informal contractors.**

Table1: Brief on National Policies since 1952 and Its Urban Reflections (Authors)

It can be traced through previously mentioned national policies and reforms that urban development is not being thought of as an independent component of city, but more to be economically and politically biased.

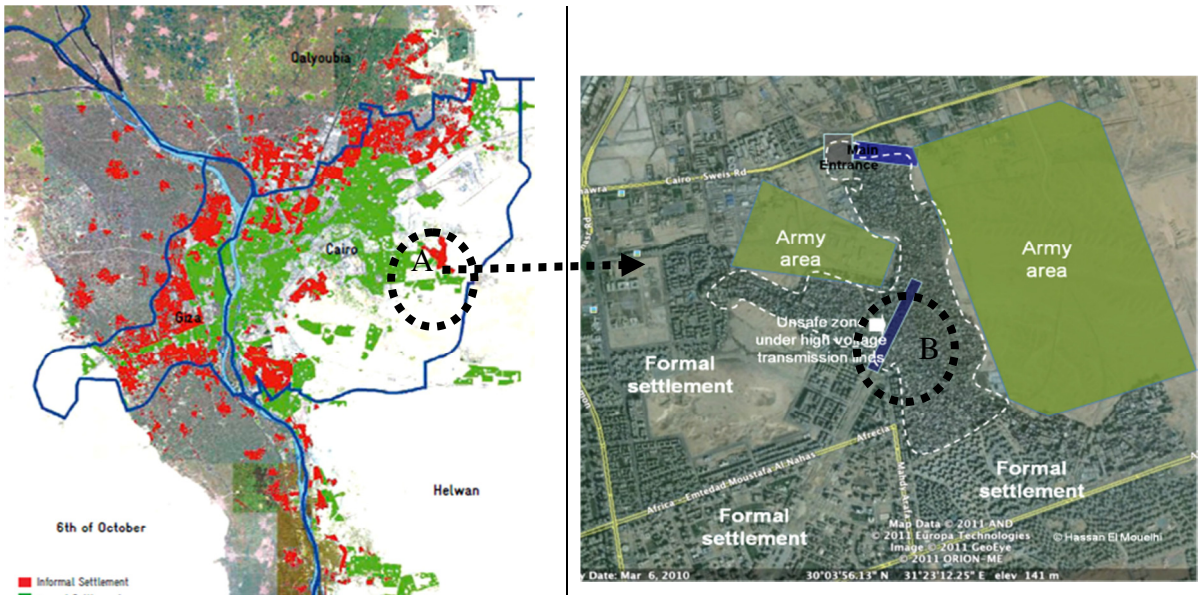
[6]Presidential Decree No. 305 for the year 2008 on the establishment of the ISDF under the direct authority of the Egyptian Prime Minister's Cabinet after the collapse of the unsafe cliff of Al-Dwika in Cairo (isdf.gov.eg, 2008)

[7] Egypt is using now 2013 constitution which was approved by direct voting system in December 2013, also the Presidential Elections are running during May 2014

These transitions collectively had an impact on public mistrust, at the same time led to gradual spread of Informal settlements as a self-developed solution. As a result, status of these settlements have been always swinging as sometimes they are indirectly blessed by the state, inwhich electricity and water meters are connected to them, while other times are seen as urban epidemic that they should be evacuated and displaced.

Informal Settlement in Cairo: Case of Ezzbet Al-Haggana

Background: As it has been demonstrated, Cairo has been much influenced by urbanization oriented policies, which have exponentially increased the city's population times in the past 60 years. The migration of rural populations has in the past represented one of the major factors fuelling urban development; although the spread of Informal Settlements proves that this is no longer the case. Hence, Cairo has been located on the world map to have 4 out of 30 "mega-slums" in the world; in which one of them is Ezzbet Al-Haggana (Davis, 2006). Ezzbet Al-Haggana is home for more than one million inhabitants living on former state desert land in the north-east of Cairo Governorate. Ezzbet Al-Haggana which is named in street signs and maps as 'Kilo 4.5'[8], has started as a village for families of guard soldiers 'Al-Haggana' stationed nearby. Nowadays, it is a place for affordable Informal housing market (Al-Shehab NGO). There is an existing unsafe area (isdf.gov.eg, 2008)that is prone to the hazard of high voltage electrical power cables (See figure 3). As it will be discussed later, this vulnerable area would be the driving factor to variety of stakeholders.



A- Location of Ezzbet Al-Haggana in relative to Cairo Informal settlements (source of original map is PDP/ GTZ, (Sabry, 2009)
B- Area prone to the hazard of high voltage electrical cables, which is estimated by the ISDF to have total number of 829 residential units (source of original basemap is google earth, while graphical representation and data source by ElMouelhi, 2014)

[8] Called that name in the 60s; as it is located 4.5 km distance form last point from Heliopolis (Al-Shehab NGO)

Figure 3: Two layers of zooming in for locating unsafe area within Ezzbet Al-Haggana (Authors)

Methodology: This section represents the continuation of research work that has been a part of M.Sc. Team Project (PartNaR)[9], which was a joint activity in 2012. The main focus was to investigate the ability of initiating a governance framework that engages the community, private sector and NGOs along with the relevant state representatives in Ezzbet Al-Haggana. Accordingly the below methodology in figure 4 was followed:

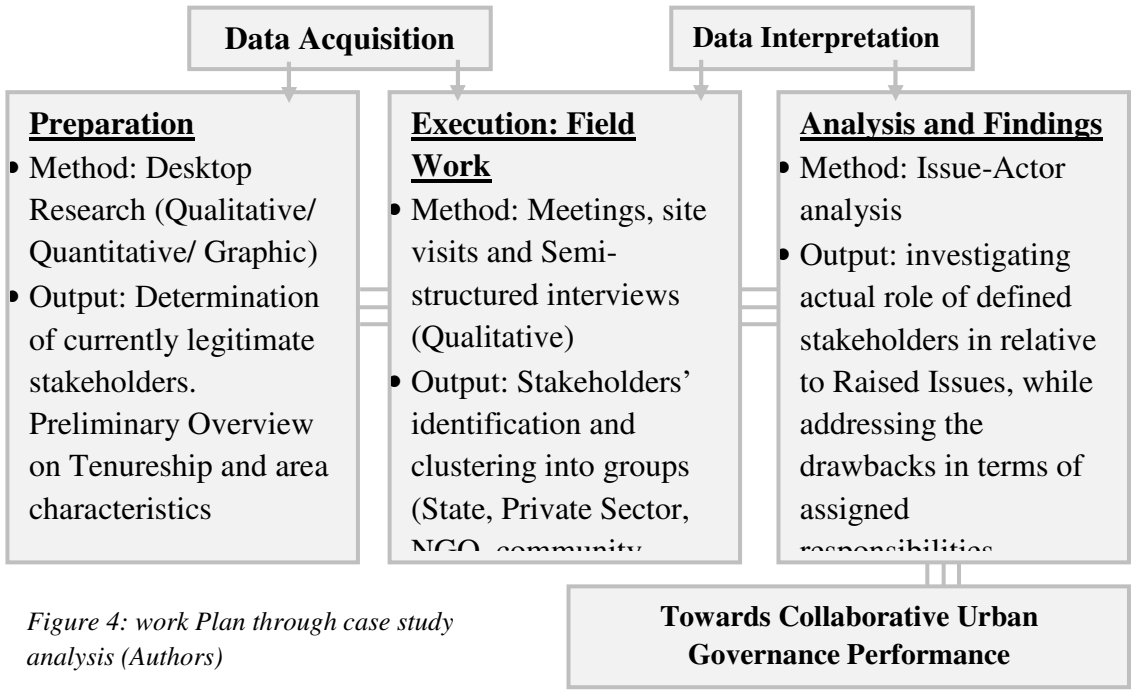


Figure 4: work Plan through case study analysis (Authors)

In this regard, role of three main stakeholder groups were investigated on ground:

- State represented in the Informal Settlements Development Facility (ISDF) who are mainly concerned with high voltage unsafe area
- Private Sector: Madinet Nasr for Housing & Development (MNHD) who are claiming to be the legitimate owners of the land
- Emarat Al-Ensan Foundation as an NGO who have facilitated interviews with community representatives (Men, Youth, Women, vulnerable inhabitants in the high voltage cable area, Local shop owners and Commuters)

Field Work Findings: certain findings were checked and briefly concluded below:

- Soci-Economic status: The inhabitants of Ezzbet Al-Haggana are mostly low-income families, where the area is recognized to have Car Mending very small workshops and some of the inhabitants work in service jobs in the surrounding area of Nasr City.
- Basic Urban Services: There is deficiency of services and infrastructure; for example, health care and education facilities, electricity, piped water, sanitation facilities, garbage collection, drainage system and paved roads.

[9] Between Ain Shams University, Egypt and Institute of Tropics and Sub-Tropics, Cologne University of Applied Sciences, Germany

- Tenure-ship: The development of the area had no legal documents and totally relied on personal trust. The Inhabitants usually claim that their tenure status is formal through paying "Awayed' which is property tax for electrical connections, and collect receipts for other items to gain as much paper legitimacy as possible.

Proposed Development Plans: were mainly triggered by MNHD and ISDF to transform the high voltage power line into underground cable, associated with Housing and Economic development including the residents as well

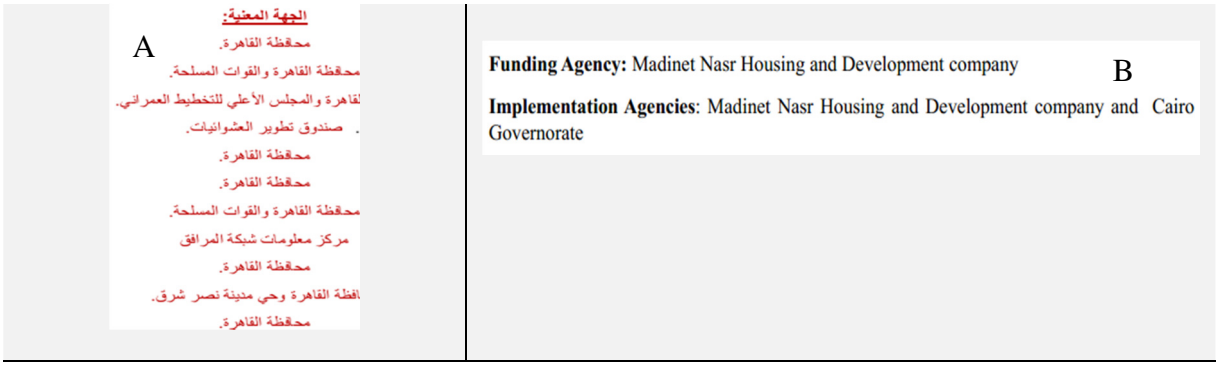


Figure5: Stakeholders Identifying their Potential Partners for Implementation of proposed development based on Snap shot of official presentation to the Research team by both:

A- MNHD, in which all named stakeholders are: Governorate authorities, ISDF, Military

B- ISDF, in which all named stakeholders are: MNHD and Governorate authorities

Notes that could be directly concluded from figure 5 are:

- **There is no mentioning of any form of local inhabitants participation**
- Unclear terms of cooperation between ISDF as a state representative and MNHD as Private Sector Company; so as to protect the rights of the most vulnerable groups against investors' interests
- Introduction of Governorate authorities and their detailed breakdown is provided through MNHD presentation
- Introduction of Military through MNHD presentation as Owner of Adjacent Land

Thus, formulating an adjusted urban governance model is required towards throughout: Identifying related Stakeholders, and correlating their roles to UN Urban Governance Model.

Identifying Stakeholders: Area-related Actors in light of the data collected and analyzed

State	Private Sector	Community	Others
•Govornorate •ISDF	•MNHD	•NGOs •Inhabitants	•Military •Sectoral Ministries

Figure 6: Stakeholders Identification relevant to the Urban Development of Ezzbet Al-Haggana (Authors)

It is important to mention that each of the mentioned actors in figure 6 can be broken down into smaller entities and represented on different scales. Also, this model is recommended to

be updated based on the specific development as there might be specific technical groups to be involved for example.

Reflections on UN Urban Governance Model: **When trying to apply UN Urban Governance model within Ezzbet Al-Haggana the following table is concluded**

	Direct Related Actors	**Recommended Collaborations: Towards better Performance**
Decentralization	Governorate Sectoral Ministries	On different tiers of governorate, decentralization should be promoted for facilitating the process of interventions and decision making process. However communication among these level should be essential as well as with sectoral ministries for Services Provision
Equity	Governorate ISDF NGOs	The fact of having an existing vulnerable community living in Ezzbet Al-Haggana increases the demand for equity measures. Hence, when proposing area development plans that should be responsibility of Public Sector and NGOs as advocacy agents of Urban Poor
Civic Engagement & citizenship	ISDF MNHD NGOs Inhabitants	In an attempt to support solutions that would resolve existing Conflicts regarding Tenureship and sense of ownership, and promoting the community Participation for that matter
Transparency & Accountability	Governorate ISDF MNHD	Public Private Partnerships always perceived to be corrupted, thus, certain measures and rules should be enforced to guarantee transparency and accountability
Efficiency	ISDF MNHD Governorate Sectoral Ministries	Feasible and Efficient plans and Capacity development are required to deal with Informal Settlements especially in the unsafe high voltage cable zone.
Security	Governorate ISDF Sectoral Ministries	Public Sector should be responsible for securing lives, resources and interests of Local community (inhabitants) and Investors(MNHD)
Sustainability	Governorate ISDF MNHD NGOs Inhabitants Sectoral Ministries Military	All actors should be this stage have identified roles that are not overlapping but more like to be harmonizing conflicts and integrating to reach a beneficial governance model that could guarantee a sustainable and responsive urban development

Table 2: relation of previously mentioned stakeholder for Ezzbet Al-Haggana in figure 6 to UN Urban Governance Model (Authors)

It is worth to mention that Table 2 illustrates only a sample of so many inter-linked and cross-cutting relationships among different actors related to Ezzbet Al Haggana. These links indicate the importance of each one of the mentioned actors and how much they are required to collaborate to achieve better and effective quality of life.

Conclusion

Informal Settlements are not only urban poor communities to be evacuated, displaced or traditionally upgraded then deteriorate after quite some years. Hence, Informal Settlements are more like to be an interactive and sensitive part of the city fabric that should be effectively integrated. Subsequently, this research attempted to introduce UN Good Urban Governance Model as a method to identify the required stakeholders to be involved for achieving the corresponding desired values within this model. This has been demonstrated within the case of Ezzbet Al-Haggana in Cairo, in which it was concluded that:

- Indirect actors such as Sectoral Ministries should be involved through decentralized and efficient channels
- Participation of Informal Actors (Inhabitants, commuters, and contractors) should be considered in a sense of empowerment and engagement
- Desired outcomes should be listed transparently and divided in terms of Actors, Roles and Collaborations in order to effectively measure all of the exerted effort, time and money in an accountable manner

Eventually, the urban governance of informal settlements in metropolitan areas is not anymore something to avoid and assess as risk factor within any urban development. On the contrary as involving the right actors would shift this paradigm towards sustainable metropolitan cities

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