

Living in Unauthorized Settlements

Housing Improvement and
Social Participation in Bolivia

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To the memory of
Gonzalo Barrón

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Preface

My first steps as a researcher started in the 1980s during my work as technical adviser to the government of the Second Region in Nicaragua. Funding by the Swedish Council for Building Research and Lund University made possible a study that included seven countries in Central America and the Caribbean region. The study's purpose then was determining how different governments meet the housing needs of the low-income. The focus on policies and strategies for housing delivery gave the study a comparative character and a macro-level (top-down) perspective. This first post-graduate thesis made it clear to me that the greatest challenge of the future would be to deal with improvements of increasingly poor residential areas. The study gave me insight on the need to share existing experiences throughout the region, and on the urgency to search for new paradigms linked to the particular context and realities of each place. Capacity building for different actors dealing with housing emerged as a significant task, particularly if it was oriented to the improvement of settlements resulting from the efforts of the people themselves.

After many years work with the regional capacity building program PROMESHA¹, I decided to search for greater understanding on the low-income housing question. My concern remains the same. How could the housing needs of more than half of the population in Latin America be met more adequately? The approach now, however, is different. This time I have tried to look for answers through the people – those affected by the housing conditions targeted by contemporary housing policies. To accomplish these tasks, therefore, this study has assumed an in-depth character and a micro-level (bottom-up) perspective.

The results presented here would not have been possible without the collaboration, the commitment and the contributions of many people, in many different ways, in Bolivia and in Sweden.

I will always be grateful to the people living at the OTB San José de la Tamborada for their priceless time, their willingness to tell me their stories, their open-minded attitude to share their dreams and frustrations with me, and for the tolerance during long interviews. My only reward to them is in the fidelity I have given to their stories, now placed in the pages of this book. I wish I could have done more than that, however.

1 The Capacity Building Program for Housing Improvement (Programa de capacitación para el Mejoramiento Socio-Habitacional) is oriented to different actors working in the low-income housing field in Latin America. PROMESHA results from the collaboration between the Housing Development & Management at Lund University and several institutions of the housing sector in Latin America. The funding institution of PROMESHA is the Swedish International Development Agency, Sida.

Many thanks must go to the staff and the research team of PROMESHA/IIA/UMSS at the University of San Simón of Cochabamba and the professionals working with the PROCASHA Foundation^{2 3} and at the Municipal Council of the Municipality of the Cercado Province in Bolivia. They made me feel part of a team and made my fieldwork not only more pleasant, but also more effective. To Nestor Guzmán, Sonia Jiménez, Ninfa Noriega, Edilberto Rodríguez, Víctor Ramírez, Patricia Tórrez, Rodrigo Álvarez, Israel Terrazas, Rolando Salamanca, Debra Pereira, Inés Flores, Liliana Arévalo and many others, I thank you.

I would also like to thank all my colleagues at the Housing Development & Management Department at Lund University for their encouragement and support during my research work. Particular thanks goes to Kiki Lazlo, our secretary, for assisting me with the unending practical steps that need to be taken; to Lena Andersson for proof reading the text; to Jan-Anders Mattsson for the layout; Mattias Rückert for his excellent illustrations and Girma Awoke for his help with the literature search.

I am particularly thankful to my tutors Jan Söderberg, Birgitta Eriksson and Britt-Marie Johansson, for their guidance and advice on methodological and scientific issues, but also for their commitment and backing for my study right from the very beginning. They never let me feel alone in my struggles and in my search for answers.

Anita Larsson was the first to encourage me to begin this research and was always disposed to give me comments; a special thanks to her. Jörgen Andreasen from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts was invaluable as the critic for my final seminar. His observations and points of views were very important to the improvement of the text.

To my family, particularly my parents, and my friends in Latin America and in Lund, you are always there; always ready to support my dreams and my struggles. My daughters Paloma and Olivia are, and will always be, the main inspiration for whatever I do in my life; they believe in me and I believe deeply in them.

This work would not have been possible without the financial support of SAREC and the Housing Development & Management at Lund University. Thanks to them for this.

2 PROCASHA (Fundación de Promoción para el Cambio Socio Habitacional) is a non-governmental organization established in 2001 for dealing with housing for low-income groups of the population through the cooperative housing model. The foundation gets financial support from the Swedish Cooperative Centre, SCC.

3 The Institute for Architectural Research, IIA (Instituto de Investigaciones de Arquitectura) belongs the School of Architecture of San Simón University of Cochabamba, UMSS (Universidad Mayor de San Simón).

Introduction

Background of the Study

According to the findings of my first postgraduate thesis, housing conditions in Latin America were worsening for high percentages of the population in the past century. The study implemented in seven countries of Central America and the Caribbean showed that housing deficiencies in urban areas was a demanding challenge to deal with in the future.⁴ Those most affected by housing shortages were the 20 percent of the population with lowest incomes, but in the last few decades households with low and middle-low incomes, also were affected. The estimations showed that approximately 60 percent of the population in these countries found shelter through the so-called informal housing sector.⁵ In fact, since the urbanization process started its high tempo more than half a century ago, the formal systems for dealing with housing for people with low-incomes have been full of constraints.

The urbanization process has radically changed the landscape of many cities around the Latin American and the Caribbean region.⁶ Migration flows, and population growth rates, are behind the change of the continent from rural to eminently urban in less than a half century. Although this situation presents variations from country to country, the general tendency is towards a more urbanized region.

The emergence of the 'urban question' as a new field of knowledge implied the development of a series of concepts aimed at explaining what was going on in reality. In general, concepts resulting from theoretical interpretations of the urbanization process were linked to the negative perception of the rapid urban growth prevailing initially, and then to the burgeoning of slums and squatter settlements as its most striking feature. Although the urbanization pace was declining in the last decades of the past century, the increase of the population in urban areas is still high, and so is the demand for land and housing, particularly in cities and towns with high growth rates.

The change of land use from rural to urban in the fringes of the cities more affected by the rapid urban growth belongs to the recognizable features of the urbanization process in the Latin American region. The fact is that a high percentage of the new, low-income, urban dwellers meet their shelter needs with little or no support

4 The comparative study includes Nicaragua, Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba, Panama, Costa Rica and El Salvador. (See Landaeta 1994: Chapter 4).

5 Estimations often made on the amount of 'informal' housing nowadays talk of 60 to 80 percent, depending on the country in question.

6 In the following text, I choose to use Latin America or the region, to refer to the area made up by Mexico, Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

from the formal housing delivery systems. The emergence of housing, built in places outside the land use and regulatory codes then in force, is a result of efforts by the people to access shelter. The so-called illegal, informal or irregular settlements became the most common 'solution' for the 'poor' living in urban areas. In general, there is a more or less shared view that 'housing by people'⁷ is behind the huge qualitative housing shortages. Among the questions often discussed when it comes to *unauthorized housing* are those related to statutory property rights and to the quality of the solutions achieved by the people. The continual emergence of settlements inhabited by the 'poor' has turned into an enormous challenge for policy makers and others active in the low-income housing field.

The amount of housing established outside of formal building standards, tenure systems and planning regulations, demanded new interpretations of the city's reality. 'Housing by people' emerged as a new 'object of knowledge'. The tendency has been to generalize, and by the use of illegal, informal or irregular labels – in reference to housing resulting from the efforts of the people – situations very different are often described and addressed when this is done. From bulldozing of slums and squatter settlements in the past, to proposals to regularize housing in the present (the concept of *regularization*), housing policies have normally considered the proposed solutions suitable to meet problems everywhere, and in all the cases, particularly for actions to be taken by the public sector.

The Habitat II Conference in 1996 concluded that partnerships between countries and among different stakeholders were essential to achieve sustainable human settlements, and to provide adequate shelter and basic services for all. The Habitat Agenda stresses the need for more collaboration among the different actors and social sectors.⁸ The concept of partnership makes participation a concern not only of people in need of housing, but also of other actors in society. The involvement of the population affected by the housing deficits and deficiencies is considered crucial. Additionally, the participants to the international conference agree on the right of everyone to adequate housing, a statement that belongs to both the socio-political sphere and the housing quality domain.

To meet qualitative housing shortages – shortages based on the deficiencies of existing housing rather than just the number of them – emerges as a most relevant question in the field of housing. The main shift in the interpretation of 'housing by people' has been from seeing it as distortion for the adequate development of the cities, to a potentiality for dealing with the increasing housing shortages in urban areas. Urban growth is no longer considered a problem, but rather an opportunity for development, and the vision now is to make cities more competitive in a worldwide perspective. Housing policies that promoted the demolition of 'illegal settlements' belong now to the past. Bringing *unauthorized housing* into legal conformity

7 The title of John F. Turner's book 'Housing by People' published in 1979, is often used to refer to housing resulting from the direct efforts of the population. Both 'housing by people' and *unauthorized housing* will be used in this text to refer to so-called illegal, informal or irregular settlements.

8 See The Habitat Agenda, Chapter II: 25, 33.

belongs to current policies towards 'housing by people'. *Regularization*, many considered similar to the access to statutory property rights and titling, is a key word in housing improvement policies in these days.

Considering the amount of population that increases annually, the size of the urban fabric, and the endemic housing productions capacity existing all over the region, an integration process of the people to a new urban life by their own means occurs in reality. The question, therefore, is: what does the people's integration into the urban reality look like and how can this integration be improved? In view of the overall housing conditions in Latin America for the achievement of real improvements certainly much more than statutory property rights are needed.

Housing policies intended to address the shelter needs of groups with low-incomes went through many adjustments in the past decades. The emphasis changed from focusing on building materials, and the implementation of housing projects and urban services through public institutions, to policy, politics and participation. To include those formerly excluded from participation in these critical questions is central to housing improvement policies these days. The people are called to take part in decision-making process 'on things that affect their lives'. This includes the improvement of their housing conditions.

Participation has not always had the positive connotation it has today in the Latin American context. Only a few decades ago, the will to participate in decision-making process could be considered a threatening action. Why participation is now desirable, or no longer threatening (or even dangerous), is of course something to reflect on further. This is particularly associated to questions such as who is authorized to define the 'taking part' action; when and why this 'taking part' is considered appropriate (or not)? It also includes how participation should take place and according to which objectives.

A great diversity of assessments is present on housing achievements through participatory schemes. But, discussions are often linked to how people's involvement happens or should happen in practice. Expectations on the real possibilities of participatory development are different, and often even contradictory. And, in many cases, recommendations have as their focus achieving better performance of participatory approaches.

There are indeed both positive and negative views these days on participatory action. The promoters of these views have political and economic reasons behind them, say the critics, and they respond to the interests of governments and international aid agencies to control and manipulate the population. The defenders maintain that participatory action enables those formerly excluded to access power and to have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

Current participatory proposals mean that social participation gives local residents the opportunity to develop skills and networks they need to address social exclusion. That gives rise to the idea of participation that provides power to the powerless, sufficient for the achievement of more equitable societies. The general conclusion could be that the people will now have more responsibility on the

outcomes of development, and will thus be less 'disappointed' with development 'delays' and results.

In the 1980s and 1990s, political and economic change was implemented to promote the need for more democratization and decentralization, which included the housing field as well. Social participation is no longer considered a threat but rather it is a means to legitimise new democratic models in the context of Bolivia, as well. Popular organizations, such as urban movements, are seen as reliable partners of the government in poverty alleviation and social programs. Proposals linked to the Law of Administrative Decentralisation (LAD) and the Law of Popular Participation (LPP) in the country seek the transfer of more responsibilities to the local governments, establishing a new arena for the relationship between the state and the civil society, which includes the low-income housing field.

The need is evident for a greater understanding of the practical effects housing improvement and social participation policies (discourses) have in particular contexts. This study shows that the empirical support is still too weak for most assumptions linked to participatory action and housing improvement currently underway in Bolivia. The participatory business towards housing improvement has represented more constraints thus far than real achievements for the people living in the housing area selected for this study. Power conflicts among the people living within the limits of the newly established administrative unit known as Base Territorial Organization San José de la Tamborada (OTB-SJT)⁹, have increased over time; participatory action has become weaker despite the implementation of laws that promote participation.

Aims of the Study

Views and proposals on housing improvement and social participation in Latin America many times changed in rather opposing direction. Social participation is no longer considered a threat, but a potentiality for enabling better outcomes in development. And, 'housing by people' is not seen any more as a distorting factor, rather it is considered a contribution for dealing with housing shortages in the region. Changes in these views are quite noteworthy: From former policies aimed at bulldozing settlements outside the regulatory frameworks into proposals for making settlements part of the legal system. From negative assessments on the rapid growth of the urban areas into views that see cities as a powerful developmental factor. In general, the population living in housing that require improvements, and the people target for participatory action, did not have much say in the production of the discourses deployed (Policies).

Housing improvement and social participation policies can frequently be opposing in their aims as well. Proposals on housing improvement related to *regularization* in Bolivia tend to make housing more a concern of the individual. Proposals of social participation related to the LPP and the LAD promote more collective actions in the

9 Stands for Organización Territorial de Base San José de la Tamborada, (see Chapter 3).

improvement of the living conditions, including the achievement of better quality in housing. The proposals have a similar stand point behind. The people, individually or collectively, will be the main force in dealing with housing deficiencies now and in the future.

These proposals have particular effects (*effects of truth*) on the perceptions of the people concerned. For the discussions of this study, I have chosen to see policies related to housing improvement and social participation as 'official' discourses. The focus of the discussion is not, however, on the particular effects (*effects of truth*) connected to predictions, or targets defined in advance by somebody, a particular group or a class, but rather, on the consequences of the discourses in everyday life. In this sense, the current study does not aim to look for how the 'official' discourses emerge or why, but on how the 'official' discourses meet the discursive praxis.

The interest of the study is not either on the truth or falsehood of the discourses on housing improvement and social participation, as deployed currently in the country. It is on what Foucault (1980) means by the 'will to truth' that any society is typified with, and which determines how knowledge is put to work, valorised and distributed. This has to do with discourse, power and knowledge related one to each other in Foucault's view.

The overall intent of the study is to understand housing improvement and social participation from the perspective of the people living in *unauthorized* housing in Bolivia. This means the need to elucidate the *effects of truth* the discourses of housing improvement and social participation circulating currently in the country have on the perceptions of the people living in the particular context of the case study area.

Research Questions and Research Issues

Discourses on housing improvement and social participation are linked to the Law of Popular Participation and the Law of Administrative Decentralisation in the last few years in Bolivia. These laws set up specific tools and mechanisms to enable the involvement of grass-root organizations. Among these, the establishment of the Base Territorial Organizations (OTB) and the co-participatory resources are relevant for the discussion of this study. The vision behind current proposals is, however, that: the people should be involved in decision-making process on 'things that affect their lives' for the improvement of their living conditions, including housing.

Discourse of Housing Improvement

Discourse of housing improvement is about the increasing qualitative shortages and has gone through many changes in the past century. The main shift of discourse has been from seeing *unauthorized housing* distorting appropriate development of cities, to considering it as an important contribution for dealing with growing housing shortages. Those people, who are most concerned, particularly when it comes to housing improvement, are now called upon to be

actively involved in the process. Participation now emerges as a key word in the low-income housing debate, as well.

A series of concepts emerged in the past century, closely linked to the urbanization process and to housing outside the formally established systems. Among these, *legal/illegal city*, *unauthorized housing* and *regularization* are important in the context of the urbanization process in Latin America. The underlying view of concepts related to 'housing by people' is that they are the wrong way of doing things in housing. The proposals, therefore, intend to correct the distortions and to enable their functioning in the right way.

Discourse of housing improvement frequently is related to the *regularization* of the existing low-income housing in the context of Bolivia and the Municipality in question, as well. Current *regularization* proposals focus significantly on statutory property rights and titling. Statements of *regularization* mean that legal security in tenure will enable people to obtain further improvements in housing. In general, the underlying meaning is that as soon as the people feel safe in home ownership through statutory property rights, then the people themselves will implement further housing improvements.

Discourse of Social Participation

Statements of participation are part of the development speech only in the past few decades. Participation is related to social relations as deployed in the development discourse in these days. In this sense, participation has to do with power relations in society. Participatory proposals also mean that the needs and demands of the people ought to be assessed through participatory schemes for the achievement of better outcomes in development projects.

Promoters and the critical voices associate often participation to contemporary Western views on power and knowledge. Discussions are normally related to how power can best be accessible to the powerless in terms of power as something located somewhere in the social realm or owned (or not) by somebody. The *bottom-up approach* and the *empowerment* notions are associated to this perspective on power.

Bottom-up and the *empowerment* approaches mean that through participatory action power will be given to those formerly excluded from its possession (the powerless). Participatory proposals promote the need to change top-down decision-making process into bottom-up. A particular kind of knowledge, *local knowledge*, possessed by those individuals formerly excluded from decisions, which affected them, ought to be included henceforth, to achieve better results.

The failures in development projects are associated to wrong decisions because the knowledge of the 'target' groups (*local knowledge*) was not taken into consideration. It is also said that participation improves of skills sufficient for making the participants more responsible for decisions that are better for them. This refers to a kind of expertise the people can develop to better address identified problems.

The idea of participation related to power and knowledge, and evidently inbuilt in the development discourses, imply some assumptions that need to be reviewed further. The perception of power and

knowledge is that of 'things' located somewhere in the social realm or possessed by some particular group (or class). This view goes against the idea of power that functions in a form of a chain or a net within the social structure, and neglects the fact that relations of power are also found at the micro-level.

Power conflicts can indeed increase through the participatory process to the detriment of the more vulnerable in the 'community' level. Furthermore, the *local knowledge* idea refers to a particular type of knowledge, possessed by the people, which exists without any influence from 'outside', and that represents always the best for the well being of all. This ignores the fact that 'official' discourses have 'practical effects' (*effects of truth*) on the perception the people have on things related to housing improvement and social participation as well, as the empirical findings in the study area shows.

Theoretical and Conceptual Perspective

Theoretical and conceptual frameworks are required for the search of information and for the interpretation of the findings in research activity. Similar things may be seen differently according to the 'colour of the lenses' one uses for looking at them. This view constitutes an essential standpoint for me as a researcher. My point of view is that there is not a 'true', but there are different ways to see and interpret 'reality'. The answers one finds in research activity depend on the relations established between the researcher and the research instruments one chooses to use and to interpret things. I am convinced that the findings presented here are 'true' in the context of my particular search. The main compromise is ethical, with my informants, other information sources consulted, and with me as a researcher. What remains written here is true related to what I had the possibility to see through the 'eyes' of my informants. The material presented along the book is basically the result of my efforts to understand things from others' perspective.

I 'met' Michel Foucault in my search for a theoretical framework. The French philosopher opened new possibilities for me to understand power relations in society. He provided me with insights on the close relationship of *Discourse, Power and Knowledge* in daily life, and in each point of the social body. To understand others' perspective demands that one gets close to the particular context of others'. To look for answers at the micro-level was therefore considered essential for the understanding of how the 'official' discourses meet the discursive praxis.

Enunciative modalities, as discussed by Foucault, became relevant to my work in reference to 'the understanding of the effects of discourse production and distribution in a particular context'. Closely linked to this, and discussed further in the thesis, are *the surfaces of emergence*, the *authorities of delimitation* and the *grids of specification* as the three rules of discursive formation.

Foucault's vision of power, not in its most centralized and institutionalized expression, was important to me as well: power not in its negative perspective of simple domination, but rather as something that underlies all social relations as an enabling force. It is a vision of

power not as ‘something’ possessed by ‘somebody’, and exercised against somebody, but rather as ‘something that circulates and functions in the form of a chain’.

When housing improvement issues are discussed an assessment of it is necessary. Things are considered good or bad according to how and by whom the assessments are made, and also related to what the assessments are. Good or bad, true or false belong to what is accepted as knowledge in a social context. Assessments have to do with how knowledge is put to work, valorized and distributed. And as Foucault (1980) points: ‘in our society nothing, not even the word of law could be authorized without discourses of truth’.

For the purposes of the study two discourses are discussed related to the low-income housing field in the current context of Latin America. Furthermore, concepts are discussed further in the thesis that belong to each of these discourses, and that I found relevant for the discussions of my research questions and research issues in the context of the case study.

- **Discourse of housing improvement** is resulting from discussion on housing for low-income groups of the population, but particularly on ‘housing by people’ as the most clear feature of the urbanization process in the past century in this region. Concepts discussed here are: *legal/illegal city, unauthorized housing and regularization*.
- **Discourse of participation** in the low-income housing field emerged as a result of changes in the view on *unauthorized housing* and is, in this sense, subordinated to the discourse of housing improvement in the context of this study. Concepts discussed here are: *bottom-up approach, empowerment, local knowledge and needs assessment* linked to the ‘community’ idea.

Methodological Approach

Qualitative Research Methods were considered suitable for the understanding of the research questions and research issues from others’ perspective. The objective of in-depth research made me choose “one case study” as part of the methodological options for my research work. Quantitative research tools were also applied, but the study has a qualitative perspective. Quantitative tools were important in approaching and assessing in the field. These tools were also relevant for selecting the qualitative sample and as reference in the interpretation of the gathered qualitative data.

The selection of qualitative inquiry and the ‘single case study’ as part of the research strategy aims for an understanding of “what remains outside the discourses deployed by the authorized voices.” Foucault claims the need of giving “a voice to histories which have been submerged, concealed and silenced” (Smart 1985: 61). Foucault writes further that “it is really against the effects of the power of a discourse that is considered to be scientific that the genealogy must wage its struggle” (Foucault 1980: 84).

The case selected for this study is a part of the *unauthorized housing* developed in the fringes of Cochabamba City on land not initially

proposed for urban use. The settlement is located in District 9, one of the new districts the Municipality of the Cercado Province has to administer, after the LPP and the LAD came into force in the country. The population living here is affected by the same poor housing conditions found at most *unauthorized* settlements in District 9. In this sense, the case study belongs to the rule and not to the exception when it comes to the settlement process in conflict with the existing regulations. The case study is also relevant because it is part of the *unauthorized housing* areas the Municipality has selected for being part of the *regularization* process to be implemented at District 9 in the near future.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured in three parts and seven chapters. Besides the Introduction, the thesis includes the reference literature as well as appendices considered relevant for the reader. The Introduction presents a general background and the purpose of the study, the research perspectives, the research question and research issues, the theoretical and methodological approach, and the general structure of the book. Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of **Part I** provide a general background of Bolivia and the Laws of Popular Participation and of Administrative decentralization; the Municipality of the Cercado Province; and the Base Territorial Organization San José de la Tambo-rada (OTB-SJT). The objective of Part I is to make the reader familiar with the country and the laws relevant for the study, the municipality in question and the case study. The information is not analytical, but is based on facts and on the quantitative inquiries done in the housing area at the beginning of the fieldwork. In **Part II** discussions for the development of the Theoretical and the Conceptual framework related to the central issues of the research are reviewed in Chapter 4 and the Methodological Approach is presented in Chapter 5. **Part III** provides a presentation of the Empirical Findings in Chapter 6 and of the Final Discussions in Chapter 7. Furthermore, four different kinds of Appendices are presented at the end of the book: the Questionnaires (Appendix 1); the Interview Guides (Appendix 2); the Tables (Appendix 3); and Drawings and Photos on the study area (Appendix 4).

Part I

Background

Bolivia

The Urbanization Process

According to the last National Census of Population and Housing Bolivia's population was of 8,274,325 inhabitants in September of 2001. Of these inhabitants more than five million were living in the areas considered urban.¹⁰ The National Census of 1992 and 2001 show that while the total population growth rates are higher in this period (2.74%) than in preceding periods (1900–1950; 1950–1992), the growth rates of the urban population segment are lower (3.62%).¹¹ The current population density of Bolivia is of 7.56 inhabitants per square meter.¹²

Bolivia is one of the less urbanized countries in Latin America. The information provided by the four last national population census show that the shift from a rural to an urban predominance occurred only in the last two decades of the 20th century¹³ (see *Figure 1.1*).¹⁴ According to the three National Census of Population and Housing, the past few decades show the percent of the female population has being slightly higher than the male in the country (see *Table 1.1*).

Bolivia's economic dependence of mineral production since the Spanish Colonial period (1492–1825), particularly in silver and tin, has been an important factor for patterns of population settlement in its territory. Until the middle of the past century, most of the habitants still lived in the Highlands¹⁵ (Altiplano), in the western region of

- 10 The urban structure in Bolivia at year 2000 was made up by three major urban centres, sixteen intermediate cities and 102 smaller towns (Ledo 2002: 58). Bolivia assumes the classification of rural and urban according to the number of people in an area. More than 2,000 people living in a non-dispersed form are considered urban.
- 11 The annual population growth rates between 1950 and 1976 were 2.05%; and between 1976 and 1992 they were 2.11%. The annual urban population growth rates were higher between 1950 and 1976 (3.85%), and between 1976 and 1992 (4.16%).
- 12 Bolivia has a territory of 1.098.581 square kilometres. It has common boundaries with Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile and Peru.
- 13 In 1950, the rural population represented 73.80% of the total population in the country; and in 1976, 58.26% of the population were still living in the rural areas. In 1992 the rural population (42.45%) was already less than the urban population. In 2001 the urban population had reached 62.43% of the total population in the country, which was below the 75% average of Latin America's urban population in 2000 (INE 2002; CEPAL–HABITAT 2000).
- 14 All Tables in Part I are found in Appendix 3.
- 15 Three different geographical zones are identified in Bolivia: the Highlands, the Valleys and the Lowlands. Before the Spanish Colonial period the most important and developed civilizations of this region were settled in the High-

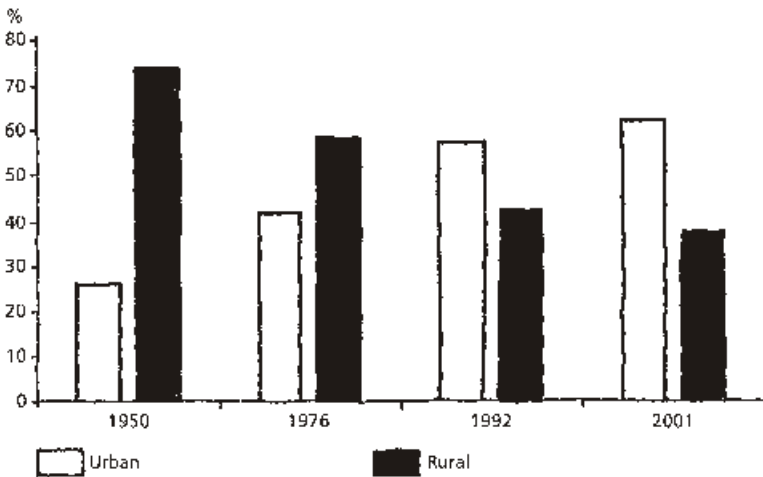


Figure 1.1 Evolution of the Rural and Urban Population of Bolivia from 1950 to 2001.

Source Instituto Nacional de Estadística 2002a.

the county; important mineral production centres from the Colonial period are located in this region. It was only since the second half of the past century that the population living in the Highlands started to show signs of decline¹⁶ (see Figure 1.2). The so-called “mining enclave economy” has been a significant factor for the predominance of La Paz City during the past century, together with a network of other cities linked to mine activity, such as Oruro and Potosí.¹⁷ Most investments in transportation networks, communication, education, health and basic services were concentrated in this region, to the detriment of other regions of the country.

The level of primacy of La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz as urban centres over the past century has its explanations in both internal and external structural factors. Among the most relevant was the “mining enclave economy” of the country linked to the crisis of 1929, when international prices of minerals became unfavourable; the post Chaco War added to the migration trend when thousands of soldiers did not return to their original homes in rural areas, and instead sought out these cities to settle in; and the crisis of large scale

lands and the Valleys. Traditional forms of community organizations existing prior to the Colonial period are still alive, particularly in the rural areas.

16 In 1900, 51.3% of the population lived in the Highlands, where La Paz, Oruro and Potosí departments are located. In 1950, 57.15% of the total population and 63.3% of the urban population was settled in this region. In year 2000, the percentage of total population living in this region was of 42.8% and the urban population represented 41.7% of the total urban population of the country (Ledo 2002).

17 The highest percentage of urban population since 1900 has been concentrated in La Paz City. In 1950, of the total urban population of the country, 38.6% lived in La Paz City. At that time, La Paz city had four times the population of Cochabamba, the second most important city of Bolivia, five times the number of Oruro, the third largest, and more than seven times Santa Cruz City (INE 1950, 1976, 1992, 2001).

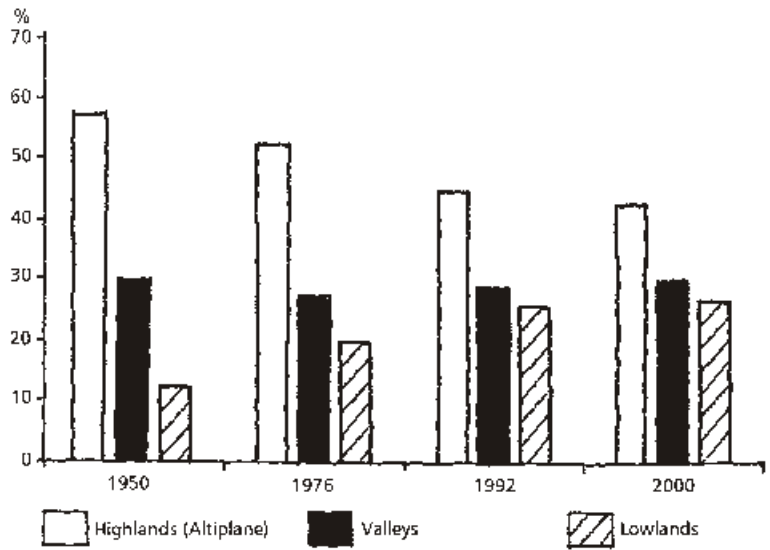


Figure 1.2 Bolivia, Distribution of the Population According to Regions. 1950 – 2000.

Source Taken from Ledo 2002: 54.

* Information on years 1950, 1976, 1992: National Census of Population and Housing Vol. 2, 3 and 7, last results, May 1993, INE. Year 2000, population's projections, INE, Website: <http://www.ine.gob.bo/iwdo202.htm>. HIGHLANDS (Altiplano): La Paz, Oruro, Potosí; VALLEYS: Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, Tarija; LOWLANDS: Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando.

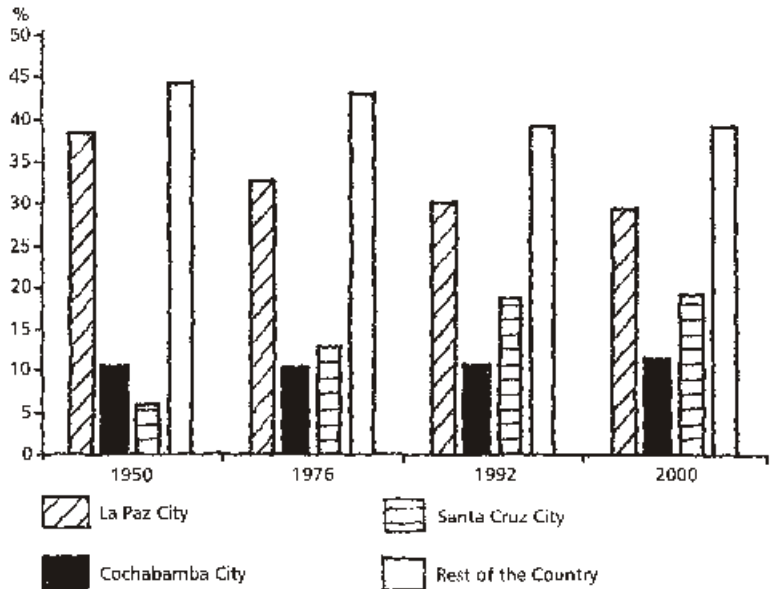


Figure 1.3 Bolivia, Distribution of the Population in the three main cities located in the 'National Economic Corridor'. 1950 – 2000.

Source Taken from Ledo 2002: 54.

* Information on years 1950, 1976, 1992: National Census of Population and Housing Vol. 2, 3 and 7, last results, May 1993, INE. Year 2000, population's projections, INE, Website: <http://www.ine.gob.bo/iwdo202.htm>. HIGHLANDS (Altiplano): La Paz, Oruro, Potosí; VALLEYS: Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, Tarija; LOWLANDS: Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando.

agricultural production, which continued the shift to cities¹⁸ (See *Figure 1.3*).

In the second half of the past century, the emergence of the 'National Economic Corridor'¹⁹ that includes La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz, also had structural factors behind it. The political and economic policies implemented by the National Revolution of 1952 made way for high levels of internal migration flows, mainly to these same cities. The 'compensatory' policies of the 'revolutionary' state towards the formerly exploited classes meant the expropriation of old farms in different parts of the country even before the Urban Reform and the Land Reform laws were implemented. In the case of the mine workers – that for different reasons 'wanted to go back to their original places' – former large land properties, particularly in rural areas, but also in urban areas were expropriated and transferred to them, many times in cooperative tenure (Solares 1999: 212–217).

The popular insurrection that enable the emergence of the National Revolution of 1952 put the workers and the peasants together in their political struggles and social aspirations, making way for the most significant changes occurring in the country's Republican history thus far.²⁰ The Land Reform, the Urban Reform, the Universal Vote, the Nationalisation of the Mine Sector, to name some, was implemented as a result of the pressures made by the popular forces.²¹

The 'revolutionary' period made way for land transferences to former mine workers to meet their demands of compensation after 'centuries of exploitation'. In practice the 'compensation policies' increased the process of illegal subdivisions of land in the fringes of cities such as La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. This process intensified land expropriations by the 'revolutionary government' at the fringes of urban area, and by the Land Reform resolution of August of 1953 (Solares 1990: 214). Former workers of the landowner's farms and landless peasants were involved in the change of use of rural land for urban development²² (*ibid.*).

The so-called Structural Adjustments started to be implemented in the middle of the 1980s with impact on population settlement patterns in the territory as well. In this decade, migration flows from Highlands to the Valleys and to the Lowlands began to be more in-

18 See Calderon and Laserna (1983).

19 The 'National Economic Corridor' is made up of a highly and densely populated territory of about 1,000 km in length and that links the cities of La Paz in the Highlands, Cochabamba in the Valleys, and Santa Cruz in the Lowlands. According to Carmen Ledo (2002: 55–59), investments in services, economic activities, and even international cooperation aid has been highly concentrated in this area of the country in the last decades; as its location has been considered strategic both at the national and international level.

20 The Republican Period started in 1825 when this territory was established as Independent Republic and became liberated from the Spanish Colony. The country was founded as Bolivia in August of that year being the capital city Sucre.

21 The implementation of these and other policies by the National Revolution of 1952 did not make way, however, to significant changes in poor living conditions of large numbers of Bolivians.

22 My own translation from Spanish.

tensive too.²³ Specific instruments and legal frameworks were established by the government for the implementation of the Economic Stabilisation and Structural Adjustments Programs.²⁴

The Structural Reforms

The effects of the first few years of the implementation of the legal frameworks linked to Program for Structural Reforms often have been evaluated negatively, particularly when it comes to the income situation of high percentages of the population. The Program for Structural Reforms meant that thousands of fired workers lost regular income sources. The general recession of the productive sector, the 'freezing' of investments of the public sector, and the cut-off of the previously existing subsidy systems, are practical effects linked to the Structural Reforms in the country. The decrees 21060, 21660 and 22407 became the legal framework for the implementation of the reforms that meant three phases (PRISMA: 2000: 260–267).

In the first phase of implementation, between 1985 and 1989, the reforms succeeded in reducing the existing high inflation rates but made way for the recession of the productive apparatus. More than 40,000 workers, both from the public and the private sectors, were fired; of these more than 25,000 were workers from the former state-owned mines.²⁵ Among other actions during this phase, subsidies in the social sector were cut-off.

The second phase (1990–1993) of structural reforms was mostly oriented to the preservation of economic stability. This included action for economic growth through the stimulation of export and private investments. The privatization of state owned companies, also, began to be implemented in this period.

The third phase (1994–1998) was aimed at economic and, in-depth, social transformations. To this period belong the 'Capitalization' Law,²⁶ the Laws of Popular Participation (LPP), the Law for Educational Reform, the Law for the Reform of the National Constitution, and the Law of Administrative Decentralization (LAD). These laws have had profound implications when it comes to the administration of the country, the management of the urban and the rural areas at a local level, and the participation of the civil society in decision-making processes.

23 The main change is presented in the Lowlands and Santa Cruz City (see Figure 1.2 and Figure 1.3).

24 The 21060, 21660 and 22407 decrees gave the legal framework for the Adjustment Policies in the country. The 21060 are considered the starting point for the New Economic Policy in Bolivia and were intended as the initial steps for the Stabilisation and the Economic Structural Reforms. It made way, among other issues, for the close of the state owned mines considered unproductive and for the radical reduction of the state bureaucracy. All these decrees have been strongly resisted, particularly by the social sectors as they have represented the opening to a more liberal economy in the country.

25 My own translation from Spanish.

26 The 'Capitalizacion' word was coined to refer to the privatization process of state-owned companies going on at that time. In the case of Bolivia, the privatization process presented some particularities as the state still preserved actions in the 'capitalized' public companies. In general, it implied the transfer of part of the assets of the state owned companies to private hands.

Economic and political factors related to the National Revolution of 1952 and to the Programs for Structural Adjustments implemented in the 1980s and 1990s, are relevant to understand the emergence, development and current situation of the Base Territorial organization San José de la Tamborada (OTB-SJT), the case selected for this study.

The Law of Popular Participation – LPP (1994) and the Law for Administrative Decentralization – LAD (1995) are considered part of the legal instruments intended to give the legal framework for the modernization efforts of Bolivia starting in the 1980s. Most of the laws approved in the last two decades are intended to strengthen the municipal structure. One of the most important consequences of this new generation of laws has been the incorporation of the rural areas into the technical and planning scope of the Municipality administrative jurisdiction, and to the participation of the civil society in decision making process at the local level.

The Municipalities now have to deal with a component new in the country's history: the participation of the people in the management, implementation and decision making of programs and projects aimed at the improvement of their living conditions, including the field of housing. Social participation is established constitutionally, and it is legally recognized now. In a country with a fragile democratic history, often threatened by social, political and economic instability, these laws have become a great challenge, a challenge to be assumed by the local governments and by the civil society.²⁷

The Law of Popular Participation (LPP)

With the approval of the Law of Popular Participation (Law 1551), important changes have taken place in the political life and the democratic practices of the country.²⁸ According to the vision, the LPP promotes for popular participation, social and political issues need to function detached from one another (at least in theory); this means that while social organizations have to deal with local development, political parties should be engaged in political activities²⁹ (Vargas 1997: 9). The law aims to give the opportunity for participatory action and to provide the instruments for local management considering, among other things, traditional modes of governing at the local, grass roots level. Social participation is considered key for planning and implementation of development projects and programs in the jurisdictional scope of the territory of the municipalities.

A goal to be achieved by local governments now is to reduce enormous differences in the living conditions of the urban and the rural areas. The LPP stresses the need to strengthen the political and economic instruments needed to improve democracy, and to enable opportunities for citizen participation equally for males and fe-

27 Since 1984, Bolivia's political history displays signs of continuity in the democratic government processes, as well as some economic stability.

28 For a review on the discussion process behind the proposals of the LPP see Molina 1997.

29 My own translation from Spanish.

males.³⁰ The Law provides a series of instruments to achieve these objectives. Among the most important are (Article 2):

- Legal status of the Base Territorial Organization (OTB)³¹.
- Legal status of the Vigilance Committees.
- New territorial jurisdictions for the municipalities.
- Establishes the principle of equity in the distribution of public funds. The co-participation resources direct the allocation of more financial resources from the central level to the municipalities.
- Transfer the jurisdiction on the infrastructure for education, health, sports, local roads and irrigation networks to the municipalities.

The Base Territorial Organization (OTB)³²

Before the LPP went into force, the population living in a certain territory was organized either in Neighbourhood Associations, in the urban areas, and in Agrarian Unions in the rural areas, when this was the case. These organizations have represented the grass roots in political and administrative relations with the municipal and departmental authorities, as well as with other institutions of society. This representation was not formally recognized and not regulated then by a particular law either.

With the Law 1551, the Base Territorial Organization (OTB) became the formal representation of the people living within the limits of a specific territory in the negotiations with the government at a local level, both in urban and rural areas. The OTB concept encompasses, in this sense, both population and territory. According to the LPP the OTBs have the right to (Article 7):

- Propose, ask for, control and supervise the implementation of public works and public services according to the needs of the community when it comes to health, education, sports, basic services, irrigation, local road networks, and urban and rural development.
- Participate and promote actions for the preservation of the environment and for sustainable development.
- Change decisions related to public works or public services when they are considered against the interests of the community.
- Propose the change or ratification of authorities in education and health sectors within their territorial jurisdictions.
- Access to information on the resources allocated for Popular Participation.

The LPP defines the duties of the OTBs as well (Article 8):

- Identify, prioritize, participate and collaborate in the implementation and management of the works for collective well being, particularly when it comes to education, housing improvement, health, sports and production activities

³⁰ My own translation from Spanish. Law 1551, Article 1.

³¹ Stands for Organización Territorial de Base.

³² Besides the LPP there are other complementary legal dispositions such as the Supreme Decree 23858 that regulate the functioning of the OTB.

- Participate and collaborate in the implementation of improvements and the management of public services.
- Contribute to the maintenance; take care of and protect public, municipal and community assets.
- Inform and report to the community on the actions done on their behalf.
- Use the legal instruments in defence of the rights established by this law.
- Promote access to representation by men and woman equally.

The Co-participation Resources³³ and the Vigilance Committees³⁴

According to Article 146 of the National Constitution, the public funds of the Bolivian government come from different sources at the National, the Departmental and the Municipal level. The co-participation resources are allocated by the central government to the municipalities (20%) and the public universities (5%), and represent 25 percent of the national budget yearly. The co-participation resources have to be owed according to the competences defined by law for these entities and for the fulfillment of the aim of Popular Participation. Other financial resources the municipalities obtain through different sources are not regulated by the LPP and are not targeted for participatory planning. The municipalities have the right to use these funds in the same way, and through similar mechanisms, as they were used in the past.

The amount of the co-participation resources an administrative unity (municipality, OTB) has the right to access yearly depends on the number of persons living within the territorial limits of the administrative unity in question.³⁵ For access to the co-participation resources, the municipalities and the OTBs need to elaborate Annual Operating Plans³⁶ through a participatory process. In addition, the municipalities need to allocate at least 90 percent of these funds for public investments.

The Vigilance Committees are organized for the joint exercise of the rights and the duties of the Base Territorial organization existing in the municipality. These are considered the most important instrument provided by the LPP to the grass roots, for control and follow-up of the co-participation funds used by the government at the local level. The members of the Vigilance Committees are elected by the community representatives of all the OTBs functioning in the particular District or Canton; they have the following responsibilities:

- Control the use of the municipal co-participation resources so they are invested in equitable conditions for the urban and the rural population.

33 Paragraph III, Article 20 of the Law 1551.

34 Paragraph I, Article 10 of the Law 1551.

35 The exact amount of pesos Boliviano per inhabitant depends on the public resources available by the central government in the year in question (20%), and the total population of the country according to the last national population census.

36 Plan Anual Operativo POA (Article 23 of the LPP).

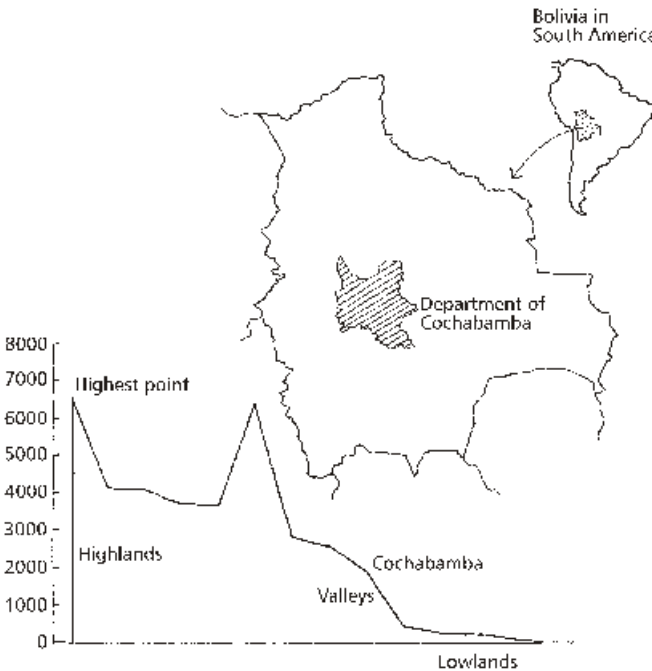
- Control of the use of no more than 10 percent of the co-participation resources in investments other than of public interest.
- To publicly express opinions on the management of the co-participation resources by the municipality in the name of the population they represent.

The Law of Administrative Decentralization (LAD)

The Law 1654 was promulgated to improve the administration of the country at the local level. The law regulates the functioning of the executive power (Prefectura). Each of the nine departments is governed by one representative of the central government (Prefecto)³⁷ and the Departmental Council made up by representatives from the civil society of all the provinces of the department in question. The Departmental Councils responsibilities are to approve the development plans, programs and projects of the department presented by the 'Prefecto', as well as the budgets for investments.

This executive power at departmental level is the political and administrative link between the central government and the municipalities. Together with the LPP the LAD ensures the participation of civil society in the decision making process. The Departmental Council is the most important instrumentality provided by this law for follow-up

and control by the people of public investments by the departmental government.



Map 1.1 The Department of Cochabamba, in Bolivia.

Source: Ledo 2002: 53.

Political and Administrative Structure

Bolivia's political and administrative structure consists of nine Departments (being Cochabamba one of them), 111 Provinces, 311 Municipalities and 1,396 Cantons; the last two entities are still changing in number (*see Table 1.2; Map 1.1*). Bolivia is administered by the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Powers at the central level. The Executive Departmental Power (Prefectura) governs at regional level, and the Municipal government at the local level.

37 The head of the Prefectura. According to the 1994 reforms to the National Constitution the 'Prefecto' is still elected directly by the Executive Power of the country.

Cochabamba

The Department of Cochabamba

Located in the central part of the country Cochabamba is one of the nine Departments of Bolivia, with Cochabamba City its capital.³⁸

Historically, the development of the department, and the growth of Cochabamba City, is based upon mine production. This department was the most important supplier of agricultural products, services³⁹ and workforce for mining during the Colonial and the Republican periods (see Solares 1999: 181; Ledo 1988: 17–18). The city of Cochabamba, together with other towns of the department such as Sacaba, Cliza, Punata and Tarata, become important for the settlement of the ruling classes active in agriculture and commerce, and later on in the service and the industrial sectors (see Solares 1990: 8–15).

The predominantly rural condition the department of Cochabamba at the beginning of the 20th Century has changed in the last three decades. Today, less than 42 percent of the population live in the rural areas of the department⁴⁰ (see *Figure 2.1*). The department presented highest annual population growth rates in the period of 1992–2001 (2.93%) when compared to the preceding census periods.⁴¹ The population structure according to sex presents patterns rather similar to the country in the last fifty years (see *Table 2.1*). The

38 According to the National Census of Population and Housing of 2001, Cochabamba has an area of 55,631 square kilometres and 1,455,711 inhabitants.

The city of Cochabamba is located in a valley of 30,932 hectares at 2,557 meters above sea level. The urban structure extends currently to more than 50% of the area (about 18,000 Ha). There were 517,026 inhabitants living in the Cochabamba City in 2001 (INE 2002: 32; Ledo 2002: 104).

39 Until 1985, farming was still the most important productive sector of the department and represented 27.6% of its total internal production. Cochabamba's input to the Gross National Product was of 17.8%, been the third in importance at national level (Ardaya, 1991: 66). Today oil and gas are more important than agriculture for the internal production of the department (Cámara de Comercio 2004: 2).

40 The National Census of 2001 shows that the urban population of Cochabamba's Department was of 23.33% in 1950; 37.74% in 1976; 52.26 in 1992 and 58.85% in 2001 (INE 2002: 28).

41 Annual total population growth rates were lower in the period 1976–1992 (2.75%) and 1950–1976 (1.79%). Annual urban population growth rates decreased to 4.21 percent (1992–2001) comparing to the period of 1976–1992 (4.83%) and increased comparing to the period of 1950–1976 (3.64%). Cochabamba is the only department that presented positive growth rates in the rural areas since 1950. The higher growth rates of the rural population in 1992–2001 (1.32%) compared to the preceding periods did not prevent, however, the department for being predominately urban at the end of the past century (INE 2002: 27).

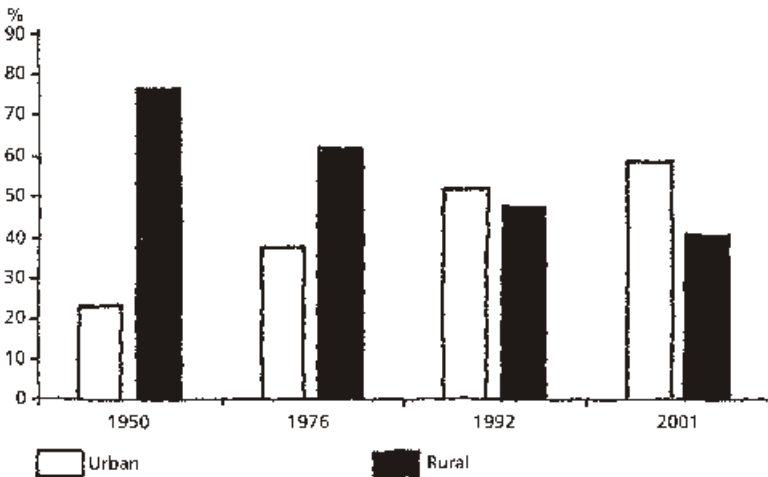


Figure 2.1 Evolution of the Rural and Urban Population of the Department of Cochabamba from year 1950 to 2001.

Source Instituto Nacional de Estadística 2002a.

department presents the highest figures in the country when it comes to population density in the last fifty years, at 26.17 inhabitants per square kilometre in 2001 (INE 2002: 7).

Cochabamba City has been an important attraction for internal migration flows throughout the republican period. In spite of this, the condition of Cochabamba City, as the second largest city in the national urban hierarchy, did not remain as such at the end of the past century.⁴² The economic and political changes implemented by the so-called National Revolution of 1952 and the Economic Stabilization and Adjustment Programs of the 1980s made way for changes in the urbanization patterns at national level, and of the condition of this city as the second most populated of the country.⁴³

The urban expansion of Cochabamba since the 1970s in the peripheries at the southern and the northern parts of the city, on land not initially aimed for residential use, was mostly unplanned and through the burgeoning of low-income settlements.⁴⁴ The high levels of urban growth rates registered in these areas in 1976 (17.17%), and

42 The National Census of Population and Housing of 1976 established that the second largest city of the country was Santa Cruz de la Sierra City, the capital of the Department of Santa Cruz in the Lowlands region (INE 1976).

43 Investments towards the economical integration of the eastern and the western regions of the country, and for the diversification of productive activities, were relevant for the development of other regions and for the growth of new cities, particularly Santa Cruz de la Sierra, but also for the establishment of a new urban configuration made up by the cities of La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. The so-called 'National Economic Corridor' emerged, changing the pattern of urban primacy based on a single city (normally the capital). This gave the peculiar character of Bolivia's urban growth based on three cities (Ledo 2002). The emergence of El Alto as the third most populated city constitutes a new phenomenon in the urban development of the country. El Alto presents population growth rates of 9% per year.

44 The tendency of urban expansion of Cochabamba City has been at the east-west (Quillacollo-Cochabamba-Sacaba) and at the north-south (Tiquipaya-Cochabamba-Valle Hermoso).

the low-density levels, are the most noticeable features of the urban expansion of Cochabamba city in the last decades of the 20th Century. The high costs of urbanized land, and land speculation, are the main factors behind the unregulated expansion of the city (Solares 1999: 272–277).

After Santa Cruz, Cochabamba's department presented the highest migration flows from other parts of the country since the 1980s. About 47,000 persons settled in the Cercado Province in 1992; only 25 percent of this population came from rural areas and the other 75 percent were already counted in the urban population before they migrated to Cochabamba City. Most of the new residents came from La Paz, Oruro, Potosí (the Highlands). There was also an important emigration process to other departments: about 32,000 persons left this department in the same period (Ledo 2002: 67). The emergence of the so-called illegal settlements (unregulated), among these the OTB San José de la Tamborada (the Case Study), is a result of these migration flows to Cochabamba city.

The Municipality of the Cercado Province

The Province of Cercado, established in October of 1955, is one of the 44 Provinces of Cochabamba's Department. The capital city of the department of Cochabamba is located here. The Municipality of the Cercado Province limits include the Cantons of San Joaquín to the south and Santa Ana de Cala-Cala to the north, with the old course of the Rocha River separating both cantons. Both the Province and the Municipality have the same

territorial jurisdictions in this case.⁴⁵ (See *Map 2.1*). According to the last National Census of 2001 the Municipality of the Cercado Province has 517,367 inhabitants.

Both Cantons that make up the Municipality of Cercado Province have urban and rural areas within their territorial limits. In the past, the urban areas were considered only as part of the planning and management tasks of the municipalities. The institutional structure for public administration was highly concentrated in urban areas as well. Rural areas were the administrative accountability of the Executive Power of the central government, and at regional level through the Corporations for Regional Development CORDECO.⁴⁶

Planning instruments such as the Regulatory Plan of 1961, the General Plan of June of 1981 and the Regulatory Frame-



Map 2.1 The Municipality of the Cercado Province in the Department of Cochabamba.

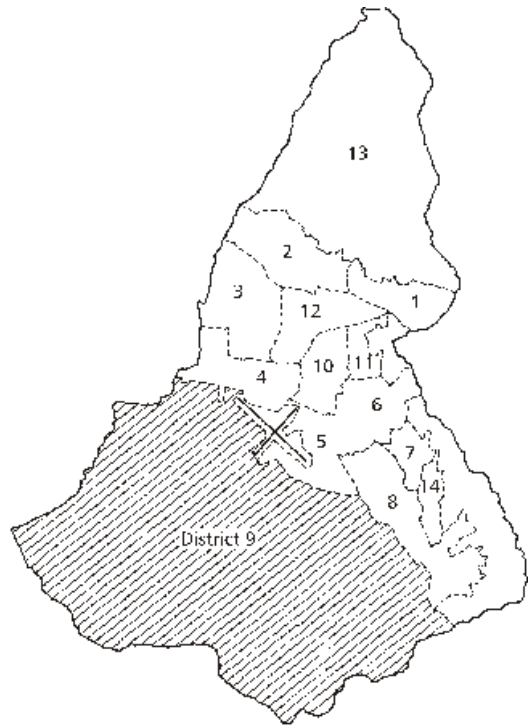
Source Municipality of the Cercado Province.

45 In other cases, more than one municipality can be located within the same territorial jurisdiction of one and the same province.

46 These were structures for planning and control of the development at regional level and were established in each department of the country. CORDECO (Corporación de Desarrollo Regional de Cochabamba) was in charge of the regional development of Cochabamba's Department.

work of December of 1991 were intended to regulate and control the urban development of Cochabamba city. Although the studies done for the General Plan define the limits for urban and agricultural land use, norms and regulations for the management of the territory were established only for urban land. This made the rural areas vulnerable for changes in land use through an unplanned process of urban expansion on land that, in too general terms, is defined as “exclusive for agricultural production” by the Municipality.⁴⁷

The Law of Administrative Decentralization transferred the duties of CORDECO to the representation of the central government at local level (Prefectura).⁴⁸ The implementation of the LPP increased the accountability of the municipalities to the rural areas within their territorial limits. Fourteen districts make up the political and administrative structure of the Municipality of the Cercado Province now. The rural land located at the south of Cochabamba City is one of the newly included parts to the Municipality’s administrative functions as District 9 (see Map 2.2). The case study area is located here (see Map 2.3).



Map 2.2 The political and administrative structure of the Municipality of the Cercado Province. The District 9.

Source Municipality of the Cercado Province.

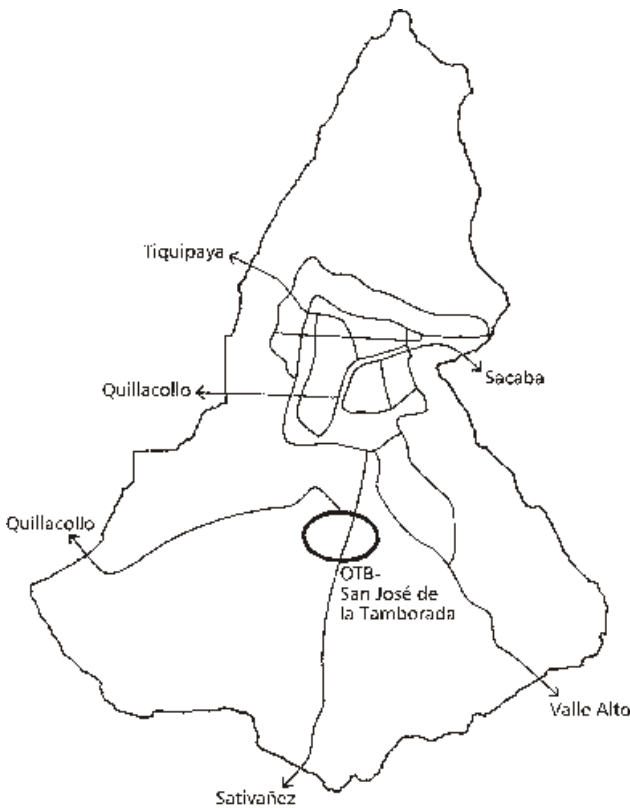
The Municipal Government

According to the Law 2028 the municipalities are autonomous entities that institutionally represent a certain territory and the population living within its limits. The government and administration of the municipalities are in hands of the Municipal Government⁴⁹ composed by the Mayor of the city (Executive power) and the Municipal Council (Deliberative or Legislative Power). The latter is the most important and the highest authority at the municipality level. The members (town councillors) of the Municipal Council are elected by popular vote every five years. The law regulates the internal structure, organization, attributions and duties of the Municipal Government. The Municipal Council elects the Mayor of the city among its members. It has a representative, normative, controlling and deliberative role when it comes to municipal management. Discussion on regulatory frameworks proposed for the regularization process is first handled here, among others between the population and the Municipal Government. The Municipal Council has a team of technical advisers on different issues related to municipal management.

47 Plan Municipal de Desarrollo del Distrito 9, 1997: 9.

48 Article 26 of the Law of Administrative Decentralisation (Law 1654).

49 I choose to use municipality to refer the territorial unity and Municipality when the Municipal Government is being referred to and when it is not written expressly in this way.



Map 2.3 Location of the OTB San José de la Tamborada in the District 9 of the Municipality of the Cercado Province.

Source Taken from Frohlin and Johansson: *The conflict between agricultural land and illegal settlements*, MFS, 2001: 30.

The District 9 – D9⁵⁰

District 9 is one of the 14 districts that make up the Municipality of the Cercado Province in the Department of Cochabamba since 1994.⁵¹ This is the district with largest territorial expansion of the entire Cercado Province.⁵² The physical expansion of the Cochabamba City has been to the detriment of the agricultural and livestock-raising activities in the micro-regional surroundings. District 9 is structured in three Sub-districts: Azirumarca, Valle Hermoso and Pukara Grande⁵³.

According to the National Census of 1992, the annual urban population growth rate of District 9 represented more than twice the national urban population growth rate.⁵⁴ The migrant population from other departments of the country accounts for more than a half of this growth. Migrant population came mainly from the Highlands (mining centres) and from the eastern parts of the country.⁵⁵ As in the rest of the country, the females (50.2%) were somewhat greater proportion than the male population.

According to the diagnosis made for the Municipal Development Plan

- 50 The following information is based on the Municipal Development Plan for the District 9 done before the last National Census of Population in Housing was held in 2001. For this reason, most of the data refer to the previous Census of 1992.
- 51 The Districts were implemented as administrative units of Cochabamba city. There Districts are often referred as “rich” and “poor”, or “urban” and “semi-urban”. The “rich” are well developed housing areas at the north part within the old limits of Cochabamba city, and the “poor” are often ‘illegal’ settlements located at the south, in the surrounding hills and in the north beyond the old limits of the city. The “semi-urban” refer to areas still considered for agricultural production, often illegally occupied by migrants from other regions of the country or other parts of the city.
- 52 The District 9 represents 37.75% of the total area of the Municipality of the Cercado Province.
- 53 See Map 3.1 in Chapter 3.
- 54 While annual urban population growth rate of District 9 was of 4.83 per cent at the national level the figure was of 2.11 per cent.
- 55 Migration patterns from other parts of the country represented 15 percent of the population living at District 9, being the Departments of Potosí (36.8%); Oruro (28.1%); and La Paz (24.4%) as the most important places of origin of the population.

in 1996, District 9 has 14,700 hectares and a population of more or less 33,400 inhabitants. Of this population, 64 percent were rural dwellers and 36 percent were urban. The estimation indicated an urban density of about 27 inhabitants per hectare and a rural density of about 1.5 inhabitants per hectare.⁵⁶

The demand of urban land at accessible costs put strong pressure on land set aside for agriculture and forestry, particularly as a result of the large differences in price between developed and undeveloped land for urban use. A noticeable feature of District 9 is the high level of land speculation and of unauthorized subdivision of rural land, with a negative impact on areas not zoned for urban development.

District 9: an Urban – Rural Problem

According to the Municipal Development Plan of District 9, the main problems of the district are related to urban settlements developed on land zoned for farming, to the deterioration of agricultural and cattle raising productivity. The following aspects are pointed as problematic:⁵⁷

- The increase in population density in the rural territory is in conflict with agricultural and livestock raising activities.
- The division of land into small farms makes the development of non-traditional agriculture impossible.
- Urban development on farming land is incompatible with the aims of preservation and improvement of agricultural and livestock raising activities.
- The absence of national or regional policies for human settlements in the rural areas of the micro-region, together with the spontaneous and dispersed character of the settlement process, resulted in the expansion of the city far beyond the urban boundaries foreseen in 1981.
- The deterioration of the agricultural and livestock raising system, and its low profitability, is no longer an economic alternative for the rural population living at District 9.

Social Aspects

The population of District 9 is bilingual with Quechua and Spanish the most frequently spoken languages. There are also different preferences with regard to religion; the Catholic Church, and sects connected to it, is predominant. There is no available data on the population's health conditions. Information provided by an NGO (Visión Mundial) indicates an average child mortality rate of 150/1000. The illiteracy rate of District 9 is above the national level.⁵⁸

56 Plan Municipal de Desarrollo-Etapa de Diagnóstico, 1996.

57 Plan Municipal de Desarrollo del Distrito 9, 1997: 8–9.

58 About 15.8% of the population of 15 years or more is illiterate. About 80% of the children in ages between 5 and 19 go to school; about 19% never attended a school. The other percentage left school for one or another reason (ibid.).

The Decentralized Units of the Municipality

The Municipal Houses are decentralized units of the Municipality of the Cercado Province, and are aimed for municipal administration more accessible to the people. There are 14 decentralized units, one in each of the Districts of the Municipality. The decentralized model of the Municipality of Cochabamba was established first in the 1990s, before the LPP and the LAD came into force.⁵⁹ This kind of decentralization model of the municipality exists in only three Bolivian cities thus far: Sucre, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz.

The management of a city like Cochabamba with about half million inhabitants was no more possible through the highly centralized model of administration. The huge increase of poor settlements in just twenty years, and the development of the city, mostly through unauthorized housing, were compelling arguments behind the search for new models for city planning and city management.⁶⁰

These decentralized structures became important means for participatory planning when the LPP was implemented. The Municipal House 9 is the decentralized unit in charge of the administration and management of the District 9.

The Municipal House 9 (MH9)

The Communal House 9 was established in February of 1995. Later on, changes inside the Municipality transformed it into the Municipal House 9. The changes were the result of top-down decision from the Municipality at the central level. The staff working with the decentralized units were not consulted in making the changes and even less were the residents of the districts. The opinion of the officials working here is that a more bureaucratic, and less democratic, view on the role of these entities are behind the changes, which are far from being only formal.⁶¹

The elaboration of the Municipal Development Plan for the District 9 was among the first tasks the MH9 had when the LPP was implemented. The work was done through participatory planning by the officials working at the MH9 in coordination with the community representatives of the OTBs of District 9.⁶² The elaboration of the Annual Operating Plans for each OTB, in coordination with the community representatives, and the implementation of these actions, is among MH9's current tasks. The Municipal House 9 is the only decentralized unit of the municipality in charge of the entire District 9. This makes

59 The units changed their name from Talleres Zonales (Zonal Workshops) to Casas Comunales (Comunal Houses) and to Casas Municipales (Municipal Houses). And in the last years there were discussions for rename them again as Communal Houses. Municipal Houses will be used throughout the thesis text.

60 Interview with a former official responsible of all the decentralized units at the central level of the Municipality (2001/08).

61 Interviews with professionals working at the Municipal Houses 9 and 10 (2000/11).

62 Organized in the District 9 Council

it difficult for the staff working here to manage the complexity of urban-rural problems existing here.⁶³

The services provided by the Municipal House 9 are related to certification of 'minutas'; certifications for tax payments, land use and for registration at the Real Estate Office; granting permits for different economic activities; elaboration and follow-up of the Annual Operating Plans; and follow-up of the regularization process.

According to the head of the MH9, the Municipal House 9 has several deficiencies and difficulties that are related mainly to two things: the lack of legal norms and the lack of technical regulations. He pointed further to the following deficiencies⁶⁴:

- The unlikely possibility the MH9 has in problem solving, since the decentralization process is basically about technical and administrative matters. The financial resources are still controlled at the central level of the Municipality.
- The limitations of the staff to manage and follow up on the Municipal Development Plan of District 9, which demands more human resources and a more integrated approach.
- The decision-making process does not enable adequate management of the most relevant problems of the District.
- The limited coordination among the governmental and non-governmental institutions active at D9 influences negatively on the decision making process and on the possibility of implementation of more integrated actions.

Housing

The housing sector in Bolivia has historically been very weak and very few programs had been implemented at national and at local levels as part of a well structured housing policy. The constantly changing views on how to deal with housing in the country are a major obstacle to progress. This includes the government's view on the housing sector structure. Among other changes, the head of the housing sector has changed from a Ministry, into a vice-Ministry and even into a sub-Secretary.⁶⁵

The implementation of national housing policies and practices is carried out at the departmental level by the Sanitation and Housing Unities UNASBVI.⁶⁶ These entities are in charge of the design, follow-up and control of programs and projects at the departmental level, both in urban and in rural areas. The Municipal Government has the task to deal with housing and basic services issues within the limits of its territory. The limits of responsibilities between the different structures at the local level are still unclear when it comes to housing.

63 Besides the head of the Municipal House, who is a student of economics, there is lawyer, an architect, a secretary and an assistant working here.

64 Interview with the Head of the Municipal House 9 (2000/10).

65 The vice-Ministry of Urban Development and Housing is currently located within the Ministry of Economic Development.
www.bolivia.gov.bo/BOLIVIA/paginas/sitiosmain.htm, (2004/09).

66 UNASBVI stands for Unidades de Saneamiento Básico y Vivienda and it is located within the administrative structure of the Prefectura.

The National Census of 2001 shows housing deficits and deficiencies of more than one million dwellings at the national level; of this, the qualitative housing shortage represents more than 81 percent.⁶⁷ Since 1988 the government of Bolivia implemented a National Housing Policy based in three components:

- Housing Subsidy (PNSV)⁶⁸, with three sub components: Housing Improvement of poor neighborhoods; Housing Improvement of areas affected by 'chagas' illness (endemic areas); Direct Subsidies for improvement, purchase or construction of houses by low-income groups.
- Prevention and Mitigation of Risks, Emergency Attention, and Extreme Poverty.
- Development of Secondary Mortgage Market.

The two last National Census of Population and Housing of Bolivia consider aspects such as the quality of the building materials, the number of rooms in the house, the access to basic services and energy (lighting and cooking), access to health and education to define the main deficiencies in housing. Although they are improvements in all these aspects both in rural and urban areas according to the information provided by INE, the deficiencies are still high at national and at departmental level (see *Figure 2.2; Figure 2.3*).

The Bolivian Plan of Housing of 2003⁶⁹ states that about 80 percent of the existing housing in Bolivia has resulted from the efforts of people without support from the formal financial systems. The Plan proposes three main components to deal with the housing situation

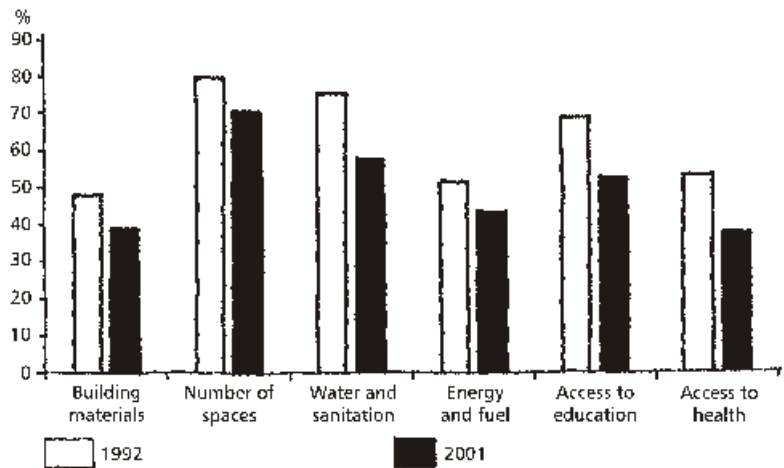


Figure 2.2 Bolivia: urban population affected by housing deficiencies in 1992 and 2001.

Source INE, UDAPE 2002b: 11.

67 There was a lack of 193,538 new housing units at national level. Another 855,238 units were considered inadequate.

68 Programa Nacional de Subsidio a la Vivienda.

69 Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada's government proposed the 'Plan Bolivia de Vivienda' after his last election as president in August of 2002. (Draft Document).

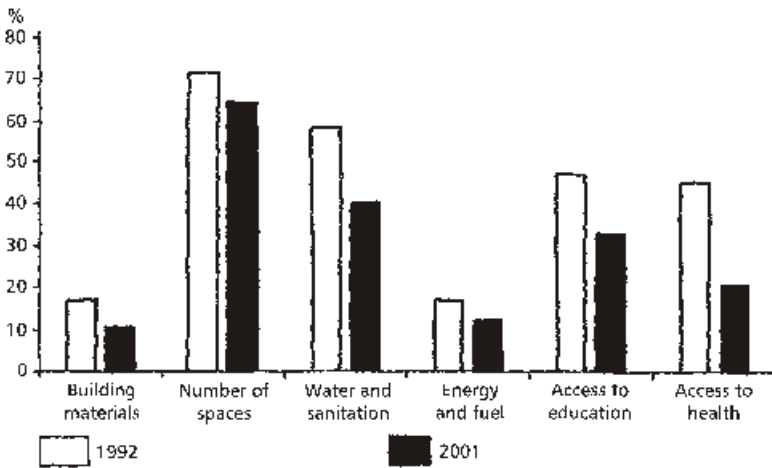


Figure 2.3 Cochabamba: urban population affected by housing deficiencies in 1992 and 2001.

Source INE, UDAPE 2002b: 47.

in the country: Housing Finance, Housing Improvement and Housing Subsidies.

The Housing Improvement component of the Bolivian Plan of Housing stresses the need for community participation and social control, and of subsidies as instruments of social investment, to reduce the poor conditions of housing in urban and rural areas. Among the proposals considered as important for housing improvements, are the provision of basic services and the access to statutory property rights.

Discussions have been frequent for the regularization of unregulated housing at the Municipality of the Cercado Province, particularly since the LPP came into force, and the municipal governments increased its administrative and managerial services to the rural areas. The new regulations for the implementation of the regularization process were finally approved at District 9 in March, 2004.⁷⁰ The main objectives of the regulations are to:⁷¹

- Permit the improvement of statutory property rights on the owners' lots.
- Enable the registration of properties at the Municipality and the Real Estate Office.
- Collect incomes for the Municipality through taxes of the cleared properties.
- Slow down the illegal transference of lots at District 9.
- Incorporate the population living in unregulated housing to the legal systems so they can fulfil their property rights and duties.
- Facilitate the extension of basic services to settlements where property right has been cleared up.

⁷⁰ The 'Reglamento para la Regularización de Asentamientos del Distrito 9' is made up of XII Chapters and 51 Articles, and according to the introductory text, is resulting from agreements made with the population living in unauthorized housing at District 9.

⁷¹ My own translation from Spanish.

- Implement action towards the improvement of the living conditions of the people living in these settlements.
- Admit the OTBs of the *unauthorized housing* areas as urban settlements and enable them the access to the financial resources of the LPP.

One of the *unauthorized housing* areas selected for the implementation of the *regularization* process at District 9 is the OTB San José de la Tamborada, the case selected for this study.

The OTB-San José de la Tamborada⁷²

General Aspects

The Base Territorial Organization San José de la Tamborada (OTB-SJT) is situated at the south of Cochabamba City. Here is where the properties of the former owners (Anaya Quiroga, Francisca Velasco vda. de Terrazas, Bazoberry and Mela Darrás) originally was located. There is a distance of between six and eight kilometres from the residential area to the old city centre of Cochabamba City. Most of offices of the local government are situated here including the Municipal Council,⁷³ the Municipality at central level⁷⁴ and the Prefectura.⁷⁵

The OTB-SJT belongs to Pukara Grande, one of the three administrative Sub-Districts of District 9 of the Municipality of the Cercado Province. The Pukara Grande administrative division comprises about 192 hectares, of which 9.4 are occupied by the OTB-SJT. (*See Map 3.1*).

The OTB-SJT is practically surrounded by both the Tamborada River and a irrigation channel that provide natural limits to the residential area.⁷⁶ The OTB is bounded in the north by the Tamborada River, in the south by agricultural land, in the east by land owned by the Bank 'Bisa' and in the west by the OTB San Marcos (*see Map 3.2*). The settlement process (that started with the 'beneficiaries' of the Cooperative group in the second half of the 1980s), in practical terms, meant the urban extension of Cochabamba City, to land set aside for farming, located beyond the limits of the Tamborada River in the south.

The main street that crosses the settlement from north to south structures the internal road network made up by smaller local streets and paths. This street is also the main link between the area and the city's road network, and with the Panamericana main road (Avenida

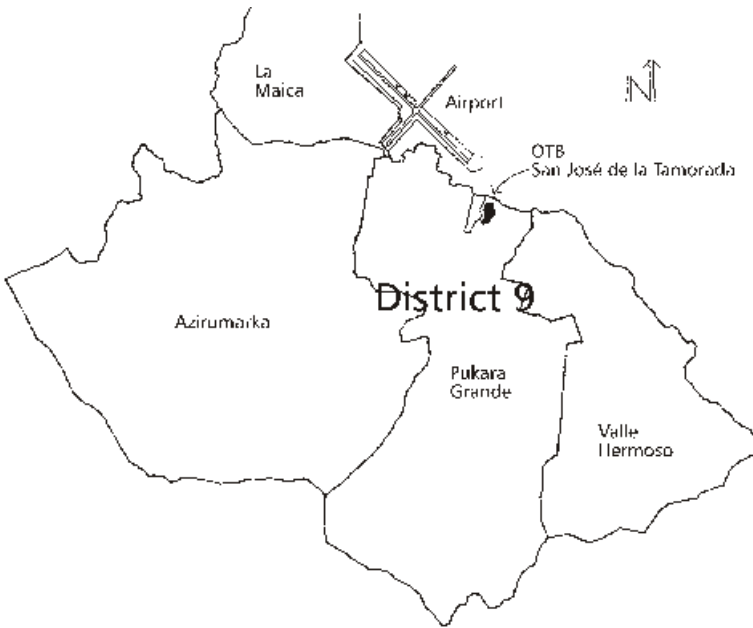
72 The information of this chapter is mainly based on the quantitative survey done between 2000 and 2001 by the research team of the PROMESHA/IIA/UMSS of which I was part, at the beginning of the fieldwork (see Chapter 5). It is important to note that not all the questions were answered by the interviewed persons, so when this is the case it will figure in the table as 'Missing data' and in the Figures as 'No data'. Drawings and Photos on the settlement are found in Appendix 4.

73 See Chapter 2.

74 Among these the Planning Office of the Municipality of the Cercado Province in charge of city planning and city management.

75 See Chapter 1.

76 The water channel belongs to the National Irrigation System No 1 intended for water supply for farming in this area and the surroundings.



Map 3.1

Location of the OTB-SJT in the Sub-District of Pukara Grande at the District 9.

Source: Planning Office of the Municipality of Cochabamba.

Panamericana) that connects the Municipality of the Cercado Province with other towns and provinces at the south.

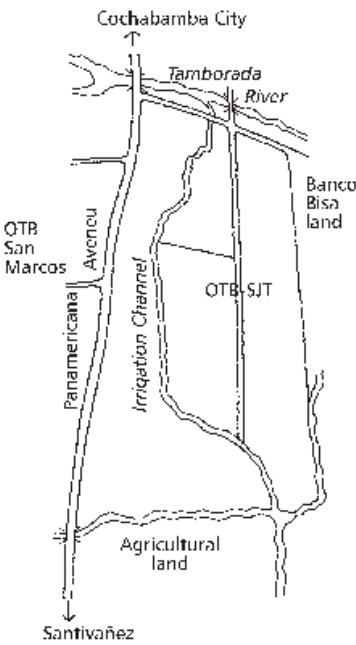
Settlement Process

The Structural Adjustments implemented in the 1980s in Bolivia implied, among other things, the loss of jobs for workers in the state owned mines that were closed. The mine employees not only lost their jobs, they lost their homes and other facilities, achieved after decades of struggle for better living conditions.⁷⁷ The cash compensation the workers received from the Bolivian state for the time working in the mines became, therefore, an important resource for solving their urgent needs in housing wherever they decided to move. The land owned by all the members of the San José Union since 1956 in the fringes of Cochabamba City, was fractioned into plots and allotted individually to less than five percent of the original owners through a lottery.⁷⁸ The tenure modality of the land remained, however, in cooperative form.

To own a plot in the fringes of the city, that sometimes could even include some kind of 'house', was surely a good way to invest the capital of a 'whole life' of work in the mines. If the decision was to

77 Between 25,000 and 30,000 miners were fired all over the country by the implementation of the 21060 Decree that is part of the Structural Adjustments and Economic Stabilization policies of the 1980s. The 21060 Decree directed that some of the most important State owned mines were to be closed, while the most productive were privatized. Some of the less productive were transferred to former miners.

78 This group is called the 'beneficiaries' of the land. The informants talked sometimes of 3,000 and others of 2,000 workers as the original owners of the land, as well as 102 or 110 plots, as allotted by the lottery to the 'beneficiaries'. The exact figures were difficult to get.



Map 3.2
Territorial limits of the OTB-SJT.
The main street and the external
links of the settlement with Cocha-
bamba city.

Source Taken from: Fohlin and Johanson, *The conflict between agricultural land and illegal settlements*, MFS, 2001: 35.

invest the compensation money in the purchase of a plot or a house, the tendency was to search for alternatives in the fringes of the city, as the amounts of the compensation were not so great.⁷⁹ Land is normally more affordable when it is not yet urbanized, and housing is in general cheaper in unauthorized living areas. A kind of “vicious circle” started in the cities that were affected by migration flows from the mines, with side effects that still have impact on the housing conditions of the population living in unauthorized settlements such as the OTB San José de la Tamborada.

Three main ‘groups’ can be identified in the settlement process of the area that makes up the OTB-SJT today: The ‘Cooperative’, the ‘Resettled from the Airport’ and the ‘Mela Darrás’. The former ‘caretakers’ of the Cooperative land belong to the history of the settlement process here as well; they are part of the ‘groups’ that now live in this settlement (see Map 3.3).

The Cooperative Group

The Housing Cooperative San José de la Tamborada was established in 1960, according to information supplied by them.⁸⁰ The members of the ‘beneficiaries’ first started to develop this area in 1987. At that time, the Department of Cochabamba was still predominantly rural, and agricultural production was the main contribution of the department to the country’s economy.⁸¹ The ‘compensatory policy’ of the Bolivian State, that enabled the transfer of agricultural land to the miners in the fringes of Cochabamba city in 1956, in this sense, is the initial reference point for

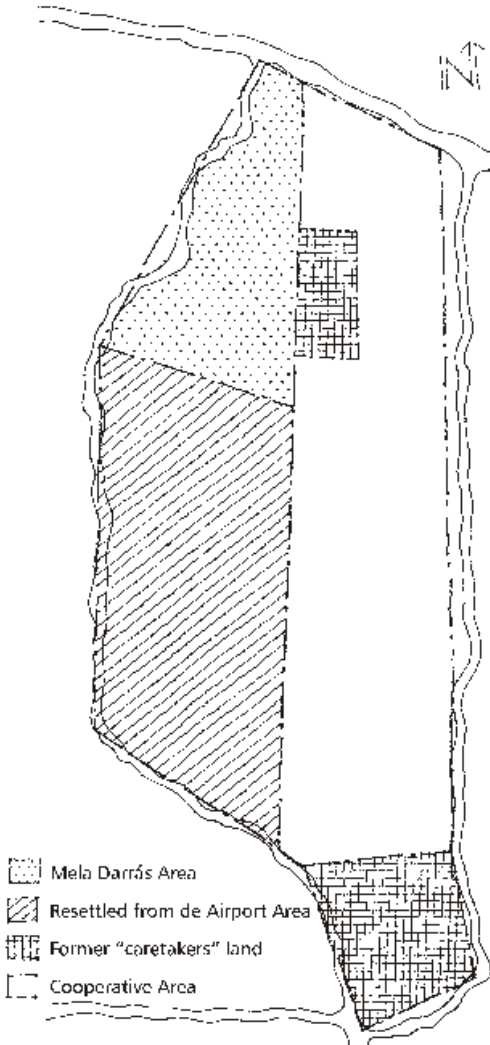
the emergence of this unauthorized residential area.

The quantitative survey shows that only about one third of the original ‘beneficiaries’ of the lottery still own land here. The remainder have sold their plots, in some cases with already constructed ‘houses’. Often properties have been sold more than once. Most of the original plots were between 400 and 500 square meters each, but in some cases the owners did further fractioning to sell portions of the plot to more than one purchaser. Therefore, plots of about 200 and 250 square meters are found also here. There were 134 plots in this area when the quantitative survey was made, which means that more than 60 percent of the total number of plots existing in the OTB-SJT were located within the cooperative land. Of approximately 44 empty plots identified, 34 belong to this part of the settlement (see Map 3.3; Map 3.4).

⁷⁹ The informants talk on amounts never higher than 4,000 US Dollars.

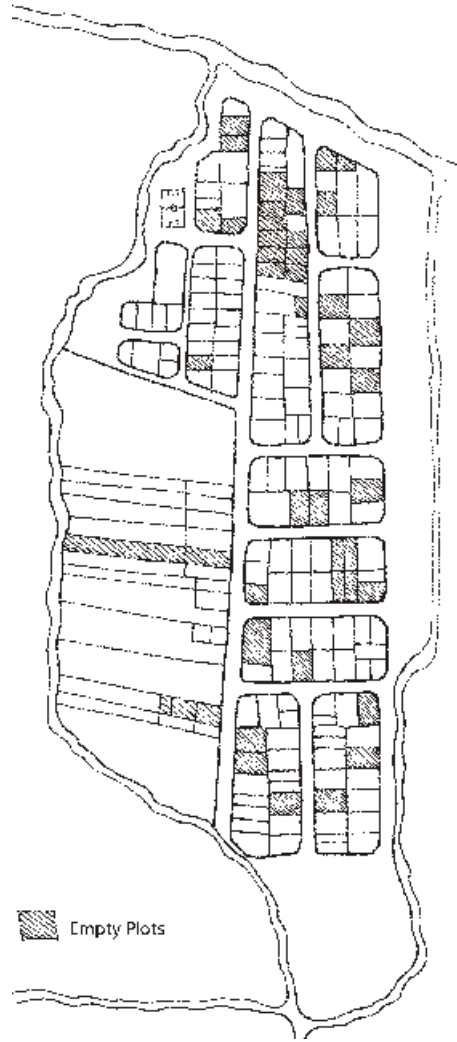
⁸⁰ One of the community representatives of the Cooperative organization told me, however, that the legal status of the Housing Cooperative was received first in October of the year 2000.

⁸¹ See Chapter 2.



Map 3.3
The different groups that make up the OTB-SJT today.

Source
Based on the quantitative survey.



Map 3.4
Empty Plots in the different areas of the OTB-SJT in May 2001.

The Resettled from the Airport

This group got land in compensation for the expropriation of their land in the surroundings of the city’s airport, when the work for its improvement was planned in the second half of the 1980s. The nine families that moved here ‘together’ were brick producers. Since the beginning, these families had as an objective to continue with brick productions in this area. In addition to the nine families that were re-located from the airport, there are others that live in this part of the settlement who individually purchased property directly from the owners.

The plots here often have very particular shapes, in some cases of less than 10 meters of frontage and about 120 meters deep. The process of further fractioning of land is also evident in this part of the settlement. When the quantitative survey was conducted there were 29 plots of the 13 initial ones, and five were still unoccupied (vacant land). The land area of newer plots now is often less than 150 square meters. The biggest brickyard still functioning within the limits of the OTB is located here, and the plot of about 6,000 square meters it occupies, is the largest in the entire residential area. The plot is used for brick production only and not for living purposes. The degradation of the site is quite noticeable (*see Map 3.3; Map 3.4*).

The Mela Darrás Group

The third group is comprised of individual purchasers from the Mela Darrás landowner. This land started its development for housing at the beginning of the 1990s. The landowner was allowed to subdivide her land and sell it for urban use by making donations of land for common use. The 'multifunction plan'⁸² was built later on about 2,200 square meters of the land yielded by Mela Darrás. It is the only open space for community use in the entire residential area today.

There are 36 plots used for housing in this part of the settlement. The plot sizes are normally between 250 and 300 square meters, but a few, of about 500 square meters, can be found as well. The biggest plot is about 1,200 square meters and is located just in front of the 'multifunction plan'. It is here that the only three-floor house existing in the settlement can be seen, together with signs of professional contributions to its design and construction. Five empty plots were found in this area (*see Map 3.3; Map 3.4*).

The Former 'Caretakers' of the Cooperative land

The three families, that were miners at the San José Mine, can in fact be considered the first who came to settle here. These families had the task of taking care of the land when it was still owned by all the employees of the San José Mine. The risk was there for takeovers, or 'illegal' urban developers, of land; this was the main reason behind the decision to send the three families to 'keep an eye' on the Worker Union's property. The families made two attempts to keep the land for themselves through a judicial process against, first, the Worker Union, and later on against the Housing Cooperative organization. According to the agreement the parties came to as a result of the court trials, the former 'caretakers' got a percentage of land for their own use.⁸³ A primary condition was that the land was to be kept for farming. Farming, as their only means of survival, was the main argument the families used to start the judicial process.

Part of the land given away to the former 'caretakers' is located within the limits of the Cooperative area and has already gone through subdivisions for residential development. Some of the plots already have been sold to second and even third owners. Of the 14 plots existing within the limits of the Cooperative land, about one

⁸² Infrastructure aimed for sports, mainly basketball and volleyball.

⁸³ The informants told about two hectares of land that was transferred to the former 'caretakers' of the Cooperative land.

third is occupied today and the other two thirds remain empty.⁸⁴ The other portion of land transferred to the former ‘caretakers’ is located at the south of the settlement, and, after the court trials, has remained outside the limits defined by the Cooperative group. The process of the further subdivisions of this land for urban use has also begun, but only in the last few years. Nevertheless, discussions among the buyers of these plots for being considered as part of the OTB-SJT, are going on at present (see Map 3.3; Map 3.4).

The Population

According to the 2000 population census at OTB-SJT, there were 865 inhabitants living here at that time. ‘Officially’ there were 170 plots, including the empty ones. This data did not consider the internal ‘illegal’ divisions that have occurred. The work with the quantitative survey, that comprised 120 households and 811 persons, showed that there were already 198 plots in the area. Of the 78 plots not included in the survey, 42 were empty and one was used as brickyard and not for living.

Further information gathered by the research team shows that 1071 people were already living at the OTB-SJT in May 2001.⁸⁵ The number of plots and the number of persons is, however, a very dynamic process at the OTB-SJT. The fractioning of plots is still going on, and people move in and out the area often. According to the quantitative survey, about 51 per cent of the households lived here less than five years; of these about nine percent lived here less than one year. About 16 percent of the households were in residence between ten to eighteen years, and about 32 percent had been living in the area between five and ten years⁸⁶ (Table 3.1; Figure 3.1).

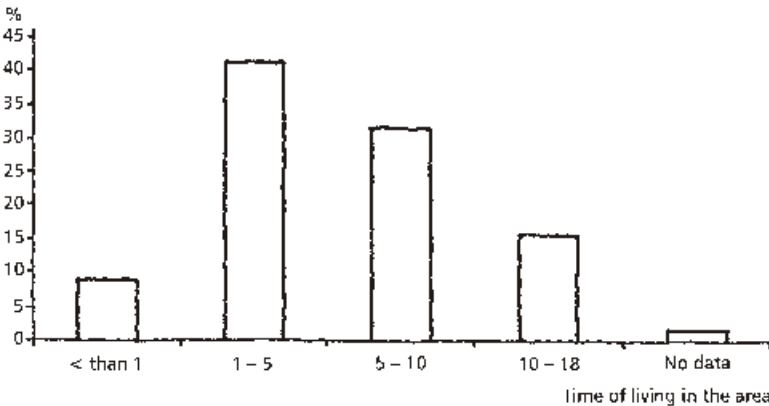


Figure 3.1 Length of time living in the area.

84 The 14 plots are part of the 134 plots of the Cooperative area.

85 The information presented below is based only on the results of the first quantitative inquiries that included the 120 households and the 811 persons.

86 Percentages in the text will avoid, as much as possible, the use of decimals unless they are presented in brackets. In the tables they will be rounded off to use only one decimal.

Place of Birth, Age Structure and Sex

Most of people had the place of birth somewhere in the Department of Cochabamba (59.1%). More than two thirds of this group were born in the Municipality of the Cercado Province, which more or less means in Cochabamba City and its surroundings. The people born in the department of Oruro, where the San José Mine is located, represent less than 26 percent of the total population living at the OTB-SJT now. The other three relevant departments regarding the origin of the population are La Paz (5.7%), Potosí (4.6%) and Santa Cruz (2.1%). The remaining percent indicates other places of birth (*Table 3.2*).

The population of the OTB-SJT is rather young. Of the 811 persons included in the quantitative survey, about half are less than 21 years old, and of these, about 87 percent are children below fifteen years old. The population between 21 and 35 years old represent nearly 28 percent of the total. People between 36 and 45 years old represent about nine percent. People 46 years or older are almost 13 percent of the total; only one person older than 46 was living here in May 2001. More or less 49 percent of the total population are males and about 51 percent females (*see Table 3.3; Figure 3.2*).

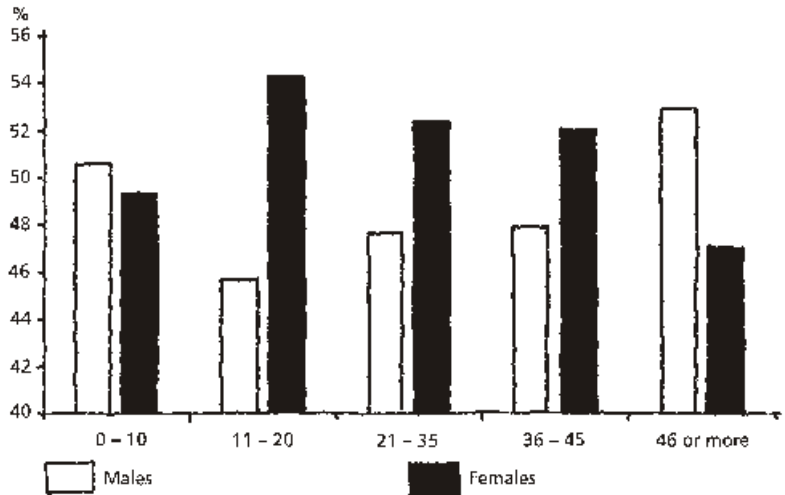


Figure 3.2 Population according to age and sex.

Household Structure

According to the households interviewed, the different types of household structure found in the area are as follows⁸⁷ (Pereira and Flores 2003):

- One person (2.1%).
- Nuclear family; the parents (one or both) and the own children.

⁸⁷ Household structure refers to the people living in the same house and that have some kind of relationship (relatives or friends), which means no people living in tenant, 'anticrético', or caretaker system.

- Extended family typ 1; the parents, the own children and the grandchildren.
- Extended family typ 2; the parents, the own children, the grandchildren, and other near relatives.
- Extended family typ 3; the parents, the own children, the grandchildren, other relatives and 'allegados.'⁸⁸

The most common household structure in the housing area is of both parents living with the children. One parent-headed households are also found, but are less representative.

Level of Education, Occupation and Household Income

The level of education is in general low. Most of the people had only gone through some of the six years of the obligatory school that the National Constitution consider free of costs when it comes to the public education.⁸⁹ In 75 cases people had also finished the secondary school and reached the exam that allows them to access higher education such as the university. In two cases the people had finished the university but they were not ready with the final exam yet and in 18 cases they had achieved professional degree. There were 24 persons in the living area that could not read and write at all (see Table 3.4).

The information presents a very broad range of occupation for household income maintenance. The informants actually mentioned about 60 different kinds of activities when this question was asked. Most of these were related to service and commerce in the private or public sectors. But, there was also an important number of self-employed occupations related to activities or business at home such as neighborhood shops, 'chicherías'⁹⁰, bakeries, mattress makers, salt collection and processing and carpentry shops.

There were 68 persons that mentioned some kind of occupation related to the building sector, both with higher education level, such as architects or engineers and semi-professionals, or self-taught persons such as bricklayers, electricians, carpenters, constructors, painters and building assistants. In 153 of the cases the people said they did not have any occupation, or were unemployed (see Table 3.5).

The information provided shows huge differences on the income situation of the households. Among the 115 households that answered this particular question, more than 74 percent earned less than four times the average minimum monthly salary of the country in the year 2001, which means about US\$ 230 of monthly income or less.⁹¹ There were 20 households with monthly incomes between

88 The 'allegados' refer normally to close friends, or not so close relatives, that normally do not make payments for living in the house.

89 Education is obligatory up to the sixth year of basic school (primary). Political Constitution with Amended Text of 1995 and Reforms of 2002, Article 177/III.

90 *Chicha* is a traditional drink that results from the fermentation of corn. It contains a relatively high percentage of alcohol. The places where this drink is sold are called *Chicherías*. These bars use to sell traditional dishes from the country as well.

91 According to international agencies, including the World Bank, the average, monthly, minimum salary of Bolivia in 2001 was 57.33 US Dollars, the lowest

five to eight times the minimum salary, which means about 487 US Dollars of monthly income or less. In six cases the household incomes were higher than US\$ 487 a month. The highest household income found in the area was of US\$ 1,200 per month; and in eleven cases the income was below the average minimum salary per month, which means about US\$ 57 or less (*see Table 3.6*).

Housing

Housing Conditions

The housing situation in the residential area in general is poor. Differences in technical housing quality between the different areas that make up the OTB-SJT but, also within the same areas, however, are noticeable. In general terms, the technical housing quality in the 'Mela Darrás' area presents better conditions than in the 'Cooperativa' area and the 'Resettled from the airport'. Houses can be found here presenting higher quality conditions, compared with the average of the settlement that make up the OTB – which is not to say that even in these cases conditions can be considered adequate all the time.

The most common building material used here are adobe and bricks, in the walls of the house and the surrounding fence, and sometimes plastered with gyps or cement, or both. In some cases the houses are built entirely with adobe and in others solely with bricks. Cement blocks are also used in the building of the walls. The people can use adobe, bricks or cement blocks, combined in one or another way, in the building of the walls as well. Similar situations are found in the building of the wall enclosures. Cement and tamped earth are the most common building materials used for inside and outside floors, but bricks are used in both cases too. The most frequent roof material is zinc, but ceramic, cement tiles, and asbestos sheets are also used, although at a lesser scale. Finally, there are those who use these roof materials combined in many ways.

The spaces that normally present the worst conditions are the kitchen, the toilet, the bath, the washing place and the outside areas of the house. Of the 110 cases that had this information available in the quantitative survey, about 28% had the kitchen as open space in the yard, or as semi-covered space. In more or less 31% of the cases the house had a particular place for the kitchen, sometimes with and sometimes without equipment specifically intended for cooking and washing dishes inside the home. In some cases the space used for the kitchen was shared among the different households that occupied the house. In 14 cases the house did not have any specific room for cooking (*see Table 3.7*).

The most common toilets are latrines. The toilets can have the lavatory; sometimes this is connected to a proper septic tank but often it is an improvised arrangement to replace the lack of sewerage

among 17 Latin American countries included in the survey presented. Argentina was at the top with US\$ 200 monthly average. It is to be noted that the average minimum salary refers to the income of a single person.
www.desarrollo.gov.bo/atpdea/ventajas_Bolivia.htm (2004/09).

system in the residential area. In 29 houses there was no specific place for the toilet (see *Table 3.8*). The situation with the bath is normally worse. In most cases bathing arrangements are in the yard, usually with only very precarious mud walls and hanging curtains, and seldom with a proper roof. It is uncommon to see outside places for the children to play, and the yard is normally used to store different kind of things, such as building materials for the construction of the house. In some cases the women make efforts to have a proper garden, but the lack of running water makes this difficult. In some houses the yard is also used for keeping domestic animals such as rabbits and chickens.

Level of Occupancy of the Plot

The number of persons living in the same plot can vary from a single person to nineteen, the latter being the largest household found in the area. The plot can be occupied by one or more households. In the last case, the households can have some kind of family links and sometimes not. In 77 of the 120 cases there were between four and seven persons living in the same plot; in 24 cases the number of occupants was between eight and eleven; in 10 cases there were between one to three persons, and in nine cases there were between twelve and twenty three persons living in the same plot (see *Table 3.9*).

Access to Housing

The house can be occupied by the owners or by persons that access housing through other systems (tenants, borrowers, *allegados*, *anticrecistas*, or caretakers), or by people living in different systems combined in one or another way (i.e. owners and tenants; caretakers and *anticrecistas*; tenants and *anticrecistas*).

The information shows that more than 67 percent of the 120 households own the house and the plot. About 22 percent were tenants, 5 percent lived in 'antriccético' system and more or less 3 percent were 'caretakers'. Persons living as 'borrowers' were also found, but at less than 1 percent (see *Table 3.10*; *Figure 3.3*).

In most cases people bought only the plot when the purchase was first made, but there were also properties that included the 'house' in the sale. The costs of the properties at the time of purchase present great variation; with the less costly being between 450 and 1,000 US dollars, and the most expensive between 15,000 and 20,000 US dollars. A high percentage of the purchases registered by the survey were made during the 1990s (74%), which is related to the sale of plots by Mela Darrás landowner. The sale of the properties has been more frequent since 1980s compared with the two preceding decades. The most common tenure documents people mention are the 'minuta' and the 'hijuela'. In some cases people say they have both. The legal status of 'property titles' belonging to the 'formal housing sector' was also mentioned by the informants. There were some who reported that they had no tenure document at all (see *Table 3.11*; *Figure 3.4*).

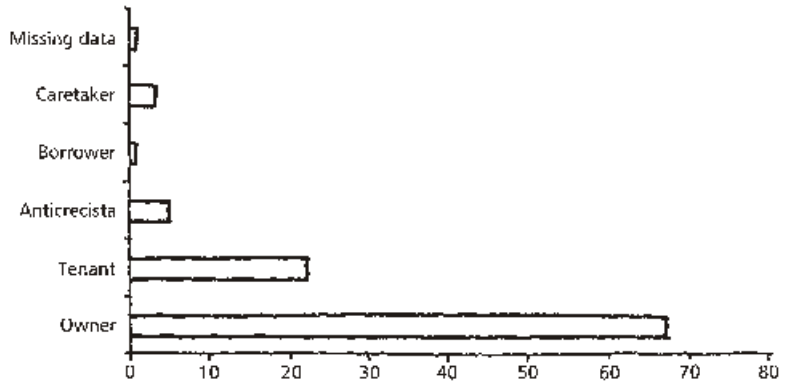


Figure 3.3 Access to housing.

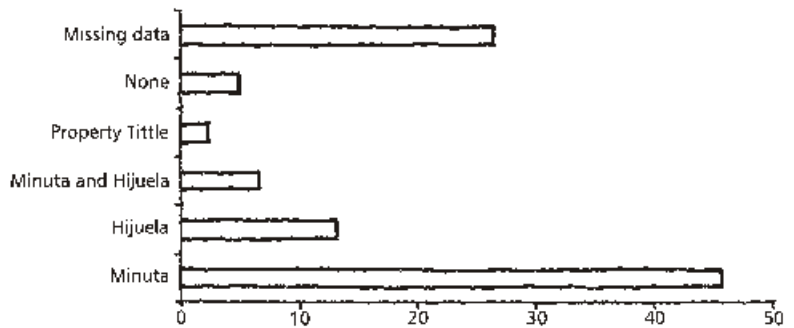


Figure 3.4 Type of tenure document of the property.

Building Process

When it comes to the building process of the house, in 48 cases the informants said that some kind of skilled labourer or professional had been involved. In 26 answers people said they did the work through self-help or mutual aid schemes without any skilled labor involved, and in 8 cases they built the house with the assistance of skilled labour and with the participation of the household members. Although people refer to self-help or mutual aid, the settlement does not show any signs of this experience in, more or less, organized schemes (see Table 3.12; Figure 3.5).

Basic Services and Community Facilities at Settlement Level

Water Supply, Electricity and Sewerage

The population gets water from tank trucks and from two artesian wells.⁹² In the first case, residents purchase water on a daily basis, storing it in barrels. Water supply by trucks is frequent at a cost of five Pesos Bolivianos per barrel (about one and a half US\$ for 159 litres). In general, the quality of the water is very low as it is not pota-

⁹² None of these wells are active today for providing drinking water at the OTB-SJT.

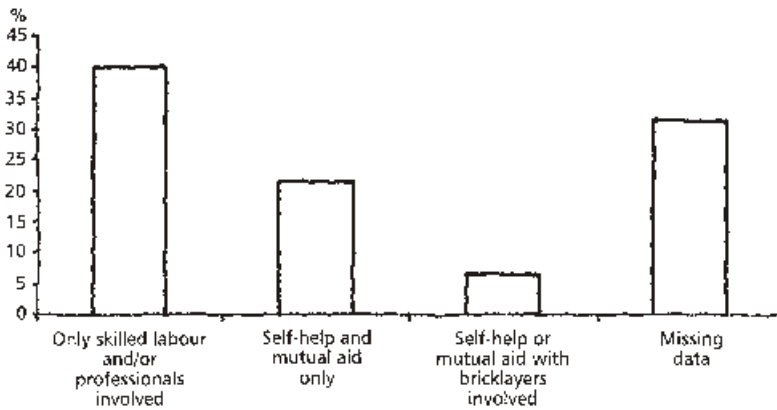


Figure 3.5 Building process of the house.

ble, and there is no regular control of its quality. The problem is not only the quality of the water, which can be good in some cases, but deficient storage methods that affect its quality negatively. Water risks contamination by the rusting of the container and by dust as it remains exposed to the environment.

The two existing water wells and the water network were financed by the people living here. According to the community representatives, approximately US\$ 10,000 were invested for each well, and they were paid entirely by the community. None of these wells responded adequately to the provision of drinking water due to the high content of salts and minerals in the water.⁹³ The water obtained from the artesian wells is used now to wash clothes, kitchen utensils and for damping the plots to avoid the dust, in the best of the cases.

Electrification may be the service with the best coverage. About 98% of the houses access this service and the average cost per month is of 30 Pesos Bolivianos (about five US\$). The difficulties here are related more to public lighting, which is of poor quality and does not have the necessary coverage within the settlement.

Due to the absence of the SEMAPA⁹⁴ sewerage system, some households substitute this service by latrines and septic tanks. However, there is a high percentage of the population that fulfil this need by using outside spaces, without any treatment, with negative effects on the groundwater and the air. The efforts made by some households to build sanitary services, or bathrooms, are not of much help, simply because a sewerage system does not exist.

Education, Health and Waste Disposal

There is no infrastructure for basic education within the limits of the OTB-SJT, or in nearby surrounding areas as well. The nearest available basic education units are located at an average distance of one

⁹³ People use to say that at the beginning, the water was good until 'dirty' water started to emerge from the faucets.

⁹⁴ The Servicio Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado SEMAPA, is still a public entity and is responsible for drinking water and sewerage services at the Municipality of the Cercado Province.

to three kilometres, including among these the schools of Salesian Don Bosco, San Antonio de Pukara, and La Encañada. Secondary schools, technical and higher education centres are found in areas connected better to the 'formal' areas of the city.

The nearest health centre is operating at the San Marcos Religious Centre built with external financial support and it is private. It provides health services throughout the Pukara Sub District's jurisdiction. In spite of its importance to date, this health centre is not yet incorporated into the District 9 public health service network. As a result, the health centre has deficiencies in medical supplies and a lack of personnel. There is any kind of health facility within the limits of the OTB-SJT. People use different kinds of care options, both private and public, but most of them refer to the public Hospital 'Viedma'⁹⁵ as the place they go to when they are in need of this service. No public dental care services were observed close to the residential area. The San Marcos private health-centre provides with this service as well.

The main health problems are related to bad nutrition, stomach illnesses and the general lack of hygiene. Huge dental problems are also evident from rather young ages. The environmental pollution is pointed to as one of the main factor of health troubles. Environmental pollution is related to the lack of running water and sewerage systems, as well as to the dust, the flies, the stagnant water and household waste. The lack of street cleaning, the brickyards and the slaughterhouse that functions in the neighbouring OTB San Marcos, contribute to the level of air pollution too. One of the most evident problems is the presence of waste on the streets, ravines and unimproved land, all of which has a severe negative effect on the health of the residents, particularly the children: the most vulnerable to contamination.

There is no adequate collection of solid waste due to the low capacity and the irregular frequency of the trucks of the Municipality service. People use the surroundings of the Tamborada River and the irrigation channels to dispose of solid waste. The Tamborada River, the water channels and the streets are used often for the disposal of solid residues coming from the toilets, and for dumping used water from cooking, bathing and the washing of clothing.

Recreation, Economic Activities and Commerce

The lack of space set aside for recreation and leisure is evident. The only nearby open spaces available are two 'multifunction plans'. One is located within the limits of the OTB-SJT, in the Mela Darrás area, and the other belongs to the neighbouring OTB San Marcos. There is also an improvised soccer field made by the residents on the bank of the Tamborada River.

Neighbourhood markets for daily food supplies are not located near the residential area. There are small neighbourhood shops with a variety of merchandise. Some of the women sell vegetables and meat in improvised arrangement, often on the sidewalks. On Saturdays a cattle purchase and sale market (the so-called cattle beach) takes place in the vicinity of the Tamborada River. This activity is

95 It is about seven to eight kilometres from the OTB-SJT to the Hospital Viedma.

well known at the regional level (Central, High and Low Valleys) and makes possible the generation of other economic activities linked to the sale of traditional food and alcoholic drinks.

The 'Chicherías' and the 'Chicharronerías'⁹⁶ are important economic and leisure activities that take place mostly during the weekends, but also on other days of the week. Many social problems arise as result of the functioning of these bars, mainly related to citizen security, violence and robberies. The level of domestic violence is considered by many as a result of alcohol drinking linked to these kinds of public places as well.

Other relevant economic activities in the living area are carpentry shops, bakeries, mattress making, salt collection and processing and brick production. Among these, the latter belongs to those activities that, together with the 'chicherías', are considered most disturbing by the population. The main problems connected to brick production are the high level of air contamination linked to brick production, and land degradation resulting from wrong methods used to extract the clay. The presence of this activity in the middle of the housing area is questioned continually, and the removal of the brickyards is among the demands for environmental and housing improvements of the people living at the OTB-SJT.

There are 14 brick kilns operating in the surrounding areas, and each affects the quality of life of residents to a larger or lesser degree. The only brickyard that still functions within the limits of the OTB-SJT is quite large and is in permanent activity. The Municipality offered the producers the possibility to change from wood to gas, in exchange for permits to operate, with the objective to reduce air contamination. However, the measures did not include improvements in the design and the construction of the kilns, in the methods of extracting the clay, therefore, the upgrading is not of such significance for the people living in the settlement.

Road Networks, Public Transport, and Communication

The main streets are paved with stones, but there are still some streets and paths of gravel and earth that contribute to dust pollution. The road network is incomplete and there are plots that still lack appropriated connections both with the settlement and the greater area. One of the problems the community has to solve is the connection of the main street with the Panamericana Avenue at the west, making the road network more functional for people here. The difficulty in solving this is that it is hard to re-configure private land, and, as in the case of the 'Resettled from the airport', even less viable when the shapes of the plots do not allow this. The problems are not only internal, plots in the neighbouring settlement, OTB San Marcos, would also be affected in case the street is opened towards the Panamericana Avenue.

In spite of intense traffic, this main street provides no safe bicycle or pedestrian circulation. In additions to traffic dust, high levels of noise particularly impacts on those living along the main street. The

⁹⁶ *Chicharrón* is a traditional dish made of pork meat. The places that sell this dish are called *Chicharronerías*.

lack of a drainage system throughout the area is a concern as well, particularly in rainy periods.

In general, these kinds of residential areas are more or less well served by public transportation, as is the rest of the city. Public transportation is in private hands and constitutes one of the most important income sources now for many people in the country. There is a telephone network, but there are still few that have own home telephones. Some of the neighbourhood shops offer this service for a fee.

Organizational Aspects

There are two main community organizations active today. The Cooperative organization that has its roots in the Housing Cooperative founded in the 1960s by the former employees of the San José Mine. This is the oldest organization here and has been behind most of the activities that have to do with the development process of the area since the very beginning. The leaders of the organization were leaders of the San José Union and had an important organizational and mobilization tradition behind them. The Cooperative organization represents just the interests of the people living within the limits of the Cooperative area.

The Base Territorial Organization (OTB) represents the interests of all the people living within its territorial limits. The OTB was established in the second half of the 1990s. Most of the leaders of the Cooperative organization became involved in this organization at the beginning also. This 'double' role of community representation made way for a series of confusions and conflicts in the newly established unit. The emergence of the OTB-SJT is linked directly to the implementation of the Law of Popular Participation and the Law of Administrative Decentralization, and it is, therefore, the organizational structure officially recognized by the government at central and local levels.

Some other so-called functional organizations have been active in the area as well. These include the 'Mother's Club', organized by the women, the youth organization 'Tucuyaj', and the Water Committee, organized to take care of the water wells installed by the residents some years ago. But, none of these organizations are active in the area now.

Part II

Theoretical and
Conceptual
Framework,
Methodological
Approach

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The Relevance of Foucault to my Research

Discourses are defined by Michel Foucault as “ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them” (Weedon 1987: 108)⁹⁷. According to Foucault’s view the exercise of power cannot be possible without a “certain economy of discourses of truth” and he points out that “we are subjected to the production of truth through power” (Foucault, 1972: 93). He states further that “in our society nothing, not even the word of law could be authorized without discourse of truth” (McNay 1994: 86).

The consideration of discourse as “something which produces something else, (an utterance, a concept, an effect), rather than something which exists in and of itself”, belongs to Foucault’s thoughts, too (1972: 49). In his view, a discursive structure can be detected by the systematic use of ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are formed within a particular context, and because of the *effects* of those ways of thinking and behaving (Mills 1997: 17).

Moreover, Foucault refers to discourse as “a form of power that circulates in the social field and can attach to strategies of domination as well as those of resistance” (Diamond and Quinby 1988: 185) He further writes:

...in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse (Foucault 1980: 93).

Foucault’s discussions on Discourse are closely related to Power and Knowledge. I find this view useful for the discussion and the elucidation of my research questions and research issues. First, my interest is in social policies, and more specifically housing policies towards low-income groups, as well as related discourses used by ‘officials’.⁹⁸ Second, Foucault opens the possibility of seeing power rela-

97 As cit. by Pinkus (1996: 1) www.massey.ac.nz/alogk/theory/foucault.htm 2004/03/07.

98 By ‘official’ I mean the government, both at the central and local level.

tionships in society from a different perspective. Third, he enables an understanding of how discourses meet the discursive praxis.

The Law 1551 of Popular Participation and the *regularization* proposals for Housing Improvement both belong to the development discourse of the last few decades in Bolivia. In these discourses, people's participation and unauthorized housing have moved away from the once negative tone they had for decades. Discourses in Bolivia are linked to discourse production on these very issues over the past in the Latin American region as well. Changes in the views and visions of social participation and housing improvement in a regional context have influenced the content of 'official' discourses within Bolivia too. My conceptual discussions, therefore, will also have the discourses of housing improvement and participatory action in the regional context as a reference framework.

Foucault's focus is: "how some discourses have shaped and created meaning systems that have gained the status and currency of 'truth', and dominate how we define and organize both ourselves and our social world whilst other alternative discourses are marginalised and subjugated", but, "yet potentially 'offer' sites where hegemonic practices can be contested, challenged and 'resisted'" (Pinkus 1996: 1).

What is relevant for Foucault is not whether the discourses are true or false but rather, how truth is conceived, circulated, transformed and used in a particular context. I find this view relevant for my research, as my discussions will not focus on the truth or falsehood of the discourses of social participation and housing improvement, but rather on the *effects of truth* the discourses have on the perceptions of the people living in the particular case study area. Foucault's analysis does not focus on the internal rules of discourse formation, but on the external social forces that "govern its rarefaction". In this regard, Foucault's reflections on *enunciative modalities* in discursive practices will be discussed further in this chapter.

Foucault (1980: 187) talks of power relations that exist "between every point of a social body ... between every one who knows and every one who does not..." His view on power is not as 'something' exercised by 'somebody on somebody',⁹⁹ rather than as "something which circulates" and that is "employed and exercised through a net-like organization" in which all are caught (Foucault 1980: 98). This view takes the focus of discussions beyond the narrow perspective of 'what is power and where does it come from'. I find Foucault's discussions of the effects of power relations at micro- rather than at macro-level (*microphysics* rather than *macrophysics* of power) quite useful. The relevance of this is linked to my intention to understand how power relations perform at a local level when participatory strategies in housing improvement are put into practice.

According to Foucault there is no knowledge that does not presuppose power relations. In his new power relations are not external

99 In this case, 'somebody' refers to more than a particular person; it can mean a certain social group or class. The attempt "to reformulate the negative conception of power as repression to account for the conflictual unstable and empowering elements inherent in any set of social relations" belongs to Foucault's later works (see McNay, 1994: 1–12).

to the *field of knowledge* but immanent to it, and that “it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together” (Simola, et al. 1988). In his discussions on genealogical research Foucault pays attention to ‘other forms of knowledge’ appropriated by systems of thought modern civilization has accepted as ‘scientific’. These questions are related to the *local knowledge* idea which is central to participatory discourses these days; and are relevant, therefore, to my own research and discussion.

The central issue here is to understand how ‘official’ discourses meet the discourses of people living in the case study area with respect to social participation and housing improvement. The aim is not, therefore, to see *how* the official discourses emerge or *why*, but to understand the *effects of truth* of these discourses in practice. This has to do with the idea behind Foucault’s (1980: 81–87) *genealogical* approach: ‘of giving expression to subjugated forms of knowledge’. In Foucault’s concept of *genealogy*, practices become “more important than theory”, and practices are to be viewed from “the inside rather than from the viewpoint of the detached observer” (McKinlay and Starkey 1998: 17). This means that one needs to see things from the perspective of others. The change from the discursive to non-discursive realm – in Foucault’s analysis related to *archaeology* and *genealogy* approaches in discursive formation – will be discussed further in this chapter.

Foucault’s Thoughts on Discourse, Power and Knowledge

For Michel Foucault “discourses structure both our sense of reality and our notion of our own identity,” (Mills, 1997: 15). Foucault (1980: 118) believes that the problem is not so much like the drawing of a line “between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientific or truth,” but in seeing “how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are either true or false”.

For Foucault, power is a key element in discussions of discourse (Mills, 1997: 19). He explains that “in the end we are judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of the specific effects of power” (Foucault 1980: 94). What concerns him is “how *power* relations of inequality and oppression are created and maintained in more subtle and diffuse ways through ostensibly humane and freely adopted social practices”. (McNay 1994: 2). Foucault (1980: 187) does not believe in power as “purely and simply a projection of the sovereign’s great power over the individual.”

Foucault does not deny a power elite or ruling class existence. He thinks that in society there is a class that strategically takes a privileged place, and it drives its projects and collects its triumphs; but he believes that the idea of ‘dominant class’ has never been formulated adequately (Hörnqvist 1996: 46). In this sense, Foucault (1980: 99) is not so concerned with the attempt of “some kind of deduction of power starting from its centre and aimed at the discovery to the ex-

tent to which it permeates into the base". He proposes instead an "ascending analysis of power", starting from "its infinitesimal mechanisms", seen then in its relations to "ever more general mechanisms and forms of global domination". He points out: "One needs to investigate historically, and beginning from the lowest level, how mechanisms of power have been able to function" (Hörnqvist 1996: 100).

According to Foucault's view: "any society – but especially modern industrial societies – is typified by a 'will to truth' which establishes a distinction between truth and falsehood and hence determines how knowledge is put to work, valorised and distributed" (McNay 1994: 86). Foucault states further: "all the knowledge we have is the result or the effect of power struggles" (Mills 1997: 21). He means by this, that there is not "any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault 1979: 27).

Knowledge as something inextricably associated with networks of power belongs in this sense to Foucault's thoughts as well (Smart 1985: 76). By this linkage Foucault does not mean that power encourages knowledge to use or to apply simply because it is useful, but rather "power and knowledge directly imply one another"; and again "that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge" (ibid.). Foucault, however, points out that power and knowledge imply a relation not just manipulative or negative. This derives from his view of power not as negative or repressive force, but something that traverses and produces things, such as knowledge, among others.

Discourse, as defined by Foucault, refers to "ways of constituting knowledge". Through his *archaeology* and *genealogy* analysis of knowledge production Foucault "looks at continuities and discontinuities between 'epistemes'¹⁰⁰, and the social context in which certain knowledges and practices emerged as permissible and desirable, or changed" (Pinkus 1996:1). And this is connected to the 'effects of truth' idea when it comes to the impact of current 'official' discourses on the views of the people living in the case study area, as regards housing improvement and participatory questions.

Archaeology and Genealogy in Discursive Formation

According to Barry Smart (1985: 47–48), Foucault's *archaeological* investigations "are directed to an analysis of the unconscious rules of formation which regulate the emergence of discourse in the human sciences", and the *genealogical* analysis "reveals the emergence of the human sciences, their conditions of existence, to be inextricably associated with particular technologies of power embodied in social practices" (Smart 1985: 47). Smart means that beyond the "change of emphasis and the development of new concepts Foucault's work does not present a rigid division or break between earlier and later writings rather a reordering of analytic priorities" (ibid.).

According to Foucault (1972: 135–140) *archaeology* does not address itself to the overt speech of authors and authorities, but at-

100 According to Pinkus (1996) 'epistemes' are taken by Foucault to mean the knowledge systems which primarily informed thinking during certain periods of history: a different one being said to dominate each epistemological age.

tempts to identify those rules that govern statements and then organize these statements into discursive formations, which in turn surface in a great diversity of practices, institutions and disciplines. Foucault's *archaeological* analysis of discourse aims to:

document its conditions of existence and the practical field in which it is deployed (Smart 1985: 48–49).

The question is: how is it that one particular statement appeared rather than another? In Foucault's view this description of discourses is in opposition to the History of Thoughts and he proposes to "re-constitute another discourse." For him the central question is not "What was being said in what was said?" but:

What is this specific existence that emerges from what is said and nowhere else? (Foucault 1972: 27–28).

His archaeology does not aim to "overcome differences but to analyse them, to say what exactly they consist of, to *differentiate* them" (Foucault 1972: 171). McKinlay and Starkey (1998: 16) point out that a fundamental difference between the history of ideas and Foucault's archaeological analysis is how the 'truth' is taken to be. While the history of ideas considers truth as "accurate representation of reality in an ever-expanding body of statements made by great figures in science", archaeological analysis sees it as "the production of sets of statements and their regulation within discrete systems of discourse independent of the conscious speaker".

Archaeology has its emphasis on discourse, but it also reveals relations between discursive formations and non-discursive domains (institutions, political events, economic practices and processes). Foucault remarks that, "the intention is not to uncover great cultural continuities, nor to isolate mechanisms of causality". *Archaeology* does "not ask what could have motivated them (the search for contexts of formulation); nor does it seek to rediscover what is expressed in them (the task of hermeneutics)" but,

...it tries to determine how the rules of formation that govern it – and which characterize the positivity to which it belongs – may be linked to non-discursive systems: it seeks to define specific forms of articulation (Foucault 1972: 162).

Foucault (1972: 164–165) points further that the aim of an archaeological analysis is "to discover the domain of existence and functioning of a discursive practice", and it "seeks to discover that whole domain of institutions, economic processes, and social relations on which a discursive formation can be articulated".

In his later work, Foucault's analysis turned from the discursive to the non-discursive realm, and particularly to the issue of power from the point of view of *genealogy*.¹⁰¹ In Foucault's genealogical analysis

101 Most of Foucault's readers consider this shift a result of the influence of Nietzsche. Daudi (1986: 155) writes: 'Nietzsche draws our attention to the fact that knowledge and cognition (theories and discourses) are permeated by values. Thus he paves the way for a new line of action in research: the genealogical approach'.

the relevance becomes “power, knowledge and the body, and their interrelations”.

The emergence of *genealogy* signified a displacement of archaeological analysis in Foucault’s work. But *archaeology* retained a secondary presence and continued to serve as a methodology for isolating and analysing ‘local discursivities’ in a manner complementary to *genealogy* (Smart 1985: 54). In his analysis of the discourses of power in managerial praxis, Philippe Daudi (1986) shows, for example, how his interest in the mentality from which it (the discourse of power) derives and the norms which it produces enables a point where the archaeological perspective and the genealogical approaches meet. Foucault contrasts genealogy to historical analyses that “pursues the *origin*” with two interconnected alternative conceptions, the analysis of descent and emergence:

Genealogy as the analysis of historical descent rejects the uninterrupted continuities and stable forms which have been a feature of traditional history... historical emergence conceptualised not as the culmination of events, or as the end of a process of development but rather as a particular momentary manifestation of ‘the hazardous play of dominations’ or a stage in the struggle between forces (Smart 1985: 56–57).

The mode of historical understanding and analysis initiated by genealogy “is one in which there are no universals, no constants to provide a stable foundation for understanding” (Smart 1985: 59). This kind of analysis “introduces a conception of discontinuity into the taken-for-granted domains of life and nature”, and that focuses on events, “not as the product of destiny, regulative mechanism or the intention of a constitutive subject”, but as the effect of accidental conflicts, chance, and error, of relations of power and their unplanned consequences. *Genealogy* does not look for the origin, and is in opposition to the idea of “timeless and universal truths” but, is concerned also, with the conception of a “relentless progress of humanity”:

... the objects of genealogical analysis are not ‘the noblest periods, the highest forms, the most abstract ideas, the purest individualities’, but neglected, ‘lower’ or more common forms of existence and knowledge... genealogy introduces a mode of historical analysis which affirms the perspectivity of knowledge (Smart 1985: 59).

Foucault’s perceptions on humanity’s progress and on the ‘subject’ are central for his genealogical analysis. This means that the question is not if humanity has progressed or not but “How is it that we have progressed?” (Foucault 1980:50). The problem is thus related more to how things happen, and in the extent to which “what happens now is not necessarily better or more advanced, or better understood, than what happened in the past”. In Foucault’s view: “the historical change might be more appropriately conceptualised in terms of the continual institutionalisation of forms of violence in systems of rules, or the succession of one mode of domination by another” (Bouchard 1977: 151). Foucault (1980: 117) writes further,

“the historical contextualisation needed to be something more than the simple relativisation of the phenomenological subject”, considered in terms of a subject that develops through the course of the history. In this sense, what he calls genealogy is:

... a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history (ibid.).

Foucault’s approach to discursive practices is not so much related to *who* or *where* but to *how*: inquiries on devices, techniques and rationalities that enable discourse in any one time, rather than questions on who possesses or uses it for one or another reason, for one or another objective. Foucault’s concerns are in the understanding of the *effects of discourse* production and distribution in a particular context, rather than in the search for internal rules of universal generalization.

Enunciative Modalities in Discursive Practices

Foucault considers that each society has processes of control, selection, organization and distribution for discourse production. The main role of these procedures is to prevent from discourse “power and threat, to control its disorganization and to avoid its heavy, scarring materiality” (Foucault 1993: 7).

Foucault (1972: 55) considers the *enunciation of the statement* concept relevant in so far as it does not try to describe “the speaking or writing in itself as action”, but rather “the context within which the words are articulated and the position or status of the writer or speaker”. The *enunciative modalities* (modalités énonciatives) refer to laws that are decisive for the development of the discourse:

...the *status* of the speaker or the writer, the *organizations and institutions* from which the statements are uttered and dispersed, along with the *position* which the object of the discourse has in relation to the contents of the discourse... (Daudi 1986: 144).

Enunciative modalities refer to the particular development criteria a certain discursive formation shapes when it starts to develop. But for the emergence of a discursive formation the conditions of possibility (rules of formation) are first necessary. *Enunciative modalities* are thus related to “what belongs to the discourse and what remains outside; criteria and codes for the production of the discourse; procedures of exclusion and types of prohibition” (Daudi 1986: 145–146). This means: “the rules and criteria which govern (from within) the production and development of the discourse” (ibid.).

Foucault proposes to answer questions related to the subject who speaks, and the right he/she has among the totality of speaking individuals to deploy a certain discourse; the institutional *sites* from which the subject makes the discourse, and from which this discourse derives its legitimate source and point of application (its specific objects and instruments of verification); the position the speak-

ing subject occupies in relation to the various domains or groups of objects to the discourse, within which the enunciation at issue is intended to be integrated. These questions are related to the internal systems of rules which govern the production of the discourse and thus to the *formation of enunciative modalities* (Foucault 1972: 51–55).

Everybody knows that “not everything can be said”, that it is “not allowed to speak on all things in all circumstances”, and that “not everybody can talk on everything”,¹⁰² writes Foucault (1993: 7). Discourse is controlled through procedures of exclusion that function via strategies of prohibition, division and rejection, or the imposition of a “will of truth”. Philippe Daudi (1984: 337) points that: “the conditions for a discourse being considered discourse rest in prohibition and in arbitrary bases rather in legitimate grounds”.¹⁰³ The question has nothing to do with a division between that which responds to the ‘scientific’ and to the ‘truth’, and that which responds to other things, but rather to the search for how, historically, the *effects of truth* are produced inside discourses that are not themselves either ‘true’ or ‘false’ (Morey 2001: 147).

Foucault’s three *rules of the discursive formation* are considered central for the understanding of a given discourse. The *surfaces of emergence* indicate the social, political, economic and cultural spheres in which a discursive formation appears. The *authorities of delimitation* are represented by experts ‘formally’ competent to express their opinions in a certain field; but also the field of knowledge, which is ‘established’ and ‘recognized’; and which automatically bestows a legitimate authority “upon the possessor of knowledge”. The *grids of specification* talk about reason that may differentiate between different types of objects that are treated within one and the same discourse. This rule refers to the classification system used for correlating or differentiating various objects in relationship to one another.

The three rules of the discursive formation should not, however, “be understood in such a way that they are assumed to produce finished objects which can then be labelled and classified” (Daudi 1986: 144–145). Daudi means that there is a close relation of a certain object of discourse and the discourse, *per se*, in the extent to which they “appear and develop together and in one and the same process”. An object of discourse should not be confused with what the linguists call ‘le référé’ (the referent or the signified), i.e. that to which an oral or written sign refers. The discourse is not about an object; rather, it produces its own object (Daudi 1986: 143).

Foucault (1980: 183) believes that in his early works he “accepted the traditional conception of power as an essentially judicial mechanism, as that which lays down the law, which prohibits, which refuses and which has a whole range of negative effects”. Foucault found that conception to be inadequate and considered the need to again elaborate the whole theory of power. The *microphysics* in the discourses of power is among his contributions to this effort.

102 My own translation from Swedish.

103 My own translation from Swedish.

Microphysics in the Discourses of Power

Discussions on power are to be found throughout Foucault's writings. His interest is not so much about the most centralised and institutionalised expressions of power; rather, he sees the marxist approach with its focus on the state apparatus and class relations as inadequate to understanding how power relations are created and maintained in society. The purely negative view of power is also put into question:

If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it?... It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression (Foucault 1980: 119).

Foucault proposes a concept of power as an “essentially *positive* force, which permeates all levels of society, engendering a multiplicity of relations other than those simple of domination” (McNay 1994: 90). Foucault considers that “a society without power relations can only be an abstraction”.¹⁰⁴ But, also, that power cannot be considered as something possessed by somebody who exercises it on others, often against his own will: a kind of ‘unidirectional’ and ‘repressive’ notion of power that is, according to him, limited. Foucault (1980: 95–100) points out, “power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual’s consolidated and homogeneous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others”. Individuals are not only its “inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation.” In other words, “individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application”. In his view, power has to be analysed “as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain” and that “is never localised here or there, never in anybody’s hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth”.

Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power (Foucault 1980: 98).

Foucault’s power analysis follows a new course. He talks of a concept of power “located in the *microphysics* of social life, in the depths of society”. To understand power, he says: “it is necessary to analyse it in its most diverse and specific manifestations rather than focusing on its most centralized forms such as its concentration in the hands of a coercive elite or a ruling class” (McNay 1994: 3). And, “this focus on the underside or everyday aspect of power relations Foucault calls a *microphysics* rather than a *macrophysics* of power” (ibid.).

Foucault (1980: 187) goes on to say it is here “minute and diffuse power relations exist, always in tension, always in action”. And, from this level and from such small beginnings “a global unity of domina-

¹⁰⁴ <http://foucault.info/documents/foucault.power.en.html>, 2004/03/07.

tion” arises. For him, relations of power are not a “purely and simple projection of the sovereign’s great power over the individual”, these are rather concrete and exist “between every point of a social body, between a man and a woman, between the members of a family, between a master and his pupil, between every one who knows and every one who does not”.

For the State to function in the way that it does, there must be, between male and female or adult and child, quite specific relations of domination which have their own configuration and relative autonomy (Foucault 1980: 188).

Foucault proposes a notion of power that has to be seen as “effect of operation of social relationships, between groups and between individuals”, an analysis of power that ought to start “from the ground up, at the level of tiny local events where battles are unwittingly enacted by players who don’t necessarily know what they are doing” (Daudi 1983).

For Foucault power cannot be seen as something unitary, in so far as it has no essence. “There are as many forms of power as there are types of relationship, every group and every individual exercises power and is subjected to it” (Daudi 1983: 12). It is an “omnipresent’ power permanently produced, that comes from all directions”, and thus it cannot derive from particular wills of individuals or groups.

Power is not built up out of ‘wills’ (individual or collective), nor is it derivable from interests. Power is constructed and functions on the basis of particular powers, myriad issues, myriad effects of power... That is not to say that it is independent or could be made sense of outside of economic processes and the relations of production (Foucault 1980: 188).

Foucault’s discussions on knowledge are also related to power. He does not see this relation as something merely negative or manipulative. His vision about power and knowledge, which “directly imply one another” is not about an instrumental relationship, or even a relationship of simple dichotomy.¹⁰⁵

Discourses of Knowledge: Field of Knowledge

Foucault thinks that power produces knowledge, not simply by encouraging it because it serves power, or by applying it because it is useful. He explains: “there is no power relation without the correlative of a *field of knowledge*, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (Foucault 1979: 27). According to Foucault, by the exertion of power, objects of

105 Daudi (1983: 10) writes that there are two incorrect answers to the question on how power and knowledge relationships are created. The first is that knowledge provides an instrument that those in power can wield for their own ends. The other is that a new body of knowledge enables the emergence of a new class of people or institutions that can exercise a new kind of power. Two assertions parallel two theses about ideology, sustained among others by pluralists, elitists and marxists, says Daudi.

knowledge are created and emerge, and information is gathered and used:

Exertion of power constantly creates knowledge and, the other way round, knowledge leads to power... knowledge does not reflect power relations; it is not a distorted expression of them; it is immanent in them (Daudi 1983: 12).

However, from the point of view of truth, what is of interest is not whether the truth is true or false, scientific or ideological, but how it is produced, circulated, transformed and used (Simola, et al. 1998: 65). Foucault considers that the central question in the pursuit of the history of truth is not "What is true?" but "How truth is created?"

Philippe Daudi refers to knowledge as something that is always political. And, that this is "not because it may have political consequences or be politically useful, but because knowledge has its conditions of possibility in power relations" (Daudi 1983: 13). Although Foucault (1980: 102) considers "the major mechanisms of power have been accompanied by ideological productions", he does not believe that what takes place "can be said to be ideological", but that "it is both much more and much less than ideology". He means: "It is the production of effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge – methods of observation, techniques of registration, procedures for investigation and research, apparatuses of control".

All this means that power, when it is exercised through these subtle mechanisms, cannot but evolve, organise and put into circulation a knowledge, or rather apparatuses of knowledge, which are not ideological constructs (ibid.).

Foucault (1972: 183) considers science as only one form of knowledge, different from other forms. These forms of knowledge have in Smart's (1985: 51) view their own form and rigor, objects of analysis, modes of enunciation, concepts and theoretical strategies, but that are yet immersed "within a discursive formation and an associated general field of knowledge which does not dissolve with the emergence of a scientific discourse".

There are bodies of knowledge that are independent of the sciences (which are neither their historical prototypes, nor their practical by-products), but there is no knowledge without a particular discursive practice; and any discursive practice may be defined by the knowledge that it forms (Foucault 1972: 183).

Foucault pays further attention to this issue in his discussions on genealogical research. In modern civilization differentiation between scientific and non-scientific forms of knowledge, is for him, in accordance with the particular criteria of the science employed. He believes that an evident attribute of the present is "the dominance of general theories, global or totalitarian systems of thought, to which 'local or lower level forms of knowledge have become subject'".

Genealogical stands in opposition to both of these features of the present and seeks to provide a counter-weight by giving expression to subjugated forms of knowledge and a voice to histories which have been submerged, concealed, and silenced by the volume of global theorizing and systematizing modes of thought and analysis (Smart 1985: 61).

For these genealogies – which are considered as “combined product of erudite knowledge and popular knowledge” by Foucault (1980: 83) – to be possible, one condition is that the “tyranny of globalising discourses with their hierarchy and all their privileges of a theoretical avant-garde was eliminated”. He means a reactivation of local knowledges, of minor knowledges, “in opposition to scientific hierarchisation of knowledges and the effects intrinsic to their power” (ibid.).

This ‘insurrection of knowledges’, does not mean, however, first and foremost an opposition to ‘the contents, methods or concepts of a science’, rather they are more about “the effects of the centralising powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of an organized scientific discourse within a society such as ours” (Foucault 1980: 84). He means further that “we are judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings, destined to a main mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of the specific effects of power” (ibid.: 94).

Foucault’s thoughts related to Discourse, Power and Knowledge, discussed above, will be used to elucidate and understand housing improvement and social participation in the case study area selected. The interest for my research is not on the statements in and of themselves on these issues, but rather in the *effects of truth* the statements have on the perceptions of the people living in the housing area studied. In this sense, the focus of the discussion on housing improvement and social participation will be on the discourses circulating currently in the country and in current discursive practices in the particular living area selected for the study.

The selection of a qualitative inquiry, and the use of a single case study research method¹⁰⁶, has as its goal the understanding of “what remains outside the discourses deployed by the authorized voices.” Foucault talks about the need of giving “a voice to histories which have been submerged, concealed and silenced”; and writes: “it is really against the effects of the power of a discourse that is considered to be scientific that the genealogy must wage its struggle” (Smart 1985: 61; Foucault 1980: 84).

For the purpose of the study, two discourses will be discussed related to the low-income housing field in the context of Latin America today. Concepts that belong to these discourses, and that I find relevant for the discussions of the research questions and the research issues in the context of the case study:

- **Discourse of Housing Improvement** is resulting from discussions on housing for low-income groups. Particular attention is given to ‘housing by people’, or self-help housing – the strongest feature of

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter 5.

the urbanization process of the past century in this region. Concepts to be discussed include *legal/illegal city*, *unauthorized housing* and *regularization*.

- **Discourse of Social Participation** in the low-income housing field emerged as a result of changes in the view on *unauthorized housing* and will be subordinated to the discourse of housing improvement in the context of this study. Concepts to be discussed include *bottom-up approach*, *empowerment*, *local knowledge* and *needs assessment*.

Discourses of Housing Improvement and Social Participation in Latin America

The findings of my first postgraduate thesis show that assessments related to the achieved results in the low-income housing field went through several changes during the past century in Latin America (Landaeta 1994). Discussions on the low-income housing question have been closely linked to the urbanization process in this region. At the beginning of the urbanization process, the different theoretical perspectives that aimed to interpret the phenomenon had in common the negative view about the rapid urbanization of the main cities. Those perspectives saw rapid urban growth as an obstacle for global development. Beyond differences in the causes behind and the solutions for the huge rates of urban growth, proposals stressed the need to hold down the pace of urbanization and establish new mechanisms to control it (Negrón 1990: 78).

Rapid urban growth, in combination with limitations on the so-called formal housing sector, resulted in the new urban dweller being forced to find other options to access shelter (UNCHS 2001: 16; 30). Housing solutions on the fringes of the 'formal housing systems' became the only choices for thousands of urban households all over Latin America. Besides the discouraging vision on how the urbanization process was taking place, the negative view of the people's self-help efforts in housing was shared by policy makers and social scientists, both from the ideologies of the Left and Right. Policies were soon enacted for the removal of housing established outside the 'formal housing systems'.

When bulldozing policies did nothing to discourage people from scratching out a living in the cities, the delivery of public shelter was considered most suitable for low-income households unable to achieve housing through the 'formal housing' market. As a result, the establishment of institutional structures and regulatory frameworks for housing construction in the public sector were created at the beginning of the 1950s. The demand for this housing, however, was way ahead of the capacity to supply it. By the 1970s, sites and services, and squatter settlement upgrading, began to be implemented in each of the countries included in the study quoted above (Landaeta 1994). Indeed, this was part of a similar pattern for housing low-income groups in most countries in Latin America.

The improvement of housing conditions through the provision of basic services was, however, also a difficult target considering the

large numbers of area built on by the needy population. Governments gave to “squatters and slum dwellers more responsibility for maintaining their settlements, along with tenure, to encourage improvements and investments” (UNDP 1991: 214). Later, efforts turned to providing access to credit, ensuring that public housing was affordable, giving people a say in the programs being developed, and coming up with more suitable building materials and techniques. The focus for international donor agencies now turned to skills, policies and institutions (Harris 1992: xix). Poverty reduction, protecting and improving the environment, as well as the need to look at city issues in a holistic way, are part of the new vision today, when it comes to the urban question.

– the World Bank, the UNDP and the UNCHS – signalled a change in their way of working from the traditional project approach to one that emphasizes process, that seizes opportunities as they arise, that stresses continuity, and, recognising the multi-sectoral nature of urban activities, also stress the need to look at city issues in a holistic way¹⁰⁷ (Harris 1992: xxi)

Illegal cities, unauthorized housing, and regularization terminology, have been part of the discourse of the urbanization process in the last few decades in Latin America (Kagawa and Tukstra 2002; Fernandes and Varley 1998). These concepts interpret ‘housing by people’ often in a negative way and have had an influence on policy design and decision-making in the field of housing. Also, they have an impact on the perception society has on housing produced by the people. This includes the people affected directly by housing conditions, which these terms attempt to explain. Underlying all of this is the concept of ‘abnormality’: the feeling of a ‘right’ and a ‘wrong’ way of doing things in housing and, in one or another way, the sense that ‘housing by people’ belongs to the ‘wrong’ way. From bulldozing of slums and squatter settlements in the past, to *regularization* policies in the present, discussions have focused mainly on how to bring *unauthorized housing* into ‘normality’.

Discourse of housing improvement is usually linked to the view that ‘housing by people’ lies behind the increasing qualitative shortages. And, important changes in the discourses during the past century can be noticed. The main shift has been from perceiving *unauthorized housing* as distorting the existing statutory and regulatory systems, to considering it as a contribution to deal with the growing housing shortages. When it comes to housing improvement, however, the people concerned are now being called on to be actively involved in the process. Social participation, therefore, emerges as a key concept in the discourse related to the low-income housing field.

The use of *participation* and *participatory* vocabulary in development projects and programs has not such a long history in this region, quite the contrary. Together with other concepts that appeared over the last sixty years, these words are connected to the so-called ‘age of development’ that started at the end of the Second World

¹⁰⁷ According to the workshop held in London in November 1991 (Harris 1992).

War (Sachs 1996). As a result of the economic structural crisis affecting more or less all the countries in the region, social activist, field workers and ‘experts’ of international aid organisations agreed with the conclusion that development projects had often failed because people were left out. To include the people was seen as a requisite for the achievement of better results.

It was found that, whenever people were locally involved, and actively participating, in the projects, much more was achieved with much less, even in sheer financial terms (Rahnema 1996: 117).

The word participation changed from the radical connotation it once had (Mosse 2002: 17). The subversive undertone the word had for economists, planners and politicians turned into a positive meaning, and to and almost a desirable attribute for the achievement of better outcomes in development, both for democratic and repressive regimes in the ‘Third World’ (Rahnema 1996: 117). In this sense, “participatory development is conventionally represented as emerging out of the recognition of the shortcomings of top-down development approaches” (Cooke and Kothari 2002: 5).

The significance of participatory action, and particularly of social participation in development, is supported by a series of arguments by international donor agencies today (World Bank, 1996; IDB, 2002). Widespread notions linked to people’s participation are *empowerment*, *bottom-up approach*, *local knowledge* and *needs assessments* (Holcombe, 1995; Cooke and Kothari, 2002). To the extent to which participatory discourse connects these notions to the ‘community’ idea, a series of assumptions are implicitly accepted. Among the most relevant are, the social, cultural, political and economic homogeneity view of the people affected by poor living conditions (Rahnema 1996; Kaufman 1997).

In participatory development proposals the ‘community’ notion gives the sense that power conflicts at micro-level are non-existent, or less significant only by the fact that most people have the same precarious living conditions in common. It gives, therefore, the misleading signal that “social power and control are to be found solely at the macro – and central levels” (Kothari 2002: 140). As long as participatory activities aim at the valorisation of *local knowledge* and seek the *empowerment* of ‘communities’, the question on how social differentiation is addressed is certainly relevant. Beyond gender, age, place of birth, time of living in the city, income situation, education level and/or ethnicity, the notion of ‘community’ gives a harmonious and consensual feeling that normally is far from reality. And, it is “frequently emphasized to the neglect of other social groups and institutions” that are often “the critical units for decision-making and action (such as individual, household, lineage, work-group, occupational association)” (Francis 2002: 79). In fact, the use of the concept of ‘community’ responds normally to requirements of the participatory process.

Community is a concept often used by state and other organizations, rather than the people themselves, and it carries connotations of consensus and “needs” determined

within parameters set by outsiders (Nelson and Wright 1995: 15).

The notion of ‘community’ gives forth the idea of a well-defined subject to be *empowered*, that will act harmoniously and consensually in *bottom-up approach* praxis. What the empowerment and the bottom-up approach notions have in common is the idea of power located in a particular place, the top, and owned by a particular group, the powerful. Participation has, therefore, the very task to change the location of power, to the bottom, and to put it in the hands of those who lack it, the powerless. An idea that goes against the vision of power as “something that only functions in the form of a chain”, that “is never in anybody’s hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth” and that “is employed and exercised through a net-like organization”, where individuals “are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power” (Foucault 1980: 98).

Development discourse circulating in the Latin American region in the past century have had influence on the official discourse deployed in Bolivia as well, not least when it comes to housing improvement and social participation. The discussions below aim to elucidate concepts related to housing and participation as employed in the official discourses over the past few decades in Latin America. I have found the elucidation of these concepts relevant for the understanding of the perceptions of the population living in the study area, with regard to the questions and issues of the current research.

My own concern is not, as noted, on the truth or falsehood of the discourses deployed on housing improvement and social participation. But, rather on what Foucault means by the ‘will to truth’ that is typified by any society, and which determines how knowledge is put to work, valorised and distributed; and, thus related to the relation between Discourse, Power and Knowledge according to Foucault’s view. More specifically, my concern is with the *effects of truth* the discourses circulating currently in Bolivia have on the perceptions of those living in the study area when it comes to social participation and housing improvement.

Discourse of Housing Improvement

The fact that high percentages of the population were meeting their shelter needs outside of the ‘formal housing sector’ soon became of interest to researchers in the housing field, particularly in the second half of the past century (Turner 1976; Harth and Silva 1982; Moser 1982; Pradilla 1983, 1987; Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1987; Gilbert and Ward 1987; among others). The low-income housing question emerged as an object of knowledge closely connected to the urbanization process in Latin America.

Starting with contributions made by Turner and Fitcher (1972), the results of people’s own inputs in housing was debated as a point of contention among those dealing with low-income housing.¹⁰⁸ Whether it was a positive or negative assessment of *unauthorized*

¹⁰⁸ Debates between marxists, liberals and structuralist are the most well known (see Landaeta 1994, Chapter 2).

housing, the fact is that it came to be one of the most identifiable features of the urbanization process. And increasingly, 'housing by people' started to be linked to the growing shortages of housing quality all over Latin America.

Discussions on *unauthorized housing* and proposals for dealing with this question have been many in the past few decades in Latin America. The link between the urbanization process and 'housing by people' made way for the *legal/illegal city* idea in reference to housing that either followed or disregarded regulations in force. According to this view, 'housing by people' was often characterised as 'the city not authorized to exist'; the very idea is, therefore, to either eliminate it, or to bring it into conformity with laws.

Legal/illegal city and *unauthorized housing* became inter-related questions in the discourse of low-income housing. There is an implicit view that it is in the 'illegal city' that qualitative housing shortages are found. In this sense unauthorized housing and thus 'housing by people' appear as the main cause behind the increasing poor housing conditions all over the region. Quality shortages and housing improvement emerged as new challenges for city planners, city managers and policy makers.¹⁰⁹ The emergence of the *regularization* idea in the last few decades is related to the current view on unauthorized housing, no longer as a distortion of the legal city, but as a contribution for dealing with increasing housing shortages.

Statements of *regularization* have their focus on individual property rights. The view of statutory property rights and regularization as similar things is not uncommon. Regularization in ownership sense is normally a precondition for the demand of public services and community facilities. And, statements of property rights are often linked to accessing loans in the financial system. The goal of 'countries of owners' became a central objective for governments, policy makers and international donor agencies in the field of housing; housing policies stressing individual property rights is an obvious result of this perspective.

The case study area in question belongs to *unauthorized housing* developed in the Southern part of Cochabamba City as a result of adjustment policies implemented in Bolivia in the 1980s. The residential areas have been developed on land originally planned for farming and not considered for urban activity. The attitude of government on this land-use change has fluctuated over time: sometimes ignoring its existence and other times threatening eradication. Official statements these days, nevertheless, mean that efforts should be commenced to bring the housing into legal conformance.

Statements of *regularization* started to be key words in the discourse of low-income housing in Bolivia as well. But, similar to the past, the discourse come first from social scientists, professionals in the housing field, and policy makers, rather than from the affected population. Today one sees a, more or less, shared view on the benefits of regularization for achieving better housing conditions in the 'official' discourse.

¹⁰⁹ In spite of the shortcomings of the statistical data, one can assert that in most Latin American countries housing qualitative shortages are often two to three times higher than the quantitative deficits.

The level of physical development and consolidation achieved since the settlement process started about twenty years ago lies behind the selection of this housing area to be included in the regularization plans of the Municipality. Discussions between the population and the local government on the regularization question have been many in the last years, but the steps forward have been negligible so far. Discussions between the parts are on questions concerning *legal/illegal city*, *unauthorized housing*, and *regularization* issues.

The use of the word regularization by different actors, including the population living in unauthorized housing, does not mean that it has similar meaning for everyone, or the same significance in one or another situation; it does not even have similar connotation in different places. Discussions on *legal/illegal city*, *unauthorized housing* and *regularization* in the context of the urbanization process in Latin America seeks a better understanding of current 'official' discourse related to housing improvement in Bolivia. The explanation of these ideas, as deployed in the 'official' speech, are relevant for an understanding of the *effects of truth* the housing improvement discourse has on the perceptions of the population living in the study area.

***Urbanization: a New Field of Knowledge in Latin America*¹¹⁰**

The emergence of urbanization as a new field of knowledge in Latin America is linked to the transformation process of the region from rural to predominantly urban, initiated more than fifty years ago.¹¹¹ The urban problem and the urban crisis concepts emerged as a result of the particular way the urbanization phenomenon occurred in this region.¹¹² According to CEPAL/CELADE (2000) urban and rural population in Latin American were 382 and 125 millions respectively in year 2000. The level of urbanization had changed from 71% in 1990 to 75% in 2000, making this region one of the most urbanized in the world.

Urban scholars in this region were initially influenced by the North American and the French Schools of Sociology (Coraggio 1990). The 'marginalization theory' in the 1960s and the 'theory of dependent urbanization' in the 1970s,¹¹³ were attempts to explain the particular features of the urbanization process in this region. Concerns focused on the role of the cities in the process of global development and on the rapid urban growth made way for the 'urban development' concept created by the end of the 1950s (Negrón 1990: 77). The view be-

110 Discussions are partly based on the findings of my first postgraduate Thesis (Landaeta 1994: Chapter 2).

111 The levels of urbanization have not been uniform. While Venezuela, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay belong to the most urbanised, Haiti, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Paraguay were among the least urbanised in the 1980s (United Nations 1988: 182-240).

112 Between 1940 and 1990, urban population in this region increased from about 49 % to 72% and reached urbanization levels similar to Europe in half of the time. The urbanization process started later in this region than in Europe, North America and Oceania, and earlier than in Asia and Africa (Lattes 1990: 258-259).

113 Among these are those developed by Paul Singer, Manuel Castells and Anibal Quijano. (Scheingart 1973), and by Cardoso, Olivera, Kowarik, and Pradilla (Valladares and Prates 1993).

hind the 'urban development' concept is the understanding of the city as a complex thing, and not easy to manage. The city's physical aspects were seen as less important comparing to the economic, sociological, demographic and infrastructure questions. Linked to the urban development idea was the huge rate of urban growth, its concentration in a few cities, and the low level of industrial development, all soon identified as particular features of the urbanization process in this region (Negrón 1990: 77–78).

Statements related to the urbanization process often had a negative undertone¹¹⁴ (Castells, 1980; Harris, 1992). Solutions were discussed to meet the high rates of urban growth, which affected the capital cities more frequently than lesser cities. New visions for national planning and urban management were developed after the Second World War, most of them following ideas and experiences from abroad (Sabaté and Robert 1990). The vast theoretical dialogue that tried to give guidance to policy makers and city planners, however, had enormous constraints of dealing with the effects of the urbanization process (see Unda 1990). No less a constraint was when it comes to the question of access to 'adequate shelter' for the increasing number of new urban dwellers all over the region.¹¹⁵

The lack of adequate housing in cities of developing countries is one of the most pressing problems of the 21st Century (UNCHS, 2001).

In spite of the different interpretations on the causes behind the so-called urban crisis and housing problem, a shared view was evident on the threats the urbanization process represented. This included a joint negative perception of the overall impact of the rapid urban growth, which paved the way for policies intended to prevent population increases in cities, particularly when it comes to rural-urban migration.¹¹⁶ Proposals towards the eradication of housing outside the statutory and the regulatory systems turned out to be almost a natural outcome of the way the urbanization question was interpreted.

114 Castells (1980: xv) means that the *ideology of the urban* sees the urbanization process in 'dependent societies' basically in demographic terms. This results in a vision of urbanization as a 'problem', and thus leads to proposals aimed at reducing the migration flows to cities and to implement policies for demographic control. Castells points out that the quantitative view (density and size) is too restricted for the understanding of urbanization as a phenomenon. Harris (1992: xii) comments that: "In an important sense, it seemed, poverty and other manifest social ills were *locational* questions – people were in the wrong place; and the migrant, moving from one place to another, now became the striking evidence of a breakdown in the natural order of society. It followed that social ills could be remedied or at least significantly ameliorated by the relocation of people".

115 According to UNCHS, adequate shelter means more than a roof over one's head (The Habitat Agenda, Paragraph 60, 1996).

116 Rural-urban migration is connected to the industrialisation process implemented in varying degree all over the region, particularly after the international crisis of 1929 and the Second World War. The 'disarticulation' of the rural society has mainly to do with low levels of productivity of agricultural production.

Political differences did not seem to affect the issue – governments of the political Right and the Left were apparently united in the perception of the grave dangers of urbanization ... There were many threads to the case – for example, it was said that cities appropriated a disproportionate and economically unjustified share of national resources ... (Harris 1992: xiii).

Discussions on the urbanization process and statements related to housing outside the statutory and the regulatory systems have been many over the last decades. Changes in interpretations of the causes behind this situation, and ideas for dealing with it, have been sometimes quite radical. At the end of the 1980s, the almost catastrophic view of city growth that paved the way for a series of policies to prevent rural-urban migration, turned instead to a view of urban economic productivity as crucial for national development¹¹⁷ (World Bank 1991; Harris 1992; UNCHS 1996). As the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements stated in 1996:

...we recognize the cities and towns as centres of civilization, generating economic development and social, cultural, spiritual and scientific advancement ... (Habitat Agenda, Paragraph 2).

The remedies flowed from the diagnosis. As a consequence, a drastic change took place in the rural-oriented policy of international aid agencies to this region. Cities came to be the “mainspring of economic development in developing countries”.¹¹⁸ The UN-Habitat Strategic Vision document now states:

After a half-century of intense global urban growth, the United Nations and its individual member states now recognize the powerful developmental role that cities play as well as the challenges they face ... In a world of liberalized trade and finance, cities are focal points for investment, communication, commerce, production and consumption (UNCHS 2003: 2).

Today, it is clear that urbanization did not follow the predictions made decades ago. Recent data give evidence on changes in the urbanization pattern. Valladares and Prates (1993: 5) have stressed the following points: a) population and urban growth rates have decelerated considerably; b) the biggest cities are growing less quickly than expected. Mexico City and Sao Paulo have become examples of the reversal of the ‘metropolitan explosion trend’; and c) the urban network in the 90s is already showing a relatively balanced hierarchy of cities with medium-sized cities increasing in importance.

But, the fast growth of a single city was not necessarily considered a problem to be tackled by territorial planners and policy makers –

117 The World Bank produced figures to suggest that sixty per cent of the value of output of developing countries, and eighty per cent of the increment in output, was generated in urban areas (Harris 1992: xviii).

118 Lille International Meeting: *Cities the mainspring of economic development in developing countries*. The meeting was called by the French Government in November of 1989 (as cit. by Harris 1992: xviii).

as it seemed to be for urban theorists – in understanding that regional divergences would adjust to the effects of positive development.¹¹⁹ According to this view, the ‘Third World’ cities were in ‘inferior’ stadium of development, ‘transitorily’, and, sooner or later, will follow the path of the cities in the ‘developed world’ (Solares 1999; Burgess et al. 1998).

The emergence of ‘urban planning’ as a societal need and as a subject of research was a result of the problems in housing, services and infrastructure increasing in the cities affected by highest growth rates (Hardoy and Geisse 1972). Nevertheless, during the past century urban development has had less to do with the visions and proposals of urban thinkers, city planners or policy-makers, rather it has to do with the own activities of the people in need of housing, particularly the low-income. The use of theoretical frameworks from abroad, and the high speed of the urbanization process, are considered the main causes behind the results in meeting the needs of shelter of the new urban dwellers so far (Jaramillo 1990; Coraggio 1990). Marco Negrón (1990: 79) notes that the evident gap between theory and practice in urban planning has been a pathological condition in this region.

The new urban dwellers, those not involved in productive activities, could seldom find answers through the formally established structures, or in the private or public housing sector for that matter. Julio Calderón (1999) points out that for a significant portion of the cities the high urbanization growth rates result from the activities of the local people.¹²⁰ The emergence of words aimed to define *unauthorized housing* (illegal, informal, irregular) are, in this sense, linked to the quick shift from rural to urban societies in Latin America, as well as to shortcomings the formal structures had to deal with this process.

Legislation and institutions could not cope with this process (urbanization). Unstable employment and low wages meant that many were unable to afford formal housing ... Informal settlements are more the norm than the exception in many cities of developing countries¹²¹ (Kagawa and Tukstra 2002: 58).

Given that a high percentage of new urban dwellers earn low incomes, urbanization became associated with poverty (Coraggio

119 Solares (1999) refers to two territorial planning visions prevailing in the second half of the past century in this region. The first stated that ‘regional divergences were going to adjust by themselves when better results would be achieved by economic development’. The second considered ‘the market as the best regulation instrument for territorial development.’ The last vision was behind the shift to decentralization policies and the transfer of responsibilities from the central to the local levels with regard to territorial planning. These changes are not only related to the instruments and responsibilities in territorial planning, but also to the ‘perceptions’ of the urbanization process.

120 Calderón refers to Sao Paulo and Mexico City, as part of the largest cities on the planet, and to Managua and San Salvador, in less populated countries, as examples where about 50% of the people accessed housing through *informal* modalities.

121 Remark in parenthesis is mine.

1990: xxxiii). The urbanization of poverty was initially understood by the idea that poverty in the rural areas was 'transferred' to the urban by migration, being more visible and more difficult to ignore.¹²² This notion was only partially true as a significant share of urban growth had to do more with high fertility birth rates and with urban-urban migration.¹²³ Poor housing conditions had other factors behind it, particularly the lack of employment and income source opportunities with impact on both urban and rural population; this was well before rapid urban growth was a fact in the region (Schteingart 1973; Pradilla 1983; Solares 1999).

In his discussions on the relationship between urban poverty and the labor market, Philip Amis (1995: 147) writes: "what were previously considered urban problems, such as crime, unemployment and poor housing are really problems created by capitalism." Amis (1995: 146) means further: "the extent to which an individual's subsistence depends upon a cash wage that determines urban poverty rather than anything associated with urbanization." According to Amis, the starting point is the 'proletarianization' and the labour market rather than urbanization, and maintains that "the question to ask is not where do individuals live but how do they survive and where do they get their incomes from?"

The message is that it is urban populations who are without sources of employment and/or income who are the poorest and hardest hit and thus susceptible to riot. This is a function of labour markets rather than urbanization (Amis 1995: 147).

The fact is that the so-called formal housing sector had enormous constraints to meet the increasing housing needs of the urban low-income population. It became clear as well that the efforts of the population itself were responsible for the increasing housing stock, and much more than the public and the private 'formal' housing sectors combined. New visions emerged from this and suggested that the 'provider' role of the Welfare State had failed. The role of the State as facilitator was proposed to achieve better results; this made way for the emergence of the 'enabling strategy approach' in the field of housing.

The Enabling Strategy Approaches and Poverty Reduction

The enabling strategy approaches were first enunciated in the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, and the *Global strategy for shelter to the year 2000* was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1988. Shortly afterwards, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme followed the same path promoting its orthodoxy in several documents that stressed the "economically productive role of the cities and the style of assistance

122 In 1985, 50% of the Latin American poor were already urban residents (Coraggio 1990). If poverty incidence remains unchanged, almost 70% of Latin America's poor will soon be in urban areas (United Nations 2001).

123 Migration was a more important factor of urban growth in the early stages of urbanization (Castells 1980: 76). But, natural population increase was estimated to make up 73% of the urban growth between 1990 and 1995 in Latin America (Tannerfelt 1995: 17).

relating to governments as facilitators rather than providers” (UNDP 1991; World Bank 1991, 1993; Landaeta 1994: 41–47). The enabling strategy proposals recommended that governments step away from its former active role in housing and urban services and, instead focus more on the establishment of incentives and facilitation, so as to enable access to resources by householders themselves, community organizations, NGOs, the private sector, and so on.

Government now supposedly should seek to facilitate action by its citizens, private firms or non-governmental organizations, to provide for themselves such services and at such standards as people themselves might choose. The capital project now became replaced by the programme of technical assistance and ‘enabling’ (Harris 1992: xix).

Enabling strategy approaches were soon linked to poverty reduction in the understanding that housing improvement was an important factor to achieve better living conditions for the ‘poor’.¹²⁴ In spite of this, in the 1980s and the 1990s, the focus on poverty was much more on economic issues, to the detriment of social, political and cultural issues; these being relevant for the achievement of human development, political participation, social inclusion, identity, sense of belonging, etc, as well. (Riofrío 2003: 6). Sen Amartya (cit. by Riofrío 2003: 67) thinks that the possession of goods and services is too limited a criterion for defining living conditions, well being, or quality of life, as the possibilities to transform goods and services into achievements are different from person to person, and are related to their particular capacities.

In spite of important efforts in the past few decades “a systematic theory on urban poverty is still missing,” points out Riofrío (2003: 9). The author believes that the most common explanations behind urban poverty are too limited for an adequate understanding of the issue.¹²⁵ Regardless of the evident lack of current information, the general perception among social thinkers and practitioners in the urban field is that urban poverty affects more people today than in the 1980s in Latin America¹²⁶ (Clichevsky 2000: 38).

124 About 125 million of persons, or 35 of each 100 households, were affected by poverty condition in Latin America in 1997 (CEPAL 1999). According to CEPAL, this situation is linked to precarious employment conditions and deficits in education, and to gender inequities.

125 Such as: rural-urban migration, the declining mobility of important segments of the population, in reference to the impoverishment process experienced by middle- and low-income groups in the last decades; or the new dynamics of social segmentation (Riofrío 2003: 9). Free translation from Spanish.

126 Most commonly applied methods to define poverty in Latin America in the last decades have been the poverty line (PL) and the unsatisfied basic needs method (UBN). Julio Boltvinik considers that both have shown limitations: the former as it ‘assumes that the satisfaction of basic needs depends only on the private income or consumption of the households; whereas the latter, in its usual applications, selects indicators of need satisfaction which basically depend on the possession of basic assets (accommodation), or on access to public services (water, sewage disposal and primary education), and implicitly fail to take into account other welfare sources. In other words, neither takes a comprehensive view of poverty’ (www.undp.org).

The social groups that access housing through 'informal' mechanisms most often belong to the urban 'poor'. But, in the last few decades, impoverished middle-income groups have turned to the 'informal housing sector' in search of solutions to their housing needs as well. 'Informal housing' is one of the most common features of the Latin American cities these days (Kagawa and Turkstra 2002: 58).

The limits between the *legal/illegal city* turned out to be more difficult to define, especially in the last few decades. Fernades and Valley (1998: 5) note: "illegal forms of production of urban land and housing are being observed more and more frequently in the more privileged parts of the Third World cities". Even so, these authors think that "given the quantitative importance and social implications of illegality in low-income areas, it is in this context above all that, as a matter of urgency, illegality needs to be understood and addressed".

Official discourse over the last decade related to questions of the *legal/illegal city* have become relevant to my analysis, due, in part, to the fact that the residential area I have selected for study is considered as *unauthorized housing* (illegal, informal, irregular) by the Municipality of the Cercado Province.

The Legal Versus the Illegal City

Strongly increasing access to housing outside the formally established systems is evident all over the region. In Bolivia, for example, estimates show that between 45 and 55 percent of urban housing, about 11,000 units per year, is produced by the 'informal housing sector' (Clichevsky 2000: 13). She considers macro-economic issues, state policies towards urban space, and the functioning of land and housing markets, to be the main factors behind this phenomenon.

Statements of the 'illegal' or 'informal' city refer to housing activities that occur at the margins (deliberated or not) of building standards, planning and tenure systems, and formal procedures, often without the involvement of financial institutions and/or building companies. The number of people living in this type of housing has increased permanently in the region.¹²⁷

...if we consider land tenure, infrastructure requirements and building standards, we find that an average of 40 percent and in some cases as much as 70 percent of the population of the major cities are living in illegal conditions (Fernandes and Varley 1998: 1).

The use of terminology such as formal/informal, regular/irregular are geared to changing the negative view on 'housing by people', which terms like legality/illegality placed upon this type of housing. The wrong/right connotation is, however, still prevalent, and it influences the view of policy makers, and city planners, but, also of the families living in this housing and the society as a whole.

127 The vast literature on this issue shows that between 50 and 70 percent of the population of the cities in this region accessed housing through *unauthorized* modalities in the last decades (Baross 1990, cit. by Kagawa and Turkstra 2002: 58).

Statements of the *legal/illegal city*, and of related issues of land tenure, have been grossly oversimplified in the main. Geoffrey Payne (2002: 4) writes: “land tenure issues in the South are highly complex” and can not be easily “defined in terms of legal or illegal, formal or informal.” Payne points further that tenure systems are “also the outcomes of historical and cultural forces and reflect the relationships between people and society and between people and the land on which they live”,

... tenure can be defined as ‘the mode by which land is held or owned or the set of relationships among people concerning land or its product’. Property rights can also be defined as ‘a recognized interest in land or property vested in an individual or group and can apply separately to land development on it’ (Payne, 2002: 4–5).

The legal/illegal dichotomy mostly highlights shortcomings. The limits between legal and illegal housing can be complex to define, not only within the same city, but also within the same housing area. People may be living in legal conditions when it comes to the plot, but then be in an illegal situation regarding the building of the house, or not have access to required basic services, and so on (Pérez and Bolívar 1998). Moreover, living in a ‘legal’ tenure situation does not always mean that residents followed the regulations. Acts of corruption or political manipulation are often behind apparent ‘legality’ in housing (Payne 1997: 2002).

Illegality, particularly related to security in tenure, can depend less on the exact legal status and more on the person’s own perception; this is particularly true when it comes to the possibility of eviction or demolition, access to services, and the passage of time (Baharoglu 2002: 24). Questions of illegal conditions go beyond housing, however.

... there is also illegal manufacturing, illegal commerce, illegal transport, and in general any activity can be termed legal or illegal, although there are no ‘informal people’, if by this term we mean people who undertake every single one of their activities in the informal sector (Pérez and Bolívar 1998: 123).

One of the consequences of the wrong/right dichotomy is the negative view it carries when it comes to ‘housing by people’. The discrediting of an important portion of the city’s real estate, that does not fit in the ‘right’ way of doing things, is one of the main consequences of this dichotomy.¹²⁸ In fact, building standards, tenure systems and cumbersome administrative procedures have resulted in housing costs that far exceed the purchasing capacity of a large percentage of the population. Planning and regulatory instruments have come to reinforce the barriers that prevent low-income groups to access land and housing (Payne 2002: 4).

For city planners, policy makers and, no less, social scientists, ‘housing by people’ is seen as distorting the formally established pro-

¹²⁸ Investments in basic infrastructure, community facilities and urban services are normally aimed at serving *formal* areas to the detriment of those defined as *illegal, irregular or informal*.

cedures for housing production. The difference over the past is that today there is a greater emphasis on the legal status of *unauthorized housing*.

The terms now in favor generally refer to the legal status of such areas: we speak of unregulated, uncontrolled areas, of informal housing and also, directly, of illegal areas. The advantages of these terms are their evocation of the common characteristic shared by such settlements: their failure to respect urban planning regulations and also, frequently, formal property rights (Pérez and Bolívar 1998: 123).

The informal systems in housing function through mechanisms quite close to the formal ones, or at least “nor wholly detached from the political and administrative system” (Rakodi 2003). Lawyers and other professionals are involved in most transactions done by residents in the housing area studied giving a sense of ‘legality’ to the buyers or renters. It is the norm, rather than the exception that documents used in commercial transactions within the ‘informal housing market’ are accepted by the formal system.

Attempts to adapt the ‘housing by people’ experience to address the housing needs of the low-income resulted in proposals that included things such as self-help, mutual aid, sites and services, progressive housing, basic modules, the provision of local building materials, etc. These proposals contributed to the low density of the cities, already initiated by the activities of the resident population (Burgess 1992; Landaeta 1994; Solares 1999).

Structural reforms of the 1980s and 1990s had a profound impact on low-income housing policies as it did on the obligations of the state at the central government level. In the newly established role of facilitator, the prevailing idea is that regulatory systems should not prevent the proper functioning of the private market, including the housing sector (World Bank 1992; Landaeta 1994).

Unauthorized housing modalities should preferably be addressed within the existing statutory frameworks, with property rights (titling) being the most widespread recommendation for the improvement of ‘informal housing’ (de Soto 1989; 2000). Today, the provision of individual land titles as the primary solution is more in question. Efforts made in this direction thus far show that titling can not be the only solution to unauthorized housing, not in the complex reality of developing countries (Payne 2003).

The use of *regularization* as a term similar to titling and statutory property rights by the own population is not so uncommon in the housing area studied. People’s demands for housing improvements are strongly related to *regularization* in the sense of tenure security restricted to statutory property rights and titling. The right to demand services, such as drinking water and sewer systems, is directly connected to this concept of being “legal” or regularized, in the minds of the people. And this can often be mostly related to the discourse of housing improvement circulating in the country in the last few years.

Unauthorized Housing, Security in Tenure, Property Rights

The formal/informal dichotomy in the analysis of urban housing markets is mostly a conceptual construction and does not reflect what occurs in reality. Payne (2000: 2) writes that “there are often different forms of tenure, co-existing in the same country and, sometimes, even within the same city, or between an urban area and its surroundings”. Discussion on land tenure and property rights need, therefore, to take into account existing “cultural, historical and political influences, as well as those of technical and legal systems” (Payne 2003: 1).

Any attempt to develop appropriate tenure policies, therefore needs to take into account this variety and the factors influencing it (Payne 2000: 2).

Particular contexts are highly relevant for how property rights and tenure issues are understood. While security of tenure refers to protection, real or perceived, from eviction, property rights are related to existing tenure systems and may vary within and between them. People can have a “high level of security but restricted rights to use, develop or sell land, or limited level of security but a wide range of actual rights” observes Payne (2003). Among the most common forms of tenure often found in developing countries are: customary, private, public, religious and non-formal tenure. The non-formal tenure, include a wide range of categories with “varying degrees of legality or illegality” (Payne 2000).

At least two main sub-topics can be grouped together in the ‘informal urban land market’ relevant to the case study area. The first is linked to the sale or rental of land, which results in ‘illegal’ changes to its original use from rural to urban. The second is connected to subdivision of the acquired land for sale, despite the ‘illegal’ ownership conditions. Together with the access to land by invasions (which is not the case of the study area), both processes have been relevant for urban development in the past decades in Latin America, but particularly for the cities with higher growth rates. Empirical findings show that ‘illegal’ transactions of land lack clarity on the original ownership and the territorial limits of the land, just from the beginning (Ramirez, et al.: 1992: 116–123).

Irregularities are often linked to circumstances where changes in land use from rural to urban have occurred, or when transaction to second, third or more ‘owners’ were done by the first purchasers of the land, or by ‘illegal real state promoters’. The channels through which land is made available vary from city to city; different modalities of tenure and rights can actually be found within the same settlement, as pointed out later in the selected case study area. Moreover, in the case of individual plots, this situation can change from one modality to another over time. The situation in the case study shows indeed how blurred the lines between legality and illegality can be; and how complex things related to co-existing tenure systems in housing can be in practice.

Urban thinkers now agree that conceptual frameworks related to housing tenure in the past, presented more obstacles than offered possibilities for understanding the ‘informal housing’ question. In this

regard, the 'market segment' idea was proposed in an attempt to move away the simplistic duality of legal/illegal, or formal/informal. The International Forum on Regularization and Land Markets held in Mexico in 1993 concluded with the need to "move away from the dualistic thought and to refuse the definition of the land market concept in terms of formal and informal city, as a parallel city, or normal and deficient neighbourhoods, which means that the poor found themselves their 'own' market".¹²⁹

There actually exists only one land market divided into segments, not apart, but along a continuum in terms of access and purchase capacity¹³⁰ (Ward 1998: 1–6).

The particular for 'one segment of the market' is that it often enables access to land and housing to people with incomes below the requirements of the 'other segment of the market'. This is more a question linked to the failures of the formal systems to give answers to the needs of the poor, than to the people's 'will' of being 'outside the law' (Clichevsky 2000; Fernandes 2002; Payne 2002).

Statements related to 'unauthorized land markets' have had impact on the housing question, particularly when it comes to the low-income. The virtual division of the city into legal and illegal "has profound implication for society as a whole, since a truly public order, in the sense of social norms to which all members of society must adhere, does not exist" (Azuela and Duhau 1998). According to these authors, when individuals are not subject to the same rules, the risk for social inequalities always exist,

As long as a substantial part of the population gains access to land by a different set of processes from the rest of society, it is clear that not all individuals are subject to the same rules, regardless of whether or not those rules can be formally classified as 'law'. It is hard to think of cases where this does not entail the existence of profound social inequalities (Azuela and Duhau 1998: 157).

'Formal' and 'informal' urban land markets have specific impacts on urban structures and in the achievements of urban housing quality. Besides, access to land represents an important condition for the feeling of citizenship and for social mobility in Latin America, according to Smolka and Mullahy (2000).

In capitalist economies land is a commodity and consequently conditioned by the market forces.¹³¹ In economic environments with fragile capital markets and high levels of inflation, land assumes the role of capitalization mechanism or as a source for savings, particularly for low-income groups where social security is missing (Arévalo, Landaeta and Solares 2003; Smolka and Mullahy 2000; Fernandes 2002). Profit and the accumulation of wealth, are usually the mo-

¹²⁹ My own translation from Spanish.

¹³⁰ My own translation from Spanish.

¹³¹ This is not the case in Cuba. By the Urban Reform Law of October 1960, urban land was controlled mainly by the state with the purpose to stop speculation in housing (Landaeta 1994: 215).

tivating force behind urban land speculation; urban land, thus, is vulnerable to political manipulation.

Enabling access to institutional credit for the low-income population has been central in proposals of international aid organizations related to regularization policies, especially as it relates to the question of stronger property rights (World Bank 2000). According to the proponents of individual property rights including the Peruvian Hernando de Soto (1989: 2000), access to formal credit would be one of the most important outcomes of a massive, nation-wide granting of property titles and for enabling housing improvements for the poor.

This universal land titling idea, leading to large amounts of credit provided to lower income groups, however, does not have strong factual support today. The results of regularization policies through massive land titling implemented in Peru between 1996 and 2000 show that credits through private banks for the poor were far lower than expected¹³² (see Calderon 2002).

Statements of regularization, focused in titling and statutory property rights to achieve better housing conditions for the poor, have been popular in the last few years in Bolivia as well. Statements on regularization are important for my discussion on housing improvement in the area selected for study. Regularization has become a key component of the country's policy towards housing improvement today; individual property rights (titling) are among the recurring demands of people living in the study area, when housing improvements are the topic in discussions with the local government.

From Eviction to Regularization Policies

In the initial periods of the urbanization process, access to urban land by low-income groups become common through modalities such as occupation of state-owned land, but even occupation of private-owned land occurred. Occupations were often driven by well-organized groups (Abrams 1966; Turner, J.F.C. 1967). Later on, purchase and rent, individually or collectively, in the fringe areas of the city and through different kind of arrangements, became prevailing alternatives for the access to land and housing for low-income groups (Payne 2002: 5).

The commonality here has been unauthorized condition as regards existing statutory and regulatory systems. The 'illegal' label has been a determining factor for the attitude of city planners and policy makers towards these types of settlements, particularly when public services and community facilities were demanded.¹³³ Regularization and security – of – tenure policies were implemented earlier in Peru than in most countries in the region.

132 More than one million titles were provided in Peru between 1996 and 2000. The promoters of regularization policies in this country meant that massive titling of informal housing areas would open the doors to formal credits to the poor. In 2001, only five percent of the potential beneficiaries in the entire country had registered their properties for mortgages (Calderon 2002: 1).

133 In Peru and Venezuela the situation was somehow different. In both cases, housing policies gave 'legitimacy' to illegal settlements and were thus more open to meet the demands of the population (Calderon 1990; Bolivar et al. 2000).

Sites and service schemes were pioneered in Peru during the 1960s. Land was reserved for the poor, and when invasions of different areas took place the authorities responded by regularizing these settlements... The settlers would be guaranteed security of tenure (Riofrío 1996: 160).

The prevailing vision towards *unauthorized housing* was, however, that of undesirable condition, one to be removed from the landscape of the cities. Statements of eradication and eviction of slums and squatter settlements were widespread in the official discourse until the 1970s (Clark and Ward 1978). Housing through conventional schemes was the paradigm to make housing available for the population of different income levels, even the poor (Burgess 1992: 75–77). Housing was defined basically in economic terms; proposals for low-income groups were focused on the ‘house’ and made way for concepts such as the ‘minimum conditions of habitability’ specifically defined by the objective of reducing building costs, living areas, size of plots, as well as the level and quality of access to public services (World Bank 1973; 1974; Bamberger 1982; Burgess 1992; Solares 1999).

Eviction policies and conventional housing were soon considered politically and economically unsustainable for housing the low-income. But, the attempts to deal with ‘informal housing’ through formal modalities did not give the expected results either. First, housing that involved building companies and financial institutions were often out of reach of the low-income groups. Second, public and private housing, that in the best of cases reached low-income groups, presented very low quality, not much better than those dwellings that were removed. Third, incentives towards the building sector made housing and land even less available for the poor. Finally, policies for eviction and eradication of low-income housing areas, rather than solving the problem, transferred it to another place (Landaeta, 1994).

The more or less acceptance of *unauthorized housing* has varied in time. Policies show differences between countries, but also between regions and cities within the same country (Calderon 1990; Landaeta 1994; Riofrío 1996; Solares 1999; Bolivar et al. 2000). The degree of tolerance is often related to factors such as the internal political context, the level of organization of the involved population, the scope and property situation of the land in conflict. In a wide range of particular situations, common features of *unauthorized housing* can be summarized as follows (Tomas 1997: 17):

- irregular, and even violent, occupation of land;
- the essential part of self-construction; and
- scarcity, if not lack, of urban services.

The Welfare State visions in the low-income housing field sought to reach ‘step by step’ housing conditions similar to those in countries in the ‘developed world’. The First International Housing Conference (Vancouver 1976) recognized the potential value of self-help efforts for housing the poor. Home ownership began to be seen as a key factor for the improvement of housing with illegal status. Processes

of land distribution through ‘informal housing market’ activities were later considered important for the delivery of land to the low-income. International agencies called upon governments to recognize and strengthen the practical features of the ‘informal land market’. Programs for simple title registration and regularising of insecure tenure went hand in hand with infrastructure improvement in slum and squatter settlements; it was here that the most relevant proposals were found (UNCHS-Habitat 1991: 78–83; World Bank 1993: 39).

The conceptual shift from ‘shelter’ to ‘housing’ as a result of the Habitat I (1976) and Habitat II (1996) International Housing Conferences had an impact on the notion of *unauthorized housing* as well.¹³⁴ The conceptual shift from illegal/informal to irregular housing, also, had socio-political and economical connotations. As Tomas (1997: 23) observes “the irregular notion in housing is mostly a result of regularization processes implemented by the public sector”.¹³⁵ Tomas points to the particular effects of this conceptual shift. On one hand, there was a strengthening of political manipulation, a feature of the low-income housing issue in this region; on the other hand there was the ‘insertion’ of thousands of households into the formal housing market (ibid.).

It is only by the middle of the 1980s that regularization projects started to become essential component of housing policies in the region. The most common arguments for its implementation were (Arébalo, Landaeta and Solares, 2003):

- irregular settlements were no longer seen as ‘transitory’, especially as events demonstrated that they will probably be permanent.
- eviction policies did not address problems such as urban chaos, deficiencies in housing, lack of public services; they have mostly a negative political impact.
- housing through conventional schemes was far from been an economically viable alternative in facing the low-income housing question, especially considering the size of the affected population.¹³⁶

It has been argued, as well, that people strive for private home ownership. This impetus has prevailed among international lending agencies, policy makers and city planners since the publication of Hernando de Soto’s first reflections on informal housing in Peru. de Soto (1989: 55) writes: “the history of the informal settlements is the history of the informals’ struggle to own private land”.

... the migrants from the countryside to the city, who have become informals, have over the years staged a long

134 The shift implied considerations beyond merely the quantity for the achievement of housing improvement. Access to public services, community facilities, security in tenure, citizen security, and environmental sustainability are now requisite for the achievement of *adequate housing*. This meant changes in the scale of the analysis from the house, to the neighbourhood, the settlement, and to the city and the territory as a whole. To achieve better housing was more than simply to ‘get a roof over one’s head’.

135 My own translation from Spanish.

136 My own translation from Spanish.

march toward private property, subjugating the state and formal society as they go (ibid.: 57).

Arguments behind regularization of insecure tenure focused on individual titling, and as inspired by de Soto's ideas, have been difficult to support by empirical facts, so far (Riofrío 1996; Ward 1998; Payne 2000, Calderón 2002; Fernandes 2002). Critical views suggest that it has been difficult to demonstrate that individual property rights alone:

- encourage investments in housing construction and improvements;
- improve access to formal channels of credit;
- increase property tax revenue base of local authorities;
- enable urban development authorities to increase influence over land and housing markets;
- improve the efficiency and the equity of such markets.

The authors point out further that not in all the cases, or in all circumstances, the people are interested in titling procedures, for a variety of reasons. One of these is the feeling of ownership that they already have. There is little interest in titling procedures that normally demand time and imply costs. The other reasons are the fear of higher taxes as a result of formalization of property rights. Fernandes (2002) points out that the ideas of de Soto fail even in his analysis of the judicial systems, which are among the main causes behind illegality in urban property in Latin America.

Only considering the case of land and real state (very specific forms of property rights), the state has not been able to assert the social function of property in relation to the prevailing individualist view the anachronistic civil legislation has¹³⁷ (Fernandes 2002: 4).

Beyond these differences and similarities regarding the aims and scope of the *regularization* question, the important thing here ought to be that regularization “should not too exclusively focus on titling leaving aside other actions that can improve housing quality” (Camacho 1996: 8).

According to researchers, policy-makers and other experts participating in the International Seminar on Urban Land in Mexico¹³⁸, the regularization concept “means different things to different people”. The participants all agree on that: “human settlement regularization is giving a specific content to the right to adequate housing, through a process that involves improving methods for recognizing occupancy and legitimate access to credit, services and opportunities” (International Seminar 1993:1). The concluding document of the seminar points (Ibid.: 1–2):

¹³⁷ My own translation from Spanish.

¹³⁸ *Managing access of the poor to urban land. New approaches for regularization policies in the Developing Countries*. Mexico City. 24–26 February of 1993. Participants were: local researchers; officials involved in the definition and implementation of regularization programs at national and local levels; representatives of NGO's; and key international experts on the subject.

- Regularization does not only refer to security in tenure.
- When it involves security of tenure, it does not necessarily imply issuing individual land titles, but may cover a broad range of options, from occupancy rights to collective tenure.
- Along with security of tenure, regularization programmes also include access to services and to credit as part of a package of physical and economic improvements.

Nevertheless, this technical aspect is only part of the problem and only part of the solution. A central question related to housing improvement in the region is indeed: where and how the low-income population can access land and housing within the existing regulatory and statutory frameworks and the current socio-economic and political contexts? Mario Lungo writes that:

In spite of that the adjustments in the economy and the state reforms can lead to more rational taxes and regulations on this asset, and even make the information on this market more transparent and accessible, they can not enable a generalized access to urban land, and can not make social exclusion it generates been removed (Lungo 1997: 21).

Lungo (2001: 1–6) observes that land regularization in Latin America has to consider four main components: the economic effects of regularization; regularization of rights and responsibilities of the land-owners; the management of the regularization process and; the links between regularization and public investments. According to Lungo, more research is needed to understand the real functioning of urban land markets, and for going forward in the planning and the regularization processes of land use in this region. A better understanding of the social and political consequences of uncontrolled urban expansion is also needed within both the formal and the informal segments of the housing market.

In general, the perspectives on regularization policies most common in the region have been (Ward 1998):

- the juridical regularization perspective, toward making the ‘de facto’ property rights into juridical property rights on land and housing;¹³⁹
- the physical regularization perspective (urbanization), which also includes the provision of basic infrastructure;¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ *Regularization*, as similar to property rights (titling), has come to be a common practice, accepted both by governments, international agencies and NGOs. In practice, processes are often long and difficult, and even too expensive for low-income people. Furthermore, the results on the housing situation within the settlements, once titling processes are ready, have not been encouraging so far (ibid.).

¹⁴⁰ With different outcomes in the various countries, there is great variety among *regularization* programmes that have been implemented. However, a common feature seems to be that in the most successful experiences the costs often have been very high and dependent of external financial support. Between 1994 and 1997, about 300 million dollars were provided mainly by the International Development Bank, which puts into question the sustainability and replicability of these programmes (ibid.).

- a third perspective, of more recent emergence, establishes as a priority the social and civic inclusion of the low-income population into the urban housing fabric.¹⁴¹

In all of these perspectives, statements on community participation are more or less included as a component of the regularization projects; something that is normally desired and accepted by the different actors involved in these processes. The level and quality of people's involvement in regularization programmes can present important quality variations from case to case. Assessments made by researchers and other professionals show that in many situations the community participation objective is non-existent and is mostly nominal (Ward 1999).

Housing improvement through social participation belongs to statements of low-income housing in Latin America in these days. This includes current discourse circulating in Bolivia, particularly since the implementation of the Law of Popular Participation of 1994 (LPP) and the Law of Administrative Decentralisation of 1995 (LAD). And these make the discussions on participation and participatory issues highly relevant to my research in the context of this study.

Discourse of Social Participation

Participation and participatory issues has been discussed profusely in Latin America in the last few decades. The roots of community-based participation lie, according to Kaufman (1997: 4): "in the progressive decomposition of the two prevalent development paradigms of the twentieth century – centrally planned socialism and market-driven capitalism". According to Kaufman, to include the people concerned in the design, formulation and implementation of housing development projects was seen as essential for success both in the capitalist market model and in state socialism.

Majid Rahnama (1996: 117) observes that participation and participatory became more common terms in the development discourse in the second half of the past century. This does not necessarily mean that a more comprehensive meaning of 'taking part' or 'being part' does not have a long history in human language. Discourse of participation and participatory issues linked to low-income housing started to emerge, however, only in the last few decades of the past century.

Arguments that support the need for participatory development are many these days. The World Bank, the International Development Bank, the United Nations, among others, stress the need of participatory development (World Bank 1996; UNCHS-Habitat 1996; IDB 2002). Pressures from the grass-root for more democratic and participatory processes are behind this awareness. But, these demands are not new. The innovation here is that grass-root claims are

141 This has the objective of making groups formerly excluded, now 'real citizens'. Programmes are often intended to reduce the high levels of criminality and poverty conditions prevailing in many low-income housing areas. The inclusion criteria coming from 'above' implies, however, the risk of a constructed vision on how a 'good citizen' and 'the social majority' ought to behave (Ward 1998).

now considered proper and even a requisite for the achievement of better outcomes of development. Since Habitat II, low-income housing projects have to include community participation before being considered as Best Practices.

There are views that put into question the real outcomes of participation in practice. This includes professionals and researchers of the academic world, as well as practitioners and staff involved in development projects. Positive and negative voices, however, are seldom heard coming from the people who are the subjects of participatory action.

Discourse of participation speaks to the need to change the top-down approach in the development industry. To include the people, the communities, the powerless, in decision-making processes enables its empowerment, is said. Participatory discourse means also that the needs and demands of the people concerned have to be assessed through participatory schemes to achieve better results. In this sense, the people's knowledge (local knowledge) is seen as a key factor for improving the performance of development projects.

Statements of *empowerment*, *bottom-up approach*, and *local knowledge* are related to power and knowledge in participatory discourse. Statements made in discourse show power and knowledge as clearly definable things, possessed, or not, by clearly definable groups (community, powerless, poor). This view of power and knowledge belongs to most contemporary Western thought; it is rather different from Foucault's view of power and knowledge. Foucault believes that it is too limited a view, that the consideration of power as something possessed by somebody who exercises it on others, often against their own will. He thinks further that power and knowledge directly imply each other and that knowledge production is always the result of power struggles. From this perspective, statements on *empowerment*, *bottom-up approach*, and *local knowledge*, as used in participatory discourses, need to be discussed further.

The difference in current proposals, as compared to the past, is related to the means (methods) for enabling the powerless to access power; and to the mechanisms for including the particular knowledge (local) of those formerly excluded from development projects. Assessments on participation are thus often related to *how* bottom-up approaches are implemented, and *how* the inclusion of the 'formerly excluded' occurs in practice. Assessments are seldom concerned about the *effects of truth* the discourse has on people's self-perceptions when it comes to participatory issues.

Empowerment, *bottom-up approach*, and *local knowledge* are concepts that refer to the 'formerly excluded' and link therefore power and knowledge to a subject. A subject that, for one or another reason, was not included before. The 'formerly excluded' notion gives the sense of homogeneous entities: the poor, the community, or the powerless. In this way, people that are targets for participatory action are encompassed in a kind of perception that gives the sense of groups where everyone thinks similarly, shares similar beliefs, stands for identical postures, encompasses alike expectations. And,

they have thus identical perceptions when it comes to participation and participatory issues.

Participatory discourse as deployed today seldom originates with grass-root people. This has nothing to do with self-awareness, but it does with the fact that in the production and distribution of discourse the views of the people are normally missing. The following discussions intend to approach *participation* and *participatory* issues as these terms have been used in participatory discourse of the past few decades. Such discussions are important for a better understanding of the practical effects the discourse has on the self-perception of people living in the study area.

Participation and Participatory Issues

It was during the late 1950s when the words ‘participation’¹⁴² and ‘participatory’ started to be part of the development jargon, explains Rahnema (1996: 117). The roots of the participation idea, related to collective action rather than individualistic, go back to the Europe liberation movements in the eighteen and nineteenth centuries, and to Luther’s Reformation long before these (see Baltodano 1997).

Henkel and Stirrat’s (2001: 172–175) discussions on the genealogy of the participation concept attempts to “draw attention to some connotations of the term that once were more pertinent, but still linger on, as it were, as subterranean bases of the current usage of the concept”. The relevance of the religious roots of the participatory concept is referred to as follows by the authors:

The Protestant Reformation not only made the direct participation of the believer possible, but placed a ‘moral imperative’ on participation... Salvation was to be attained through individuals actively participating in the duties of the community (Henkel and Stirrat 2001: 174).

Rahnema (1996: 116) remarks that participation could be: “...either transitive or intransitive; either moral, amoral or immoral; either forced or free; either manipulative or spontaneous...” He means that participation and participatory principles are not ideologically neutral concepts, and even if the words imply a positive aim, the partaking act could also have negative purposes. The partaking process is often seen as voluntary or free, but this is not always true. When it comes to manipulative or spontaneous aspects of participation, Rahnema points out further that people can take “actions inspired or directed by centres outside their control” without feeling they are forced to participate, and even ignoring the final objectives of their participation.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) was introduced in the 1970s in Asia and Latin America. One of its founders, Orlando Fals-Borda (1988: 2) considered that the intent was to achieve power: “a special kind of power – people’s power – which belongs to the oppressed and exploited classes and groups and their organizations.” The PAR researchers and popular participation activists saw it as a methodology within a total existential process, as means to initiate processes

¹⁴² For the *Oxford English Dictionary*, participation is the action or act of partaking, having or forming a part of.

of social change by the people themselves and from their own perception of reality.

Sherry Arnstein (1969) thinks that participation can be of different types depending on the role the population has in the participatory process and the kind of relations established among those involved. She talks of three types of participation: 'Non-participation', when citizens have no active role, and relations are of therapeutic or manipulative kind; 'Symbolic participation' when the aim is to inform and consult the citizens; 'Real participation' when citizens have control of the participatory process, and relations are of power delegation and partnership.

Participation has been linked to democratization and decentralization processes in Latin America. The fact is that participation has tried to be promoted by dictators in the 'Third World' such as Pinochet and Mobutu, as well, points out Rahnama (1996:117). Giuletta Fadda (1988) writes that the ideological use of participation made it empty of content.

Discussions on the goals and objectives of participatory action as well as classifications according to the levels or 'quality' of the involvement of the grass roots have been many in the last few decades in Latin America (Pizzorno 1975; Pears and Stiefel 1980; Guerra 1980; Castells 1981; Borja 1986; Fadda 1988; Cunill 1991, Jacobi 1990; Astudillo 1993). Approaches are different, but in general the authors discuss the key role of participation as the extension of representative democracy. The need for a new kind of relationship between the state and the society is seen as the most important element behind participatory action.

Humberto Vargas (1997: 4–6) identified two main streams among the different views of participation. One is the need to reinforce the organizational capacity of groups and individuals to increase self-management and empowerment of the society. Transferring power to groups traditionally excluded, to achieve new relations between the public and the private, is thus relevant. The other is to see participation as a tool to support democratic processes. The need is to reinforce both the state and the society and to establish new spaces and mechanisms to enable their relationship. Main differences between the two streams identified by Vargas are: (1) concern for participation as a means of change; or (2) as a reinforcement of democracy.

Rahnama (1996: 117–121) thinks that the reasons behind the increasing interest with participatory schemes are found in, at least, six reasons:

- The concept is no longer perceived as a threat;
- It has become a politically attractive slogan;
- Participation has become, economically, an appealing proposition;
- Participation is now perceived as an instrument for greater effectiveness as well as a new source of investment;
- It is becoming a good fund-raising device;
- An expanded concept of participation could help the private sector to be directly involved in the development business.

Westergaard (1986: 25), refers to popular participation as: “collective efforts to increase and exercise control over resources and institutions on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from control”, stressing on the collective dimension of participation. The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) efforts to develop a conceptual framework for popular participation in the 1970s agreed with the need to increase control over resources and movements of those previously excluded from such control (Stiefel and Wolfe 1984: 12).

In these authors view, “the central issue for popular participation has to do with power”, a kind of power that is “exercised by some people over other people, and by some classes over other classes.” In this sense, Pears and Stiefel (1979: 5) discuss participation as means to re-distribute “both the control of resources and of power” in favour of those who were excluded before. Rahnema (1996: 120) believes, however, that the popular participation notion was proposed “to save development from its present failures”.

Statements of popular participation directed towards a human-centred development are based on, at least, four functions: a cognitive, a social, an instrumental and a political one.¹⁴³ Rahnema writes that some particular underlying assumptions of popular participation statements are rather similar to those it pretends to overcome. First, the proposal is focused on participation as an instrument for the better performance of development. What has been wrong with development, so far, is that people’s knowledge and inputs were not taken into consideration. Second, there is the perception of power in hands of a group or class that should be possessed by another group or class (the exploited and oppressed), in order to remove inequitable conditions in society. Third, an insight that through participation people will have the power, and the ‘right’ knowledge to find more adequate solutions, and to make development work better.

International aid agencies have been active in the search for alternatives through participatory schemes in development enterprises. The World Bank Participation Sourcebook defines participation as:

A process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them. And recommends that: those people affected by development interventions must be included in the decision-making process’ (World Bank 1996: Chapter I).

Regarding the free act connotation, and the positive sense that participation normally provides in the development discourse, Rahnema

¹⁴³ The *cognitive* function aimed to regenerate the development discourse, and its practices based on different forms of interaction and a common search for so-called ‘popular’ knowledge. The *political* aimed to empower the voiceless and the powerless, creating a bridge between the Establishment and its target population. The *instrumental* function was to provide the ‘re-empowered’ actors with new answers and alternatives to the failures of conventional strategies. The *social*, meant that all groups and individuals involved in development activities would work together to enable development to meet everyone’s basic needs and remove poverty in all its manifestations (Rahnema 1996: 121–122).

comments that “participation tends to be perceived as a free exercise” and that “this perception neither conforms to the meaning of the word, nor the way in which it is translated into practice,”

For, more often than not, people are asked or dragged into partaking in operations of no interest to them, in the very name of participation. Neither the pyramids, nor the many contemporary mass demonstrations in favour of repressive regimes, have represented free acts of participation (Rahnema 1997: 117).

The question still remains of why participation now has a higher status than it had some decades ago. Participation is now proposed as a key factor to achieve equity in development, even by those who once considered it a threat for political stability and national security. International donor agencies, such as The World Bank, are now enthusiastic promoters of civic participation:

The World Bank recognizes that civil society plays an especially critical role in helping to amplify the voices of the poorest people in the decisions that affect their lives, improve development effectiveness and sustainability, and hold governments and policymakers publicly accountable.¹⁴⁴

The proposals for making the powerless involved in decision-making processes are often in collision with the goals established, and also in collision with the practical results of development projects and programs. Pimple and John (2001: 28) writes that “the promotion of local autonomy and the devolution of powers to the level closest to the people is desirable for good urban governance” as advocated by the UNCHS-Habitat’s Global Campaign on Urban Governance.

The authors point out further that reality shows “these initiatives seem to have been overridden by an increasing trend towards the privatization of amenities and services with the purported intention of reducing the administrative and financial ‘load’ on municipalities.” Pimple and John (ibid.) state that in such an arrangement, the poor are at the particular disadvantage in the access to services that shifts the control of public resources outside the control of the local authority and the larger community.

The reasons behind proposals for people’s involvement in decisions that affect their lives could very well be connected to other motives. The motives can be as a result of the international donor agencies, or of domestic policies, in need of monitoring the impact of development on larger groups of the society. The World Bank’s president Wolfensohn wrote in 1996, the foreword of the Participation Sourcebook as follows:

I personally believe in the relevance of participatory approaches and partnerships in development and I am committed to making them a way of doing business in the Bank (World Bank 1996).

144 <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/essd.nsf/NGOs/home>, 2003/12/20.

The 'poverty alleviation' programs in implementation all over the region strive to make the impacts of development less of a heavy burden for the 'poor', but they also attempt to avoid the negative political consequences of poverty. Institutionalization efforts of participation are considered important for poverty reduction programs today. These efforts are in reference to poverty conditions that have close links with the poor performance of the development paradigm as far.

The development discourse that began at the middle of the 1940s made millions of human beings poor and part of the newly invented 'underdeveloped world', asserts Gustavo Esteva (1996: 1-23). Arturo Escobar's (1998: 91) discussions on the 'Third World' notions in the development discourse show that since the very invention of the so-called underdeveloped world, the rules of the game have always been defined by a sort of elite of experts both at international and at national levels. Max-Neef (1991:18-19) observes that: "the traditional concept of poverty is limited and restricted, since it refers exclusively to the predicaments of people who may be classified below a certain income threshold."

Poverty alleviation programs are strongly linked to structural adjustments implemented in the 1980s as an additional objective of economic reforms. Filgueira (1997: 135) writes that poverty agendas aim to "build *safety nets* and to improve the access to education, health, water and sanitation, and to support income generation activities, small and middle scale productivity initiatives, and other measures that made it possible to increase the 'basic needs' coverures to the most 'vulnerable' social sectors".¹⁴⁵

With the participation and participatory components included in these efforts, the deprived groups are now called to take part in the efforts for making their situation better. In other words, the 'deprived' and 'marginalized' (people, communities, target population) are to be *empowered*, and their *knowledges* (local) taken into consideration, all to deal with the past failures of development.

Participatory discourses mean that the voiceless must have the chance to express their willingness and the powerless have to be seen as relevant actors in order to achieve better outcomes in development. The 'people' have to be provided with the *power* to make decisions on 'things that affect their lives'. Participation normally gives a positive and a free-act connotation that, in fact, is not necessarily related to the word.

The notion of power located at the 'top' which then can be transferred to the 'bottom', or that is exercised by somebody on somebody, goes against Foucault's idea of power as something that functions in the form of a chain which circulates throughout the social body. The notion of power as something that can be provided, transferred or received, that is owned or not, surely is behind the very idea of the *bottom-up approach* as a means of *empowerment* that is central to the participatory discourse today.

145 My own translation from Spanish.

The Bottom-up Approach as Means of Empowerment

The *bottom-up approach* in participatory development seeks to enable people's *empowerment* and to make way for more effective and more efficient processes. The change from a top-down to a bottom-up approach in planning can be questioned when power and knowledge relationships within the development context are inequitable. Whether or not the people at the 'bottom' have the means, and the knowledge to define the terms and nature of its participation, is a central question for this perspective.

Kaufman remarks about the importance of not being constrained by *one-line* definitions. He points out that the complexity of societies demand in-depth analysis each time. Inequalities may be found even within less powerful or excluded groups: "inequalities based on sex, age, colour, sexual orientation, and so forth" (Kaufman 1997: 7). Studies must consider such complexities, he insists. Differences in the level of participation, both in quality and in quantity, between different social groups, or according to gender, age, education, income level, religious beliefs, to mention some, have indeed been noticed in the housing area selected for this study.

Kaufman (1997: 5) wonders: "how to build inclusive structures of social, economic and political power, ones that overcome inequalities and could fundamentally shift the basis of social power". These are circumstances, he believes, that demand more in-depth understanding of the role and potential of community participation as effective participatory, decision-making, and administrative structures, structures capable of responding to problems of a community and a nation, particularly when it comes to societies where power is controlled by a minority and the majority does not have access to:

- "effective means of political power,
- sufficient means of economic production, and they do not have
- education, training, or self esteem and self confidence to engage in a successful process of change" (Kaufman 1997: 6).

The author remarks further that participation is both "a broad and often a vague concept", that participation linked to empowerment is both a goal and a method of change.

As a goal, popular participation refers to a society in which no longer exists the means of political, economic, cultural and social power in the hands of a particular class, sex, social stratum or bureaucratic elite (Kaufman 1997: 7).

And as method of change,

participation is a means to develop the voice and organizational capacity of those previously excluded; it is a means for majority of the population to identify and express their needs and to contribute directly to the solving of social problems (ibid.).

Although these statements can be true to some extent, the problem is that they give the wrong perception on how things work in practice when it comes to *power*. The idea of some well-defined group, 'the minority' (a particular class, sex, social stratum or bureaucratic

elite) who controls power, or some other clearly identified group – ‘the majority’ who does not control power now, but could or will in the future – can make an understanding of power relations in society difficult, in Foucault’s view. This is particularly relevant when it comes to statements related to *empowerment*.

Waltzer (1998) observes that the view on power as something that can be possessed or controlled by some well-defined group is rather different to Foucault’s pluralist view on power, which is, according to him, more relevant to understand how power relations work in society. It is a view that rejects an “embracing opposition between ruling and ruled groups at the roots of power relations”, that refuses the idea of power as something that “one can acquire, get or share”. Waltzer refers to Foucault’s view on power as “something that is exerted from innumerable points”, that “plays in each moment in small individual parts, in a kind of net”, and that “people are always in the position to suffer and to exert it” (Waltzer 1998: 65).

In this context the *empowerment* idea turns out to be more difficult to see in practice. The fact that within group’s power relations and inequity conditions for some of its members also exist makes the objective of ‘empower the powerless’ a more obscure target to find. To the extent to which power is no longer seen as a relation between clearly definable subjects – those who possess it and those who do not, who exert it and who do not – a central question here is who will be the target of *empowerment*? To empower the powerless is just too general and blurred objective, in so far as groups are seen as homogeneous entities and power relations as uncomplicated, twofold things.

Henkel and Stirrat consider the *empowerment* concept as something which is not as liberating as the new orthodoxy suggests: “The question that should be asked, they argue, is not how much people are empowered, **but for what**” (as cit. by Cooke and Kotary 2002: 12–13). Henkel and Stirrat own answer to this question is that:

Participatory approaches shape individual identities, ‘empowering’ participants ‘to take part in the modern sector of developing societies’. This empowerment is therefore tantamount, in Foucauldian terms, to subjection (Cooke and Kotari 2002: 12–13).

Statements of *empowerment* attempt to embody a new vision of power relations, and provoke the need for change to overcome development failures in the past. By including the ‘target people’ in the decision-making process of development projects, it seems that the ‘top-down’ practices eventually will be eliminated. Additionally, ‘bottom-up’ practices seem to be sufficient for making development more equitable and more suitable to the needs and demands of the people. In fact, the idea of ‘inclusion’ related to *empowerment* makes people more accountable for the successes or failures of projects and programs where they are involved. It is, indeed, a matter of further reflection as to the extent inclusionary practices provide the ‘powerless’ with both the responsibility and the means to change the circumstances behind their deprived conditions.

When it comes to participation and *empowerment* as ‘means or ends’, Holcombe (1995: 17) quotes Peter Oakley’s arguments for having the ‘poor’ included at the design and implementation stages of projects for:

- “better information for projects design; feedback for projects adjustment;
- adaptation of programs to local conditions;
- ability to tap local technical knowledge and resources;
- more efficient use of existing government services and improve the access for the poor;
- better cooperation of intended beneficiaries”.

Discourse of participation speaks about the inclusion of the formerly excluded, and of *bottom-up approach* as the means to empower, especially someone that, in practice, has a blurred identity.¹⁴⁶ The commonality of such statements is the positive connotation on expected outcomes of the participatory processes (things just turn out better.), and the sense of the homogeneity it gives of ‘target’ groups. There is a belief that each individual of the ‘community’, the ‘powerless’, or the ‘poor’ is excluded and lack power in a similar way, is an obvious result of this view, as well as the sense that within these socially constructed categories, people consider themselves as part of a homogeneous entity.

Nelson and Wright observe: “*community* is a concept often used by state and other organization rather than the people themselves, and it carries connotation of consensus and needs determined within parameters set by outsiders” (as cit. by Mohan 2002: 160). This view “conceals powerful interests at the intra-community level”, points Byrne.¹⁴⁷ In his reflections on participatory research, as a technique for knowing particular kinds of subjects, Giles Mohan (2002: 160) comments that the danger from a policy point of view is “that the actions based on consensus may in fact further empower the powerful vested interests that manipulate the research in the first place”. Linked to this homogeneity view behind the community notion are concepts such as *local knowledge* and *needs assessment* that belong to the participatory discourse as well.

Local knowledge and Needs Assessment in Participatory Development

Discourse of participation additionally suggests that the involvement of the people is necessary to assess their needs and demands more adequately. It is further emphasised that people’s knowledge is essential for making things work better in development. *Local knowledge* is now seen as key for the reversal of former ‘top-down’ approaches in planning, and for enabling people’s *empowerment*. There is a more or less subtle vision that people ‘know best’ about the problems that affect them; they know which are the best solutions to their problems. Project agents need to listen and to learn from the project’s users. The World Bank recommends to the bank task managers as follows:

¹⁴⁶ In reference to how difficult it can be to identify who are the ‘powerless’.

¹⁴⁷ As cit. by Mohan (2002: 160).

The first step in any effort to enable the poor to participate involves learning from them firsthand about the problems they face, how they have tackled them, and their proposals for gaining more control and influence over development initiatives¹⁴⁸ (World Bank, 1996).

The revalorization of people's knowledge in participatory approaches also hints that 'others' knowledge, including the professional's knowledge, has less value now than it had before. Mosse (2002: 16) writes that "Chambers, for instance, posits PRA¹⁴⁹ as key instrument in challenging the institutionally produced ignorance of development professional 'uppers', which not only denies the realities of 'lowers' but imposes its own uniform, simplified (and wrong) realities on them."

In discussions related to PRAs experience in rural projects in India, Mosse (2002: 19–23) points to following factors that reveal the prejudicial view on 'people's knowledge' in participatory development:

- "the shaping of knowledge by local relations of power,
- the expression of outsider agendas as 'local knowledge',
- local collusion in the planning consensus and,
- the direct manipulation of 'people's planning' by projects agents".

Mosse (2002: 17) states "the critical point is that what is taken as 'people's knowledge' is itself constructed in the context of planning and reflects the social relationship that planning systems entail", and observes further that:

the way in which what is read or presented as 'local knowledge' (such as community needs, interests, priorities and plans) is a construct of the planning context, behind which is concealed a complex micro-politics of knowledge production and use ... (Mosse 2002: 19).

The goal of participatory techniques and tools is to find out people's requirement towards achieving more suitable answers to their problems. The users of these techniques also seek to include the relevant information that people have in order to make development projects more efficient and sustainable. The underlying assumption is that people have a clear picture of their needs, and on the things that will bring about significant and positive changes to their living conditions.

¹⁴⁸ The Participation Sourcebook, Chapter IV: 2

¹⁴⁹ The Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), together with Beneficiary Assessment (BA) and Social Analysis are among the more common methodological approaches (social development approaches) to participation used by donor agencies such the World Bank. Francis (2002: 5) observes that: 'These approaches have several characteristics in common. All are justified in terms of the shortcomings of conventional development planning methods that are seen as lacking in a 'human' or 'social' dimension. All stress the importance of incorporating the actor's or 'emic' view – that is, the perceptions, values and priorities of local or beneficiary' populations.' Francis points further: "despite these common features, the rationales, methods and epistemologies of the three approaches differ quite widely, as do the assumptions about social reality, explanation and the nature of development upon which they are based".

This view holds that the needs and demands of the affected people typically are not influenced by external conditions, including the presence of project agents; that they do not change over time, and always have some 'logical' connections between one another.

The 'consensus act' requirement that belongs normally to participatory practices have consequences on individual's behaviour when it comes to each needs assessment, and thus to what is meant by *local knowledge*. First, and arguably, as individual dreams, desires, or beliefs come after the interests of the 'community', there exists the risk that 'common' interests are in conflict with individual interests. Under the 'consensus act', the interests of the more powerful can be imposed over the interests of the less powerful within the groups.

Hildyard, et al. (2002: 57–70) observe: "what passes for participation frequently serves to sustain and reinforce inequitable economic, political and social structures – to detriment of marginalized groups". The point is that "projects aimed at increasing public participation or 'decentralizing power' end up excluding 'target populations' and strengthening elites and local power relationships that the planners may not even have known existed (ibid.)."

Second, as the 'consensus act' refers to potential solutions that can already have been defined by others, the risk of manipulation and co-optation is there. The 'consensus act' can be seen merely as only a formality to fulfil, and not much related to an equitable agreement process for all involved.

Moreover, the fact that the opinions and points of view of all the participants are not always considered can depend on several factors. It can be related to power relations within the groups (power at micro-level), and of the groups with external agents, which are seldom democratically 'horizontal'. It can also be connected to what David Harvey (cit. by Cooke 2002: 108–111) refers as 'action anxiety': "which occur as each one present struggles to find a compromise between what one thinks should be done and what one assumes others want to be done".¹⁵⁰

Discussing in organizational terms Harvey's 'Abilene paradox' – which is 'about unconscious collusion to produce false agreement' – Bill Cooke (2002: 108–111) writes that "we do not have more effective planning, analysis and evaluation, nor do we have commitment if people subconsciously collude to make decisions they know are wrong". The 'Abilene paradox' suggests, according to Cooke, that the 'face-to-face' interaction that participation implies is not necessarily a remedy and can indeed make things work worse,

...people are not empowered in the sense of being given control over their own development if they come to decisions with which they disagree, but which they feel unable to publicly contest. The implication of the 'Abilene paradox' for those who see empowerment as conscious-

150 "According to Harvey, action anxiety arises from combination of there being genuine 'real' risk to the individual consensus, and risk that is imagined. Harvey calls imagined risk 'negative fantasies' about what will happen if one acts according to one's true beliefs. These include, for example, 'loss of face, prestige, position, and even health' and 'being made scapegoats, branded as disloyal, or ostracized as non team players..." (Cit. by Cooke, 2002: 110).

ness-raising is that participatory processes may lead a group to say what it is they think you and everyone else want to hear, rather than what they truly believe (Cooke 2002: 111).

Needs and demands are social and historical constructions; not all, and not always, do they have positive connotations for people in every context. In addition, it is not easy to demonstrate that needs are always translated into demands, or that demands correspond all the time to needs that will lead to positive changes; or that the needs and demands identified through participatory activity represent the interest of all the people living in a particular place regardless of their participation in the process; or embody the interests of all that will be affected by the implementation of the demanded things.

The demands of the people are frequently related to things they know they will have the chance to get, although they really want or need something else, (which may, indeed, be a 'normal' attitude for human beings). Also, there are times when people have difficulties in identifying needs and demands relevant for their well being; some problems may not be so evident as regards the impact on their living conditions. Urgent daily problems may shadow others that are less visible and thus more difficult to detect. They can be urgent needs, with hidden consequences for not dealing with them adequately, that people do not translate into demands for a variety of reasons.¹⁵¹

Lack of information can result in insufficient knowledge on issues of great importance for people's quality of living conditions. The assumption that people's knowledge is *per se* sufficient for achieving better outcomes in development projects can, in this context, be false. There is a risk that exists of mystifying *local knowledge* as a guarantee for the achievement of better results; particularly when the following assumptions are found in official discourses:

Participation allows local people to speak for themselves. After all, they are the "experts" on what they want and need. Through participation, experts may open up other possibilities for local people for incorporation into their own expertise. Local people are also uniquely expert on what they are willing to change, to what extent, and how¹⁵² (World Bank 1996).

Participation is related to social relations as employed now in the development discourse. In this sense, participation has to do with power relations in society. The positive connotation of power relations in participatory discourse is inherent in notions such as the *bottom-up approach* and *empowerment* related to the 'community' concept. Through participatory action power will be given to the citi-

151 The 'vinchuca' that causes the deadly disease 'chagas' live in adobe houses both in urban and rural areas of Bolivia. It is estimated that about 40% of the Bolivian population is already infected from them. In spite of this, people seldom mention this as a problem, and less a need that they have translated into an urgent demand. Moreover, in some rural areas the presence of this insect is considered a sign of good harvest to come, and thus it is desirable to have it in the house.

152 The World Bank Participation Sourcebook, Chapter III: 3.

zens (communities) that were formerly excluded. What is needed for making things work better in housing the low-income, is to change the 'top-down' decision making process into a 'bottom-up'. Furthermore, a particular kind of knowledge held by those formerly excluded from development process, *local knowledge*, ought to be included for better outcomes in the development projects.

These various assumptions can be a basis for having misleading perception of what can really be achieved through participatory processes; this includes the perceptions of the very people targeted for participatory action as well.

Housing improvement through social participation belongs the current discourse in Bolivia as well. The implementation of the Law of Popular Participation (LPP) and the Law of Administrative Decentralization (LAD) turned people's participation into a desirable act and into a concern of the society as a whole. Today, the population is called on to be involved in decision-making process on 'things that affect their lives'. The LPP and the LAD made, in this sense, participatory action not only a right, but a duty of the people. Social participation is now a requisite the people have for the achievement of better living conditions, including improvements in housing.

Methodological Approach

This study aims to increase understanding on the motives and reasons¹⁵³ behind housing improvement and social participation of the population living at the OTB-SJT.¹⁵⁴ The study looks for the elucidation of the research questions and the research issues from the perspective of the people in the context of the case study area. This means dealing with subjective research topics such as people's visions, point of views, feelings, expectations, and experiences. In this sense, what is relevant for the discussions of the research is not related to quantity, but to quality.

The study uses qualitative research methods to look for which *effects of truth* the discourses on housing improvement and social participation have on the population living in this particular place. The following notions and reasoning related to qualitative research methodology were considered as important standpoints for the selection of this perspective for this study:¹⁵⁵

- Central to qualitative research is 'understanding' people from their own frames of reference and experiencing reality as they experience it.
- The qualitative researcher studies people in the context of their past and the situation in which they find themselves.
- For the qualitative researcher, all perspectives are worthy of study. He/she rejects the assumption that the perspectives of the powerful are more valid than those of the powerless.
- For the qualitative researcher, there is something to be learned in all settings and groups. No aspect of social life is too mundane or trivial to be studied. All settings and people are at once similar and unique.

The consideration of qualitative methods as more appropriate for this study does not mean that quantitative methods were not also considered useful for the research work. A quantitative survey was worked together with a team of researchers of the PROMESHA program at the Institute of Architectural Research of the San Simon University of Cochabamba (PROMESHA/IIA/UMSS)¹⁵⁶. The quantitative survey became not only helpful for the initial steps to approach the

153 "Our understanding of natural phenomena is in terms of the notion of cause, while our understanding of social phenomena involves the categories of *motives* and *reasons* for actions" (Winch 1990: xi).

154 Peter Winch (1990: 78) writes, "To discover the motives of a puzzling action is to increase our understanding of that action; that is what 'understanding' means as applied to human behaviour."

155 See Taylor and Bodgan (1998: 7–10).

156 See footnotes 1, 3 and 165.

field, but an important reference source during the interpretation of the qualitative data, and the writing of the findings. The quantitative survey and the 'single case study' belong, in this sense, to the research strategy. This chapter attempts to present qualitative and quantitative research methods used during the research work.

The Single Case Study as Research Strategy

Qualitative methods permit the study of selected issues, cases, or events, in depth and in detail.¹⁵⁷ For qualitative researchers each individual issue, case, or event is considered worthy of attention as it represents part of the reality. In qualitative empirical research the researcher and the object/subject of the study are considered as research tools, both independently and related to each other.¹⁵⁸ How the researcher chooses to elucidate the questions and the issues of the research has to do with methods. Both qualitative and quantitative methods can be used in case study research.¹⁵⁹ In this sense, case study strategy is not similar to qualitative methods.¹⁶⁰

The study looks for the understanding of how the people living in *unauthorized housing* perceive the discourses now going on in Bolivia with regard to housing improvement and social participation. Potentially, this has made any of the fifty-four 'illegal' urban settlements, existing at the District 9 of the Municipality of the Cercado Province, as a subject for a case study.¹⁶¹

The case study has been selected from among the residential areas developed by the own population with little or no support from the formal systems in Bolivia. The case study provides the opportunity to discuss the research questions and the research issues in depth. First, this case study is the rule, not the exception, when it comes to the settlement process, a process in conflict with governmental regulations in force. This means that it belongs to the *unauthorized housing* areas of the Municipality in question. The settlement is located in District 9, one of the new districts the Municipality of the Cercado Province has to administrate since the Law of Popular Participation and the Law of Administrative Decentralization came into force in the country. This land was rural before 1994, a fact which

157 Michael Q. Patton (1987: 9) considers "the fact that data collection is not constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth and detail of qualitative data."

158 See Karin Widerberg (2002: 15–16).

159 The case study is used as a research strategy in different fields of knowledge, including social work and community planning. The case study is "used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena" (Yin 2003: 2).

160 Robert K. Yin (2003: 14–15) points that: "the case study strategy should not be confused with qualitative research" and that "case studies can be based on any mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence."

161 The common denominator among the different ideas different authors have about case studies as research methodology, is with the view that "the case study should have a 'case' which is the object of the study" (Johansson 2003a: 2).

makes the need to deal with existing 'illegal' settlements a new and complex issue for the local government now.

Second, participatory processes through the Law for Popular Participation were implemented some years after the population had begun the settlement process; this provides the opportunity to see the participatory question in housing improvement in a historical perspective. In particular, this situation allows us to understand how housing improvement and social participation issues are perceived by the people living in the area, before and after participatory action became part of the 'official' discourse in the country. Finally, the case study is relevant for the current study because it is part of the *unauthorized housing* areas selected by the local government for the *regularization* process, soon to be implemented in District 9.

The case study belongs to the *unauthorized* settlements developed in the fringes of Cochabamba City, on land not initially designated for urban use. The population living here now is affected, in many ways, by the poor housing conditions found at most *unauthorized* settlements in District 9. It was important that the settlement had achieved the legal status of OTB, as this formal structure enables the population to be involved in decision-making processes linked to the Laws of Popular Participation and of Administrative Decentralisation in the country today. This includes questions related to housing improvement as well. Within this framework, and from the beginning, the purpose was to do a 'random' selection of the particular case for this study.

To define which case study it would be, I followed some considerations mostly related to the local conditions that would enable the implementation of the fieldwork and the use of qualitative research methods. The most relevant are the following:

- the predisposition of the population and the community representatives to collaborate with the research and particularly with the observations and the in-depth interviews;
- the physical accessibility of the living area, considering that the close contact with the field was a central aspect for the achievement of a qualitative survey representative of the different kind of situations existing there;
- the size of the settlement, as my intention was to highlight its full diversity and complexity, and I was going to be alone in charge of the qualitative survey for this particular study;
- the interest of the local government to facilitate research activities at the site; linked to the fact that the OTB-SJT is among the twenty-two *unauthorized housing* areas selected by the Municipal Council for the *regularization* process to be implemented at the District 9.

Among the discussions that look for more specific definitions of the case study, the *intrinsic* and the *spatial* characteristics became more closely aligned with the intentions of this study. The case study selected can also be defined in *spatial* terms, related to the fact that the research work is concentrated within the limits of one neighbor-

hood or 'community',¹⁶² which is the case of the OTB-San Jose de la Tamborada.

The alternative of *intrinsic* is related to the objective to explore, explain and describe just that particular case, with no intentions to do further generalizations.¹⁶³ Although generalizations are not an implicit objective of this study, the *intrinsic* character does not mean, however, that the intention to achieve findings that can be generalized is not there also. This is linked to the fact that the OTB-SJT belongs to the rule and not the exception when it comes to the development of Cochabamba City in the past decades. Besides the possibility to contribute to a better understanding of the impact of discourses (policies) at the micro-level, I see this study as a chance to contribute a way of approaching the *unauthorized housing* issue through the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods.

I am aware that the case study selected presents particularities only found here, but it also presents conditions that belong to most *unauthorized housing* areas developed in the District 9. I did my best to see the case in both perspectives during the research work: as unique and as alike to other cases. I did my best to understand the single case in all the complexities it presents, but I am sure that many things stayed hidden for me. I made many an effort to see and understand the research questions and research issues through the perspective of the people living in the area, but the possibility that the same things could be seen and interpreted differently by others is of course there.

The use of research methods to build up a quantitative survey on the case study was part of the research strategy.¹⁶⁴ The work with the quantitative survey was relevant in approaching the field and identifying key persons, informants, and "gatekeepers" in the residential area. This came to be an important information source during the different steps of the research and for the selection of the qualitative sample. The quantitative survey was based on questionnaires to the households, as well as on measurements and drawings of the houses.

162 Miles and Huberman consider that "a 'case' can be defined in terms of social, *spatial* and in the scope of a particular period of time" (as cit. by Johansson 2000a: 3).

163 "The case might be given and studied with an *intrinsic* interest in the case as such. In such a case the researcher has no interest in generalizing his or her findings. The researcher focuses on understanding the case" (Johansson 2003a: 8).

164 "In a case study, qualitative methods are normally used in combination with quantitative methods" (Johansson 2003b: 2).

The First Steps

The Establishment of the Local Conditions for the Research

The first step was to establish the local conditions for the fieldwork within the Institute of Architectural Research at the University of San Simon of Cochabamba (IIA/UMSS).¹⁶⁵ The IIA/UMSS sought to develop different kinds of studies in the same poor residential area of the Municipality of the Cercado Province. A research team started this work in the year 2000 and I became part of this group during the elaboration of the quantitative survey. Aspects of this phase were discussed related to the selection of the case study, and to the design of the quantitative inquiries according to the needs of the different research issues. Also as part of this work was the implementation of the quantitative inquiries in the field and the processing of the data gathered.

Additionally important was to make the local conditions for the research within the Municipality of the Cercado Province proper. This was done within the framework of the PROMESHA/IIA/UMSS and the Municipal Council agreements, which include the implementation of studies of interest for both parties. For this reason, the selection of the case study was done in collaboration with professionals working at the Municipal Council. The District 9 is for several reasons highly problematic for this municipality. This situation was behind the decision to implement studies in some of the *unauthorized* settlements existing here. The residential area that makes up the OTB-SJT today is among the oldest 'illegal' settlements at District 9 and among those that present higher levels of physical consolidation. These were the main arguments for its selection for the *regularization* process by the Municipal Council.¹⁶⁶

The Selection of the Case Study

The selection of the case study area was part of the tasks that, initially, had to be done. The Base Territorial Organization San José de la Tamborada (OTB-SJT) is among the fifty-four urban settlements developed 'illegally' on rural land at District 9 in the past two decades. Furthermore, the OTB belongs to the twenty-two housing areas selected by the Municipal Council for the regularization process in this particular district. The *regularization* proposals coming from the Municipality are a highly controversial issue at District 9 these days. Both the Municipal Council and the representatives of the District Council of the District 9 are aware of the need for more references and facts from the field to go forward in the discussions on this question. The selection of this as case study by the research

165 The IIA/UMSS and the University of Lund work in collaboration with the capacity building program PROMESHA (Programa de capacitación para el Mejoramiento Socio-Habitacional) since 1995. The program seeks to contribute to the improvement of the housing conditions of the low-income in Latin America through courses, seminars, workshops and publications at regional and at local level. The Phase V of the program is currently in implementation and has Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador as focus countries.

166 According to the interviews done at the Municipal Council and at the Municipal House 9 (2000–2001).

team first responded to the political will of the Municipality to support the implementation of studies here. And second, it responded to the interest of the community representatives for more technical information on the physical and social situation of the housing area.

In this sense, among the factors for considering this area suitable for conducting studies was the political will of the Municipality, and the positive attitude of the population, linked to the fact that this housing area is among those selected for the *regularization* process. Among my own considerations for selecting this housing area as case study were the physical accessibility and the manageable size of the settlement, as well as the possibility to initiate the field work together with other researchers and to be able to share information with them.

Quantitative Research Methods in Practice

The quantitative survey became an important component of my research strategy. First, it enabled the initial contacts with the people in the housing area selected for the study. Second, it gave me the chance to build up a frame of reference for the selection of the qualitative sample and for the identification of potential gatekeepers and informants. Third, it provided me facts on the current situation of the households that made for an easier approach to each person during the interview work.

Quantitative Inquiries to Approach the Selected Housing Area

Quantitative inquiries were conducted during two different times. The first and the most relevant for my research comprised 120 households of the 143 occupied plots at that time (see *Map 5.1*). The different phases of this work were implemented from November 2000 to May 2001. The design of the inquiries was the responsibility of the entire research team in collaboration with local professionals in other fields of knowledge. The purpose of the work with the quantitative inquiries was explorative. The research team would be more familiar with the place, both physically and with the people living here by gathering information useful for the different studies to be implemented here.

The questions were grouped into different issues, according to the interest of the different studies, and there were questions of general interest for all as well (Appendix 1: Questionnaires):

- A ***General Information***: location of the residential plot in the settlement, sketch of the house on the plot, photos and drawings of the house.
- B ***Social and Economic Data of the Household***: Family structure, income.
- C ***Data of the House***: property rights on the house and the plot, legal situation, regulatory aspects, technical aspects.
- D ***Housing Improvement***: at house level, at neighborhood level.
- E ***Organizational aspects***: the existing community organizations, membership, payments, other kinds of organizations active in the area, community participation, the local government and the Mu-

nicipal House 9 performance, important projects to improve living conditions.

F **The Youth:** their main interests, point of views on the neighborhood, specific organization they belong to, specific improvements they would like to have in the settlement.

Twenty-three people were trained for the implementation of this work in the field, all with studies in architecture for the design of the questionnaire demanded this kind of skill. The work was implemented in two phases. The first, which sought to test the questionnaire in the field, was done only in some households first. Once adjustments were made to make the questionnaire easier to handle, the second phase involved the whole area. The questionnaires were implemented only in the households that agreed to collaborate with this work.

The second kind of quantitative survey consisted in the preparation of maps of the general physical situation of the settlement (location of the brickyards, 'chicherías', carpentry shops, neighborhood shops, public phones, public lighting, water wells, drinking water, green areas and open spaces, empty plots, streets, and so on), and in detailed drawings of the houses.¹⁶⁷ This information was mostly a point of reference for my own work as regards housing conditions of the area, and of the potential informants for the qualitative inquiry.

The Usefulness of the Quantitative Survey for the Qualitative Work

The results of the first inquiries were elaborated by the team in a format accessible for all the researchers.¹⁶⁸ The gathered information provided me with a good picture on the different kind of situations to be found at the OTB-SJT, no less when it comes to housing conditions, which enabled me to define a more or less representative sample for the qualitative survey.

The possibility to access more than one 'case' in a similar situation was also highly valuable before the actual contacts with the household were made. For various reasons, not all the people were willing to be involved in in-depth interviews.

Of the 120 households included in the quantitative sample, 45 were first selected as potential informants for the qualitative inquiry. I found the following data relevant as main references for the selection of a representative qualitative sample.

1 Place within the OTB the household live in.

Four main groups were identified: the 'Cooperative', the 'Resettled from the airport', the 'Mela Darrás' and the former 'caretakers' of the Cooperative land.

¹⁶⁷ About four hundred students, in their last year at the School of Architecture, were involved in this work that was organized into small teams. The students had to make drawings using the requirements of the Municipality, and for the approval of the organization of Architects. The exercise focused on the practical experience of the students, and also offered something more tangible, the drawings, to the people living at the OTB-SJT, as contribution for their collaboration with the researchers' field-work.

¹⁶⁸ Later on, the results were presented in the document *Resultados Encuesta Barrio San José de la Tamborada – Distrito 9*, Mayo 2001.

- 2 Modality of access to housing.
Besides the 'owners', there were people living as 'tenants', 'caretakers', in 'anticrético' system, and as 'borrowers' or 'allegados'.
- 3 Type of ownership document on the property.
The 'minutas', 'hijuelas', or both at the same time, and the 'property titles' were among the most commonly referred by the population.
- 4 Household structure.
Single parent (male or female) households, households with both parents, and extended families.
- 5 Time the household live in the settlement.
The variation existing were from less than one year to 18 years living in the place.
- 6 Place of origin and last place of living before the OTB-SJT.
The variation was huge, but an important percent of the households had the Municipality of the Cercado Province as the last place of living before and the department of Cochabamba as the place of origin. People coming from the Highlands and the tropical areas of the country were also found.
- 7 Number of occupants of the plot.
The number of occupants could vary from one person to twenty-three persons living in the same plot.
- 8 What was included in the purchase of the property
Most of the households bought only the plot and this meant that they had been involved, in one way or another, in the building process of the house; but there were also households who bought both the plot and the house.
- 9 The building process of the house.
Self-help and mutual aid with the participation of bricklayers, or the bricklayers alone were the most common answers.
- 10 Organizational aspects.
People could belong to the Cooperative organization or to the OTB organization, but there were also those who were not part of the community organizations according to the response.
- 11 Households with economic activities in the house.
Particularly related to income generating activities done in the house such as neighborhood shops, brickyards, carpentry shops, chicherías.
- 12 Level of education or kind of occupancy.
Although the level of education was rather low, the people work in rather broad kinds of activities, some professionals of different fields of knowledge also live in the area. A high percent of bricklayers and carpenters were noticed.

The quantitative survey became high valuable for the implementation of the qualitative research.

Qualitative Research Methods in Practice

The following qualitative methods of data collection were applied in this study:¹⁶⁹

- 1 In-depth, open-ended interviews; both with the population and with relevant persons of the housing sector in the country and at the Municipality.
- 2 Participant observation of activities and meetings at settlement level, at district level and at municipality level, as the most relevant.
- 3 Written documents review; of documents related to the activities of the community, the municipality and the housing sector in the country, and particularly related to the LPP and LAD.
- 4 Other complementary qualitative research tools such as the *photo-interviews* and the *mental maps* were also used with target groups of the population at the OTB-SJT.

These kinds of data collection were applied in a rather flexible way during the development of the study and according to their relevance for the fieldwork at that particular moment.

The Implementation of the In-Depth, Open-Ended Interviews

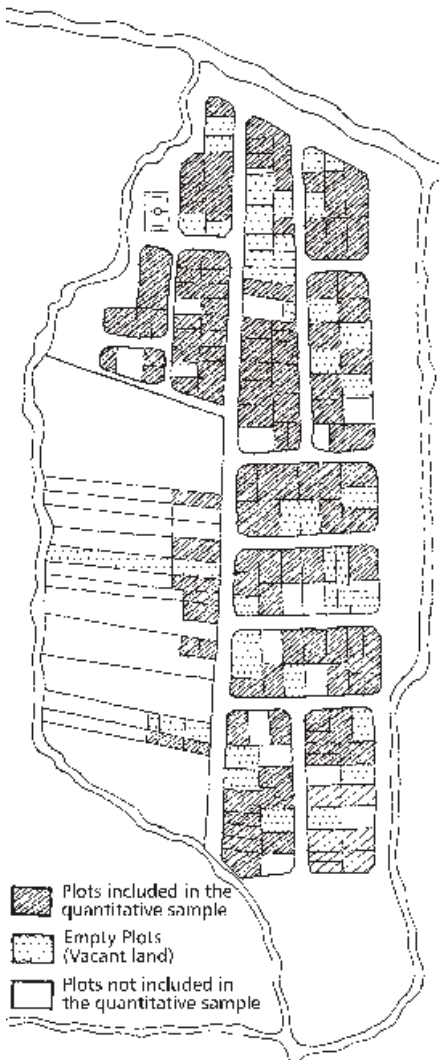
Two periods of the fieldwork, with the in-depth, open-ended interviews, are to be differentiated. The first was implemented between November 2000 and September 2001 and the second from March 2002 to September 2002 (*see Map 5.2*).

The following in-depth interviews were conducted: with the population living at the OTB-SJT (29); with representatives of the two community organizations active at the OTB-SJT (9); with functionaries working at the Municipal Houses (2); with functionaries and professionals of the Municipality at the central level (8); with a former Head of the Housing Sector in the country (1); with professionals working in other municipalities of the Department of Cochabamba (2) (Appendix 2: Interview Guides).

The interviews with persons other than the population living at the OTB-SJT endeavored to approach the 'official' discourse, circulating currently in the country, on questions and issues related to this study. The interviews gave me an understanding of the views existing among different persons working in the government at central and local levels on housing improvement and social participation issues linked to the LPP and the LAD.

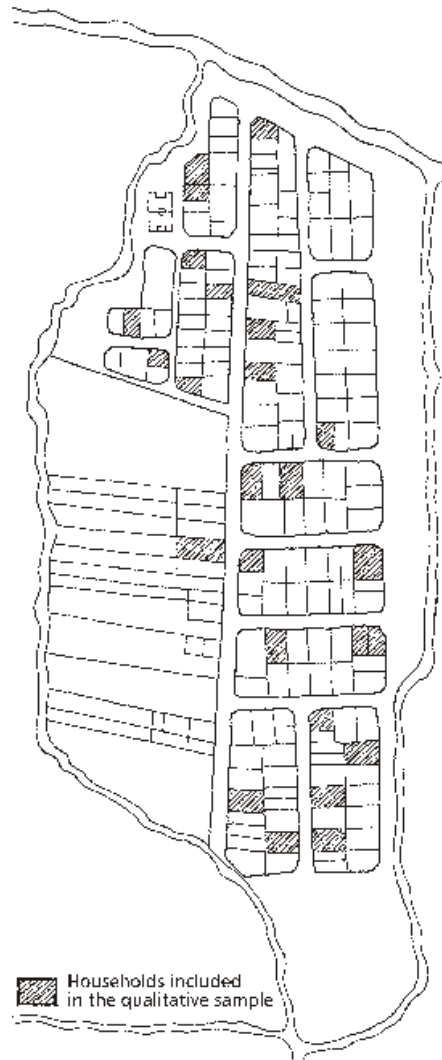
During the implementation of the in-depth, open-ended interviews with the population living at the OTB-SJT, including the community representatives, two different types of inquiries are to be differentiated. The difference of the second type of interview guides was related to adjustments in the questions according to the results of the first interviews. While some questions showed less relevance, others emerged as important for more in-depth interviews with new informants, or to talk again with the former ones. The second group of in-depth interviews also sought to cover the household profiles missing from the first time according to the proposed qualitative

¹⁶⁹ See Michael Q. Patton (1987: 7).



Map 5.1 Plots included in the quantitative survey in the OTB- SJT.

Source Taken from IIA/PROMESHA/UMSS.



Map 5.2 Plots included in the qualitative survey in the OTB- SJT¹⁷⁰.

Source My own elaboration.

sample (Appendix 2: Interview Guides Community 1 and 2; and Interviewed Guides Community Representatives).

The number of plots included in the qualitative survey is not similar to the number of persons interviewed. Two or more persons living in the same plot could be part of the survey.

1 In depth-interviews between November 2000 and September 2001 at the OTB-SJT included community representatives (6) and households (12) with following profiles:

¹⁷⁰ The number of plots included in the qualitative survey is not similar to the number of persons interviewed. Two or more persons living in the same plot could be part of the survey.

- Original owners of the Cooperative land, those living since 1956.
 - Second (or third) land owners, those who bought the plot (or the plot and the house) from the original (or the second hand) owners of the Cooperative area.
 - Owners, living in the Mela Darrás area.
 - Households with more than one generation living in the house.
 - One parent headed households (the man or the woman).
 - Urban and rural migrants from the Municipality of the Cercado Province and the Department of Cochabamba.
 - Urban and rural migrants from other parts of the country.
 - Representatives of both community organizations.
 - Households living for more than one to less than 10 years in the area.
 - Households involved in the chichenía activity.
- 2 The first interview guides were reviewed and adjusted. Although the main focus of these interviews was on the population selected for the sample (17), interviews with some community representatives were also done (3). The intention was to cover as much as possible the different kind of situations found in the housing area, and to make new questions that emerged as relevant for the study in the first interviews. The profiles of the interviewed persons were this time the following:
- Male or female headed households.
 - Households with both parents and extended households.
 - Old people living alone, in charge of the grandchildren, with tenants, or with grown up children and their families living as ‘allegados’.
 - People living in tenant, ‘anticretico’, ‘caretakers’ modality with and without the owner of the property.
 - Resettled from the airport.
 - Newly established households.
 - Living in the housing area: less than one year, between 10 and 15 years, and between 15 and 18 years.
 - Households involved in the chicherías, with neighbourhood shops, carpentry and bakery as income generating activity.

The Relevance of Participant Observation

The activity intended to observe the different kind of matters related to the practical implementation of the LPP at the Municipality of the Cercado Province. Through participant observation at different levels of the Municipal structure, I got insight on how the official discourse meets the discursive praxis. This helped me to identify people I found relevant for the interviews in the housing area, among these the women and the youth that always attended the meetings, but never said a word in public. Following activities were included here:

- The set up of the Annual Operative Plans at the Municipal House 9.
- Meetings of the District 9 Council at the Municipal House 9.
- General meetings of the Cooperative organization.
- General meetings of the OTB-SJT organization.

- Meetings of other organizations active in the area with the population.
- Workshops organized by other organizations active in the area with target groups, including women and youth.

The Search of New Kind of Qualitative Information

The *photo-interview* and the *mental maps* qualitative research tools were used opportunistically and were mostly related to the activities of other researchers and other non-governmental organizations active in the area. The *photo-interview* method was used by the research team to gather qualitative information in the field as well. The *photo-interview* method is based on work with photographs previously taken by the researcher on events and situations considered representative of daily life in the housing area. Later on the material is used to discuss, individually or in meetings with residents their impressions and interpretations of the matter in question (Appendix 4). As observer, my role was to write the impressions I got from the opinions and reactions of the people involved in the exercise.

The activity is very useful to understand how the people living in the place see the same things that one sees and interprets as a visitor. There are perceptions of events that belong to the housing area that are difficult to identify, or are perceived differently, as an outsider. Talking with people with photographs was more relaxing than interviews that are only recorded. Some of the things people talked about through this technique were also of help for the adjustments of the second in-depth qualitative interviews I conducted with the population.

The *mental maps* technique was mostly used in a workshop with the representatives of both community organizations. The exercise attempted to see how different people express themselves in drawings of current situations in the housing area, but also to express proposed solutions to the problems identified by them (Appendix 4). People worked in small groups and the task was to draw all the positive and negative aspects they found relevant on the settlement situation at that particular moment. Even here my role was mostly as observer both at the discussions of the groups and the presentation of the results of their work.

The activity enabled me to see how different people living in the same place differed in their interpretations of the neighborhood housing situation, which problems are more relevant, and how the solutions are seen differently for the identified problems. The fact that they had to make drawings, and not speeches, helped to see the level of importance each group gave to the different problems existing in the area, and the different ways they saw the solutions for the same problems. This gave me good insight on how complex the *local knowledge* and the *needs assessment* issues can be at the micro-level. The activity provided the possibility to observe power conflicts between the 'older' and the 'younger' community representatives as well.

A similar exercise, also with *mental maps*, was conducted with three households, to discuss the situation of their houses. This time the groups were set up according to the gender and the age of the household members. The drawings first were related to how they saw the current situation of the house, and then what the improvements would look like if they had the chance to make the decisions at that moment.¹⁷¹ This exercise was in some way similar to the other but this time the views and the visions were among the household members. The results showed here, that people, even at this level, see differently the problems and the solutions according to factors such as age, level of education, gender and economic situation.

Working with Data: Data Analysis

The theoretical and conceptual framework developed in Chapter 4 and the data collected through the qualitative inquiry have been the main components for this work. Discussions on Foucault's thoughts on Discourse, Power and Knowledge and on the discourses related to housing improvement and social participation, circulating currently in Latin America and Bolivia, contributed to my understanding of the research questions and the research issues of this study. The development of the theoretical and conceptual framework intends, in this sense, to provide me with the 'lenses' for reading the empirical data. The following activities are related to this work.

Classification of the Information Gathered Through the In-Depth Interviews

I decided not to use any type of computer software related to qualitative research for this work. The coding and classification of the information was limited to the interviews with the community and the community representatives, as this study seeks an understanding of the *effects of truth* the official discourses have on the perceptions of the people living in the case study area. The two main themes behind the research proposals – housing improvements and social participation – were used for the general classification and coding of the answers. In each of these main themes a certain number of sub-themes were identified closely related to answers provided by informants and questions in the questionnaire guides, as follows:

1 Housing Improvement Issues

- Prior housing quality at neighborhood and household level.
- Current improvements and housing quality at neighborhood level.
- Housing quality at household level. Improvements done. How the people see their own housing conditions now.
- Improvement expectations at neighborhood level.
- Improvement activities done and improvement expectations at house level. The family's view on their future house.
- Property rights influence on their current housing conditions, and on the regularization process.

¹⁷¹ Two students of the School of Architecture of the San Simón University of Cochabamba who were making their undergraduate thesis in the housing area did the work. I had the role as adviser for their work for a while.

- Positive and negative aspects of being a tenant, ‘anticrecista’, borrower, caretaker, owner, ‘allegado’.
- Why people chose to live just here? How was it to live here? Future dreams and expectation of living here.
- Other things, such as the difference between their situation now compared with how they lived before, in another place, and another modality to access housing. Housing costs and finance methods. The attitudes of the other groups living in the area when it comes to housing improvement.

2 Social Participation Issues

- Issues related to organizational aspects in the area, before and now.
- On participatory activities in housing improvement at neighborhood level.
- On participatory activities for housing improvement at household level.
- Experiences with the LPP, the POAs and other participatory processes implemented at the OTB-SJT.
- On participation of other actors. The local and the central government, the Municipal House 9, non-governmental organizations, etc.
- Other points of view on participatory activities.

Identify of Themes and Ideas Based on the Field Work

The work with the quantitative survey provided me with the opportunity to approach the field, to ‘explore’ the area selected for the study, and to get familiar with the place and the people. It gave me the chance to identify relevant persons for my fieldwork and to access information that was useful for my work with the qualitative inquiries as well.

Participant observations gave me good insight on how discourses on housing improvement and social participation, meet the discursive praxis. Through this activity I could identify more people and raise other questions relevant for the qualitative interviews.

Through other techniques such as *photo-interview* and *mental maps*, complementary information could be gathered. These were particularly important for observing how people see the problems and the possible solutions in the housing area, and thus how complex the *local knowledge* and the *needs assessment* ideas can be in practice. The activity gave me insight on how power conflicts perform at the micro-level as well.

The different research tools used in the fieldwork, and, particularly the responses of the informants, as well as the theoretical and the conceptual frameworks, constitute the main references for the identification and presentation of the different themes in The Case Stories (Chapter 6). The chapter seeks to discuss the discourses of housing improvement and social participation through the perceptions of the people living in the case study area selected.

Part III

Empirical Findings

The Case Stories

Introduction

The following chapter presents the results of the qualitative inquiry made in the residential area selected for this case study. The two overriding issues discussed below, of Housing Improvement and Social Participation, are made through the perceptions of the people interviewed. I have chosen to see policies in Bolivia related to housing improvement and social participation as discourses circulating in the country over the last few years. Foucault's thoughts on Discourse, Power and Knowledge, as well as statements that belong to the discourses on Housing Improvement and Social Participation in Latin America, became the theoretical and conceptual framework for the analysis of the empirical data, particularly as these have developed in the last few decades.

The qualitative approach used attempts to understand the *practical effects* the discourses on Housing Improvement and Social Participation have on the people living in *unauthorized housing*, in one of the districts considered problematic for the Municipality of the Cercado Province, in the department of Cochabamba. The Base Territorial Organization San José de la Tamborada, District 9 became the focus for the study, because it is one of the *unauthorized housing* areas selected by the Municipal Council to be included in the *regularization* process, soon to be implemented.

This chapter provides a general view, first, about questions related to housing improvement and social participation in the residential area selected for this study. It is meant to serve as an introduction and background for the reader. This information is based both on the qualitative and the quantitative research work. Following this general view, I will present the results of the qualitative inquiry. This, in turn, is structured, in general themes resulting from the theoretical and the conceptual explanations. Second, I will deal with sub-themes according to responses collected through in-depth interviews with people living at the OTB San José de la Tamborada, as well as by observations made in the field.

At the end of this chapter I will briefly complement discussions with some of the interviews conducted at the Municipality's central level. I found this relevant because the perspective of employees with different tasks and responsibilities at the Municipality provided me with an insight into the complexity of the participatory question at different levels of the social structure. The *effects of truth* of the discourses on social participation and housing improvement go well beyond the population living in *authorized housing*.

Housing Improvement Issues at the OTB San José de la Tamborada

The development process of the case study area first goes back to 1956, when COMIBOL¹⁷² acquired agricultural land near Cochabamba City and transferred it to the Worker's Union of the San José Mine.¹⁷³ Then, a Housing Cooperative was established in 1960. The development of the land for urban use, however, began only in the second half of the 1980s, and this by a small group of the 'beneficiaries' of the land.¹⁷⁴

In the second half of the 1990s the 'Cooperative' area was merged with two bordering settlements: the "Resettled from the airport" and the 'Mela Darrás area'. The first and smaller group was forced to move when the city's airport was modernised in the 1980s; people got land here as compensation for expropriated plots.¹⁷⁵ The second group resulted from the purchase of individual plots from the landowner, the Darrás family, at the beginning of the 1990s. Differences in the methods of access to land in the fringes of Cochabamba City, between these three groups, are evident from the beginning and, also in the way the settlement process occurred in each case. The methods these groups used to access land and the way the settlement process occurred have been relevant for social relations at the micro-level, no less when it comes to housing improvement in the later-to-be-established Base Territorial Organization San José de la Tamborada (OTB-SJT).¹⁷⁶

Although the original aims of the 'Cooperative' land remain unclear to me, when the land was transferred to a small group of the mine employees (the 'beneficiaries') the objective, clearly, was to develop it for urban housing. Fear of losing land, was one of the main reasons behind the initial steps of the settlement process. In times of high migration flows to the city from urbanization, empty land was highly vulnerable for the actions of people in need of housing, or exposed to land speculators in search of plots for business. For the former employees of the closed state-owned mines, a piece of land in the city represented the possibility to start a new life, and possibly the only hope they saw to an uncertain future.

The extent to which the land went to benefit the people with the greatest need of housing is an open question. This is particularly relevant when less than 30 percent of the original 'beneficiaries' today

172 The Mine Corporation of Bolivia COMIBOL (Corporación Minera de Bolivia) was established during the National Revolution of 1952 for the purpose of administering the mines nationalized by the Bolivian state.

173 One of ten important mines located in the Highlands, in the department of Oruro.

174 The term 'beneficiaries', as it was explained before, refers to those who got a plot in the 'Cooperative' land through a lottery.

175 The state owned aircraft company LAB (Lloyd Aéreo Boliviano), bought the land to give to this group of families.

176 For information on the Base Territorial organization see Chapter 3 of the thesis.

live at OTB-SJT.¹⁷⁷ This could partly be related to why the land owned by 3,000 employees was allotted to so few households.¹⁷⁸ There may be other reasons behind why the high percentage of plots were re-sold, or remained empty, but to find these out will require further inquiry.

Seventy percent of the ‘beneficiaries’ in the Cooperative group have already sold their plots, a feature not found to such a degree in the other two groups, particularly in the Mela Darrás area where plots were bought individually. The ‘illegal’ subdivisions and commercial transactions of the land owned by the “Resettled from the airport”¹⁷⁹ are related primarily to the difficulties this group had with continuing their brick production here, and in finding alternative income sources.

The settlement process started by the ‘beneficiaries’ had the Cooperative organization behind it. Although some kind of collaborative action during the building of the first houses is noticed, this does not mean that the building process present signs of organized self-help or mutual aid schemes. It is evident that most housing improvements at settlement level, however, have come about through the leading role of the Cooperative organization in all these years.

Although there were nine families that lived now in the “Resettled from the airport” area who decided to move together to this place, there are no signs of grass root organization or collaborative action behind their settlement process.¹⁸⁰ They did have in common their former brick production activity, and they had been forced to move from the same area. The home construction process was, however, a matter for each household to solve, a feature also found in the Mela Darrás area. The main difference of the last group over the others is that most of the households that live here did not know each other before they moved; they did not settle in this place as a result of a collective decision. They had, therefore, less in common when they came here even though they are part of the ‘same group’.

The Laws of Popular Participation (LPP) and of Administrative Decentralization¹⁸¹ (LAD) implied, among other things, new territorial limits for the municipalities throughout the country, as well as a greater possibilities for the people to have influence on the decision-making process at the local level. The land the three groups were developing – for some years rather independently from each other – came under the administrative role of the local government, as part

177 According to the information provided by one of the older representatives of the former miner workers, the allocation of the land to the smaller group was done through a lottery: 60% of the plots were raffled among the approximately 3,000 ‘original owners’; the raffling of the other 40% of the plots were drawn from among the workers that were the longest employees of the San José mine.

178 The representatives occasionally talk about there being 110 plots and others about 102 as the ‘beneficiaries’ of the lottery.

179 According to one of the persons interviewed from this group, one of the conditions from LAB in allotting this land as compensation was for the new owners not to not make further subdivisions for sale.

180 There are also individual purchasers of land that live in the ‘Resettled from the airport’ area today.

181 See Chapter 1.

of the newly established District 9 (D9).¹⁸² The implementation of both laws meant, also, that grass-root organizations that wanted to represent the population of a certain territory, had to attain the status of a Base Territorial Organisation (OTB).

When the Cooperative area, together with the other two bordering settlements, came to establish the OTB San José de la Tamborada¹⁸³ (OTB-SJT), the only consideration given was economic, as far as can be determined. The fact that the financial resources allocated by the LPP to each OTB is related to the number of persons living within its territorial limits, made way for a prevailing quantitative criterion for the establishment of these type of administrative and organizational units at local level.

The emergence of OTB-SJT can not be seen as a result of bottom-up demand of the part of the population living within its territorial limits, rather it is an effect of the participatory discourse linked to the so-called Second Generation Reforms implemented in the 1990s in Bolivia. The OTB-SJT is, in this sense, mostly a product of the Law of Popular Participation and the Law of Administrative Decentralization in practice.

Within a more or less ‘unplanned’ definition of its territorial limits, social processes within the OTB-SJT to structure a ‘community’, and to share a common identity with the place, have represented more constraints than benefits for the people living here. Most issues considered key for the improvement of poor housing conditions remain as they were before the LPP was in force, according to the perceptions of the people living here.

The OTB-SJT is not in its genesis a product of violent or pacific ‘take over’ of land. The land that makes up the Cooperative area, as has been pointed out, was bought by the state owned Company and the Worker Union of the San José Mine in the name of its employees in the 1950s. But, there is land people got as a result of juridical processes against the Worker Union and the Cooperative group, and land that people got in compensation of expropriated plots in other parts of the city. In addition, there are households that bought the land directly from the landowners and those who acquired the plots from the second and even third generation owners. People who inherited the land from their own families are found living in this area as well.

Moreover, a high percentage of ‘vacant land’ is found within the limits of the OTB-SJT, as well as an important number of households that accessed housing as ‘caretakers’¹⁸⁴, ‘borrowers’¹⁸⁵, tenants,

182 See Chapter 2.

183 See Chapter 3.

184 Refers to people that take care of the property and can live there free of payments as compensation for this kind of work.

185 The difference from the former is that in this case the borrowers are normally relatives or friends and the relationship is, therefore mostly of solidarity between the parts.

‘allegados’¹⁸⁶, and ‘anticrecistas’¹⁸⁷. This shows the very high diversity in a residential area of about eight hectares, less than 200 plots, and more or less 1,000 inhabitants.¹⁸⁸ In this context, housing improvement can mean rather different things to the people according to the particular housing situation they live in.

Social Participation Issues at the OTB San José de la Tamborada

Discussions on the positive and negative impacts of the Law of Popular Participation in the context of Bolivia have been many since the very beginning. It is evident that the practical implementation of the LPP has had implications on participatory issues in the field of housing as well. This includes questions related to housing improvement by low-income groups, both in rural and in urban areas of the country.

Part of the argument put into discussion for the approval of the 1551 Law (LPP) was related to the participatory tradition of the Bolivian people. Acts of resistance as well as collaborative practices belong to the history and the cultural roots of the population living in this territory since the pre-Columbian period. Collaborative and participatory activities in housing are commonly found in Bolivia, particularly in the rural areas of the country.¹⁸⁹ The extent to which these collective and mutually supportive modalities have been transferred to housing activities in today’s human settlements, resulting from the urbanization process, is not something that can be generalized about easily. Further studies to support this possibility are needed.

People living in housing areas such as the OTB-SJT may present a very heterogeneous composition when it comes to the place of origin and the time of living in the city.¹⁹⁰ Even if some group of dwell-

186 Refers to people that live with the owner, sometimes even without the need of making any payments. It can be young couples that stay with the parents until they can access housing themselves. It can also be other relatives, friends or persons with social connections to the owners.

187 *Anticrecista* is somebody who lives in an *anticretico* system. This is a contract modality that means ‘against a normal credit’ which exists in only a few countries in the region, among these in Bolivia. It involves two parties, the owner of a property on one side, and the potential occupant on the other. Through a legal contract, the former receives an amount of money from the later for the right of using the property. The period is that which the parties agree to at the beginning, but is normally for two years. At the end of the contract period, the owner returns the amount deposited to the property user. For the owner this is a way of raising capital sums without interest rates, while for the user, it represents an effective way of living at low cost and for saving funds to invest, for example, in their own house in the future.

188 For more detailed information on the OTB-SJT, see Chapter 3.

189 The Ayni, Mink’a, Waki, Mita, Huarare, are collaborative modalities that are part of people’s ancestral traditions since the pre-Columbian period, particularly in the territories that were part of the Inca Domain. They are mainly used in production activities, but also in the construction of social infrastructure and in the building of houses (see Iriarte 1979).

190 The data shows 80 different localities as place of birth of the 720 persons that answered this particular question (see Chapter 3).

ers have a common place of birth, this does not mean that they decided to migrate in a group to the city. In this sense, social relations linked to a 'shared past' connected to the idea of 'community' are not the most noteworthy characteristics here. Besides, the time of residency in the city has an impact on social relations, between those who have been here a while and the newly established ones. This surely has an influence on people's view about housing improvements and participatory questions.

The Cooperative group shows some signs of social relations that might be related to the idea of shared identity before they moved together to the area. The links of the group, and the collaborative experiences they shared before they moved, had mostly to do with their 'working class' affiliations, and thus to their common struggles as an oppressed and exploited group. Participatory action in support of better housing conditions, in the sense of self-help or mutual aid, is quite uncommon in the mine sector. In the context of Bolivia, housing belongs to the obligations the companies have with their workers. The tradition of mobilization of the miners, however, has been a determinant factor for housing improvements in these places over the years. Paradoxically, it has been one of the factors behind power conflicts at the micro-level, both with the people living in the Cooperative area, and in the relationships of this group with the other two groups that make up the OTB-SJT today.

The discourse of participation related to the LPP suggests that the obligation of the law is to enable the inclusion of those formerly excluded in the decision making process on 'things that affect their lives'. The LPP allocates a certain amount of resources each year for investments the population has the right to decide on for the improvement of their living conditions. The LPP provides the mechanisms for social control of the use of these resources by the local government as well. The aim here is to guarantee that the investments answer to the needs and demands of the population. The modality and the tools for people's participation are established for the different levels of the social structure by the law too. For the institutionalization and operation of the LPP the key slogan is 'popular participation'.

The LPP allocates resources for capacity building and for the dissemination of its objectives, mechanisms and participatory modalities, also. In spite of this, most of the persons interviewed at OTB-SJT were poorly informed on their rights and their possibility to influence events as provided by the law. This failure is something noticed not only by those not directly involved in community organization, but even among the community representatives themselves, particularly the younger ones.

Through the OTB legal status the implementation of the LPP and the LAD gives the grass root organizations the formal right to enter into negotiations with the government at the central and local level, and with other national or international actors. Negotiations include the resources annually assigned from the national budget to the municipalities for the improvement of living conditions of the population. This is something rather new in the country's history.

The intentions behind this surely were positive, but the available resources have been too limited compared to the needs and demands of the population at the OTB-SJT. This is something that cannot only be connected to the argument of limited available resources, but in many cases to the urban development vision city managers and city planners have as well, particularly at the central level of the municipality. Modernization efforts of the city have commanded enormous sums over the past few years, particularly in infrastructure for vehicular traffic, making this municipality among the most indebted in the country.¹⁹¹ Too small a proportion of this debt has been spent to benefit the people living in low-income housing areas such as the OTB-SJT. The main argument usually heard from the Municipality refers to the 'illegal' status of these kinds of settlements, particularly to the lack of statutory property rights and to the 'unauthorized' change of land use from rural to urban.

The lack of resources has negative consequences for the work of the grass root organizations as expectations for what is to be done exceed what is possible. The little knowledge the population has on the potentiality of the Law for Popular Participation, even among the newly elected community representatives, puts into question the extent of influence the people at the OTB-SJT have on 'things that affect their lives'. The possibility to achieve substantial housing improvements remains as much an open question now, after the creation of the LPP, as it did before.

It is clear that the original group of 'beneficiaries' made possible the development of this land for urban use through a type of collaborative modality. The group created a certain level of physical consolidation of the area in less than fifteen years with little support from the formal systems. The Cooperative organization was more or less successful in some of the housing improvements achieved, but it failed in others. The organizational capacity of the community, as a whole, became weaker in time. This opens the question on why grass root organizations can grow weaker instead of stronger when a particular law is in force in the country aimed at the enabling of people's participation. The situation tends to turn even more bizarre considering that participation is no longer a threatening action in Bolivia, as it once was; participatory activity is, according to the LPP's vision a desirable act. Indeed, people are now called on to 'be actively a part' and to be central actors in the construction of a better destiny for the country today.

Since 1994, the discourse of social participation in Bolivia is related to the Law of Popular Participation (LPP) and the Law of Administrative Decentralization (LAD). The practical implementation of both laws have had implications for power relations at the micro-level in the country, and have had serious impact on housing im-

¹⁹¹ The level of indebtedness of the Municipality of the Cercado Province in the last years made the central government put on hold the resources assigned annually to the municipality from the national budget until the debt was reduced to 'a more rational level'. In addition to resources coming from the central government, Cochabamba is among the municipalities with greater support from different kinds of international agencies, both in form of loans and aids. These questions were heavily discussed in the local press during years 2001 and 2002.

provement through social participation in the case of the OTB-SJT. The discussions which follow attempt to elucidate housing improvement and social participation from the perspective of the people living in this particular place. I intend to approach the research questions and research issues in the context of the discourses of housing improvement and social participation, which have been circulating in the country over the past few decades, particularly since the LPP and the LAD have been in force.

Discussions focus on how the official discourses of housing improvement and social participation meet the discourses of the population living at the OTB-SJT. In this sense, the interest here is not so much on the truth or falsehood of the official discourses, and not on how or why the particular discourses emerge, but, on the *effects of truth* the 'official' discourses have on the perceptions of the population living in the housing area studied. And this means: the understanding of the 'official' discourses deployed related to the discursive praxis.

In addition to Foucault's discussions on Discourse, Power and Knowledge, as things that imply each, one to the other, the conceptual discussions on low-income housing and participation in the context of Latin America are important for the discussions in the case of Bolivia as well. In this sense, *legal/illegal city*, *unauthorized housing* and *regularization* are key concepts when it comes to discussions related to the **discourse of housing improvement**. The *bottom-up approach*, *empowerment*, *local knowledge* and *needs assessment* ideas have relevance for explanations related to the **discourse of social participation**.

Unauthorized Housing Develops in the Fringes of the City

Demolitions of 'illegal' settlements belong to housing policies implemented in the past in Latin America. 'Bulldozing' is historically connected to actions against *unauthorized housing* in urban areas. In this particular case, the initial conflicts related to the land and the threatening attitudes towards the settlement process were first developed from within the group, not from the government. At the very beginning, the attempts to stop the settlement process of the Cooperative group were not related to the 'illegal' conditions in housing. The attempts were based on the view of the land as a valuable commodity by the two families that were living there as 'caretakers' before the settlement process started.

Various versions are contradictory, right from the beginning, on whether or not the land was destined for urban development. The fact is, however, that the development process of the land for urban use began more than fifteen years ago. Besides the internal conflicts within the Cooperative group, particularly with the former 'caretakers' of the land, there have been conflicts with the peasants in the surrounding area since the settlement process started as well. The peasants see the use agricultural land for the development of urban settlements as a threat to their livelihood. Although local government

frequently talks of the need to preserve District 9 for farming, there are no clear policies for making farming sustainable and profitable for the peasants. This makes the pressures on rural land for urban development at risk for uncontrolled land use change. According to information available at the Municipal House 9 (MH9), in less than ten years the number of urban settlements in the District 9 changed from twenty-two to fifty-four.¹⁹²

When the establishment of the OTB-SJT was in the discussion stages, to merge the land of the Cooperative group, with the other two bordering settlements, was seen as almost natural. The need for more people to access more resources from the LPP and the near situation of the three groups settled in the area were the main considerations done by the population for taking the decision to establish the OTB together. The surrounding irrigation channels and the Tamborada River made the area occupied by the three 'groups' practically an island in rainy periods. This fact became a reference point for the definition of the geographical limits of the OTB. Social relations at the micro-level, which include questions related to housing, have not been been easy for the people living within these new geographical limits.

When the person interviewed speaks about people living in other parts of the settlement, they give the impression that they do not belong to the same community. The 'Cooperative members', the 'former caretakers', the 'Resettled from the airport', the 'Mela Darrás dwellers', are commonly used terms to refer to the 'others'. These attitudes have roots in the settlement process, of the different parts of the residential area; and have implications for social relations within the limits of the new administrative and organizational unity OTB-SJT. Differences in the settlement process have implications on the way different people perceive housing improvement and social participation as well.

It was not meant to urbanize rural land from the beginning

Some told me that the land was planned for housing right from the very beginning, while others said that the objective was to establish a centre for recreation and farming to benefit the workers and their families. In the second half of the 1980s it is evident, however, that the decision was to develop the land for housing; the land was allotted to households in plot sizes not suitable for agriculture or cattle rearing.

Antonio is a former leader of the most powerful and well-organized worker unions Bolivia has had in its contemporary history. The miner unions were feared by the ruling classes, but also respected both in the country and at international level. Antonio has been retired since 1987 and earns less than a hundred dollars monthly after a 'whole life' working at the San José Mine.¹⁹³ He told me that when

¹⁹² Interview with the head of the Planning Office of the Municipality (2001/09).

¹⁹³ He belongs to a group of more or less 25,000 miners who were fired when the Structural Adjustment policies were implemented in the 1980s. They are called 'relocalizados' (relocated and not fired) for political reasons. A high percentage of the fired workers moved to cities in the so called 'National Economic Corridor' of the country. Cochabamba City became attractive because of the climate and the working possibilities in commerce and services. In the

he was fired together with thousands of workers all over the country, his severance pay from the mine company was US\$ 4,500.

Miner unions use to be proud of their history of struggles. So is Antonio when he talks of his experience and his role in the fight to make the settlement a 'good' place for living. In almost three years of research work with the study area, he became one of the key persons in the field, both as information source and as gatekeeper. He knows everybody and everybody knows him. Once he had been a member of the COD board, and he told me that when things were too complicated with the judicial processes regarding the Cooperative land, he would ask for the support of Lechin, the powerful workers' union leader.¹⁹⁴ For Antonio, as for many that belong to the 'beneficiaries' of the Cooperative land, the history of OTB-SJT is closely linked to his own story as a new dweller of Cochabamba City.

Antonio lives in the house owned once by the former landowner. The house was, in his own words "a reward he got from the Cooperative group for his hard work as leader". He owns other plots located near to his house, too, "aimed for housing for his children in the future", he said.

The house I live in is a gift from the Cooperative members, it was the country house of the landowner... it was as a reward for the work I have demonstrated for the Cooperative, because I'm a founder of it, and at the same time I have managed to get back this land in the trials made by the former caretakers of the land...¹⁹⁵ (Antonio, 2001/04).

According to his version, the land owned by the workers of the San José mine was considered compensation from the Bolivian state to the workers in the times of the National Revolution of 1952, a situation similar to other residential areas which were established by former mine workers in the most important cities of the country after the second half of the 1980s. Many of these settlements are still considered illegal by the Municipality of the Cercado Province.¹⁹⁶ This is also the situation of the case study area.

first period of the adjustments about 40,000 people lost their jobs throughout the country. Migrants often went through a 'nomadic' process before they found a place to settle down. Families moved from one city to another, but many relocated within the same city. Although this is not the case of the first 'beneficiaries' of the Cooperative group like Antonio, it has been the reality of a large number of the people living at the OTB-SJT today.

194 The Central Obrera Boliviana COB (similar to LO in Sweden) was established also in times of the National Revolution of 1952. Juan Lechin Oquendo, a legendary but highly controversial political figure, was the founder and the general secretary of this organization for decades. The COD (Central Obrera Departamental) were the structures of the COB at departmental level.

195 All the citations from the interviews are translated by me from Spanish. I have tried to be faithful to the way people express themselves, without too much considerations to grammatical rules. Cursive remarks and text in brackets are mine whenever they are found in the citations of the people. When people were named in the interviews, their real names are replaced by imaginary ones.

196 The 'Municipality of Cochabamba' is prior to the LPP's implementation. After the new competences the municipalities have since 1994, it came to be the 'Municipality of the Cercado Province'. People still use the first name as it is

In a later conversation with Antonio, Renato was also present. He is younger and he belongs to the 'next generation' of leaders in the settlement. Like Antonio, he was born in Oruro, but came to this place as a teenager. He no longer lives in the housing area, but the impression he gives is of a strong identity with the place. His family is one of the thousands of families from all over Bolivia that took up the challenge to develop rural land for urban housing to meet their shelter needs, in spite of the regulations in force.

Answers from Antonio and Renato to my inquiries on the original aims of the land, the land ownership question, and the way the land was allocated to the 'beneficiaries', show how different these things are as seen by different people in the area:

The land was bought by the 'workers' company' from the Bazoberry family¹⁹⁷, I mean the San José of Oruro Mine Company, and that is why the neighbourhood carries the name... later on, the land fractioned by Mela Darrás was included for making up one neighbourhood... in those years *I believe* the aims were to do a kind of recreation farm...at the beginning *I suppose* the aim was not to urbanise it, after the first trial in 1977 *they started* for sure to think on it... (Renato 200/11).

The land belong to the San José workers that were about three thousand at that time, all were owners... later on, the land become transferred for free by the Union to the families of the Cooperative... there were 110 plots, *the land was not enough for three thousand houses, you see?*... if the Municipality had given the approval for our urbanization plans at that time the two hectares had not been loosen in the two trials...they denied the approval although we had the chance to build 100 houses with financial support of CONAVI,¹⁹⁸ therefore we couldn't build our houses then... (Antonio 2000/11).

When the San José Mine was closed, the Worker Union lost its leading role and the workers had to move from the houses in the mine camps. To keep the land and to enable its use for housing, a decision was made to subdivide it in plots to be transferred to a smaller number of employees. As best as I could understand through my conversations with Antonio, the cooperative model in land ownership was chosen to keep the collective and collaborative vision the

shorter and more familiar. In cases where I use the first name, it will be when I refer to the period before 1994.

197 The OTB-SJT is located on properties owned previously by, among others, the Anaya, the Bazoberry, and the Darrás, former landowners.

198 The National Housing Councils (Consejos Nacionales de Vivienda) were part of the Housing Sector in the 1960s and 1980s. Workers at the mines, education and health sectors, had specific housing funds administered through their Councils. Funds were made up based on 2% of the active and passive workers yearly salary, and by a not fixed contribution from the state's annual budget. High levels of corruption in the administration of the funds of the CONAVI's, however, were behind the low performance of these councils and the basis for its replacement by other institutional structures later on.

mineworkers had at that time.¹⁹⁹ The goal was to own the land in collectivity; each 'beneficiary' would have the right to develop individually an 'assigned' plot for housing. The households were not allowed to sell the plot without the approval of the Cooperative organization. This collective view of land ownership has been the most difficult to preserve over time.

The transfer of the Cooperative land to a smaller group of 'beneficiaries' was first discussed and then carried out in 1987 by lottery, according to Antonio's version.²⁰⁰ The land, however, was insufficient for all the original owners if the aim was to use it for individual housing, he explained. When I asked how the 102 (or 110) families could take over the land owned by all the workers, he said that a rather complicated and 'just' allotment process was employed. The question of how exactly the decision was made, however, remains unclear to me.

In addition to Antonio and Renato, there were others among those interviewed that knew about the lottery question. One was Filomena. She is about seventy years old and a widow of a former miner that was part of the 'beneficiary' group. On the story of the lottery drawing for plots she said:

They made the draw among them (she means the miners)... according to the number you take you'll get a plot, they said to us (she refer to the union leaders)... each one took a number and it corresponded to the number of the plot that one was going to own... (Filomena 2003/07).

Filomena was aware of the lottery, but she did not participate in it personally. It was the men who were involved in the 'play', she said. She told me that she used to follow her husband to the meetings and therefore she was aware of the lottery question, but she was not so sure on how the whole thing really worked.

I talked with another 'beneficiary' of the Cooperative group, with his daughter's help as he did not want to answer my questions directly. The loss of most of his hearing in a working accident made him uncomfortable in 'speeches with strangers', his daughter Iris explained to me.²⁰¹ She and her husband are young and know less of the settlement's history, but they had heard many things from Iris' father.

The old man said that the land was originally set aside for a vacation centre for the workers affected by silicosis²⁰², and for agricultural production for the benefit of the employees of the San José Mine. The use of the land for urban development was in question

199 For the mine workers, the cooperative model was not alien and was part of the efforts made by the National Revolution to benefit formerly excluded groups. In 1956, a particular law to regulate the functioning of different cooperative modalities was approved by the 'Revolutionary Government'.

200 According to Antonio, the Housing Cooperative was first founded in 1960 but got legal status later on.

201 Iris told me that the old man only hears noises in his ears since his accident at the mine.

202 This is a kind of illness that affects miners with insufficient clean air protection while working inside the mines. It attacks the lungs and has fatal consequences.

only when the state owned mines were closed and the workers were fired, he explained. According to his version, the unemployed workers were forced to search for alternative incomes in the cities.²⁰³ Cochabamba became an attractive city for the migration flows from the countryside, from the mines, and even from other cities. The old man told me that he was asked personally by Antonio to be part of the first group of ‘beneficiaries’, but that he did not know anything about the lottery question.

Antonio talks, as well, about the financial possibilities through CONAVI when funds started to be available for workers’ housing in the 1960s. The negative attitude of some functionaries of the Municipality of Cochabamba, for the approval of urbanization plans, became a hinder, he said. This shows that the plans to develop the land for housing was put up for consideration before the San José Mine was closed, but it became a fact only when the employees were fired and had to leave their houses in the mine camps.

How much influence union representatives had on who the “beneficiary” group would be, is not so clear now. But, according to Iris’ father, he was personally asked by Antonio to become a member of the Cooperative group, and he never was involved in the lottery drawing to get the plot he now owns in the settlement. The way the smaller group of miners accessed the Cooperative land was only the start of a series of quarrels over the land from this point on. The conflicts have not only been between the population and the local government in the way one normally thinks with regard to *unauthorized housing*. Several internal conflicts have emerged and have had an impact on social relations among the different groups living at the OTB-SJT today. Among the first are the quarrels between the Cooperative group and the former ‘caretakers’ of the land, beginning in the 1970s.

The troubles with the ‘caretakers’

Disputes on the Cooperative land were not initially with the formal systems. The land was involved in two judicial processes initiated by the former ‘caretakers’: the first against the Worker Union and the second against the members of the Housing Cooperative.²⁰⁴ According to informants from this group, the objective of the ‘caretakers’ was to keep the whole land through the ‘usocapión’ legal instrument.²⁰⁵ Besides the troubles and the legal costs, the two legal processes implied the transfer of two hectares of the Cooperative land to the demanding families. The trials resulted in many constraints to the ‘beneficiaries’ indeed:

203 Members of the unions were often at the top of the lists of workers to be fired. The 1980s winds blew in a rather negative direction for the social movements in the country compared to those in the 1950s.

204 Both judicial processes were during the 1970s.

205 The ‘usocapión’ is a legal modality that gives to people, who are ‘users’ of other’s property for at least ten years and without interruptions, the right to claim the property for their own. (Art. 138 del Código Civil, Tomo I). This demands a judicial process that is complicated, can take time, and represents high costs for the involved parties.

I'd to travel to Cochabamba and to La Paz, sometimes once in a week, sometimes each fifteen days, and I'd to stay for two or three days in detriment of my work... nobody recognizes all these efforts... I never asked for allowances for my expenses... I asked for permission from my work...sometimes I got certificate of illness from the hospital because they new I was involved not in politics but in social questions... I used the US\$ 4,500 of my severance pay for this expenses (Antonio 2001/04).

The costs of the land became higher than it was supposed to be from the very beginning. Those sent by the Union to make the purchase were the first to take profits from the land, and this attitude became a feature in the development process of the settlement. Antonio told me that the original cost of the land was only half the price the purchasers said they had to pay for it in 1956:

Two persons were involved in the purchase of this land, they were also representatives of the San José Union and thus workers of the mine. They paid 48.000 Bolivianos, but in their accounts the figures are almost double so much. I have a document with their travel fees and they are higher than they should be. You can't have travel fees for a cost similar to the cost of the land, you see... (Antonio 2001/04).

One of the first families that moved here was Eloisa's. She told me that their plot was originally 1000 square meters, but they got only half of this area when they moved to it. The loss of two hectares of land in the two legal processes with the former 'caretakers' probably was behind the smaller sizes of the plots than the originally planned, she said. Eloisa is over seventy years old; she gives one the feeling of knowing everything about the history of the area. She remembers the settlement process in detail, but precise dates can be difficult to remember, she told me. She was normally present in the activities of both community organizations as they exist in the area today, but I never saw her talking openly in the general meetings.

For many years, Eloisa and her husband asked Antonio to 'keep an eye' on their plot because they did not yet have the money to build the house. This had to be solved first before moving to the place, the woman said. The plot was practically in a 'wild' state and the family had small children at that time. Eloisa remembers that they got the 'hijuela'²⁰⁶ of the plot one day in May, but she was not sure of which year:

The first time we came here was to get our plots, we were some few families that day... it was the First of May but I don't remember the year. I remember clearly that the caretaker was intimidating us with at least ten dogs... he (the caretaker) started an action because he wanted to be

206 A kind of informal security in tenure the people in the 'illegal' settlements get as proof for their property rights for the plot and the house. Lawyers and authorities can be involved in these transactions, with this kind of documents, but they are not considered legal by formal finance institutions.

owner of the whole land...he was also member of the Co-operative... (Eloisa, 2002/07).

She speaks about one of the former 'caretakers', a name I would hear many times when I was trying to reconstruct the history of the settlement. When the land was recently bought it was necessary to have somebody to take care of it, said Antonio once. The eight hectares of agriculturally productive land could not be left unprotected without the risk of been occupied by force. These were times when land occupations by landless peasants, people in search of a plot to settle, but also land speculators, started to be common in the fringes of Cochabamba City. The Land Reform and the Urban Reform in the 1950s made land not only a right for those previously excluded from its possession, but also a highly valuable asset.

Eloisa told me that the males of one of the 'caretakers' family, together with 'criminals' from Villa Mexico, were involved in the demolition of the first house her family was building at the beginning of the settlement process. Eloisa talked with one of the sons personally and "let him know clearly that she and her family were going to live here in spite of what they would try to do against it":

I know you destroyed my house, I said to the man, you were drunk and together with criminals you hired from Villa Mexico you did it... I have serious problems with the money so we are now going to build it again and you have to let us do it in peace otherwise you will have to do with the police, I said... (Eloisa, 2002/07).

The heads of the families of 'caretakers' involved in the first trial were also workers of the San José Mine, "we were working mates", explained Antonio sadly, "it was meant that they only protect the land from outsiders", but "they became peasants and wanted to keep the whole land for their own". The 'caretakers' were not only using the land for their own cultivation, they hired it to landless peasants for profit and started a brick production operation here, Antonio told me. The degrading of the land in the northern part of the Cooperative area shows past evidence of the brick production activity of the former 'caretakers'.

When the head of one of the 'caretakers' family died, the widow and the grown-up children, together with another 'caretaker', initiated the second trial, this time against the Cooperative organization. The costs of the two trials were covered through the sale of nine plots at low prices.²⁰⁷ Additionally, as a result of the agreements made through the judicial process, the former 'caretakers' received land from the Cooperative members and became owners of several plots within the limits of the Cooperative area. Relations between the Cooperative members and the former 'caretakers' are not good even today; the Cooperative members never accepted the attitude of their 'working mates' about their rights to land and consider them betrayers.

Antonio told me that all decisions related to the selling of disputed land were taken at general meetings, so the members of the Cooper-

²⁰⁷ According to Antonio, the plots of 500 square meters each were sold at the cost of one US\$ per square meter at that time.

ative organization were always informed on what was going on, although for others in the area, this was not so evident.

In addition to these internal problems between the Cooperative group and the 'caretakers', the peasants living in the surrounding areas saw the settlement process as disruptive to their production activities.

The miners have appropriated land meant for farming

For many peasants in the countryside surrounding Cochabamba City, the urbanization process has had mostly negative consequences. The increasing costs of the land and the lack of support to farming forced many peasants to sell cultivable land for urban development. Discussions between rural and urban dwellers of District 9 could reach a fever pitch in meetings at the Municipal House 9. And these were good examples on how intricate land questions could be at micro-level as well.

Eulogia is of peasant origin and comes from the countryside of Cochabamba. She lives with her grown children in one of the houses of the Cooperative area for only five years now. When she was a child she worked as a shepherdess to help her father with his livestock. They came to the area to feed the cattle because the grass was good, she said. When we talked about changes in land-use from rural to urban, she gave me the same response I heard in the meetings when the 'agrarian' dwellers and the 'urban settlers' discussed the problems of District 9.²⁰⁸

I know these fields since I was a child... when I was twelve I use to feed the livestock here ... I came with my father very early in the morning, we started to go, almost trotting, at three in the morning from the Angostura²⁰⁹ and we arrived here at eleven in the morning... there were only nice grasses, trees and the river... if my father was alive, he could tell the history of this area... (Eulogia 2001/07).

I discuss sometimes with Antonio... I've said to him that this land doesn't belong to the miners originally, they have assaulted land that was aimed for agriculture, I don't really understand how they got this land... (ibid.).

The urban development of this land has, in this sense, resulted in conflicts with the population traditionally occupied in farming activity, mainly because of its impact on land prices. Since farming is not an easy activity in these times, land developers look for peasants that have financial problems, in order to buy their land. Rural land is subdivided and sold, not only by the former landowners, but also by peasants and communities that got it through the Land Reform in the 1950s. For the peasants that still have farming as its main income

208 They call themselves the *agrarios* (agrarian) in reference to people that still live as peasants; they refer to the new established urban dwellers as *asentados* (urban settlers).

209 In reference to the place near the Angostura water dam, initially proposed for irrigation, and located about 17 kilometers to the south east of Cochabamba City.

source, the urban dwellers are 'invaders' of the land that is not designated for urban use.

Land conflicts within the Cooperative area derive from the attempts of the 'caretakers' to keep the whole land owned by the Cooperative group. The former miners 'became peasants', according to Antonio. They saw its potential for farming and other activities, such as brick production, he said. The land the 'caretakers' received from the court in the southern part of the settlement had been designated for farming until a few years ago. The subdivisions the 'caretakers' already made for the sale of plots for urban use, exist mainly in the land they own within the limits of the Cooperative land, or in bordering areas of the settlement.

The internal conflicts within the Cooperative area also have their roots in the confusion created by the community representatives in land dealings over the years, this according to the people living here. This is a topic that emerges many times, both in the personal conversations, and in the general meetings. There are other issues that the people refer to in negative tones, as well; among these are the failed attempts to provide drinking water to the settlement and the unfinished 'community house'. In general, all these questions are, in one way or another, related to the study area's population struggling to 'being part' of the city, with little or no support from the formal systems. It also has to do with how power relations perform at different levels of the social structure.

Struggles and Conflicts for Being Part of the City

The Housing Cooperative was established in 1960 but the Cooperative organization got formal status and started to be active only when the 110 (or 102) households became 'beneficiaries' of the land in the second half of the 1980s. A strong community organization was surely needed to develop rural land for residential use. The members of the Housing Cooperative were former miners with an important mobilization and organizational tradition behind them. This group shared the common features of being without the income sources they earned before, and the extraordinary challenge of developing an urban settlement on the fringes of Cochabamba City.

As pointed out earlier, it was a small group of the 'beneficiaries' that first started the settlement process. Even now, after fifteen years, only a few of the original members of the Housing Cooperative live at the OTB-SJT. The former miners surely had strong organizational capacity and a tradition of struggle, but this was not a struggle related to housing, and even less to organized self-help and mutual aid. The employees in the mines got housing from the companies as long they were employed there (which meant that to lose a job was to become 'homeless' at the same time). This could be the main reason behind why so few of the households made the effort to build a house and to move here.

Even now, the leading role of the Cooperative group is clearly perceived in the OTB-SJT. The experience of the Union has been, without doubt, relevant for the consolidation of the housing area and for

the improvements made thus far. But, this seems not to be of much help for mitigating the negative attitude held today by the people living here against the Cooperative organization and the former community representatives. In many interviews the people seemed convinced about the murky affairs of the community representatives in their handling of the Cooperative land. They also blamed the community representatives for failures with the wells for drinking water. These questions became even more acute when the requirement of land for open spaces and green areas was mandated by the Municipality, a lack that was the main obstacle for the implementation of the *regularization* process of the OTB-SJT. As a consequence the label of *unauthorized housing* turned into the main obstacle for the extension of drinking water and sewer systems by the institution in charge of these facilities.

Joint activities to improve the area had started before the LPP and the LAD became in force in the country, particularly with the 'Resettled from the airport' grouping. This group began to move in almost at the same time as the first 'beneficiaries' started building their houses. People remember the place as a 'wild land' in the first years of the settlement process. No electric service or transportation facilities existed at that time; access to other basic services and community facilities did not exist either.

Electricity and the first transportation routes came about through joint efforts by both groups. When the 'Mela Darrás' area initiated its settlement process, access to drinking water, opening of streets and the building of the 'multifunction plan'²¹⁰ were accomplished in coordination with this group, too. The people's contribution was related to payments in cash, negotiations with the formal system through the community representatives, and sometimes in the 'watching' of the building materials or the 'taking care' of those in charge of the works. In this sense, contributions were not linked to organized participatory schemes at that time.

The development of housing area had demanded enormous efforts from both community organizations. Even so, members of these organizations are often accused of bad management of the projects and irregular administration of community funds. Some representatives have had legal charges brought against them in connection to the irregular sale of plots in the Cooperative area. Community participation in housing improvement was not without power conflicts at the micro-level from the very beginning of the settlement process. A relevant question here is how much the vulnerability of these housing areas to political manipulation contributes to increase power conflicts at the micro-level.

It is evident that the 'illegality' label placed on housing conditions has not discouraged the people for making the improvements achieved so far. It is clear that some of these improvements had not been possible without some kind of acceptance and support, particularly from the local government. In spite of this, for many of those interviewed, the political connections of the community representa-

210 The Municipality and the people commonly refer this way to the basketball and volleyball sport facilities that are built in many neighborhoods in Bolivia these past years.

tives were mostly negative, no matter how much these connections enabled the improvements in the first place. There is a commonly shared view among the people interviewed that ‘political parties do things only to get votes in return’.

In general, for many people – particularly among the ‘beneficiaries’ of the Cooperative land and the first families of the ‘Resettled from the airport’ – there was more solidarity before, and the community sense was stronger, in the first years of the settlement process.

It was more solidarity at the beginning

The first time I saw Eloisa was in one of the general meetings. I used to see her in most activities the grass root organization active here had. Two of her sons are members of the boards of the community organizations; but they do not work well together. They do not agree much on how things should be done when it comes to people’s participation at the OTB-SJT, as became clear in my interviews with both. Ramón is more interested in youth activities. He was active in the changes to the community organization when a ‘new generation’ practically ‘took over’ the board. When he was elected vice president of the SJT-OTB, his brother was among those removed from the board. Renato is more interested in politics, and his good connections with one of the strongest political parties in the government of the city are well known here. The divergences of the brothers on participatory and housing improvement questions made me think that power conflicts at micro-level could be found even at the household level.

Eloisa and Filomena belong to the first group of household that started the settlement process. Eloisa remembers this period as “better times of solidarity” and talks warmly on the “common food pots” they made to “take care” of the workers in the extensions of electrical service. The women talk about collaboration and solidarity, but the things they talk about are not really connected to mutual aid practices in any organized way. They talk more about spontaneous, mutually supportive efforts among the families that from the beginning came to live here.

We were only five houses at the beginning...when they were making the excavations for the electricity posts the five families take care of the workers, everybody was contributing, nobody was egoist, I went around to get ingredients for the food, they gave little potato, onions, vegetables, each family gave little, but together was enough for the worker’s food and also for those who were collaborating with the works... (Eloisa 2001/07).

Indeed, it was only when the first conflicts with the ‘caretakers’ emerged that the need to develop this land ‘in collective’ came into question. Filomena remembers the discussions the Cooperative members had in Oruro when they noticed that the ‘caretakers’ wanted to keep the land for themselves. In her recollections, discussions on the possibility to move to Cochabamba emerged, but with many doubts about doing so from the miners. To own a piece of land in the city was one thing, but to develop ‘wild land’ for urban use by one’s own efforts certainly was another. Moreover, as long as

the employees were working at the mine this was not seen as such an urgent question.

We have to build, no matter if it is only a *chujlla*²¹¹ they said in the meetings, but we didn't have enough money yet... there were some who wanted to move, but there were also other who didn't want to move yet... (Filomena 2003/07).

The miners probably had doubts about moving here, but this did not mean that they were not well disposed to fight for the land they now owned. Filomena remembers the actions they took to stop the 'caretakers' as follows,

We decided to come in four buses to clean the area with tractors and to show the 'caretakers' that we will resist for our land... (Filomena 2003/07).

When the mine employees were forced to move from the mine camps, most of the households choose not to come to this place as a first alternative. This alternative was to develop rural land and to meet their housing needs by using their own efforts. The miners were unemployed, and were in need of new income sources just to survive. It probably was more realistic at the time to choose other ways to access housing. The fact that a large percentage of the plot owners did not move here from the very beginning, but choose to stay in Oruro, made me think about social networks. Social networks were surely needed to start a new life in the city, and were a relevant factor to choose where to move. Some of the 'beneficiaries' that kept their plots at the OTB-SJT are still living in Oruro. They are notified and invited to the general meeting when decisions are considered important. They usually come only for that particular day.

Filomena refers to the lack of financial resources when the discussions to move to this land were held during the times of conflict with the first 'caretakers'. When the mine employees were fired, they usually got compensation in cash from the Bolivian state. The amounts given were dependent on the time a miner worked. They were never big sums, but it was seen as start up capital just the same. What is clear is that most of the fired workers decided to settle down in places other than the Cooperative land. The reasons behind this may be many and different for each particular case, but the question goes beyond the limits of this study.

Considering that few 'beneficiaries' moved to Cochabamba it is possible to assume that the households were more biased to choose alternatives other than to develop a new housing area in the fringes of the city themselves. The significant number of empty plots in the Cooperative area shows that, for one or another reason, the owners decided to wait for the building of the house or for the sale of the plot. Both these situations have in common the fact that others were

211 It means *hut* in Quechua. Aymara and Quechua are the biggest indigenous languages in Bolivia and are official languages. Aymara is spoken mostly in the Highlands while Quechua in the Valleys. Many of the 'old' dwellers of the settlement speak one of these two languages better than they do Spanish. It was clear that many persons felt more comfortable in their own language than in Spanish when they asked for the word in the general meetings.

in charge of the development of the land. Emilia²¹² said once in a rather angry tone that,

The owners of the empty plots are waiting so somebody else makes this to a good place to live in, but why they are not here to help us with this work?... (Emilia, 2001/07)

The people, also, were angry with the owners of the built houses who chose not to live in the place. The tenants, ‘antirecistas’, ‘caretakers’, or other kind of occupants “are not interested in activities of the community because they are not the owners of the property”, I heard many times from those living here.²¹³ “We need more persons to make this place better”, said one woman, “the non owners are never in the meetings and they are not interested in the development of the community at all”. This was true in the cases of the no-owners category I had the opportunity to interview.

Filomena and other people told me that the population was no longer interested in making contributions in cash to the community organizations, even though the monthly contribution was less than one US\$ per household per month. According to them, the people had paid too often for things that never worked. “The community representatives make promises when they need money but the accounts are never transparent enough”, she commented. According to her, the bad management with the community contributions started very early.

I use to *follow* my husband to the meetings, and we paid for things that never were done, they asked for money to buy corn and alfalfa seeds, to plant potato, to build an irrigation system and a watering pool, they got money for stones, sand, cement, but when some people came to visit the area nothing was done... (Filomena 2003/07).

It is not so clear to me if mismanagement of community contributions at that time were the responsibility of the leaders of the Worker Union, or of the ‘caretakers’ that received the money, but never did the things they were supposed to do. This was not so clear for Filomena, either. But the negative to pay the monthly contributions makes the work of the community representatives difficult because of the lack of funds. The newly elected members of the OTB-SJT board use to comment: “it’s impossible to do things without money”. The representatives need to reimburse themselves for their transportation to different places of the city, and to attend meetings with the local government, among other expenses. These costs can be prohibited for household economies that are already weak.

Antonio told me that his retirement money was used in the travels and other costs during the two trials. He explained that the landowner’s house he received was a ‘reward’ he got for the efforts and contributions he made at that time. I had the impression that he views the extra plots he owns near his house as fair compensation for his efforts to win the Cooperative land back and to develop the

212 Emilia lives in the ‘Mela Darrás’ area.

213 Of the 119 occupied houses that made up the sample on this particular question: 81 were occupied by the own owners, 27 were tenants, 6 were ‘antirecistas’, 1 was a borrower, and 4 were ‘caretakers’.

housing area. And this is something that not all the interviewed persons agree with him about. For many, this was part of the representative's bad management. The 'plots question' was not an easy topic to touch upon with Antonio, or with other representatives of the community, but the population in the housing area saw the issue in a negative way.

They made business with the land

Subdivisions and transfers of the land, through non-transparent procedures by the representatives of the Cooperative organization, belong to the history of the settlement, and this becomes clearer to me with time. The issue is still disturbing for the people at the OTB-SJT, and particularly for the members of the Housing Cooperative. Explanations about these sales of the plots by the representatives have not been much help in recovering the lost trust of the people.

We had to sell plots, among others, to pay the costs of the two trials...but also to pay costs related to the water wells... (Antonio, 2001/04).

The establishment of the OTB-SJT made the 'affairs' with the Cooperative plots, from an internal question of the Cooperative group, to a concern of the whole population of the newly established entity. The requisites for open spaces and green areas to implement the *regularization* process only worsened the internal conflict related to this question. The people normally refer to the subject as "the business with the plots" and the topic is mentioned quite often in the community meetings. The "affairs with the land" appear as the starting point for dissatisfactions with participation. The *regularization* issue linked to the practical implementation of the LPP and the LAD, therefore, has contributed to an increase in power conflicts at the micro level.

The bricklayer that *helped* me with the building of my house lives here, he helped actually to repair the house of one of the community representatives as well. *He got* the plot he lives in *as payment* for this work... (Eloisa 2002/07)

There were bad managements even when the land was owned in cooperative, plots were illegally sold and nobody knows where the profits are...the lack of regularization is a huge problem because we can't access basic services, SEMAPA²¹⁴ didn't want to work with the housing area because of our illegal situation, the neighbours think that with the regularization we are going to access these services, particularly the drinking water is something important for us... (Gerardo 2002/03).

214 SEMAPA (Servicio Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado) stands for Municipal Service of Drinking Water and Sewage. It is the municipally-owned company that deals with these services in the city. SEMAPA was not privatized as other similar companies in the country because Cochabamba's citizens were against it. The so-called 'water war' (guerra del agua) was among the most remarkable social mobilizations in the last few decades as it succeeded to stop the privatization plans of this service by the local government.

The lack of open spaces and green areas is now associated to bad managements of the land by the entire population living within the limits of the OTB-SJT. In the interviews the subject primarily was mentioned as linked to the demands of the Municipality for making the *regularization* process possible, rather than to the potentiality that open spaces and green areas have for the improvement of the living conditions here. This interpretation was similar in the case of some professionals working at the Municipality as well. The lack of land for open spaces and green areas emerged as a kind of ‘debt’ the population has with the Municipality, and it had to be ‘paid’ either in land, in other places of the city, or in cash.²¹⁵

According to the Municipality, the lack of land for open spaces and green areas was the main reason behind the non-viability of the *regularization* process of the OTB-SJT. And, in the view of SEMAPA, the *unauthorized housing* situation was an obstacle for the extensions of running water and sewer systems to the area. No matter how true or false the accusations on the affairs with the Cooperative land are, the fact is that the land was already subdivided into individual plots when the settlement process started in the second half of the 1980s, as the first existing urbanization plan shows.²¹⁶ It is clear that the issue of open spaces and green areas did not have the same connotation it had before the statements of *regularization* started to be circulated. The *regularization* question made the lack of land for open space a matter of conflicts between the people and the formal system, as well as among the different groups that make up the OTB-SJT today.

The requirement of 44% of land for open spaces and green areas was discussed first when the LPP and the LAD made rural areas part of the administrative duties of the municipalities. The land occupied by the Cooperative, the ‘Resettled from the airport’ and the ‘Mela Darrás’ groups, became part of the newly defined District 9. The Municipality of the Cercado Province had the administrative responsibility for this territory beginning in the second half of the 1990s.

The twenty-two urban settlements existing in the D9 at that time were initially labeled as ‘illegal’, as this was considered rural land set aside for farming. However, the LPP and the LAD gave the population the possibility to negotiate with the local government and the right to take part in the decision-making process on ‘things that affect their lives’ through the OTB legal structure. The residents living in *unauthorized housing* areas started to see these laws as instruments for their struggles for being recognized as part of the city.

The grassroots now have the formal channels and the mechanisms for exercising their demands for housing improvements. As a result, to simply ignore residential areas such as the OTB-SJT, or to try to eradicate them, is more difficult for the local government today than it was in the past. Conflicts have been many over the past few

215 According to the *regularization* proposals at least half of the land not available for open spaces and green areas should be paid in cash by the population living in the housing area in question. (Meeting of the District Council of the District 9 in 2001/01).

216 The first urbanization plan was drawn by an architect and paid by the Cooperative group in the 1980s.

years, between the Municipal Council and the representatives of the OTB's organized in the 'District Council of the District 9'²¹⁷. Discussions on the rights of the fifty-four settlements that exist in the entire district today, on how they can achieve "regular" status, are still going on.

Statements of *regularization* started to circulate from the official side first. To demands for housing improvement, the Municipality answered that the *regularization* had to be implemented first. In the official statements, the OTB-SJT changed its status from 'illegal' and 'informal' into 'irregular'. The regulations in force for Cochabamba City since the 1960s, were initially considered adequate for this kind of residential areas as well.

The establishment of the OTB-SJT is a result of the practical implementation of the so-called Second Generation Laws in the country. The challenge was now to 'adapt' this new physical reality to the *regularization* requisites under discussion. In this context, the 'affairs' with plots of the Cooperative land came to be considered as 'the main obstacle' for improvements to the residential area by the people living here; particularly when related to access to drinking water and sewer systems, a central demand of the population. The Cooperative area does not have land that could be allotted for open spaces and green areas and this now affects the other groups that are part of the OTB. Statements of *regularization* made, in this sense, the efforts taken all these years to develop the place, with little support from the formal system, less significant in the perceptions of the people living here.

The people seldom mention their achievements, and focus mainly on shortcomings. When conversations turn to the past and today it is easy to understand that the development of this settlement demanded huge efforts from the people, and strong leadership at grass root level. It is not longer the 'wild land' people remember from the initial periods of the settlement process. Living conditions are still very poor for most of the households, but improvements are evident, especially when compared to the memories of the first settlers on how the place looked before. One of the newly elected representatives of the OTB board told to me,

I moved here when I was eighteen, it was really a rural area and my dream was that the place will develop to a little city, you know...but it has stagnant in its development if one compare with other suburbs in the city...I'm a dreamer and I think that we didn't reach yet the limits we can reach one day... (Gerardo 2002/03).

The negative background that burdens community participation at the OTB-SJT is not, however, without grounds. Besides the question of the land, the population talks often, and in angry tones, of the failures with the water wells. Both attempts to access drinking water have been costly and the solutions were not sustainable over time. Although the failures have had mainly to do with technical factors

²¹⁷ The District Councils are organizations that represent all the OTBs of the same district and are a result of the LPP's implementation. See Chapter 2.

and not with bad managements, the people blame the community representatives for the mistakes anyway.

We didn't want to pay for polluted water

I used to see Eulogia frequently in the community meetings. She is a middle age woman who normally sits together with other women, but never in very prominent places. She uses to make loud comments, time after time. Her jokes often made the participants of the meeting laugh. I noticed that the things she said made the community representatives upset. The woman was not aware of the 'rules of the game' in the assemblies and I never saw her making a speech. She never stood up to talk as other participants did actually.

"They don't want me to talk", she said in reference to the community representatives when we were talking about her participation. The women and the youth seldom speak at the general meetings and when Eulogia speaks it happens mostly in the informal way described. She is not only present at community meetings, but in other kinds of community activities as well. She normally came on time and stayed until the meeting was over. Eulogia is convinced that people want to participate, but they are tired of paying cash contributions without clear explanations on how the money is to be used.

When people participate they want to know the true... we don't want to pay fees if things are unclear... how long should we accept this?... although the economic crisis is such big nowadays, we could contribute with enthusiasm and pleasure if things were transparent...the new representatives are young, I hope they can do things work better... (Eulogia 2001/07).

The lack of running water was not a hindrance for Eulogia's amassing a garden at the house. She needs, however, to buy water regularly, as everybody does at the OTB-SJT. The extra cost for the watering of the garden was worth it for her. "I couldn't possible live in a house without flowers" was her explanation. Housing improvements are important to feel comfortable in the neighborhood, but running water was the most urgent for her.

If San José de la Tamborada improves everybody would stay here, but when nothing happens it is really boring... water is a priority, sanitation one can solve with a latrine... I buy two barrels of water each two days... I have my flowers, I adore them... the flowers are my relatives, my family... I go up four, five in the morning and I sit here and pray, then I take water and say: we are going to have water soon you'll see, so you can live fresh and happy... (Eulogia 2001/07).

The lack of drinking water represents a problem because the people need to buy it from trucks. Monthly expenses for water like this are far greater than with houses that get this service through SEMAPA.²¹⁸

²¹⁸ Comparative studies made on drinking water expenses in different areas of the city showed that households that get this service through SEMAPA have significantly less costs than those that need to buy the water in poor residential areas like the OTB-SJT (Escobar and Ledo 1988).

As far as I know, the water supplied by the trucks does not go through any regular quality control. Water distribution does not follow a routine either so people do not know for sure when the trucks will come at a specific time of the day. But this was not the most disturbing thing because the trucks came rather often anyway. As long this is a private service it is in the interest of the owners to sell the water.

The water issue emerges each time one talks of the needs and problems people have at the OTB-SJT. Normally this is related to the bad experiences they had in trying to solve the problem on their own. The investments made in the two water wells that are out of service now, represent a negative reference-point for community participation here. People talk frequently of the 200 US\$ each household paid for the running water they got, for only a very short period, "before it turned dark and dirty and was impossible to use even for washing or watering," as Iris expressed once. The high levels of mineral and salt contents of the water was something people remember very well, "it was impossible to make the food with this water, and to drink was even worse", was not uncommon to hear.

Isaura was little aware on the LPP and the POAs. The organizational problems in the area for her were related to mistakes the former community representatives made in the past. She was sure that the population was fed up paying for poorly conceived plans.

We pay to the organization but nothing happens...less persons want to pay now ...people are doubtful because they don't have a clear picture of what happens with the money...the general meetings are tiring, they talk on other things, the people abandon the meetings, they never solve things, there are unending speeches only... (Isaura 2001/07).

The presence of people coming from different parts of the country, and of people with different religions, is not the main problem for the low level of participation, according to Isaura. "The problem is that everybody concerns only about their own business", she said. The failure to supply drinking water was a poor precedent for community participation, in her opinion. That everybody did not pay the total amount due for their water connection was disturbing for those who did. But, most of all, people felt angry because the water ran only for a short time "before only dirty mud came from the taps" and the representatives of the community, "were trying to get payments for the service anyway."

I paid US\$ 200 for the water connection and there were many that didn't pay or paid less but got the service anyway...my husband said: Do you think that the others will pay? But I didn't listen to him...it is not fair, some got taps paying 20 or 10 US\$ only... in the future I will first be sure that everybody pays before I do myself... (Isaura 2001/07).

My mother didn't want to pay, but we insisted... everybody has water, we said, we really wanted to have this service....we've got the water for six months I think and that's it...my mother was really angry... what I told you?,

she said...we could have done many things with US\$ 200... The water of our own well is not for drinking, it's too salty... (Vania 2002/08).

When they wanted me to pay for the service... come in and see which is the quality of the water you want me to pay for, if you drink this water then I pay for it, I said... (Iris 2001/07).

In general, the confidence for the community representatives was low, but in talking to Isaura about one of the most controversial community leaders, he said to me: " maybe he did affairs with the land, but he also did improvements for the community". And this is something not uncommon to hear about the public servants in Bolivia. The corruption level can be so high that people 'know' that persons in public services are frequently involved in hidden business, but those who, at the same time, perform some type of 'good' work are apparently 'less guilty'. Antonio told me once that the paving costs per square meter that the Municipality charges to the OTB s at the District 9, are more than double as high as the costs would be if the OTB s got the funds and make the contracts directly with the paving 'companies'.

We made calculations on the paving costs and asked directly to the people in charge of this works, the amounts of money can be more than twice for the prices the Municipality charges to us... in my work as a member of the Vigilance Committee²¹⁹ I need to know this things... but when we say to the Municipality that we will make the contracts directly they said that this is against the law, so we can't do anything, the communities lose money... (Antonio 2001/04).

Improvements made at settlement level thus far can fairly be connected to organized self-help and mutual aid activities. However, attempts to work together in an organized fashion was accomplished once, for the construction of a 'community house'. The initial work was carried out by the OTB dwellers according to many of those interviewed. But, even in this case, signs of a well-structured organization for working together were difficult to find. The building activities with the 'community house' have been mostly spontaneous, and dependent on the good will of the neighbors for taking part in the work on Sundays.

Everybody was enthusiastic with the 'community house' idea

The residents talk about the time when they were trying to build a 'community house' in the Cooperative area. But, the half abandoned walls became witness to one more failure of the community organizations. The promise to build it was made by one of the community representatives in compensation for the debts he had with the Cooperative group. According to the deal, in return for being freed from his debt he would buy the building materials, and the people would work together in the construction of the 'community house'. Although the community representatives told me that there were

²¹⁹ See Chapter 1.

drawings and plans ready for the construction of the 'community house', I never saw them.

Gina is a single parent woman who lives in the house next to the plot where the 'community house' started to be built some years ago. Her house is owned by her uncle and she has lived as a 'borrower' in the property for five years. There are seven children and four adults occupying the four bedrooms. The house includes a dining room, a tiny room for the kitchen, a precarious latrine and a yard for domestic animals. The building occupies about one third of the 400 square meters plot and is located in the back of the plot. There is little greenery in the yard. The plot is located near the watering channel, in one of the flood-risk zones of the settlement. In answer to my question about the 'community house' she commented:

Everybody was enthusiastic and wanted to work, we were here some Sundays but one day there were no more building materials and nobody knew what to do... the community representatives didn't come either... people lost interest after a while... (Gina 2001/07).

The first time I observed a general meeting at the OTB-SJT it was held on the plot proposed for the 'community house'. There were more people attending this meeting than in the meetings I had the opportunity to observe in the same place, three years later. The half-built 'community house' then was in the same uncertain situation, and the topics discussed then were now rather familiar to me. Community meetings in this open plot were more common on Sunday mornings and mostly in dry weather periods.

Alberto's 'chichería'²²⁰ presented more practical conditions for general meetings, particularly when they had to be held in the evenings. Access to chairs and tables made things easier at meetings; even seminars and workshops were easier to hold there. The bar's clients were never a disturbing factor for community events, at least at meetings I had the opportunity to be as observer. For many in the community, however, the meetings in this bar were not looked upon well. This was complicated by the fact that the 'chicherías' question was one of the controversial issues related to general matter of improving housing at the OTB-SJT.

For example when the construction of the community house started with the participation of the neighbors, they were organized and worked through *self-help* and *mutual aid* systems, they went and put its own 'grain of sand' regularly... you have maybe heard from Mrs Eloisa that the women made the food for all the participants... to not make the building ready is a mistake of the former community representatives too...the youth need a better place to meet than the 'chichería'... (Gerardo 2002/03).

"We need a decent place for having meetings", Gerardo once said to me. In his opinion the 'community house' was an important demand of the entire population here. The half built building was seen as one

²²⁰ These are kinds of bars and restaurants that got the name from the traditional alcohol drink *chicha* that is made of corn grains. These bars sells traditional dishes from the country as well.

of the many promises the representatives handled wrong. For Gerardo, the abandoned construction was a symbol of the many failures of the former community representatives. “The ‘chichería’ is not an appropriate place for meetings with young people”, he commented, “particularly if the aim is to make them desist from drinking alcohol and when our struggles are towards the better use of their free time”.

The organizational and mobilization experience of the former miners was certainly an important resource for the struggles towards housing improvement. The establishment of a new urban housing area on undeveloped land demanded, nevertheless, more skills than that experience could provide. Capacities related to physical planning and housing construction were needed; even financial resources and support from those in charge of the development and the managements of the city were required for the achievement of better outcomes on the part of residents.

Since the very beginning, the ‘illegal’ label the settlement carries has been the main factor behind the difficulties the population has had for getting more support from the formal systems. But this does not mean that the formal systems had nothing to do with the emergence and development of the place as the stories of the people testify. The impression is rather that the *unauthorized* condition of the living area was used as an argument for not giving answers when the improvement demands of the population were stronger and costly, such as the question of drinking water and sewer systems. In fact, the limits between ‘legality’ and ‘illegality’ are, blurred at the OTB-SJT.

The Blurred Limits Between *Legal* and *Illegal* Housing

The OTB-SJT is one of the 54 ‘illegal’ settlements established on land set aside for farming in the fringes of Cochabamba City. In spite of the high level of physical consolidation of the settlement today, the struggles with local government for being considered ‘legal’ are still going on. ‘Illegal’ conditions related to changes of land use from rural to urban have implications that show, however, how much the formal system has been involved in the settlement process from the beginning.

Social and economic structural factors are behind migration flows to the urban areas in the past century in the case of Bolivia.²²¹ These may help to explain, in part, the emergence of this settlement. But, the causes behind the changes in land use are far from being the result of decisions made by the population with this particular question in mind. The first group that started to develop the land was not aware of the illegal implications of this action as regards rural/urban land questions. They were not aware, either, of the impact this issue would have on their housing conditions in the future. Statements of ‘illegal’ housing and the consideration of ‘informal’ or ‘irregular’ set-

²²¹ This is in reference to economic policies implemented at the national level that negatively affected the working possibilities of the population in productive activity both in the countryside, in the mines and in the industrial sectors.

lements, in reference to *unauthorized housing*, started to have effects on the population's self-perception later on.

The involvement of the formal system is evident in settlement process of the OTB-SJT. The San José Mine Company and COMIBOL were the first that had to deal with the purchase of land in this place. The legal system was involved in the two trials with the Cooperative land. The state owned aircraft company LAB was behind the compensation of land to the 'Resettled from the airport'. And the Municipality of Cochabamba demanded land cessions to the Mela Darrás family for the approval of the urbanization plans for this area. Further transactions of land and housing in the different parts of the settlement have had professional involvement, as well.

Moreover, the group that started the settlement process on the Cooperative land requested, and got the approval for, building the first houses from the Prefectura²²², which is the direct representation of the Executive Power at local level. There are internal differences and diversities in access to land and housing among the groups that are part of the OTB-SJT, that vanish under the 'illegal' labelling. And, the involvement of the formal systems in the settlement process of the different areas that composes the OTB-SJT is seldom taking into consideration as relevant background when the *regularization* question is discussed today.

We got permissions to build our houses

The occupation of land by squatters became more common in the fringes of the cities. The possibility to losing more land to this process, if it lay unused, prompted the decision to start the settlement process in the Cooperative land. The initial steps were mostly a result of the dynamics of the urbanization process in the country, than purely from the housing demands coming from the owners of this land. "To leave the land empty was too risky", said Antonio once.

For Eloisa and her husband, the journey to Cochabamba was not a straight-forward one from Oruro, the city where they lived since they were children. Their stories are testimony of societies where the most vulnerable are the least protected. None had income, although the husband had worked for years at the San José Mine. It was difficult not to think about how, in their old age, the couple could possibly survive on a daily basis. In addition to the elderly couple, six other people lived in the house, three adults and three children. One of the sons told me once that he still stays with his parents because it was the only way "to support them economically."

Households with some ability to make investments in housing were invited to move here by the Cooperative representatives, among them Eloisa's family. To start the building process the families asked for permissions from the local government. "It was with the Prefectura we got in touch, not the Municipality", Eloisa told me. The 'anticretico' money, together with the money they got from the

222 Before 1994 rural areas were of direct competence of the central government. The Prefecturas are structures that represent the central government at the departmental level and have an administrative and political role (see Chapter 1).

sale of one of their taxis,²²³ was the source of start-up capital for the building of the house.²²⁴ A loan from a financial institution was never considered, she said. After fifteen years, the house still gives the impression of being under construction.

My oldest son already had enough authority to demand of my husband that he sell one of his cars, to use the money for the purchase of the building materials ... it was the twelfth or the eleventh of May when we brought stone, sand, gravel and other things here to start the works... (Eloisa 2002/08).

Eloisa and her husband were also part of the first group that asked for building permissions from the local authorities.

We got the authorization from the Prefectura to build the houses... we were five to ten households that asked for the approvals, we were all in need of housing... (Eloisa 2002/08).

Some houses were occupied already when discussions started with local authorities about electricity and other basic services. Eloisa said that her son was in negotiations with these authorities and that he told them that the rest of the group was waiting for electricity to start construction and move into the place,

My son was watchful when they said that there were too few houses for making this worth their investments... 'we are 110 families', he said, the others will move as soon as the electricity is installed in the housing area... ELFEC²²⁵ did the work shortly thereafter... (Eloisa 2002/08).

The building process started with consent from the authorities. This means that, in addition to providing the initial access and right to the land by the Cooperative group, the first steps for its actual development for housing was done with the consent of the formal systems. The investments in electric service by ELFEC show that, for one or another reason, the illegality question was not an overriding thing for the local government at that time.

But, there are also other steps taken during the urbanization process of this area. The paving of the streets, the 'multifunction plan' and arrangements for transportation, certainly are investments aimed directly towards the development of residential housing on

223 The lack of formal jobs has resulted in more activities related to service and commerce. As a result there was a huge increase of private vehicles for public transport in the cities. Besides the negative environmental impact, the income possibilities through this activity have been decreasing proportionally to the increase of taxi services in the city.

224 The 'anticretico' is considered a type of savings, to be invested, among other possibilities, in the building of one's house. With this money in hand, the step-by-step housing construction process starts, particularly in the case of low- and middle-income households.

225 The local energy company, ELFEC, stands for Empresa de Luz y Fuerza Eléctrica Cochabamba, owned by the Municipality at that time. It is one of the municipal companies that were privatized ('capitalized' in the Bolivian context) in the last few years and came to be the ELFEC S.A.M. (ELFEC Sociedad Anónima Mixta).

this land. The contradictions inherent in the history of the residential area are permanently present, making conditions of 'legality' versus 'illegality' confusing for the people. The issue is not restricted to the settlement level either; confusion in the involvement of the legal system is found in situations related to the household level as well.

The land is a legacy from my father

Josefina moved to the plot when the land she inherited from her father was subdivided among the members of the family.²²⁶ She was born in this place and has always lived here. For three years she is building a two-storey house; and there is still much to do before it can be considered ready. When I asked about the ownership document for the property she spoke of a 'juridical resolution', which is a different document than the 'minuta' and the 'hijuela', which the members of the Cooperative group use to refer to.²²⁷ She was doubtful about the validity of this document for commercial transactions. But, since other members of her family have already sold land here under the same document, she most likely has nothing to worry about when she does sell. She talks, further, about the 'inheritor declaration' document, made when her father died; this is a legal paper that belongs to formal procedures in cases of death.

Josefina was aware of the need to pay taxes on her property, but she was a year late in the payments, she said. She was aware of the possibility that the regularization process would mean higher taxes for the owners here as well.

If all the things are *in order* here, to pay taxes may be more expensive...but one can also pay the taxes if the neighborhood improves...they said (other neighbors) that they are paying taxes, I don't know if it's true, but I didn't pay my taxes the last year either... so I have probably to pay this year... (Josefina 2002/05).

The land owned by the former 'caretakers' was a result of legal processes with final ownership decisions involving the formal system. Furthermore, the right to inherit the land, for the children and wife to make commercial transaction, shows the similarities of the tenure system to those who operate the formal segment of the housing market. Josefina also talks about taxes that she and other neighbors have to pay annually to the Municipality, which means that Josefina's land tenure follows the rules normally demanded by the legal system when it comes to property ownership. Statements related to legality/illegality on land tenure linked to regularization make her feel confused about her ownership situation indeed.

Josefina has documents that prove she is the owner of the plots inherited from her father, but she talks about statutory property rights for being sure that commercial transactions can be carried out. When I asked her why titling was needed, she referred to the possi-

226 Josefina's father belongs to one of the former 'caretakers' involved in the trials with the Cooperative land.

227 The 'minuta' is the general document related to the collective ownership of the land. The 'hijuela' is a document each family got for their plot tenure. Both are the most common tenure documents for commercial transactions in this settlement (see Chapter 3: 56-57).

bility of loans. Paulina and her husband are unemployed and have insecure incomes now. Their chances to get loans in the formal financial systems, at least according to the requirements in operation, are slim.

Josefina does not have statutory property rights or building permits related to the house she is building now. Her ownership documents refer only to the plot, as it does in many cases in the settlement. For months she was trying to get a ‘stamp’ from the Municipal House 9, she said, in reference to a kind of authorization needed for the building. This authorization is a common practice for houses built here since the decentralized units of the Municipality were implemented. However, in spite of the ‘stamps’ that may be provided by the MH9, most of the houses here are not built according to the regulations in force for Cochabamba City. The legal conditions people may feel because of the authorizations they get from the MH9, can easily be considered as ‘illegal’ if the *regularization* is implemented following the regulations in force. And this shows how complex the legal/illegal question can be in practice.

The woman talks about the need to achieve a legal status that enables her to sell the land inherited from her father. She links this question to taxes that must be paid in the future if the *regularization* is implemented, and to the possibility of getting loans. The fact is that her brothers already sold the inherited land with documents similar to those she has for the property. And she has to pay taxes for the land she owns even now. She will have little chances to use the property as collateral for loans, even if she gets another kind of tenure documents, because of the household’s difficult economic situation. In this sense, her perception of the impact the *regularization* question will have for her can be seen more readily as the *effects of truth* of the ‘official’ discourses, than with what really occurs or can happen.

We got this land as compensation

Rosaura was only fifteen when she and her mother were forced to move here. Magda, the mother, was born in Cliza²²⁸, but she had moved to Oruro city when she was only a child. Rosaura’s father died in a work accident and the insurance money from the Rail Road Company was part of the capital that enabled her mother to buy land near Cochabamba’s airport. Magda was a peasant in her origins, but the land she bought was never considered for farming. She decided to be a brick producer and according to both women the household had three brick kilns, and a rather good economy as a result.

Magda showed me the type of legal titles the “Resettled from the airport” got from the aircraft company, and said that she pays taxes for the plot to the Municipality yearly. According to the MH9 version, one of the requisites for the resettled families to move here was to keep the land without further divisions as “the land was aimed for farming”. But, this is not what has happened. The households removed from the airport were not peasants but brick producers, and

²²⁸ One of the provinces of Cochabamba’s Department, it is located at the south east of the Municipality of the Cercado Province.

when brick activity was not possible here the land itself become an option to improve incomes.

Our property titles are registered in the Real Estate Office and we pay taxes to the Municipality, we don't have problems with the regularization because we are owners... I wanted to be a brick producer because to be a peasant is not worth anything anymore, you can't raise enough income, it is too hard work for nothing... (Magda 2002/05).

The very fact that brick production and farming are activities incompatible and even conflicting with each other opens the question of why the families got this particular land as compensation.²²⁹ Furthermore, the way land was subdivided for allocating it to the nine families puts the farming productions argument into question. According to Rosaura they were never informed that the land could not be subdivided further. When the resettlement of the families went into discussion, the representatives of the aircraft company gave the families the option to search for "a place they liked more for moving", she said. The nine families chose this land because the quality of the clay was good for brick production. Their intentions all along were to continue with this activity, said the women.

Now they say that we don't have the right to subdivide the land because we belong to the 'Resettled from the airport' group...we can't produce bricks but why do the 'compadre'²³⁰ of the Municipal House administrator do it then? it's not fair...(Rosaura 2002/05).

Magda has already divided and sold three plots of her land 'illegally'. The plots are between 250 and 500 square meters each and as I could understand from her the sales were conducted with the consent of the MH9. The situation for the new plot purchasers is rather complicate, as there are no streets or paths to access their houses today. The too narrow shapes of the plots makes it very difficult to open even small paths for the access to the houses. To have the possibility to access their properties from the main street of the settlement, the families have to go through others' land. This same situation can be observed in other plots sold by the "Resettled from the airport" group as well. The need to open streets for improving accessibility to the new plots, and to enable a better communication of the whole housing area with the city's transport networks, is a matter of continuing conflicts of this group with the other groups at the OTB-SJT.

We are not in the urbanization plans they are doing for the housing area because we have problems with the MH9,

229 The clay removal system, still in use in the country, tends to degrade the land. Within the housing area one can see plots where excavations for brick production have left huge holes in the ground and where areas affected by depredation will be difficult to use without well-planned interventions and costly investments.

230 Relationships through one's godparents. This kinship condition is very important in social relations in Bolivia. One can be 'compadre' to another adult by different methods; one is the godfather relationship. A godfather has the same respect from the family as the real parents.

they want to open streets through our plots, but our plots are already too narrow... they want to force us but none of the resettled group will accept it... (Rosaura 2002/05).

Despite poor accessibility conditions, and the new “illegality within the old illegality”, some of the houses under construction in the plots sold by the resettled group have a higher quality than many other houses at the OTB-SJT; particularly compared to most of the houses existing in the Cooperative area. This goes against one of the arguments that supports the *regularization* question, when the notion is used as similar to statutory property rights or titling in housing.

The lack of clear property rights as an obstacle to the improvement of housing by low-income households is normally used as main argument for current *regularization* proposals. *Regularization* is proposed as the key for enabling improvements in low-income housing. According to these proposals, the low-income is likely to invest in housing only if a clear legal status in housing tenure is achieved; an idea behind current housing policies for poor housing areas in the Bolivian context too.

For Magda and Rosaura the problem was not related to the ‘feeling of illegality’. They got their plot from the state-owned aircraft company and had documents that supported their ownership. The subsequent ‘illegal’ subdivisions of their land, and the poor housing conditions present today resulted from their income situation rather than from the statutory property rights question. When compensation for land was given to people who owned land surrounding the airport, this ended the problem the aircraft company had, but the question of how to raise incomes began for the people involved in the agreement. The resettlers probably agreed to not doing any further subdivisions; because their intention was to continue with brick activity here. Right from the start, the whole transaction was bad business for the people, as it became clear with time. This makes the further ‘illegal’ divisions of the land rather complex, particularly when it comes to who should be blamed.

Other issues related to changes of landuse from rural to urban are also evident here, as is the case of the landowners that divided the land further and sold it for residential plots. This activity can be far from being considered ‘illegal’, at least in the case of the Mela Darrás landowner. Here the involvement of the local government is evident in the approval of the subdivisions.

We bought the land from the landowner

One of the households that live in the ‘Mela Darrás’ area and who bought the plot directly from the landowner was Carmelo’s. He owns the house together with a brother-in-law that is living abroad. They bought the land in 1992 and paid US\$ 750 for the 250 square meter plot. The house, made of ceramic bricks, has a rather good quality compared to other houses at the OTB-SJT. The house was built with the ‘help’ of a bricklayer, he said. The design of the house includes open spaces covered by zinc roofs supported by a simple metal structural system. The half enclosed areas are for the ‘chiche-ría’ Carmelo runs together with his wife Corina.

Despite the fact that Carmelo bought the land without, what he now calls, 'legal papers', he believes that a potential buyer will not see the documents he got from the landowner as reliable. He is one of the few at the OTB-SJT that talked of 'housing titles' in reference to his documents, and not on 'minuta' or 'hijuela', as other people usually mentioned. 'Housing titles' are the documents used for commercial transactions in the formal segment of the housing market. This is not so much about the feeling of housing illegality he has today, but the insecurity he feels when he tries to sell the property in the future, only with the document he received from the landowner.

I have housing titles and I pay taxes...nobody can move me from here, that is not the problem...we need tenure security for the future...if I want to sell some day, then the *legal rights on the property* will be the key, the buyer couldn't say that I don't have the *legal papers*...(Carmelo 2002/05).

A lawyer was involved in the transaction of the land and according to Carmelo his documents are registered in his name at the Real Estate Office. They pay taxes on the property regularly, but only as a plot, he pointed, which means that the plot can be considered legal, but not the house. The building of new houses or additions outside the regulations is far from uncommon in the city. It is a feature not restricted to low-income areas. The Municipality talks of 70 to 80 percent of constructions in the city lying outside the legal framework.²³¹

As long as the Municipality considers the residential area 'illegal', there is no point in searching for building approvals for the constructions of the houses either. Some of those interviewed talked about 'stamps' they got from the Municipal House 9 to build the houses. People get this kind of temporary permissions to build their houses until the regularization is implemented. Some of the people explained that they built the house according to recommendations they got from the MH9. "We did not want the houses to be demolished when the regularization process is implemented", Gina told me once. "We are not sure about the regulations that will be applied to the housing area then", was the explanation of the functionaries of the MH9, when they recommended the building of the house in the back of the plot.

In this sense, statements of 'illegality' related to the housing area, coming from the Municipality at central level, are behind the perpetuation of 'illegal' housing production. All of this is with approval of the decentralized units of the Municipality at district level, making way for a kind of vicious bureaucratic circle.

Many individuals told me that they pay taxes for the plot, but not for the house. According to them, taxes are paid to the Municipality particularly by the 'Resettled from the airport', the 'Mela Darrás' group, the former 'caretakers' or their inheritors, as well as by the

²³¹ Interview with the team of the Planning Office of the Municipality in October 2001.

second or third generation owners in the Cooperative area.²³² Transactions often mean the involvement of lawyers and the register of plots in the Real Estate Office. The building of the houses in a residential area, not yet considered legal, is seen as an illegal act by the formal systems. People do not feel, in this sense, the need to register the houses and pay higher taxes until it is actually required. Illegal housing conditions may be seen as convenient for many, considering the low incomes of most of the people living at the OTB-SJT, and particularly by those who do not feel insecure about their housing ownership today. *Ciro* was one of the people that bought the land from the *Mela Darrás* landowner. He told me once that,

I pay taxes only for the plot because the area is not urbanized yet...I used to pay about 90, 80, 70, Bolivianos before but Renato told me that it was too high so I claimed to the office and an architect explained to me something that I didn't understand first but I insisted and I finally was heard, now I pay only 40 Bolivianos yearly... (*Ciro* 2002/08).

I'm sure that this is my plot because it is approved by the Real Estate Office, it's legal because we bought from the owner *Mela* and she signed the papers...now they are saying that they will give us titles, but we already have titles... they explain and I don't understand the need to get more papers... I wonder if we are going to be more owners than we are today? (*ibid.*).

The two failures related to the drinking water wells, mentioned earlier, made the people in the 'Mela Darrás' group convinced that the best solution was to get this service through the municipal owned company SEMAPA. Nevertheless, this demand became even less viable when the OTB-SJT was created following the requirements established by the LPP. Despite the fact that the landowner adopted the regulations for new urbanizations before the LPP was approved, the merger of this land with the other two in the OTB form, made them 'illegal' in the eyes of the formal systems as well.

The lack of the land for open spaces and green areas in the Cooperative area, made housing conditions for the "Resettled from the airport" and for the 'Mela Darrás group' even worse than they were before. In this sense, the practical effects of the discourses of participation and housing improvement of the past few years have mostly had negative consequences for the housing conditions of the people living here. In spite of the 'illegal' situation in housing, the sale of properties in the area is quite active.²³³

232 In the case of the land owned by the original Cooperative group, requirements for taxes are applied according the General Law for Cooperative Societies of September 1958 that follow other tax regulations.

233 In a short study made by students of the School of Sociology of San Simón University at the OTB-SJT and the near surroundings in April of 2001, 46 announcements were found posted on the walls of the houses: 15 were for the sale of houses and plots, 11 for only the plots, seven for rooms for rent, and 4 for rooms in 'anticrético' system. The costs of the properties per square meter showed a wide range of differences. (*Informe: Oferta de Bienes Inmuebles en San José de la Tamborada, Abril 2001*).

The owner sold the property to me

The place Eulogia lives in now was found by her son through an announcement hanging on the door of the house. When she got divorced, the house she owned with her husband was sold, so she decided to buy here. US\$ 1,200 was paid in 1996 for a property that included the house, on a 464 square meters plot. This was very affordable compared to other properties sold in the same year at the OTB-SJT.²³⁴ But for Eulogia and her six children, the place presented less attractive housing conditions than they had before they moved here. The tenure document she received is the ‘minuta’.

The former owners were part of the ‘beneficiaries’ of the Cooperative group and Eulogia thinks that the man’s illness was the reason behind the sale. “He had *silicosis* and probably needed the money for medical treatments”, she said. The purchase of this property in an ‘illegal’ residential area was due to a lack of resources after the sale of her former house; there were not enough resources for a ‘better place’. Part of the money she got from the sale was used to pay for a gall-bladder operation she needed. It is not uncommon that the sale of a house or plot is the only way low-income people can pay for emergencies such as this.²³⁵

We own a 1500 square meter plot in the Northern part of the city as well; it is a regular place with access to basic services, but my children don’t want me to sell it because you never know... (Eulogia 2001/07).

Hanging placards or sale announcements are widespread techniques and can be seen all over the city, something that is not only seen for properties in *unauthorized housing* areas, but are in practice both in the ‘legal’ and the ‘illegal’ segments of the housing market. Many told me that a friend or a relative had seen the announcement on the property in sale, when I asked the question, “why they had moved just to this place”? Some said that they went around the city to find properties at affordable prices before they found a plot, or the house, here. The mechanisms of the informal and formal segments of the housing market in reaching potential clients are indeed similar.

According to many, it was real estate promoters who sold land in the fringes of the cities; some of them even went to the recently closed mines in search of potential buyers.

They had nice pictures on land in this city to show to the people in the mines, told me one of the former miners, and that they *lied* that it was no problem with the drinking water and other basic services... (Eulogia 2001/07).

Eulogia remembers that the house was in very poor conditions and that it demanded enormous efforts from her and her children to im-

234 Eulogia paid US\$ 2.6 per square meter, and according to the available data, her property is the least expensive among the properties sold in 1996 at SJT. The most expensive (considering the house and plot) that year was for US\$ 29.5 per square meter.

235 The lack of well-functioning health care systems in market oriented economies increases the vulnerability of the low-income. The costs of private health care can be expensive.

prove it. Among other problems, they had to deal with the proliferation of ‘vinchucas’.²³⁶ “I think they keep rabbits before, because the house was really full of vinchucas”, said Eulogia. Although the housing conditions are far from adequate, the house looks rather well organized inside. According to her the house lacks “a living room, an extra bedroom for her visitors and a bathroom”, in order to have enough space for everyone living here. It is obvious that more than the improvements Eulogia wants to do would be needed to achieve adequate housing conditions for the eleven members of the household today. The adobe walls made me think that the ‘vinchucas’ must still feel comfortable in Eulogia’s home today. She is aware of this situation, and would like to replace the adobe with bricks walls. But for her the most urgent matter was access to running water.

We can always solve the sewer thing by latrines, but to buy water is tiring and you can never be sure on the quality, besides my flowers need water every day as well... (Eulogia 2001/07).

Together with many people living in the Cooperative area, Eulogia belongs to the group dwellers that bought the properties from the second, and sometimes even the third generation owners. Purchases often had lawyers involved, and according to several sources the documents have ‘official stamps’ and are registered in ‘official books’. The widespread use of ‘hijuelas’ and ‘minutas’ for property transactions in this kind of settlements is legitimized this way by the legal system.

The professionals’ involvement may give the people the sense that things go according to the ‘rules of the game’, but the regularization question emerges anyway as a cloud each time people demand improvements to the local government.

It is not easy to see a clear division between ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ housing at the OTB-SJT. Nevertheless, words such as ‘illegal’, ‘informal’ or ‘irregular’ housing do not belong only to the discourse used by local authorities, or professionals working in low-income housing areas, it is part of the people’s language too. This is related, clearly, to the negative view the citizens got on the lack of an adequate legal status in housing ownership. Peoples’ perception on statutory property rights in housing is that this is a key factor for the achievement of better housing conditions.

Land speculators, or even landowners, were aware on the cash compensations the mineworkers got when they were fired, and pushed them to invest in land. Sometimes the same land was sold more than once, and in many cases the sale was related to land not originally established for urban development. Many buyers became aware of their ‘illegal’ ownership situation only when statements of *regularization* started to circulate.²³⁷

Regardless of the different kinds of ‘illegal’ situations that can be found at the OTB-SJT, the people never stopped making investments

²³⁶ This is a kind of insect that transfers the deadly illness ‘chagas’, and that usually lives where animals such as rabbits and hens are found. The ‘vinchucas’ find themselves particularly comfortable in adobe and unhygienic houses.

²³⁷ Interview with one of the technical advisors of the Municipal Council in July 2001.

in their housing from the very beginning. The issue is not so much related to 'legal' or 'illegal' question, when it comes to poor housing conditions, but to other factors that prevent a more rational and effective, step-by-step, investment strategy by the people. In addition to poor incomes, the lack of technical and financial support adapted to the householder's circumstances, are among the most relevant. Few houses under construction presented signs of a clear understanding on how to start and end the process towards the achievement of adequate housing conditions in the future. Furthermore, none of those interviewed could answer the question about the amount of investment they had made so far.

In this sense, the regularization question, as similar to statutory property rights and titling, belongs to the kind of discourse that see the problems, and the solutions, in too general a perspective. From the beginning, the proposals neglect the fact that the whole matter is about human beings; human beings that may have different ways of seeing problems and possible solutions. Surely, people have differences when it comes to visions, dreams and particular conditions when it comes to housing, and they can also have large differences in their views on needs and demands related to housing improvements.

The Needs Assessments Tricky Business

It is clear that only one third of the original 'beneficiaries' of the Co-operative area live at the OTB-SJT, and that properties have been sold in some cases more than once, even with houses that are constructed already.²³⁸ The survey shows that about 25 percent of the plots in the Cooperative area were still empty (vacant land).²³⁹ The tendency was now towards individual land ownership.

In addition to the 'vacant land' question, the population living here considers the brickyards and the 'chicherías' the most disturbing. The brickyards are associated with pollution and land deprecation, the "chicherías" with the increasing levels of crime and citizen insecurity. The question of 'vacant land' is related to the lack of open spaces and green areas, and to the need for more residents: "to feel this as a *real* neighbourhood", as a woman expressed once. Residents think that other people do not use the property because they are holding it only for speculative purposes.

Housing is directly linked to human beings need for shelter in a broader perspective in the context of the discussions here. Human beings refer to individuals who, in the case of the study area, belong to particular situations when it comes to access to housing; that have different places of origin; that live as city dwellers for more or less time; that have differences in their beliefs, political views, and even in the language they speak. These are people who may have, as well, points of view according to their age, gender, level of educa-

238 According to the quantitative survey of 86 households that provided information for this question, 77 bought only a plot, and 9 bought both the plot and some type of house. (*Resultados Encuesta Barrio SJT-Distrito 9, Mayo 2001*).

239 This includes the empty plots of the former 'caretakers'.

tion, ethnic background, social situation, or economic conditions when it comes to housing issues.

People's demands for housing improvement can often be the result of the discourse deployed by others, such as the Municipality, the central government, or professionals working in the housing field. In fact, statements of regularization came first from the 'official' side. These soon became demands by the people because in the discourse of the Municipality proper legal status have to be achieved first before further improvements can be implemented here.

Needs assessments conducted through participatory practices are actually not needed in order to see that basic services are of high priority here. It is not difficult to understand, either, that people demand *regularization* when the requirement for drinking water and sewer systems is linked to statutory property rights by the formal systems. The poor housing conditions at the OTB-SJT are, however, beyond the basic services question and have to be seen in a more holistic perspective. Furthermore, when approaches to solve the problems have a too narrowed and focused perspective, such improvements can easily mean that meeting the needs of ones, increases problems for others.

When the improvements of ones affect the interest of others

For some years now, Villa Mexico was a very poor neighborhood, known mostly for its bad living conditions and its high level of criminality. This is the area that has been the residence for at least ten percent of the households living at the OTB-SJT.²⁴⁰ Housing improvements in Villa Mexico were the result of the active involvement of the Catholic Church, I was told by Euterio. He had lived there before.

Religious groups and Non-Governmental organizations (NGO's), working with low-income population have been active in raising external funds, with the co-participation resources of the LPP. The co-participation resources can also be used as a counterpart for development projects in direct negotiations with external financiers.²⁴¹ Within the participatory framework, this is something that can rightly be considered a 'partnership' model with involvement of the grass roots, other local organizations active in the area, and the external financiers.

These activities have often a too narrow perspective with the risk that solutions for ones became problems for others. The absence of housing policies and guidelines in the field of housing at the local level makes the landscape even more complicated. When there is a lack of a comprehensive vision of problems, and their solutions, at city (and municipality) levels, the troubles move from one place to another. The increasing housing costs resulting from the improvements in Villa Mexico, for example, made way for more pressures on land in areas not considered for urban development, in particular by the poorest groups of the population. And the higher levels of social

²⁴⁰ According to the quantitative survey.

²⁴¹ The co-participation resources of the LPP, made it possible for the OTBs to be the counterpart that externally founded projects normally demand. Furthermore, the decentralization process has opened the possibility for more or less autonomous negotiations at the local level.

control in that place, pushed social problems and insecurity to less protected and more vulnerable residential areas.

Citizen insecurity depends on the people, bad people have move to the neighborhood... before it was Villa Mexico that was a 'red zone',²⁴² now it seems that all the worst kind of people have moved here...when the 'chicherías' disappeared there, the criminals disappeared too... (Euterio 2002/05).

The improvements in the neighboring settlement have had negative consequences for the housing situation of the people with lower incomes living there but, for the case study area as a whole too. When housing costs increased at Villa Mexico, people with lower incomes were forced to move. For those who came to the OTB-SJT, the alternative was to live without access to basic services and community facilities. For people that had the possibility to own a home, the OTB-SJT became more affordable, because of its 'illegal' label and the lack of basic services.

The people that moved from Villa Mexico said that housing became more expensive, particularly for those living as tenants and 'anticrecistas' when improvements were made there. The increasing housing costs were probably related to the implementation of basic services and community facilities, and to the higher levels of security. Many said that Villa Mexico was a nice neighborhood now, and there were even those who wanted to move there. There were people who believe that crime from Villa Mexico had been transferred here. Part of the concerns the population at the OTB-SJT expressed in the general meetings, was related to the increasing crime. This was a problem mentioned frequently by those interviewed, when questions were related to which were the 'worst things about living in the housing area today'.

There are robberies and assaults more frequently now and even the taxis don't want to drive us here, as soon as you mention Tamborada they refuse to drive... (Germania 2002/08).

It is impossible to live with so many criminals around, I hear people comment when they are buying in my shop... we had well before, see now so many drunk youth and the parents can't control them anymore... (Josefina 2002/05).

It was a calm and nice neighborhood, you could live your house open and nothing disappeared, but now, my God!, they are 'flying' as those living in front of my house, they are tenants, they are terrible!... (Euterio 2002/05).

Euterio and Lorena belong to the group that moved from Villa Mexico. The couple lived first in Oruro, but Euterio was fired from the police corps and is unemployed now. He told me that Cochabamba is too expensive a place for them to live in, "in Oruro one could have

²⁴² The 'red zones' classification is made by the police in reference to areas of the city with high levels of crime.

But I don't have any idea where, it was my children who were talking on how impossible is to live here nowadays, they asked me to look for another place... even other people think that it is no way to live here anymore... I listen to their comments when they buy in my shop... (Josefina 2002/05).

The 'chicherías' question was often referred as problematic and disturbing by many of those interviewed, excepting the owners of these bars, of course. The people feel that the presence of bars is negative for good living conditions here. Together with the lack of running water and sanitation, the 'chicherías' were seen as the biggest problem, mainly connected to the increasing levels of citizen insecurity, and the rise of alcohol consumption among the youth.

We are fed-up with the chicherías

Discussion on the 'chicherías' question can be tough in the general meetings, and the closing of these bars is a constant demand from the people living here. The feeling of insecurity was particularly expressed by women and parents with small and young children. Many were concerned because crime had increased since these places have opened here. This is a problem that is certainly not particular to the OTB-SJT, but that belongs to one of the main problems of this municipality these days. The lack of jobs has resulted in the growth of this kind of places all over the city, but particularly in the low-income living areas.

There are particular days when this type of bars sell traditional dishes and people from different parts of the city come to them. This has a lot to do with alcohol drinking. At the end of the afternoon, particularly on Tuesdays and Sundays, one could observe the effects of this activity around the bars. Besides the presence of inebriated people, the lack of toilets make the situation rather unpleasant for those not involved in the 'party'. It is often rather noisy too because the bars have loud music until very late in the evening.

Josefina owns two houses at the OTB-SJT, but it is impossible to see her as a well-being person. Her husband is unemployed, as many of the men in working age are in these days. She sells the meat and the vegetables in a rather precarious arrangement on the sidewalk, outside the house she owns on the main street of the settlement. While I was talking with her I realized how noisy and dusty the street was, because of the car traffic. All the vehicles that go in and out the settlement have to use this street as this is the only link with the city's road network. The traffic was of course higher on the days the 'chicherías' offered special dishes.

I could also observe how the lack of basic infrastructure negatively affected the daily life of the people. It was just before lunch-time and the women were probably home making the food. From time to time, dirty water was thrown to the street from one or another house. In the front of Josefina's place the 'chichería' was also active in making food in huge pots on open fires on the sidewalk. Even the owners of the 'chichería' used the street to dispose of water used for cooking and dish washing because of the lack of a sewer system.

It was much better to live in the housing area before, now it is only a mess, there are no jobs and too many criminals around... most of the youth do not go to the school any more, and one is afraid of asking the criminals to leave one in peace; the chichería there in front causes only problems, on Tuesdays I wish not to live here, there are only drunk people messing around... (Josefina 2002/05).

Carmelo and his wife Corina run one of the controversial bars that most of the people not involved in this activity at the OTB-SJT point to as disturbing to the well-being of the community. He is a car mechanic and used to work with vehicles until it was too difficult to find a job, he said. His wife was involved with the 'chichería' for many years, and she had experience with the business, Carmelo told me. He decided to help her with the bar when he "lost hope to find a job in his own field of experience". They were living in a house located on the Blanco Galindo Avenue²⁴³ before they decided to move here because it was "too noisy there." Carmelo likes to live here just because it is "calm and silent."

Similar to the other 'chicherías' at the OTB-SJT, the couple used the sidewalk as a kind of 'kitchen' to cook food for the business. The hygienic conditions seemed unacceptable to me. The open receptacles on the sidewalk with exposed cooking food, the incessant dust from car traffic, the residual water thrown time after time into the street, the dogs and the flies around, the stagnant water in the street drain channels, were among the disagreeable pictures passing in front of my eyes, while I was talking with Carmelo in his bar. It was before noon so the bar was almost empty and things were calm. I could observe that from time to time men with working clothes, maybe from the brickyards, or from the houses under construction, came and bought 'chicha' and took the drink with them.

Carmelo was convinced that the criticism of neighbors as regards the functioning of his 'chichería' is related mostly to envy. But, at the same time, he understands that the children's well-being in the settlement is troubled by these places.

Yes, it is a problem for the children, we need to improve all this, we agree on that; not to give attention to criminals, to young people, not to open late in the evenings... we use to open the bar from noon to eight or nine in the evening only... (Carmelo 2002/05).

The couple has four children. The oldest is a teenager girl that goes in and out the house through the bar. They all must share the toilet with the clients, many of whom are surely drunk at times. The partially enclosed kitchen of the house, that occupies an important part of the plot, together with the open spaces and the toilets, are used indiscriminately for the activities of the family and for the 'chichería'.

²⁴³ The Blanco Galindo Avenue links the Municipality of the Cercado Province with other municipalities to the west. It goes through Quillacollo City, being connected to one of the important highways of the country that links Cochabamba Department with, among others, the departments of Oruro and La Paz. The presence of commercial activity, factories and housing developed on this avenue in the last few decades has led to the conurbation of the cities of Cochabamba and Quillacollo.

He did not find it a problem in having the house and the bar so closely related to each other. He was not worried either by the fact that the children were around when drunken clients could be noisy and irritating. When I asked the daughter about her expectations regarding housing improvements that needed to be made, she first mentioned the sewer question, and not the running water, as the adults did. Her preferences were surely more related to what was bothering her most about the house.

In my conversation with Carmelo my feeling was, however, that he does not have much of a choice; he has to provide for the family in some way. The demands from many residents for the closing of the 'chicherías' would mean that the owners, and their families, would be without their income source. While I was talking with him I came to think in Magda and Rosaura's situation, and their increasing poverty, because their plans to continue their brick production and to open a 'chichería' were stopped by the residents.

Carmelo is upset on the proliferation of bars, because the intolerance of the people living at the OTB-SJT is increasing. He does not seem to be aware of the fact that the owners of the other bars are probably in a similar situation as his family, when it comes to the need for an income source.

We are doing what we agree on, but I don't think the other places are doing the same, that's the problem, there were only three of such places before, I was the first, but there are more and more of this kind of places now, the proliferation of chicherías is bad, criminality has increased, they blame us for all bad things that happens, but I am following the rules we agree on in the community meetings... (Carmelo 2002/05).

The other big 'chichería' is also located on the main street, about one hundred and fifty meters from Carmelo's. The place is owned by Alberto, and his wife Magda. The couple comes originally from Quillacollo. Alberto and Magda were employees in a wool factory owned by a man from Germany. They were 'allegados' in the house of his mother in law, in another poor housing area at that time. They bought their plot here from one of the community representatives eight years ago, for which they paid US\$ 1,550, for about 330 square meters of land.

Alberto was not much worried about the conflicts of the 'chichería' with the living activities in his house. Conflicts over the drinking establishments with other people living in the settlement seemed not to worry him either. He left his work as an electrician in order to be a community representative some years ago, he has never worked again in his electrical profession. Some residents thought that his interest for being on the community board was mostly to protect his own business from the critics.

They never allowed me to have my own chichería in spite of the fact that I had already made investments. I think it was probably because I wasn't a member of the community board as is the man that owns the chichería in front of

my house . He does'nt have any problems with permis-
sions to run his business... (Rosaura 2002/05).

Rosarura and her mother lived for 17 years at the OTB-SJT when I interviewed them. They had tried to start different income raising activities, without success, after they were relocated from the airport area. When plans to start a brickyard failed, because the neighbors were opposed to it, the two women tried to start their own 'chichería'. The resistance was strong even in this case; the residents were already fed up with these kinds of places.

To start the 'chichería' the mother decided to put their house into 'anticretico' system. They moved to some place that looks like a temporary hut within their own plot. They share the toilet with the tenant family, and have been involved in many conflicts with them for different reasons, not uncommon when the owner shares the house with tenants. Magda believes that 'the neighbor's envy' has to do with the failure of their plans to run the brickyard and the 'chichería' business. The fact that the biggest and oldest bar here was owned by a person, who was a community representative of the OTB at that time, was behind the prohibition, the women believed. When they talked about this, they commented that "the envy of the people is too big at the OTB-SJT". They did not see the problem with growing insecurity and the high level of crime, the same way as those not involved in this kind of activity.

The 'chicherías' and the brickyards are, without doubt, a huge problem for the well-being of the population. On the other side of the coin, the lack of alternative job opportunities gives few options to these families for a livelihood. When it comes to the brickyards, residents get very disturbed by the idea of air pollution linked to brick production.

We can't breath when they are burning the bricks

The main reason behind the strong opposition with the brick production activity is the high level of air pollution connected to brick making, and the consequences for the children's health. The resettlement of brick producers to this area was a mistake from the very beginning. To allow more brickyards in the residential area would mean a worsening of the living conditions, according to the people. And they are right. When the brickyards burn bricks, it is possible to understand what the people are talking about. The strong smelling smoke that emerges from the brickyards makes the air difficult to breathe. Many told me that sometimes it is impossible to sleep at night. The depredation of the land as a result of the exploitation of soil, is a long-term consequence, and unsightly to look at from the outset. The use of clean-burning gas, instead of wood as fuel, did not help much with air pollution, because the design of kilns was not improved at the same time.

I live just in front, its is impossible to sleep when they burn the bricks...the smell is so strong that you can't eat or be here at all... they talk and talk that they will close the brickyards but the owners have good contacts with the MH9 so they never do nothing... (Filomena 2002/07).

In any case, the location of this kind of productive activity in the middle of a housing area is the real problem. Similar to the ‘chicherías’ question discussions on this issue are in angry tones at the general meetings. The demands of the residents have not been of much help in this case either. The building the Municipal House 9 rents for its office space is owned by the same man that owns the biggest brickyard in operation at the OTB-SJT. This was pointed out by Rosaura and Magda when they told me that the MH9 denied them the permission to start their brick activity here.

The investments required by the Municipality for the change of fuel from wood to gas in the kilns shows that the authorities were and are concerned about air pollution. It shows at the same time little awareness of the fact that this kind of activity cannot be combined with housing without serious consequences. And it is evidence of the limited knowledge of the Municipality on the measurements needed to control the impact of brick production on the environment. The fuel factor is only one; it is far from being enough. The other question is related to allowing this activity in the middle of the residential area, in spite of the strong opposition of the people. The political connection the brickyard owner has with the MH9, was pointed out as the reason behind the difficulty in stopping him with this activity. People’s concerns about their children’s health surely are well grounded.

I’m most aware for my children, we close the windows in the nights so they can’t inhale the polluted air, but you still feel the smell because it’s very strong, particularly if when they burn the bricks the nights are windy ... (Sabina 2002/05).

In the case of the “Resettled from the airport” the picture looks even more threatening if one think of the possibility of nine more brickyards functioning here. This had resulted in a housing area being intolerable as a place for living. The fact that the plots did not have shapes appropriate for brick production, and that the Cooperative group was against more brickyards operating here, resulted in the loss of possibility for raising incomes through this activity by the nine resettled from the airport families. But it also meant the good fortune for the well being of the dwellers of the OTB-SJT.

We were brick producers from the beginning

The families that were forced to move from the airport area were asked to search and select the land for compensation themselves. Rosaura told me that this place was considered suitable by nine families; the clay here was appropriate for brick productions. All nine were small-scale brick producers for many years.

Rosaura talks of the compensation issue in negative terms, which makes one think that the exchange of land was not such a good experienced for the family. “When we were *thrown* out from the airport”, was a common expression she had in reference to the resettlement. The families were offered money as compensation but their demand was land. The first house the family built here was with the

“help of bricklayers”,²⁴⁴ said Rosaura. She remembers the time after the family moved to this area as a difficult time, so does her mother.

This was a cultivation area, there were no streets, no electricity, no water, nothing... we didn't have water in La Chimba either but there were good transport facilities and we could sell our products and we could live good with our brick production... it was empty here, the business never worked, and the neighbours didn't allow us to produce bricks, we tried but it was impossible... (Magda 2002/05).

And she adds,

It was only mud everywhere and the rooms were so precarious that it rained inside... we had to build the fence first ...my husband was unemployed...only my mother and I could pay for the building costs, it was difficult... (Rosaura 2002/05).

The 1.690 square meters of land that belongs to Magda, Rosaura's mother, only has about fourteen meters along the front. Besides the resistance of neighbours to more brickyards, the shapes of the plots made this activity practically impossible. In addition, the local government required a change of fuel, from wood to gas. This was a change that needed an investment of six to ten thousand dollars, a sum that most households did not have, said Rosaura. Since they were resettled to this area the household has tried different alternatives to raise incomes. They moved once to another municipality but it went bad for them there as well.

The bad neighbours didn't want me to produce bricks... I gave this house in anticrético and I bought a plot and built a house with this money in San Benito²⁴⁵...only my small children were in the house when a strong wind blew the roof off... my children became afraid so I decided to sell the property and I am here again... (Magda 2002/08).

The failed efforts to start other activities that can provide income to the households, similar to those they had in La Chimba, make the women feel like failures, since they were resettled. Magda was so tired with all the conflicts that she wanted to sell part of her plot and move to another place. The problem for the families is related to the 'anticretico'. Without any income the households have little possibility to raise the money needed to give back the 'anticretico' and to get their house back. They spoke of the possibility to find another place there, one with “at least running water and sanitation already existing.”

I've too many problems here so I'll like to sell... I've already decided to do it, but I'll move near this place because my husband is buried in Pukara...this is the reason

244 Although bricklayers and building workers are normally hired, people refer to their work as 'help'.

245 The San Benito town is located at the south-east part of the Municipality of the Cercado Province.

why I want to buy somewhere near this place... (Magda 2002/08).

Brick production is a business filled with conflicts because of air pollution, the destruction of the soil and the bad smell. The 'chicherías' are problematic because of the increasing alcohol consumption among the youth and of the levels of criminality. In spite of this, some brickyards and 'chicherías' have functioned here for years. The only brickyard still active within the limits of the OTB-SJT, is owned by the same family that owns the building where the MH9 has its office. This leads to questions among the people, particularly considering that this family has its economic activity here, but live in another part of the city.

Among the three 'chicherías' in operation, a former community representative owns one of the biggest and oldest. Most of the community meetings were held in this bar until the new board of the OTB was elected; they decided to change the meeting place, because the people did not like to meet there anymore. Somebody told me that it was particularly because of the 'Brothers'²⁴⁶ who did not like to come here because bars are against their religious principles.

There are other kinds of problems that affect the housing area today according to the perceptions of the people living here. In most of these situations, it is easy to understand how complex relationships can be at a micro-level, and particularly when related to the *needs assessment* question that belongs, as well, to participatory discourse. The needs of income of the families that run the 'chicherías' or the brickyards go against the needs for adequate environmental conditions of other people living here. And this kind of examples can be found on different questions in the housing area, among these in the plots owned by people that have them as 'vacant land'.

The conflicts with the empty plots

Josefina was born here almost 40 years ago. Her family belongs to the very first who came here, even though it was only to take care of the land at that time. She feels part of the Cooperative group. Within the limits of the OTB her family and the other 'caretakers' have more land than most of the families living at the OTB-SJT. By subdividing the inherited land from her father, Josefina and her near relatives had the possibility to earn a plot (or more) each. In the case of her family, the subdivided plots are between 300 and 500 square meters each. The plot she occupies now is well located with accesses both to the main street and to a secondary street.

Josefina told me that for years she has tried to get a stamp needed for her property documents from the Municipal House 9, without any results. To some extent, the way the family acquired the land made them different from the rest of the Cooperative members. The administrator of the MH9 was relative to one of the first settlers of the housing area in times when the 'caretakers' tried to stop the settlement process with rather aggressive methods. The father, and

²⁴⁶ It is general meaning employed to name the religious sects with origins in the Catholic Church. They have many members active in the housing area. People in these groups do not drink alcohol and they use to meet mostly with members of the same sect when it comes to common activities.

other members of Josefina's family, were demolishing the first houses built here; an anecdote the old members of the Cooperative used to tell when they talked about the first years of the settlement process.

Josefina moved to this plot only three years ago, when the house she is gradually building was habitable enough. She told me that her mother and her sister live at the OTB-SJT, but not the brothers. The brothers had already sold the land they owned here. The land Josefina's family got as a result of the trials with the Worker Union and the Cooperative organization is already subdivided, but many of the plots remain empty. 'Vacant land' is considered a problem by many people at the OTB-SJT.

Most of the land the other former 'caretakers' got as compensation in the Southern part of the settlement remain for farming, but subdivisions have already started in the areas bordering the settlement. For many years the families involved in the court trials were no longer considered part of the Cooperative organization. When the first quantitative inquiries were done by the research team, the community representatives and the administrator of the MH9 told us that the houses built in the southern part did not belong to the OTB-SJT. Renato commented that when the establishment of the OTB-SJT was in discussion the condition established for the former 'caretakers' was to contribute land to the community for open spaces and green areas. The former 'caretakers' then decided to stay outside the limits of the newly established OTB.

In reference to the subdivisions which the 'caretakers' made to land, in the bordering areas to the south of the settlement, Renato said that the owners started subdividing the land without considering the need for circulation, and without permissions from the MH9. He explained further that,

The condition to get the land after the court trials was that it would remain for farming, but they started to subdivide and to sell it for urban development illegally... (Renato 2001/08).

The representatives of the OTB-SJT and the functionaries of the MH9 were forced to make agreements with the family to avoid further problems that could negatively impact the *regularization* process to be implemented some day. In the last urbanization plan, drawn by an architect, the plots which had been sold by these 'caretakers' were shown as part of the OTB-SJT.

The Cooperative group has been developing the land for urban use 'illegally' in the last fifteen years, and the process is still going on. They have tried to stop the 'caretakers' with arguments similar to those the local government uses when they refer to the settlement process here. But, the conflict has indeed less to do with the legal/illegal question than with the lack of land for open spaces and green areas, which the Municipality demands today for the implementation of the *regularization* process. The little land still available is the 'empty plots' of people not living here, most of these plots are in the Cooperative area. It is also land owned by the former 'caretakers' both within the limits of the Cooperative area and at the south part of

the settlement. The empty plots became, in this sense, matters of conflicts as a result of statements of *regularization*.

When discussions about open spaces and green areas came up, the issue was directly connected to the requirements of the Municipality to enable the *regularization* process to take place 'soon'. Discussions at the general meetings were seldom on the need of open spaces and green areas to improve housing quality in the settlement. This is something that I could notice when the question was discussed with officials of the Municipality at central level as well. However, some of the interviewed persons, particularly those with small children, women and youth, talked of this question as a means to enhance community life.

Who demands open spaces and green areas?

The lack of land for open spaces and green areas does not only have to do with the court trials. For many in the housing area, arbitrary transactions of land by the community representatives, is behind this situation. A significant number of persons in the survey answered with the name of a community representative to the question on "who sold the land to them"? According to the community representative in question, the owners (who did not live in the place) asked for help with their land transactions account. For other people, the lack of land for open spaces and green areas had to do with the fact that land transactions came to be seen as a lucrative business, both by the original 'beneficiaries' and by the community representatives.

When we bought the first plot for my daughter we paid US\$ 500 only, but when Renato started to sell the prices were of about 1,500 or 1,600... he sold the plots because the cooperative members that didn't live here asked him for help of course, but those who lived here said that he shouldn't do it, but he did it anyway... (Marina 2002/05).

Marina is married to a former miner of the San José Mine. But, the man was not part of the 'beneficiaries' group. They had decided to move to this area about fifteen years ago and became part of the first families that settled here. When agreements were made with the 'caretakers' after the trials, Marina and her husband were forced to move from the plot they were borrowing temporarily because this land was part of the deal the Cooperative group made with the former 'caretakers'. They bought the plot and the house she now owns in 1994 and paid US\$ 9,500 for it. The property was owned by a 'beneficiary', but the transaction was done through the Cooperative organization, she said. The relevance of green areas in the place was pointed by her too.

It would be nice with more green areas here, the community representatives said there will be small parks also here but the people started to build houses in these places instead... I don't know if this depends on the community representatives or on the Municipality, or if it is simply because the people don't want to work together... (Marina 2002/05).

The other thing that the people at the OTB-SJT use to link with the open spaces and the green areas issue are the unoccupied plots: about 22 percent in the whole settlement. Although the highest number of empty plots is found in the 'Cooperative area, there are empty plots in the areas of the 'Mela Darrás' group and of the 'Resettled from the airport', as well. Many reasons can be behind this situation. One could be the lack of resources the families have to build the house. Another is probably the owner's intention to sell the land at a higher price in the future. In fact, the cost of the land has increased gradually over the years and the improvements made in the area have contributed to this.²⁴⁷

The people living at the OTB-SJT often refer to the empty plots in negative tones. Firstly, because they think that the owners are too far away and too little engaged in the struggles the people living here have to improve the place. Secondly, they think that the plots are seen only as commodities by the owners. They believe that the improvements achieved thus far, and in the future, will benefit those not living here as well, despite their minimal contribution to the effort. Emilia said once,

Why doesn't the Cooperative do something with all the empty plots they have...if the owners are not here, it means that they have another place to live in and they don't need this land... they are surely waiting so they can sell when the regularization process is ready and they can get more money for it...the Cooperative should confiscate this land and maybe use it for green areas, so we can be ready with this question sometime... (Emilia 2001/07).

The 'multifunction plan' is practically the only place the OTB-SJT has set aside today for community activities. *Ciro*, who lives just in front of it told me that when the youth organization was active the place was used more frequently. The place is used even by young people coming from neighboring areas; this is something that bothers some at the OTB-SJT, and particularly the youth.

People coming from the surroundings use the 'multifunction plan' nowadays, I don't feel comfortable to go there anymore because I don't know these people...there have been some problems with the guides of San José de la Tamborade because this persons from other places can be sometimes very aggressive... (Vania 2002/08).

Even inside the housing area, the households that live more detached from the 'multifunction plan' do not feel secure in sending their small children there. From the house where *Emeterio* lives, to the 'multifunction plan', there are about five hundred meters, two 'chicherías', and the children have to use the main street of the settlement that has heavy car traffic during the day.

²⁴⁷ The cheapest plots among the 120 of the survey are found in 1985 at a price of US\$ 1.12 per square meter, and the more expensive is registered in 1998 at a price of US\$ 20.11 per square meter. More expensive properties are also found, but these already included a house.

It's too far away for my children, I'd like to have them where I can see what they are doing...the streets are too dangerous for their age, particularly when the many chicherías in the housing area are open for foreigners... (Emeterio 2001/07).

I prefer to have my children inside the house because they are too small to go alone to the multifunction plan, we prefer to have them in sight... (Julian 2002/05).

Vania lives just in front of the 'multifunction plan', but she was reluctant also to send her little son to the place alone. Her son and the other small children of the household mainly play inside the house, she said. The need for playgrounds for small children, located close to the houses, was evident for the improvement of housing conditions at the OTB-SJT, but was seldom mentioned by the parents as a clear demand. In fact, the urban design proposals prepared by paid professionals for the urbanization of the OTB-SJT, in more than one occasion, had priorities focused on car traffic more than on facilities for free time activities according to the gender and the age of the people living here.

The parents use to tell me that the older male children are allowed to go to the 'multifunction plan', but not the small children or the girls. The increasing incidents of alcohol drinking among the youth can be behind the negative attitude of the parents to send their children to this sport facility. In many of my visits to the settlement I noticed that the place was often empty in spite of the good quality of the infrastructure. I could also observe that the youth playing in the plan were not from the OTB-SJT all the time.

Only one of my sons go to the multifunction plan but my daughter said to him yesterday that he is not allowed to go there anymore, too many kids that don't go to school is a bad influence for him, she said to me... (Josefina 2002/05).

The open spaces and green areas question should be seen as not only related to the demand the Municipality has for the approval of the OTB as a 'regular' housing area, but most of all as the possibility to improve living conditions of people, particularly of children, youth and women. This is very important considering the low quality of the open spaces the children have inside their houses. When the parents have the time they usually take the children to the nice parks found in Cochabamba City, but most of them are located far away. The cost of transportation prevents people from doing this. Antonio said to me once that,

The nice parks in the city are good, but they are too far away from here. We need smaller parks near our houses, so the children can be safe there and we can have more control on what they are doing... (Antonio 2001/04).

Isaura was among the few persons that mentioned the need of parks and green areas for the small children. She was probably thinking mostly of her grandchildren, as her own children are grown up. About the 'community house' she said that it would be good for ac-

tivities for the young women. At 49 years old she felt too old for participating in community activities with the other women. When I asked her why there were so few females on the boards of both community organizations, she answered, “This is probably because ‘they’ don’t elect women for this kind of things.” Although she often was participating in the general meeting, she expressed herself like the choice was of other’s responsibility and not hers.

The ‘community house’ issue shows how big the need for spaces and activities that can contribute to the ‘community’ sense is. I could often observe that the women use some of the street corners of the settlement to meet for small talk; most of the times this was related to shopping. It was in this way I had the opportunity to get in touch with many of the women that agreed to be interviewed later on. Furthermore, the negative attitude many people have for attending meetings in the ‘chicheria’ is a sign that spaces for common activities are needed.

The fact is that the empty plots do have owners today. The proposals to use them for open spaces and green areas would mean to take private property for public use. Although the owners are not living here their ownership right is a fact. For the population living in the ‘Mela Darrás’ area, the lack of land the Municipality demands as a condition for the *regularization*, is even more sensitive because they feel they have already fulfilled this requirement.

We contributed with the only place for community life the OTB has today

Conflicts within the OTB-SJT are not only between the Cooperative group and the ‘caretakers,’ or between the ‘Resettled from the airport’ and the Cooperative group. The Mela Darrás and the Cooperative group also have problems related to the land the Municipality demands for open spaces and green areas.

When the landowner Mela Darrás wanted to sell her land for urban development, the Municipality demanded 44 percent of the total area to be allocated for common use. The ‘multifunction plan’ was built on land later obtained this way from the landowner. When this group became part of the OTB-SJT, the land allocated was no longer enough to fulfil the percentage requirement for the whole area. For the Mela Darrás group merger with the other two groups meant that they, too, now lacked enough land for open spaces and green areas.

Emilia is a middle age woman who belongs to the ‘Mela Darrás’ group. She was born in Potosí²⁴⁸ and bought the plot from the landowner in 1993. Emilia and her husband paid US\$ 2,000 for 312 square meters land, six times more per square meter than the price of the nine plots sold by the Cooperative organization, to pay the costs of the trials, a few years before. She has been one of the first female members of the OTB-SJT board.

248 Potosí is one of the most important mining cities of the country. Located at 4060 meters above sea level in the western part of the territory, Potosí became well known because of the tin and silver mines, in use since the Colonial period. Once upon a time Potosí had a greater population than London, and its Baroque architecture reminds of the wealth and richness the city had in the past.

The couple lives with their three daughters and their granddaughter in a two-floor house. The family has a private area on the second floor, but share the kitchen, the dining room, the garden and the toilet with the public day-care operation that Emilia runs in the house. The whole family was involved in the construction process of the house, she told me. But, the quality of the building has surely demanded more specialized skills as well.

Emilia's perception is that the members of the Cooperative treat the Mela Darrás group unfairly. We have "contributed with the only land that has made possible a place for free time activities for the youth" she said in reference to the 'multifunction plan'.

We feel outside, the Cooperative group uses us only when they need *our support* as it was when they needed *our financial contribution* to make the water well... they need to remember that the only 'green area' here is because *we contributed with this land...* (Emilia 2001/07).

Emilia expresses her thoughts in the name of the all the people that live in the Mela Darrás area. She talks, also, of the percentage of land the landowner yielded as some kind of contribution of this group to the rest of the settlement. In fact what this group has in common is that everybody bought the land from the same landowner, and for this reason moved near to each other. But, it seemed important for her to show a difference with the Cooperative group. Emilia is convinced that the group living in the Mela Darrás area has already done its part as regards the open spaces and green areas issue, and it is now the Cooperative's turn to deal with that problem.

The cooperative members should solve the problem with the so many empty plots they have... (Emilia 2001/07).

Emilia was convinced that the Cooperative could "very well use the empty plots as compensation for the still missing green areas", because the situation was "their own fault". For her it was important with "more people living here to develop the housing area, instead of having so many unoccupied plots".

They have fractioned and sold all their available land... we have problems because we lack green areas for the regularization process....the Cooperative has so many empty plots, why don't they use them for negotiations with the Municipality?... (Emilia 2001/07).

The lack of open spaces and green areas is perceived as an obstacle for the *regularization* because of the messages the residents get from the Municipality. The 'affairs with the land', of which some of the Cooperative representatives are accused, are discussed frequently and openly in the general meetings of the OTB-SJT. This made the issue known to those outside the Cooperative group. The formal system put *regularization* as a requirement, to meet the demands of drinking water and sewer systems. The question has now turned to rather sensitive for social relations among the different groups living here.

People from the 'Resettled from the airport' feel affected by the lack of open spaces and green areas, as well, and express feelings of

'being utilised' by the Cooperative group 'only when they need support'. It was peculiar to hear that the things they talked about, when they accused the Cooperative group of exploiting them, had to do with improvements that benefited them as well.

They want our land for green areas now, he²⁴⁹ should have thought of this before too many plots were fractioned and sold, he could have left at least one for the green areas...they want to take land from us now, but we will go to the press if it's necessary... (Rosaura 2002/05).

They borrowed our housing titles to present them to the electricity company... we have contributed to the improvement of the housing area since the beginning...we have already provided land for the green areas, the multi-function plan was built thanks to that land... (Magda 2002/05).

As in the case of Emilia, Magda feels that the contributions of her group were important for the improvements made so far, including the extension of electricity to the area. Both women felt 'used' by the Cooperative group. Moreover, for both women, the land yielded by the Mela Darrás landowner was perceived as their 'own contribution' for the green areas and open spaces issue too.

Within the limits of the OTB, there are important differences between the groups, in particular between the Mela Darrás and the other two groups. One of them, is in the way people accessed and developed the land. In the Mela Darrás area the purchase and development of the land has been on an individual basis. Another, is in the organizational differences that exist among the 'groups'. The Mela Darrás group presented little signs of grass-root involvement before the OTB-SJT was established. All the activities of the group were connected to the Cooperative organization until then.

No doubt higher quality buildings can be found in the Mela Darrás area. And, there are fewer empty plots here than in the Cooperative area. This is most likely related to the fact that people acquired land, most probably, with a clear aim to settle down and live there. In the Mela Darrás area; most of the plots already have houses, many times of better quality than in the Cooperative and the Resettled areas. But, even here, not all houses are occupied by their owner. Other ways of accessing housing also exist in this part of the settlement. The way people access housing has influence on questions related to housing improvement and participatory action.

Housing Improvement and Participation at House Level

There are 'others' that live indistinctly in some of the parts of the housing area that do not belong to the owner category. For the people that live in 'antiretico', tenant, 'caretaker', 'borrower, or 'allegado' system, the living area can be perceived as a transitory circumstance. Most of these household have relations with community life

²⁴⁹ She refers to one of the functionaries of the MH9 and community representative of the Cooperative organization.

through the owner of the property. The people that belong to the no-owner category are seldom involved in general meetings. In their opinion, issues related to housing improvement are the owner's business. Not one of the no-owner category that was interviewed, linked drinking water, sewage, and the open spaces and green areas topics, to the regularization question in the same way the owners did.

Even at the household level the feeling of 'otherness' could be noticed connected to the type of access to housing. The conflicts in this case are restricted to the house level and to relations between the owner and the no-owner, but also between no-owners that share the same house. In general, the sense people give when they talk on this issue is that the ownership of the house or the plot provides a certain power to the owner and causes many conflicts, particularly when both parties share the use of the property.

I can't ever leave the house alone

I met Germania and Amanda in the house they share in the 'Mela Darrás' area. A woman that moved to Santa Cruz City owns the house.²⁵⁰ Germania lives as 'caretaker' and does not pay anything for staying in the house, but her living conditions are impressively poor. She has a provisional room built of cardboard in the corridor of the house that she occupies with her five children. As part of the agreement with the owner, she is not allowed to leave the house 'out of sight'. The rather young woman and her husband moved ten years ago from a rural area of the department of La Paz to this location.²⁵¹

Germania still owns land in her place of origin and sometimes thinks she would like to move back. But, "farming is a really heavy activity in the Highlands", she said, and she is not sure that her oldest children will get used to that kind of life anymore. Besides, she wants them to go to school and this would not be as easy to do in her place of origin.

Germania's husband 'disappeared' to Santa Cruz some months ago. He never sends money and I could not understand how she managed to provide for the children if she was forced to take care of the house day and night and every day in the week.

I miss everything...if I want to buy something I don't have any money...I would like to have my own house, as tenant or caretaker it is impossible to live well...I can't move nowhere from this house... (Germania 2002/08).

The woman said that she likes the settlement as a place to live, where she has been for ten years now. She and her husband found the place through her brother-in-law who had already settled here. They were tenants originally in another house and they paid 100

²⁵⁰ The capital of the department of Santa Cruz has presented population growth rates of about 5% annually in the last few decades, this caused mainly by migration flows from the Highlands and the Valleys. The department of Santa Cruz is located in the south-east part of the country.

²⁵¹ The department of La Paz is located in the Highlands in the north-west part of the country.

Bolivianos monthly for one room.²⁵² But all she wants is to have her own house some day.

As caretaker the owner can tell you to leave the house whenever the owner wants...as tenant or 'anticretico' there can also be problems with the owner... I don't find anything positive in living as caretaker or tenant you can't ever live good... I'll like to have my own house... (Germania 2002/08).

To own a house will probably be something difficult to achieve for the woman at least in the near future, considering her economic situation and the conditions of the household. It will be difficult for her to find the solution in the housing market – in either the 'formal' or 'informal' segment as well.

In the case of couples living as 'caretakers' the situation can be less difficult, combining the need to work, and the requirement of somebody looking after the house all the time. I found that households with grown up children had a better chance to live this way too, as they have the possibility to make shifts, always having someone to look after the house. For Germania the house was her only alternative to have a roof over her head but, at the same time, it was the main hindrance to raising the income of her family.

I want my 'anticretico' money back

Amanda lives in the 'anticretico' system and her housing conditions seem much better than Germania's, although they live in the same house. She lives with her husband and their small daughter in the two rooms the owners had occupied before. The man is a policeman and belongs to the few with secure incomes at the OTB-SJT. Amanda comes from La Paz too, but she moved with her family as a child.

She thinks that the 'anticretico' system is a more suitable arrangement for her family and feels that their housing conditions have improved a lot since they moved here. "The only problem is the lack of running water", Amanda told me and added "it is constraining to buy water and to take a bath in the open garden". There is a toilet with a shower and a washing place in the house, but "we can't use them because we lack running water", she told me. She was convinced that to own a house would only lead to problems for them.

We have paid US\$ 100 monthly up to the US\$ 1,200 total for the 'anticretico'... I don't want to own a house, as an owner one needs to pay taxes... my father thinks that it was better for him before he owned a house, it is more expensive to own a house than to live in 'anticretico', he said to me... (Amanda 2002/08).

Besides the lack of running water, insecurity in the evenings and the nights bothers her. She never leaves the house late because she feels that the area is dangerous in the evenings. The main reason for her to stay at the OTB-SJT is the money put up for the 'anticretico', which the owner has to give back to her first. This is a common situation in 'anticretico' contracts.

252 100 Bolivianos was about US\$ 15 at the time of the interview.

I'll like to move from here to a more protected place but the owner doesn't have the money of the 'anticretico' to give back to us.... if I were outside the house at night, who knows what could happen to me, there are too many criminals coming from other places here... too many people that drink alcohol every day... (Amanda 2002/08).

The area is little far from the city and too dangerous, we don't have any protection here and the criminality is too high, murders and all these kind of things... we are in danger all the time... I'll like to move to a place there I can have more luck with my shop, but as far we don't get the money back from the owner, this is not possible... (Daysi 2002/05).

The families' needs will mostly likely have to wait until they can get the money back, as it usually happens in this type of tenant system. A lawyer drafted the 'anticretico' contract, said Amanda and Daysi, and they feel it is safe because the money is secured by the property. They know that the owner will see to the return of it sooner or later to avoid problems with the house.

The fact that the owners do not give the money back within the stipulated time has very little to do with willingness of the owner. The amount is never enough to risk the loss of the property. Often the owners have a plan for saving the money during the time of the contract. But many factors can hinder the fulfilment of this plan. Often this has to do with investments that did not give the expected results.

Rosaura told me that they wanted the family living in 'anticretico' out of their house, but they did not know how to raise the money to give the 'anticretico' back to them. As long as this requirement is not fulfilled the tenants have the right to stay. The fact that Rosaura and her mother could not manage to have a more regular income meant that the 'anticretico' money could not be saved on time. Their situation with the tenant had become critical for this reason.

We have problems, but we don't have the money to give back the anticretico...I can't ask for a loan at least for the next five years because I was late with my payments to Acceso,²⁵³ and my mother can't get a loan either, she is too old, they said to her... (Rosaura 2002/05).

Amanda's situation was better than Magda's and Rosaura's as regards the internal conflicts between the owners and the tenants living in 'anticretico' system. This was probably because the owner, in Amanda's case, only occasionally was in the house as she lives in another city. Share the house with the owner is a negative experience in most cases, both in tenant, in 'anticretico' or in 'caretaker' modality.

²⁵³ Acceso belongs to those 'alternative' finance institutions that have rents often two or more times higher than the banks, but they give loans that demand less bureaucratic procedures. Many people became locked into this 'easy loans' system at the beginning, but defaulting problems have increased in the last years. Today, there are even 'movements of in-debt people' established to struggle against the rent requirements of these agencies.

Amanda is not interested to start any legal actions against the house owner because she feels comfortable with her housing situation thus far. But, in the case of Magda and Rosaura, the tenants have already involved the authorities, demanding their money back.

The owners are not the only ones that can have problems in the 'anticretico' system. The contracts use to have paragraphs that protected the owners as well. If the time of a contract expires, and the owner has the money and wants the property back, the tenant living in 'anticretico' can be forced to pay daily or monthly penalties if they do not leave the property within the agreed term.

Eloisa's family had this kind of problems when the former 'caretakers' demolished the first house they were building in this area.. They were still living in the house they got in 'anticrético' system in another place of the city although they had already got the money back from the owner. "The owner wanted to 'help' us", said Eloisa and "gave us the money so we could start the building of our own house". After many conflicts with the 'caretakers' the family could start the building process again, trying to reuse the building materials of the demolished house as much as possible. However, as the term they got initially from the owner was over, they had to pay a monthly penalty anyway.

It was very urgent for us to build our house and to move here because we were already paying a monthly penalty in dollars... I do not remember how much, but it was a penalty we paid to the owner of the house because we had already got back the money of the 'anticrético' and we were still living in his house... (Eloisa 2002/07).

The people living in 'anticretico' system feel normally more comfortable than the 'caretakers' and the tenants in their relation with the owner. The 'anticrético' system means that the tenant 'uses' the house and in exchange 'borrows' money to the owner free of interests. This gives a sense of more equity to the relationship. This does not mean that the 'anticretico' system is free from troubles for the parties involved. Although the more vulnerable situation seems to be for those living as 'caretakers' or 'borrowers' of the property, the experiences of the tenants that pay rent are often rather difficult as well.

It's horrible to live as tenant

Before Amanda came to this place she lived in another poor housing area in the city, first as 'allegada' to her father and later on in the tenant system.

We lived first with my father and then we moved to a single room to live as tenants, it was terrible, it was even raining inside the house... we shared the house with other tenants, the owner was not even worried to have doors in the house, there were no doors to the street... we stayed until we spared some money and then we moved here... (Amanda 2002/08).

According to her tale it is clear that her living conditions have improved since she lives in 'anticretico' system. Besides, Amanda's

household has a greater chance to move to another place, than for example Germania, because they have the money of the 'anti-cretico' as basis for the search of other housing alternatives. There were others, including Carmelo, who told me that to live as tenants is a really traumatic experience.

While I was talking with Carmelo I could observe that the house has many functional conflicts between the private and the public activities of his 'chichería'. But when the man tells about the time the family lived in the tenant system, his feeling of freedom now, when they live in their 'own place', is understandable. Although they have to share the toilet with others, it seems to make a difference that now there is 'the other' that borrows the toilet from them.

It is horrible to live as tenant, particularly with other tenants and the owner of the house, we couldn't be late a single day with the rent ... we paid 70 Bolivianos²⁵⁴ monthly including the costs of the water and the electricity... we had to be on time in the house because they locked the door in the evenings... there was only one main door to all the tenants in the house..., we had to share the toilet with the other people living in the house... (Carmelo 2002/05).

For Carmelo and his family there was an enormous difference to live in their 'own house' compared to the time living as tenants. The housing quality really improved for the household since they moved to the OTB-SJT, he said.

The difference is huge now, it is more peaceful, and one can do whatever one wants to do, nobody cares about what one is doing... to be owner is only a positive thing (Carmelo 2002/05).

The conflicts between the owners and the tenants can be of different character, but these are in general related to issues of being the owner or not. The no-owners are normally in a more vulnerable situation comparing to the owner in tenant agreements. The personal relations between the parties in a tenant contract can be too complicate if the owner also lives in the house. Conflicts can be related to delays in rent payments, or to bad housing conditions. The conditions of the houses are normally very poor for tenants with low incomes; there are often problems with the maintenance of the house from both viewpoints. And the 'good' relations between tenants and owners are not any guarantee of good housing conditions either.

In one of the houses Eloisa had lived in as tenant, the relation with the owner was "very kindly" because the old lady felt alone, she said. The house lacked electricity and was crowded with 'vinchucas'. To get drinking water the family needed to go to the garden as well as to use the toilet, this was troubling Eloisa thought. She was also worried of the possibility of the chagas illness linked to the proliferation of 'vinchucas' in that house.

We had to go across the garden to use her toilet and to collect water, it was complicated with the small children,

²⁵⁴ About US\$ 10 at the time of the interview.

particularly in the night and when it was rainy... (Eloisa 2002/07).

I could hear the 'vinchucas' when it was dark, the noise was scary in the night...sometimes I think that I need a health control because I have symptoms people said they have when they got the 'chagas' illness...there were so many 'vinchucas'... (Eloisa 2002/07).

The problems frequently have to do with the little tolerance the owners have with the tenants' children. When one of the owners was arguing because her little son took a flower from the garden Eloisa thought that, sometime she will have her own house, so "her children could do what ever they want to". The well-being of the children was a very common concern when people talked on the negative questions surrounding the different ways one had to access housing. The lack of patience of the owner or other tenants with the children, often heads the list of the bad memories people have as their time as tenants.

The parents usually think of housing related to the children, no matter how old the children are. They want to have a place where the children feel comfortable, and a property to leave them as an inheritance. This concern is firstly related to the fact that housing modalities, other than home ownership, are normally less convenient for the less vulnerable parties involved in the deal. And secondly, it is to the feeling of security that home ownership gives to the low income. The less protected often see property ownership as the only way to save money for future generations. It is mostly in this sense that people link the *regularization* idea to housing improvement together with the possibility to access drinking water and sewage systems.

The extent to which the *regularization* process will enable housing improvements for all at the people living at the OTB-SJT, is not a very obvious thing, especially as this notion is basically focused on statutory property rights and titling.

Regularization: What for?

The OTB-SJT is often referred as 'illegal', 'informal' or 'irregular' settlement in official speeches, particularly at the Municipality level. The meaning of these terms is basically connected to statutory property rights in housing. Questions that prevent the well-being of the population at OTB-SJT appear to be secondary (or do not appear at all), beyond the questions closely linked to current *regularization* proposals, such as drinking water and sewer systems.

Topics related to citizen security; deficiencies in the access to health and education services; lack of green areas, meeting places, neighborhood markets; bad environmental conditions, deficient communication networks; the need for job opportunities, free time activities and capacity building, all emerged in the individual conversations, or in workshops with different groups, such as youth, women or community representatives.

The consideration of *unauthorized housing* area by the Municipality has had a negative effect for housing conditions of the OTB-SJT,

for the most part. Urgent needs such as basic services have not been easy to solve by the people, no matter how participative and engaged they may be in the search for solutions. Statements of illegality conditions in housing are behind the negative responses of SEMAPA, to make these services available to this kind of residential areas; which has contributed to the growing demand of the people for *regularization*.

According to more or less accepted views today on *regularization*, people are reluctant to invest in housing until their property rights are made clear. The widespread emphasis on statutory property rights found in *regularization* proposals relies on the belief, that this makes the people, feel safe in their investment and reliable to access loans for making further improvements to their homes.

In fact, for access to loans in formal finance institutions, property rights is but one of the requisites. Access to regular income is a requirement of similar importance for the approval of formal loans. Moreover, here are significant percentages of people living at the OTB-SJT who access housing through other types of tenure modalities. For these people the achievement of statutory property rights in housing do not have the same meaning as it has for the 'owners'. If *regularization* was implemented today, it would probably have more negative than positive consequences for them, particularly if this leads to raise land and housing costs. The question on how *regularization* can enable better housing conditions in the particular context of the OTB-SJT is certainly relevant here.

We need regularization for basic services

I had the opportunity to observe a workshop organized with the representatives of both community organizations at the OTB-SJT with the following main question for the discussions: "*Regularization, what for and how?*"²⁵⁵ The discussions showed that for the older community representatives the issue was very much a matter of titling delivery to individual property holders. It was clear that regularization was a long-hanging promise that had been made to the residents for many years; the representatives still felt obligated to fulfil it. In the speeches of the older community representatives, *regularization* was promoted as the key for access to drinking water and sewer systems.

The engineer of SEMAPA was here personally and explained that as soon we get the legal status they will make the efforts necessary to get the running water and sewer extensions to the OTB-SJT ...the housing area across the Tamborada river already has access to these services, so it's not impossible, but we need the *regularization* first... (Renato 2002/03).

For the newly elected representatives, other questions related to housing improvement were not solved so obviously through statutory property rights. *Regularization* was seen more likely as linked to other improvements needed in the housing area. For the new gener-

²⁵⁵ The workshop organized by the Procasha Foundation was held at the OTB-SJT in August of 2002.

ation of dwellers, increasing crime, the bad environmental conditions, the lack of green areas and meeting places, the deficient access to education and health, and even the housing needs of the newly established households, were of high relevance. These issues often were seen in the same high priority as basic services. In this sense, the *regularization* issue acquired a broader perspective in the visions of the more youthful members at the OTB-SJT.

Of course drinking water and sewer systems are important, but it is also important to stop the high levels of criminality because of the 'chicherías'... the young girls and the women are afraid to go outside in the evenings...we need do something so the youth find better things to do, they are only drinking alcohol and messing around... (Ramón 2001/08).

When workshops were implemented specifically with the youth or the women living at the OTB-SJT,²⁵⁶ the regularization issue was seldom mentioned among the priorities. Things not normally mentioned at the general meetings emerged more clearly here, such as the need of a library, of bookshops, a theatre, neighborhood police station, drug store, garbage dump, garbage collection, public phones, replanting of trees, and more institutional and technical support for different things. The lack of job opportunities and the low savings capacity of the households were pointed to as main causes behind the general deficient living conditions here.

One of the households with an apparently stable income lived on the main street of the area. In my eyes, Isaura was a typical 'chola'²⁵⁷ from the Cochabamba region; she engaged in economic activities in the tertiary sector. She ran the biggest and best supplied neighborhood shop. Although she was initially negative to the idea of being interviewed, we had an enjoyable time during the conversation. The shop had clients all the time and she called them all by their first names, no matter how old they were. She owns one of the few telephones at the OTB-SJT, and I was surprised when I noticed that she charges both for making and for receiving calls. Ciro commented once, "when people have money they always want more and have less solidarity with the poorest". He was angry because he needs to pay five Bolivianos each time he receives a call from his children living in Brazil.

Isaura moved here from Villa Mexico seven years ago. The family bought the 455 square meter plot in 1990 for US\$ 1,000 from a former member of the Cooperative. Her husband is a bricklayer and he was

256 The workshop with the women was held in December 2002 and the workshop with the youth in January 2003. Both were organized by the PROCASHA Foundation in collaboration with PROMESHA.

257 It refers to the woman who wears the traditional 'pollera', a voluminous skirt developed by the original population of this region, following the idea of the Spanish womens' skirts in the Colonial period. 'Chola' can also have a negative pejorative assertion in some contexts and situations of daily life. The 'chola' of the Cochabamba region is well known for her ability in business. In general, the women of Cochabamba have an important role in the dynamic of the so-called informal (tertiary) sector in commerce and services in the region, and the country.

building more rooms in the house, together with other bricklayers, when I made the interview. They have three children, but only two still live with them. Including the two tenant families, the house has twelve dwellers, five adults, two young girls and five small children.

There are twelve rooms in the two-store house; the construction process is still going on in the second floor. The building has two latrines connected to tanks with place for an improvised shower. It also has a washing place, with no running water and no sewer system, but located near the latrines, which shows that the owner has an idea on how the 'wet area' question works. A very precarious half enclosed room is set aside for cooking with firewood; it was the only place that looked like a kitchen. The owners also have a gas stove in the room behind the shop, where there are small tables and a bed as part of the furniture. The tenants, however, did their cooking and eating in the bedrooms they rented.

The housing layout looked like a series of rooms around the garden. But the original idea seemed to be that more than one household could live in the house. Although Isaura is hard working and a successful businesswoman, and the man is a bricklayer, the poor conditions of the 'kitchen' were surprising. When I asked her about the improvements needed, the kitchen was not mentioned at all. The statutory property rights 'for feeling as owners', and the running water, were the most important things for her. She was convinced that these were matters closely related to each other.

SEMAPA *said* that we are not going to receive drinking water until we have clear property rights of our houses, we need the titles... (Isaura 2001/07).

Statements of *regularization* were first linked to drinking water and sanitation by the institutions in charge of these services at the Municipality. But, even 'legal' living areas, including some for high-income groups, still lack basic services through SEMAPA in these days.²⁵⁸ Investments for running water and sewer systems demand much more resources and are less available than, for example, investments in electrification, often done first, and without the need of too much of a struggle by the population. The *regularization* question seems, in this sense, more an excuse than the real reason behind the lack of attention with basic services by SEMAPA to the area. The people at the OTB-SJT were convinced that as soon as the *regularization* process was implemented basic services would follow. Many of those interviewed believed that *regularization* would enable them the access to formal loans as well. However, the fear of losing the mortgaged property was always hanging there.

We can access loans through formal finance institutions

When Eulogia talks on *regularization* she gives to the word a connotation similar to that of titling. She sees the issue as something very urgent. The woman has no regular income now, but she believes that *regularization* will give her the possibility of getting a loan from some regular financial institution. "I need the money to improve my

²⁵⁸ Private septic tanks and private water wells are not uncommon in high- and middle-income residential areas of the city.

house”, she said. The statements of *regularization* linked to statutory property rights in housing make people believe that housing improvements will be possible only by its implementation. People think that with statutory property rights the property can be used as a guarantee for loans as well.

With titles of the house and the plot we can build as we want ...my new rooms will be in the front of the house... I need the titles for getting a loan to improve my house... without the titles I can't go to the 'San Joaquin Cooperative for Savings and Loans' and ask for the money I need... (Eulogia 2001/07).

But it is not easy to see how a finance institution will give Eulogia a loan without the requisite of a regular income. However, in this particular case the household has other members that probably can help in the repayment of the loan, and potentially can enable its approval. Eulogia has experience with finance institutions and was sure that she could get a loan in spite of her lack of income.

I've always worked with formal finance institutions...I build my first house with borrowed money, it was tough to pay, but it is the only way... (Eulogia 2001/07).

Emeterio is one of the few persons I met at OTB-SJT who has a regular income. He sees the *regularization* issue in a similar perspective as Eulogia. The legal document will be the guarantee for loans. He paid US\$ 8,000 in 1997 for the 460 square meters plot he owns here. He had his own savings, but needed to sell his taxi to raise the total amount needed for the purchase. For the construction of the house and the bakery he runs here, he borrowed US\$ 3,000 from the 'Banco Sol'.²⁵⁹ The repayment term was eighteen months.

In the Banco Sol it took me only 15 days to get my loan and I required only two personal guarantors... for the information on my income I only had to show my personal notebook, where I write my daily spending and profits ... (Emeterio 2001/07).

The US\$ 210 he needs to pay monthly for the loan speaks to an income level far above most of the people living at the OTB-SJT.²⁶⁰ This makes the issue of statutory property rights, as the means for accessing formal loans, doubtful for most of the households here, at least considering the requirements of the finance institutions now.

259 Banco Sol belongs to the type of alternative finance institutions established in 'developing' countries to serve the poor. The idea was inspired by the experience of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. Grameen Bank became a government-registered bank in 1983 with the objective of providing credits to the rural poor (Holcombe 1995). The experience of Banco Sol cannot be easily compared to Grameen Bank's successful experience when it comes to reaching the poorest groups of the population however.

260 Of 115 households that answered the questionnaire, about 76% had monthly incomes less than US\$ 192, 15% of these had up to US\$ 64, and about 37% earned between 65 and less than US\$ 128 monthly. As most people at the OTB-SJT have insecure incomes, and frequently do not provide accurate information, the data, therefore, is to be seen only as a general reference. (*Resultados Encuesta Barrio San Jose de la Tamborada – Distrito 9, 2001*).

Despite Emeterio has a better chance to access loans, after four years of living here the conditions in his house were still very poor. The priority for household investments has been towards the bakery he owns. Considering the loan requirements, and the dreams Emeterio has for his house, it seemed improbable that he will achieve this, at least in the near future.

Most of the people I met at the OTB-SJT know little about how financial institutions work; many have never had contact with a bank or similar institution. Emeterio told me that one of his neighbors was now trying to sell his property because the US\$ 6,000 they saved in a 'box' in the house was recently robbed. The money was to pay back credit they got for the purchase of a bus to be used for public transport, he said.

Among those I have spoken with, Emeterio is one of the few who has experience in dealing with formal finance institutions. He was a member once in a 'cooperative for saving and loans',²⁶¹ but their routines are, according to him, too cumbersome.

Before I was saving in the San Antonio Cooperative too... but the papers needed are really a mess...they say that the loans are available only when you have all the documents on the house ready...you need also papers that show that your house is free from other loans, they say... with all this questions ready the loan is available only after one month, it is too long time to wait... (Emeterio 2001/07).

Although the mechanisms in the Banco Sol may be less cumbersome than in other financial institutions the interest rates and the short-terms of the loans may make them difficult for low-income groups to get. Those interviewed who saw statutory property rights as means to access formal loan, were, at the same time, very doubtful about the mortgage idea.

It would be nice to get money to improve the house, but mortgaging the property can be risky, one can loose the property as well... (Lorena 2002/05).

Euterio and Lorena came to the OTB-SJT more than seven years ago. They have four children, the oldest being twenty-five and the youngest eleven. All of them still live in the house with the parents. When the husband was laid-off during the Structural Adjustments in the 1980s, they decided to move to Cochabamba because the climate was good for Lorena's health. Euterio had worked for a while in Argentina to save money for the purchase of the property here. With their savings and the sale of two properties they had before, they

261 The charter of 'cooperative for savings and loans' was established to make loans available for middle- and low-income groups in the country. The procedures and the interest rates were often more flexible than those of banks. Changes made years ago put these kinds of institutions under the national structure that controls the banking system (Superintendencia de Bancos). The interest rates and the procedures today are similar to other financial institutions and are, therefore, less accessible to the poor.

paid 10,000 Bolivianos²⁶² for a 334 square meters plot in 1996. One of the former ‘caretakers’ family owned the plot previously.

The first construction this family made to the plot on the main street included a room for a neighborhood shop, at the front of the house. The things to buy in the shop were in short supply, and it was not difficult for me to see that business was not going well. They told me that they always have had shops in the places where they lived. It is Lorena who used to be in charge of this activity, which served as an extra income source for the household, said Euterio. Considering their positive economic conditions previously, the poor situation observed in the shop most likely has nothing to do with the lack of experience of the wife with this kind of business.

Lorena said that things went well until they started to have problems with the repayments of the loans with two financial institutions. The loans were for starting the business here. The poor supply of the shop was a result of the lack of money left for operating it after repayment of the loans. Property rights are important for loans, she said, despite her bad experience with this question. She pointed further that statutory property rights were essential in order to be sure the children will inherit the house in the future.

Without the legal documents it can be problems...the ‘minutas’ are not enough...the legal documents can be used for bank loans and for all things they are useful to, but also for the feeling of security on tenure...and then one can say that one is the *legitimate owner* of the plot and one can afterwards leave the property to the children... (Lorena 2002/05).

Lorena was not alone in having problems with finance institutions. In most of the cases loans had been possible through personal guarantees, but people had huge difficulties in making the monthly payments. It is true that loans with personal guarantees often have higher interests levels than housing loans in Bolivia, but housing loan rates were over 20% when the interviews were conducted as well. Long-term housing loans demand regular incomes. Failure to repay a loan with a personal guarantee can mean not being seen as reliable for future loans and maybe to be unfriendly with the guarantor. But unpaid loans when mortgages are involved can mean to loose the property. Most of the people I talked to were aware of that.

To get loans the titles are necessary, sometimes one needs money; with the titles we could get a loan and maybe we could improve the house ...but I would not like to take a big loan, only a little one, because if the loan is too big I could loose my house in case I couldn’t pay it back. I would like to borrow also to start some business... (Celina 2001/07).

I use to see Celina in the community meetings. She belongs to the group of middle-age women often seated together with Eulogia. They are normally seated in the back and use to be whispering things all through the meeting. The family was living here for seven

²⁶² About US\$ 2,000 at that time.

years when the first quantitative inquiries were conducted. There were twenty-three people in the house, being that this was the largest group living in the same plot in the whole area. The fifty-seven years old father was the oldest member, and the two four-month old children were the youngest of the group.

The household has a small but well-served neighborhood shop that gives the sense of a stable economic situation. We had our conversation in a little room adjacent to the shop, and often there were clients coming in. There was always somebody from the household taking care of the sale so we could talk without interruptions.

“We only have a ‘minuta’”, Celina said, and explained that the signatures of her property document were ‘legally recognized’.²⁶³ She said that she liked the place a lot and felt comfortable here. The household paid US\$ 3,000 in 1994 to a former member of the Cooperative for the 455 square meter plot. There were many rooms around the amazing and attractive garden, but it was definitely crowded in the house. Celina told me that her dream was to build a multiple floor building so each of her six children could have their own flat. She had some experience with loans from finance institutions, but the amounts she mentioned were less than US\$ 1,500 each time. She was still paying to Banco Sol for a loan they got seven years ago. “The legal titles are important for loans”, she commented.

Celina does not feel secure with only the ‘minuta’ as tenure document. She believes that it is not enough in case they sell the house. “If we could not get a loan, we likely could not sell the house either”, she said. Her reasoning was tenuous considering that they bought the plot with only the ‘minuta’ as document for the commercial transaction. But, she was sure anyway that there will always be people interested in buying her property.

There are buyers, they wanted to buy my house, the people were begging me two times but I didn’t want to sell for my children, but the documents are also a problem, when I said to the buyer that we had only the minuta she said that her lawyer was not going to accept this document, it may not be easy to sell afterwards, the woman said to me... (Celina 2001/07).

The offer made by the woman was about US\$ 4,000 because ‘the house did not have legal documents’. Buyers often may use the ‘illegality’ argument to offer less money for the property. The fact is that the properties are in the housing market. Problems for doing commercial transactions are not so much related to the validity of the documents. Questions affecting the value of the properties have more to do with bad housing conditions in the settlement, particularly when it comes to access to basic services and community facilities, as well as to the bad conditions of the house itself. However, a general review of land costs in the residential area shows that prices have been increasing gradually over the years.

²⁶³ This is a judicial procedure by which the signature of a person is legally registered and supported by his/her identification documents, often the identity card.

The poor situation of the houses is related to factors other than to statutory property rights. The lack of regular incomes, the lack of technical support for the investments people make in housing, and the absence of policies clearly oriented to improve the living conditions, all these are among the most relevant to low-income groups.

To improve housing through the access to loans from formal financial institutions, as current statements of *regularization* suggest, seems unrealistic in the case of the OTB-SJT. To achieve 'legal' status in housing tenure will be of little help in so far as the population is not able to fulfil the requirements of a more or less regular income. In spite of this, statutory property rights belong to the most widespread argument behind *regularization* as the key for housing improvement in Bolivia as well.

People don't improve the houses because of the insecurity in tenure

Iris training as an architect makes her statements on the *regularization* issue closer to statements made on the 'official' side. She recommends the use of existing regulations established for urban development in the city to the neighbors that asked her for advice. These regulations are highly controversial; they were conceived in times when the 'garden city'²⁶⁴ vision was considered the 'model' for town planning in Cochabamba City. The debates related to the 54 urban settlements established in District 9 focus greatly on the unrealistic view of the 'old' regulatory framework in force for the development of a high proportion of the city today. Iris believes, however, that the *regularization* spectre makes people afraid of building their houses with better quality materials and techniques. According to her view, the "people do not care" about the quality and condition of the houses because they are waiting for the *regularization*.

The regularization is the most important thing because we don't feel as owners as we don't have a document that supports us, a testimony from the Real Estate Office or a stamp from these office ...the people do not invest now because they don't feel safe with their ownership on their properties... (Iris 2001/07).

This argument may be true in some cases, particularly in the case of the first owners of the Cooperative group. In constructions made by the second or third generation owners of the Cooperative area, and by the owners in the other parts that make up the settlement, the houses presented poor conditions, but they give a more or less permanent sense as well. This was the case of Iris's house, too. Although the house was located in the back of the yard, (because the idea was "to build the main house in the middle of the plot" in the future), the quality of the existing rooms made me think that they will probably stay permanently. In this case, the involvement of technical skills in the design and building of the house was evident for the rather good quality achieved.

264 In reference to the movement that initiated practical town planning in Great Britain and in many parts of the world. The publication in 1898 of the book "Tomorrow: A peaceful path to Real Reform", by Sir Ebenezer Howard, is considered the starting point for this movement.

The low quality of the other houses seemed more related to economic factors, and to the lack of technical advice, than to the property rights issue. Iris was, however, convinced that the people would start to think about better houses when the *regularization* was implemented. She talks also of the “fear of demolition”. The level of consolidation of the residential area and the fact that the OTB-SJT was already selected by the Municipal Council to be part of the *regularization* process makes the ‘demolition’ possibility groundless.

We don’t have either the definitive plans of the plots, we don’t know if the total area is legal or it will be affected... most of the people don’t talk even on the house, they didn’t build yet the *permanent house* because they are waiting for the regularization... people do the building but with some fear for future demolitions... (Iris 2001/07).

Iris has similar expectations on the *regularization* issue as other dwellers have: access to statutory property rights in housing is essential. The fact that some houses present better quality than others within the same living area puts her assertions into question. Considering that everybody is more or less affected by the lack of legal status in housing (according to the official view), the differences in housing quality within the same living area can not be dependent only on this question. The significance often given to the argument of statutory property rights as central for the achievement for better housing conditions loses, in this sense, its credibility.

The legality question touches different groups in different ways. Families relocated from the airport are, for example, to some extent more ‘legal’ than the Cooperative group. In spite of this, the ownership document Magda has on the plot is not much help for the improvement of the housing quality of the household just now. The financial institutions consider her too old for a loan, and she does not have a regular income, a requirement of these institutions.

The debts Rosaura has did not need a mortgage on the house because the ‘institution’ that gave the loan worked with ‘group pledge’ modality instead. If the house had been the guarantee for the loan, she would have most likely already lost the property. Rosaura’s explanation about the type of loan sounded strange to me. The group of women involved made repayments to a man who came to visit them directly, in representation of a ‘bank’ I had never heard of before. The conditions of the loan were frightening. She was convinced that the loans were specifically oriented to the ‘poor’.

We borrowed 1,000 Bolivianos each to be paid in 12 months, about 160 Bolivianos monthly... we don’t even need to go to an office, the man comes to our houses each month to get the repayments, this are kind of loans for the poor you know²⁶⁵... (Rosaura 2002/05).

Rosaura and Magda were skeptical of the *regularization* issue because of the need of more streets and green areas. This fear has grounds. According to the residents’ demands, the settlement

²⁶⁵ The loan was of about US\$ 128. According to the conditions of the loan at the end of the period the recover would be of 1920 Bolivianos (US\$ 245), which means almost 100% profit for the lender in such a short period.

needed to be connected to the main road that borders it on the west (Panamericana Aveneu). There is a need to open more streets and thus to give access to already defined plots. If this would be the case, Magda's plot will probably be affected. The urbanization plan of the OTB-SJT, recently elaborated, do not include the plots of the 'Resettled from the airport' group, apparently because the group opposed the grading work that was needed to carry out the drawings.

These situations are certainly not unfamiliar to *regularization* processes of residential areas previously developed without planning. The problem here is that the shapes of the plots in the 'Resettled from the airport' area are already too narrow.²⁶⁶ To reduce them further would likely make the plots even more difficult to use. This shows that *regularization*, focused basically on statutory property rights, can not be seen as the overall solution in improving housing conditions of people living in a different kind of situations.

In the discourses coming from the 'official' side, *regularization* appears as the key factor for the improvement of *unauthorized housing* areas. In spite of this, the steps forward have been few.²⁶⁷ Among other matters, the Municipality's demand for a percentage of land for green areas and open spaces has been the cause of unending discussions and controversies between the local government and the representatives of the OTBs in District 9.

The demand for green areas and open spaces is unrealistic

One of the main disagreements between the Municipality and the representatives of the OTB-SJT is the percentage of land demanded for green areas and open spaces as required for implementation of the *regularization* process. When the Municipality gave the option to pay the missing percentage of land in cash, the question was raised on how the money would be invested and who will make the decisions.

I wonder if we pay the penalty for the green areas to the Municipality: How will this money be invested? Is the Municipality going to buy land in another area for the building of community facilities we need? Are they going to provide us with community facilities in another place? Are we going to receive this as donation? How can we know? We need, for example, a kindergarten, a basic school... is the money going to be used for this?... (Iris 2001/07).

The fact that the land is already subdivided in individual plots makes the Municipality's demand difficult to understand. This is even less understandable when the alternative the residents received from the Municipality is to pay in cash for the missing land. Open spaces and green areas are linked to urban quality and, therefore, aimed at improving the living conditions of the population. This can hardly be achieved through cash payments, particularly if clear plans to use the money for this objective have not been set. According to the community representatives, the regulations proposed for the *regular-*

266 The plot is of 14.36 meters in front and 119.43 meters deep.

267 The Municipal Council approved the new regulations for the regularization process of the District 9 recently. The goals are oriented strongly to statutory property rights (Ordenanza Municipal del 24 de Marzo de 2004).

ization process at the District 9 were not adapted to the real situation of the urban settlements already existing here²⁶⁸.

It has been discussed for years, and people have been waiting already for a such long time... the new regulations are not adequate to the physical reality of the urban settlements... they do not understand, for example, that the land prices the Land Office of the Municipality consider are not related to the real economic situation of the people in the settlements... besides, they should see the possibility that only half of the missing land for green areas could be paid in cash, but not all... (Renato 2001/08).

For the representatives involved in the issue the demand could be solved in different ways if the political will existed. Antonio and Renato had a different kind of ideas for solving this problem so the *regularization* process could move ahead, but the Municipality has never accepted the proposed solutions, they said.

We proposed to use the land near the river for the building of community facilities, sport plans, and green areas... they don't accept the streets and the already built 'multi-function plan' as part of the missing green areas either... they want cash for the percent of land we still need to fulfil the requirements, but there are no possibilities to collect this money from the people... they will never pay, and they don't have this money either... (Antonio 2001/09).

With time it became clear to me that the internal divisions of the political party in majority in the city's government in the last few years was the main factor behind the difficulties the MH9 had in implementing the regularization process at the OTB-SJT. One of its main promoters belongs to the fraction that lost in the internal power struggles, and as a consequence Renato was soon removed from his post as head of the MH9. The *regularization* issue is practically in the same state as it has been in the last 15 years, he said afterwards to me.

The 'illegal' change of land use from rural to urban, and the lack of enough land for green areas and open spaces, according the regulations in force, has been among the main arguments, these many years, against the *regularization* of this housing area. For the people living at the OTB-SJT, the regularization process represents access to drinking water and sewer systems and to achieve the 'formal' status in housing tenure. This perception is mostly a practical effect of the statements coming from the Municipality, rather than resulting from the 'illegality' sense in housing ownership the residents had from the very beginning.

In spite of the positive aspect the 'multifunction plan' represents for the community as a whole, the question shows the contradictory messages of the Municipality when it comes to the change of land-use from rural to urban. The landowner got the 'approval' to sell rural land for residential development by following the regulations in force for new urbanizations in the city. This was done in spite of the

²⁶⁸ The text refers to proposals existing before those recently approved by the Municipal Council.

fact that rural areas were not yet part of the competences of the Municipality at that time.

The LPP and the LAD made the rural areas part of the administrative duties of the municipalities. The grass roots were called in to establish the OTB structures, for being reliable for participatory action at local level. The merger of the three groups that already lived in this area meant that the percentage of land demanded for green areas and open spaces by the Municipality would be difficult to fulfil by the new unit. The most affected group was from the Mela Darrás area as they had already fulfilled this requisite before these laws were in force. In this sense, the question is an open one on where the demand of regularization is coming from first.

We need to fulfil the regularization promise

During the electoral period of 2002 the *regularization* issue became more of interest, particularly for some of the community representatives. The issue suddenly acquired a higher priority at community meetings. When I asked one of the community representatives once why the *regularization* process was so important he answered:

We made the promise in the last municipal elections and we have to fulfil it for having better chances in the coming national elections... (Renato 2001/08).

The former Mayor of Cochabamba, and the leader of the strongest political party of the local government, was candidate to the president post at that time. *Regularization* emerged as a top political issue in the cities affected more by migration. This was especially the case over the last decade, since the constitutional reforms established that the local authorities of the municipality have to be elected by popular vote each five years.²⁶⁹ Political parties are now used to promise access to statutory property rights in housing as part of the electoral campaign, making the question high vulnerable for political manipulation.

For the local government, the urban settlements established in District 9 were first considered 'illegal' as they were established on land set aside for agricultural production. The application of the same land-use criterion to the whole district seems, however, too sweeping. There is land that can be used for this activity and there is land not suitable for farming. Many settlements I had the opportunity to visit in District 9 were established in the hills and on land that could not be developed for agriculture or cattle production. One of the community representatives of the District 9 Council told me once:

I don't understand why the Municipal Council talks on agricultural land in such general terms, there is actually land that can be used for farming in the District 9, but there is land that can't ever be used for this activity, it's impossible to produce something in the rocky hills and stony land many of the new settlements are built today, isn't it?... (Interview in November 2002).

²⁶⁹ This is related to the Municipal Council and the Mayor of the city. (Ley de Municipalidades, Título II Artículo 11, 1999).

Although the OTB-SJT is actually built on land suitable for farming its level of urban consolidation made the Municipal Council select it among the settlements to be part of the *regularization* process at District 9. In spite of this decision, there are many questions that make this process cumbersome and intricate and particularly exhausting for the people living here. The issue was often on the agenda of general meetings. The architect working with the new urbanization plan sometimes was at these meeting.²⁷⁰ He was one more in the list of professionals in charge of the urbanization plan of the settlement since the Cooperative group started the development process fifteen years ago. My impression was, however, that the regularization process had made little or no progress so far.

Not all the groups that make up the OTB-SJT perceive the *regularization* issue as something positive. Many people see it as similar to titling, mostly related to the plot. This condition, according to their words, will enable commercial transactions, loans through formal finance institutions, inheritance of the properties by the children, and the feeling of ownership of their properties. Except for access to loans from formal financial institutions, (who do not accept the documents of most people for mortgages today), most of the things people mentioned were, more or less, in practice from the beginning.

The Cooperative group considered *regularization* more urgent, however. At least it was discussed more often in the meetings of the Cooperative organization than in the meetings of the OTB. For the 'Resettled from the airport' and the 'Mela Darrás' groups the *regularization* process would have other consequences in practice; and they actually feel that they already 'own' the land individually. The implementation of the *regularization* process can mean to these owners the allotment of land for streets and/or the need to pay for the land missing for green areas and open spaces. The 'Resettled from the airport' and the dwellers of the Mela Darrás areas felt more negatively affected by these questions than the Cooperative group and the former 'caretakers'.

That the Cooperative group still owns the land collectively seems to make the difference in this regard. The new owners need more clarity about their property rights. The cooperative approach in land ownership is unfamiliar to the 'new owners' as they purchased their properties individually. The collective sense that was the cornerstone for the establishment of the Housing Cooperative in the first place has lost its initial meaning, most of the original 'beneficiaries' are no longer part of the group that lives here now.

It is not easy to know if the original group of 'beneficiaries' shared the cooperative philosophy from the beginning, or if this was the only way that a small group of former miners could find to keep the land. But in the conversations with the 'old' members of the Cooperative group, the cooperative idea linked to solidarity and togetherness emerged in warm words.

The argument commonly heard that the *regularization* process will enable access to regular loans has little validity in the context of the OTB-SJT. Even in institutions specially established to reach the

²⁷⁰ The urbanization plan was a requisite for further discussions with the Municipal Council.

'poor' the requisites are far from the financial reality of most households at the OTB-SJT. In this sense, the statements of *regularization* incorrectly make people 'believe' in better future housing conditions, through statutory property rights.

The sale by auction of properties by financial institutions is not an unusual practice in Bolivia. It was more common at the time the interviews were made. Strong controversies about the fairness of auctions made for a slowdown in this practice, but they still happen. Families could lose the properties for amounts less than five percent of their value, a reality the people at the OTB-SJT, in fact, were aware of.

People do not talk about improvements at household level until the question is directly raised, in spite of the overall bad housing conditions at the household level. In all the groups that are part of the OTB-SJT the house has been seen as a private question. The consideration of the house as a private matter, not as something that could be solved in a group, is reinforced by the *regularization* idea as it focuses on individual property rights.

The level of consolidation of the housing area and the memories of the people living here demonstrate that the struggles of the population have been intense and demanding much energy. In the memories of the people it is clear that the formal systems have played a role in the emergence and development of the housing area. And it is clear that statements of *unauthorized housing* as regards the OTB-SJT are often confusing and contradictory, particularly for the people living there.

It is not uncommon to see professionals involved in the development of *unauthorized housing*, for which they received payment from the people. The 'legality' feeling the population gets through the participation of professionals does not always correspond, however, to the legal requirements demanded by the formal systems now.

The involvements of legal professionals in the agreements between seller and buyer, owner and no-owner, can be related to housing purchase, renting and 'anticrético' contracts, heritage procedures, or judicial processes related to land and housing. The involvement of other professionals and technicians in housing activities are not uncommon either. Although architects and engineer were less involved in housing activities at households level, many told me that there were bricklayers who were in charge of the 'design' and the building of the house. The people explained that they often gave the 'directives' to the bricklayers on how the houses should look. The results, in most of the cases, were far from acceptable when it comes to technical and environmental aspects of housing built in this manner. This opens the questions related to *local knowledge*, self-help and mutual aid as keys for current statements of *regularization* in the country.

The Myths about *Local Knowledge*, Self-help and Mutual Aid

It is clear that the experience of the Worker Union representatives of the San José Mine have been behind most of the improvements

made here since the beginning. This means that the organizational skills of the miners were important for the development of the housing area over the years. However, when the families remember the settlement process they never talk about self-help or mutual aid. The most common feature is that the houses are normally built, with the involvement of hired labour. In cases where the interviewed persons mentioned that somebody helped in the building process of the house, it was difficult to connect this to some kind of planned or organized, collective action.

At the general meetings I had the opportunity to observe, the agenda never included discussions on housing conditions at household level until an external organization started to talk about this matter. Community participation for both organizations active here was mostly focused on the housing problems at the settlement level. But even here, the discussions were very much related to basic services, and as a consequence to the *regularization* issue. The 'chicherias' and the brickyards problems emerged in the general meetings as well. People's knowledge about deficiencies in housing quality was normally very limited.

In spite of the economic constraints of most households, the tendency was to pay for skilled labour when it comes to housing construction. Many reasons account for this. The lack of knowledge on building questions can make people insecure for the building of a house on their own. Building a house demands the time the households normally needs for income raising activities. It is possible that this particular group lacks self-help and mutual aid traditions in housing. But it can also be related to the view they have on housing construction as something that should be done by those who 'know best'. What is clear is that self-help and mutual aid modalities linked to collaborative traditions, as practiced in some rural areas of Bolivia, were not found in housing construction in this particular area.

According to the survey, few of the households interviewed had drawings or plans of the houses. The plans were only for the plot, whenever they even existed. The lack of technical documents shows that the building process had a rather improvised feature and that the solutions were often discussed 'in situ', as it became clear during the field work. When bricklayers were involved, the owners discussed with them just that part of the building that would be worked just then. Decisions were made "in the field" according to the resources available at the time, which included stored building materials, and the needs considered most urgent at the time.

A high percent of the people that answered this question in the survey reported that they had bought only the plot, with no building included, from the beginning. The survey showed also that there were households that had purchased the plots in the same year. But, this had not led to joint actions, for the construction of the houses, either. No matter which way people had accessed the land, the houses were arranged for by each household alone. No signs of collaborative practices beyond the household members were found and even here the tendency was to pay for the work and not to build on their own. Furthermore, in most cases it was the males who were involved in housing construction. When people decided to build the

house themselves, the reason behind this can fairly be connected to self-help and mutual aid practices or to ‘collaborative’ traditions in housing.

A bricklayer ‘helped’ me with the house

About 68 percent of the 82 households that answered the question on “who built the house?”, reported that some kind of paid labour was involved, and normally a bricklayer.²⁷¹ In general, the bricklayers did the work without the participation of the owners, but they usually receive directives related to the housing layout and the use of building materials.

Many bricklayers that worked in the building of the houses came from the OTB-SJT. The participation of bricklayers in the building process was not, however, any guarantee for good results in housing quality. Bricklayers are themselves self-taught persons and their building skills can differ from case to case. In addition, the lack of economic resources of the households reduces the possibility to achieve better outcomes in housing design and housing construction, particularly when the knowledge on how to achieve this does not exist. People used to say that a bricklayer ‘helped’ them with the building of the house but this is actually paid labour.

It was the bricklayer that lives here very near that *helped* us with the building... but he did not make the work well... the windows move and the house shakes as a little match ash when it is windy... (Eloisa 2002/07).

In the case of Eloisa’s family, the husband and the young male children helped the bricklayer, however, this help was mostly in the purchase of the building materials. The family had also done a sketch on how the two floors of the main house should look. The drawings included a place for the garage and for the outside toilet. Later on, the second house was built for the married children and their children. Both ‘houses’ share the toilet and the kitchen, that in this case has a special room for the kitchen, which includes a place for the dining table.

The two houses lie in the plot as two independent structures that happen to share some services and are built on the same plot. Although this is one of the first houses built here, the ‘main house’ was not located in the back, but in the front part of the plot. It was evident that the design of the main house had influence from the former landowner’s housing design, the only one existing in the place at that time, particularly when it comes to the location of the main building, and the two floor concept.²⁷²

271 In about 58 percent of the cases the members of the household were not involved in the construction process, and in only 10 percent of the cases the householders had helped the skilled laborers. In the rest of the cases (32%), the owners said that they had built the house without the help of persons from outside the household circle and without any kind of skilled labour involved (*Resultados Encuesta Barrio SJT-D9, Mayo 2001*).

272 It is not uncommon for low-income housing in rural and in urban areas that people build one-store houses first, and make extensions to a second floor later. It is also common that the first floor is built in adobe while the second

Otherwise, the most common feature from the first period of the settlement process was one-store houses located in the back of the plot. In this case it was Eloisa's decision to have a 'proper' kitchen from the very beginning. But it was clear that her participation in the building of the house had been limited to feed the construction crew. Eloisa was not satisfied with the bricklayers' work and with the overall quality of the building. She was not alone in this feeling at the OTB-SJT.

Euterio and Lorena had always been urban dwellers. They bought the plot and started the building of the first rooms with the savings that came from the sale of the two houses the family owned before. Euterio told me that he paid US\$ 3,300 for the land.²⁷³ His plot is among the most expensive sold in the housing area at that time according to his version. The high cost of the plot could be behind the poor conditions of the house considering that the economy of the family was rather good before they moved to the area. The plot is on the main street and is part of the Cooperative area.

Euterio was one of the few people I interviewed that said they had been actively involved in the building of the house. It was easy to understand from the conversation that the house was built strictly according to Euterio's criteria. He told me almost proudly,

I'm doing things that I had never done before and I am doing it alone, without any assistance and according to what I have seen others do... (Euterio 2002/05).

He was working with the foundation of a new room for his son, who was helping him with the building. "He has to work because the room is for him", he said. The couple shared a big bedroom with their four children. The fence wall was made of bricks, but the new room will be built in adobe with zinc roof as the other rooms of the house were done.

In asking questions on the building process I could understand that Euterio's knowledge was limited and his ideas were mostly taken from his observations to the bricklayer's work when the first rooms were built. He was rather insecure on what he was doing now but, at the same time, he was evidently not satisfied with the work of the bricklayer. The cracks on the walls in the room used for the neighborhood shop were the best proof of the bricklayer's bad performance. This was behind the decision to "do the thing on his own this time". He seemed not to be worried about the possibility of making mistakes in his 'self-help' experiment.

"This is my first experience in building without the participation of skilled labour", said Euterio. To put self-help into practice was related to his conviction that "it was a waste of money to pay for this work", not so much because of some kind of self-help 'tradition'. The lack of precision on the amount of investments made so far did not mean that Euterio was not convinced about the house he wants to have for his family. In the conversation he appeared in my eyes as

floor is done in more durable building materials, often brick or cement blocks.

273 Which was about US\$ 1,300 higher than the price he gave in the local currency when the quantitative survey was done one year before.

somebody who 'knows what is the best' for everybody in the household.

His visions were, however, not so much linked to quality in housing design, or to well-planned building costs, but mostly to the amount of rooms needed for all the members of the household. The rather poor conditions of the kitchen and the toilet made me think that these were not the first priority in housing investments. The general impression was that everything was still under construction.

Bricklayers also constructed Vania's house. And the members of the household were very active in helping the bricklayers when the improvements were made. She is about twenty-three years old and she takes care of her little son without the help of the father. The father lives at the OTB-SJT too, she said, "but he pretends to ignore that the child is also of him".

The young woman was convinced that bricklayers are lazy people. "They only want to drink chicha", she said, and told me that when their house was under construction they use to help the workers, "we did most of the work, actually", she commented. She said that the three daughters and the teenager son of the family worked together with the bricklayers, but the neighbors made negative comments on the participation of the girls.

The neighbors thought that we were like men because we were helping the bricklayers, we made adobes and we laid the adobes too... the workers were drunk all the time, and we had to work with the building to get the wall ready, so what!... (Vania 2002/08).

When she talks on the household's involvement in the building process she is not talking of self-help or mutual aid on some organized basis however. The negative attitude of the neighbors to the involvement of the young females was something to be noticed. In most cases when people said that the family was involved in housing construction, it was the male and not the female they referred to. Spaces where the females normally spend more time were often the most neglected and of lesser priority, except for the spaces that were for income-raising activity that the women will run. This was the case of the space set aside for neighborhood shops in Lorena's, Celina's and Isaura's houses.

In most of the households interviewed, the women had an important role in income-generating activities; some of these activities were done in the house. The leading role the men took in housing construction does not mean that the women were not interested in it. When the issue was raised the women were quite willing to work if their participation was needed. Although the women often had a relevant role in the household economy, the fact that they were not involved in housing construction limited their knowledge of the investments made. This was not exclusively the failure of the women, the men also were unaware of the building costs rather often.

I don't' have any idea on the building costs

The households are use to buying building materials whenever they have some money left over and store them until a part of the house can be built. Normally they have little controll over the building costs

and the building process. Nobody gave me clear information on these questions. They did not have a total budget, nor a clear idea on the final results when the 'missing' parts of the house would be completed. They knew what kind and what amount of rooms they needed, but as far as knowing how to design and construct their 'dream home', they were at a loss.

With the money we once paid for the rent before, we made improvements to our house instead...we paved the yard and we bought glazed tiles we saved for until the toilet and the kitchen can be improved ...we bought it from a construction site that had some building materials left over... I don't remember how much we paid for it, but it was cheap... (Sabina 2001/07).

Euterio used to talk convincingly of the type of house needed for the whole family and had decided to do the building himself this time. Euterio could say in very enthusiastic tones how many rooms will be needed to have a finished house. I was interested in the costs of the building, but he could not tell me, even for the son's room that was under construction.

I don't have any idea, I know that I have used four cement bags so far, then we bought tools as well... the rooms done by the bricklayer with adobe were bad, it's not worth to pay for work that's done wrong... so I'll do this part by myself now... (Euterio 2002/05).

People could be aware of the kind of spaces and facilities they would like to have in the house, and many even knew where the new rooms could be located, but this is far from saying that the solutions they proposed were the best for internal comfort, building costs or the functionality of the house. The results achieved were good examples on how this kind of 'step by step' process for low-income housing areas can turn out in practice. The outcomes were mostly poor, not only on the quality of the house, but also with the eventual detrimental impact on the household economy. To improve the conditions of most of the existing houses here, knowledge and skills will need to be present, not only for a competent 'diagnosis' of the housing situation, but for carrying out the work needed in each case. The *local knowledge* concept related to the idea of 'people knows best', is certainly difficult to prove in this example.

The plot was empty for about one year, there were only some few houses in the area...we made the building without any sketches or plans of the house...we said what we wanted to have and how we wanted the house to be to the bricklayer, and that's it... (Celina 2001/07).

We didn't have any drawings of the house...I made the building according to my own criteria...I told to the bricklayer how to do it and he did it...he was not a mason, but only a bricklayer... (Emeterio 2001/07).

The population has had little control over much of the investments made so far. The building process was improvised and it responded

mostly to the immediate needs the people had for moving into the place quickly. Many persons lived as tenants before, and they wanted to save the rent to invest in the house. The quality of the buildings is, in this sense, related to the resources they had for the investments at that particular time. There were never enough resources to build the house completely from the beginning. Many told me that when they had moved into the place the rooms had no doors or windows.

I don't remember how much I paid for the building of these two rooms, we spend the money when it is needed and when we had it... the investment in housing is a process for us...I didn't have any drawings when we started the building...we were in a hurry and needed two rooms to move to our plot, that's it... (José 2002/05).

People could easily give information on the price of the plot they purchased. This is easily understood since the purchase was made at one time and normally in cash (I heard of no cases where plots were purchased with credit). And, it was a major event in terms of investments of the household, and thus, more easily recalled.

The results achieved in most cases show that the 'step by step process' in low-income housing can be irrational in economic and physical terms. The results can be detrimental to the functionality and the internal comfort of the houses, now and in the future, and can go against the better use of the households' scarce resources. Decisions they made seldom considered the effects they would have on the quality of their own living conditions, or on the quality of life of others living around them.

I told the bricklayer how to do the building

Emeterio had lived in the Cooperative area for only a few months when the first interviews were made at the OTB-SJT. He is a baker, quite young and has five children between one and eight years old. He bought the plot in 1997 and moved to the settlement three years later, when he had managed to build two rooms for his family. There were no professionals involved in the design and the construction of the house, just the bricklayers who followed Emeterio's "own ideas and directives on how the house should be done". He belongs to the group of households here that have their own business; he is one of the few I met that knew how to deal with financial institutions working specifically with loans for income-generating activities of low-income groups.

His bakery is located in the house and it looks well organized and clean. It was surprising to know that even the design and the construction of the bakery was of his doing. He learned the bakery business from his father and has worked in it since he was a child. It is obvious that in his investments the bakery was the first priority. The house was still in the same incomplete condition when I visited him more than one year after the first interviews were done. The only new construction in the house was a flimsy addition built "to help the unemployed brother with his own business".

Emeterio was born in La Paz and moved with his father to Cochabamba when he was a child. Before he and his wife came here, they

lived as tenants in Villa Mexico; he worked with the bakery business there, also. "It was too crowded because we had only one bedroom for living there", he said. Emeterio's dream had always been to have his own bakery. His future house would have at least one room for each child besides the parent's bedroom, the living room, the kitchen and the toilet with a proper shower. Today the house does not have any special room for the kitchen, and only improvised arrangements in the yard for cooking, for personal hygiene and for the laundry. "We need to warm water to bath the children outside", he said. When the irrigation channels that surround the settlement have enough water in them they go and wash clothes there.

I'll like to have a little flat for my children, today I only have two rooms for the whole family...I'll like to have a toilet with a shower too...now we dip the children in the open sky and in the winter we have to do it at noon because it is warmer... (Emeterio 2001/07).

The use of the plot for housing and economic activities is not uncommon, as we have seen. The problem with Emeterio's activity is the proximity of the bakery and the family's living area. As Emeterio was responsible for the design and the construction of the bakery, without any specialized control or technical advice, the risk of fires and other accidents exists, with the use of gas in the bakery. I wanted to know more about his skills for the design and the construction of this kind of infrastructure, and particularly for the oven. He seemed convinced that being in the business since he was a child was enough; he "had seen how these things were done in practice".

His experience helped him in the construction of the bakery's infrastructure and the first impression was really positive inside the building. This does not mean that the use of the plot for bakery, so near his own house and neighboring houses, fulfilled the technical requirements needed to protect people living in the vicinity.

Similar questions arise when it comes to other economic activities linked to the residential areas such as the brickyards, the 'chicherías', and the carpentry operations. People do things according to their knowledge and they make efforts to meet their needs, but the results cannot immediately be considered adequate for their living quality, their families or of their neighbors.

Julian worked as a carpenter since he was a child. His dream was to have "something of his own" when he was an employee. The family bought a plot, together with other people, from a former 'beneficiary' five years ago. They paid US\$ 4,000 for 500 square meters and each got half of the plot. Inside the house he now runs his own carpentry shop and the noise of the machinery, and the residual of the wood flying around, are surely disturbing for his wife and their two small children. The man who owns the other half of the original plot did not build his house yet, so Julian has the possibility to use this space to store the wood for his business. He seldom attended community meetings because "he needs to travel a lot for his work", he said, when I asked about this.

When Julian talks about housing improvement, the need to separate the living area from where the carpentry takes place, was not mentioned first, in spite of the obvious non-compatible character of both activities. While he is working, the dust and residuals coming from the wood infiltrate clearly inside the house. He needed more space to store the wood; this was the main reason behind his desire to move the business to another place in the city. The kitchen presented very poor conditions and the yard was practically covered by wood residuals everywhere, was crowded by the machinery and half-finished furniture. In spite of this, Julian never mentioned the need for a kitchen and a proper place to play for the seven and ten years old children. He was among those interviewed that told me that his children were not allowed to go to the ‘multifunction plan’ because it was too far from the house to “keep an eye on them while they were there.”

The two rooms of the house were built by a bricklayer, he did what I told him to do...I’ll like to move my carpentry shop to another place because I need more space to store the wood... we need a toilet and a shower to improve the house, the running water is a priority in the housing area... (Julian 2002/05).

According to what the people have told me, they were normally active in the ‘design’ of the house. This was often related to the things that needed to be done just at that time. The reasons behind the layouts often had to do with reasons other than *local knowledge*, in the sense similar to the people-know-best-idea that belongs to participatory discourse today.

Somebody told me to build the house in this way

In many of the discussions I have heard in Bolivia over all these years, and particularly among people working with low-income housing in urban areas, a recurrent question was why people in ‘poor’ housing areas built the house in the back part of the plot, putting the rooms around the court-yard. Some suggest that this is related to the vision the Andean people have on housing layout.²⁷⁴ Others consider that this has to do mostly with the housing design inherited from the colonial period people use as a reference after their contact with the city.²⁷⁵ When I asked about this at the OTB-SJT, it was common to hear that “the administrator of the MH9 told me not to build in the front of the plot because the regularization could affect the building when implemented”.²⁷⁶

274 This refers to how people in the countryside build the rooms of the house around a main yard. This open place has an important role for many activities of the family, including those for economic production.

275 This is in reference to the courtyard housing designs inherited from the Spanish Colonial period.

276 The argument was that more areas for streets probably will be demanded by the Municipality. This was surprising to me because most of the existing streets here are already at least 10 meters wide. But, if more streets would be needed, surely they will not be at the front part of the plots considering how the urban situation of the area looks today.

Similar to some cases of the first Cooperative group, the rooms built by the former owners of Eulogia's house were 'only temporary until the definitive house could be built sometime in the future'. The new rooms will be constructed in the front of the plot so "it will look like a real house," she said. When I asked why she had made more rooms in the back of the plot instead of in the front, she said that this was not her own idea,

Renato told us to build in that way... we were afraid for demolitions because he said that the Municipality will maybe decide to have more streets when the regularization process will be implemented... (Eulogia 2001/07)

The building of the house in the back part of the plot can also have economic reasons behind it. The first investments the families make are normally with the fence wall that is often done in more permanent building materials, often bricks. To use the fence as part of the house means a savings. The way people use the plot and the wall in the building of the house is connected to the *regularization* issue as well. The fears of future demolitions may make people locate the rooms in a more protected part of the plot.

Often the first rooms are built with a 'temporary vision'. The family expects to have enough money in the future for the building of the 'definitive house'. In most of the cases, these rooms are part of the house built incrementally, and according to the available resources of the household, a process that often takes a long time. Most of the houses here are still 'under construction'. In many cases the enlargements represent problems to the already existing rooms, as the extension process was not really planned from the beginning. The 'temporary vision' one see in the first investments in housing construction responds to other reasons as well.

We build the first rooms in the back part of the plot to make use of the walls of the fence as we needed a place to move temporarily...until the regularization is implemented we didn't want to risk an investment that could be demolished later on... (Gina 2001/07).

When we first bought the plot the area was still without nothing, no streets, no electricity, no transportation, it was a 'desert' with trees and bushes, it was too difficult for living, so we built a fence around the plot and left it for a while...I was working abroad when my wife told me that the cooperative organization would confiscate the plot if the family did not move here, so we decided to build some temporary rooms to move here for seven years ago... (Alberto 2001/08).

Alberto remembers the first years in the housing area as difficult. They had to move to the place in spite of bad housing conditions because the Cooperative organization "wanted people that really lived here". Alberto owns one of the biggest and oldest 'chicherías' and the conflicts between the living area and the business activity inside the house are evident. The activities developed without any clear

separation between them. The bedrooms are located along one of the sides of the courtyard, which has been covered with zinc roofs to adapt it for the bar's clients. It was probably difficult for the children to sleep when the bar's large music loudspeakers were functioning late in the evening.

The couple has four daughters between nine and eighteen years old. The daughters help the parents with the preparations of food for the business. Similar to the other 'chicherías' some of the dishes are prepared in open fire on the sidewalk. Alberto was building more rooms in the house and he was in charge of the work together with a bricklayer. From his explanation it was easy to understand that the building was constructed without sketches or plans and the work was mostly discussed with the bricklayer 'in-situ'. "The bricklayer gives me advice on how to do it", he pointed out. It is obvious that the priority was the bar and many of the investments made to improve its functioning have had a bad impact on the family's living area. The roof that covers the courtyard now has reduced ventilation and daylight for the bedrooms. Clearly, the functioning of these non-compatible activities works against the privacy of the whole family as well.

There were cases when members of the family told the owner how he might build the house, which does not mean, necessarily, that they had some particular experience in housing construction either. Filomena comes originally from the countryside of Sacaba, a town very near to Cochabamba, but she moved to Oruro in search of better working opportunities when she was only twelve years old. She told me that she did "not even know the door of the school" because she had to take care of the family's livestock in her early years. She earns a small retirement annuity from the mines because she worked as a *palliri* when she was a teenager.²⁷⁷ I could understand that she gets economic support from her children and the impression was that they took care of the mother well.

She still owns a house in Oruro, occupied now by two of her children and by tenants. She has tenants in the house she owns at the OTB-SJT as well. The tenants, a young couple, have a small child and they occupy one of the three rooms of the house.²⁷⁸ There is even a little 'hut' for storage, a room for the kitchen, a latrine and a washing place with no connections to running water or sewer systems. The owner and the tenants share these facilities. The main rooms are built along one of the sides of the courtyard as is the case in many other houses. When I asked why the rooms were built in just that way she answered that,

It was my daughter who told me where the rooms had to be built, she does not live in Cochabamba now but she was here to show where and how the rooms would be

²⁷⁷ *Palliris* are women that work in the mines 'winning' minerals from the residuals of the mine exploitation. They use their hands to select stones that still have some mineral content and are paid for this work by the mining companies. They are often part of the employees of the companies, but there are also women who work by their own and sell the 'stones' to the mines or to the *rescatistas* (private mineral rescuers).

²⁷⁸ The tenants pay a rent of 100 Bolivianos monthly, about US\$ 15.

done... a bricklayer did the work according to her indications... (Filomena 2002/07).

One of the big households at the OTB-SJT was headed by a couple of high school teachers, Felix and his wife; they have eight children. The oldest is a twenty-five years old woman that still lives in the house. She studies at the university. The youngest girl is only ten. The couple comes originally from Oruro but worked in Potosi and Quillacollo before they bought the plot from Mela Darrás and moved here. Felix paid US\$ 1,300 for about 280 square meters in 1990. A bricklayer built the first rooms, but Felix is now building more rooms for his children without any help. The new rooms lack foundations because they were 'only temporary', he explained.

I did the other rooms by myself, in my own way and without the involvement of any architect or bricklayer... they don't have foundations because they are only provisional, I need to give more comfort to my children... I don't follow any drawings but we didn't have any drawings for the first constructions either... (Felix 2002/05).

The house has two latrines, but only one big bedroom for all the children, and one for the parents. It has, as well, a dining room, a storage room and a proper kitchen built along one of the sides of the plot. Felix and his wife were fired from their works as teachers at the Huanuni mine during the Economic Adjustments of the 1980s.²⁷⁹ Both work today in several schools each contributing this way to the economy of the household. Some of the rooms of the house still lack proper doors, and the housing conditions are far from adequate, in spite of their dual income. The fact that Cochabamba City is considered an earthquake risk zone made me think that regardless the education level of the parents and the grown up children, they were unaware of the risk to the occupants of the new rooms because of the poor construction techniques used for the temporary rooms. The knowledge of this family obviously was not enough to solve the housing question adequately in this particular case either.

In most cases, the 'step by step' process gave the impression of the dwelling being under permanent construction, without any clear perspective of what the 'final' results would be. Even more precarious housing conditions can be seen in the Cooperative area, where according to the survey, more or less half of the households were living in their houses between five and fifteen years.²⁸⁰ This means that in this particular case poor housing conditions are difficult to link to the length of time of residency of the people in the place.

The fears of demolitions linked to the *regularization* idea had more impact in the Cooperative group probably because the land is still owned collectively. In spite of this, the fact is that people need a shelter no matter whether *regularization* is implemented or not. The 'temporary' solutions people find themselves in may answer their immediate housing needs to some extent, but it can also be detrimental in other ways to other people.

²⁷⁹ Huanuni is one of the state owned mines closed in the 1980s. It is located in the department of Potosi.

²⁸⁰ *Resultados Encuesta Barrio SJT-Distrito 9, Mayo 2001, IIA/PROMESHA/UMSS.*

The small quantity of my sewage can't be dangerous for anybody

The house that Vania occupies is located in the 'Mela Darrás' area. The family had been living in the Tamborada zone for about 15 years before they came and settled here.²⁸¹ The house has the rooms located around the yard, which is paved with bricks in a rather improvised way, to avoid the mud in rainy periods and the dust when it is dry. The plot has an irregular shape but is well organized and the house is clean inside. There are bedrooms for all the adults of the household. The arrangements for washing and cooking are located in one of the corners of the plot and even the toilet is located nearby. The sewage and the water waste coming from the toilet, the washing and the cooking goes directly to the irrigation channel that borders the house at the north. On the contamination problems she said that,

But the quantity is too little for been dangerous to contaminate the irrigation channels... and it is only a provisional solution... how this could be solved better anyway?... (Vania 2002/08).

For a while, Vania was part of the young people involved in sports and cultural activities with the Tukuypaj organization.²⁸² Although she finished her high school studies, she was not aware of the consequences of the arrangements the family made for household sewage disposal and the dangers of contamination.

People's understanding of the contamination possibilities related to improper sewer and household waste disposal obviously was very limited. Shortcomings were also obvious in the case of the sale of food in bars and in neighborhood stores. When I was talking with Josefina, the meat she sold was in direct contact with the dust coming from the main street. In front of her house the clients of Carmelo's 'chichería' use the street when the toilet of the house was occupied. The residual water from cooking was also thrown into the open street from time to time. All of this has to do with *local knowledge* related to housing needs indeed. Eulogia told me once,

We need drinking water first, that's the priority, the sewer question can always be solved in different ways, I can build my toilet near the main door and have some channels connected to the street for evacuating the sewage... (Eulogia 2001/07).

The *local knowledge* idea can be discussed related to power relations at the micro-level. Within the households it is mostly the men who make decisions related to housing layout and housing construction. The children and the women may give their opinions, but the fi-

281 This is the area at the southern part of Cochabamba city that got the name after the Tamborada River. The OTB-SJT is located within the Tamborada territory and the name is, in part, a result of this.

282 Tukuypaj means in Quechua 'for everybody'. The organization was founded by some of the young people living in the housing area and was active from 1999 to 2001. The main objective of the founders was to give a room for free time activities to the youth and the children at the OTB-SJT; among these were sports, music, dance and theatre.

nal decisions seemed to be mostly in the men's hands. In community meetings the women and the youth were seldom seen giving opinions openly. Even within the male forum there were those who always asked to speak and those who never did. In this context the *local knowledge* topic turns more complex and is less easy to define, particularly related to the question: whose *knowledge* is meant to be representative as *local*?

Vania is a young hardworking woman. She earns her own income, as do all the members of the household. "My mother educated us to work since we were children", said she proudly, and she is sure that when people want to work people never lack money. "When a business goes bad it is time to start a new one, my mother used to say, and it's true", she pointed out. The household's economy is made up of both parents' and the four grown-up children's incomes. In spite of her positive attitude and the acceptable conditions of the house, there are things she misses here to consider it as adequate housing for her and her son.

I'll like to move to Vinto²⁸³... my son likes domestic animals and I'll like to give him the opportunity to have them...my parents can visit me whenever they want ...it is calmer there in Vinto, near nature... when my child becomes older I can go to the Adventist University that is located very near as well... (Vania 2002/08).

She lives in her own room with her son, as does her sister, with her two small children. The conditions of the living spaces considered 'typical' for female activities in many contexts in Bolivia, such as washing clothes, cooking, bathing of children, were the most neglected in the house. Questions related to the children and the parent's privacy had not been solved in an appropriate way either. She was aware of the lack of improvements for female activities in the house:

We have almost everything in the house, but we need to pave the courtyard and to make a good kitchen and a good toilet with a bath for the children... (Vania 2002/08).

It was the women who mentioned more often the need of improvements in the kitchen, but even in this group the priority could be for something else. The bad conditions of the kitchens are negative for the women as well as for young females. The security conditions of the kitchen are also hazardous for the children who are exposed to cooking accidents.

Issues such as the inadequate indoor ventilation and deficient daylight in rooms, the 'vinchucas' bug problem, the lack of play space for the children, the poor arrangements for washing clothes and for personal hygiene, were never mentioned in the general meetings when the housing improvement question was in discussion. These aspects were seldom touched on in the personal interviews either, until I asked specific questions. But even here, the interviewed persons seldom mentioned many things I could observe as problematic for the well functioning of the houses. The 'people

283 A nearby town at the west part of Cochabamba City.

know best what they need' argument implicit in the *local knowledge* idea in current participatory discourse seems even more difficult to sustain in light of these observations.

People's knowledge can be related to information they receive from others. Information can be given because it is seen as convenient for one or another reason by those who first receive it. It is in this way that *power* can be related to *knowledge* at the micro-level when it comes to housing. In the field of low-income housing this is normally related to the vulnerability this question has for political manipulation. Such has been the case in this residential area from the very beginning. Many things people express as needs and demands, for instance *regularization*, that could be considered as *local knowledge* are actually a result of the 'official' discourse. When it comes to specific information related to housing improvements going on in the OTB-SJT, the people sometimes got contradictory information. The resident's information about ongoing or planned improvements, was often unclear, depending on how the information was provided.

It's not the Municipality who's doing the paving works

Political reasons, and not so much the well-being of the residents, often have been behind housing improvements at the OTB-SJT. When the paving of some streets was underway between 2001 and 2002, the confusion on who was financing the work was huge. While some versions implied that the Municipality was in charge, the engineer in charge of the works explained that the resources for it were coming from the 'poverty reduction funds' of the central government. The paving works started short before the general elections of the country. The political parties sitting in the government at national and local level were in opposite camps at that time.

They said it was Renato who fixed the paving but when we asked the engineers in charge of the works they said that it's the Prefectura in behalf of the central government who is in charge of this...they gave us some flyers to distribute and to explain to the population what's *true*... (Eulogia 2001/07).

I don't understand why they need to lie...the engineer came to me and explained the thing in a different way the administrator of the MH9 did in the meeting... it's with the money that the central government receive for poverty reduction from international aid agencies that they are doing the work with and not with funds of the Municipality ... (Iris 2001/07).

Somebody told me that it's Renato who is in charge of this works, that he managed to redirect the works that were for another housing area, to do it here instead...*somebody* told me that this was said in a general meeting... (Euterio 2002/05).

Like many others in the area, Emeterio also seemed confused about information related to paving work.

They said that it is the Prefectura who is paving the streets and not the community organization or the community representative... what's his name now?...we didn't know anything before they start to do the paving works; it was a surprise when the works began... (Emeterio, 2001/07).

For many people at the OTB-SJT the commencement of the works was a surprise. The different version regarding the paving work was not an accident. The Municipality of the Cercado Province and the Prefectura were both interested in appearing as the institution in charge. The intentions in both cases were similar: to use the works and the economic resources of the public sector for the political campaign before the general elections of the country. Besides, the community representatives saw the paving work as a way to reduce the pressure from the people for the repayment of mismanaged funds. For some of the people interviewed, doing the paving work before providing running water and sewer systems, was a bad investment and a waste of energy.

I wonder, when the sewer and the water systems will be done, do they need to open the streets again?...but it's much better than before anyway... the kids can go to the school without splashing on mud... (Josefina 2002/05).

To do paving works with cobblestone is seen as a temporary solution by the authorities until running water and sewer systems can be implemented and streets can be paved with asphalt. The streets are easier to use in rainy periods and less dusty in the summer and this is an important improvement in the viewpoints of the functionaries of the Municipality. Although the temporary paving solved some problems, this improvement was not among the highest priority people have here.

According to some versions the work would be done in another housing area but Renato has been able to redirect it to the OTB-SJT. The information that the Municipality was in charge of the paving was widespread here, so many believed that this was the true.

This evidences that which is considered as *local knowledge* can result from information available to the population, both as regards what they 'know' and what they 'do not know'. It shows the complexity of the *local knowledge* idea when it comes to what is true and what people assume is *true*.

In general, participation seems to be unrelated to the 'community' idea when it comes to housing improvement at the OTB-SJT. I can hardly remember a person talking about participatory and collaborative housing experiences they had in the past, not even in the case of people coming from rural areas, who were peasants in their origins. Nevertheless, the efforts made for housing improvements at the settlement level, and the level of physical consolidation of the housing area, implied joint efforts in search of common interest. But, this was difficult to link with organized self-help and mutual aid in the sense the participatory discourse implies, particularly when related to the 'community' idea.

In addition to access to basic services, connected to statutory property rights, there were other issues the people could point to as

important for the improvement of their housing conditions at the OTB-SJT. Concerns mentioned in individual conversations often included more accessible infrastructure for recreation, meeting places, neighborhood markets, work opportunities, or the need of housing for young couples and no-owners. The bad housing conditions at the household level, however, were seldom discussed unless the question was specifically raised.

Although the general perception today can be of a general distrust when it comes to participatory action, the fact is that social participation at the OTB-SJT mostly has meant attending the general meetings, to 'be part' of discussions that are often done by the most experienced persons, or to participate in decisions that normally demand more in-depth knowledge of the issues. Not even when the people were working with the construction of the 'community house' was it possible to say that this was related to an organized, participatory act, in a 'community' sense.

Since my first contacts with the housing area, participation seemed mostly directed at getting information, electing the community representatives and being asked for opinions, than it did with being involved in decision making processes on 'things that affect their lives'. In spite of this, all these activities are demanding of people's time. Time they have to use to the detriment of other activities, including resting and taking care of the family, as most of the participatory activities are held in the evenings and on the weekends. The 'waste of time' feeling related to the failures in the past is very much behind the low level of engagement people have at the OTB-SJT these days. In spite of the participatory discourse linked to the LPP, community participation at the micro-level is far from being an easy task for those involved, including the community representatives of the two grass-root organizations active in the area.

Participatory Discourse and Power Relations at the Micro-level

People's efforts to improve the settlement are found during all these years. Mostly, these have been 'spontaneous' and not that much related to organized self-help and mutual aid modalities. When electricity, water supply, and paving work were done, the households, also, had tasks to do on their houses, such as digging for electric line posts and for running water pipes, and the construction of sidewalks in front of the lot. When work on the 'multifunction plan' started, the representatives of the community had as their main task control of building materials so these would not be stolen. The preparation of 'common food pots' for the public electrification workers was initiated on a voluntary basis by some of the women.

Collaborative actions are not new between the three groups that comprise the OTB-SJT; even before the LPP was in force in the country, joint efforts were made in the residential area. These efforts can hardly be construed as participatory action in the strict meaning of participatory discourse, however. Most of the effort, at the community level, has been related to contributions in cash. What the LPP did was to encourage the search for judicial status for grass

roots through the establishment of the OTB legal status: a concept that made territory and population closely linked to each other in the participatory discourse related to the LPP. The fact that the judicial status was demanded by formal institutions made residents believe that *unauthorized housing* conditions could be negotiated under better circumstances, when the groups living in this territory would be officially recognized as an OTB.

Furthermore, when legal status was achieved, the LPP gave each of the OTB's the right to make decisions on the so-called co-participation resources, which included the OTB-SJT. Access to financial resources meant the possibility to access basic services and other improvements in the area. Under these possibilities, the area could become a more attractive place for the low-income. In time it became clear that the OTB status had nothing to do with the 'legal' aspects of the area. To achieve this, *regularization* first had to be implemented.

In general, knowledge about the LPP was limited. Few knew what the law meant and even fewer were informed as to their rights regarding it. People used to say that they 'know a little' even if they had only heard somebody mention the LPP, never getting an explanation on how it works and what it means in practice. Even the newly elected representatives of the community were normally insecure on the LPP, its mechanisms and its tools for practical implementation. The discourse of participation linked to the LPP have been circulating for almost eight years, and nearly everybody has heard something about it one way or another. The fact is that very few at the OTB-SJT knew what this really meant for the improvement of their living conditions. In this sense, the perceptions of the people often can have little to do with what actually can be achieved by the law.

To merge the three groups that make up the OTB-SJT today meant certainly a great effort by the residents. The groups have not only a different history when it comes to their settlement process; within the settlement's boundaries there are different kinds of social situations, including how people access housing. This makes the 'community' idea difficult to link with the sense of homogeneity that is often implied in participatory discourses. Indeed, to establish the OTB-SJT was a result of the LPP's implementation, but to build a 'community' sense here surely demands more than the achievement of the OTB legal status.

Beyond the causes lying behind the failures in joint efforts for the improvement of the housing conditions at the OTB-SJT, the fact is that these are a heavy burden for the community representatives today. The expectations the population had on what would be achieved when the OTB was legally established have only increased this burden. The practical implementation of the LPP has meant very little for the improvement of living conditions of this place so far. As a result today, general distrust about what can be achieved through social participation is a prominent feature of the OTB-SJT.

We will pay our contributions but things must be cleared first

When Emeterio bought his plot, he paid six times more per square meter than Eulogia did the same year for a plot located just in front of her, even though Eulogia's property included some dilapidated rooms. Both had made the purchase directly with the 'beneficiary' without any involvement of the community representatives, in spite of the fact that both plots were located in the Cooperative area.²⁸⁴ While Eulogia conducted business directly with the owner living there at that time, Emeterio made the deal through the parents of the owner, who lived in other city and had never moved to the place. But in other cases the people usually refer to the Cooperative as the seller: in practice it means some of the Cooperative's community representatives.

We bought the plot from the *Cooperative* when this land was in dispute, nobody was living here, we were only three families first... my husband was also a miner but he didn't got land at that time, the president of the cooperative organization *helped* us to find this plot... (Marina 2002/05).

I never saw Emeterio at the meetings of the Cooperative group, or in the general meetings of the OTB-SJT. He blames the lack of time for not attending the meetings, because work at the bakery demands that he be awake from four in the morning to late in the night, every day of the week.

Emeterio told me that he bought the plot here because he "had heard" that basic services would be available very soon. He bought the plot from one of the former 'beneficiaries' but he is "not yet" a member of the Cooperative organization. He "had heard" about the LPP, but new "very little" on the Annual Operative Plans. He had visited the MH9 only once, when he needed permits for building his house. He has, in general, vague information on the activities of both community organizations and talks in third person when he is not so sure of the answers. He thinks that the lack of engagement by residents is related to the distrust the people have on the community representative's past performance.

I think the people has lost confidence in the community representatives, *at the beginning* it functioned well in the meetings but nobody wants to attend the meetings now, they simply don't go... I'm new here, it's the people that lives here from the very beginning who knows best on this things... (Emeterio, 2001/07).

All the people interviewed, except the community representatives themselves, talk in negative terms about the 'affairs' with the land by the former community representatives. People speak of amounts of money the former community representatives must pay back to the Cooperative organization, the amounts seemed rather high to me. "These are debts with the community" was a phrase I heard many

²⁸⁴ According to Antonio, all the commercial transactions of properties within the limits of the Cooperative area have to receive the approval of the Cooperative organisation.

times, both in the general meetings and in personal interviews. How much these sums have to do with reality is difficult to know; the community representatives have another version of this. Renato is one of them.

I never sold the plots for my own benefit, the owners that live in other cities asked for my help to do the business in their name and that's it... (Renato 2001/08).

Certain representatives of the Cooperative were pointed out as the sellers of the land when the first quantitative inquiries were made. It is evident that some of the former community leaders live in better housing than other dwellers do here, but this is not the situation in all the cases. It is possible to see that some of the former community representatives have access to more land than others in the Cooperative group; it is evident that there is a general distrust of the population for this reason. This negatively affects their motivation to take part in activities of the community organizations, and to contribute with money, making the work of the newly elected community representatives more difficult.

They said they will put all the things clear, that the question of bad managements with the community funds and the sell of the plots will be cleared now, we are waiting, as soon it happens we will pay our contributions again... (Rosaura 2002/05).

It is a lot of money that the former representatives are in debt to the community, if the new representative manage to get it back as they have promised then they can use this money for the costs they have to do... (Eulogia 2001/07).

The representatives have lost the confidence of the people because they got money and nobody knows what happened with it...But, I don't really know, I have only heard of it, the only thing I know is that people don't trust them anymore... (Vilma 2002/08).

Of course we must pay for the costs they have in their work with the organization, but we need to be sure that this time the money will be used well... (Ciro 2001/07).

Ciro lives in the 'Mela Darrás' area. His two daughters went to Brazil in search of better opportunities to work and left their small children with the grandparents until "they have the economic conditions to keep the children with them", he said. One of his daughters had been working with the Tucuyapaj juvenile organization that was active in the area some years ago. He told me that she became tired of 'pulling' the youth into activities and decided to leave the organization.

The problem is that the people are apathetic, when we try to organize us some people wants to participate, but others not...the bad managements of the organization boards made the people more indifferent to everything that has to do with participation here... (Ciro 2001/07).

New when the LPP was implemented, also, was the change of the leading role of the Cooperative organization in the negotiations with the formal system. For the LPP, the OTB-SJT is the official representation of the entire population living within its limits, particularly when it comes to negotiations with the local government. This process of 'transference' of the representative role of the Cooperative organization to the OTB-SJT organization has been going on for almost ten years now, and it has not been without power conflicts at the micro-level.

Why two heads are needed?

The disagreements between the Cooperative organization and the OTB-SJT organization have only increased over time. At the beginning, representatives of the Cooperative organization were also members of the OTB-SJT board. It was only in the last elections of 2002, that a 'new generation' of younger residents 'took over' the leadership of the OTB-SJT because they were "fed up with the old leadership and their unclear affairs", as it was expressed by Gerardo once. He was the newly elected president of the OTB organization at that time. In spite of this, both grass root organizations are still active in the area today. The people that live in the Cooperative area attend meetings of both organizations, but the dwellers of the other two parts that make up the OTB-SJT are not called to the meetings of the Cooperative organization. Antonio explained that,

The land is still owned in cooperative form, and until the individual ownership is not solved by the *regularization* process the Cooperative organization is still needed...
(Antonio 2001/04)

The Cooperative organization was the only representation the whole group living in this place had for many years. Most of the improvements that were made before the LPP became in force, actually are related to initiatives taken by the leaders of the Cooperative organization. To all intents of purpose, they were the developers of this new settlement on the fringes of Cochabamba. The pride of being the founders of the housing area is noticeable in the conversations with the old community dwellers, particularly when the leaders of the former Worker Union of the San José Mine remember the first period of the settlement process of the 'beneficiaries' group.

According to the LPP, the OTB is the primary entity to represent the residents in decision-making processes.²⁸⁵ This means that the OTB-SJT organization represents the interests of all the people living within the OTB territorial limits in negotiations with the government, particularly at the local level. The Cooperative organization represents, in this sense, only the interests of those living in the Cooperative area and that still feel part of it.

The fact that each organization has its own board but often very similar aims, made way for power conflicts at the micro-level, among others, because the members of the Cooperative feel that they are the 'original' developers of this land. For many at the

²⁸⁵ There are also the so-called functional organizations that can represent the population in particular issues, most particularly in the urban areas. The OTB is the most important for the implementation of the LPP.

OTB-SJT, the existence of two community organizations was not necessary, and was mostly confusing. But, others think that until the former representative do not clear up the debts they have with the Cooperative, the Cooperative organization must exist and the two grass root organizations have to work together.

They have elected a neighborhood committee, but *they* say also the Cooperative organization, I don't really understand what's this...both organizations are working together... I have to go when one calls to meetings but I have to attend the meetings of the other organization as well... (Celina 2001/07).

There are two boards, one for the Cooperative, one for the Neighborhood Committee ...I don't understand why...it is not clear in my mind that one board exists inside the other board, can somebody explain me this?...it should not be in that way I think...then, the Cooperative have its own meetings and asked for our support for the water and the sanitation demands... its not fair that things are handled in that way... (Emilia 2001/07).

We still have two directories because the Cooperative organization has debts with us...the Cooperative group says always that they are the owners of this place but this is not true...precisely because they have many unclear questions with the money we still have two community organizations...until things became clear the Cooperative organization must also exist... (Gina 2001/07).

Emilia was in charge of the economy of the OTB-SJT board for a while and she is not at all happy with that experience. She regularly goes to leadership, capacity building programs specially oriented for training female leaders in low-income housing areas. But the access to this kind of training has only been possible in the last few years. She works now with the settlement's public day-care operation that gets financial support from the governmental program PAN.²⁸⁶

She told me that the opportunity to go through training and capacity building had been necessary when she was active in the community board, because "many mistakes had probably been avoided." She gets angry when the Cooperative organization issue is discussed, and also when she talks about some of those who shared the OTB-SJT board with her. For Emilia it is unnecessary to have two community organizations that have similar tasks in the same residential area.

We are 54 households here and there are 110 in the Cooperative area, in the meetings of the OTB 'they' are allowed to participate, but we can't be in their meetings. But the objectives for improvements here are for all of us; I don't

²⁸⁶ The Program of Assistance to the Childhood PAN (Programa de Asistencia a la Niñez) functions within the Prefectura and is part of the poverty alleviation programs supported by the World Bank in the country (Decreto Supremo No 24557, Reglamentación de las Leyes de Participación Popular y Descentralización Administrativa, La Paz, diciembre de 1996).

understand why they split us? Why should the Cooperative still exist? ... (Emilia 2002/07).

Emilia is also a controversial person in the settlement, as are many who have been involved in the community boards. The day-care facility operates in her house. In order to support its activities some improvements were made, both with “her own resources and with governmental funds”, she said. Some people think that the repairs made to her house were done with the community money and there are charges of mismanagement against her as well. Charges of cheating with community funds usually emerge in conversations with people, and when the general meetings are held.

The opinions of the people about the day-care facility were sometimes contradictory. Some see it as a good service for the housing area, while others think that Emilia is only doing it for her own benefit. The small fees the parents pay monthly for the 20 children that get the service is not such a clear question for some parents. Some think that day-care should be free, as the government finances the activity. The fact is that the fees belong to the design of the PAN's program for low-income housing areas, and it is a requirement for receiving financial support.

And these things show how confused the questions can be when economic resources are involved. The perceptions of the people about the community representatives' bad managements of community funds cannot be taken at face value all the time. Sometimes people talk of amounts of money that are difficult to link with what can really be true. Frequently my feeling was that ‘everybody knows but nobody really saw it’. Regardless of the amounts of money involved, or the possibility that this could be a result mostly of rumors, the general feeling of distrust indicates the low interest in community participation, that has its origins in the way the community funds and other community resources such as land were administrated.

It was once a man that wanted to pay back money he was in debt to the community, at that time I was sitting in the OTB board, but he didn't trust us and said that maybe we will do the same things with the money the former community representatives did... (Gina 2001/07).

I feel frustrated and many times I'll like to move to another place, the people is not nice here, it is so introvert... we had many good intentions, we wanted to do many things but it was impossible... nobody wanted to collaborate, nobody wanted even to pay a little fee so we could have money at least for transport... (Ibid.).

You know Emilia? The woman that has the day-care, the nice house she has now was done with the *thousands and thousands of American dollars* she took from the community funds... (Ciro 2002/08).

Gerardo was eighteen when the family moved to the place ten years ago. They lived as tenants in Villa Loreto²⁸⁷ until the parents bought

²⁸⁷ Another residential area in Cochabamba city, located not so far from the OTB-SJT.

the 300 square meters plot from Josefina's family and paid US\$ 900 for it. Besides the two rooms used for the kitchen and the dining room, there is only a bedroom for the nine household members that live in the house, including his wife and their two small sons. Gerardo's family comes originally from Oruro city. The mother was a trader and the father was in the transport business before the "misfortune made them lose everything", Gerardo told me. The father decided to "start a new life" as a bricklayer and it was he who initiated the building of the house when he was still alive.

When Gerardo's family moved here, the only room they had at that time still lack windows and doors. The plot is located in the Co-operative area, but the family does not belong to the Cooperative organization. As do many other people at the OTB-SJT, he believes that two parallel organizations only create confusions and internal divisions in the settlement. For him, the OTB is the only organization that should be active and that should represent the interests of the whole population living within its territorial limits. He is convinced that there was more solidarity and more 'community feeling' among the neighbors only a few years ago.

It was different before, it was more solidarity between the neighbors, there is still solidarity today but only between relatives, my neighbor, for example, work with the *Ayni* system with his brothers to improve his house, next time he will go to help with the building of his brother's house... (Gerardo 2002/03).

The ruined walls of the 'community house' testify on building activities that were started once and never completed. This is the building the new president of the OTB board refers to when he talks of community participation and solidarity that used to exist before. The people see the failure with the 'community house' as indicative of the bad performance of the former community representatives as well. For the community representatives it is the attitude of the population that makes improvements through social participation so difficult. "They said that they will participate but at the end of the day there were only some few persons that were there to do the work, often the same people", was Renato's comment on this question. The 'community house' was, in any case, only one of the many negative burdens the history of community participation has in this place. The idea to 'change the old leaders' started to be seen by many as the only good solutions, in the last community election the idea went through.

Most of the people that worked with the juvenile organization 'Tucuy paj' were among the critical voices against the 'old' representatives and believed that "things should be done in a different way", as Ramón expressed once. For the new generation that 'took over' the OTB board in the last elections, the most important task was to improve social participation at the OTB-SJT.

We wanted to make things work better

Gerardo is young and he studies architecture, but he lacks resources to make the final push to graduation. He belongs to the new generation of dwellers of the OTB-SJT that were critical of the 'old' commu-

nity representatives. Together with other young people, they usually set up activities 'of their own interest', such as theatre, music and sport. They began doing activities some years before they started the 'Tucuy paj' organization together. Gerardo and Ramon were leading the organization for a while and in the last elections they were elected as representatives of the new board of the OTB together with other young people. Among these was Emilia's daughter, Thalia.

The young had good intentions, but 'to change the way things were done before', was not such an easy task, as it became clear with the time. Gerardo is convinced that the former community representatives are interfering with the work of the new board so that they "fail in their intentions to do things better." This may be true, but it is also evident that the young lack experience, and have little time for this activity considering the kinds of personal problems they need to deal with. Some recently have established their own family, and all have to struggle for a place in a society with little opportunities for the young and the 'poor'.

Three members of the newly elected board have university studies behind them. Each temporarily left the area for employment reasons very shortly after they were elected. Gerardo had found provisional work outside Cochabamba city and practically 'disappeared' from the area for several months. As president of the OTB, the absence meant a practical stagnation of the activities of the community organization. Moreover, the general distrust on social participation held by most people makes it more difficult for the new board to perform properly.

It's a damage what the former community representatives have done, the lack of trust, the lack of credibility the neighbors have nowadays, the neighbors have turned apathetic, they do not want to share, they do not care on improvements in the community, they are not accessible anymore... (Gerardo 2002/03).

The people often refer to the murky affairs, and the former representative's failures with the projects, in angry tones. One's impression is that these became a burden for the new board of the OTB. Among the 'promises' made for been elected was to clear up all the obscure affairs, but this has not being an easy task so far. Somebody said in a meeting that he was not going to pay any fees until the new board put lights on the 'dirty affairs' of the past. Many seemed to agree with this point of view.

Emilia and Renato worked together on the same board of the OTB organization some years ago. They do not talk to each other now; the public disputes between them are well known in the settlement. Emilia's daughter Thalia was in the newly elected board but she left her post after only a few months. I could observe that she had a rather aggressive attitude when the former community representatives were at the meetings. I could also see that the men were very disrespectful with her. These conflictive relationships between the 'old' and the 'new' community representatives were rather common, particularly when issues related to the community funds were taken up for discussion.

For Emilia the new representatives are honest people that “can do good things for the housing area.” But she is convinced that they will meet strong opposition from the former representatives because they “were frightened on the probable investigations on their obscure affairs in the past”. She seemed to think that this would not include her time as community representative.

I have heard rumors that they want to change particularly my daughter from the OTB board because they think she is problematic...we are not problematic, we want to see what's wrong, we don't want they present us papers and documents we don't understand at all, we don't want to be manipulated any more... I believe that this new board will really work for the happiness of the housing area... they will learn... but I hope nobody will put its nose in their work... (Emilia 2001/07).

The activities of the ‘new generation’ of community representatives have been far from easy and free of constraints. To be a community representative is a time-demanding and normally non-paid activity. The work demands political experience and political skills which the old representatives had plenty of after many years in this activity. Some of the former community representatives also were members of the political party in the majority in the local government at that time. This was surely of help when negotiations with the Municipality were up for action. The new, young representatives had few of these experiences and skills.

When I first came to SJT I started to be active, the first thing *they* did was to invite me to be member of their political party, but I didn't accept...I don't think the population like the community representatives involvement in politics...(Ramón 2001/08).

The problem is now that the people don't want to participate anymore and they are suspicious of everything... they said the first times I was talking in the meetings that I surely wanted to be in the board for stealing money too... (Ibid.).

The lack of clarity with the community organization's finances is an issue that emerges often in the meetings and in the conversations. There are some that are convinced that bad management stems from a lack of training. To some extent this view leads to the election to community boards of representatives with high education levels. This opens the question on the extent to which this enhances power conflicts at the micro-level. It also raises the question of how much the highly educated can represent the interests of the majority that in this case is less educated. The situation in the residential area can be compared with what occurs in the country in general, when it comes to power relations at the micro-level, considering the high percentage of population that does not have access to certain standards of living, and lack education opportunities even today.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁸ According to the National Census of 1992 and 2001, the illiteracy in Bolivia decreased from about 20% to 13%, from about 9% to 6% in urban areas, and

How can one be in charge of the economy if one can't even count

Ramón came back to the area after his divorce just three years ago. He left his house, located in one of the 'formal' housing areas of the city, to his ex-wife and the children. He has taken law studies, but has not taken the final exam. He had worked for some years in a 'saving and loans housing cooperative', but was laid off when cuts in the staff were made. Ramón's main concern is young people. He is one of the founders and was president of the 'Tucuyaj' organization, and he was also one of the critical voices to the bad economic managements of the 'old' community representatives. This was, according to him, the reason for him, and other young people, to work with the OTB organization. For him, one of the main causes behind the mistakes of the past was the limited know-how the members of the former board had compared to the responsibilities to be assumed.

I don't understand how one can be responsible of the economy if one can't anything on numbers, the person they had before couldn't even count...now we have somebody that is certified public accountant to take care of the economy... (Ramón 2001/08).

The first thing we did was to go through the accounts of the former board as the money was the cause of the internal problems, but we need more information that they have to provide us...things go so slowly...we are preparing detailed informs to explain so the population understand better how things went really... (Ibid.).

His point of view are similar to Emilia's as regards the need to have more capacity building for the tasks and responsibilities the work demands with community organization boards. For Emilia many things became clear when she had the opportunity to access training, she told me. The question of one's level of education is of course related to structural factors in the country. It was only about fifty years ago that basic education was constitutionally established as a right for the peasants and the indigenous people.²⁸⁹ There are rural areas where children still must travel several miles daily to reach the school.²⁹⁰ Children, even at an early age, also must engage in income generating pursuits due to the poor economic situation for households. This is a feature not only related to the rural areas of the country but also to the urban reality, as well.²⁹¹

from about 36% to 26% in rural areas. These results are below the average achieved by the rest of countries in Latin America in the same period. The information points out that, in general, the female are still the most affected by illiteracy (Ministerio de Educación 2003: 5).

289 One of the achievements of the National Revolution of 1952 was the right of all to access free public education up to the sixth grade of primary school.

290 There are rural areas where the children have to walk daily to the school because of the lack of transport facilities.

291 According to a study made in Bolivia, the second most important reason given by the people for not attending school was the lack of economic resources. About 55% of females and 45% of males gave this reason as an

There are people with higher education that can more easily be in charge of key posts in the community organizations. But there are other who never went to school or only had a few years of basic education, and those who cannot even read or write. The people with low or no level of education represents an important percentage of the adult population at the OTB-SJT.²⁹² There are people from the rural areas that have Quechua or Aymara as their first and even their only language. To speak Spanish in public can represent a huge obstacle for them. Irma said to me that,

When I heard Jacinto speak in Quechua I was very surprised on the clearness of his ideas, but in the general meetings he never talks or when he do in Spanish the things he says are very confusing, it is difficult to understand what he really means... (Iris 2001/07).

The argument has a good basis for seeing higher educated persons as the most reliable for key posts in the community organization board. This provides the organization with better resources for dealing with the employees and politicians of the local government. This may also help to reduce the risk of mistakes in economic management. The question is how much this view reinforces power conflicts at the micro-level. It is not certain that merely being better educated is good enough to represent the interests of the whole group. As far as I could see, the people involved in leading posts during these years were normally those with higher levels of education. This had not been of much help considering the existing conflicts and the apathetic attitude the people have today on social participation. Besides, the more highly educated may also look for better living conditions for themselves as soon as their economic possibility permits. This was the case with Ramón, when he was married, or of Iris and her husband, when they took a job in another part of the city.

Iris is an architect that lived in the area only a few years. She had been recently elected as member of the OTB-SJT board. Her husband Emilio is an architect too, and he was present in my conversation with her. The couple took their higher education studies in Oruro and worked there before they moved here to the house owned by Iris' father. They expressed very strong interest to "do things for the housing area", and have the 'right education' for this as well. Many people referred to her with very positive and hopeful tones. She was "an excellent resource for the organization", a "clean person without political links" and "she has the professional background needed", were the most common commentaries on her. The couple moved to another part of the city for employment reasons

answer to the question. (OEI – Sistemas Educativos Nacionales-Bolivia, www.campus-oei/quipu/bolivia/).

292 Of the 788 persons that the quantitative sample includes this information, 342 were under 20 years old and the other 446 were adults. There were 15 persons who had some professional degree, 24 illiterates, 75 had finished the high school and 25 were studying at the university. The rest of the persons had completed the school education up to the third level of secondary school in the best of the cases. (*Resultados Encuesta Barrio San José de la Tamborada-Distrito 9, Mayo 2001*).

and 'disappeared' from the housing area shortly after our conversation. I did not have the opportunity to see them again. But I could notice that the people at the OTB-SJT were uninformed on where she was.

There are other factors that make the work of the community representatives difficult. Alberto decided to accept the responsibility of joining the OTB board, but stayed there for only two years. This was at the time when the second water well started to work badly and the people refused to pay their contributions. New investments were made to clean the water well and it worked again, but only for a short time. "We had to ask for contributions to the population for all repairs needed", he commented, "but people became fed up to pay for things that only worked for a short time." To deal with the authorities was also difficult, according to his experience.

It is not easy to get support from the authorities, when I wanted to solve the problem with the water well I was looking for help in many places, it was no way to meet the Prefect... I wanted to travel even to La Paz to see if somebody could help us so the company that did the works would assume the repairs needed...it was impossible... I was representative for two years, as soon my time was over I called to a meeting and left the post... (Alberto 2002/08).

The differences in education accounts for differences in the way people have to access decision-making positions. The people involved on the board of the community organization normally have higher levels of education than most people here have. When the population comes from rural areas the situation is affected to even a higher degree, especially for mature women. None of the middle age women I interviewed had completed basic education. Some of them even had difficulties speaking in Spanish, because it was not their mother language.

But for the new generation dwellers this question was changing. The youth had better opportunities to access education in the city, and parents pushed the children to do it. Germania said that she did not return to her original place in the Highlands of La Paz because her children probably would not have access to the school there. She could not read or write herself. A higher level of education is not enough, however, for having more influence when it comes to community participation. And, to be young and female makes things more difficult. Thalia's resignation of her post in the OTB board was connected to the difficulties she had for being listened to and respected, particularly by the 'old' male representatives.

Power conflicts at the micro-level are related to personal circumstances such as the time of permanence in the living area, the role in the development process of the settlement from the beginning, the political connections with the local government, the level of education, and to gender and age issues. All these things have significance for the possibility of influence in decision making process.

Community representatives have to attend meetings and need to visit the authorities in schedules that do not take into account their

available time. The new generation has to learn how things work at different levels of the public sector and in the political apparatus, as well. This includes the need to learn the ‘rules of the game’ connected to the ‘new generation laws’ in force in the country over the last few years, among these the LPP and the LAD.

The situation is certainly not better considering that the activities are free from economic compensations, because in the view of the political establishment and the public servants, “it is of their own interest to improve their living conditions.” In this context the ‘corruption’ question is of course a more complex issue to discuss. The ‘new generation’ had surely its good will to help it, but the possibility of ‘doing things better’ was not the most easy task to achieve all the time. Critical voices are many. But those who will and can really be active in the community boards are rather few, and this has nothing to do with the lack or not of interest in being involved in the decisions making process.

Everybody is critical but nobody wants to be a community representative

Ciro told me that he used to help his daughter when she was in the ‘Tucuyaj’ board. She was in charge of the free-time activities, with sports, with the young and with children, but “she got fed-up after a while because it is not easy to work with the people here”, he said. He was also part of the OTB-SJT board for a short time but he did not find this experience worthwhile.

Besides the need to work for your daily bread, you have to participate in commissions, meetings, and nobody appreciates the efforts that this means...one need to attend the meetings and to write what ever they say to inform to the population, then you have to be in the meetings of the community board, then in the general meetings...it’s a lot of work besides the need to generate incomes for the family and nobody wants to contribute for the expenses for transport, a cup of coffee, nothing... (Ciro 2002/08).

Pelagia said that she belongs to the OTB organization and not to the Cooperative group in spite of the fact that she lives in the Cooperative area and bought the plot through one of the representatives of the Cooperative organization. She is often at the general meetings but she was not informed on the LPP and the POAs questions. She had “never put foot in the MH9”. When I asked her about housing improvements she never mentioned the kitchen in spite of the fact that she prepared the food in the yard where there were no facilities for its proper handling. She comes from Arque²⁹³, speaks a regular Spanish and had never been to school, she said. It was good with more women in the community board but she was not interested herself in it because her “reading was very bad”.

The young people had the opportunity to go to the school, they can read and write and speak better Spanish than I

²⁹³ A province of Cochabamba’s department, at the south-west of the Municipality of the Cercado Province

do, they can be better community representatives than me I think... (Pelagia 2001/07).

But Pelagia was ready to participate in housing improvement activities if needed and she is convinced that the women would be more active in any kind of self-help or mutual aid project because,

The women are more often in their homes while the men are in the street...the men are not worried of nothing... that's why it is good with more women in the community board... (ibid.).

Gina is a middle-aged woman who was also a member of the OTB board for several years. She told me that her interest to participate in the board was because "she had many ideas on how the women could be more actively involved in the improvement of their own living conditions together with other women". For her, the 'community house' was an important project because the housing area needs places to meet and to share with the other people living here. She was deeply disappointed with her experience as community representative.

Sincerely there were no possibilities to work, people's distrust is so enormous, they don't want to pay their fees anymore, they want to know what happened with the contributions they made before, they didn't want to collaborate at all...(Gina 2001/07).

In my conversation with Gina she talked sometimes of Alberto, the man that together with her "tried to make the neighbors more confident in the new board". This was something that happened some years before the young 'took over' the community organization. People saw the fact that Alberto owns a 'chichería' as negative. "People thought that what he wanted for being representative was to 'control' the critics to his 'bar'", said Gina. Alberto is convinced that the criticism is related more to "neighbors envy" than to problems with the noise and drunk people being a nuisance. When the meetings were held in his place, to close down the 'chicherías' was certainly a sensitive issue to discuss for the participants of the meeting.

He and his wife Martha work closely together in the 'bar'. While he participates actively in the meetings, she does her 'normal' activities pretending not been there at all, but she is listening and following the course of the discussions carefully. I never saw her sitting and attending a meeting and when I asked her for an interview she thought that it was better to talk with the husband. "He knows better than me", she said.

With his work as electrician Alberto traveled a lot before, not only inside the country but also abroad. When the community asked him to be part of the board they offered him a monthly compensation of 300 Bolivianos (about 60 dollars at that time) for being in charge of the household payments for the running water service. This was in times when the service was functioning well. As the water service was organized in cooperative form, it's functioning, including the maintenance of the well and the water network, was the responsibility of the people. "Somebody was needed to go around and to make

sure that the payments for the service were done”, explained Alberto. This was the only case I ever heard that a community representative here had received payments for his work in cash. But as I understand it this was related to the fact that the people were not ready to pay the water costs “without this press”.

“The decision to accept the proposal was mostly for being near my family”, said Alberto. He had to recover the US\$ 200 that each household had to pay for building the water well and water network, something that according to him “never worked well.” Alberto told me that less than 40 percent of the households paid the total amount, while others gave between US\$ 70 and 100, and there were even some that never paid at all. He was president of the OTB when problems with the water service first emerged, and nobody wanted to pay anymore.

I invested US\$ 500 to clean the water well, it worked only a week, and we got mud instead for water again ... the people was unhappy and didn't want to pay for this, but we had still to pay for the electricity for the water pump and the resources become less and less... It was difficult, I was alone, and nobody helped me... I tried to clean the water well one more time, we paid US\$ 300 this time, and nothing happened... I really tried to do something but I couldn't... (Alberto 2002/08).

The distrust of the people when it comes to the community representatives may have its basis in the circumstance that the work was not technically adequate to guarantee the service in the long run. However, the failure with the water system probably depends on more complicate technical aspects, as well as on environmental and geological factors. The proliferation of private wells in the northern part of the city in the last few years has greatly affected the subterranean water aquifer of the whole city, mainly to the detriment of the southern areas, as explained by a local specialist on environmental questions.

The population and the community representatives are frequently forced to deal with questions that demand more expertise and specialized knowledge, particularly when the housing areas are considered ‘illegal’ by the formal system. It is evident that good will and the commitment of the people to ‘take part’ are far from enough to overcome deficiencies such as the ones we have seen, and that should be the charge of other levels of society.

The lack of knowledge on technical aspects lies behind the failures with the water wells. The population had the willingness to meet their needs of running water by their own efforts and they took action, but the negative results have only contributed to the distrust people have now. Statements of *regularization* circulating in the last few years have contributed to increasing the conflicts at the micro-level. The people want to solve basic services through “more secure” methods next time. But, this is not possible as long as the formal sectors consider the OTB-SJT as *unauthorized housing*.

People lack knowledge not only on technical issues. After more than eight years of practical implementation, information at the

OTB-SJT was still very meager about the LPP and the LAD, its mechanisms and tools for social participation, and on the possibility of influence they have in decision making process 'on things that affect their lives' through the laws. This lack of knowledge included the community representatives as well.

I heard about the LPP but not so much about the POA's

When I asked to Ramón, the newly elected vice-president of the OTB-SJT, on how informed he was on the mechanisms and tools the LPP²⁹⁴ had for its implementation at the local level, his answer was that,

I have studied at the university on the LPP, that's why I know about it...on the POAs I have heard once in a discussion of a group of young people in Pukara, they wanted to take over the community organization and were talking on this thing ... I don't think the people at San José de la Tamborada knows on these questions, maybe the woman that has contacts with the IFFI knows more²⁹⁵... (Ramón 2001/08).

The population is in general ill-informed on the LPP and knows even less on how its implementation can go in practice, as the answers in the quantitative inquiries already showed. What was surprising is that even among the community representatives the information on these issues was rather limited, too.

Although Gina and Alberto had worked together at the OTB-SJT board for a while, none of them could answer questions related to the LPP with confidence. They were mostly doubtful on the law and much less insecure on the POA's question. They had never been involved either in activities connected to the allotment of the co-participation resources that have to be discussed yearly at the MH9. These activities have schedules established at the central level, which includes certain steps to be followed before the budget can be approved. Among these are discussions on investment priorities with the people concerned, belonging to the preliminary steps to be fulfilled according to the law. The modest knowledge of the population after eight years of practical implementation of the LPP certainly opens many questions on participatory issues linked to the law.

I know little on the LPP, almost nothing...on the POAs I know anything really...I think the paving *they are doing* now is with this money, isn't it?...but I think it's wrong to do the paving when we do not have water and sanitation services first, that's a priority...then the streets have to be destroyed when these works will be done... (Alberto 2001/08).

294 Among the instruments established for the implementation of the LPP are the Municipal Development Plans (Planes de Desarrollo Municipal PMD) and the Annual Operative Plans (Planes Operativos Anuales, POA) (see Chapter 2).

295 The Capacity Building Integral Female Institute IFFI (Instituto Femenino de Formación Integral) works with the capacity building of women, particularly of low-income groups of the population. He refers to Emilia.

I never participated in the POA's question, I don't know what they really are... I'm bitter with Antonio on this question indeed because in my time as community representative there were information meetings on the LPP but he never told us, he went alone, he never helped us in our work really... (Gina 2001/07).

Rosaura was one of the few people that said that she "knew of course" about the LPP when I asked the question. She talked on the co-participation resources and on the right each citizen has to a yearly amount of money. But she was not aware on the right she has to decide on these resources through decision making process that have to be implemented by 'participatory planning' modality according to the law.

I was in San Benito when the population wanted to burn the Mayor with gasoline, they were angry on the co-participation resources... I was curious, I asked and it's in this way I got informed on this question... (Rosaura 2003/05).

She told me that she has discussed many times with the neighbors on this issue,

We have the right to 150 Bolivianos each I said when they told me to vote for the Mayor because he made works in the city...the works are done with our money, I said, and it is a lot of money the whole city has, but Cochabamba is still in huge debt and there is never money for us...The POAs?, no I never heard about that... (Rosaura 2003/05).

According to the LPP, the population has the right to take part in decisions related to the co-participation resources assigned yearly to the OTBs. In the meetings I had the opportunity to observe when the POAs were in discussion, the Municipality at central level had already made a detailed budget for the coming year. Participatory planning in these meetings was limited to discussions of the meager financial resources left over.

The average financial resources, to be allocated by each OTB at District 9, were less than US\$ 4,000 yearly, for improvements in housing areas that lack almost everything. According to the number of inhabitants, the OTB-SJT had the right to receive about US\$ 21,000 yearly at that time. But after all the 'cuts' made at the central level for investments of 'common interest for all the inhabitants of the municipality', the community got less than one fifth of this amount. Antonio said once,

Why we need to pay for maintenance of parks that are located so far from our housing areas, we use this infrastructure so seldom anyway...we could make many small parks that can be more accessible to our children with that money all over the District 9... (Antonio 2000/05).

Those involved in decision-making processes quite seldom were the people with the greatest needs and concerns, even though these opportunities were few and far between. The participatory activities of the POAs are greatly limited to some of the community representa-

tives. In the case of the OTB-SJT, at least, these representatives gave only very general information to the population about the decisions already taken. I never had the opportunity to observe ‘participatory processes’ intended for investment proposals related to the POAs at the OTB-SJT, before the meetings with officials of the Municipality were held at the MH9. According to the LPP, the POA is considered one of the most relevant instruments for enabling ‘participatory planning’ at a grass roots level. In spite of this, most of the inhabitants here did not know much about it.

In the meetings at the MH9, however, the presence of the community representatives seemed to be for the purpose of ‘being informed’, and to validate the decisions already taken by the Municipality at central level. The community representatives had little opportunity to discuss the use of the funds left over after the Municipality’s budget had been defined at central level, in the same top-down way, as it has always been practiced in the country. The main difference now is that the municipalities have access to more resources for investments, which can be seen as a step forward compared with the past. But people’s participation as regards decisions on the co-participation resources is still more of a slogan than a reality, at least in the case of the OTB-SJT. Many things will have to change if the goal is to improve this situation. The first that must be changed is that the people need to know more about what the process is about, before being able to participate in decision-making processes on ‘things that affect their lives’.

To talk of social participation in housing improvement is to talk on many different interrelated and complex things that, at the very beginning, may give a very positive and constructive sense, a sense that actually can be very far from reality, in the case of the OTB-SJT. There is a need to do something about improving the housing conditions of the people living here, of course. Why is social participation needed to improve housing?, is a relevant question here. Discussions are certainly needed for a better understanding on how people can participate to enable better outcomes in housing improvement than those achieved thus far in the case of this particular area.

Why is Social Participation Needed?

Since the very beginning social participation at the OTB-SJT has been mostly related to discussions on the land and, to some extent, to basic services and community facilities issues. The idea behind the establishment of the Housing Cooperative was the possibility it provided to get financial resources from CONAVI for the construction of the houses, as Antonio explained once. When the miners lost this possibility, because they did not get approvals from the Municipality, the building of the houses became a question of individual concern. However, housing projects financed by CONAVI were not normally implemented through participatory schemes. The projects were designed by professionals and carried out by building companies. Community participation, linked to self-help and organized mutual aid, therefore, was probably not discussed either at that time.

Housing through collaborative modalities is not found in the other parts of the housing area during these years either. The view that low-income people usually meet their shelter needs through collective action is not such a clear feature in this particular case.

The building of most houses in the Cooperative area primarily was in the hands of people who bought the land from the 'beneficiaries', which can be seen as a sign that the persons that got the land in the 'lottery' were not the most in need of housing. There could be other reasons as well. One is the fact that this was practically a 'wild' land. Only those who were not able to meet their housing needs in a less demanding way were forced to assume the huge challenge to develop rural land for urban use. About 70 percent of the original 'beneficiaries' already had sold land to people without links to the San José mine. But there are those who still own the property, but not live here, and in some cases they have built houses and have tenants, 'antirecistas', caretakers, 'allegados' or borrowers as occupants.

The no-owners are normally disinterested in participation. "They are not engaged in the search of solutions for problems that demand everybody's contribution", as Emilia expressed once. This means that those who belong to the no-owners category are not considered by the others, or by themselves for that matter, as part of the 'community' in the sense the owners are. This can lead to the conclusion that social participation in housing improvement is restricted to home owners.

Current participatory discourse claims for the need to change top-down practices into bottom-up as means to empower the powerless. The question on who at the OTB-SJT can be considered the powerless that ought to be empowered, clearly emerges as relevant in this context.

Who in the 'community' is to be empowered?

The 'community' concept commonly used to refer to people living in this kind of territorial unity in Bolivia today, provides the feeling of togetherness, homogeneity and shared objectives; that is not really found in this particular case. The causes behind this situation depend upon not only differences in the settlement processes, but in differences in the way people access housing. Within the three (or even four) 'groups' that make up the OTB-SJT there are heterogeneities that make the 'community' idea even more complex, and particularly when related to social participation in housing improvement.

With the implementation of the LPP, existing 'communities' became part of the newly established OTB-SJT, which included the former 'caretakers' holding land inside the Cooperative area. Inside these previously existing 'unities' power conflicts at the micro-level not only remain as they were before the OTB was established, but they have increased in complexity as well. The *empowerment* idea that belongs to current participatory discourses turns here very diffuse, particularly when it means to give power to the powerless. With the implementation of the LPP some of the 'old' community

representatives have indeed strengthened their political roles, even at the Municipality level.

There are people who think that religion or place of birth has little to do with the low level of participation, there are others who believe that just these factors have influence on how people see questions of common interest. Celina thinks, for example, that people coming from the Highlands are not interested in green areas and this has been the reason behind the failures in attempts here to plant trees. "They are not used to live in places with flowers, parks or green areas", she said. According to Gina the 'religious' people are not interested in being involved in community activities because they are only concerned with their own group. "The fact that many persons belong to religious sects make community participation difficult here", means Gina.

There are many Evangelists and it is why we can't do anything...this people say: it is nonsense to do anything ...my religion does not allow me to do things together with people that have another kind of believes, they say... (Gina 2001/07).

There are other questions that make the 'community' idea complex here. Some of the interviewed persons were convinced that the no-owners are little interested in taking part in activities of the community just because they do not own the property.

Gina and Celina belong to the group of people who well remember the period when this was rural land with no services and no streets. The presence of too many tenants is in the women's view negative for the organizational aspect in the housing area as well; the indifference of these people concerns them very much.

The worst thing is that many owners have built the houses but they don't live here, they have tenants, and tenants have not interest in community activities, when we asked them to be part they use to said that this is not of their business...we become really disillusioned and together with Alberto we decided to give up... (Gina, 2001/07).

When we asked them kindly to participate in the meetings, they answered that this is something that the owners have to do, some houses have 3 or 4 tenants you know, and all said the same to us: 'talk with the owners'... (Ibid.).

They say: 'if the house was mine I could work to improve it, I could do things to make it better'...the tenants don't go to the meetings because they are not owners...I told them: you should came to inform the owners on the things discussed, but they don't come to the meetings anyway... (Celina 2007/07).

Daisy lives in 'anticrético' in a two-floor house in the Mela Darrás area. The family comes originally from Oruro and moved to Cochabamba 13 years ago. They have been living at the OTB-SJT for just two years. The couple has seven children, but only the four youngest still stay with them. The older children are already married, said the

woman who was fifty years old. She runs a little neighborhood shop and the business “goes regular because the housing area is not the best place for this kind of activity”. Daisy feels the place is dangerous because of increasing crime, and the lack of running water bothers her. She never attends the community meetings because she has “too many things to do with the family”. The couple plans to buy a plot to build their own house in a “more convenient place”. The problem they have is that “the owner of the house does not have the US\$ 2,000 of the ‘anticrético’ in spite of the fact that the time on the contract has expired”.

I’m interested but I don’t have time to attend the community meetings, I need time to take care of my family and watch over my shop... (Daisy 2002/05).

When I talked with Amanda and Germania, the women who share the house in the Mela Darrás area, one in ‘anticrético’ and the other as ‘caretaker’, I could feel that for them it was the owner’s duty to attend the community meetings. They were not so aware on the activities of the two organizations in the settlement. They had only vague information on the ‘bad management’ of the community representatives, heard mainly through ‘rumors’. They expressed things in such general terms that it was clear that they only had heard the thing from others, but they never said where exactly the information came from. The women were not aware either of the conflicts between the different groups living in the housing area. When I commented how difficult it may be for the community representatives to know the best for all the persons living here if they were not expressing their own opinions in some way, Amanda’s reply was that,

The owner told me that it is not worth to say nothing in the meetings, she said once that the only thing that worried the president of the community board was the well functioning of his own ‘chichería’... there is no running water, no electricity, not even transport facilities for the people, but he did nothing, she told me... she said also that it was good when Emilia was community representative... *she was the first female representative here and she made possible the ‘multifunction plan’ and the electricity for the community...* (Amanda 2002/08).

There are other factors that influenced negatively people’s attitude as regards community participation meant some of the interviewed persons. These things have to do with the settlement process and with the struggles of the population for the improvement of the housing area in all these years. For Ramón the lack of transparency in the management of the community resources is behind the distrust of the people. He is convinced that the failures with the water wells and the ‘community house’, but also the ‘obscure’ affairs with the cooperative land and the misuse of the contributions the population did in cash have affected deeply social relations at the OTB-SJT. They are families that “not even talk to each other as a result of these questions”, he said. But, people’s negative attitudes for taking part in activities of common interest were even for him not easy to understand.

The former community representatives management of the money was bad...many families has taken this personally, as own problems...problems between the parents have also affected the children...some families think that their children should not even speak with the children of the other families, you know...that was the main reason I become interested in working with the youth here ... (Ramon 2001/08).

There are differences among the young people too, there are who don't want to meet other for one or another reason...I tried to unify the group, to have for example all involved in sports, but they have their own way of thinking and they don't want to be together in the same activities... some didn't felt welcome and didn't want to come back anymore... (Ibid.).

Marina sees the lack of participation linked to the fact that too many new people bought the plots of the former miners. She referred to them as 'foreigners'. In her view, punishments in cash for those not attending the meetings would improve community participation. The woman talks on participatory action as a kind of 'sacrifice'.

The majority is now foreign people only... the miners are very few now because they sold their land and left the place...each time somebody do not attend a meeting they should pay penalties for this... it's not fair that only we made sacrifices for the common interests... (Marina 2002/05).

There are issues that put the 'community' concept into question here when linked to the 'empowerment of the powerless' idea. First, because it is difficult to see the 'community' conceptual construct linked to the current situation of the OTB-SJT. In fact, my feeling was that the people talked often on the 'others' even in cases when these 'others' belong to the same part of the settlement they also live in. The 'owners' and 'no-owners', the 'Cooperative members', the 'Resettled from the airport', the 'Mela Darrás group', were references often used by the people to talk about the 'others'. The 'community' idea as similar to togetherness, homogeneity or shared view on common destiny, is quite alien to the reality of the area these days.

Second, because it is not so easy just to define who the 'powerless' is here. The aim to change top-down into bottom-up practices as currently implemented at the OTB-SJT surely have little chances to *empower* those with less power. Most of the people with worst housing conditions, such as the non-owners, were not attending the meetings and had, therefore, no possibility to make decisions 'on things that affect their lives'. Besides, the meetings had an atmosphere where the women and the youth seldom expressed their own opinions. In fact, it was easy to see that those who had been leaders from the beginning were those with better access to information, and capacity building, and with more influence possibility now too.

According to the perceptions of some of the persons interviewed, the lack of meeting places and places for activities of common inter-

est prevented the involvement of the people in participatory action. In particular, the people referred to the failure with the 'community house' project; it seemed to have important significance for many, no matter the age, the gender, the level of education, or the manner by which they accessed housing. People would talk about the 'community house' as something that could restore today's missing sense of 'community. Although this is something difficult to know right now, the fact is that this project belongs to the negative burdens the OTB-SJT has today as a 'community'.

We need meeting places for togetherness

Gina had a negative memory on her experience as a community representative. She was, however, sure that the 'community house' was an important project for the women at the OTB-SJT because they would then have "a place for togetherness". The things Gina thinks that would be possible with the 'community house' are strongly related to activities 'typical for females' such as embroidery, cooking, baking, or dressmaking.

Gina was not alone on this view of the 'community house' among the female informants at the OTB-SJT. This is not surprising; many projects aimed to improve the conditions of the low-income women used to be carried out with this vision. The 'Club of Mothers' projects implemented in many poor housing areas of the city over the past few decades, have had strong influence on this view. The idea behind it is that women meet (participate) to develop capacities 'exclusively meant for women'.

Many considered the need of a place for joint activities important. But the visions on the value of the place were different depending on different factors, among these the gender and the age of the interviewed. Even religious factors were behind the reasons for considering the 'community house' important. Many religious groups, similar to those found at the OTB-SJT, have prohibitions related to alcohol consumption and persons active in these sects are often negative to attend the general meetings when they are organized in the 'chicherías'.

Filomena had 'converted' to Evangelism some years ago. She still attends the meetings held in the 'chichería' but she is not happy about that, "there are other religious people that are more radical and do not go to the meetings for this cause", she said. The fact that the bars were still open for the clients when the meetings were going on did not make the thing easier. Filomena talks of these persons with an 'otherness' sense in spite of that they belong to her sect too, and even when she does not drink alcohol either now.

*They don't drink alcohol and feel that to meet in a place there people drinks is wrong, the community house can make their minds change and maybe they can be more interested in the problems of the neighborhood...
(Filomena 2002/07).*

For the men the topic of the 'community house' was more related to meetings, both of the whole group and of the community boards. For the middle-aged and married female it was mostly connected to activities specifically intended 'for women'. They told me about the

‘Club of Mothers’ organization they had organized; they seemed attracted to the idea to make it active again. Some members of that group still meet in the corner of Pelagia’s house and talk of ‘things that concern only the women’.

Pelagia belongs to the group that together with Eulogia and Celina are often sitting together in the general meetings. Eulogia was convinced that the women’s organization ceased its activities because “they did not have a better place for meeting.” For her the ‘chichería’ was “not an appropriate place for the women to be ‘alone’ there”, without the husband or other male company. When Pelagia talks of the ‘community house’ that seems important for activities specifically aimed for women, she refers to the building process as something that was not any of her own business.

They were doing the community house, and they left it half done...they were working on Sundays but not now anymore...the community representatives should be more strong and force them to work...we can also use the place for many things, for example as day-care or for a health centre... (Pelagia 2001/07).

A workshop was specifically organized with the young people, and was intended to prompt discussions about their interests and point of views on housing conditions and community participation at the OTB-SJT. The youth talked of the ‘community house’ as greatly connected to a “place for meeting in the evenings” and “for having capacity building, seminars, conferences, or discussions on topics that specifically concerned the youth”. Their thoughts were on joint activities and not so much in male and female terms, as the middle-age women used to do.

I liked to work with the Tucuyaj group, the young people at SJT need really to do free activities related the their age and not connected to alcohol drinking, we played instruments and made theater, sports, but we did not have an appropriate place to meet, the ‘multifunction plan’ is good for sports, but not for other activities such as conferences or workshops... (Ramón 2002/08).

A place for togetherness was something demanded by the population, a place that would enable different kinds of activities according to different interests. The ‘community house’ certainly cannot be considered as a magic solution for solving existing power conflicts at the micro-level today. But just this kind of solution could be a means for the development of the sense of togetherness missing today.

The ‘community of San José de la Tamborada’ with the apparent positive connotation the ‘community’ ideas gives to it, is mostly a result of the participatory discourse circulating in the past few years in the country, and less a reality. In this particular case, participatory discourse has meant the deepening of power conflicts at the micro-level.

One of the key aspects of the LPP is related to the peoples’ right to decide how the co-participation resources would be better used to improve their living conditions. After eight years of the law’s implementation, there were only a few people that had some vague

idea on this question. And as far as I could observe in my three years of fieldwork, decisions related to an important proportion of the co-participation resources had still the same top-down perspective they had in the past. The feelings of those who were better informed on this question were normally that the decisions were taken 'somewhere else'.

The distribution of the co-participation resources is defined somewhere else

The LPP aims to give the grass roots the possibility to be involved in decision making processes for the improvement of their living conditions. According to the law, the OTBs have the right to decide on the investments to be made yearly by the municipalities in their residential areas. The co-participation figure has meant the allocation of more financial resources from the central government to the municipalities defined according to the number of people living within its territorial limits. The co-participation resources are, in this sense, one of the cornerstones of the LPP to enhance people's participation.

Access to more financial resources by the municipalities has not only had positive connotations. Many times, it has meant the *empowerment* of those who already accessed power at the micro-level and strengthened the political networks of a limited number of persons, often the leaders. After almost eight years of practical implementation, most people at the OTB- SJT knew very little, or nothing, on the co-participation question. Even less were informed on their right to decide on the resources linked to this figure through participatory modalities.

I observed some meetings of the Annual Operative Plans at the MH9, where discussions were conducted on investments to be made in the different residential areas of the District 9. The technicians of the Planning Office of the Municipality at central level were in the meeting along with the representatives of the District 9 Council, to discuss these opportunities. By the explanations it was not always easy to understand the criteria behind the preliminary distribution of the co-participation resources, or the different priorities of 'common interest for the whole municipality', particularly when investments went to the already better serviced areas of the city, and also to infrastructure seldom used by the people in the poorest housing areas.

The budget was first set at the central level and then presented to the District Councils for its 'approval'. Discussions for investments at the District 9 were thus related to the financial resources that were left over after all the priorities had been budgeted at central level. I never noticed any modification of already defined budgets when meetings with the OTBs, related to the Annual Operative Plans for the D9, were held. It was clear that the financial resources left over were small compared with the improvements needed at the D9. There was a general lack of information on how the resources were first budgeted at central level. The lack of information included the staff working at the MH9, among others the administrator, who in

practice, is the main representative of the Municipality at district level,

In fact we don't get the information we need when it comes to the resources of the LPP, there is a lot of information that stays at central level that even we as heads of the Municipal Houses ignore and this is something that obviously gives room for doubts and susceptibilities among the neighbors... (Renato 2001/08).

Although the Vigilance Committees²⁹⁶ together with the Municipal Council have to control how the Municipality manages the LPP resources, it is not always easy to access the right information on how the distribution is really handled, and this is indeed a very sensitive issue inside the municipalities... (Ibid.).

I think that the resources should be managed more decentralized and more directly by the districts, we consider that we could do much more... we could implement more works at lower prices... (Ibid.).

Renato is convinced that after all these years of practical implementation of the law the people are more aware on questions related to the co-participation resources just the same. "The neighbors are more awake now and have started to think in terms of costs of the works the Municipality does in the neighborhoods", he said to me once. Discussions in the meetings with the officials of the Municipality could be in quite angry tones when the budget issue was in discussion. A young man said once while he was showing some numbers in his small calculator that,

We are not the same ignorant persons as we were for some years ago, we know best now on our rights on the resources allocated by the LPP, so don't try to cheat on us... (General meeting of the District 9 Council at the MH9 2001/12).

The question here is why community participation is needed if most of the decisions on the investments for the coming year are already taken at central level. But also, why do people have to be involved in such time demanding activity for 'decisions' on things that are obviously needed to improve their living conditions, like drinking water and sewer systems. The question on why people are called to 'take part' if the resources left are scarcely enough to meet their urgent demands is also relevant here. In most of these meetings the feeling I got was of disappointment by the community representatives when they understood that not much could be done in their areas in the next year. The fact that the community representatives had to explain the whole thing to their neighbors afterwards was something that bothered them.

Renato said that we should be patience, but even Jesus was crucified because of his patience, I don't really want to be crucified by my neighbors...there is already a time-

²⁹⁶ See Chapter 2.

bomb installed in my neighborhood, ‘you talk too much and do nothing’ they have said to me in the last general meeting... (General meeting of the District 9 Council at the MH9, 2001/08).

For Antonio and Renato bad management practices first came from higher levels of the Municipality and their lack of understanding on the “peculiarities of the District 9”. For the population at the OTB-SJT, the failures were the responsibility of the community representatives all these years. But in some of my interviews with the officials of the Municipality, I also heard that the main problem was that the resources coming from the government at central level were too scarce, were disbursed normally late and had a lot of conditions that left the Municipality with “tied hands for taking decisions to meet the huge demands at local level”.²⁹⁷

It was, indeed, not uncommon to hear interviewees blame ‘somebody else’ for the few achievements thus far, or for the failures, no matter what role in the participatory process they had. The fact is that participatory schemes, with so many actors involved in decision making process, and that are formally established in the governance praxis, is a rather new experience in the country. It is not only the population who need to learn the participation procedures demanded by the LPP and the LAD. Government officials at central and local levels, and the new generation of professionals and technicians, are often as little informed as citizens, or they find it more comfortable in doing things the way they were done in the past.

We are learning about participatory processes in practice

I had the opportunity to meet Maria José many times during my field-work. She has a broad experience of working at different levels of the Municipality, which includes the definition of the Municipal Development Plans of the Districts²⁹⁸ (PMDD) through participatory planning as the LPP demands. As architect of the MH9 she had worked with the Municipal Development Plan of the District 9 (PMD-D9) as well. Maria José is well known by the population in the poor living areas. She worked as technical adviser of the Municipal Council when the interviews were done.

When I talked with Maria José on the positive and the negative side participatory action has in praxis, the most relevant for her was to change the former view the people have on how things should be done. “This includes the people working at different levels of the government at central and local level, but also the population the LPP aims to benefit”, she pointed out. “Participatory planning is not only new for the population it is also new for all of us and not all the persons have the right attitude to listen and to work together with other actors, and particularly with the low-income people”, she said. Maria José commented further that: “one thing is what the LPP says in words, but another is to put it into practice”. It was also clear for her that “to be part of the same team within the Municipality structure was not similar to a common view on how things should be

²⁹⁷ Interview with the Head of the Planning Office of the Municipality (2001/09).

²⁹⁸ Stands for Plan Municipal de Desarrollo Distrital (see Chapter 2).

done, and either on a shared view on which was the better way to work with the population”.

The population has the daily life experience and we have the technical experience, we have to find the way to join both experiences and some basic criteria on how to do this is needed... in my experience the Terms of Reference we got initially were inadequate, we needed to change them afterwards following what the praxis learned to us... (Maria José 2001/07).

We had workshops not only with the population, but internal workshops to discuss our own views, we realised that our conceptual frameworks were not coincident all the time... to work with the population it was needed to define first internally what we expected with the process, what we meant with development, with strategies, with policies, an so on ... (ibid.).

Another big problem is that the technicians at the Planning Office don't know too much on participatory action, they don't have the basic principles; they don't have the philosophy on participation... (ibid.).

Others mentioned the lack of experience of the teams working at the Planning Office of the Municipality and at the Municipal Houses on participatory processes in my interviews at the Municipality. A general opinion was that the universities do not give the new professionals the kind of knowledges according to the changes promoted by the LPP and the LAD. “Many professionals feel that they lose power if they listen to people with less technical capacity”, commented an architect working at the Planning Office.

For the head of the Planning Office, one of the bottlenecks they had were the cuts the central government often did to the annual budget aimed for participatory planning, and the frequent delays in the disbursements of the co-participation resources to the municipalities. He was convinced that the LPP was one of the most important instruments for the achievement of more equity in society and he believed that it was impossible to go back to ‘old’ practices in planning. “The population would never accept this”, he pointed out.

Participatory process opens expectations that we can't fulfil if the financial resources are less than the initially programmed and are disbursed months after what was planned from the very beginning... (Head of the Planning Office 2001/09).

The changes are radical, the decisions were before centralized in the Mayor and his immediate collaborators, the population became ‘informed’ only when the works were in implementation, there is a qualitative difference not only because now they take part in the decisions but also now they have the right to follow-up and control the quality of the works... (ibid.).

Similar to other Municipal officials, José Luís is convinced that the steps forward have been many in spite of the difficulties. He has a

rather long experience of work at the Municipality and is also teaching at the School of Architecture of the San Simón University of Cochabamba. For him, the only way to strengthen participatory action was through capacity building of all the actors involved in the process. He was one of the professionals in charge of the Development Strategic Plan for the Municipality of the Cercado Province defined through participatory action and that involved actors from both the public and the private sector as well as grass root organizations active at the municipality.²⁹⁹

The last two experiences have been the most rich when it comes participation, the teams have more experience now, than in the first periods, the next question is certainly how to manage the resulted plans... (José Luís, 2001/10).

It is important to change the view the population had before on development, the tendency is still to be more focused in material things, our aim is towards human development and during the development of the Strategic Plan between 65% and 75% of the defined actions aim to the creation of social capital, organizational aspects, more transparent processes, decentralization, participation, than to physical investments only... (Ibid.).

According to the LPP, capacity building is a key aspect for more successful participatory processes. In all these years the burgeoning of seminars, workshops and other kinds of activities is evident and aimed at the dissemination of the 'new generation laws' in force in the country and for capacity building among different actors. This has certainly helped to increase knowledge about the laws in the country. Maria José commented, however, that a lot of resources are invested annually in capacity building but very few of these persons stay for longer periods at the Municipality.

There are no clear policies to keep the human resources that already have the experience and the capacity...it is disappointing that many times political reasons are behind this situation.... (Maria José 2001/07).

Maria José commented that this was not different in the case of the representatives of the community that often saw their activity as a stage in their political career. In her opinion "the leaders leave their duties in the housing areas as soon as they got better opportunity in politics". The little knowledge on the laws is of course only part of the problem, the complexities of the problems in the poor housing areas demand capacities rather different to those the professionals and technicians normally get at the universities nowadays.

There are not only differences in the quality of life among the different districts of the Municipality, but also in the cultural patterns of the population, there are things that

²⁹⁹ The development of the 'Strategic Plan' (Plan de Desarrollo Estratégico), as it was shortly called, took several months during 2000 and 2001. It was developed with financial support from the University of Toronto. The aim was to achieve a common vision for the future development of the Municipality of the Cercado Province.

matter when we talk on human development...we don't have the human resources with the right capacity to see planning in a different way, the professionals still think in planning as something only physical... (Interview at the Planning Office of the Municipality 2001/11).

The demands the population really think can make their living conditions better in the long term were never in discussion at the meetings of the OTB-SJT. The investments related to the LPP are mainly intended for physical improvements. And, in some way, the people still see the role of the Municipality linked to the implementations of basic services, streets and green areas. But, for the achievement of more radical changes in former top-down practices in the country, more than participatory processes restricted just to the co-participation resources are surely needed. Other resources of the government at central and local levels are still defined as they were in the past.³⁰⁰

What is really missing, not only here but everywhere in the country are job opportunities, when one has a job, even if it is low-paid job, more needs could be tackled by oneself, in this sense, for me this is the focal point that should be into discussion... (Workshop of the OTBs of Pukara Grande with the Municipality at the District 9, 2000/11).

To meet the housing needs of the whole population living at the OTB-SJT is not quite such a simple question. It has to be connected to the particularities in the development process of the residential area, which may be the case of other *unauthorized housing* of the city, as well. The implementation of improvements in housing areas developed mainly by the people demands a broader perspective in approaching the problems and the solutions than current discourse of housing improvement has in the country.

Participatory action has to do with power relations in society. It is clear that the understanding of power relations at the micro-level demands more than the traditional view of "who access power and who do not". The population may have the will to 'take part', but if their participation does not lead to the achievement of better living conditions, the practical effects of the discourses deployed by the 'official' side could mostly have negative consequences for social relations at the micro-level. Such has been the situation so far in this particular case study area.

The Laws of Popular Participation and of Administrative Decentralization are intended to enhance social participation in the country. And *regularization*, as proposed now, aims the improvement of the housing conditions of people living in *unauthorized housing*. The *effects of truth* current discourses of Housing Improvement and Social Participation have on the perceptions of the people living at the OTB-San José de la Tamborada, enable us to understand what

³⁰⁰ The co-participation resources are related only to twenty percent of the national budget to be distributed by the central government among the 312 municipalities according to the number of population living within their territorial limits. Following the same criteria, financial resources are allocated to the Districts and the OTBs by the Municipality at local level.

Foucault means by: “indeed it is in Discourse that Power and Knowledge are joined together”.

Final Discussions

In this chapter I intend to discuss the findings of the current study regarding the research question and the research issues posed in the beginning. The guiding research question all along has been: how are the discourses on Housing Improvement and Social Participation perceived by the people living in *unauthorized housing*? Following the general structure of the thesis, I will present my final discussions as: the *effects of truth* of the discourses of housing improvement and social participation, as currently deployed in the Latin American context and in the context of Bolivia, on the perceptions of the people living in the case study area – the Base Territorial Organization San José de la Taborada.

The *effects of truth* of the Discourse of Housing Improvement

Unauthorized Housing and Housing Improvement

Statements of housing that emerged in the fringes of the regulatory frameworks, have been circulating widely over the past few decades in Latin America and Bolivia. Discursive formation on ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ housing was linked to the urbanization process, as well as to housing resulting from efforts by the population.

The definitions of ‘housing by people’ have been many, so too have the solutions proposed for dealing with this question. The shift of the view of *unauthorized housing*, from ‘illegal’ and ‘informal’ into ‘irregular’, are linked to the way in which ‘housing by people’ is interpreted and understood. In this sense, housing improvement policies refer to ‘the way in which the discourse produces its own object and proceeds to shape it into a specific form’.

Housing improvement means facing shortcomings in already existing settlements. It means dealing with already implemented ‘solutions’ which, for one or another reason, does not fit into what is considered adequate by the formal systems. In this sense, it means changing the perspective on how to deal with housing, particularly for low-income groups. What rapid urban growth did was to put into question the way housing was managed by the formal systems, and particularly to question the role of different actors involved in housing production.

Statements of housing improvement first placed *unauthorized housing* into the category of an ‘illegal’ activity. Housing built in the fringes of the legal system should be removed for being inadequate, legally and physically. The new urban dwellers had to find answers to their needs of shelter through the formal systems, this being the

Welfare State, the one responsible for housing the low-income. Considering the obvious constraints for meeting housing demand in urban areas, the removal of 'illegal' settlements was not a viable course of action anymore. A new challenge emerged: how to assimilate into the formal housing sector, the housing assets of the people? To deal with all this, the 'enabling strategy approach' recommended that housing production should not be in hands of the public sector, but in the private market, if better outcomes in housing were to be achieved.

The low-income people themselves, those in need of shelter, came to be considered key actors in the search for solutions to growing housing shortages, not less when it comes to the upgrading of poor housing areas. Therefore, a central issue in the housing improvement discourse was to 'legalize', 'formalize' or 'regularize' *unauthorized housing*.

Formal and Informal Housing

It is a common view to see 'housing by people' as an activity that happens without the involvement of either the public or the private 'formal housing sectors'. In this view, it is the 'informal housing sector' that normally enables housing for the low-income. This could be assumed as true only in the extent to which the dividing line between the 'formal' and the 'informal' housing sectors could clearly be defined. The division between 'legal' and 'illegal' housing is a theoretical construct that is not so easy to see in reality.

What belongs to the 'formal' and what to the 'informal' housing sector certainly is not clearly defined in the case of the OTB-SJT. The complexity of the question goes from housing production at the household level, to the settlement process of the area, right from the beginning. Many activities that are seen today as informal have had the formal systems involved in one way or another. Not only was the central and the local government's involvement evident in the emergence and consolidation process of the settlement, but so too was the early participation of other professionals in the field of housing.

The 'illegal', 'informal' or 'irregular' labels the settlement is known by today are strongly related to statutory property rights, which the Municipality demands for consider the area part of the 'formal housing sector'. The institutions in charge require these property rights to first be satisfied before improvements such as drinking water and sewer systems can be provided. This view belongs not only to housing improvement discourse in Bolivia, but to the perception of the people living at the OTB-SJT too. In this sense, the demand of *regularization* of the population results from the demands of the 'formal system', rather than from the need of the people for security in housing tenure. None of the persons interviewed saw the fear of eviction, or the threat of losing their property, as the main reason behind the demand of *regularization* indeed.

Regularization and Statutory Property Rights

Regularization of unauthorized housing belongs to current housing policies in Bolivia as well. *Regularization*, as proposed, focus greatly on statutory property rights and titling as means for the achievement of better housing conditions for the low-income. There are several

assumptions linked to this view. It is said that statutory property rights will give the people the sense of security needed for making investments in housing construction and housing improvements. It is also said that titling will improve the possibility to access credits in the formal financial system. In this sense, the widespread idea behind *regularization* proposals is that the key for the improvement of poor housing conditions is related to the legal question of housing tenure. This is something that, so far, is difficult to prove, considering most of the cases that already applied the prescription in Latin America. In spite of this, the perception of people living in *unauthorized housing*, such as the area selected for this study, is that statutory property rights, or titling, will lead to the improvement of their housing conditions.

Moreover, the focus on individual property rights as a means for housing improvement neglects the fact that there are other tenure forms to access land and housing that are different from home ownership. The findings in the residential area selected shows that a significant percentage of the population here access housing through other kind of tenure systems, some of them unique for few countries in the region. These tenure systems give the people the right to use the property, and, thus, the possibility to meet their needs of shelter.

In fact, titling procedures can be detrimental to access these other forms of shelter, if housing improvement focuses only on ownership. It is evident that there is a need of more comprehensive view for addressing the housing problem, one that goes beyond the legal aspect only. Partial solutions can mean solving the problem for ones and creating problems for others, or to move the problems from one place to another, as happened when improvements implemented in the neighbouring area Villa Mexico had negative consequences for the people living at the OTB-SJT.

Nothing indicates that through statutory property rights people will achieve better housing conditions. This is not to say that assuring property rights should not be part of the housing improvements needed; but, rather that statutory property rights is but one aspect required for the achievement of better housing conditions. Quite the contrary, the housing situation at the OTB-SJT demands more than titling procedures for reaching relevant improvements at either the settlement, or the household level. This includes the improvement of housing for the no-owner category that comprises an important group of people. To assure legality in home ownership can scarcely be a substitute for improving housing for all the people now living at the OTB-SJT.

Housing improvement discourse, as deployed today, cannot immediately be considered positive for housing conditions at the OTB-SJT, for a variety of reasons. First, because in 'making' the OTB-SJT an 'irregular' settlement, the residents backed away from their right to demand basic services and community facilities from the Municipality. Second, by giving the population the message that statutory property rights is the most urgent matter to achieve housing improvements in the future, the struggle acquired a more narrowed and more individualized perspective. Third, making *regularization* such a cumbersome and controversial issue, power conflicts at the

micro-level deepened with time. And last, the ambiguous attitude from the formal systems towards the settlement increased its vulnerability to political manipulation.

Housing Improvement Discourse and Discursive Praxis at the OTB-SJT

The Irregular Conditions of the Settlement

The OTB-SJT belongs to the residential areas that started to emerge as a result of structural reforms implemented in the country in the 1980s. Evidence of the formal systems participation in the establishment, and in the development process of the different areas that make up the OTB today can be seen from the very beginning. The different kinds of tenure documents people have indicate that legal professionals have been involved in the commercial transactions and in deals with the properties. Although these tenure documents are not accepted as legal by the formal systems now, the procedures followed and the fact that professionals were involved in the operations, make the people feel like they own the property. In fact, the statements of *regularization* made people started to wonder about the extent to which their situation in housing ownership was legal.

Other kinds of professionals from the public and the private sectors, and no less the politicians, had to do with the consolidation process of the settlement over these years. The establishment of the different parts of the housing area certainly had not been possible without the involvement of other actors than just the people themselves, including the participation of the government at local and central levels. The Cooperative land was 'given' as compensation from the 'revolutionary' government to the employees of the San José Mine already in the 1950s. The 'Resettled from the airport' got this land in compensation, from the state-owned aircraft company LAB, in the 1980s. The settlers of the 'Mela Darrás' area bought the land from the landowner in the 1990s, who got permission to change the land use from rural to urban, by fulfilling the regulations on allocation of land for green areas and open spaces. The former 'caretakers' of the Cooperative land got the right to the land through court trials with the legal system involved in the agreements.

In all these years, further transactions with the properties, and other ways to access housing, have transpired based on procedures similar to those in practice in the 'formal housing sector'. All these activities became 'not legal' in the minds of the people living here, as a result of the so-called Second Generation Reforms in implementation since the 1990s. Among these reforms are the Law of Popular Participation and the Law of Administrative Decentralization. The emergence of the OTB-SJT, as a new administrative unity for the Municipality, made way for *regularization* as a high priority for those living here. The 'regular' situation is now a prerequisite for the achievement of further housing improvements, such as drinking water and sewer systems. In this sense, the 'not legal' perception the people at the OTB-SJT now have in home ownership is a result of the housing improvement discourse coming from the government at central and local levels.

Regularization, Statutory Property Rights and Housing Improvement

Regularization is very much linked to statutory property rights and titling as it appears in the housing improvement discourse today. The shortcomings of this proposal are related to the fact that the problems of the housing area are beyond the legal questions. The ‘demand’ of *regularization* focused on statutory property rights cast a shadow over other highly relevant aspects residents believe should first be solved to make it worthwhile to live here. Individual property rights in housing as the highest priority could mean the risk of making housing a more individual concern than it is already now. Indeed, beyond some internal conflicts, the only group that still provides a sense of ‘community’ is the Cooperative group, a group that still preserves a type of collective ownership on the land. This is a group that has been the driving force for most of the improvements in the residential area thus far.

Furthermore, the *regularization*, as proposed, overlooks other tenure systems to access housing that need to be improved as well. The tenant, the caretaker, the ‘allegado’ the ‘anticretico’, the borrower, tenure systems all provide answers to the housing needs of households with less economic possibilities than solely the ‘owners’, but these answers can barely be considered adequate in most of the cases as the empirical findings show. The situation can become even worse if housing improvements focus only in the owners. The increase of housing rents in the case of Villa México is an example of this possible scenario.

Solving the legal problems of the owners will have limited impact, however, if other important groups cannot access adequate housing conditions as well. It will mean very little if the possibility to meet housing improvement on a broader scale is neglected. This includes the likelihood of making possible more adequate housing at the household and settlement levels for all the people living at the OTB-SJT. The need for housing improvements in the area is beyond statutory property rights. The type of improvements the residents talk about depends on aspects such as gender, age, physical capacity, income situation, level of education, time of living in the city, and/or religious beliefs. But, when the people talk of *regularization* in these days, it is mostly related to statutory property rights. The people often say now that access to legal titles in housing is the most important action for the achievement of better housing conditions. This is related to the perceptions people have on what can be achieved by the *regularization* process, when implemented.

For the population the demand of statutory property rights is frequently connected to the possibility of obtaining financial resources through the formal system. That is the ‘message’ the people getting from current housing improvement discourse. Unfortunately, statutory property rights will help the people very little at the OTB-SJT, considering the demands the formal finance institutions have for housing finance today. The high level of unemployment, the general poor income situation, and the low level of education, goes against the people’s expectations to access housing loans through the formal systems.

Regularization, as proposed, has a too narrow perspective when compared with the housing improvement needed throughout the OTB-SJT. This can hardly be seen as a 'solution' for the housing situation of people that live in other kind of housing tenure systems, either. Furthermore, the danger with the housing improvement discourse as promoted today is that it opens false prospects on the things that could be achieved in the near future by statutory property rights.

Who Demands Statutory Property Rights in Housing?

Housing improvement can mean different things to different people at the OTB-SJT. But, the general perception the residents have now on their non-legal housing conditions has made *regularization* a highly ranked demand in the last few years. The possibility to solve urgent needs, such as basic services, is behind current 'bottom-up' demand from the people for *regularization*. The 'irregular' housing condition in the residential area is the main argument the formal system gives for not answering the demands for basic services and community facilities.

The expectations the people have on the *regularization* process are not necessarily related to things that can really be achieved in practice, at least not in the income situation of the population at the OTB-SJT today. The gap is still very large between the expectations of the people for housing improvement, and what can be achieved within the framework of the *regularization* as proposed. The high percentage of 'formal' areas of the Municipality that still lack running water and sewer systems through SEMAPA works, for example, against the possibility of getting these services soon, regardless the statutory property rights question.

The requirements for the achievement of statutory property rights in housing come first from the formal system. In spite of this, the people mostly run into trouble in their attempts to meet the various requirements needed by the formal systems. The regulations the Municipality pretends to use for the *regularization* of this kind of residential area is quite similar to those applied in settlements planned and developed through more traditional ways. But also the knowledge of each one of these realities is too limited for meeting their specific problems adequately. Lack of knowledge has many negative consequences at the micro-level.

The argument over the absence of land for green areas and open spaces, for enabling the *regularization* process, increased the ongoing conflicts among the different groups living at the OTB-SJT. The titling procedure that is the corner stone of *regularization* has different impact on the different ways to access housing existing in the settlement. Not all the people living here have similar point of view on the *regularization* issue. For instance, some think that property rights will mean only higher taxes and will impact negatively on their already poor incomes.

It is evident that there are constraints that difficult things work better when it comes to low-income housing still coming from those who take decisions and who are in charge of policy making. Socio political complexities are over simplified, and mostly seen in a

macro-level perspective, particularly by policy makers. The only difference with past is that legal aspects in housing are now the 'prescription', no matter what the particular context is. The 'general validity vision' is still the same. Although the demands for statutory property rights in housing seem to be 'bottom-up', they are primarily 'top-down' requisites linked to the discourse of housing improvement circulating currently in the country. In this sense, the discourse of the people living at the OTB-SJT results from the discourse of housing improvement initially coming from the government now.

Today, participation is a key word in the development discourse. This includes social participation in housing improvement for the low-income groups of the population. This view resulted from rapid urban growth, and the fact that an important percentage of the housing supply has been in the hands of the people. 'Housing by people' is a noticeable feature of the urbanization process in the context of Bolivia as well. The Discourse of Social Participation means that mechanisms that enable the people be involved 'in decision making process on thing that affect their lives' are missing in attempts to improve the performance of the 'formal sector' in the low-income housing question.

The *effects of truth* of the Discourse of Social Participation

Social Participation and Housing Improvement

People's struggles to take part in the improvement of their living conditions are found throughout the history of the Latin American region. This includes struggles for meeting needs for shelter, ever since the urbanization process was an inescapable fact in the past century. The number of people that actively take part in housing throughout the continent is not, however, similar to 'the free will' to be involved in decision-making process 'on things that affect their lives'. Most of the time, low-income people are forced to participate in the search for solutions because this is the only choice they have to find shelter. The people, in taking part of meeting their housing needs, is mostly a result of the limitations of the 'formal housing sector' in dealing with the increasing housing demands generated by the urbanization process.

The contributions of the population in providing for their own shelter, with little or no support from the formal systems, are behind the high levels of qualitative housing shortages. Nothing indicates that, in the near future, the low-income population will be released from the burden of solving their shelter needs on their own. The future presents also an obscure scenario on how the inputs of the low-income can be more effective for the achievement of better outcomes in housing. The discourse of social participation in housing improvement can, in this sense, more or less mean that people will remain responsible for upgrading their housing conditions in the future as well.

Shortcomings in the provision of new housing for the low-income are prevailing all over the region. The lack of capacity is evident for dealing with qualitative housing shortages as well. Statements of self-help and mutual aid are often supported by the argument that the low-income 'use to take part' in the search for solutions to their shelter needs. This is not a particular feature of people with low incomes; however, the difference in the quality and the quantity of participation required has more to do with the income level of the people than with their 'will to participate'.

Participatory action in housing represents a great constraint on the low-income population. Normally, it demands the time and energy people need for income generating activity, for leisure, or for taking care of the family. Households at the OTB-SJT usually chose to hire labour for the construction of their homes whenever they had the economic possibility to do so. The difference with other income groups is related to the quality and the quantity of the hired labour they could afford to pay. In this sense, the poor economic condition, rather than the 'will to participate', is behind people's participation in housing construction at the OTB-SJT.

Housing improvement through social participation belong to current discourses circulating in Bolivia too. The implementation of the Law of Popular Participation and the Law of Administrative Decentralization turned people's participation into a desirable civic act, and into a concern for the society as a whole. The people are called to be involved in decision-making process today on 'things that affect their lives'. The LPP and the LAD made participatory action not only a right, but also a duty of the people. Participation is a kind of requisite the people have now for the achievement of better living conditions, and this includes improvements in housing.

Bottom-up Approach and Empowerment

Besides the moral imperative of partaking in civic affairs, the act of participation demands consensus within the groups regarding the actions to be taken. These actions seldom are open alternatives for the people, and have often a range of options already established by others than the people most directly concerned. The homogenization power of concepts such as 'community', the 'powerless' or the 'poor', linked to the idea of consensus, frequently have only negative consequences for the people involved in the participatory process.

What is meant to represent the interests of the 'community' can be against the interest of those with less access to power and knowledge at the micro-level. Relations of power happen even within the same household and can work in a rather complex way when it comes to age, gender, income, level of education, and even physical capacity. Power relations can be related to cultural patterns, or religious beliefs, that are not easy to understand using values alien to them. In this context, the whole idea of the 'community' turns fuzzy.

The lack of understanding on how power relations perform at a micro-level can work against the very idea of participation, as a positive and desirable act of the 'community', particularly when the 'community' is seen as a homogeneous and untroubled entity. This vision, frequently applied in participatory discourse, is indeed quite

difficult to see in the case of the OTB-SJT. There are power conflicts now among the different groups that make up the OTB that have only increased since the LPP and the LAD came into force. But, there are also conflicts between groups based on how they originally accessed housing, such as between the owners and the no-owners categories. Power conflicts at a micro-level speak against the crucial arguments supporting the relevance of social participation in housing improvement, including the *bottom-up approach* and the *empowerment* question linked to the 'idealistic' view of 'community'. Many questions arise, such as: who in the 'community' is meant to be empowered, how and why?

Participation can reinforce existing social inequities in a group quite well. To have the opportunity to take part and to communicate opinions, can be seen as a step forward compared to not having the opportunity. This circumstance must be assessed in relation to the qualitative results of partaking and participation at the micro-level. Complexities, when it comes to communication in the participatory act, arise here, as well as the issue of equitable conditions for all involved. Questions such as the language, age and gender can influence the possibility to take part in equitable conditions, as in the case of the non-Spanish speaking persons at the OTB-SJT, or the youth, the women and the less experienced in organizational matters. These things have effects on key arguments behind participatory action such as the *local knowledge* and the *needs assessment* questions.

Local Knowledge and Needs Assessment

There is an implicit error in believing that participatory processes induced from 'outside' (read top-down) do not influence the perspectives and perceptions of the people targeted for participatory action. Participatory discourse produces and distributes visions and thoughts established and accepted as 'true', and that have impact (*effects of truth*) on those targeted by the speeches. In most participatory processes 'outsider agendas' have been set up previously; external actors are far from being merely passive facilitators of local knowledge, or appraisers and assessors of needs. In fact, external actors usually shape and direct these processes.

Propositions such as *local knowledge* and *needs assessments* also have as a starting point the view of communities as compact entities free from power conflicts at the micro-level. This 'idealistic' perspective of people living in a certain territory set the stage for 'the people knows best' quarrel, that lies behind the *local knowledge* idea in participatory discourse. This is something that is not so easy to verify in the case of the OTB-SJT. It is true that the people, often men, are actively involved in decisions related to housing improvement. The people can well identify needs that lead to improvements in housing. This does not mean, however, that just these needs are the most urgent compared with others that could impact living conditions even greater.

Participatory discourse gives the impression that there are only two (and no more) 'visions' disconnected from each other, and, therefore, unable to define needs, problems and solutions in analo-

gous ways. Something similar to two worlds, existing in the same overall context, but for some reason or another, influenced in different way by things that happen around. This can guide to the misleading conclusion that situations are always seen differently by the 'community' and by other stakeholders. It can also give the wrong idea that assessments made by the 'community' are free from mistakes, and the people always have a right understanding of needs/demands, problems/solutions that are more relevant for them. A kind of fail-safe *local knowledge*, that provides even an incorrect impression that the presence of 'others' does not have any influence in the way people originally see things or think about them.

Aspects such as ventilation, day-light, open spaces for the children, the 'vinchucas', or the kitchen, are never mentioned in general meetings, or in individual conversations, as important needs for housing improvement. The knowledge on how things could be done for the achievement of better results from their investments is also limited, both when it comes to their own housing situation and as regards the situation of people living nearby. This knowledge includes the physical and the financial matters as well. Most investments done at the OTB-SJT have been to the detriment of people's time and money, considering the quality of the results in housing, both at the household and the settlement level.

Social Participation Discourse and Discursive Praxis at the OTB-SJT

Power Conflicts at 'Community' Level

The consequence of the discourse of participation linked to the Law of Popular Participation and the Law of Administrative Decentralization was the increase of power conflicts at a micro-level in the case of the study area. Several factors can be pointed out for this situation. The overall reason is, however, that arguments supporting participatory proposals in housing improvement for residential areas such the OTB-SJT lack enough knowledge on what happens in reality.

The differences in the settlement processes of the groups that make up the OTB-SJT were never considered when the OTB was defined as an administrative and organizational unity. This includes the various ways that people accessed land and housing in the different parts that comprise the settlement now. In fact, the emergence of the OTB-SJT is mostly linked to the implementation of the LPP. In this sense, the need to establish the 'community' OTB-SJT is more a result of top-down decisions, than of a bottom-up demand from the people living here. These questions have had implications for the functioning of the newly established 'community' over the years. Power conflicts at the micro-level show how negative this kind of 'theoretical' proposals can be when applied without consideration to the particular conditions.

More than one 'community' can be identified within the limits of the OTB-SJT. Even within the different groups, the 'community' idea of a homogeneous entity is not such a clear question. The community feeling can be stronger for those who own their property and live at the OTB-SJT, longer than for those who accessed housing through

other tenure forms, or even those who bought the property recently. For the people that access housing in tenant, caretaker, ‘anticrético’, borrower or ‘allegado’ systems, living at the OTB-SJT can be only circumstantial. They are normally little concerned with social participation. This is relevant considering that this group represents a significant portion of the population living here. It is important because the ‘circumstantial’ situation can mean many years of one’s life, but, also, because their lack of engagement in community issues can make those more engaged upset.

The no-owner category is ‘assimilated’ and ‘disappear’ under the ‘community’ sort despite that their housing situation is normally worse than that of the owners. The improvements made in the housing area have often meant higher costs for those who want to purchase properties here, and higher cost for those who access housing through other tenure forms as well. Just *who* is meant to be empowered by participatory processes emerges as a relevant question here, as does the question about the extent to which the housing situation of these groups is addressed in the *bottom-up approach*, the participatory discourse means to promote.

It is clear that there are individuals who know how things perform with the new laws implemented in the country over the past decade. There are people who do not know anything, or know very little about them at the OTB-SJT, as well. It is also clear that those who already had leading roles before strengthened their positions when the LPP and the LAD were implemented, as was evident in the case of the former leaders of the Miner San José Union who had better possibilities to access information (knowledge) from the beginning. The information provided to the people at OTB-SJT often give little consideration to personal aspects such as the level of education, the language, the age, the gender, the physical disabilities or religious beliefs. The vision of the ‘community’ as a homogeneous entity is partly responsible for how information is made accessible. Until now the *empowerment* question at the OTB-SJT was to the benefit of those who already accessed more power at the micro-level.

Local Knowledge and Needs Assessments – Conceptual Shortcomings

People are not always aware of situations that impact negatively on their living conditions when it comes to quality in housing. People simply do not know how these situations can be taken into account as needs and demands, in spite of their relevance. People at the OTB-SJT are unaware of how risky it is for their health, and the health of others, to have some kind of domestic animals inside the house, to cook and sell food on the street, to dispose of sewage and household waste directly into irrigation channels, or to use nearby outside places as toilets. It is also clear that people are unaware of the negative impact deficient environmental conditions inside the houses have on their health.

‘The people know best’ argument is behind *local knowledge* and *needs assessment* ideas in current participatory discourse in Bolivia as well. It is often suggested that the people know more about their needs, and about how things should be done to achieve better re-

sults. This is only partly true at the OTB-SJT, for questions related to housing. The results, both at household and at settlement level, show mostly shortcomings in housing construction and housing management. Economic limitations of the population are only part of the causes behind the housing quality shortages. With the same resources, and with adequate knowledge, many things could be done better.

The *local knowledge* and the *needs assessment* concepts have the 'community' idea behind. This makes the possibility of generalization easy in the discourse, but difficult in practice. The question is relevant here: which *needs* and which *local knowledge* are representative for all those living at the OTB-SJT? So far the focus of the *regularization* issue is only on statutory property rights, it is difficult, therefore, to visualise how the needs and the knowledge of other people living in the settlement will be understood in the housing improvement dialogue. This includes the no-owner category, but also other people according to age, sex, level of education, religious beliefs, income situation, or occupation, for example.

Participatory processes are not certainly necessary to understand that basic services are important to improve the living conditions of the housing area. And the failures with the water wells show how limited the knowledge of the population is on how these urgent needs could be solved better. Many other unsuccessful efforts for housing improvements could be found both at the settlement and household level at the OTB-SJT. The housing quality shortages that now exist indicate just how little support the 'people know best' argument has.

There is actually a series of housing improvements the people express as urgent at the OTB-SJT. Many of them are easy to be identified without the use of participatory processes. What is important here is that the improvements demanded by ones can be against the interests of the others. People can often be aware of which things impact negatively on their living conditions, but just as often they can be unaware of how solutions can impact negatively on the interests of other residents.

Frequently, the solutions implemented can have more to do with power relations than with the interests of the people as a group. The 'chicherías' and the brickyards are still in operation in spite of their negative impact on the living conditions at the OTB-SJT. This has to do with power relations at a micro-level indeed. Reasoning of this kind can very well be applied at household level too. The neglected requirements for space for female activities, such as the kitchen, the laundry, the bath of the children, in most cases, speak to power relations at the micro-level. In general, the adult males are the ones who make decisions on housing construction matters. This was clear in the general meetings, where the adult males, to the detriment of women and youth, normally expressed the opinions of the households.

Who Demands Community Participation in Housing Improvement?

Discourse of housing improvement means that social participation is needed for better outcomes in the field of housing for the low-income. The participation of people is considered key for more adequate solutions. Participatory discourse promotes the key role of the civil society in decisions about things that affect their living conditions, with housing among these. Up till now, the implementation of the LPP and the LAD has meant little for those with less access to power at the micro-level when it comes to decisions taking place in the case study area. Most of the resources for improvements coming from the LPP were not allocated for the most urgent housing needs the people demanded. Among other priorities, drinking water and sewer systems are considered a high priority at the OTB-SJT. In fact, the contribution of the people in participatory activities implemented here so far has been mostly manpower, as the case of the 'community house' shows.

There are other demands the people express in different forums that never make their way into concrete actions. Participatory activities linked to the LPP, in most of the cases, are a kind of exercises to legitimize decisions already taken at the top level. The little that is left for decisions at the grass root level can barely manage to be considered as 'things that affect people's life'. Even in the limited space of this small community, those involved in decision-making processes are still the minority, who already had access to power before the LPP was in force. In this sense, the discourses of people's participation linked to the LPP have meant the strengthening of the leading position of the former community representatives in the case of the OTB-SJT.

There is certainly a new generation of leaders that has emerged, and that intends to increase the influence of the people at the grass roots level. But, their possibilities to succeed in this effort will have to be assessed in the future. The young people have enormous restrictions on their ability to be active. They normally have newly established families and need time for income-generating activity; and they lack experience, as well.

Participation is demanding of time both for the people and for their leaders. Activities are normally conducted during hours of the day when people need to rest, or take care of their family. When the outcomes are so sparse the question of why to take part emerges as obvious.

The claims for social participation, linked to current housing improvement discourse, come mostly from the top. Many of those interviewed said, in effect, that participation is worth it if the achieved results in housing improvement compensates for the time and the energy invested. In my nearly three years of work at the OTB-SJT, the steps forward for the achievement of better housing conditions have been too small, especially when compared with the amount of time participatory activities demanded of the people. In none of the occasions where I was an observer, did I ever feel that the participatory activity actually lead to decisions about things that seriously affect the housing quality of the people living at the OTB-SJT.

Appendix

PROMESHA PROGRAM
 PROJECT I FUCVAM-PROMESHA
 DISTRICT 3
 SAN JOSE DE LA TAMBORADA

Questionnaire

A. General Information

Supervisor..... Responsibly of the inquiry.....	Questionnaire No	Block Code:	Plot No:
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Photo of the House

Planimetry of the Plot

Photo of the House

Location Plan:



Photo of the House

OBSERVATIONS *(on the questionnaire)*

B. Socio – Economic Data

B.1. Family Structure:

1. Head of the household _____
2. Time living in the Neighborhood? _____
3. Where did you live before? _____
4. Number of persons living in the house _____

• **Family Structure (Draw)**

1st Generation	2nd Generation
3rd Generation	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
	Persons living in the house (Name)	Family relationship (Or other)	Sex (M o F)	Age	Civil status	Place of Birth Department Place	Level of Education (Specifically)	Main Activity	Secondary Activity	Monthly Income? (Each one)

B.2. Income

1. Your monthly Income is estimated in:
2. How much can you save monthly?

C. Data on the House**C.1. Property rights on the house and the Plot**

3. The house you live in is:

Owned

Rented

Anticresis contract

Other *(Be specific)*

4. You bought:

Only the Plot Plot and house

5. How much did it cost _____SUSS

6. When was the transaction made? (year)

7. Time living in the house?

(If the house is owned please answer these questions)

8. How did you build the house?

Self help

Mutual Aid

Constructor or bricklayer

Architect or engineer

Other *(Point specifically)**(If the house was build by self help please answer the following question)*

9. Who were involved in the construction of your house?

C.2. Legal situation

10. Which kind of property document do you have?

- Minute
- Hijuela
- Nona

11. Who sold the property to you?

12. Who is or are the owner (s) according to the document you have?

13. When you got the document? (year)

C.3 Regulatory aspects

14. Are you informed about the discussions regarding the Regulations for the D9?

No. Why?

Yes. What is your opinion?

15. Which are the reasons behind the non-legal situation of your house and your plot?

16. Do you know about the regulations for the use of the plot and for the construction of houses in force for the D9?

Yes. What do you know about it?

No. Why?

C.4. Technical aspects**General Description (materials and conditions):**

17. Walls *(Description)*

1st Floor:2nd Floor:

Surrounding wall

18. Whitewashing *(Description)*

Inside:

Outside:

19. Floors *(Description)*

1st Floor:2nd Floor:

Space between galleries:

20. Roof *(Description)*

Structure

Cover

Ceiling:

Outside Areas of the House (description)

21. Toilet *(General Description, type, materials, artifacts, conditions)*

22. Kitchen *(General Description - equipment)*

D. Housing improvement**D.1 House***(If the answer is too long please continue in the backside of the page).*

23. Which aspects of your house do you like most?

24. Which aspects of your house would you like to improve? *(Point)*

D.2. Neighborhood

25. Which aspects of your neighborhood do you like most? *(Point)*

26. Which aspects of your neighborhood would you like to improve?

E. On Cooperative aspects

27. Are you member of the San José de la Tamborada Housing Cooperative?

Yes No

(If the answer is negative go to question 28)

28. How much do you pay monthly?

29. Are you part of the Council Board?

Yes No

If yes. Which is your responsibility?

30. Are you member of another kind of cooperative? Which?

31. How do you evaluate your experience in the Housing Cooperative San José de la Tamborada?

Good Regular Bad

32. Would you like (are you interested) to participate in a housing cooperative to improve your house and the living conditions in your neighborhood?

Yes

No

I don't know

Comments:

If the housing improvement program would be designed to improve your house and your settlement through self-help and community participation.

33. Would you like to participate in this program?

Yes

No

I don't know

Comments:

Which kind of support would you like to get to improve your house?(Point)

34. What is your opinion on functioning and the support you get from the Municipality at central level?

Excellent Good Regular Bad
Inefficient

Comments:

35. What is your opinion on the functioning and the support you get from the Municipal House 9?

Excellent Good Regular Bad
Inefficient

Comments:

36. What is your opinion on San José de la Tamborada Neighborhood Committee?

Excellent Good Regular Bad
Inefficient

Comments:

Are you a member of the Neighborhood Committee Board?

What is your role?

37. What do you think on the work of the Neighborhood Committee Board?

Excellent Good Regular
Bad Inefficient

Comments:

38. Is there other kind of organizations in the Neighborhood? Which?

Comments:

39. What do you know about the Annual Operating Plans?

A lot Very little Nothing

40. Did you participate in the work with the Annual Operating Plans?

No. Why?

Yes. When? How?

41. Which housing improvement projects have been implemented at OTB-SJT last year?

42. Were you involved (or other members of your family) in these projects?

Yes. Who?

How?

No. Why?

43. Were these projects those you considered to be of the highest priority for your neighborhood?

Yes. Why? _____

No. Why? _____

Otherwise, which projects do you consider a higher priority? _____

44. What do you know about the Law for People's Participation?

A lot Very little Nothing

45. What is your opinion on the LPP?

The Youth

(If there are some young people between 14 to 24 years present please ask the following questions)

46. Which kind of community facilities do you think are missing in the neighborhood?

47. Which activities do you pursue in your free time?

Male _____

Female _____

48. Are there specific organizations for the young in the neighborhood?

Yes No

Which?

49. Do you participate in some of them?

If yes. Which? Why? (Be specific, write names)

If no. Why? (Be specific, write names)

50. Which activities are important to having social contact with other youth in the neighborhood?

51. Would you like to participate in these activities?

If Yes. Why? (Be specific, write names)

If No. Why? (Be specific, write names)

52. Which are the most critical problems for the youth in the neighborhood?

Interview Guides: The Community (1)

Case Study San José de la Tamborada in Cochabamba, Bolivia

Some considerations for conducting new interviews

The people to be interviewed at the OTB-SJT should fulfil some of the following characteristics, if they are to be representative of that population living here:

- 1 Original owners of the cooperative plots, those living since 1956.
- 2 Second (or third) owners, those who bought the plot (or the plot and the house) from the original, or the second, owners of the housing cooperative.
- 3 New owners, who bought the plot from the private landowner.
- 4 Households living as tenants of the plot and the house.
- 5 Households living as caretakers of the plot and the house.
- 6 Persons living as guests of the owners or tenants (often part of the family).

Furthermore, other aspects will also be considered in making up the sample:

- 1 Households (couples) with more than one generation living in the house.
- 2 Households with only the women as head of the household.
- 3 Households with only the man as head of the household.
- 4 Young couples without children.
- 5 Urban migrants from Cochabamba City.
- 6 Rural migrants from the Department of Cochabamba.
- 7 Urban migrants from other cities of the country.
- 8 Rural migrants from other regions of the country.
- 9 Representatives of the SJT Neighbourhood Committee.
- 10 Representatives of the SJT Cooperative Housing.

The same person interviewed can fulfil more than one of these characteristics.

QUESTIONS**Group A General Background**

- 1 Name. Occupation. Family structure. Property situation to the plot and the house. (Taken from the inquiries already made)
- 2 How long have you been living in SJT?
- 3 Where did you live before moving here?
- 4 Why did you move to SJT?
- 5 How did you access housing before moving here?
- 6 Do you like to live here in SJT? What is good? What is not so good?
- 7 Do you want to stay here? Why?
- 8 Would you like to move to another place? Why?

Group B On the participatory process**B1 Background**

- 1 Are you involved in the election of the community representative? How? If not. Why?
- 2 Do you make some payments to the community organization? How often and how much? If not. Why?
- 3 How are these funds allocated? Are you involved in the discussions? How? If not. Why?
- 4 Have you been involved in housing improvement activities in SJT? In which? Why? How? If not. Why?
- 5 Have you been involved in the definition of the Annual Operative Plans for the SJT? When? How? If not. Why?
- 6 How were the discussions on the final content of the Annual Operating Plan carried out? Who were involved? Were you involved? How? If not. Why?
- 7 Are you informed on the Annual Operating Plan's final content? Do you agree with it? If not, can you make changes? How?
- 8 How was your experience in working with the AOP?

B.2 Identification of the needs and demands in housing improvement

- 1 Which are the main needs and demands in housing improvement that you have in SJT?
- 2 Are these needs and demands in housing improvement similar this year to other years?
- 3 Which of your needs and demands in housing improvement are included in the Annual Operating Plan this year? How were these selected? Were you involved? If not, why?
- 4 How were the investment priorities of the co-participation resources established for SJT? Were you involved in this process? If not. Why?

B.3 Design and Implementation of the housing improvement projects

- 1 Were the design proposals for housing improvement projects discussed at SJT before its implementation? How? Were you involved in this process? If not. Why?
- 2 Have you been involved in the implementation of housing improvement projects in SJT? In which? How? If not. Why?
- 3 Which are the main activities of the representatives of the community and the MH9 during the implementation of housing improvement projects in SJT?

B.4 Follow-up and Evaluation of the housing improvement projects

- 1 Were you involved in the follow-up process of the housing improvement projects? How? If not. Why?
- 2 Were you involved in the evaluation process of the housing improvement projects? How? If not. Why?
- 3 Were you involved in activities to overcome eventual deficiencies of the housing improvement projects? How? If not. Why?

Group C Conceptual Aspects

C.1 On Housing, and housing quality

- 1 Do you think that SJT should be legalized as an urban housing area? Why?
- 2 How do you define housing as good or bad? Point out some good and some bad aspects in housing in the SJT case?
- 3 Which are your priorities to improve the housing/living conditions in SJT?

C.2 On people's participation in housing improvement

- 1 What do you think on people's participation in housing improvement projects according to your experience in SJT?
- 2 Have your points of views been taken into consideration for the implementation of housing improvement projects in SJT?
- 3 Do you think that the representatives of the community and the functionaries of the MH9 have been open to your opinions?
- 4 Do you think that you have contributed to the implementation of housing improvement projects in SJT? How?
- 5 Do you think that your participation in housing improvement projects is needed? Why? When? Which tasks and responsibilities do you think you should have?
- 6 How is the participation of the SJT community in housing improvement projects now in relation to other years?

C.3 On your own expectations

- 1 What do you think on your original expectations and the real possibilities to improve your housing conditions in SJT? Are there some obstacles to make the housing conditions in SJT better?

- 2 Are there some recommendations you can make to improve the work of the SJT community with housing improvement projects?

Interview Guides: The Community (2)

Case Study San José de la Tamborada in Cochabamba, Bolivia

Some consideration on the new interviews

Individuals already interviewed represent some of the following characteristics:

- 1 Original owners of the cooperative plots, those living here since 1956.
- 2 Second (or third) owners, those who bought the plot (or the plot and the house) from the original (or the second) owners of the housing cooperative.
- 3 New owners, who bought the plot from the private landowner.
- 4 Households with more than one generation living in the house.
- 5 Households with only the women as head of the household.
- 6 Urban migrants from Cochabamba City.
- 7 Rural migrants from the Department of Cochabamba
- 8 Urban migrants from other cities of the country
- 9 Rural migrants from other regions of the country.
- 10 Representatives of the SJT Neighbourhood Committee.
- 11 Representatives of the SJT Cooperative Housing.
- 12 Households living in the area for more than one to less than 10 years.
- 13 Households involved in the chicherías activity

Requirements for the new interviews

- 14 Households with only the man as head of the household.
- 15 Young couples without children.
- 16 Households from areas II, III, and eventually some families living in the Sub area IV.
- 17 Households living as tenants and anticrecistas of the plot and/or the house.
- 18 Households living as borrowers or caretakers of the plot and/or the house
- 19 Persons living as guests of the owners or tenants (often part of the family).
- 20 Young households.
- 21 Young single persons.
- 22 Extended households, between 8 to 17 persons.

- 23 Time of living in the housing area: less than one year, between 10 and 15 years, and between 15 and 18 years.
- 24 Households involved in brick production.

QUESTIONS

Group A General Background

- 1 Name. Occupation. Family structure. Property situation to the plot and the house. (from the inquiries already made).
- 2 Time living in SJT? Place of living before?

Group B Questions on housing quality

- 1 In which extent is SJT a good/ bad place to live in? Why?
- 2 Why do you move to SJT? If this situation was different had you anyway moved here?
- 3 Have your initial expectations regarding SJT changed? How? Why?
- 4 Have you sometime thought that it was a wrong decision to move here? Why?
- 5 Are there some other places in the city or the country that you would like to live in? Which? Why?
- 6 Are there some facilities in other housing areas that you would like to have in SJT? Which? Why?
- 7 If somebody asks you how it is to live here, which things you would tell him/her as main positive and negative references on SJT?

Other issues I'll like to go more in deep

- 1 How/in which extent will property rights influence your current housing situation?
- 2 Which kind of things you can make then comparing to now? Are these things reachable only by having property rights?
- 3 Which do you think will be the impact of the regularization process on the housing conditions (quality of basic services, community facilities, shelter) of the whole area?
- 4 How will the regularization process influence your own housing conditions?

On the tenants/antirecistas/borrowers/ caretakers aspiration of the "own house"

- 1 Which are the positive and the negative aspects in living as tenant/antirecista/borrower/caretaker?
- 2 Which are the most important requirements you have for feeling comfortable as tenant/antirecista/ borrower/caretaker? Why?
- 3 Can you think the possibility of living as a tenant/antirecista/borrower/caretaker for a long time? Why?
- 4 Are there positive/negative aspects with the "own house" as a housing solution? Which? Why?

Group B: Questions on the participatory process

The questions will try to go further in the answers I already got in the first interviews:

- 1 What would you propose in order to improve the living conditions at SJT now?
- 2 What would your main housing improvement demands be if you had access to water and sanitation at SJT now? Why?
- 3 If you were a representative of SJT how would the priorities in housing improvement at SJT be done? Who should be involved? Why?
- 4 How do you think that housing improvement demands of the community should be met?
- 5 Is community participation needed in housing improvement activities? When? Why?
- 6 How can the community contribute best in housing improvement activities at SJT? Which tasks and responsibilities should you/they have?
- 7 Which are the main difficulties the representatives and the community at SJT have in making better living/housing conditions possible?

Tables

Chapter 1

Bolivia

Table 1.1 Male Female Population Bolivia. 1950–2001 (in percent)

	1950	1976	1992	2001
Male	49,04	49,33	49,39	49,84
Female	50,96	50,67	50,61	50,16
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source Taken from *Bolivia: Distribución de la Población*, Instituto Nacional de Estadística 2002a: 5.

Table 1.2 Political and Administrative structure of Bolivia, Area, Capital of Departments, Number of Provinces and Municipalities.

Department	Area (sq.Km)*	Capital city of the Department	Number of Provinces*	Number of Municipalities**
Chuquisaca	51.524	Sucre	10	28
La Paz	133.985	La Paz	19	75
Cochabamba	55.631	Cochabamba	16	44
Oruro	53.588	Oruro	16	34
Potosí	118.218	Potosí	16	38
Tarija	37.623	Tarija	6	11
Santa Cruz	370.621	Santa Cruz	15	47
Beni	213.564	Trinidad	8	19
Pando	63.827	Cobija	5	15
TOTAL	1.090.581		111	311

Source INE Censo de Población y Vivienda 2001–Resultados Finales. Pag 7.

* Censo de Población y Vivienda 1992–Resultados Finales. Ministerio de Planeamiento y Coordinación. Instituto de Estadística, 1993.

** Primer Censo de Gobiernos Municipales. Ministerio de Hacienda. Ministerio de Desarrollo Sostenible y Planificación, 1998.

Chapter 2

Cochabamba

Table 2.1 Male and Female population of the Department of Cochabamba 1950–2001

	1950	1976	1996	2001
Male	48,38	48,54	49,06	49,4
Female	51,62	51,46	50,94	50,6
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.0

Source Taken from *Bolivia: Distribución de la Población*, Instituto Nacional de Estadística 2002a: 29.

Chapter 3

Table and Figure 3.1
Length of time living in the area

<i>Time living in the area</i>	<i>Number of households</i>	<i>%</i>
< 1 year	11	9.2
1 to 5 years	50	41.6
> 5 to 10 years	38	31.7
> 10 to 18 years	19	15.8
Without data	2	1.7
Total	120	100.0

Source Taken from *Resultados Encuesta Barrio San José de la Tamborada Distrito 9, Mayo 2001. IIA/ PROMESHA/UMSS.*

Table 3.2
Population according to the place of birth

<i>Department of birth</i>	<i>No of persons</i>	<i>%</i>
Cochabamba	479	59.1
Oruro	206	25.4
La Paz	46	5.7
Potosí	37	4.6
Santa Cruz	17	2.1
Other places	11	1.3
Missing data	15	1.8
TOTAL	811	100.0

Source My own elaboration based on *Resultados Encuesta Barrio SJT-Distrito 9, Mayo 2001. IIA/PROMESHA/UMSS.*

Table 3.3 and Figure 3.2
Population according to age and sex

<i>Age (Years old)</i>	<i>Males</i>		<i>Females</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
0–10	120	50.6	117	49.4	237	29.3
11–20	77	45.7	92	54.3	169	20.8
21–35	107	47.7	118	52.3	225	27.7
36–45	36	47.9	39	52.1	75	9.3
46 or more	56	52.9	49	47.1	105	12.9
TOTAL	396	48.8	415	51.2	811	100.0

Source *Resultados Encuesta Barrio SJT-Distrito 9, Mayo 2001. IIA/PROMESHA/UMSS.*

Table 3.4 Level of education of the population

<i>Level of education</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Kinder and pre-kinder	24	3.0
Children under 6 years old not attending school yet	113	13.9
Basic school (six years)	298	36.7
Seven years of basic school to third degree of secondary school	170	21.0
School-leaving exam	75	9.2
At University or Technical School	32	3.9
Studies at the University (without degree)	2	0.2
Professionals	18	2.2
Illiterates	24	3.0
No data	55	6.9
TOTAL	811	100.0

Source Taken from *Resultados Encuesta Barrio SJT-Distrito 9, Mayo 2001. IIA/PROMESHA/UMSS*

Table 3.5 Population according to main occupation

<i>Main occupation</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Building sector professionals	7	0.9
Building sector non-professionals	61	7.5
Household labours	121	15.0
Students	234	29.0
Employees in service	48	5.9
Trader	25	3.0
Transport	29	3.6
Vendors	23	2.8
Own activity or own business	58	7.0
Any occupation or unemployed	153	18.9
Retired	7	0.9
Without data	45	5.5
TOTAL	811	100.0

Source Taken from *Resultados Encuesta Barrio SJT-Distrito 9, Mayo 2001. IIA/PROMESHA/UMSS.*

Table 3.6 Monthly Household Income

<i>Income according to the average monthly minimum salary *</i>	<i>No of Households</i>	<i>%</i>
Below one minimum salary	11	9.2
More than one to less than four times	78	65.0
More than four to less than eight times	20	16.7
More than eight times	6	5.0
Missing data	5	4.1
TOTAL	120	100.0

Source Taken from: *Resultados Encuesta Barrio SJT-Distrito 9, Mayo 2001. IIA/PROMESHA/UMSS.*

* According to international agencies, including the World Bank, the average, monthly, minimum salary of Bolivia in 2001 was US\$ 57.33, the lowest among 17 Latin American countries included in the survey presented. Argentina was at the top with US\$ 200 monthly average. It is to be noted that the average minimum salary refers to the income of a single person.

Table 3.7
The situation of the Kitchen

<i>Type of space aimed for the kitchen</i>	<i>No of Cases</i>	<i>%</i>
Open space	10	8.3
Half closed space with or without equipment	24	20.0
Closed space with no equipment and no installations	10	8.3
Closed space with equipment	27	22.5
Shared space	25	20.9
No particular room for cooking	14	11.7
Missing data	10	8.3
TOTAL	120	100.0

Source *Resultados Encuesta Barrio SJT-Distrito 9, Mayo 2001. IIA/PROMESHA/UMSS.*

Table 3.8
The situation of the toilet

<i>Type of toilet</i>	<i>No of Cases</i>	<i>%</i>
Latrine	41	34.2
With lavatory and septic tank	28	23.3
With lavatory without septic tank	12	10.0
No toilet inside the house	29	24.2
Missing data	10	8.3
TOTAL	120	100.0

Source *Resultados Encuesta Barrio SJT-Distrito 9, Mayo 2001. IIA/PROMESHA/UMSS.*

Table 3.9
Number of persons living in the same plot

<i>No of persons</i>	<i>No of Cases</i>	<i>%</i>
1– 3 persons	10	8.4
4– 7 persons	77	64.2
8–11 persons	24	20.0
12–14 persons	6	5.0
15 persons	1	0.8
17 persons	1	0.8
23 persons	1	0.8
TOTAL	120	100.0

Source *Taken from Resultados Encuesta Barrio SJT-Distrito 9, Mayo 2001. IIA/PROMESHA/UMSS.*

Table 3.10 and Figure 3.3
Access to housing

<i>Type of access</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Owner	81	67.5
Tenant	27	22.5
Anticreticista	6	5.0
Borrower	1	0.8
Caretaker	4	3.4
Missing data	1	0.8
TOTAL	120	100.0

Source *Resultados Encuesta Barrio SJT-Distrito 9, Mayo 2001. IIA/PROMESHA/UMSS.*

Table 3.11 and Figure 3.4
Type of Tenure Document on the Property

<i>Type of tenure document</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Minuta	55	45.8
Hijuela	16	13.3
Minuta and Hijuela	8	6.7
Property Tittle	3	2.5
None	6	5.0
Missing data	32	26.7
TOTAL	120	100.0

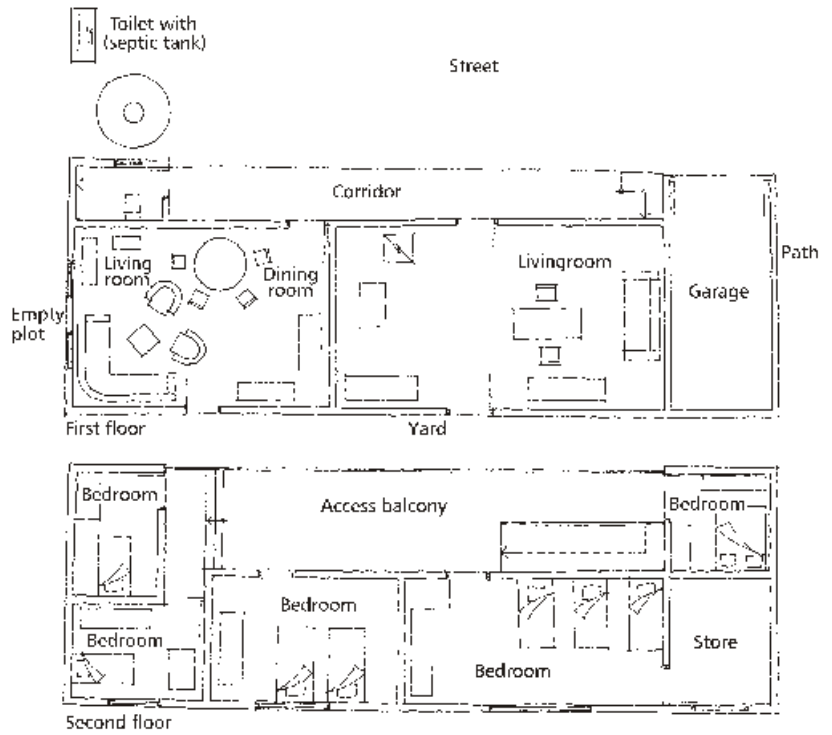
Source *Resultados Encuesta Barrio SJT-Distrito 9, Mayo 2001. IIA/PROMESHA/UMSS.*

Table 3.12 and Figure 3.5
Building process of the house

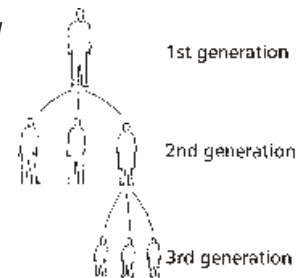
<i>Housing construction process</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Only skilled labour and/or professionals involved	48	40.0
Self help and mutual aid only	26	21.7
Self-help or mutual aid, with bricklayers involved	8	6.7
Missing data	38	31.6
TOTAL	120	100.0

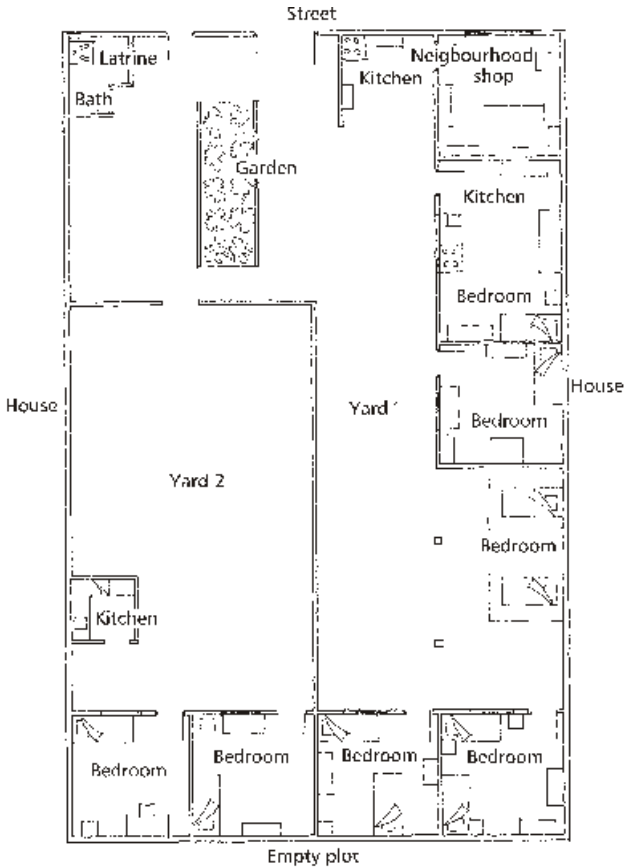
Source *Taken from: Resultados Encuesta Barrio SJT-Distrito 9, Mayo 2001. IIA/PROMESHA/UMSS.*

Drawings and Photos

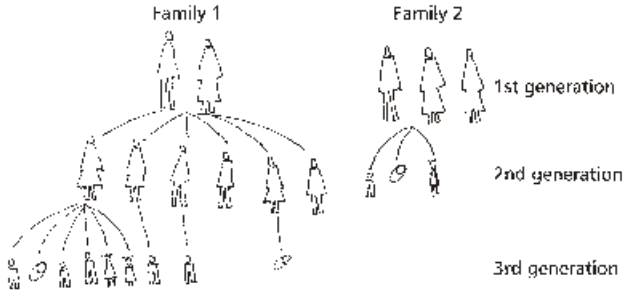


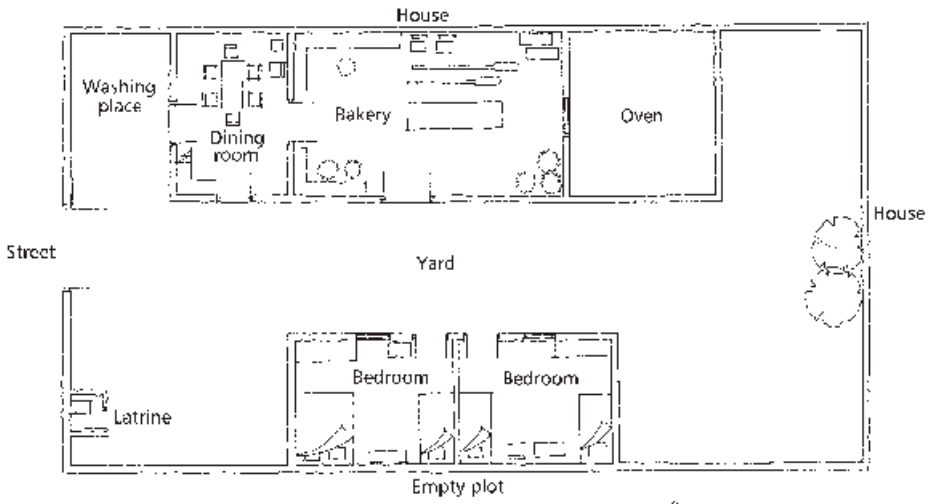
Antonio's house and household structure.



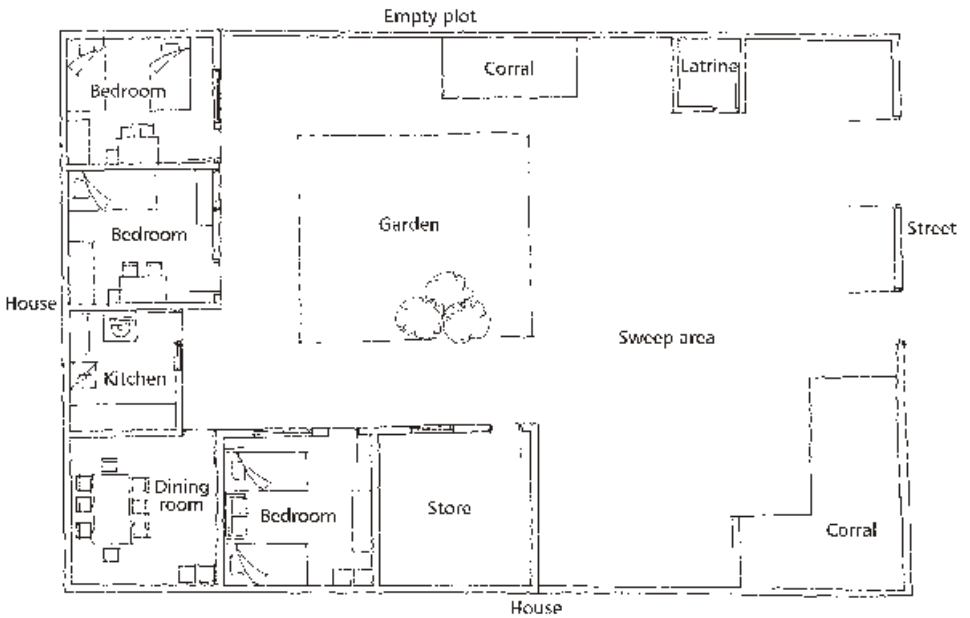
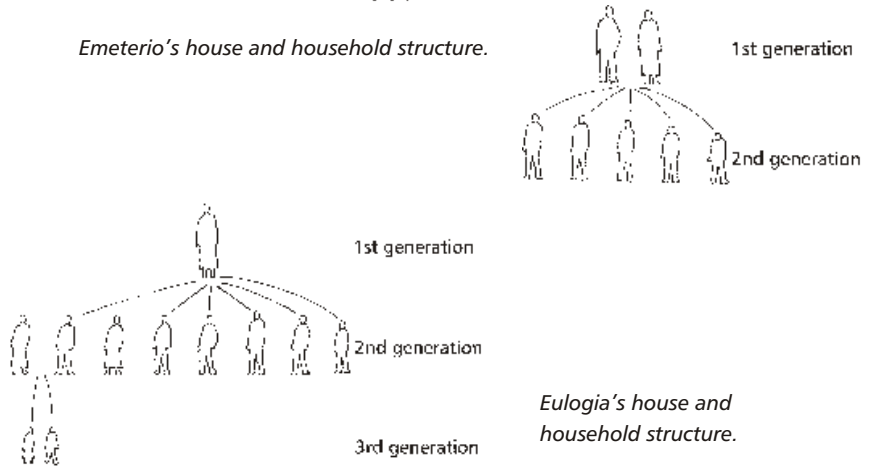


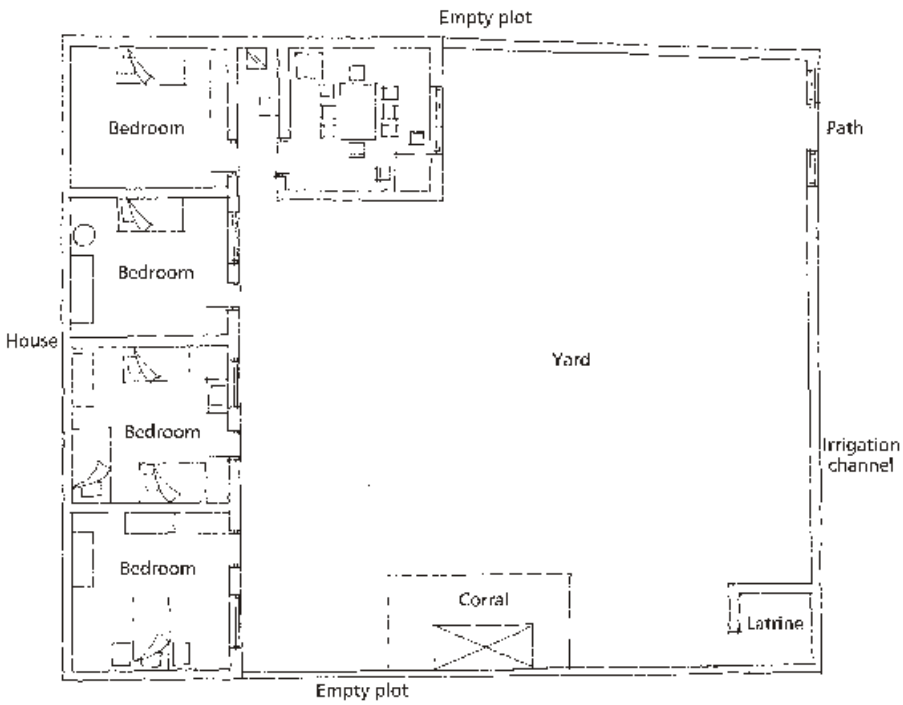
Celina's house and household structure.



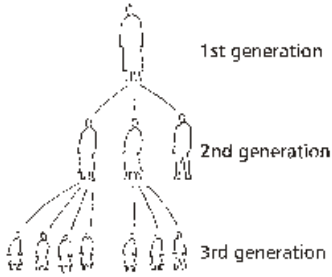


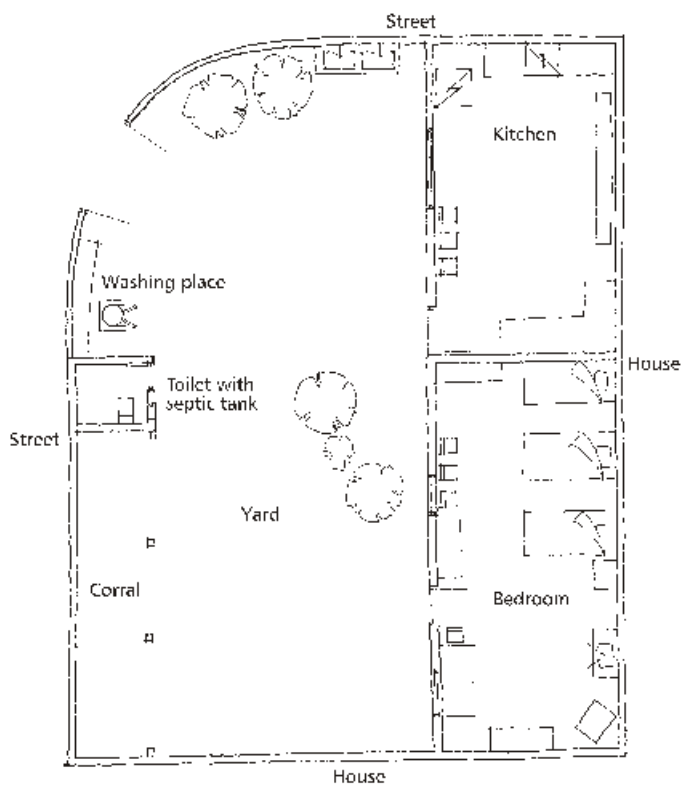
Emeterio's house and household structure.



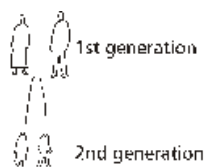


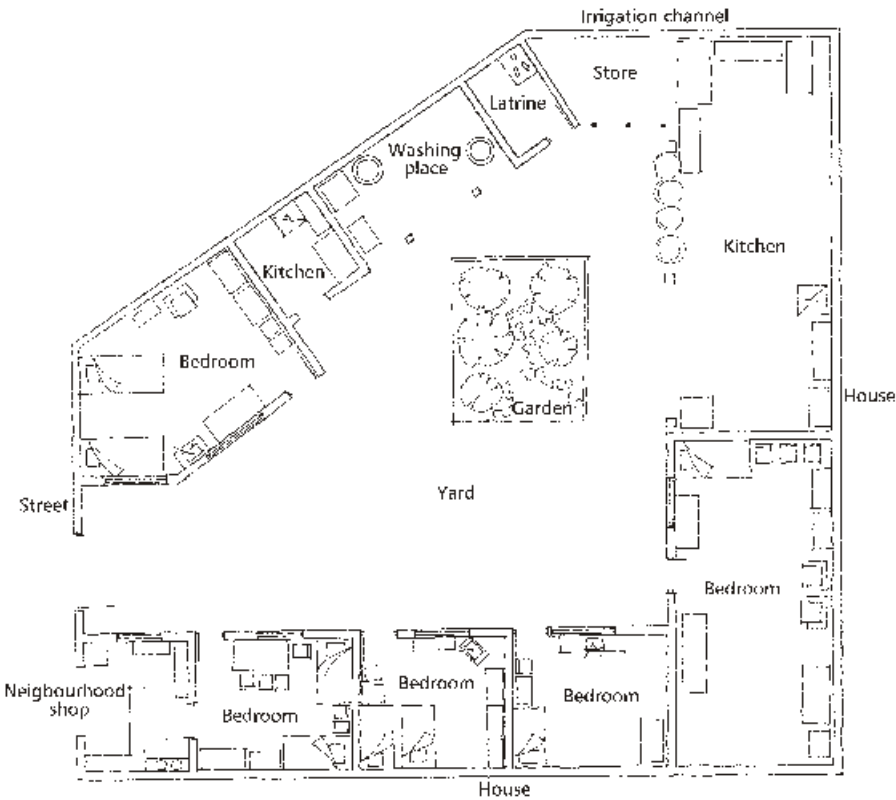
Gina's house and household structure.



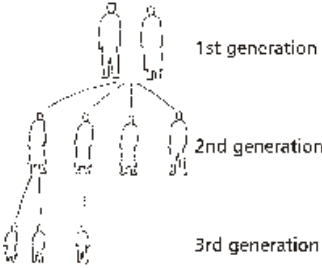


Pelagia's house and household structure.





Vania's house and household structure.





The main street of the OTB-SJT.



Secondary streets of earth contribute to dust pollution.



The disposal of garbage in the irrigation channels (dry period).



One of the small neighborhood shops.



Selling food in the streets.



The 'multifunction plan'.



Cooking for the 'chichería' business.



Air pollution resulting from the brickyards activity.



House built by bricks and cement.



Adobe house in the Cooperative area.



The quality of the houses is normally better in the Mela Darrás area, but laundry facilities are missing even here.



The kitchen and the toilet are often the most neglected spaces in the house.



Improved latrines and baths are the most common.



The yard is used to store many different things.



The collected water is exposed to air contamination and dust.



People improvise laundry facilities in the yard.



The surrounding irrigation channel in rainy period.



Toilets with no connection to a sewer system.



The 'mental maps' qualitative research tool in practice: people making their own drawings of the settlement.



Working with the 'photo interview' qualitative research tool.



Meeting of the Pukara OTBs with the technical adviser of the Municipal Council.



Representatives of the District 9 Council working with the Annual Operative Plans at the Municipal House 9.



Workshop with the youth and the women organised by the PROCASHA foundation in one of the 'chicherías' of the settlement.



General meeting in one of the 'chicherías'.



General meeting on the plot of the 'community house'.

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