

Urban transport in the Congo: case of the city of Brazzaville, Problems, and prospects

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Abstract: *The social and economic changes have brought about important and profound changes regarding both the lives of the citizens of the South of Africa in the Sahara and regarding their mentalities in general and in Congo in particular. Food, clothing, shelter and especially transportation are among the daily concerns of the people in Brazzaville. The dramatic increase in the population observed in recent years has not provided adequate and appropriate conditions for city dwellers that have to travel every day in order to attend to their occupations, and thus meet their daily needs. The urban transport network, which is constantly deteriorating despite numerous works undertaken at the cost of billions, is also a crucial problem in the urban transport networks in the city of Brazzaville. Thus, many problems coupled with inadequate roads, spreading of the urban perimeter and the phenomenon of half-terraces constitutes a handicap to improve the supply of urban transport in Brazzaville. This requires adapted solutions in order to satisfy residents of a cosmopolitan city whose population grows at an exponential rate.*

Keywords: *Transport, Congo Brazzaville, Problems, Prospects*

I. Introduction

The city of Brazzaville has for several years experienced unprecedented growth in its population. This growth which takes place without genuine accompanying measures sometimes seems to modify the behavior of urban dwellers in certain areas, including transport. Attitudes of urban dwellers with regards to transport issues do not lead to a consensus (...) (Plat, 2003). Some authors believe that transport remains the primary concern of city dwellers in cities in developing countries. On the other hand, others think otherwise. The notion of transport refers to the movement of a person or merchandise, from one place to another, by any means to train, plane, bicycle and moped. Hence the terms air transport, rail, maritime transport, river transport. This displacement of people or goods can carry from one continent to another, from one country to another, within a country but also from a city; it is urban transport (Silou, 2006).

Most cities in sub-Saharan Africa, public transport in Brazzaville are a thorny issue. In the offer of public transport in Brazzaville, two actors intervene. There is the municipal government represented here by the State and the private sector which is the prerogative of the people themselves. However, their offers are far from meeting people's expectations. The queues are mainly at bus stops, several districts remain poorly served. Public transit regulations are poorly enforced (Idem, 2006). Central neighborhoods are still served but peripheral districts are almost inaccessible because of the lack of roads and especially of roads Bitumen. The outlying districts are therefore far from the center.

This article firstly aims to scrutinize the organization of transport in the city of Brazzaville and then consider the problems endured by the people in this area when we know that transport has developed networks mafias which are materialized by the concussion and the corruption. This article then shows the role of car parks and their economic and social contribution, which is considerable and appreciates the involvement of actors (governments, civil societies, economic decision-makers) in improving this thorny urban problem.

Insufficient roads

Brazzaville is the first conurbation of the Republic of Congo, because of its multiple functions and its geographical position, Brazzaville is a hub of business and trade. However, an increase in population makes it difficult for public authorities to resolve the issue of transport. For the record, the first transport companies date just after independence, notably in 1965 with the creation of the Brazzaville Municipal Transport Board (BMTB). To this are added other urban transportation companies which were born after 1965. We can cite the Urban Society of Brazzaville (USB) and the Urban Transport Company of Brazzaville (UTCB) ... (Ibid, 2006). But the economic and financial crisis of the 1980s and the mismanagement have made all these transport companies of the city of Brazzaville perish. This table shows the various transport companies that have existed in the city of Brazzaville. Nowadays, the company serves the city called the Urban Public Transport Company of Brazzaville (UPTCB) which has 100 buses.

Table No 1: Urban transport companies of the city of Brazzaville from 1965 to today

Years of creation	1965	1972	1985	1991	1992	1995	2015
Years of disappearance	1972	1985	1989	1992	1995		
Companies created	BMTB	STB	UTCB	SMT	RATB	USB	UPTCB

Source: City Council of Brazzaville,

The roads are very inadequate in the city of Brazzaville and they do not meet the requirements of the city streets of the 3rd millennium. The few that exist and are actually in a good condition are: The road of OAU (Organization of African Unity) starting from the ex-FCC (French Cultural Center) to the bridge of Djoue, and from there, to the national number one. The avenue of peace road, the road of the airport which leads to the CCF, Avenue of the peace Moukondo quoted of 17, the road of the avenue of France -station Kouounda-Tsieme etc. Police have accelerated municipalization which was initiated since 2004 which the city of Brazzaville benefited respectively in 2008, 2009 and 2010 made it possible to pave new routes, notably that of the African Union otherwise known as the Brazilian road (due to its construction by One of the Brazilian companies of the place). Starting from the roundabout Mazala in Kombo. The Moukondo road, the town hall Mfilou, the PK round about Kinsoundi road, as well as the rehabilitation of the road the border town hall Mfilou. But the quality of the work done by these different societies is far from satisfying the needs of the population because sometimes it is sloppy work that degrades the roads in a repetitive manner.

The lack of roads leads to multiple problems, which in turn affect the standard of living of the people. These problems may include the phenomenon of half-land (the phenomenon of not arriving at the destination fixed by the State), the delay of the agents of the different administrations in the places of service, Pupils in their respective schools and universities. In urban areas, transport is costly and complicated due to the lack of regulation of the system, the deficiencies of the existing supply and its unsuitability for the needs of disadvantaged city dwellers (Vasconcellos, 2001, Diaz Olvera et al., 2008). It can also be said that the inadequacy of the roads is due to the inability of the State to mobilize the important economic resources to build viable roads but also to an absence of the policy of planning and development of the Capital city which is Brazzaville.

Taxation, tolling and corruption in the transport system

In terms of urban transport in the city of Brazzaville, the legislation prescribes a number of documents that every carrier must have in order to comply with the texts governing and organizing urban transport in the Congo. Among these documents one can quote: the transport license, the insurance, the driving license, the gray card ... But some drivers do not fulfill all the criteria mentioned above and may lead to the defiance of the rule. The corrupting factor and the gymnastics which are sometimes victimized by police officers especially corrupt carriers and constitute a handicap to road traffic. Thus, the lack of means and the high price of certain parts do not facilitate the organization of transport. For example, a CEMAC (Economic Community of Central African States) license, 120,000 XAF or 220USD is required. Therefore, certain carriers working in complicity with the police are exempt from the controls imposed on them. The improvement of the quality of the urban road network is a factor contributing to the efficiency of the transport supply, since it solves the recurrent problem of traffic congestion and that of the extension of time Reduction of accidents and improved access to essential services (health, school, water, markets, etc.) and in the workplace.

Urban roads

Urban roads in Brazzaville have a reality that is similar to roads of cities in developing countries. Most roads have a width of 7m separated by a strip. Sometimes each pavement has three meters. These urban roads are in a state of disrepair, sometimes causing many accidents. This is the case of the urban road below (Fig.1)



Fig.1: Road in a state of disrepair and carried away by rain in Brazzaville

Indeed, Brazzaville has a lot of traffic problems. It can be said that its construction does not meet the standards of a modern large city. Tracks are restricted, flues are shallow, clogged or do not exist in some areas. The channels are poorly maintained or are not covered in some places, which is a genuine danger for pedestrians especially in times of rain (1). In the area of traffic, panels are not visible on some arteries because they are planted with trees or other obstacles. The fires are under the foliage of the trees which conceal them from the sight of drivers. Some roundabouts are small and make a turn difficult, sometimes causing accidents. All of this makes it difficult or impossible in many sectors and constitutes endless traffic jams in a city where the number of vehicles gallops every year (Idem).

The characteristics of urban roads

Despite the demographic increase of the population of the city of Brazzaville 311,403 inhabitants in 1974, 1,373,382 inhabitants in 2007 (Yekoka, 2008) and 1700000 nowadays, roads are only getting worse making traffic difficult. The most commonly used means are shared taxis and buses, more suited to the middle and poor sectors. Taxis make up about 70% of vehicles on Brazzaville roads. (Nzoussi, 2014a). These types of transport are more suited to the level of neighborhoods. With 750km of roads, of which 100 were asphalted in 2008, the city of Brazzaville has an antiquated road network. The streets dwindled from the city center to the periphery and especially in the new districts where they are almost non-existent (Xavier et al., 1992). These forces carriers to concentrate only on major roads. The lack of roads and the intense transport activity on the main roads consequently lead to the phenomenon of bottling. In Brazzaville, public transport is all green. The coat of arms and other taxes are imposed by the State through the town hall (Nzolo, 2008).

With public transport in Brazzaville, a genuine network of informal activity has developed. These are car parks that have a particular impact on people's lives. The management of public space in Brazzaville is also a thorny issue between the actors who are in charge of managing this space and the populations. The management of car parks in Brazzaville appears to be a major factor in the materialization of the economic and social crisis (Nzoussi, 2014a). This is why private transport is managed in precarious conditions (Pripode, 2005). The transportation system in Congo Brazzaville in general and Brazzaville, in particular, generates a large number of accidents due to surcharge, the lack of adequate training of drivers, none - compliance with the highway code, Absence of signs of certain arteries, insufficient road, traffic congestion, In conformity of vehicles.....

Traffic in Brazzaville

Road traffic is a very complicated issue in Brazzaville because of the increasing number of mainly used cars from Europe from Dubai and even from Japan. In addition, roads are mostly in a state of disrepair, especially during the rainy season causing serious accidents as is also shown in this figure (Fig.2).



Fig.2 Accident of the road on Boulevard Alfred Raoul (Brazzaville) on 11.January 2017

Being located in Central Africa, therefore in the tropical world, the city of Brazzaville experiences a high rainfall that does not favor the war of the urban transport network. As a result, many accidents are sometimes due to the state of roads which are very narrow and sometimes dilapidated. Lack of signage and bribery, fraud and corruption are all scourges that cause many road accidents.

Table 2: Distribution of the number of accidents in Brazzaville in February 2015

Nature Of accident	Number of accidents	Locality	Casualties
Fatalities	10	Brazzaville	05
Accidents With Serious injuries	30	Brazzaville	70
Accidents With minor injuries	30	Brazzaville	50
Accident with major injuries	80	Brazzaville	60
Accidents With Property damage Thin	40	Brazzaville	thirty
Total	190		215

From the foregoing, it should be noted that population growth impacts on the urban environment of Brazzaville. This is justified by the extent that the extension of the city of Brazzaville causes the disappearance of nearby villages with the birth of the suburbs with the type of homes in third world countries.

Types of public transport in Brazzaville

A car is all the more a sign of social success and distinction that it remains a rare commodity in African urban households (Antoine et al., 1987, Daloz 1990, Banegas, Warnier, 2001). In Brazzaville, public transport is all green. The coat of arms and other taxes are imposed by the State through the town hall (Nzolo, 2008). Throughout the city of Brazzaville, there are three types of public transport used by the population. Those are:

- Individual taxis, with a capacity of four seats representing four passengers, these taxis carry out races at the request of the customers. The price of the race is not static and varies according to the distance to be traveled by taxi. The minimum price is 800 XAF or 1.90 USD.
 - Taxis in common, working in the closed routes around neighborhoods with its edges 6 passengers as shown in the figure above (Fig. 3). It should be noted that these types of taxis are almost old having served for many years under the first type of means of locomotion.
 - Minis buses and buses with a capacity of 19 places for the first case and 30 seats for the second case, these types of means operate long distances. The price of the place is 150 XAF or 1 / 3 USD. (Fig. 4)
- The different types of means circulate on two types of track; Primary pathways and secondary pathways (Audard and al, 2012). Primary pathways are non-bitumen pathways, usually in a state of disrepair due to lack of maintenance, heavy rains, but also rock quality on the (Sand), while the secondary routes are those that are tarred.

Thus, local authorities intervene in these types of unpaved roads, by organizing the population, which contributes to the maintenance of roads, as the state sometimes has financial difficulties to deal with certain problems related to transport urban at the city of Brazzaville.

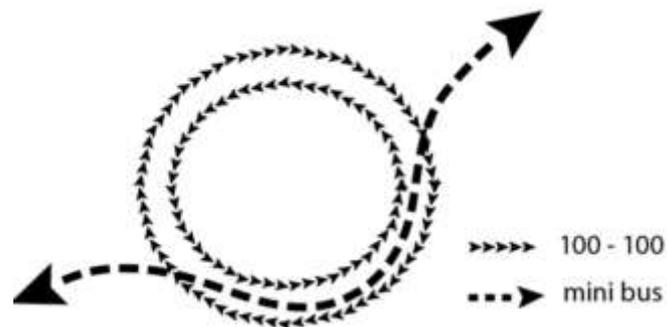


Fig. 3 Transportation at the ward level

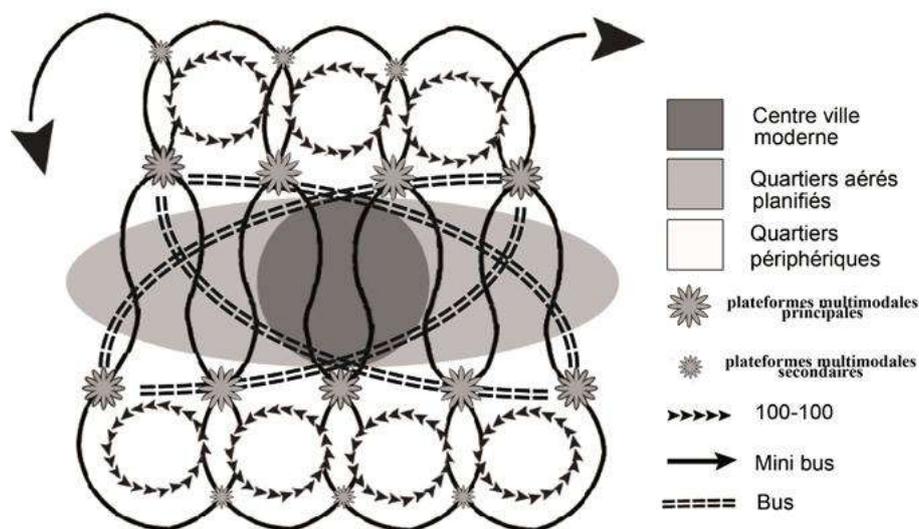


Fig. 4 City-wide transport

Competition between the different operators of the road

However, transport is not considered one of the priorities in spending, with low-income households having to resort to adaptation strategies (Diaz et al., 2010). These adjustments are even more difficult that in a context of poverty multifaceted and increasingly significant to the urban supply crisis (Potts, 1997) and in urban extensions - equipped travel needs to tend to become more numerous (Diaz Olvera et al., 2007) Transport is the cause of increased competition between carriers practicing this trade. In this commercial activity, there are populations both affiliated to the public authorities and ordinary citizens. Indeed, taxis in common with six places otherwise called (100-100) circulate on a much reduced perimeter and are in a deplorable state. They adapt well and it's possible to serve the peripheral districts which grow in an enormous way. It should be noted that the city of Brazzaville has grown from 311,403 inhabitants in 1974 to more than 1,373,382 in 2007 and 1.700.000 inhabitants today. Taxis make up about 70% of vehicles on Brazzaville roads. It is, therefore, a type of local transport adapted to the poor. Obviously, the scarcity of work, the closure of the labor market, the exclusion of young people from several decision-making bodies obviously lead some to find themselves in the world of car parks or they do not have much to feed their families with.(Nzoussi, 2014a).

Buses and mini-buses travel long distances and very often adopt their own strategies to collect their money in a better manner, which are half-land (the phenomenon of not respecting the itinerary fixed by the State Or the phenomenon of not reaching its route).This phenomenon is due to both the narrowness of the urban transport network but also to many cars that circulate there. This constitutes a bottleneck to the smooth functioning of public transport. Coaster buses travel long distances on more or less improved tracks. The competition between these different operators is, therefore, difficult. The "public transport car" (...) widens the use of this mode of transport and gives it a major role at the heart of urban social relations. This "requisitioning of an individual means of transport is mainly to benefit the community" (N'Guembo, 1998: 239).

After the socio-political events known by Brazzaville (1993, 1997, 1999), the roads had become an advanced state of disrepair without the slightest modification. Thus, the State has undertaken a major program called "accelerated municipalization". This program concerns the construction of basic infrastructure, of which roads are an integral part. Thus, until 2009 the lengths of the municipal and tarred roads were 88.14%.

Decentralization and local governance all exist but not well applied because of the neglecting of the administrative texts that are put in the drawers. Transport is, therefore, a thorny problem in Brazzaville. Moving on a daily basis requires a lot of demand and sacrifice for an urban population that has insufficient means to reach both ends of the month. In the coming years, one wonders what would be the easiest means of transport for the population, when it is known that despite abundant means of transport the routes are chosen by the carriers themselves and not those fixed by the State. Environmental issues are also very recurrent for a city that receives many used cars coming mainly from Europe.

In China, for example, and particularly in the city of Wuhan, there are three types of public transport with the exception of the metro; Taxis, small rolling stock belonging to the users and buses. Here, public transport is run by the state that defines routes, and respected by drivers. The question of travel, half-land, and many others does not arise in comparison with the city of Brazzaville, which faces the problem of transport provincial and regional governments. Take the facilities to satisfy the needs of the population. The need for motorized mobility to leave the neighborhood and to frequent the city (...) represent opportunities for access to employment, social integration, meeting health or educational needs (Decentralization and local governance must be Diaz Olvera et al., 2010) ...

The organization of car parks

In Brazzaville, no law regulates the management of car parks and is just similar to the activities of the informal sector. Like any activity in the informal sector, parking management does not allow the state to levy taxes. However, the state recognizes this, as shippers and car park manager's work in collaboration with state representatives, police officers, and city council officials. Shippers and managers are generally people who are socially excluded, persons who have failed to achieve social integration, and ex-combatants who have abandoned the rebellion have converted into a driver or bus loader Or car park sweeper. The diagram below shows the organization chart of the parking management. (Fig.5)

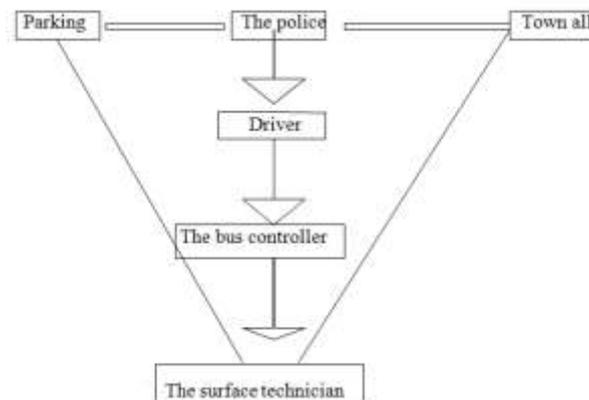


Fig 5: Diagram of the organization of car parks in Brazzaville

Like all informal activities, the management of car parks constitutes of a shortfall in the state, which is nevertheless an actor in the management of markets and regional planning. The collected taxes go directly into the pockets of individuals. The informal thus acts both as a safety valve and as a buffer for social shocks (Savane, 2002). Obviously, the scarcity of work, the closing of the labor market, the exclusion of young people in several decision-making bodies obviously lead some to find themselves in the world of car parks or they feed their families with the little that they have. In China, the organization of transport, as well as the management of car parks, is regulated by the providential state, which exercises an authoritarian power. He manages public transport, recruits workers, and surface technicians. However, in Congo Brazzaville in general and Brazzaville in particular, the populations organize themselves. The state stops just the regulation of the taxes and other support of transport.

The economic and social contribution of car parks

Classified as an activity of the informal sector, the car parks of the city of Brazzaville play a large role in the economic and social field. Marginalized groups and those excluded from socio-economic progress seek to ensure their subsistence and alleviate the conditions of extreme poverty (Laberge, 2000). Precariousness and

lack of employment lead to the creation of survival mechanisms, favoring the decomposition of systems and the breakdown of traditional forms of integration (Dube, 1987). Many families feed themselves with car parks jobs. Of the concordant sources, at the end of the day, an individual having worked seriously can end up with 5000fcfa or 10usd per day outside the money paid to the police and the agents of the town hall. This allows him to take himself not only himself but also his family. At total walking, there are 10 parking lots (personal survey). Car parks are therefore an important form of social integration. This makes it possible to avoid juvenile delinquency, robbery, rape, banditry.....In Congolese cities in general and in Brazzaville in particular, poverty and social survival are two very difficult components to disentangle because of the situation of precariousness from which young people pass. All of its economic activities linked to resourcefulness are a catalyst for repositioning and socio-economic integration. The diagram below explains it (Fig.6).

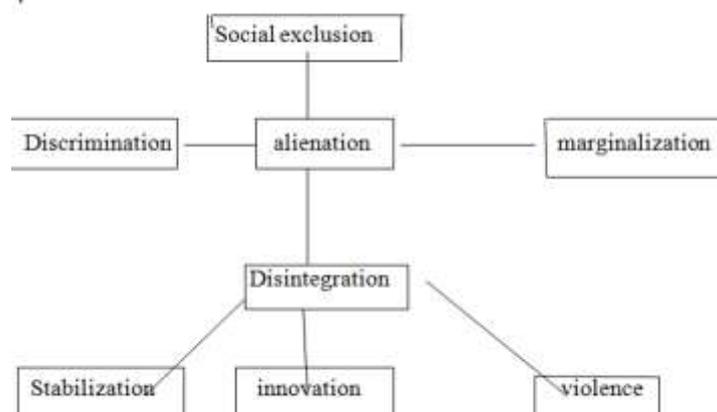


Fig.6: Outline of the crisis of ascent in young people

This figure shows the crisis of development and integration experienced by young people in the cities of developing countries in general and in Brazzaville in particular. Young people are discriminated against. They are alien and marginalized. Being socially disintegrated, they create conditions for survival, innovating and excelling in the informal sector. Since each of us has a creative genius, in other words, since man is the measure of everything, these young people sometimes imbued with violence still manage to find themselves in the informal. With a population of 1,373,382 inhabitants (2007) and 1,700,000 (estimate 2015), Brazzaville has a large, young and dynamic population which, unfortunately, is languishing in poverty and living below the poverty line. Surveys conducted by the World Bank show that more than 50% of the population of Brazzaville lives below the poverty line with less than 1dollar per day. Urban life is, therefore, a real gymnastics where everyone has to create their own job to survive.

Involvement of stakeholders in the improvement of transport systems

In the improvement of urban transport services in Brazzaville, the role played by the state will be of great importance and it is responsible for the governance of the city. In the world, more than 1200,000 people die each year from road accidents.65% of the victims are pedestrians, 35% of them children, and 30% of transport are seriously injured. Of this death, 70% are from developing countries (2). The issue of road safety thus remains crucial in the Congo in general and in Brazzaville in particular. Since 2002, the number of accidents is increasing. The Republic of Congo has recorded over the last five years 2350 accidents per year that left about 212 people dead and 2136 injured. Congo knows an annual rate of 53 deaths for 100.00habitants. In 2014 for example statistics which was conducted by the Central Office of Accidents (BCA) from the capital city, reported 1781 accidents on public roads last year, 65 fatal, for 101 dead and 1399 injured (3).

Thus, the National Commission for Road Safety (NCPC), a transport ministry department organizes annual refresher sessions to transport drivers that improve their material transport pipes (4).As many seen Challenges are to be met, training is, therefore, essential and the improvement of the quality of the roads, the quality of the vehicles and the rigorous control of the parts in order to spare the populations of the danger. Electric bus 100% clean energy now circulate in the streets of Brazzaville, as in many African countries where the Bollore Group develops these alternative transport solutions (5). These buses have been tested by Bollore in order to find a solution to the transport problem.

II. Conclusion

The issue of transport in the city of Brazzaville remains a crucial problem that must be quickly resolved in order to satisfy the people who are constantly paying a high price to travel. After independence, the town of Brazzaville was equipped, through the town hall, with means of transport which until the 1990s played a significant role in the displacement of people and goods in the capital city. But after the advent of democracy and especially Brazzaville's repeated wars (it must be noted that Brazzaville was the scene of inter-ethnic operations and clashes in 1993, 1997, 1999 and 2000), these societies disappeared Buses and mini buses belonging to the private sectors and therefore managed by private individuals. This activity, while economical and lucrative, is included in the activities of the informal sector, has generated very harsh competition between carriers who carry out this activity sometimes are at the risk of their lives, generally hinders the issue of the displacements of the populations with the birth of The phenomenon of "half-land" (Phenomenon which consists of not arriving at the definitive stop of its course). This phenomenon which has for profit is also due to the insufficiency of roads, therefore, traffic jams. Transportation is sometimes run without the rules that govern it and organizes the transport system in the Republic of Congo and causing numerous traffic accidents, a concussion and widespread corruption in a city where you have to move every day. But transport also brings out the car parks that have a contribution and economic and social. If a city govern is to foresee and provide tangible solutions to the problems people face, it is necessary and imperative on the part of public authorities to find and regulate the sector and provide remedies in order to lift people out of this thorny problem that continues to grow with the evolution of the population and increase the space away from growing the outskirts of large urban centers (administrative, school, shopping ...). In terms of urban development, it is essential to develop the local offer basic facilities and services affordable to the poor. Such public investment in non-parceled zones would reduce the risk of fragmentation and urban segregation due to a messy sprawl (Bertoncello, 2008)

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