

Participative Planning in Africa

First steps in the Director Plan of Huambo

Tomaz Ponce Dentinho¹ e Paulo Oliveira²
¹ Universidade dos Açores, Portugal ² Prosistemas
tomazdentinho@uac.pt ; pobettenc@gmail.com

Abstract

Huambo has central capacities able to compete and complement other major towns in Africa such as Johannesburg and Nairobi. Nevertheless, Huambo, the second city of Angola, was at war from 1975 till 2002 and continued to be relatively isolated from 2002 till 2006, because it took some time to rebuilt former roads. Furthermore the destruction of the export based activities during the war reduced the capacity of the city to regain the development path experienced in the sixties and early seventies. Under these circumstances the design of a Director Plan is necessarily a strategic plan of a city that has lost its export base and has obvious difficulties in getting its role in Africa. The Provincial Government asked for a Plan which design should be participated. The first question is to know who the stakeholders are and what are their expectations? The second issue is to design a participative and consistent strategy. In this paper we report the first phase of the Plan which includes not only the characterization and diagnosis of the region but also the design of a participatory strategy. We used Q Methods to interact with the stakeholders and the bureaucrats. Notwithstanding being an on-going process it is still possible to stress the need of a participatory planning system since the perspectives of the stakeholders can be more consistent and focused than the perspectives of the bureaucrats.

1 Introduction

The city of Huambo in Angola has centrality able to compete and complement other major towns in Africa such as Johannesburg and Nairobi. Nevertheless, Huambo, the second city of Angola, was at war from 1975 till 2002 and continued to be relatively isolated from 2002 till 2006, because it took some time to rebuilt former roads connecting to the ports and to the outside world. Furthermore the destruction of the export based activities during the Angolan Civil War reduced the capacity of the city to regain the development path experienced in the sixties and early seventies.

Under these circumstances the design of a Director Plan is necessarily a strategic plan of a city that has lost its export base and has obvious difficulties in getting its role in Africa. The Provincial Government asked for a participated Director Plan which. The first question is to know who the stakeholders are and what are their expectations? The second issue is to design a participative and consistent strategy.

Spatial Planning is often seen as a multidimensional concept, involving multidisciplinary interests that range of land use to transportation, environmental issues to economic and social affairs. It involves themes from urban and rural planning to the regional and national regulation including local, provincial and national levels, public - private partnerships and community participation in the process of creation and management of space and suitable channels (Levent et al, 2008)

According to Andreas Faludi (2000) territorial planning should not be evaluated primarily in terms of substantive results but on improving the understanding of the decision makers taking into account the present and future problems facing society. Territorial planning is also the activity that reaches decisions able to increase the range of choices in the future giving meaning to the concept of development proposed by Amartya Senn (2000).

To do this, and given that it is a public and long term issue, it is very important that planning is developed as a set of "communicative acts" (Habermas, 1984) as if the truth cannot found immediately but constructed by language (Rorty, 1995), in an attempt to find new and better futures generating the ability to influence decisions that – as said by Miguel de Unamuno – want to believe to create those desired futures (Muller, 1998).

In this paper we report the first phase of the Plan which includes not only the characterization and diagnosis of the region but also the design of a participatory strategy. We used Q Methods to interact with the stakeholders and a Spatial Interaction Model with Land Use to create consistent scenarios that arise from the political and entrepreneurial options related to the location of a new modern airport, the new export base of the town, the solution in terms of urban densities, the structure of the transport network and the design of land use planning measures.

In point 2 we present a short context of the area. Point 3 describes the participative methodology. Point 4 presents and discusses the results of the two first participatory exercises. And point 5 proposes some conclusions, recommendations and future work.

2 The Context of the City of Huambo

The highlands of Huambo are one of the main distribution centers of hydrographic basins in Africa (Figure 1), showing a centrality that can become a major metropolitan area in Southern Africa with connections dictated by geography to Luanda, Benguela, Namibe, Cape Town, Johannesburg-Maputo, Harare- Beira and Nairobi-Mombasa. The Master Urban Plan of Huambo of 1972 says that *"Huambo is located precisely in the line of ridges that draws a separation between the slopes to the Atlantic Ocean and Indian Ocean, in a similar position to the set-Johannesburg, Windhoek Lubumbashi and Nairobi, which stresses geographically its geographical vocation as large urban center"*.

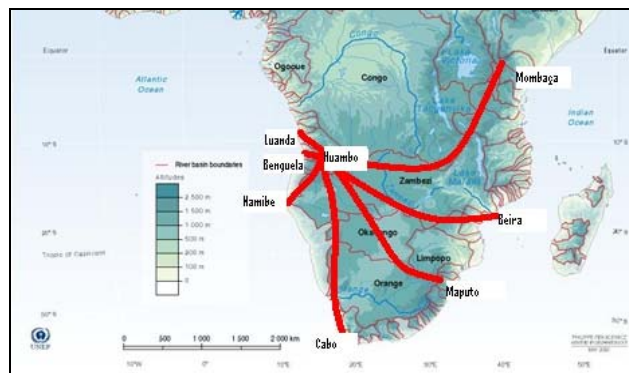


Figure 1 – Centrality of Huambo

The population of Huambo province is estimated at 2355453 inhabitants and the city of Huambo and its surroundings have 924869 inhabitants. The city lived isolated from 1992 till 2002 and continued to be relatively isolated from 2002 till 2006. Nowadays the economic base of the region is public spending in reconstruction but there are a lot of potential in agriculture, mining, logistics and industry and services (education, health and banking), which development was somehow interrupted due to the 30 years disruption of the economic tissue, from 1975 till 2005.

3 Q Method

There are several methods available for deciders and policy makers to use in assessing the role and motivations of stakeholders (Hermans & Thissen ,2009). One of these is Q Methodology (Stephenson, 1953) in which participants are asked to rank several statements by order of importance or agreement. These Q Statements are gathered beforehand through interviews with prominent stakeholders and/or from media and other sources. The results are analyzed through a Principal Component Analysis where each respondent (Q Sort) is a variable. Respondents are grouped into factors according to the degree of similarity of their rankings. Thus, this method allows not only to gather a measure of the subjectivity of the respondents, but also to determine the similarities and divergences between factors or groups, establishing a basis for dialogue and discussion (Addams & Proops, 2000)

There are a few examples of Q Methodology as a basis for consultation and participatory decision in the literature. One example is given by Sweeden (2006), who resorted to this method to “find a common basis for cooperation among groups with a long history of conflict over forest management issues (...).” Her argument for Q Methodology is that participatory decision methods are preferable to a more limited monetary valuation in ecosystem decision processes. In her words, “Understanding the attitudes of groups involved in conflict over ecosystem use is crucial for designing policies that have a chance of being implemented, as well as being equitable and sustainable. Thus, the use of Q method is an essential step for supporting successful public participation in decisions affecting ecosystem sustainability”. Other examples are Rajé’s (2007) work with Q methodology to explore the different perspectives people have of transports in their lives and how these affect their social inclusion, and Hawthorne and colleagues (2008), who used photos instead of statements to assess the relation between spatial proximity and opposing reaction to the development of recreational trails in abandoned railways. An example even closer to what we aimed to do in this paper was presented by Doody et al. (2009) who used Q Method to analyze the discourse, combining public opinion with technical expertise to select sustainable development indicators.

4 Results and Discussion

From listening to interviews conducted between February 28 and March 2, 2011 we identified 31 sentences (Figure 2).

Phrases from Interviews	
1	Our main problem is the bad land use with occupation of watercourses and the degradation of other natural resources
2	The problem is the lack of appropriate garbage collection and processing.
3	The water supply is either nonexistent or bad.
4	The problems of malaria are related to water
5	There are very poor sanitation and sewage treatment
6	There is a serious lack of human resources and lack of qualified and specialized personnel in public administration
7	There is a big problem of access to outside information and internet works very badly
8	Hunger and poverty are the main problems of Huambo
9	There is an increase in inequality that is unfair and worsens the security situation in Huambo
10	Soils of Huambo are very worn up and the intervention of extension agencies is not effective.
11	There is a serious problem of deforestation caused by charcoal extraction
12	There is a problem of lack of employment in Huambo
13	The Morro do Moco biodiversity is threatened
14	On the road to Luanda there is a great degradation of the urban structure
15	The airport should change to Calima to allow for its expansion
16	The land behind the post office should be kept to the cathedral as planned before the war
17	It is essential that the city retains green spaces.
18	It is essential that the city retains the structure of modern urban and avoid the proliferation
19	Acceptance of concrete construction in transitional neighborhoods will create injustice when it becomes necessary to operate demolitions
20	There should be public transport stations and structures for collective taxis
21	The railroad should be extended to the whole country linking Huambo to the North (Luanda) and to Lubango, Namibia and South Africa
22	There is a lack of business investment in the city of Huambo
23	The rural access roads are not cared
24	There is a problem of accessibility to some localities
25	There are still communities that lack access to community schools
26	There are still villages that have no access to health posts
27	The University should become a major driver of development in Huambo
28	Farming should be an important factor in the economy of Huambo
29	Tourism should be a key economic sector in Huambo
30	Huambo city should be a financial service centre
31	The logistics must be one of the basic sectors of the economy of Huambo

Figure 2 – Phrases from Interviews

These phrases were ranked by those responsible for planning and management of Huambo in accordance with the scheme of Figure 3. The 15 responses were obtained at a meeting held at the Provincial Directorate of Urban Planning which is sufficient taking into account that the advised number of answers should be roughly a third the number of sentences.

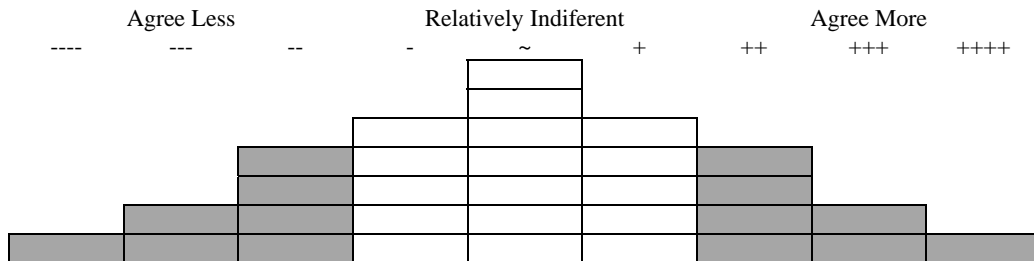


Figure 3 – Structure to Rank the Phrases

The extraction of factors or perspectives by the method of principal components analysis underlying the Q enables us to perceive the attitudes of the various agents involved.

The systematization of sentences according to factors 1 and 2, allows us to propose a name for each one of the factors or perspectives.

- The first factor has to do with phases that favor the "Competitiveness of Value Chains Exporters' as Logistics, Agriculture, Tourism, and although with less importance, Financial Services.
- The second factor has to do with the phrases related to "Sustainability Resources Non-tradable" such as human resources, forest resources, land, railway, airport, parks, etc..

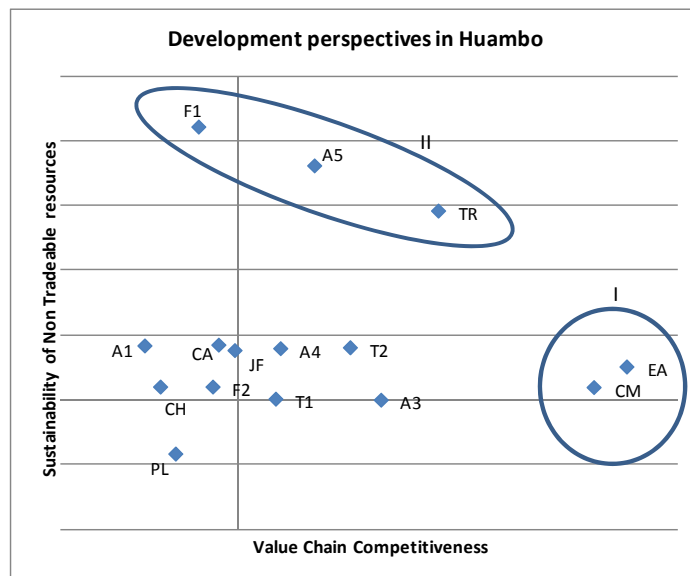


Figure 4 – Perspectives for the Development of Huambo

Once identified these two perspectives (Value Chains Competitiveness Exporters, Sustainability Resources Non-tradable) it is possible to improve knowledge about the attitudes of Development Agents questioned in Huambo in March 2011.

There are many other groups or factors, but each is represented in its own sector which shows the technical nature of the perspectives, the need to hear more people and especially the need for a plan that integrates the various technical perspectives.

5 Conclusion

This first test of participation around the elaboration of the Municipal Plan of Huambo is purely exploratory. However it is already possible to draw some important conclusions:

- First, contrary to what usually happens in this kind of exercises there is a big difference in the perspectives of the agents interviewed which can be partly explained by the fact of their technical affiliation since they represent different sectors of administration and various areas of the county. This result is very important because it reinforces the need of the Municipal Plan of Huambo that should reconcile the desires and gestures of the various sectors and areas for the benefit of all.
- Secondly it is clear that agents are more concerned with global issues affecting the city than with the more specific issues. This reinforces the potential of the Municipal Plan of Huambo which must first frame the major issues in the city and then focus on more detailed issues.
- Third is also verified that the majority of officers interviewed is relatively neutral compared to the main common issues (Competitiveness of Export Value Chains and Sustainability of Non Tradable Resources).

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