

In search of institutional mechanisms and policy frameworks for inclusive and effective planning. Reflections from Bogotá and Santiago de Chile

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The Latin America urbanization process has steadily risen during the last decade following demographic transformation trends seen during the last half of the 20th century, shifting from rural and regionally distributed communities to a more spatially centralized organization with vast attracting urban poles. Today, 80% of the continent's population is concentrated in cities, placing the region as the most "urbanized" continent of the world with nearly 470 million urban inhabitants in 2010 (U.N. Habitat 2012). However, and despite this urban growth has triggered positive and negative economic, social and environmental impacts in all of the continent's countries, socio-spatial and economic disparity indicators still place the continent as one of the most unequal regions in the world (Kingstone 2011; De Ferranti et al. 2003).

Characterized by highly fragmented built environments, Latin American urban agglomerations still struggle with high poverty and criminality rates where spatial segregation based on socio-economic stratification have generated ghettos and gated communities. In these urban agglomerations, access to technical, financial, human and social resources, knowledge, justice, education and health have been accessible mainly to higher-income classes as “services”, whereas poorer communities are burdened with environmental risks and vulnerabilities. Faced with the complexity and multiple dimensions of these challenges, many Latin American cities (including those here analyzed) have become during the last 15 years important “laboratories” for innovative urban planning and policy making strategies, contributing new responses to questions of democratic management, socio-spatial inclusion and environmental challenges. This panel will explore institutional mechanisms, policy frameworks and urban projects that have sought to achieve meaningful advances associated with slum upgrading, inclusive urban renewal strategies, social infrastructure development and addressing environmental or climate justice, in Bogotá and Santiago de Chile. It will discuss specific case studies to evaluate the policy and institutional vehicles articulated through the spatial planning and/or implementation processes. According to Kingstone, “Political economists have begun to pay more attention to institutions as key components of democratic development. But, to date, we still lack good explanations for institutional development and performances.” Thus, planners, designers and academics, ought to develop comparative understandings of the mechanisms, frameworks, actors and policies, regulating and/or affecting urban and regional planning processes, as well as the capacity to influence urban development and its spatial fabric. As a critical review, the discussion weaves together best practices and failed experiences in a multi-scalar approach (from the neighborhood scale to the urban, regional and national level) aiming to highlight spatial impacts, risks, side-effects, as well as the achievements that such policies and institutions can deliver in the built, social and economic environment. References: ONU HABITAT (2012). Estado de las ciudades de America Latina y el caribe 2012 [online] Available at: <http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=3380> . Accessed 12 07 2015. Kingstone, Peter (2011). The Political Economy of Latin America.



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