Chapter 2
From Informal to Formal: What Can Be Learned from Reviewing 50 Years of Portuguese Models, Policies and Politics

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Abstract This chapter considers the formalization of informal settlements in mainland Portugal. The country experienced a rise of illegal settlements during a period of economic growth (corresponding to the 1960s and 1970s). Informal developments culminated in an exploding social and environmental problem with hundreds of thousands of citizens living in informal settlements, mainly around the Portuguese capital. The Portuguese example evolved from the late 1970s "critical stage" to our days in which informal settlements are residual and about to be solved. The general aim of this review is to discuss how different types of informal settlements influence the way public policies are designed, in four complementary perspectives: informal settlements' characteristics, including physical, social-economic and livelihood; local public policies initiatives and models of action; national public policies and paradigms; political involvement and the bridging role of political leaders. In this context, the success of public policies depends on its capacity to co-evolve with local organization's initiatives involving informal settlement dwellers. The scope of this review concentrates on two kinds of informal settlements: those in spaces not belonging to the residents; and those in spaces involving land ownership. The methodology adopted will follow those four perspectives along the last five decades (since the early 1960s). By demonstrating the benefits of long-term analysis of public policies in highly complex, hierarchical and dynamic environments as are informal settlements, the authors hope to stimulate more studies of similar nature.

Keywords Informal settlements management • Urban policy innovation • Long-term law-making analysis • Urban regeneration paradigms

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2.1 Introduction

Informal settlements are key issue in the urbanized world, both developed and developing. At the rise of the twenty-first century, United Nations estimated one billion people living in these territories and a growth in the following years of 10 %/ year (UN-Habitat 2003). The impact of these numbers in society and in urban territories is evident: lack of infrastructure, fragility of built structures, poor public health conditions and unclear land tenure are just some of the problems caused by informal settlements (Tranberg Hausen and Vaa 2004). In the European context, 50 millions are estimated to live in informal settlements under these conditions (UNECE 2010).

This chapter considers the formalization of informal settlements in mainland Portugal (South-western Europe), over a period of 50 years. As in many other countries in the past and in the present, Portugal experienced a rise of illegal settlements during the period of economic growth (in the 1960s and 1970s). The revolution of 1974 increased this process due to the return of emigrants living in central Europe and war refugees from former African colonies. This informal development culminated in an exploding social and environmental problem with hundreds of thousands of citizens living in informal settlements, mainly around the Portuguese capital. The Portuguese example evolved from the late 1970s "critical stage" in which the urban system was highly affected by this unsolved problem, to our days in which informal settlements are residual or about to be solved. However, the deep economic and social crisis in which Portugal currently lives is creating a new set of challenges.

The chapter is organized in six sections, including the present one: Sect. 2.2 will expose methodological aspects of the chapter; Sect. 2.3 will bring to the discussion the theoretical framework through opportune literature review; Sect. 2.4 will expose the results from the chronological approach of the chapter; Sect. 2.5 will discuss the chapter findings; finally Sect. 2.6 will conclude about previous sections' contents.

2.2 Methodological Aspects of the Chapter

Methodologically, a first theoretical approach with the aim of managing the different types of informal settlements was performed. Considering two types of informal settlements (slums with no secure land tenure and informal areas with secure land-ownership), four complementary perspectives were explored: (a) informal settlements' characteristics including physical, social-economic and livelihood (also related with landownership); (b) local public policies initiatives and models of action; (c) national public policies and paradigms models; (d) political involvement and the bridging role of political leaders. The interaction between these four perspectives will be discussed with one goal: to identify the different ways in which the two types of informal settlements were treated. In this context, institutions'

responsiveness will be approached in order to enhance the possible replication of some main features into other contexts (Olstrom 2005).

In order to better understand how local public initiatives, national public policies and political involvement deal with informal settlements, a common time frame was established regarding: the dictatorship period (until 1974); the revolutionary period (between 1974 and 1976); the post-revolutionary period (from 1976 to 1986) and the period following the European integration (after 1986).

Statistical data was collected – in order to understand the territorial expression of these phenomena – and technical reports related with informal settlements' law-making were the two main sources of information.

2.3 Informal Settlements

Despite the fact that the world experienced informal settling since the post second world war, unique political, social and economic contexts in each world region as well as ecological impacts claim tailor-made solutions. In order to try to solve problems created by informal settlements, institutions, academics and practitioners have to deal with highly complex processes (Dovey 2012) in which public administration, political forces, landowners and residents interact in a dynamic way. Approaches to deal with informal settlements have ranged from demolition and resettlement to in loco formalization. Scientists and practitioners recognize the necessity to learn from these cases (Portas 1988; Busquets 1999; Indovina 1990), especially from existing long-term experiences and from long-term analysis and/or evaluations, like the ones of Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain in the last two decades (UNECE 2010). Nevertheless, much of the research on informal settlements is only comprised of snap-shots of one or few case studies, focusing mainly on a limited number of aspects.

Several are the definitions of "informal settlements". However, some consensus has been built up around three main ideas by worldwide institutions such as OECD, which comprises: the construction on someone else's land; the construction without following technical rules; and the occupation of territory without respecting planning regulations (OECD 1997).

Although worlds' diversity of occupations makes difficult the "classification" of informal settlements (Roy 2011), two main categories will be addressed in this chapter. The first one corresponds to slums (ISS) as the sum of constructions, in general in compact environments and built in precarious conditions (in terms of materials used). The second one relates with occupation involving landownership (ISL) in which settlers owe the land and therefore construction conditions tend to be better. In both kinds of informal settlements, regulations are not taken in consideration, neither in terms of construction nor specially in terms of spatial planning.

Although there are many variations under this theme, ISS and ISL are two dominant kinds of informal settlements in the Portuguese recent urban history. Regarding these two categories, the following section will provide an inclusive perspective, under four main topics, of how and why ISS and ISL evolved in Portugal.

2.4 Complementary Perspectives on ISS and ISL: Main Findings

Informal settlements considered as slums (ISS) or as involving landownership (ISL) are rarely seen as part of the same process neither in academic works nor in practitioners' interventions. In this section four complementary perspectives will be addressed: the one over their main characteristics; the one of local public initiatives to deal with them; the one of national public policies' initiatives and the one of political involvement.

2.4.1 Informal Settlements' Characteristics Including Physical, Social-Economic and Livelihood

Informal settlements' characteristics mostly related with ISS and ISL include physical, social-economic and livelihood (related also to landownership) aspects. They contribute to specify the main differences between ISS and ISL.

Although informal settlements were known in Portugal since the early twentieth century in the late years of the Estado Novo's dictatorship, (1926–1974) was when they became more prominent as ISS as well as ISL. The second post-war brought some economic growth to the country and since the 1960s the economy started to open to the European markets. Main Portuguese cities became economic hubs and it was mainly in and around the city of Lisbon (but also in Porto) that informal settlements increased. Settlers were the result of migratory movements (Fonseca 1990), with origin in rural parts of the country since the early 1960s. Additionally, in the 1970s after the independence of Portuguese colonies, an important movement of war refugees took place.

ISS occupied public land, owned by an authoritarian but decadent state, and also private land, in a context in which legal owners were not able to stop the squatting process. ISL was based on the illegal division of rural land in order to create an offer of small plots of land for residential purposes (Rodrigues 1984). ISS implied less financial resources (investment in land and in construction materials was significantly low) and ISL implied a higher capacity of investment – although illegally divided land was sold at very low prices, the investment in materials was higher (Ferreira 1984). Although both types of informal settlements had been the result of similar social and political processes, they were associated with different types of population and therefore, with different territorial impacts (see Figs. 2.1 and 2.2).

Portuguese statistical data also shows some differences between ISS and ISL. Since 1864 (when the first national census was set up) and until 1960, the concept of housing unit was comprised by a wide range of construction types used for residential purposes, becoming "shelter" almost as a synonymous of "house". Only in the census of 1970, classical housing units were for the first time distinguished from "non-classical" ones (INE 1971). Non-classical accommodations included

Fig. 2.1 Example of ISS (Source: Silva 2014)

precarious constructions located in slums (which in Portuguese is translated by the word "*barraca*") mixed with other types of temporary housing (such as houses for workers in construction sites) and with buildings originally not designed for housing purposes. It was in 1981 that for the first time statistical data was produced in order to survey specifically the number of families, people and housing units located in slums (INE 1984). The following table shows how since then ISS developed in terms of numbers of residents, families and housing units (see Table 2.1).

Lisbon is heavily represented in these numbers. The concentration in 1981 of ISS in and around the Portuguese capital accounted for about 80 % of the more than 24,000 housing units located in nationwide slums and for nearly 90 % of people and families living under these conditions throughout the country.

By *distritos* (an in between municipality and region administrative division), the *distrito* of Porto, the second largest Portuguese city, had only 5 % of the national amount of housing units in ISS.

Differently from ISS, Portuguese censuses do not provide information about ISL. It is necessary to use other sources in order to find some data concerning ISL: in 1978, a report made by the national government revealed that at the national level existed 83,000 dwellings built in ISL, 63,000 of them located in Lisbon Metropolitan Area. In 1982/1983 another survey reported the existence of over 300,000 inhabitants living in ISL in Lisbon Metropolitan Area, which then represented over 12 % of the whole population, occupying almost 12,000 ha, a surface larger than the municipality of Lisbon (8500 ha).

Fig. 2.2 Example of ISL in Lisbon Metropolitan Area (Source: Silva 2014)

Table 2.1 Evolution of housing units, families and population in ISS between 1970 and 2011. The column in grey includes slums and other forms of housing such as improvised spaces in buildings originally not designed for residential purposes

	1970	1981	1991	2001	2011
Housing units	31110	24016	15607	11185	2040
Families	30185	21662	16184	11819	2090
Population	116650	72861	56288	37554	6658

A social differentiation existed between ISS and ISL; population living in ISS were more associated with economic instability, unemployment and illegal activities such as drug trafficking. The solution to these problems became one of the most visible parts of authorities' concerns with ISS. On the other hand, ISL were associated to different economic and social conditions related with more stable professional situation, which allowed access to landownership. Therefore, major pressures were put on other issues like the construction of infrastructures and of public facilities in ISL.

While the municipality of Lisbon concentrated the majority of ISS, looking basically for a shelter, a large part of ISL were spread over the suburban municipalities

around the capital, where residents could aim landownership at lower prices (Salgueiro 1977). However, different build typologies reflected a common need of free space around their houses in which they develop some small agricultural practices or gardening. Similarities and differences between ISS and ISL were important to the way that local public policies' responsiveness was designed as shown in the next sub section.

2.4.2   Local Public Policies' Initiatives

2.4.2.1   Until 1974

Local public initiatives to deal with informal settlements until 1974 were almost inexistent. A highly centralized government system gave little or any power to local authorities. Local leaders were chosen by the national government. More than fighting back informal settlements, local institutions ignored this movement (following the pattern of the national government), since they occurred in remote and less visible territories. Local public policies were marked by a crucial point in which the relations between institutions and citizens changed – the revolution of 1974, which put an end to 48 years of dictatorship – and established the ground for the first initiatives to deal with informal settlements.

2.4.2.2   1974–1976

In the first years of democracy, planning problems were almost completely shadowed by housing problems. Focusing on housing scarcity, in the period between April 25th 1974 (the date of the revolution) and April 25th 1976 (the date of the first parliamentary and local elections) a set of experimental initiatives took place in order to deal with informal settlements. Freedom of speech and of reunion catalysed associative movements, with residents' commissions gaining a central role in Portuguese society, which influenced the way ISS and ISL evolved.

Municipalities were part of an experimental process by providing land to build new housing settlements cooperation with ISS residents and technical teams created by the central government. The idea was to involve future residents into finding architectural solutions combined with flexible mechanisms such as self-construction and typologies adjustable to the growth of families.

Regarding ISL, they very quickly became part of the local housing agenda. The freedom of association allowed small landowners to organize themselves, to set priorities and to work as mediators between institutions and individuals. In order to deal with lack of infrastructures, collective facilities and public spaces, several municipalities produced urban plans as a way to set a stable urban framework (Silva 2010).

2.4.2.3 1976–1986

Two years after democracy's establishment, the first local elections took place. Municipalities gained autonomy in relation with central government at different levels, namely in terms of spatial planning, which influenced the way ISS and ISL were approached.

In respect to ISS, municipalities tended to have less intervention in the way solutions were designed. They became mediators between central government and communities, defining architectural programs and managing the selection process of families in condition to apply to a legal dwelling. But this period was scarcely responsive since public financial resources were insufficient to deal with the growth of slums.

In the same period, ISL evolved based on a growing involvement with local institutions. In some municipalities, mainly in Lisbon Metropolitan Area, where the size of ISL was exceptionally large involving a significant number of landowners (reaching several thousands in some cases), municipalities and landowners/residents commissions self-organized creating structures (local technical offices) specially dedicated to deal with ISL. At the same time the number of landowners and new residents was still growing and eventually the need to legalize the largest ISL in the country – Quinta do Conde, was the pressure to the emergence of a new solution in terms of landownership registration (see Fig. 2.3).

Fig. 2.3 Quinta do Conde, one of the largest ISL in Portugal, covering over 400 ha (Source: Silva 2015)

2.4.2.4   After 1986

With the entrance of Portugal into the European Union, a significant amount of cohesion funds (from ERDF – European Regional Development Fund) was used to build infrastructures' networks. These investments contributed to a new era in the way institutions were dealing with informal settlements, since there was an external stimulus to solve a problem, which was still growing.

In this context of environment and planning concerns, ISS eradication became a priority. With more financial means local authorities also got more involved with the central government on answering people's needs. However, the place given to local authorities let very little space to experimentation and innovation. Municipalities in general replicated different pre-established models, and during the following decades some improvements in procedures were made, but without introducing any radical changes. Local institutions became responsible by providing land, usually in a different location from the one occupied by ISS and shared the financial burden with national institutions.

Regarding ISL, much of the effort put on the first decade of this period didn't have immediate effects on accelerating their legalization. However this period was crucial for the recognition of local authorities as the key agent to deal with ISL. They became more aware of the main critical issues related with their legalization, such as managing spaces for public and collective purposes (Silva 1996). This fact had a crucial influence in the way national public initiatives evolved as we will see in the national public initiatives (next sub-section).

2.4.3   National Public Initiatives

2.4.3.1   Until 1974

Since national planning institutions acknowledged the existence of ISS and ISL, but they did not take any relevant measure to deal with them, national public initiatives addressing informal settlements were scarce during this period.

In 1965, the Portuguese government made an attempt to control the sprawl of informal settlements by opening to private initiative the possibility to urbanize. Nevertheless informal settlements continued to grow since the offer that emerged from this initiative didn't meet the aims (Salgueiro 1977)) of a significant part of the population (individual houses with a yard). The construction of some social housing neighbourhoods by the State was not enough to fight back the spread of ISS.

2.4.3.2   1974–1976

The two first years after the revolution became crucial in terms of experimentation in terms of informal settlements. Although the social support to the revolution of 1974 crossed the Portuguese society, national governments knew that this was

mainly grounded on lower classes which had as one of their main concerns housing conditions.

Regarding ISS and in order to answer to major housing's needs, an ambulatory service was launched by one provisional government in 1974. This service took the acronym of SAAL (which means Local Support Ambulatory System) within which brigades composed by architects and engineers provided technical assistance to communities (Costa et al. 1979). Because SAAL was launched by the central government, they provided technical skills, which were very scarce in municipalities.

Although ISL were also present in governments' agendas, main efforts in this period were put more on providing new spaces, than to create special legal tools to legalise existing ones. This was also the period in which public authorities started to acknowledge ISL's national dimension (Soares 1984).

2.4.3.3 1976–1986

In this period some legal initiatives were taken in order to control informal settlements. They were very much repressive and putting in local authorities the right and the responsibility of dealing with both ISS and ISL. However their growth made evident the lack of effectiveness of such initiatives.

Regarding ISS, the "two-system" approach of the previous period (in which both top-to-bottom and bottom-up initiatives were launched) was abandoned and central governments concentrated their efforts on top-to-bottom solutions, represented by large scale interventions (most visible by the *Planos Integrados* – Integrated Plans).

Although efforts were put in dealing with ISL, more settlements appeared (Ferrão and Leal1984). Ecological awareness made possible the publication in 1983 of the first decree-law establishing the national ecological reserve and some demolitions of constructions were carried on in ecologically sensitive areas. In 1984, in order to control the growth of ISL, a decree-law (nr. 400/84) had some effectiveness by forbidding the sale of the same piece of land to several co-owners, a major step to stop the emergence of new ISL. Existent settlements were approached with the same kind of planning procedures applied to legal urbanizations; only in the next period tailor made tools were created in order to deal with ISL.

2.4.3.4 After 1986

National perception of informal settlements was influenced by the entrance of Portugal into the European Union. ISS and ISL were seen as threats to an ordered territory and to the preservation of ecologic values. During the 1990s two major steps will be given in order to deal with ISS and ISL.

In 1993 a program to eradicate ISS from the metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto was established. In 1996 the focus of this program was enlarged in order to allow municipalities and also families to have access to funds to buy or to repair buildings. Two decades later, the effort made to eradicate slums from urban land-

scapes was recognizable. However a new challenge emerged: the need to regenerate social housing areas in order to make them more liveable. Launched in 2005 and extended until 2013, the *Iniciativa Bairros Críticos* (Critical Neighbourhoods Initiative) was an attempt to deal with the consequences of how ISS were solved some decades ago, with inter-disciplinary task groups being created to design regeneration programs in response to residents' socio-economic problems.

The approach to ISL changed radically with the approval of a new act in 1995, AUGI act (AUGI is the acronym for illegal urban areas). Based on the evaluation of two decades of experimentation, this law sets new rules in order to deal with ISL with large number of landowners, to overcome decision-making difficulties and to open the possibility of several types of management between landowners' commissions and municipalities, proving to be successful in addressing and solving problems.

2.4.4   Political Involvement

Political involvement concerns two main dimensions. The first one is related with the type of institutions involved in law-making. The second one has to do with individual actions, which will be addressed particularly in relation with ISL.

Law-making has two main agents in Portugal: the parliament which is responsible by producing acts; and the government which is responsible by producing decree-laws. In the case of ISS most of the legal framework is composed by decree-laws which depend on each elected government. The ISL has its major basis in one act, produced and approved by the parliament (the AUGI act), which has been recurrently changed, but in a consistent way, in order to address the critical aspects of its implementation.

The involvement of municipalities was important to deal with informal settlements, although they act differently towards ISS and ISL. In the case of ISL, they were more visible, since they played a role of transferring information to law-makers (the national parliament) in the case of the act produced to deal with ISL in 1995.

Political involvement and the bridging roles of political leaders were more visible in terms of ISL. They played an important role in law-making and in law-monitoring; a major contribution to innovation. In the case of ISS the assessment was made in the long-term, mostly concentrated on the evaluation of the result of public interventions. For instance, *Vale da Amoreira*, one of the largest Portuguese social housing settlements, with almost 20,000 inhabitants was built in the early 1970s and only assessed in 2005 by the *Iniciativa Bairros Críticos* (Critical Neighborhoods Initiative), a pilot intervention launched by the national government and involving public and private institutions, as well as NGO's (see Fig. **2.4**).

In the case of ISL, assessment has been made on the short-term. It is possible to relate law changes with evaluation as well as to identify very specific actors dealing with the subject. The AUGI Act, after being approved in 1995, was thoroughly revised in 1999. Most of the changes addressed difficulties felt by municipalities

Fig. 2.4 Vale da Amoreira, one of the largest social housing settlements in Portugal, with almost 20,000 ha (Source: Silva 2015)

and by management commissions in applying this legal tool; but a significant number of changes were the result of individuals' feedback, expressing an unusual accuracy.

2.4.5   A Synthesis

We can summarize the four complementary perspectives on ISS and ISL described above, by underlining the major events regarding these two kinds of informal settlements according to the four periods considered in this chapter (see Table 2.2). Although ISS and ISL had in common informality, they experienced sometimes the same type of approaches by public institutions, at the local and/or at the national levels. The shift of political regimes was crucial for both types of informal settlements and for both levels of administration. But also in democracy, it is possible to identify periods such as the "revolutionary" one (1974–1976) in which conditions existed to allow and even to stimulate experimentation. In the case of ISS a sudden shift from experimentation to institutionalization occurred while in ISL experimentation was prolonged during the post-revolutionary period (1976–1986). An adapted

Table 2.2 ISS and ISL according to different Portuguese historical periods (developed by authors)

	ISS	ISL
Until 1974	Emerged inside main cities	Emerged in remote suburbia
	Authorities tend to hide them	Non-cooperation with authorities
1974/1976	SAAL is launched with bottom-up solutions involving authorities and informal settlements (**experimentation**)	Self-organized structures for survey and legalization of buildings (**experimentation**)
1976/1986	Social housing initiatives became more formal and hierarchical (SAAL is extinguished | **institutionalization**)	Planning initiatives to legalize settlements; 1986 – a plan for the largest ISL in Portugal – Quinta do Conde, 400 ha (**experimentation** continues)
After 1986	1993 – Program to eradicate ISS from metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto (coordinated by national government)	Increasing interaction between institutions and ISL
	1996 – programme to eradicate ISS is extended to other cities	1995 – creation of a dedicated legal framework, with successive changes until the present, the AUGI act, the result of two decades of **experimentation**
	2005 – Urban regeneration program to deal with obsolete public housing settlements	

answer only was produced in the "European integration period" (1986–present) as a result of that long period of experimentation.

2.5   Discussion: On Experimentation

In the previous section we described four complementary perspectives on ISS and ISL. We will discuss in this section how experimentation leaded to different stages of innovation.

2.5.1   Same Aims in Different Settings

ISS and ISL have a basic difference, which defined the way they were perceived by institutions, both at national and local level – landownership. The aim of an individual house, with a yard, according to population's rural origins, was easier to achieve in contexts in which informal settlers possessed land (ISL) than in circumstances of settling in someone else's soil (ISS). Landownership was crucial for ISS to evolve in a complete different path than ISL. ISS were dependent from institutions' solutions in all terms. Instead in ISL, improvements made by private landowners over decades were an investment to the future in different ways, since they

contributed to consolidate a status and were a starting point to claim for rights – the one to a house – having something to contribute to make it possible – the soil where to build that same house.

2.5.2 Same Institutions with Different Behaviours

That basic difference between ISS and ISL (landownership) contributed to different institutional approaches. Same institutions (municipalities) although being sensible to the constitutional and universal housing right adopted different behaviours. The availability of land played a crucial role in solving housing needs. Therefore, institutions provided houses, most of the times in distinct locations and with different typologies from ISS. They provided not only the construction, but also the soil and the urbanization. Institutions tried to reduce costs choosing more affordable locations and typologies; but at the same time they were responsible by providing and financing "everything". For this reason they tended to reduce the level of intervention of settlers in the process (apart from adjusting architectural typologies to families' characteristics). Local institutions' behaviour towards ISL was very different. Although starting from the same point – to fulfil the basic need of a home – settlers had something to contribute to the process: the land for future urbanization. Same institutions – municipalities – start from this point in the ISL case, to create solutions in which the construction of a shelter, the location and the typology chosen by each family were integrated. In terms of ISS, municipalities adopted the role of "providers" while in terms of ISL they acted as "enablers" of the urbanization process in cooperation with informal settlers.

2.5.3 Different Institutions with Different Models

In terms of national institutions, two main actors played important roles in dealing with informal settlements. The national parliament responsible by producing and approving acts, which are legal tools tending to deal with a wider spectrum of issues; and the national government, responsible by producing and approving decree-laws, to deal with more specific issues. Several governments did perceive informal settlements mainly as a housing problem during the revolutionary period (1974–1976) and the post-revolutionary period (1976–1986) and only with the European Union integration they started to be seen also as a spatial planning problem with all the environmental consequences. For two decades, governments tried to find solutions to deal with both ISS and ISL. Many decree-laws were produced in order to control ISL (namely in 1984) but several attempts to put an end to ISS and to deal with ISL as any other formal settlement, gave different results. In 1995 the way to deal with ISL acknowledged a shift. The national parliament became the

new institution to respond to the need of a solution for ISL and approved the AUGI Act specifically for illegal urban areas.

2.5.4   Different Levels of Priority Leading to Different Models of Intervention

The way institutions, both at local and national level, dealt with informal settlements, bring us to discuss priorities and models of intervention. In terms of ISS, the priority was centred on providing a home, institutionally recognizable as such, many times without any kind of public facilities – an exhausted welfare state calling to itself most responsibilities in solving the problem. In terms of ISL, the spatial impact which an increasing amount of areas created, implied a more integrated approach, combining legalization of settlements with planning principles, according to what institutions understood as possible to be legalised – a state considering impossible to deal with the problem on its own and sharing the path of these territories with landowners.

When it comes to different levels of govern, the "classical" approach would recommend a bottom to up one. In the case we have been discussing, we find crucial moments in which the involvement of communities and institutions was very strong (the period of 1974–1976) although that didn't mean in the following years the same thing to ISS and to ISL. This experimental phase, in the case of ISS, had a sudden cut, with the state trying to return to "normality" and to recover its role in a welfare way. But in the same phase, from the interaction of ISL with municipalities emerged structures which continued to experiment in the following two decades reaching an innovative model to deal with informal settlements.

But what made institutions behaving so differently with ISL or with ISS? Since the success of ISL model was based on interaction with institutions, why did the same not happened in the case of ISS? One of the basic conditions for interactions between institutions and informal settlements (by nature assuming opposite roles, when it comes to formal and informal) is the pressure to solve problems. Pressures were several. The visual impact of ISS and ISL was very important, but apparently this pressure was not enough to promote similar developments. The major difference was related with the resources of both sides (institutions and informal settlements).

On one hand, ISS had no resources; therefore, after the experimental revolutionary period of 1974–1976 in which a very close interaction was established between settlers and institutions (through the SAAL project), public institutions reassumed their traditional roles. Public institutions continued to provide completed housing as much as their scarce financial resources allowed. Hierarchically speaking, the initial outstanding role of municipalities was gradually reduced to a more discrete one, as an element more of the bureaucratic chain leaded by national public administration.

On other hand, ISL had an important resource (landownership) which made institutions change their behaviour. Although their visual impact was less negative than the one of ISS, territorial impact was larger and the amount of residents living in "proto-urbanized" territories increased along years and decades. As it occurred with ISS, their right to a house was legitimized by public institutions. But in this case legitimacy had a strong ally: settlers were also owners of land. Initially organized as residents' associations (as well as ISS), some elements gained visibility in local political forums. The fact that they got a voice in society and within local public institutions, national institutions were "forced" to adapt their traditional behaviour: the hierarchical chain was broke and municipalities got direct access to the legislator – a special one, the parliament.

Was it relevant that the legal tool (AUGI Act) created in 1995 was produced by the parliament instead of the national government? Although more data needs to be collected to confirm that, it is the authors' conviction that the answer is affirmative. It is clear that legislation produced by the parliament or governments have different political implications. Although both are subjected to elections, governments are traditionally single-party composed and tend to change at the end of each term (even less, sometimes). Instead, parliaments are much more stable in terms of political party composition (although proportional weights change). Parliaments have specialized commissions to issues as informal settlements, and all political forces tend to be represented in these commissions. This characteristic allows long term relations between individuals within institutions, concentrated in few key-actors. Is there then a secret to be learned from the reasonable success of the ISL model? The following section will summarize the main findings about it and address this question.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter started by recognizing and stressing on the importance of learning from long-term processes. More than story-telling the Portuguese experience puts in evidence differences between slums (ISS) and informal settlements with land-ownership (ISL). The interesting conclusion of this chapter is that the major difference – which is based on the existence of landownership – has much more impact in the process than only in terms of the physical solution. It is responsible by the level of commitment and of intervention of settlers, affecting the way other agents intervene in the process.

This national example questions the dichotomy between the "developed world's" and the "developing world's" perceptions of informal settlements. Within the same national context, different approaches of informal settlements exist, depending not on informality but on landownership security. It was also clear that institutions and citizens were open to experimentation in both contexts, although requiring very specific social and political conditions (such as the ones that occurred during the 1974–1976 revolutionary period). Therefore, two conditions needed to be present:

the pressure to deal with informal settlements and the way resources are distributed among the different agents intervening in the process.

As we saw, pressures can be of various orders: aesthetical, sanitary or social. They are always, at the end, political. They can lead to different solutions depending on how they are combined with other factors, such as resources. If we can infer something about the role of pressures and public institutions initiatives, is that it is not governance that leads the process but it is the process that defines the level of governance (a topic to be explored in further works).

Finally, addressing the question – is there a secret to be learned from the success of the ISL which can be addressed to ISS and to other contexts? The answers are both no and yes. The "no" part of the answer relates to the fact that we are discussing an unique process – as each one is – and, therefore, unrepeatable. However, the "no" leads to the "yes" part of the answer: the authors found in these processes three aspects that need to be enhanced. The first relates with experimentation. Experimentation is present in the early days through landowners' associations; later between landowners/residents and institutions (which leaded to the AUGI act in 1995); and continues until today with improvements to the law being made regularly.

The second aspect relates with long-term relations. This aspect is crucial to establish trust among partners, as a result of prolonged interactions. To remain in a place, in some cases for decades, depends on a deep motivation: sometimes is the commitment to a personal project as to see the dream of building one's own home becoming true; other times is the service to a community to which one belongs; or even to take political responsibility in contexts in which informal settlements have an electoral weight. These kinds of motivations can lead to long-term relations between institutions in order not to solve an isolated problem but to find broader solutions.

The third aspect relates with short chains. When referring to ISL everything started 50 years ago with individual aims to fulfil a dream and ends with the approval of a responsive parliament's act in 1995 (followed by successive changes/improvements up to today). This represents a long path if considered the time involved in the process, but also the hierarchical distance between marginalized individuals and national institutions. In normal circumstances to bridge the gap between these two groups would be already an almost impossible task. However, the fact that channels of communication were opened – through specific political involvement – between municipalities and the national parliament avoided, through a short chain, the numberless institutions which compose any national planning system.

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