

# working paper



## GROWING PUBLIC SPACES: SHAPING THE AGENDA FOR SCIENCE, POLICY, PRACTICE, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

### Race against the failed cities

Urban *[Data]* Planning and Inclusive Governance at Intermediary *[Informal]* Cities.

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**Abstract** After twenty years since the Declaration of Istanbul (1996), the urbanization process in the economies of the Global South has only just highlight the enormous complexity of harmonizing the growth of national wealth with the correction of inequality in the scope of proximity; in response to this, urban planning constitutes one of the pillars of the New Urban Agenda of HABITAT III that must influence in the improvement of a fragile governance managed by municipalities without resources and an even more vulnerable citizenship. However, there are a sum of factors like the time (rapid precarious urbanization rates), multilevel resources (low decentralization level of subnational governments) and the availability of precise information (urban indicators) that put into question the consistence of an urban planning process without a previous alignment of priorities linked to the analysis of the informal urban reality that can make viable, later, the equation of a sustainable, inclusive and responsible urban management.

This research paper is divided into three correlated sections from the enhancement of the role of intermediary cities in the global urbanization process for the coming decades, the contradictions posed by urban planning in an environment of continuous technological disruption and finally, the traction element that concurrence technology can means for the citizenship empowerment or on the contrary, to amplify new vulnerabilities that lead to increased fragility of governance and accelerate its failed.

**Key words.** *Intermediary city, HABITAT III, Governance, Disruptive technology, Fragile-failed*

## Introduction.

Against the mixture of fascination and fear that arouses in good part of society the metropolitan agglomeration projections for the coming years, the intermediary city, in its scale of proximity, functional singularity and territorial implantation constitutes the ideal laboratory on which experiment with new ways of public management affecting the improvement of urban governance that, in the case of emerging cities of middle and low-income economies in the Global South, will must show its capacity of resilience to the increase of demographic pressures, weak fiscal-administrative decentralization processes and the paradoxes arising from technological disruption in everyday life spaces. The aim is a “classic” in the development narratives: strengthening the mechanisms of local management, like the urban and regional planning, that have to reduce the social, environmental, economic, and institutional vulnerabilities that threaten the fragile governances of the emerging urban environment, and approach them to their «failed»; a failed understood as the instant before to the open conflict in every one of its political, social and economic fronts; a sequence of failure illustrated by the ‘lost decades’ of the 1970s and 1980s in the Americas, and that however, still not have come to end in a good part of the inequality urban geographies of sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.

With the intention of increasing the relevance of the intermediary cities in global debates on sustainable urban development, the main organization of municipalities in the world, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG-CGLU) held last March in Barcelona, a consultations precisely aimed to analyze the role, challenges and priorities of the intermediary cities in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG and UrbanSDG) and the New Urban Agenda that must be agreed in a few months, in HABITAT III. Conclusions that could be summarized in the next points: a greater recognition of the role of intermediary cities in the global economy, a greater fiscal and administrative robustness of local governments to decide, without external interferences, how has to be their local-territorial development model, and the need to put in value the human scale of these cities in facilitating the promotion of more inclusive, sustainable and efficient urban policies. A narrative which, however, leaves aside the technological drive assumed by the city that is favoring new turning points in the consciousness of a global, young and empowered citizenship that progresses in network.

This research paper is divided into three correlative sections from a first analytical reading to the urbanization process and its impact on the governance of Intermediary Cities of the Global South, followed by the contradictions posed by urban planning in contexts strongly conditioned by the structural informality and finally, the paradoxes generated by a technology so capable of strengthening the role of citizens in public management as well increase the vulnerability of the urban governance.

## The geopolitical value of (informal) intermediary cities

Since the entry into force of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, the world population has increased in 1 billion inhabitants (2015), of which, about 900 million were located in the heterogeneous group of middle and low-income economies; in this time, more than 926 million people have incorporated to the urban life, a figure that represents an increase of 30% in little more than a decade, of which, about 800 million, have gone to increase the geographies of inequality represented by the cities of low-income municipalities of developing economies, fact that suppose the 87% of the total urbanization process that has taken place in a decade. The most recurrent analytical readings on *World Urbanization Prospects* (2015), however ignore the incidence of intermediary cities, those between 50,000 and one million inhabitants<sup>1</sup>, in favor of biggest polycentric agglomerations represented by the *megacity*, the *megaregion* or the *regional corridor*<sup>2</sup> that are already forming in advanced and emerging economies, and that in all likelihood will widespread among developing economies with higher speed and virulence.

In 1996, year of the Declaration of Istanbul (HABITAT II), something more of 65% of world urban population lay in the intermediary cities, twenty

1 There is an open debate about the definition of intermediary cities; meanwhile in the European Union have a dimension between 20,000-500,000 inhabitants, for The World Bank is until 1 million and 2 million for some regions of Southeast Asia, especially India and China (Llop, Bellet, 2000). In any case, from UCLG are working in define permanently this concept for HABITAT III.

2 From an economic point of view, the 10 most important urban mega-regions in the world account for 6.5% of the world population, generate 42.8% of the economic output of the planet and create 56.6% of patents. Expanding the group to the first 40 mega-regions, the population living in them would 17.7% of the total, and would generate 66% of the economic output and 85.6% of patents (UN-Habitat, 2011: 38).

years later on the eve of HABITAT III, makes it 58% , over a total of urban population that has grown by more than 1.3 billion people. Although the regression of intermediary cities in front of the big cities this would be more clearly incorporating the projections until the year 2030, these would continue surpassing by more than 400 million inhabitants (20%) and more than 900 agglomerations (136%) to the whole of *metropolis* and *megacities*<sup>3</sup>.

The relevance of intermediary cities in the global urbanization process, despite its “invisibility” in front of the expectations generated by the metropolitan agglomeration economies in financial markets, is unquestionable, not only in quantitative terms, but also for their role in the economic<sup>4</sup>, environmental and social integration with its territory of proximity (UCLG, 2013). However, it is also necessary to insist in the enormous difficulty of establishing parallel narratives about the needs and challenges that can share a heterogeneous geography of intermediary cities integrated by *Regional Cities, City Clusters in Extended Metropolitan Regions, Economic*

3 Author’s Note: Although the readings drawn from World Urbanization Prospects do not allow to identify with greater sharpness to the cities below 300,000 inhabitants, in the last two decades the population in intermediary cities in low-income economies has tripled, going from little more than 35 million to 96 million; by importance, intermediary cities in middle income economies capitalized in 2015 the bulk of the urban population of Global South, with more than 66% of the total, tripling the demographic weight of this typology in advanced economies; i.e. more than 1.5 billion people, or 40% of the total of the world’s urban population lives in intermediary cities of middle income economies, 43% if we also include low-income economies. Not only in people number, but in a number of cities, intermediary cities have gone from an approximate number of 770 (1996) agglomerations to 1,228 (2015) and 1,536 (2030), while the biggest cities have passed from 305 to 500 and 660 respectively for the same years, i.e. that 458 agglomerations have passed the barrier of the 50,000 inhabitants and 195 intermediary cities have exceeded one million. It deserves special attention African intermediary cities that have doubled their numbers in the last two decades, from 75 cities to 145 with a forecast for the year 2030 of 230, of which the 77% would correspond to cities in sub-Saharan Africa. A similar case, but that double and triple the figures is the urban Asia, which moved its intermediary cities from 342 to 629 against the growth of big cities which passed from 137 to 267, and capitalized by Southeast Asia.

4 In Latin America and the Caribbean, the biggest cities continue to be the largest contributor to GDP however their relative weight in the economy is declining. In this sense, is expected that population and GDP growth falls below the average in 10 of Latin America’s largest urban areas between 2007 and 2025, according to the GDP in 2007. On the other hand, the rest of the cities with 200,000 or more inhabitants not only increase their populations at above average rates, but it will also generate almost 1.5 times the growth of the GDP of the 10 largest cities (MGI, 2011: 7-20).

*Trade Corridor Cities* or *Globally Networked Intermediary Cities* (Roberts, 2014); a reading that increases its complexity as enter into scene factors like demographic pressure of new intra-territorial migrations, the availability of sea access, the extension of the municipal territory, the quality of social interactions with the rural or metropolitan environment and above all, its membership to advanced, emerging or low-income economies, or on the last step to fragile States. “Intermediary” cities referred both, by their scale of proximity<sup>5</sup> as by their external connectivity in form of “economic heart” of large rural areas, assuming the status of strategic nodes in the provision of specialized goods and services, not only for their own community, but for the whole of the people in their area of influence, articulating a territorial governance strongly adapted to the context, although also limited by the narrow margin of action that has public Administration more close to the citizen, conditioned by a lower solvency and financial capacity than National Administration, and even exceeded in competences by the metropolitan governments (Rojas, 2009: 163) that assume, naturally, the physical representation of the State<sup>6</sup>.

Given the uncertainties<sup>7</sup> posed by the informal conurbation process in metropolitan areas of the Global South carried out by survival household economies newly migrated from rural areas or displaced from conflict zones, the intermediary

5 From the comparative study of a hundred intermediary cities of the global geography with a population of up to 650,000 inhabitants, more than 70% of their population lived within a radius of 3.9 km. (Llop, Bellet, 2000) and (UCLG, 2013)

6 See Framework Document (UCLG, 2013: 13). «Intermediary cities are points of transition, a first stop for people looking for jobs, specialized services and a better quality of life. For example, research in Tanzania showed that one in two individuals/households who exited of poverty did so by transitioning from agriculture into the rural non-farm economy in medium-sized cities; only one in seven exited poverty by migrating to a large city».

7 To obtain a “funny” vision for the next decades see: “Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds”, (National Intelligence Council). With respect to the informal urbanization: «in the year 2012, in Latin America and Caribbean, 23.5% of the urban population, more than 110 million people, lived in heterogeneous typological variants of informal city, confirming a decline of more than 10 million people since 1990, decade in which began the second waves of neighborhood improvement programs. On the other side, sub-Saharan Africa concentrated more than 60% of the urban population in the different typologies of slums, a population of more than 200 million which, unlike what happened in Latin America, has increased in the last two decades with over 100 million new inhabitants» (Iglesias, Sanchez, 2013: 26).

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cities<sup>8</sup> are called to play a key role in the correction of most significant territorial imbalances that threaten to unruly, both in emerging urban areas as in the rural areas at risk of social-functional desertification; in this regard due to their size, the «intermediary cities are more flexible in adapting to new challenges and coming up with innovative solutions that are closer to their citizens» (UCLG-Frame 2013: 20), favoring, a priori, the resolution of their problems in a more accurately and quickly way than big cities; one of the most significant, the structural informality that threatens the “social elevator” of most vulnerable households of these geographies of inequality.

4 If Latin America and the Caribbean continue being the regions with greater social, legal and economic inequality in the world it is, largely due to most of its working-age population is concentrated in the informal economy; a key factor that reduces their ability to generate income and accumulate capital, perpetuating cycles of poverty (OIT, 2013: 45). Inequality in African cities, in this sense, would be lower by the simple fact that the State would not comply with any regulatory role, people being at the mercy of the market forces in a context of non-existent formal economy. Therefore, the difference between informal and formal would lose meaning, by the fact that all economic activities acquire a very similar character to what is known as informal, a phenomenon so deceptively simple and extraordinarily complex, trivial in its daily manifestations and able to subvert the economic and political order of the Nations (Portes, Haller, 2004: 22), that it could be summarized in the non-accession of a part of society to an institutionalized system of political, economic, social and environmental norms that guarantee certain levels of collective well-being covered in the correspondence between the duty of the tax burden and the right to social protection. Although reductionist, this definition shows the causal relationships between the invisibility and marginalization to which is exposed a growing number of urban population to remain outside the rules established by a nation-State, paradoxically become the main guarantor of the perpetuation of inequality, exclusion and violation of the universal rights to a full citizenship. The territorial ungovernability, the increase of instability and, finally, the outbreak of the conflict in each of their political, social and economic fronts complete the sequence of failure that would

8 An example of the importance of intermediary cities in the global scope can be find recently in words of Dr. Clos on the occasion of a visit to Rwanda, one of the newest paradigms of urban transition: “It’s crucial for a good national urban policy to have intermediate cities. It’s a very important strategy in order to avoid the spontaneous collapse of the mega capitals that we are seeing in many parts of Africa,” February 25, 2015 <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-02-25/186335/>

draw the so-called «lost decades» in the Americas, decades which, however, still not have come to end in much of sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia urban regions.

Despite the concept of “failed State” has ceased to be used in geopolitics narrative to explain the economic, social and institutional vulnerability of Nations near to the collapse or the conflict, to be replaced by a concept that does not provoke much discomfort in the International Community as can be the “fragile State”<sup>9</sup>, when is talking about the failed or fragility of cities the reading differs substantially; in the same way that not all the States involved in conflicts lead the annual ranking of the Fragile State Index, either fragile cities are not necessarily concentrated in fragile States. A correspondence, that despite the direct impact of cities in the national GDP, is evidenced in the fact that 22 of the 34 States listed in *very high alert*, *high alert* and *alert* are represented by sub-Saharan Africa States, while 46 of the 50 most violent cities in the world are in Latin America. In this same line, it can be seen that, while the five most fragile economies in the world have an average rate of urban population of 35%, the five most violent cities are in middle-income economies with urbanization rates of 72% and with a predominance of urban violence in the agglomerations over one million inhabitants (66%). If only with 12 indicators can be defined the fragility of a State, in the cities the main indicator that measures the fragility of governance corresponds to the rate of homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. In the year 2014 San Pedro Sula, Honduras’ second urban polarity and one of most important intermediary cities in Central America headed for fourth consecutive year the list of most violent cities in the world with more than 1.317 murders for a population of 769.000 inhabitants.

If for Muggah<sup>10</sup> the concept of fragility or failure of a city is linked with three key factors as the speed of the conurbation process, the level of people discontent with poor governance and the expansion of information and communication networks, episodes like those as have been replicated around the global urban geography since 2010 and have generated new paradigm shifts in politics<sup>11</sup>, seems that coming to

9 To get a clear reading, see: “From Failed to Fragile: Renaming the Index”, June 24, 2014, Krista Hendry. Fragile States Index 2014

10 See: (Muggah, 2014; 1-14) “Deconstructing the fragile city: exploring insecurity, violence and resilience”, in *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol 26(2), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

11 See (Iglesias, Sanchez, 2013): “Serve as an example the urban operations of Taksim Gezi park in Istanbul (2013), which

stay permanently in the city.

## Urban (Data) Planning

Given the uncertainties that can generate the strong component of informality in the habitat and in the labor market in the growth of the fragile economies of agglomerations of middle and low-income countries for the coming decades, institutions, organisms and international agencies defend more and more the role of territorial planning as one of the key elements to generate traction on the improvement of urban governance, and with it, make viable and sustainable in time the «social elevator» that mean, for the most vulnerable households, reach the dignity in their everyday spaces. An urban and territorial planning understood as sum of transverse knowledge, of inclusive legal frameworks and concurrent working processes applied to land uses that, although in the European municipal tradition has facilitated daily and strategic public management also has highlighted the existing contradictions between the interests of elected Governments, the private sector aspirations and recurrent demands of citizenship<sup>12</sup>.

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ended up uncovering the displeasure of an emerging middle class vulnerable to an imminent cut of freedoms, a fact that triggered protests ever more radicalized throughout the country against Turkey central Government, supported by the use of social networks as a main amplifier for the new mass participation or e-participation; or as the student protests in Mexico DF («Yo Soy 132») in 2012, or the citizens' protests against rising public rates during the summer of 2013 in the biggest cities of Latin America as Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Lima, or the latest in the Brazilian cities on the occasion of the celebration of World Cup (2014); mobilizations articulated on concurrent ICT that keep continuity with the citizens movements that, on 15 May 2011 (15M) occupied the streets in the main cities of Northern collapsed economies demanding the democratic regeneration of the system from a bigger and better participative representation»

<sup>12</sup> Author's Note: is worth remembering the recent experience of South European municipalities, especially of Spanish state, in which, despite having a strong national, subnational and local legal framework for govern land management, was developed a policy of urban extension covered by speculative practices on a necessary good as can be housing. In this sense, the urban planning which should have been motor of inclusion to facilitate the access to housing for vulnerable population segments as young people and recent immigration, has become the "thrown weapon" of an impoverished population that has shown its disaffection to banking and politicians generating new spaces for citizen action that have made possible, among many other things, that Ada Colau, an activist from the Platform for People Affected by Mortgages (Plataforma de Afectados por las Hipotecas, PAH), can be the new mayor of the City of Barcelona.

However, are clear the social, environmental, economic, and institutional gaps that, in our days, still separate the cities of advanced economies<sup>13</sup> from the rest; according to this, to tackle the investments on the precarious urban environment of developing countries would be needed about \$200 billion a year for the next 25 years (UCLG-GOLD, 2010: 78)<sup>14</sup>; an entelechy if we compare them, to have a quantitative reference, with the \$3 billion provided by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) from a total of \$5 billion invested in the 37 neighborhood improvement programs financed since 1984 to 2008 in Latin America and Caribbean, mainly in Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Argentina (Rojas, 2009: 159-161).

After international guidelines on "Decentralization and strengthening of local authorities" (UN-Habitat, 2007) and universal "Access to basic services for All" (UN-Habitat, 2009) from the reinforcement of public-private partnerships, international guidelines on "Urban and territorial planning"<sup>15</sup> initiated from Resolution 24/3 of 19 April 2013, definitely put in the center of national policies the need to promote an integrated approach to the planning of the emerging urban environment through two non-negotiable axes: the Government of proximity and vulnerable urban communities. With the imminent entry into force of the Post2015 Development Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-UrbanSDG, September 2015), and the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21/CMP11, Paris, December 2015), this international guideline constitutes one of the pillars in the articulation of the "New Agenda urban" that will kick off to the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Urban Sustainable Development , HABITAT III, (Quito, October 2016), and from which should provide answers to the principles of the urban policy *-why plan?-*, to the management processes *-how to plan?-*, and to the technical

<sup>13</sup> Author's Note: The city of Barcelona, where was Mayor Dr. Clos, Executive Director of UN-Habitat, as in most of the cities of Southern Europe in the first half of the 20th century, was characterized by the precariousness of the urban periphery; however, in the so-called "golden age of the slums" in Barcelona the rate of population who lived in precarious informal settlements never exceeded 5% of the total city population, with only one settlement of 20,000 inhabitants, far from the figures presented by the informal habitat in the cities of the Global South. (Oyón, Iglesias, 2010)

<sup>14</sup> The equivalent of one third of the total estimated for public infrastructure by The World Bank (UCLG, 2007).

<sup>15</sup> See: Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, "Draft international guidelines on urban and territorial planning. Report of the Executive Director". (UN-Habitat, 2015).

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products –*what urban and territorial plans?*– (UN-Habitat, 2015:3), focusing the attention on the urban reality of the Global South so conditioned by the lack of national urban policies as, at the local level, by financial human and technical resources to make them viable.

A first approach to this guide allows to appreciate the long way that still remains to be done in the agglomerations of low and middle-income economies if, one of the goals of the New Urban Agenda, is to replicate, at short and medium term, processes, as the urban planning, that has shaped, for decades, the governance in the cities of advanced economies. In this sense, the own narrative of *Northern development industry*, despite the geopolitical emerged from South-South cooperation and that has allowed to deploy new mechanisms for multilateral funding as the giant New Development Bank (NDB)<sup>16</sup>, also seems to resist to lose influence over the management of the challenges posed by the “informal” agglomeration economy, of which its direct experience is rather irrelevant. In the same way, it also can observe the paradox that represents the deployment of urban policies at national level without understanding first the reasons why, good part of developing economies slow down, until unexpected limits, its multilevel decentralization processes<sup>17</sup> that limit to municipalities their options

to manage the inclusive transformation of land uses. Other issues such as the absence of an operative urban management sensitive to the informal predominance and demographic pressures, or the low efficiency of local Authorities to deploy and monitor inclusive urban policies beyond the electoral mandate, or the defenseless of most vulnerable communities to land use transformation processes, are some of the key factors that help to understand the causes that have contributed to institutionalize the precariousness in the habitat of the Global South.

As personal thought, who has participated in the drafting of instruments of town or territorial management, master o partial planning or polygonal management, regardless of the place, will be able to perceive, surely, more weaknesses than strengths both during the process of drafting as in the final product; perhaps one of the most common characteristics can be its tendency to expand it in time for political reasons, or by its marked opacity when it comes to justify certain decisions largely covered by market interests. Despite this, from all the management areas of local government, urbanism remains being the one that in a more quickly, easily and effectively way allows, to the community, distinguish on a physical and temporal specific space the intimate relationship between money (finance) and power (politics). In this sense, citizen participation becomes relevant as auditor<sup>18</sup> of public management and not as a subject susceptible of timely consultation. On the other hand, understand that the empowerment of vulnerable communities takes place from specific decision-making in certain aspects such as public infrastructure or housing, is a half truth, especially if there is not a direct and immediate benefit for communities in the creation of decent jobs and sustainable horizons of opportunity, remembering that these are the main causes of the high structural inequality and precariousness that affect the informal urban environment and perpetuates the exclusion with respect the rest of the formal city. Other personal reflection that call into question the lace of urban planning in the cities of the Global South keeps a direct relationship with the low level of knowledge of the environmental, social,

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16 Author's Note: «The gap towards investment in basic infrastructure for energy, telecommunications and mobility is estimated in over one trillion dollars, of which 40% would be provided by traditional multilateral banks; in this sense, it seems obvious that the BRICS new Bank will prioritize investment to this sector attending the expected increase in demand of these countries in transition. A medium-term horizon in which the investment amounts will tend to dwarf the World Bank loans, as has happened with the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) which currently finances more infrastructures in Latin America that World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) together». Extract from: “What the new bank of BRICS is all about”, By Raj M. Desai and James Raymond Vreeland July 17, 2014 in <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/07/17/what-the-new-bank-of-brics-is-all-about/>

17 Author's Note: «Would be necessary analyzing the degree of diversification of their national economies, exposure to international fluctuations in the financial market of raw materials, to natural disasters, wars, debt costs and chronic inflation (UNECA, 2011: 13), arguments used on occasions against greater freedom of action in administrative and Government sublevels that make up a State. Another element, perhaps more important, is the viability of fiscal decentralization processes dictates from the central Government, allowing some room for innovation in the tax management to local authorities in order to increase revenue. Revenue that surely will not be to the liking of civil society, even more if it bases its entire structure in the informal economy, which leads to the creation of a loop in which the local authority has powers but can't exercise with full guarantees». (Iglesias, Sánchez, 2013).

18 «Therefore, it refers to participation in defining the problem, in the generation of alternatives, in the selection of the best alternatives, in the application or execution of actions and resources, in monitoring the results and in the evaluation of their impacts (Morales, 2005: 52); and to participation in the execution of actions, such as the self-management of production processes and self-building, which could be manipulated if it is used in order to reduce costs and streamline resources, but constitutes a factor of social integration and generation of social capital that supports development processes in the medium and long term, always that it goes linked to an active participation in the decision-making process designated previously» (Iglesias, Sánchez 2014, 37).

economic and institutional vectors on which have subsequently sizing and focus public investments. While The World Bank structures a set of more than 9,000 national indicators in five databases<sup>19</sup> under constant review, that constitutes the main source of macrostatistics information in the world that feeds to the main multilateral organizations to draft their reports and annual assessments, is precisely in the urban environment where the lack of accurate, quantitative, qualitative, and continuous information becomes more evident. In this case, the gaps are still more flagrant in those areas of the city generated by informal urbanization processes where is evidenced the paradox that suppose «measure the invisible».

Although every day born new technology-based initiatives aimed to put remedy to the chronic invisibility of low-income habitat, their integration in the instruments that covers the legal framework, as in the case of urban planning, is still uncertain; a relationship that highlights the growing gaps between the rigid public administration and technological innovation ecosystems, without hardly margin for feedback than timid open government initiatives. In this regard, recent experiences like *Map Kibera*<sup>20</sup> in Nairobi, the settlements monitoring by *Techo Chile*<sup>21</sup>, or the global campaign coordinated by Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) called *(Know)Your City*<sup>22</sup>, apart from putting in value the “impact analysis” in front the planning, contribute to strengthening governance from the inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable population segments in the collect, treatment and dissemination of qualitative and quantitative information on which articulate impact public policies later. Seems obvious that to fight the fragility that increasingly threatens the urban governance, key factor in the “failed” of cities, is necessary to analyze the root causes that generate the exclusion without denying the possibility, however remote, of generate turning points later, from a complex urban planning implementation; for this reason is essential that the analytic process could be dynamic, low-cost and, in the absence of planning tools, the analysis can provide clear readings on the corrections to be assumed by the government of proximity. In this regard it is worth highlighting on the one hand, the work developed by Professor JM. Llop (University of Lleida, UdL), who since 1996

at the UIA-CIMES and since 2008 in the UNESCO Chair of Intermediate Cities<sup>23</sup>, in coordination with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG-CGLU), has implemented more than a hundred urban municipalities in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe, for a population over 36 million inhabitants, in the use of Base Plans<sup>24</sup>, «an urban planning tool with a high degree of synthesis that stands out for its simplicity, by articulating the basis for the subsequent town plan, by incorporating the participatory strategic planning, by enabling the strengthening of collective work between region and municipality and for its flexibility and adaptability to the technical resources context (...) A Base Plan designed for citizenship that only requires a maximum of 2 months of dedication by local technicians» (UCLG, 2014). In the same line, since 2011, the Emerging and Sustainable Cities Initiative (ICES-IADB) affects precisely in generating turning points in the short term, an efficient way to fighting against immobility; in this sense is worth highlighting the impulse made by Inter-American Development Bank<sup>25</sup> in giving visibility to medium-sized cities that emerge with force in The Americas, through of a methodological program that allows to the municipality and citizenship get at short time, the awaited “fixed image” needed for that institutions, organisms and agencies can be adjust their budgets to social, environmental, economic, and institutional priorities and needs detected previously in the territory.

19 WB, Databank: World Development Indicators, Education Statistics, Gender Statistics, Health Nutrition and Population Statistics, Poverty and Inequality Database. See: <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx>

20 See: <http://mapkibera.org/>

21 See: <http://chile.techo.org/cis/monitor/>

22 See: <http://www.knowyourcity.info/map.php#/app/ui/world>

23 See: UIA-CIMES: [http://www.uia.archi/en/participer/organes-de-travail/wp/6080#VWpBZ8\\_tlHw](http://www.uia.archi/en/participer/organes-de-travail/wp/6080#VWpBZ8_tlHw)

See: UNESCO Chair in Intermediate Cities: <http://www.unesco.org/en/university-twinning-and-networking/access-by-region/europe-and-north-america/spain/unesco-chair-in-intermediate-cities-urbanization-and-development-823/>

24 (UCLG, 2014): Peer Learning, 07, Peer learning in the province of Santa Fe, Argentina. Regional planning based on Intermediary Cities. [http://issuu.com/uclgcglu/docs/peer\\_learning\\_in\\_the\\_province\\_of\\_sa](http://issuu.com/uclgcglu/docs/peer_learning_in_the_province_of_sa)

25 Authors' Note: To find out more about the methodology and developing process of Action Plans of Emerging and Sustainable Cities Initiative see website: <http://www.iadb.org/en/topics/emerging-and-sustainable-cities/emerging-and-sustainable-cities-initiative.6656.html>

## The challenges of an inclusive (algorithmic) Governance.

In parallel to the global urbanization process, Internet access has grown exponentially driven mainly by the rapid uptake of low cost mobile devices<sup>26</sup> and affordable contracts offered by the phone market, factors that has allowed to achieve in Africa a growth rate of more than 40%, more than double the world average; in this respect it is worth highlighting the penetration of broadband in Nigeria and South Africa, two of the emerging economies and highly polarized by the urbanization process (ITU, 2014: 2), that in a few years will reach a majority of subscriptions 3G, although the monthly average prices for fixed and mobile broadband are respectively three times and twice more expensive than in advanced economies, a significant proportion in the households expenditures. However, more than 60% of the world's population remain without access to Internet, of which 90% is located in middle and low-income economies, a reading that has a strong urban component which is evident in that 89% of the world urban population has access to 2G-3G-4G mobile networks in front of 29% of people that are living in rural areas, presumably concentrated in developing economies.

Without the robustness of telecommunication infrastructure would be unthinkable technological breakthrough which we have accustomed in increasingly shorter time cycles. As an example, in 2006, at 8:50 pm on 21 March a «just setting up my twttr»<sup>27</sup> started an initiative that a few years later would be the leading global network of massive information exchange in real-time; a decade later, in 140 characters, its creator assumes that «Twitter is the people's tool, the tool of the ordinary people, people who have no other resource». As in the case of Twitter, there are numerous experiences of tech-business that have gone from a simple *start-up* to *unicorn*—capitalization over \$1 billion— and from this to multinational, whose paradigm are the GAFAs<sup>28</sup>,

26 To get an idea of the dimension that is acquiring technological empowerment in these economies, the number of mobile subscribers in Africa increased from 25 million in 2001 to more than 650 million in 2012, making possible that two of every three adults, in the continent, have access to ICTs. Another example is that of 350,000 Kenyans during 2011 could buy a smartphone for \$80, manufactured by the Chinese company Huawei, a remarkable fact considering that 40% of Kenya's population lives on less than two dollars a day (UN-Habitat, 2012: 7)

27 See on Twitter: @jack

28 See: The Big Four internet giants report results – here's how Google, Facebook, Apple, and Amazon are doing, Felicity Duncan, February 2015, in: [http://www.biznews.com/global-](http://www.biznews.com/global-investing/2015/02/02/big-four-internet-giants-report-results-heres-google-facebook-apple-amazon/)

acronym for the four global companies –Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon–; but are considerably more numerous the technological adventures that have fallen by the wayside putting in evidence the risks of a bubble<sup>29</sup> articulated in the high capacity of technology business to capitalize high risk investments at short term without generating the minimum income for guaranteeing their sustainability in the medium term; an explosion, that threat of being far more “forceful” than the crisis started by Dot-Com between 1997 and 2001 or, in 2008, by the financial markets. On the other hand, the mobile broadband infrastructure that is transforming social, economic and institutional relations globally, also is facilitating the consolidation of cybercrime<sup>30</sup>, perhaps one of the main indicators that shows the degree of vulnerability to which are exposed the networks<sup>31</sup> of biggest urban agglomerations, especially in strategic areas such as banking, tertiary sector and public administration, which most need the use of Internet for their integration in the Global Village and that, for cases such as Kenya, South Africa or the United States has represented an impact equivalent to 0.05%, 0.01% and 0.02% of their national wealth

[investing/2015/02/02/big-four-internet-giants-report-results-heres-google-facebook-apple-amazon/](http://www.biznews.com/global-investing/2015/02/02/big-four-internet-giants-report-results-heres-google-facebook-apple-amazon/)

29 See: “The next tech bubble is about to burst”, Joe Kukura on April 19th, 2015: «While Silicon Valley and New York City are paying larger-than-ever salaries, the U.S. median income has dropped by a couple percentage points. Still, most top tech firms insist on doing their business within a certain, select few-dozen ZIP codes contained entirely in Northern California and New York City. In these select areas, money-losing tech firms drive up the price of everything from housing to a loaf of bread. This cost-of-living overvaluation not only causes displacement and gentrification, it inflates other bubbles—in corporate office space, in the cost of housing and rental units, in salaries, and in the overall employment market. When the tech bubble bursts, it won't hurt just tech workers: It'll affect cooks, custodians, assistants, TaskRabbit rabbits, and Uber drivers. Even if you don't enjoy the startup spoils, you'll feel the sting when this cash stops flowing».

30 To get a glimpse of the impact of cybercrime globally see: “Internet Security Threat Report”, (Symantec 2015); “The Global Information Technology Report 2014 Rewards and Risks of Big Data”, (World Economic Forum and INSEAD, 2014); “Net Losses: Estimating the Cost of Global Cybercrime, Economic impact of cybercrime II” (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2014)

31 Relative to Malware Infection: «Pandalabs found that 28.39 percent of computers worldwide appeared to be infected with malware. That global infection rate was one of the lowest that PandaLabs has ever recorded. China had the highest infection rate by far -- 53.85 percent of all computers analyzed there were infected. Latin America and Asia were the regions with the highest number of computer infections. Eight of the ten least-infected countries were in Europe». In “Latin American+Caribbean cyber security trends”, (2014, p86)

respectively (Paganini, 2013). An evolved form of traditional criminal practice, now protected by the opacity of 80% of non-visible Internet, called *deepweb* or *darkweb*<sup>32</sup>, depending on whether the content is only accessible by search boxes hosted in deepweb's websites or if being deliberately hidden from any existing search engine.

In this context of “cyber-resilient” governance, the massive concurrence to information and communication networks, together with the dematerialization of hardware to mobile devices and software to the cloud (Cloud Architecture), are favoring the deployment of concepts such as the *Smart City* –to refer to citizenship connectivity to infrastructure, services and government–, or the *Internet of Things* –to refer to the integration of the individual with the objects of its daily environment–. Concepts closely linked to the ability to extract (Data Mining), analyzing (Data Analyst) and transmit (Data Visualization) massive amounts of data (Big Data) in real time and which are one of the emerging industries of our time<sup>33</sup>. However, this and other industries with “bright future” as *cyber security* also will increase the gap regarding to innovation ecosystems that may be generated in urban environment of low and middle-income economies, that despite the improvements in telecommunications infrastructure, will take decades to achieve the necessary level of competitiveness of global technology *hubs* like Silicon Valley, Beijing's Zhongguancun District, London, Barcelona, Amsterdam, Stockholm and Tel Aviv with its particular «Silicon Wadi». A discordant note also

repeated in the emerging collaborative economy 2.0, as says J. Owyang, founder of Crowd Companies, that currently «is in the hands of 1% and the social return that many expected has not yet produced»<sup>34</sup> and that, without doubt, leads to think about Uber's disruption in mobility.

Another factor that evidences the technological gaps between the economies of agglomeration of North regarding South, is directly related to accessibility and usability of operating software; while in the advanced economies, for example, geo-information has transcended the geographic analysis for being integrated into the geo-marketing industry, intelligence and mobility, in the cities of the Global South, GIS software becomes relevant as “street addressing” tool, for building census of an urban reality strongly conditioned by the size of the informal habitat. In this regard, it is worth noting the contribution made by the Open Street Map community (OSM) in managing the crisis of Ebola<sup>35</sup> that recently affected Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia and allowed, among other things, obtain a precise mapping of their informal settlements from which improve the tasks of humanitarian workers; in the same vein, it should be noted the initiatives discussed in the previous chapter as *Map Kibera*, *Know your city*, or the work of UNOSAT<sup>36</sup> in supporting humanitarian assistance operations in episodes of crises caused by natural disasters and conflicts.

Despite the weaknesses and risks that suppose for global citizenship a governance built on algorithms, the technological paradigms is accelerating the emergence of new turning points from which correct historical deficits as can be the universal access to education, key factor of empowerment for generations that have to assume, with greater assurance of success than their predecessors, the challenges posed by urbanization in the Global South; a generalized fact by all the urban geography of developing economies that

32 To get some idea of what it represents is worth highlighting the figures that one of the few studies that have attempted to measure the deepweb in relation to the visible web or surfaceweb, although in the year 2001, obviously increased in recent years: «In this work, dated 2001, Bergman tries to quantify the hidden Internet by presenting the 60 known, largest deepweb sites. These contain about 750TB of data, roughly forty times the size of the known surface Web, and appear in a broad array of domains from science to law to images and commerce. The authors estimate the total number of records or documents within this group to be about 85 billion» in “Deepweb and Cybercrime: It's Not All About TOR” (Ciancaglini, Balduzzi, Goncharov, McArdle, 2013)

33 See: (IEC, 2014: 45): «Opening US weather data led to gross receipts by the commercial weather industry of 400-700 million USD per year and created jobs at 400 firms for as much as 4,000 people. By comparison, Europe has a similar-sized economy, but with largely closed weather data, and had only 30 firms with 300 employees and receipts of 30-50 million USD a year. According to McKinsey open data can enable trillions of dollars in value in education, transportation, consumer products, electricity, oil and gas, healthcare, and finance sections (e.g. commuter time saving, emission reduction, etc.). The European Commission Communication on Open Data predicts that overall economic gains from opening up public data could amount to 40 billion EUR per year in the EU».

34 See: El Mundo, “El segundo asalto de la economía colaborativa”, in <http://www.elmundo.es/economia/2015/05/24/555f4a16268e3eb1348b4581.html>

35 See: 2014 West Africa Ebola Response, (Humanitarian OSM Team, 2014): «The net effect of these contributions on the OpenStreetMap database is remarkable. In comparison with the OSMPlanet of early 2013, the net effect on the map as of August 15 for Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone is: 62,442 km of highways added from 21,597 (+289%), 15,124 km of waterways added from 16,000 (+94%), 11,162 Places added, 505,372 buildings added». [http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/2014\\_West\\_Africa\\_Ebola\\_Response](http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/2014_West_Africa_Ebola_Response)

36 UNITAR's Operational Satellite Applications Programme, <http://www.unitar.org/unosat/>

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is evidenced by the absolute lack of urban planners<sup>37</sup>, just in a moment of strong informal urbanization process in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. In this sense, the disruption of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in higher education has led to the emergence of initiatives such as Kepler<sup>38</sup> in Rwanda, the first university in history to offer all its content in a formal, open and low-cost from the training offered by main MOOCs global platforms; platforms that also begin to concentrate specialized content from multilateral organisms like the IADB, that through EDX<sup>39</sup>, shared the ICES methodology<sup>40</sup> with more than 16,000 students around the world enrolled in the course “Liderando el Desarrollo Sostenible de las Ciudades”, program that since 2011 has made possible implementing in urban management more than 55 intermediate cities in Latin America. In the same vein, it is worth highlighting the efforts of the Lincoln Institute and The World Bank Institute to facilitate the access to “capacity building” programs that are today, in some regions of the world, the only references of urban management training; in this sense, and increasingly urgent, it is necessary that each metropolitan area, every town, intermediary city and rural area of countries of the emerging South can has a minimum competitive ecosystem of professionals and technicians in order to facilitate decision-making, both the citizenship as governments of proximity and thereby generate viable solutions to the complex challenges of our time.

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37 Author’s note: the report on “The State of Planning in Africa”, (UN-Habitat 2013) warns about the total lack of urban planners accredited in their cities. In this report can we find paradigms like Burkina Faso, which only had in 2012 a total of 14 planners accredited for a population of over 16 million people, or Kenya, whose capital, Nairobi, in addition to locating the headquarters of UN-Habitat and one of the largest slums in the world like Kibera, only had 200 accredited professionals for a population over 40 million people; The UK, on the other end, concentrated more than 23,000 planners for a population of 61 million. Gap that shows the long way that has to run the urban Africa, to reach quantitatively and qualitatively, the minimum professional ecosystem necessary to ensure the right to the city of its inhabitants.

38 See: <http://kepler.org/#home>

39 See: <https://www.edx.org/school/idbx>

40 See: <http://www.iadb.org/en/topics/emerging-and-sustainable-cities/emerging-and-sustainable-cities-initiative,6656.html>

## Conclusions.

Never before distance and time was so short. Every day, urban communities condition with their precariousness the responsible decision-making by their representatives and not by this they leave the task of daily survival. In a context of sustained enrichment of the macroeconomics, it is in the scope of proximity where the seeds of conflict can acquire unimaginable proportions or, conversely, accelerate the transition to a framework of full being. The challenge, however, passes for empowering citizens and their political representatives, particularly of intermediary cities in emerging and developing economies, in the recurrent use of concurrence technology as a fundamental principle to ensure the viability of the long-awaited sustainability of life in the city, and joint governance frameworks that can generate traction in the management of shared spaces of opportunity.

However, in this article we have also found some risk factors that can compromise the governance in fragile contexts as can be the geographies of inequality generated by informal urbanization processes. In this sense, we have seen that urban planning, despite its social function, also can be the trigger for conflicts latent; correct their inconsistencies through legal frameworks difficult to enforce can contribute to further increase its inefficiency in front of an urbanization process characterized precisely by its dynamism. The same dynamism that has allowed a significant proportion of people without access to water or sanitation have access to mobile technology, one of the few gaps that are declining progressively between hemispheres. A technology that in the same way that has allowed the challenge of universal access to education and information also shows new vulnerabilities that not everyone can cope with the same guarantees. Despite the uncertainty, there is one key element that allows facing the future with optimism: a global citizenship, young and empowered technologically demanding vigorously exercising their right to a massive and transversal participation in the political, economic and environmental decision-making that affect their daily lives.

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