Addressing Sub-Standard Settlements

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How does the politics of fast growing cities shape urban inequalities? What are the main policies to address these inequalities, especially with regards to sub-standard settlements? How do civil society organizations mobilise to address those inequalities and deprivations?

These are the main questions asked in Work Package 3 under the EU-funded project "Urban Chances – City Growth and The Sustainability Challenge" (Chance2Sustain). This policy brief summarises some of the team's work so far:

- What is meant by 'sub-standard settlements', and why do we use this term?
- How important are sub-standard settlements for the population in the four case countries?
- Which public policies are directed towards them?

1 What is meant by 'sub-standard settlements', and why do we use the term?

This project prefers the term 'sub-standard settlements' to emphasise that there are certain normative perceptions, or 'standards', differing from one country (or city) to another that define a settlement category. The first 'sub-standard' aspect these settlements have in common is the *precariousness* and *socio-economic deprivation* characterising the majority of their households. However the type of precariousness and deprivation may differ across spaces. Moreover, there are certain national legal standards expressed by the law and policy making as well as certain 'technical' standards applied by city planners making in categorizations of urban settlements. Thus, we suggest a certain typology based in terms of *legality* (status of occupation) and *regularity* (in spatial lay-out, physical structure and urban infrastructure) to categorise the settlements that surround household-level precariousness and socio-economic deprivation.

Sub-standard settlements epitomise cities in the global South as spaces of inequality, and are always in the process of being made. They are therefore a reflection of social relations within cities, regions and nations and their politics. The process of defining what 'sub-standard settlements' mean in different fast growing 'megacities' in four different countries is important to constitute the focus of study, and the redefinitions and reinterpretations of these settlements are key parts of the comparative analysis.

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2 How important are sub-standard settlements for the population in the four case countries?

The available national and city-based statistics do not necessarily reflect the categories we have identified as sub-standard settlements. The figures in Table 1 cannot be compared across the countries, but the variations within each country should be noted. Moreover, these figures express some of the focal points in the public debate.

Table 1: Percentages of the population residing in the nationally defined and main sub-standard settlement categories in 2007 (India 2001).

Country	Category	Nationally	Cities
Brasil	"Precarious housing"	14	São Paulo 15, Rio de Janeiro 21, Salvador 24
India	"Slum"	26	Delhi and Chennai 19, Mumbai 54
Peru	"Overcrowded"	24	Arequipa <24, Lima >24
South Africa	"Non-formal"	30	Cape Town 35, eThekwini (Durban) 45

The Brazilian category "precarious housing" refers mainly to three categories: (i) older, overcrowded and dilapidated residences or slum tenements *(cortiço)*, usually in inner city areas; (ii) residences on 'invaded' or squatted areas *(favelas)*, hence illegal settlements); and (iii) *irregular settlements*, which is the most prevalent sub-standard category in Brazil: there is no division of the plot, and the residents have no individual title of property. However, usually these settlements are a result of legal yet incomplete building projects.

In India, the term "slum", used extensively in official documents, comprises two main subtypes of settlements: (i) the old dilapidated and overcrowding housing sectors, as defined by the Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act of 1956; and (ii) clusters of precarious forms of self-made housing structures with inadequate infrastructure, lacking in proper sanitary and drinking facilities and usually located on land occupied illegally –and then labelled "squatter settlements". However, sub-standard housing is not confined to "slum" areas; notably, the resettlement colonies for the residents of demolished "slums" are also characterised by a lack of adequate urban services.

The Peruvian "overcrowded" category is in the 2007 national census considered a house with more than 3 persons sleeping in a room. Moreover, there is a category of "not acceptable standard" (huts, cottages, tenements, makeshift housing in locations not intended for human habitation) with 9 per cent of the population. In Lima around half the population of Lima lives in *barriadas*, which are constituted by occupations on peripheral and low-value public land.

The South African "non-formal" category comprises informal settlements and traditional/rural habitats. African people (Black, Coloured and Indian people as classified under apartheid) were allocated land and housing in areas demarcated as townships under the Group Areas Act (1950). Some cities, such as eThekwini (also known as Durban) were located immediately adjacent to 'black' homelands and so *informal settlements* developed on the periphery of these cities when homeland residents migrated as close to the 'white' urban edge as possible. The residents erected backyard shacks in existing townships and invaded both public and private land that was both marginal and degraded.

3   Which public policies are directed towards the sub-standard settlements?

In Brazil, the military dictatorship (1964-85) reinforced the Brazilian metropolitan model, with high and middle classes living in central well-equipped areas, while poor people live in remote areas with few economic activities and public facilities, and with increasing public insecurity as one moves toward the edges of town. After 1985, several local governments initiated an intense process of innovation in housing policies, pioneering *favela* rehabilitation and regularization of irregular settlements. With Lula's government in 2003, the Ministry of Cities was created and represented the return of the federal government to the sector. A deliberative process with the civil society started at the city-level and ended up with the 2006 National Housing Policy and institutionalization of citizens' participation in housing-related policy making. The recent years have seen massive federal funding of programs focusing on rehabilitation, legalization and regularization of existing settlements . The "Minha Casa Minha Vida" (My House, My Life) programme aimed at building one million houses for low income groups, and the "PAC – Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento" (Program to Accelerate Growth) has invested huge amounts in urban infra-structures (water, sanitation and waste management), among other sectors.

In India, several national housing initiatives have been formulated since 1988. They have in common the emphasis on private sector participation, cost recovery and use of market mechanisms. Nevertheless, the 2007 National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy addressed a critical issue regarding substandard settlements, namely the granting of tenurial rights to the slum dwellers, and a new strategy for "Slum-Free City Planning" was initiated in 2010.

Till now, in facing the persistence of squatter settlements, three types of *ad hoc* public interventions have been employed: (i) environmental improvement, by provision of basic services; (ii) resettlement on alternative sites most often located in the periphery, either with housing or only with site-and-services schemes (such as in Delhi); (iii) in-situ rehabilitation in multi-storey buildings, with the active involvement of private builders –this model was developed in Mumbai since the late 1980s, and is adopted by the new national policy. However, in large cities many squatter settlements have been demolished and their dwellers evicted without any compensation. Furthermore, by promoting now access to house ownership requiring financial contributions and regular monthly instalments from the residents, the poorest families are likely to be excluded from these programmes.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the housing policies have been driven by the central government and its ambition to relocate informal settlers to formal housing. The ANC government has also produced low cost housing projects on the periphery of cities where affordable land is available. These projects are known as RDP *houses* (named after the Reconstruction and Development Program). However, housing delivery rather than quality was the imperative of these projects. A new housing policy framework launched in 2004, *Breaking New Ground* (BNG), signalled a renewed commitment to *in situ* upgrading alongside formalisation efforts. The top-down approach of government housing programmes have been accompanied by a strong emphasis on participatory process in relocation, upgrading and construction efforts – although the level of substantive community participation in some of these programmes have been questioned. BNG also identified increased local government involvement in the planning and implementation of informal settlements upgrading. Alongside progress on housing construction and upgrading, the ANC government have invested heavily in extending service provision (access to piped water and sanitation) to under-resourced and new settlements. Service delivery has improved immensely since 1994, but also been subject to intense political contestation.

Chance2Sustain examines how governments and citizens in cities with differing patterns of economic growth and socio-spatial inequality make use of participatory (or integrated) spatial knowledge management to direct urban governance towards more sustainable development.

Consortium partners: European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI, Germany), Governance for Inclusive Development (GID) at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR-UvA, Netherlands), Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS, France), Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento (CEBRAP, Brazil), Cities for Life Forum (FORO, Peru), Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR, Norway), School of Planning and Architecture (SPA, India), University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN, South Africa)

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4   Summary

Sub-standard settlements have in common *precariousness* and *socio-economic deprivation* characterising the majority of their households. However the type of precariousness and deprivation may differ across spaces. Table 2 summarises these differences. All four countries know sub-standard settlements that are both legal and regular, and all four countries consider settlements that are both illegal and irregular, and as a result, most precarious. Still, many settlements have a more complex legal and technical status by being semi-legal and/or semi-regular.

Table 2: Categories of sub-standard settlements in Brazil (B), India (I), Peru (P) and South Africa (SA)

	Regular	**Semi-regular**	**Irregular**
Legal	B: 'Slum tenements' (cortiços) (inner city) I: 'Slum areas' (dilapidated and overcrowded houses) P: 'Over-crowded' houses SA: 'Townships' (apartheid era) SA: 'RDP settlements' (post-apartheid)	I: 'Slum' areas w/faulty infrastructures I: 'Resettlement colonies' (inadequate urban services) SA: 'Informal settlements' upgraded & tenure obtained	
Semi-legal	SA: Over-crowded inner city areas (post-apartheid)	B: 'Irregular settlements' w/ some infrastructures P: 'Bariadas' improved and developed.	B: 'Irregular settlements' without any infrastructures or regulations.
Illegal	All countries: Inner city squats	B: 'Favelas' w/ some regulations and infrastructures	B: 'Favelas' without any regulations I: 'Squatters settlements' P: 'Bariadas'. SA: 'Informal settlements'

The next stages of the research may tell us to what extent, and why, there are systematic differences in the policies, politics and outcomes related to these different types of sub-standard settlements.

There are differences in the relations between national and city governments in policy-making directed towards sub-standard settlements. In Brazil pro-poor innovations have taken place in certain cities, and then the federal government has come in recently to embrace and mainstream these policies. In India and South Africa the national government has championed policy shifts, albeit in a more market-oriented way in India and with more systematic central government efforts in post-apartheid South Africa.

The next stages of the research will conduct case studies departing from sub-standard settlements selected in each city. The attention will be on the agency and mobilisation efforts of poor and vulnerable groups. How do they engage with (or outside) the civil society and governance structures to achieve their collective goals, and what is the role of these grassroots in politics and policies challenging urban inequality?