

URBAN PREVENTIVE PLANNING TOOLS TO MANAGE EMERGENCY AND CRISIS IN LA PAZ (BOLIVIA)

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In the urban context of the South, vulnerability is strongly altering and in most cases is intensifying. This particular dynamic is the result of several factors: an increased exposure to destructive threats due to the significant urban expansion; an urban transformation that does not integrate conditions for development or that is not thought for the long term; a rise in poverty and social exclusion; a decrease of resources allocated to preventive development.

From these observations, it appears that while it is useful to maintain an orientation towards research on prevention, particularly to improve preventive urban planning, it has also become essential to think about emergencies and how to improve crisis management systems, in order not to abandon cities to their fate. However, within this subject matter, research has not approached the spatial and territorial dimensions for crisis management very often, which could clarify the complexity of emergency situations and the uncertainty that characterizes them, by taking into consideration the multiplicity and intricacy of spaces, decision-makers and territories involved in a crisis situation. This attempt could easily lead to tools for preventive planning focused on emergency and crisis. This is what this poster proposes to establish.

The poster is based on the experience of the PACIVUR programme (Andean Programme for Training and Research on Vulnerability and Risks in Urban Environments, IRD-University of Paris 1) developed within the frame of a scientific partnership agreement between the Research Institute for Development (IRD) and the Municipal Government of La Paz (GMLP) beginning in September of 2008. The programme aims for a better understanding of the kind of vulnerability generated by the agglomeration of La Paz, mainly approached from a spatial and territorial focus for emergency and crisis management.

At first, this poster shows how operational concerns linked to a retrospective analysis of events that caused damage has centered the attention on emergency and crisis: what is an emergency and crisis situation, both at municipal and local level? In the second stage, the poster refocuses these analysis within the paradigmatic context of risk, which has led to implement a scientific collaboration with the municipal authorities of the city of La Paz, in order to develop knowledge and tools more adapted to the context, in particular spatial analyses from a database supported by a geographical information system. In the third place, it reveals the attempt to analyze emergency and crisis areas, and their management by following different stages: the identification of vulnerable spaces and spaces for emergency and crisis management; the study of tools for emergency and crisis management: the analysis of their vulnerability, and the analysis of the territorial vulnerability.

This attempt leads to create proposals for territorial planning that able to reduce the loss of urban operation elements in determining, for more efficiency, intervention spaces according to the level of perturbation that this type of loss can provoke. This attempt is also interesting as it provides a clue to rethink risk in a radical manner, which is free from the conceptual and operational constraints imposed by a focus on the pre-eminence of hazards within risk studies.