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**Urban policy mobilities and local translations of compliance and
contestation within development-aid regeneration programs.**

The case of the Acahualinca Integrated Development Programme in Managua, Nicaragua.

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Abstract

The study is based on the case of La Chureca, the rubbish dump and slum of Managua, Nicaragua, and its regeneration programme, the Barrio Acahualinca Integrated Development Programme, funded by a development aid agency and implemented by the Managua municipality. The programme includes since 2009 until 2013, the construction of new housing for the slum dwellers, the construction of a new sanitary landfill and a recycling station where most of the waste pickers will work formally employed by the municipality.

In previous papers we have examined the formulation and implementation of the Programme in terms of the construction of an action net in which, by a chain of translations, the programme was transformed from an aid programme managed by international aid organisations into the urban policies carried out by the City of Managua.

Despite the initial compliance with the programme; little by little, local actors (mostly community leaders, residents, trade unions and waste collectors) enacted a myriad of small acts of defiance and resistance, changes and transformations (translations) of the programme implementation.

In the paper we unfold how waste collectors trade union, slum community leaders, community grass-root associations and local residents under the pressure of securing both jobs and houses (either in symbiosis with local mass media, by using physical force, political negotiations, circumvention) attempted to twist the programme to fit local needs of those groups that felt that were not fairly benefit by the Program, such as older workers, women or non-residents in La Chureca. The paper finally discusses its theoretical contribution to the notion of urban policy mobilities from the city management literature.

Introduction

Both in policy making and research there is an increasing concern with the so-called “implementation gap” that exists between policy goals and how they are achieved (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973). But in practice, policies and their implementation are not separated categories. Instead, as recent research both in policy mobilities and city management show, policy implementation involves a complex translation of goals, policies and plans into life. Policies are moved and mutated (Cochrane, 2007, 2011; Allen and Cochrane, 2010, McCann and Ward, 2012, Freeman, 2012); translated, changed and localised in the new organizational context (Czarniawska, 2002, 2010, 2012; Kornberger and Clegg, 2011; Vaara et al 2010).

This paper studies the chains of translations through which urban policies are made mobile and mutable (MacCann and Ward, 2012); or in other words how urban policies are translated into practice. It focuses on the ‘follow the policy’ technique and the relational situations in which policy is translated.

The paper is based on the case of La Chureca, the rubbish dump and slum of Managua, Nicaragua, and its regeneration programme, the Barrio Acahualinca Integrated Development Programme, funded by the Spanish Aid Development Agency and co-implemented by the Managua municipality. The programme included since 2009 until 2013, the construction of new housing for the slum dwellers, the construction of a new sanitary landfill and a recycling station where many of the former informal waste collectors are working, formally employed by the municipality.

The paper shows the formulation and implementation of the programme in terms of the construction of an action net in which, by a chain of translations, the programme was transformed from an aid programme managed by international aid organizations (Zapata Campos and Zapata, 2012b) into the urban policies carried out by the City of Managua (Zapata Campos and Zapata, 2012, 2013); and later on translated into houses, jobs and other assets for some of the residents at La Chureca. The paper focuses on the latest phase of implementation of the programme.

The paper also shows how in the process of making the programme mobile the programme both shaped and was shaped by the policy recipients. The paper further shows how despite the silent infiltration of important issues brought to the municipal political agenda by the development aid agency which initially led to a as good as total compliance with the programme; little by little, local actors (politicians, local NGOs, municipal officers, slum dwellers and waste collectors) enacted a myriad of small acts of defiance and resistance, changes and transformations of the programme implementation. These changes, or translations, challenged the isomorphic pressures exerted by global aid organisations and succeeded in exploiting the programme from below by the final beneficiaries against global aid agencies and municipal authorities, under the pressure of securing both household and jobs.

The paper finally contributes to enrich the literature about policy mobilities by bringing in research on city organising (e.g. Czarniawska, 2002, 2010, 2012; Kornberger and Clegg, 2011; Vaara et al 2010) and action net theory (Czarniawska, 2002).

Theoretical framework

As mentioned above, policy implementation involves a complex translation of goals, policies and plans into life. In order to analyse and understand the terms and conditions of this translation, we make use of action net theory.

City management can be conceptualised as a complex action net consisting of collective actions connected to one another according to a particular institutionalised pattern at a given time and in a given place (Czarniawska, 2002; 2004). From this perspective, city management can be understood as “a set of actions accomplished within a seamless web of interorganisational networks, wherein city authorities constitute just one point of entry” (Czarniawska, 2010: 420). In the city arena, a multitude of actors from various levels, policy areas, sectors, and industries coexist. They often uphold different and conflicting interests, long- and short-term approaches, and visions of how urban development is induced. Organising the city implies connecting and stabilising these actions, often with the intermediation of city translators (Czarniawska, 2002), such as consultants who translate technique and knowledge into plans, or politicians who transform citizen needs into policies. Translation is “the mechanism whereby connecting is achieved” (Lindberg and Czarniawska, 2006: 295) or, differently expressed, the process whereby collective actions are connected with each other. Through translation, interests are interlocked, making development projects and policies, such as the Acahualinca Programme, become real.

In development studies, in coherence with action-net theory, development translators refer to “skilled brokers (managers, consultants, fieldworkers and community leaders) who read the meaning of a project into the different institutional languages of its stakeholder supporters, constantly creating interest and making it real” (Mosse, 2005: 9). The translations can either shift or perpetuate power dynamics between and within global and local actors and can therefore lead towards more social, economic and environmental justice (Zapata Campos and Zapata, 2013a); or towards the ‘tyranny from below’ where ‘grasstops’ (Briggs, 2008) and their leadership block progress, control or capture benefits aimed at the poor and misusing them for private interests (de Witt and Berner, 2009).

The construction of action nets is both affected by and can result in different institutional arrangements (Scott, 1995), and a key challenge of planning is to take both these constraints and these possibilities into account. In new institutionalism theory, imitation is conceptualised as a basic mechanism for circulating ideas that become rational myths (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Organizations will respond with compliance strategies by adopting these ideas if they perceive benefits from following the rules of the institutional field (Oliver, 1991; Sharfman, Gray & Yan, 1991). In the case of local governments in many global South cities, aid development agencies are powerful institutional constituents that bring ideas of governance and management in association with the projects they fund. There are many examples of these isomorphic pressures (e.g., Caulfield, 2002; 2006; Zapata Campos & Zapata, 2012; 2013b); for example, New Public Management ideas have travelled the globe and been implanted in developing countries under donor pressure (Sulle, 2010). Other ideas, such as participatory processes, have become internalised habits and the normative expectations of the agents and subjects of development (Green, 2010). In other words, what ideas travel seems to depend more on who transports and supports them and

how they are packaged, formulated, and timed (Czarniawska-Joerges & Joerges, 1996; Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008) than on the ideas themselves.

The travel of ideas does not imply the reproduction of exact copies of original ideas; instead, the adoption of new ideas can eventually bring about change and innovation. The travel of ideas metaphor has developed from a “diffusion” to a “translation” model, in which institutional pressure, or rather, external ideas, are translated, changed, and localised in the new organizational context (Czarniawska-Joerges & Joerges, 1996; Czarniawska-Joerges & Sevón, 1996; 2005; Sahlin-Andersson, 1996). The research on ‘the travel of ideas’ metaphor is also coherent with the literature on policy mobility and mutation, which have also shifted the focus from policy transfer to policy mobilities: “how policies move from one place to another, being assembled, disassembled, and reassembled along the way” (McCann and Ward, 2012, p. 43).

In both traditions, the travel of models and policies cannot be reduced to the simple compliance, assimilation and appropriation of programs transferred from, for example North to South. Instead, policies are also locally contested and eventually localised, overt or silently. Local actors (city managers, community leaders) can create new spaces in which to interpret, adapt and twist these projects to local needs, meanings and interests (Zapata Campos & Zapata, 2013b). Consequently, in the making up of policies, new and unexpected circuits of knowledge, power and identity emerge in these global ‘scapes’ (Appaddurai, 1996).

This explains why organizations such as local governments, although subject to the same effects of institutional forces, do not all respond in the same manner to these pressures (Scott, 1995). Organizations can respond to the travel and adoption of ideas not only with compliance and compromise strategies, but also with avoidance, defiance and manipulation (Oliver, 1991).

Accordingly, the Acahualinca Programme can be conceptualised as an action net where a multitude of organisations and individuals are involved in the formulation and implementation of the programme, for example planners, politicians, development aid workers, squatters, waste pickers, community leaders, engineers, volunteers and labouring children. In this paper we understand the translation process as presented by Czarniawska and Joerges, where an idea (the programme) is disembedded from its institutional surroundings, packaged into an object, translated and unpacked to fit the new context and translated locally into a new practice, reembedded (1996: 46).

Methodology

This paper is based on a case study (Flyvbjerg, 2011) conducted in the La Chureca rubbish dump and slum, examining the Acahualinca Programme. The research was qualitative (Silverman, 2006), based on semi-structured interviews, meeting observation, workshop participation, and programme document analysis. We gathered our data during three field visits to Managua, January 2009–March 2010, December 2010–February 2011 and July to August 2012, and during April 2010 we conducted field visits to some of the Madrid-based international organisations involved in the Acahualinca Programme.

On the first visit to Managua, our focus was on how La Chureca became an international development aid programme (reported in Zapata Campos & Zapata, 2012), seeking to learn how the programme was formed and formulated and by whom. On the second and third visits, we concentrated on what had happened during the intervening time, more specifically, on how the programme was translated into Managua's city management during its implementation, by whom and with what implications. In visiting the organisations' headquarters, we concentrated on the relationship between the field offices and headquarters when formulating and implementing the Acahualinca Programme. When talking to residents and waste collectors we focused on what the programme meant for them and their context.

As Czarniawska points out, important events seldom happen when researchers are present; in fact, nobody is aware that something is important when it happens, as events must subsequently be rendered important or unimportant (Czarniawska, 2004; White, 1973). Using a combination of data gathering methods and sources, we have aimed to understand, render, and reconstruct the richness of the process studied in a credible manner (Silverman, 2006).

Throughout our fieldwork, we conducted personal interviews seventy key actors related to La Chureca and the Acahualinca Programme, including local politicians, municipal and ministry officers, local and international NGO managers and mid-management functionaries, representatives of civil society organisations, local community members, community leaders, waste collectors, informal settlements residents, journalists and consultants.

The data analysis started with the Acahualinca Programme implementation in Managua during the studied period. Then, as McCann and Ward (2012) suggest in their study of policy mobilities, we traced back in time the connections of the programme to reconstruct how it became a programme, following how La Chureca travelled turned into words, pictures and numbers via journalists, NGOs and other carriers to other places and times. In the process, La Chureca was translated by a local action net from a local blight into a global representation of urban distress. Then, following the translation process as presented by Czarniawska-Joerges and Joerges (1996, p. 46), we focused on how the programme travelled back from Madrid to Managua city management and then to La Chureca: how the programme was disembedded from its institutional surroundings, packaged into objects, translated and unpacked to fit the new context, and translated locally into a new practice, i.e., "re-embedded".

In analysing our findings, the data were coded and categorised (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) in line with the collective actions that we identified as interconnected in a succession of translations, whereby the Acahualinca Development Aid Programme was disembedded in the Managua city management practice and the La Chureca dump and settlement.

In the fieldwork, Spanish was the language spoken and the language of most documentation. Spanish is the mother tongue of one researcher, while the other speaks it fluently. We transcribed and analysed the material in the original Spanish; all quotations used here were translated into English by the authors.

Preamble. The case: translating the Acahualinca Programme

This section describes the initial links in the translation chain of the Acahualinca Program: how La Chureca first emerged as an NGO project; then became a project of the Spanish Agency for International Development Co-operation, AECID; and how the aid project became a part of Managua city management practice.

Translating La Chureca into the Acahualinca Programme

La Chureca was until recently the open rubbish dump of Managua, and the home of 300 families living in a rubbish slum named as the dump, La Chureca. Approximately 2000 waste collectors – women, men and children – worked daily at La Chureca, exposed to toxins and contaminants. In addition, the conditions under which the rubbish was mismanaged at the dump were causing heavy contamination of nearby Lake Xolotlán, affecting the health and environmental safety of not only La Chureca's residents, but of the whole metropolitan region of Managua.

Since the early 1990s, a number of international and national NGOs committed themselves to alleviating this situation of extreme poverty. Over the years, these NGOs succeeded in problematizing La Chureca in the national and international mass media (e.g. travel blogs, social media, television channels or newspapers). In August 2007, La Chureca was visited by the First Vice-President of the Spanish Government during a tour to the region, where she committed to 'ending' La Chureca by funding the Acahualinca Programme. Despite the fact that La Chureca was not a priority for Managua city management (Telemundo 51, December 2005, 'Los niños del Basurero' (The rubbish dump's children)), an agreement was signed in 2008 between the Managua municipality and AECID to implement the Acahualinca Programme. After that, La Chureca officially entered the political agenda of Managua city management as a development aid programme.

From the Spaniards' programme to the city of Managua's programme

During 2008 a long participation process was conducted to contribute to the formulation of the programme. AECID entrusted the Spanish public engineering company, Tragsa, with the formulation of the Acahualinca Programme, and with the constructing of both the new sanitary landfill and the waste recycling station at La Chureca. Two open workshops involving a large number of NGOs and community-based organisations were held to support the formulation of the programme. Previous strategic plans and practices carried out by local NGOs were taken as a relevant source of ideas for the design of some parts of the programme. Furthermore, in parallel to the Acahualinca Programme AECID funded two projects carried out by two Spanish NGOs with focus on the Acahualinca neighbourhood and La Chureca, Solidaridad Internacional and Educación sin Fronteras. Likewise, via multilateral aid, further resources were transferred to UN-Habitat to support the formulation of the Waste Management Strategic Plan of Managua by opening a Water and Sanitation programme office in Nicaragua in 2008.

During this period, the interaction between the organisations' headquarters in Madrid and Managua were very intense, and both Tragsa and AECID had special positions dedicated in Madrid to deal with aid development projects in Nicaragua.

However, after the municipal elections in autumn 2008, a new political team took over and the mayor, councilors and main public officers were changed. As a result, important changes in the internal management of development aid projects were initiated. The new city authorities were very concerned with the asymmetric situation in which development aid projects, and specifically the Acahualinca Programme, was implemented. In response, the new city management 2009 started a process of 'reformulation, appropriation, and ownership of the Acahualinca programme' (municipal officer, interview), often not exempted of overt confrontations.

With the arrival of a new AECID Nicaragua country manager at the end of 2009, AECID came to support the change in city leadership, and the transfer of the Acahualinca Programme to the hands of Managua city management. To start with, the Spanish co-director of the programme was discharged in December 2009. In 2010 the Acahualinca Programme manager was changed to a person closer to the ruling political party. Similarly, the Spanish officers working in the programme completed their work during this year.

And, by the beginning of 2010, the programme's execution, documentation, budget and design were in the hands of the city of Managua. By the end of 2010, the development aid projects implemented within the municipality had been integrated into a municipal strategy whereby expensive consultancy services (often resulting in reports and plans) were used sparingly, substituted by public Nicaraguan organisations; and activities between projects were better co-ordinated to prevent duplications. Through this process of harmonization the municipality shaped the development aid projects were to better fit Managua local government's needs and plans.

Findings. The Acahualinca Program: from city management to La Chureca

With the the initial description of how the Acahualinca Programme was made mobile and mutable as a base, in this section the findings discussed in this paper are presented. The section reconstructs the final phase of implementation of the programme. It shows how the programme shaped and was shaped by the place, the residents and workers at La Chureca, as found in our interviews and observations.

Implementation (compliance) of the programme through NGOs, GROs, community-leaders, and residents participation.

The programme relied on the intermediation of the NGOs operating within La Chureca to support the implementation of the programme: by providing a safe entrance through their own staff and local residents performing as guides; by helping to contact the community and provide the necessary legitimacy; and by sharing their knowledge about the cultural content to adapt and implement the programme:

We, from within [La Chureca], have had an advisory role, assisting during workshops, we have also taken development and governmental organisations here (...) it's through us that the government have met people. The people were reluctant to listen to them, because you know, promises from the government are not well seen in these communities. So through us organisations from the outside could gain credibility and they used us as a channel to enter. (Juntos Contigo, local NGO)

The programme also relied on other grass-root organizations, such as trade unions, Consejos del Poder Ciudadano (Citizen Power Councils - parts of the Sandinist party

and thus the governing party in Managua and Nicaragua, that exists in the barrios of Nicaragua's cities and serves as local committees through which information can pass up to the local government, or down to the CPCs from the local government) to implement the programme. For example, a register of the beneficiaries of the programme (both Chureca residents and Chureca waste collectors) was conducted, in negotiations with local trade unions, scavengers, residents and intermediaries, to prevent potential conflicts with other waste collectors from outside La Chureca who also wanted to be benefit from the programme.

entonces el enfoque (del proyecto) está pues en los pepenadores de toda la vida los que viven dentro y los que viven fuera, entonces en ese sentido hemos establecido coordinaciones tanto con los sindicatos, con la federación de trabajadores, con los intermediarios y, en la comunidad

The programme localised an information and policy recipients office within the La Chureca slum, the blue house (casa azul), to provide health care, space for meetings and a headquarter for the community leaders. And the offices of the programme management team (which had been very criticised for initially being situated in the expensive neighbourhood close to the international aid organisations headquarters) were also moved from central Managua to the less fancy and more affordable Acahualinca neighbourhood.

The programme management also relied on the participation of community leaders to implement the programme. The '12 community leaders', had been elected in 2009 as representatives of La Chureca's residents by petition of the programme in order to have a counter partner within the community to communicate activities and design some parts of the programme activities. They were elected as representatives of different social groups: young people, elderly people, women, CPC, CNT trade union, Movimiento Comunal trade union. They used to meet every 15 days and when it was required by the program. A pair of the community leaders were assigned to each one of the five sections (50-60 residents) in which the La Chureca residents had been aggregated. The community leaders also had meetings with the residents to inform them about the progress of the programme, specially the houses and the recycling plant. Initially, the '12 community leaders' was created by the programme as a top-down communication mechanism:

We, the community leaders, give orientation to the people, we communicate what happens in the programme. We act under the programme leader within ALMA, and we inform ALMA if something occurs here ... ('12 community leaders')

The implementation of the programme also relied on the direct participation of La Chureca's residents and workers as beneficiaries of the programme, for example in the design of the houses and the new neighbourhood:

TRACSA, decía, bueno los especialista en la Chureca son las personas que viven ahí, por más que nosotros queramos extender somos actores externos, no vivimos ahí, así que hay que escuchar a las personas porque son ellas las que saben que es lo que quieren para sus propias vidas ... nosotros estamos de acuerdo con ese planteamiento y por eso todo este año hemos tratado de facilitar procesos de auto reflexión con la comunidad para que la gente reflexiones más sobre la oportunidad que significa este proyecto y que implicaciones tiene para sus vidas, que son muchos más que tener una casa, es realmente pasar a convertirse en ciudadano y eso te pone, te convierte en un sujeto político, (Dos Generaciones)

Estamos preparando a la gente para una vida nueva. Por ejemplo la próxima entrega de

viviendas. Este cambio es una importante pérdida psico-emocional para la que hay que prepararse, la pérdida del palito, etc. ... Todo se decide con la comunidad. Por ejemplo se celebró una jornada de participación para elegir el modelo de casa (programme manager).

(programme manager)

ahorita empieza el proceso de construcción de la vivienda, entonces, había que escuchar las voces también de la comunidad, como se imaginaban la casa donde iban a vivir, como podría ser, entonces se hicieron maquetas y ellos llegaron, y, dieron sus opiniones, se les aclaraba, porque en ningún momento se trata de hacerles creer de que vamos hacer todo lo que ellos digan, no podemos llegar con las mentiras, porque aquí hay cuestiones técnicas que obedecen, hay regulaciones y todo, pero al menos se les ofrece la posibilidad, se les abre entonces para que participen y entonces dan sus opiniones después se recogen y ahora en el informe final, las que sean técnicamente posibles van a ser incluidas, esa es una manera, digamos de ver como las comunicaciones van abriendo también un espacio de diálogo entre los ingenieros, los arquitectos que se suponen que son las personas que la abren, y las comunidades (Communication programme manager).

It was simply not possible to implement the programme without involving La Chureca's residents, collectors and community leaders. As some interviewees remind us, the waste collectors at La Chureca showed their mobilization capability when they went on strike in 2008 and stopped municipal waste trucks to enter the dump for weeks. Therefore "it is not possible to implement this programme without the people of La Chureca" (Former AECID manager).

Similarly, the engineering company in charge of the construction works in the landfill, Tragsa, realised according to several interviewees "that without the social [dimension] they can not make their construction works. They learnt that the first day when they entered with the machines in La Chureca and the Churequeros rushed in to grab the garbage that they were lifting up" (AECID Country manager in Madrid). As a result of this experience, Tragsa had to employ community leaders to guarantee the security of the slum residents and the scavengers during the construction works.

Con el sellado del vertedero (the 12 community leaders) forman parte del equipo de vigilancia, los hacemos partícipes... Por ejemplo hoy hay reunion para prevenir accidentes con las obras en la comunidad (programme manager).

They also employed waste collectors and residents as part of the construction crew, as we will discuss later.

The programme changes (shapes) La Chureca. Community leaders' and residents' evolution during the implementation of the programme

Some international and national NGOs were critical with the celerity to elect these community leaders, arguing that they were not skilled as leaders and, in some cases, not representative for the community:

yo creo que por parte del proyecto ha habido como una urgencia por tener personas de referencia en la población y en esa urgencia pues, me he ido a los líderes que ya estaban ... nuestra pretensión era, trabajar esto antes de, a medio plazo, no así como ya, y me comunico con estas doce personas, y ya está y ellos que transmitan (Solidaridad Internacional)

Si uno escarba no son tanto representativos de la población no transmiten digamos la información que reciben con la transparencia deseada (Solidaridad Internacional)

According to many interviewees the 12 community leaders were closer to a top-down informational mechanism than to a community-based participation whereby the

communications were mostly made in one direction only – from the local government to the community:

People (at la Chureca) think that the community leaders are not doing a good job and, instead, they are taking care of their own interests. The 12 community leaders have improved their skills, no doubt about it. But they are not following their own values or beliefs. Instead they are being constructed by the local government. They are not moved by a feeling of defending the interests of the community (...) When the municipality is going to do something related to the programme, they have to acknowledge it to the community. Then, the community leaders can say ‘it is better in this way, otherwise the community will not support it’. The leaders make some suggestions about the programme but at the end the one who decides is the municipality. They just sign papers. The leaders get the message and accordingly, in theory also the community gets the message. That is the idea. Sometimes the community is unaware of the changes in the programme. This is why the community feels that the 12 leaders are not being useful. (Juntos contigo)

The programme management team was initially (in 2009) concerned with the challenges that faced the new community leaders to act beyond their individual interests:

Los líderes comunitarios son un equipo muy bueno. Pero hay mucho individualismo, producto de sus traumas y de la dureza de sus condiciones de vida. Hay conflictos internos. No hay que dispararse (programme manager).

Es un liderazgo (el de los líderes comunitarios) muy dividido, muy fragmentado por las luchas partidarias, un liderazgo que está muy apegado a las orientaciones del partido o de los partidos, pero aún así, no por eso, no podemos deslegitimarlos (Dos Generaciones)

However, during the four years of implementation of the programme, the community leaders evolved into their new role. They acknowledged to have improved their social and participatory skills and learned to go beyond individual differences without fighting. They also gained social and communication skills to deal with the residents, with municipal and aid officers, with the other community leaders and with outsiders as us.

“Como líderes comunitarios se ha logrado aumentar el respeto mutuo y de la comunidad. Hemos cambiado mucho. Ahora respetamos mucho a los compas y también la comunidad gracias a la ayuda del proyecto” (Community Leader, 2011)

“Hemos sido capacitados para hablar con la gente, como con ustedes” (Community leader, 2011)

En nuestras formas de ser todos hemos cambiado, nosotros éramos unas personas agresivas, de todo nos enojábamos, de todo hacíamos pleito, y si hemos cambiado. (Community Leader, 2012)

During the construction works and the implementation of the programme the La Chureca and its dwellers also changed. The place had physically changed even before the construction works and the houses were finished. Since the dump was sealed the air was breathable (no gas, no smoke and dump dust), the trees were green again, and the neighbourhood was cleaner in general. The built environment had also improved: some residents had re-constructed their temporal houses as a result of the new skills acquired in the vocational training courses; others got new temporary roofs, the houses and the streets were clean as a result of environmental campaigns and brigades supported by the programme. The number of people with drug addictions was fewer as well as a result of the social and rehabilitation programs. And La Chureca residents gained in self-confidence to overcome their stigma as a result of these changes:

‘You can feel the hope now’. You can also notice how the environment has been improved already. “I remember first time I was there, I opened the car door and La Chureca hit me. Now you can be there!” (TRAGSA Nicaragua manager, 2011).

poco a poco hemos ido socializando con otras personas, ya que prácticamente vivíamos aquí marginados, ¡la gente de la chureca, huyyy! hasta nos hacían como apartaditos en los centros de salud, pero ahora ya todo eso ha cambiado. Ya la gente de aquí se relaciona, sale, ahora casualmente recién hay hasta transporte, tenemos motitos que antes no existían aquí. Porque la calle... vivíamos en un fango, salíamos aquí en el invierno, llegamos hasta aquí con el lodo. No salíamos completamente, estábamos aquí (Community leader, young representative).

Si se puede y si se pudo cambiar, y seguimos avanzando (Community leader, young representative)

The example of residents that had been working in the construction works, or young people attending the vocational courses had already changed the attitude of many residents that had again hope of a better future outside La Chureca:

Nosotros no, nosotros dependíamos prácticamente de la recolección de la basura, hoy en día las personas han visto y han abierto nuevos horizontes, se han expandido afuera, ya ahora hay gente trabajando afuera, gente trabajando en la urbanización y gente que ya está trabajando como guardias de seguridad, en lo que es las construcciones, hay albañiles, los que salieron de la escuela taller, jóvenes y adultos (Community leader, young representative).

For example, some of them got employed in the construction works to seal the landfill. The TRAGSA manager in Nicaragua was very pleased with how well the Churequeros had adapted to a formal job and he was very optimistic about the resilience of this people:

“40 people from La Chureca are now working formally for the different companies involved in the construction works, with a regular salary. This has showed them that it is possible to insert them in the formal economy. An anecdote is that one of the maras leader at La Chureca who, people say, has a long list of murders behind him, is now working for one of the companies with an impeccable behavior. This proves that when you start integration mechanisms it is possible to turn into a formal economy. Nosotros creemos que los churequeros seran los mejores trabajadores en la planta. Ellos saben en qué consiste el oficio de clasificar basura porque ha sido y es sutrabajo. Y además quieren trabajar. En total se estima que se crearán unos 700 puestos de trabajo entre oficinas, guardería infantil, trabajo en la planta... We are very optimistic about this, unlike other people. We don’t think it will be a problem. The challenge will be the management of the plant” (TRAGSA Nicaragua manager, 2011)

Chureca residents went beyond their complexes and stigma and started becoming proud of their identity:

Hace poco, ando en esa moto haciendo una compra por Monseñor Lezcano y me dijo un señor: cómo vas a ser churequero vos, si vos sos un hombre de riales, diciendo que sos de la chureca. -No hermano no te equivoques, el hecho que sea de la chureca no quiere decir que me vas a ver andrajoso toda la vida, yo tengo dignidad, independientemente que sea churequero, no me vas a ver arrastrado por el suelo.

o desde que estaba con la idea de la moto dije yo le voy a poner, confederación de trabajadores por cuenta propia, FNT- La chureca.

La Chureca contestation to the programme.

As the programme evolved the latent conflicts between the programme and the community became more overt. The residents and the community leaders who

initially complied with the programme and performed as mere informants, raised divergent voices when the programme was approaching the end, and houses and jobs had to be assigned, thus breaking the initial uniform discourse of gratefulness and harmony.

The programme beneficiaries was a heterogenous group including: residents at La Chureca; waste collectors working regularly at the dump but not living there; young and elderly; single mothers with family; extended family living in one household; people with drug and alcohol addictions. However heterogeneous, there was a common concern: the top priority was to continue working at the recycling plant when waste-picking at the dump would be forbidden. The beneficiaries were worried about the fact that their income would decrease when the plant started working: only one member of the family would work (all could pick waste at the dump) and to a lower salary. They will also have to pay for basic services such as water, sewage, waste collection or electricity, which have been illegally consumed so far:

La casa no vale para nada si no puedo pagar la luz o el agua. Prefiero esa casita de ahí y seguir teniendo trabajo. (La Chureca resident)

The second most important concern was the houses: who was included in the registry as tenant of a new house, when and in what conditions (quality of materials and characteristics) would the houses be delivered. Some community leaders complained that the initial models elected and agreed upon through community participation lost something in their translation when they were constructed:

Las casas han venido desde un inicio cambiaron de modelo, porque ya no es el mismo modelo desde un inicio, desde que empezó la construcción el modelo cambió, porque el modelo que el barrio eligió nada que ver con ese que está ahí, ni los materiales ... Yo no soy ingeniera le digo a ella (a la directora del proyecto), pero yo sé lo que han puesto, ... no hay necesidad de ser eso para saber. Ni de saber leer, para ver lo que está malo y lo que está bien, uno por eso mira. (CPC)

When the end of the programme was approaching, and jobs were promised to be delivered, the tension increased at La Chureca. More waste pickers were attracted to work at La Chureca and hoped to be elected for a job at the plant. And the rivalry between La Chureca residents and the non resident waste-pickers increased; as well as the rivalry between La Chureca residents and the residents who were moved to new housing in the same barrio but financed by the state government due to flooding of their former houses. People at La Chureca flagged how they had been born there, breathed the polluted air and thus gained the right to a new house and a job:

Yo fui nacida aquí, yo he tragado humo aquí, mis hijos han tragado humo aquí. (La Chureca resident)

The La Chureca waste picker's trade union representative, community leaders and residents were very concerned about how Chureca workers older than 45 would be compensated as they could not continue waste-picking at the dump, nor would be offered work at the plant according to the programme plan.

nosotros no podemos quedar al sol y al viento en la calle porque nos está quitando el medio de trabajo que nosotros tenemos... Este proyecto nos está quitando nuestro trabajo. Y a cambio de qué? A cambio de nada

ellos tienen su meta de 18 a 45 años hasta ahí es, y es como dijo el amigo "sálvese quien pueda" entonces por eso es problema que nosotros tenemos que buscar alguna respuesta, alguna solución de alguien para poder sobrevivir...

viendo algunos grupos de la tercera edad de 55 años de 50 a 60 y más si pueden estamos haciendo lo posible por cómo organizar nosotros verdad a que no hay ninguna ayuda de nadie porque aquí ... no nos ayuda nadie. Entonces nosotros como afectados tenemos tiempalales de trabajar en ese vertedero de la chureca aquí y se puede decir que ahora estamos quedando abandonados (Community leader, elderly)

The community leaders that diverged from fully complying the programme contested the programme manager's authority in different ways. For example, the CPC representative complained to the city district political representative about the form in which the programme was managed. However, the strong political ties of the programme manager with the elite of the Sandinist Party made these attempts unsuccessful:

Cuando una estructura pertenece al mismo partido o al mismo, estructura, no se puede hacer nada, yo soy sandinista igual, pero yo voy al distrito me quejo por X o Y razón a ella le pueden llamar la atención pero ¿Qué es lo que hace ella? Por lo menos lo que es el distrito tenemos un secretario Político que es amigazo de ella, entonces ¿Qué puedo hacer en contra de esa persona? (Community Leader, CPC).

The community leaders were aware of the long command and information chain in the programme :

nosotros sabemos que Mariscal es el que ve el proyecto del barrio, hay varios, pero en realidad, es que nosotros hemos hablado, hemos dicho lo que ella nos traduce, pero lo que a nosotros exactamente alguien del proyecto muy responsable o un español nos digan no, no hemos tenido ningún tipo de información (Community leader, CPC).

And some community leaders tried to get information about the programme by circumventing the programme management and the long command chain. For example they tried to contact the former Spanish aid worker who was in charge of the socio-economic parts of the programme; or even the AECID director whom they phoned to get further information when they were not satisfied with how the programme was been managed by the municipality:

...Nos prohibieron (the programme manager) habláramos o nos reuniéramos con él (the former Spanish aid worker)...Eso salió como dicen, un día en una reunión pues nosotros tuvimos hablando de eso que nos iban a reunir con él, (cuando el ya había salido de aquí). Si, porque igual necesitábamos información. Necesitábamos saber, porque él como español, sabía muchas cosas que nosotros no sabíamos,

The programme management forbade the community leaders to contact the former Spanish aid worker and even pressed the AECID director to not be contacted directly:

Con Mariscal nosotros hemos tratado bastante, pero se ha venido distanciando bastante. Durante una visita de Mariscal a La Chureca una de mis compañeras le pidió el número de teléfono, para buscar cualquier tipo de información, porque nosotros estamos necesitando información, exacta y veraz... Le dio el número, después le dijo que cualquier cosa lo hablara con la directora del proyecto... Resulta que al siguiente día, la llaman a mi compañera y le dicen: ustedes solo se andan prestando para hacer tales y tales cosas, en contra mía, en contra del proyecto... ellos se han adueñado ya de lo que no es de ellos. (Community leader, CPC)

Demonstrations and physical force were also reactions of La Chureca's waste collectors organised by the trade union along the implementation of the programme

nosotros tenemos suficiente capacidad de enfrentar cualquier lucha que se nos venga, porque es lo que hemos aprendido de la organización y además de eso ya tenemos experiencia de lucha, de experiencias fuertes, nosotros nos hemos tenido que fajar con la policía, con el

gobierno, como dirigente soy dirigente también, sandinista, pero también, defendiendo mis derechos. Mis derechos es muy aparte mi partido es otra cosa (Trade Union representative)

In 2012 when the houses were delayed and the programme manager did not inform the community as they demanded, the trade union together with some community leaders called to a press conference to lobby towards the programme management:

hubo un momento que estaba parado el proceso de las casa, el de las comunitarias, que les corresponde esa parte, estaban con la boca callada, entonces fue cuando ustedes vieron algunas declaraciones, que yo tuve que abocarme a los medios, y denunciar y pedir al proyecto que es lo que estaba pasando, la Elvira reyes se puso enojada conmigo, pero- ahí está mi casa también , si aquí hay un proyecto que no debe de pararse, entonces toda la gente está pegando grito allá, que la planta está trabajando, que el sellado está trabajando pero que las casas no están (FNT Trade Union representative)

No le gusta lo malo que ella está haciendo, que uno la señale, eso no le gusta, porque hace como 4 meses, más o menos nosotros le echamos los medios de comunicación, porque estábamos empachados, saciados, de que aquí ella hacia lo que quería, ella era la dueña del barrio, ella todas las cosas era directamente ella y su gente la que venían (Community Leader CPC)

The trade union's capability to mobilise the waste collectors to strikes and demonstrations was also been proved a few times along the last years of implementation of the programme , as when the city of Managua was flooded of waste because the waste collectors did not allow the trucks to enter La Chureca. The strength of the FNT trade union is entrenched with the Sandinist political party, that relies on the mobilizing capability of the trade union for national and local politics.

nosotros agotamos, cualquier gestión administrativa, hasta mas no poder, pero cuando ya no nos quieren ver, no es que no nos vean es que no nos quieren ver, entonces, vamos a la calle, por eso es que el frente nacional de los trabajadores es la mano derecha del gobierno (FNT trade union representative)

The residents and community leaders reaction was not only to struggle with the programme manager, but also to diversify the sources of employment for those who would be left with no work at the plant. For example, the FNT Chureca trade union started a collective taxi service for La Chureca's residents with former waste pickers and have so far managed to buy eight moto-taxis (August 2012). The trade union and other community leaders had also formulated programmes to start new entrepreneurial activities such as taxi-boats for tourists, moto-taxis to collect waste at informal settlements in the neighbourhood, a restaurant programme in a coastal area close to La Chureca ... And they also proposed to integrate workers over 45 in the social security system.

The programme manager's discourse towards the community leaders changed during the last phase of the programme. Suddenly, the manager agreed on the community leaders' lack of representativeness and commitment to defend the interests of the community beyond their personal interests, and instead got involved in internal power struggles between leaders:

Ahí entran intereses creados, yo soy líder entonces a mi me vas a dar una casa esquinera, yo soy líder entonces a mi me vas a dar trabajo a mi hijo... No hemos logrado en ellos en todo este tiempo el sentido de lo que es un líder comunitario, el líder porque con ellos nosotros los decimos no es presentar los problemas, es presentar las posibles soluciones, no es sentarnos todos los jueves o cada quince días tenemos este problema, necesitamos esto (programme manager)

Es lamentable que aca que son un equipo de trabajo (los líderes comunitarios) de pronto sea el equipo de trabajo el que más golpea al proyecto cuando son los mas beneficiados de esto, como es posible que estemos viendo todo lo negative!” programme manager

Entre ellos tienen una lucha de poder, aquí te puedo decir recibimos llamadas, uno diciendo: “la maría tal cosa”, otro, “la Maritza tal cosa, no vino a trabajar y que no se que”, esa situación, esa inmadurez.” (programme manager)

As a result of these struggles, many residents and community leaders felt that, even though they shared political views with the municipality, their rights as workers and as residents were another thing. Thus, they did not feel committed to agree with the implementation of the programme when their interests were not addressed as they thought they should:

es mi gobierno y lo quiero mucho claro porque hace buenas cosas pero aquí se ha olvidado (community leader Eldery)

soy dirigente también, sandinista, pero también, defendiendo mis derechos (trade union)

At the end of the programme some community leaders acknowledged that they had been instrumentalised to legitimise decisions that were often already taken:

Pero sobre nosotros (los líderes comunitarios) han hecho lo que han querido. Y es lamentable porque parece que nosotros simplemente estamos tapando (justificando) algo que ella (la directora del proyecto) hace. (Community leader, CPC)

Despite that the community leaders were instrumentalised by the programme and that their election was accelerated in order to have a legitimate interlocutor as soon as possible, and even if the benefits they got (e.g. a regular salary for their dedication to the programme) was perceived as somewhat a bribe; during the implementation the community leaders started believing in their own role as representatives of the community and the need to defend their rights:

la codirectora a veces quiere hacer lo más a ella le parece bien muchas veces sin contar con el liderazgo de la comunidad y nosotros estamos puestos aquí por la comunidad, la comunidad nos tiene aquí para que miremos los intereses de la comunidad, no dejar que nadie pase encima (Community leader, Eldery).

porque a mí me dan una ayuda de 2000 córdobas al mes, yo voy a callarme, no, ayuda es ayuda, yo por eso hago mi trabajo, pero también tengo que ejercer mi derecho.

hemos tenido bastantes indiferencias, porque directamente, hay cosas, que ellas codirectoras del proyecto, no lo puede hacer, sin contar con nosotros, aunque ella dice yo soy la instancia que puedo decidir o la alcaldía es la que puede decidir pero igual nosotros estamos para estar a favor o en contra de lo que ellos hagan, entonces hemos tenido bastantes conflictos (Community leader CPC)

When the programme ends... new programmes on the move.

In February 2013, 500 waste collectors started working at the new waste recycling plant at La Chureca and 300 families moved to the new houses. Despite the plans to close the landfill, part of it is temporarily open for waste picking as an intermediary solution to compensate those that did not immediately benefit from the new jobs. There are new programmes funded by Nicaraguan state, municipality and NGOs on the move to follow up those collectives that have not been beneficiaries of jobs.

A few months before houses and jobs were delivered, the community leaders already thought about how things will be when the programme ended up. Some considered that they will continue to work as community leader, but now integrated in the political and governmental participatory structures. They also felt that once the funding ends, they will continue making their own decisions:

Ellos (programme management) se han aduenado de lo que no es de ellos. Ya terminado el proyecto, nuestra comunidad volverá a ser nuestra. (Community leader, CPC representative).

They acknowledge that there is a lot left to do, specially for those that are not employed by the waste recycling station. The future is full of new programmes:

Hemos estado peleando por que nadie se quede fuera, yo como secretario general he dicho siempre que lamentablemente los único perdedores tendrán que ser los Zopilotes. Porque no tiene sindicato que los salve

Analysis

The Acahualinca Programme was made mobile and mutable through chains and circuits of translations enacted by a myriad of policy actors (Czarniawska 2002, McCann and Ward, 2012). In this paper we have followed some sequences of the network of translations and specifically we have focused on how the programme was translated from the city management to La Chureca: into houses, jobs, a sanitary landfill, a recycling station and other assets for the community.

The Acahualinca Programme was made into practice by the translating labour enacted by ‘policy translators’, such as local NGOs operating at La Chureca and Acahualinca, GROs, community leaders, trade unions and individual residents (Zapata Campos and Zapata, 2013).

These policy translators (Czarniawska, 2002, Mosse, 2005) were mediators (Latour, 1993) who could read the meaning of the programme into the different institutional languages of the involved organizations and groups. By making their translations they adapted the programme to different interests and made it real (Mosse, 2005, p. 9). Each mutation allowed the programme to move forward in different directions. The local NGOs operating at La Chureca served to safely access the local community in very dangerous sites, and initially provided legitimacy to the municipality to start running the programme. The programme was translated to the residents and waste collectors’ interests and language by different translators and through different means: a photo essay performed by Chureca residents to represent the programme; or meetings with community leaders and programme managers around houses prototypes...

The programme was made mobile and mutable in relational sites or situations (McCann and Ward, 2012), such as seminars held at the programme headquarters, the blue house, or walking tours to La Chureca guided by local residents. These relational situations provided the programme with a safe and accessible connection with the policy beneficiaries, as well as for data collection, for researchers like us. These places become windows that allowed extraordinary and unexpected connections, such as when the Spanish Vice President met waste collectors at the dump; as “places

constituted by assemblages of the near and far, the fixed and the mobile” (McCann and Ward, 2012, p.47).

Initially, the ‘12 community leaders’ represented a form of domination whereby the local community was politically instrumentalised by the programme management and the municipality. Development translators as the ‘12 community leaders’ helped ‘construct and maintain social and professional identities and structures of power and authority’ (Mosse and Lewis, 2006, p.17). The community leaders were at the beginning submissive compliers with the programme management and the community participation was instrumentalised to smooth the implementation of the programme: ‘to offload public responsibilities, defuse protest, co-opt opponents, impose social control and mobilise communities’ (Silver, Scott and Kazepov, 2010, p. 455). Participation in the Acahualinca Development Programme thus became ‘a mode of ‘governmentality’ reproducing state power in new spaces’ (Silver, Scott and Kazepov, 2010, p. 455).

However, in policy participatory processes, ‘the rules of the game, and thus its outcomes, are not set in stone; the plans of elite political actors can be disrupted’ (Silver, Scott and Kazepov, 2010, p.467). Previous research has also observed how policy beneficiaries constantly attempted to make programme activities suit their own needs (Rossi, 2006). Despite that the institutional pressures to comply with the Acahualinca Programme conditioned the path dependency in which the programme was moved and transformed, the trajectories of its implementation were not inscribed in stone (McFarlane 2009). It mutated and became unpredictable, as was the case of the role played by the 12 community leaders. The community leaders were believed to be mere transmitters of information, but when jobs and houses were going to be delivered and the tension increased, the community contested the programme’s authority by trying to circumvent the command chain, by political activism, by demonstrations and physical force, and by using the mass media.

The Acahualinca Programme was hardly shaped by these actions. Nevertheless, the fact that these policy translators unexpectedly showed their awareness and their willingness to defend their interests changed how they were constructed (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011). Rather than mere mechanisms of the programme machinery, the community showed that they were a collective that acknowledged their rights and were ready to fight for them at any cost. The community leaders were transformed into policy actors and mediators. Residents and GROs were unexpectedly strengthened as city constructors, and no mere spectators of the making of the city.

The implementation of the Acahualinca Programme shows how power emerges through organizing (Czarniawska & Hernes, 2005), policy mobility and mutation; following Actor Network Theory, power is the result of actions. The ‘12 community leaders’ were created as an instrumental and sometimes a ‘window-dressing’ participatory process whereby actions/decisions and community participation were decoupled within the programme. However, even ceremonially adopted structures, as this participatory process, has consequential effects on the programme implementation, resulting in organizational change (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008).

In other words, imitation and compliance can eventually lead to performative processes (Czarniawska-Joerges & Sevón, 1996). The community leaders ended up

by believing in what they had been transformed, and accordingly contested the programme by defending their interests as they considered that “the programme was theirs”. As has happened elsewhere in Nicaragua, the Sandinist Party has encouraged community participation processes and GROs such as the CPC highly politicised and embedded in the Sandinist Party. Eventually these participatory bodies are empowered and can contest the doctrine coming from the Party itself: “I am a Sandinist, but’/ ‘I love my Party, but’” were phrases we heard very often.

Concluding discussion

Policy mobility and city management is not about ‘putting plans in operation’, but about ‘coping with daily problems (or managing, as the double meaning of the world in English astutely suggests)’ (Czarniawska, 2001, p.4). Also the organising of the city of Managua through the implementation of the Acahualinca Programme shows how city management and the making up of policies is about muddling through (Lindblom, 1959) more than about the strict implementation of pre-decided plans.

From this perspective city planning and its practice are loosely coupled activities. Which is coherent with the notion of assembling urbanism (McCann and Ward, 2011) and policy assemblages (Prince, 2010) whereby programmes as Acahualinca Programme are assemblages of: materials like waste; places as La Chureca; resources as those coming from international donors; networks of policy actors connected at different levels that result into more stable and coherent things, such as the new houses, the landfill, the jobs or the waste recycling station at La Chureca.

The Acahualinca Programme contained social and policy practices that draw together diverse elements, such as resources and networks, into relatively stable and coherent things. Unexpected connections were uncovered in this paper, whereby waste collectors in one of the poorest open dumps in Latin America were personally connected to a Vice President or to the country manager of the Spanish Aid Development Agency (including his personal mobile number). This confirms how city management is reproduced and made real by the efforts of actors located at different scales and levels, at different spaces (Madrid, La Chureca) (multiplex cities, Allen and Cochrane, 2007). Similarly, the paper shows how unexpected mutations, such as the community leaders contestation emerge, as policy is not inscribed in stone, but mutates and moves, sometimes surprisingly and unexpectedly (Andersson and McFarlane, 2011).

The formulation and implementation of the Acahualinca Programme also represents the travel of a place: La Chureca. Uncanny places represented as spectacular and global disasters (Clegg and Courpasson, 2007) of social and environmental degradation, such as La Chureca, have a strong capability to travel (Zapata Campos and Zapata, 2012). And put the place on the map (Robinson, 2006) via policy actors, as national and international NGOs, who mobilised policy and engaged with global circuits of policy knowledge and aid development resources. Once the La Chureca had travelled out of Nicaragua, it soon came back as a Programme to change the place, their residents and workers. Paradoxically, when the Programme succeeds to change the place, its power to travel will probably disappear. The place will be less uncanny, less sellable (commodified with a market value) and therefore less mobile. As policy mobility is in this case intimately linked to practices of commodification:

pero le dijeron a la esperanza, ¡oye, si quieres te damos un terreno para que te lleve la escuela ahí, no, no, es que ya la chureca no va a vender, no vende la no pobreza ! (AECID officer)

Aquí han venido gente de otro país a filmar videos.. pero ya la situación no va a ser igual (cuando acabe el proyecto), porque ya no vamos a trabajar en la basura. Y si no tienen beneficio se irán. Porque todos buscamos un beneficio. (Community leader)

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