
METROPOLITAN AND MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS

- THE METROPOLITAN CONSTRUCTION OF THE RIGHT TO THE CITY: TOWARDS INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE MODELS

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- POLYCENTRISM AND THE RIGHT TO THE CITY IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

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- THE RIGHT TO THE CITY AND MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE IN LATIN AMERICA

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I. The right to the city and new municipalism

Could the “right to the city” be the 21st century heir of the civilisational project the welfare state forged in the 20th? Can the new democratic municipalism become the main agent of its construction? The first section of this chapter is organised around these two questions. Subsequently, some reflections will be given on the metropolitan scale – where the main dimensions of the right to the city are settled today – and on the challenges of governing it in an innovative way.

Could the “right to the city” be the 21st century heir of the civilisational project the welfare state forged in the 20th?

Urban era, change of era and right to the city

Industrial society took shape in a space configured by *states*, but we now live in an *urban era*. Since the recession, the position of cities as key sites for configuring the liquid society and the digital economy has been consolidated. At Habitat III in Quito in 2016, we learned that the majority of the world’s population was urban. Today’s cities are the expression of the 21st century’s cross-cutting tensions and challenges: as vulnerable to speculation as they are creative and cooperative; filled with as much social division as community strength; responsible for climate change but also spearheading the ecological transition. The hegemony of the urban has become tangible: cities are the epicentre of the daily life of the majority, and the space where the conflict between fear and hope is being organised (Borja et al., 2016; Olmedo & Endara, 2017).

In this urban age, the *change of era* has a markedly spatial dimension. The patterns of sociocultural change are shaping a landscape of complexity and uncertainty that affects the family, work, emotional and housing spheres and promotes the strengthening of the local dimension of the welfare state (reception, inclusion, organisation of care, life cycles). The patterns of socioeconomic change, on the other hand, place the financialisation of housing at the heart of the accumulation system and paint a picture of real estate bubbles, housing exclusion, gentrification and residential segregation that demands the urban agenda of the welfare state be strengthened (social housing and rent controls, tourism

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regulation, neighbourhood improvement with neighbourhood defence tools, etc.). The *right to the city* – as an everyday, community encapsulation of all basic rights – is gaining prominence as a project for rebuilding a citizenship for the 21st century. It is about placing local-level social policies and the urban agenda at the heart of the welfare system: returning the processes of collective progress and improvement that were in state hands in the 20th century to the local level. The challenge of rewriting social justice through the urban grammar of proximity thereby takes shape (Subirats, 2016).

Industrial society produced national frameworks for managing class conflict: welfare states with varying degrees of redistribution and welfare (Atkinson, 2016). Twenty-first century society faces the challenge of building citizenship formats that are more closely linked to their emerging range of realities. That is where *local-level welfare* comes in. In a complex society affected by multiple tensions, the construction of social rights is multidimensional. Certain key aspects of the design of social policies for the right to the city must be borne in mind: a) equity must be addressed in integrated and predistributive terms (not only redistributive or relating to income); b) fighting against inequalities means recognising differences: in a heterogeneous urban society all roads to equality pass through diversity; c) personal autonomy must be connected to the absence of collective domination, and social equality must be connected to personal self-determination in the face of state paternalism; d) all the above must be linked to community action: fraternity and care to weave urban interdependencies to tackle the exploitation of vulnerability. This network of core ideas may materialise in a catalogue of local-level welfare organised in four areas: social and relational inclusion policies; health, education, culture and income policies in community terms; day-to-day agendas (gender relations, social distribution of care and demographic change); and diversity agendas (LGTBI, interculturality, functional diversity, etc.) (Laval & Dardot, 2014).

In a context in which housing appears in the axis of vulnerabilities, in which metropolises are the hubs of the digital and financialised economy, and in which the urban production of environmental risks acquires maximum relevance, *spatial justice* and the *ecological transition* become key components of the right to the city agenda. As with local-level welfare, the urban agenda is also affected by multiple issues: housing as a financial asset or as a right; neighbourhoods as safe or gentrifiable places; the city as a segregated or cohesive residential space; natural environments and resources as goods or as elements of municipal sovereignty (Sennett, 2018). Faced with these dilemmas, the urban agenda of the right to the city requires the hybridisation of urban and ecological logics.

- Urban logics. *Spatial justice* policies should guarantee the right to housing and the neighbourhood in order to tackle dynamics of speculation and expulsion (Soja, 2014). Guaranteeing affordable and dignified housing within a framework of cohesive neighbourhoods and cities that are socially and functionally mixed requires the use of a range of instruments. A) *An urban agenda for the right to housing*: from increasing public parks to promoting cooperatives, via the municipal regulation of rents and prices; from renovation policies with mechanisms for guaranteeing the permanence of residents to

programmes to fight residential exclusion. B) *An urban agenda for the right to the neighbourhood*: from regeneration using neighbourhood defence instruments to the protection of local commercial networks, via the preservation of urban fabrics, memories and identities; from public land banks to the urban taxation of residential uses, and the protection of residential uses against their replacement by tourism.

- Ecological logics. The urban agenda is also the *ecological transition* to protect the climate and the air, and to regain citizen control over the food chain and the water cycle. We know that cities are responsible for 70% of climate change-inducing emissions, linked to the use of fossil fuels; we know that air pollution in metropolises causes hundreds of thousands of deaths annually, and that travelling by private vehicle is a decisive factor in that. UN-Habitat, on the other hand, has for years been raising the need for food alternatives and universal access to water as basic urban rights to tackle financial-commercial speculation dynamics. The ecological transition agenda is thus configured along four key axes: energy, mobility, water and food.

II. The new municipalism. Social innovation, urban movements and local governments

The change of era creates the conditions for a model of citizenship around local-level welfare, spatial justice and urban ecological transition. Through institutions, this model should bolster its municipalist dimension. The right to the city not only redefines public policies, it also re-articulates the rationale of governance, relocating the toolkit for its enactment in *municipalism*. We are living through a crisis of the classic political and governance structures. Globalisation unleashes realities and feelings of a lack of protection, and states tend to respond with exclusionary borders and authoritarian withdrawal. But using the language of hope, the municipalist alternative is also advancing: local-level governments with areas of collective empowerment, democratic expansion and the reconstruction of rights. A local sphere is progressively shaped around agendas connected to structural issues (inequalities, migration, human rights, climate change). Municipalism is redrawing – albeit incipiently – the geography of global governance and its power relations: local governments become democratic political subjects against global markets and state borders. Municipalism emerges as a project in which connections and differences can be articulated; community and reception. It creates a meeting place for openness and protection, and participatory democracy and the right to the city.

In Spain from 2011 onwards, the dynamics of the 15M movement and the recession-austerity duality seriously impacted the municipalism configured from 1979 onwards. Local reactivation based on new parameters grows out of collective action (social innovation and urban mobilisation) and political intervention (citizen and convergence candidacies).

- In the field of collective action, what emerges are:
 - a) *Social innovation practices*. This is a set of community-based experiences that seeks to respond, first of all, to the social impacts of the crisis; initiatives that prefigure alternative models of producing and coordinating the urban commons using the rationales of personal

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and collective empowerment. The social innovation unfolding is wide-ranging: from the solidarity economy to time banks, via networks of agro-ecological consumption; from citizen management of urban spaces to technological sovereignty initiatives via housing, energy or transport cooperatives (Blanco & Nel.lo, 2018).

b) *A cycle of urban mobilisation.* This is a series of dynamics connected to global problems, but which are expressed in everyday life: the “yes we can” to fight evictions and energy poverty; urban self-management to tackle speculation and the commodification of spaces; the women’s labour struggle in precarious urban economic frameworks; activities supporting the reception and citizenship of refugees and migrants; and local sovereignty (energy, water and food). They are innovative formats of collective action: in their organisation (community-focused); in their range of activity (more disruptive than conventional); in their narrative (creating stories with great social resonance); in their subjects (focussing on socio-economic issues after years of the *postmaterialist* cycle). And they are networks that seek to impact municipal agendas (Nel.lo, 2015; Martí et al., 2018).

- In the field of political intervention, municipalist subjects burst onto the local electoral scene. They emerge from a double transition: from fragmentation to confluence; and from the social sphere to the political arena. They are configured around processes that combine emerging and pre-existing cultures of action, and the general public and established political spaces. In May 2015, the new candidates won their first social and electoral majorities. They went on to lead the government of 4 of the 5 largest cities in the country (Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and Zaragoza). Barcelona en Comú, which brought Ada Colau – an activist from the anti-evictions movement – to the position of mayor, is the clearest expression of this: she won 25.2% of the votes and was the leading force in 54 out of 73 neighbourhoods. The baseline political conditions are therefore set for the creation of the new municipalist landscape. The 2019 election results were more uneven. Government coalitions led by emerging forces were formed in Barcelona and Valencia, but not in Madrid and Zaragoza.

This scenario is substantially different from all those before, but certain dynamics are in tension as it comes into being: **a)** the adoption of a governance culture can reduce the disruptive capacity of new actors, but also generate new kinds of relationship between the institutional and the social with roots in mutual recognition, public-citizen alliance and processes of *commoning*; **b)** that the context of austerity may be processed by the local world out of resignation, but also as an opportunity to build alternatives: new social policies and urban agendas, processes of community appropriation of services and spaces, and more democratic and citizen-focused administration; **c)** the impacts of the crisis generate fear and suffering in both private and domestic spheres, but they also throw up new social innovation dynamics, empowerment processes and cooperative practices (Blanco & Gomà, 2016).

Indeed, municipalism is growing stronger as an institutional space for constructing the right to the city and as a political subject in multilevel governance. But states have too much clout, both symbolically and in

effect. Local governments are pressured by historical inertia: they are not at the centre of the distribution of public resources, and they are not yet at the heart of welfare and ecological transition regimes. Three challenges must be addressed to change the global governance structure with a municipalist mindset: **A) Empowerment.** Substantially increasing government capacities in the local sphere. This must be done on issues such as migrant reception, the energy transition and the public control of rent, which are agendas linked to everyday life where the failure of the state-level approach is also proven. **B) Horizontal interdependencies.** Shifting from a *top-down* system of cities being subordinated to “higher” levels to another of a more horizontal type in which scale does not imply hierarchy. This would mean coordinating governance between equals whose sovereignty is accepted – a new relational grammar for cities, regions, states and supranational areas to communicate (Barber, 2013). In practice it means that cities co-govern the New Urban Agenda, the SDGs, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the EU’s Pillar of Social Rights, for example. **C) Scaling out.** Transferring urban policies and practices through international municipal networks and processes of *policy learning*. A few decades ago, in a less complex reality, the mindset was to “think globally and act locally”, but today, in a more complicated and interconnected world, there is also a need to “think locally and act globally” (the internet and digital spaces enable this). There is undoubtedly a long way to go, but an international geography of cities (C-40, Sharing Cities, Cities for Housing, etc.) is already starting to be outlined that aims to address the challenges of the global urban era from powerful agendas that are interconnected and not subordinate.

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In a more complicated and interconnected world, there is also a need to “think locally and act globally”

III. Right to the metropolis and innovation in governance models

Most of the planet’s population lives in cities; and most of the urban population lives in metropolises, complex human settlements of over a million inhabitants that are rapidly expanding. Constructing the right to the city, therefore, unavoidably involves metropolitan-level processes. It is at the metropolitan level where today’s battles take place between habitability and speculation and between socio-spatial justice and gentrification; where the daily dispute over economic exclusion and cooperative forms of production and consumption takes shape, as well as that between climate change and respect for the planet’s environmental limits. In the 21st century, the right to the city is also the right to the metropolis. But constructing it requires metropolitan governance models that remain largely unexplored.

The metropolitan dimension of the right to the city

Today’s metropolises were produced by multiple interactions over time (Marull & Boix, 2016). Their basic features must be modelled in order to grasp the realities on which public policies and governance dynamics can be rolled out. We may start with the idea that the recent metropolitan construction is the result of interconnected three-dimensional processes: economic, socio-residential and ecological. The crossover between these processes and their spatial materialisation has produced open, evolving metropolitan models (Table 1).

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Table 1. Types of metropolis. Evolutionary dynamics in multiple dimensions

	Production model	Socio-residential structure	Environmental model
Industrial metropolis	Fordist	Class-based society; intensive urban planning	Climate change and atmospheric pollution
Post-industrial metropolis	Flexible	Dual society; diffuse urban planning	
Knowledge metropolis	Creative	Complex society; urban regeneration	Ecological transition

In economic terms, the Fordist city consolidates the economic specialisation of space: labour-intensive industries and the development of transport networks. At the end of the 20th century, the economic bases of the metropolis were outsourced, which had a double impact: the multiple spaces of the industrial shut-down contrast with the corporate sector's concentration in a few global urban districts; and the central spaces of financial and technological services contrast with the peripheries, where the tertiary sector is located, which adds little value. Metropolises are emerging that have strong hierarchies and territorial dualities. A new economic-urban shift is already being developed with three key components (Harvey, 2016). Value creation is shifted to knowledge (innovation capacity) (Fíguls & Galletto, 2019) and industrial reactivation occurs in the conditions of the technological revolution; digital activity explodes and internet-based platforms enter city economies; financial capital directed towards urban investments is activated and tends to create real estate bubbles. These changes at territorial level produce a complex set of opportunities/risks in the metropolitan sphere: the potential, on the one hand, for diluting spatial hierarchies and moving towards more reticular and sustainable metropolises; the threat, on the other, of gentrification processes.

In socio-residential terms, the middle decades of the 20th century were characterised by the massive urban presence of wage labour, with social class the main axis of stratification, along with the Fordist production of housing blocks in residential areas that are high in density and suburban-metropolitan in conception. At the end of the 20th century, two relevant changes occurred. In terms of labour, the market became polarised between new skilled sectors and precarious tertiary work with little collective organisation. In residential terms the extensive city became an urban and symbolic space for the new urban professional classes, with lower density and diversity.¹ The current phase appears to again be taking the shape of a game of powers in tension. On the one hand is the unprecedented increase in urban social complexity (origins, homes, ages, etc.), which creates an opportunity for spaces with new diverse and compact morphologies; on the other, the social impacts of urban financialisation produce expulsions and functional and population replacement (Sassen, 2014).

In ecological terms, the prevailing model of the mid-20th century had severe environmental effects, producing urban economies highly dependent on fossil fuels and the growth of motorised mobility by private vehicle. Since the end of the 20th century, this has only intensified, and it is only very recently that strategies to reverse it have begun to be put in place. Higher emissions are provoking climate change and alarm, and

1. Some metropolises have demonstrated the possibility of moving from the industrial city to the post-industrial without social dualisation. The overlap of growing welfare systems and urban cohesion policies may lie at the root. Barcelona is one of the leading examples (Porcel, 2016).

metropolises are key agents of global warming. The mass use of the car causes air pollution, the main environmental health factor and a process of extensive space consumption has been triggered: from 1996 to 2016, the urban population grew by 25%, but urbanised territory extended by 40%. Today's metropolises pose ecological hazards that are socially produced due to a lack of protection for the climate, degradation of the air and the depredation of space.

In short, the Fordist, class-based city, which was dualised and embodied by diffuse urban design processes, and gave rise to hierarchical metropolitan areas and outsourced economies, now faces the transition from an urban era towards networked metropolises, and spaces in which all their complexities are expressed. These patterns are clearly revealed when we focus on Latin America and the EU.

- In Latin America, cities' demographic weight grew from 25% of the population in the early twentieth century to 75% in the early twenty-first; urban GDP rose over the same period from 20% to 80% of the total. There is no precedent for this explosion of metropolitan life. No Latin American city housed over a million people just hundred years ago; today over 60 metropolitan areas do. Of the world's 25 megacities (over 10 million inhabitants), four are in Latin America: Mexico City, São Paulo, Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro; while Bogotá, Lima, Santiago, Belo Horizonte, Guadalajara and Guatemala City have over 5 million inhabitants. These are dynamic metropolitan economies, albeit inefficient in global terms; they house unequal, segmented societies with high levels of labour and urban informality; they embody diffuse urbanisation processes; and have high levels of traffic and pollution.
- Shifting the focus to the European Union (EU), perhaps the most significant development in the urban sphere has been the process of forming 12 transmetropolitan networks: areas of high relational density (economic, sociocultural, ecological) centred around mature metropolises. Two of these megaregions are located in Great Britain (London-Birmingham-Manchester-Liverpool; and Glasgow-Edinburgh). Six are in the western and central EU: Amsterdam-Brussels-Cologne; Paris; Frankfurt-Stuttgart; the Berlin area; Prague-Dresden-Leipzig; and Vienna-Budapest. And three are in the Latin-Mediterranean EU: Rome-Milan-Turin; Barcelona-Lyon; and the Madrid-Lisbon region. In relation to EU totals, the 12 metropolitan networks make up 61% of the population, 69% of GDP, 74% of R&D spending and 78% of creative industries.

Thus, Latin America and the European Union have in recent decades consolidated a demographic and territorial reality characterised by metropolitan hegemony. This dominance has been transferred to the economic, social and environmental spheres, making metropolises the true epicentres of daily reality for most people. The metropolitan construction of the right to the city becomes completely inescapable.

Towards innovative metropolitan governance models

Today, municipalism is growing stronger through a process that is dual and interconnected: it is progressively articulating a *policy agenda* for the right to the city, and a *political agenda* for the recognition of cit-

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ies as the subjects of global governance. Changing metropolises still display both significant deficiencies in their capacities for self-government, as well as weaknesses in their institutional architectures. It remains a paradox: we live in the metropolitan era. They are the new scale of the urban, and in them the century's main dilemmas and challenges take shape. But they are dogged by weaknesses of agenda and democracy that are hard to account for (Ahrend et al., 2014; Tomàs, 2009). These weaknesses make it difficult for them to tackle these challenges with the necessary political and citizen strength. It seems therefore reasonable to raise the need to *strengthen metropolitan governance* to move towards a sphere with the democratic capacity to build the *right to the metropolis*. A window of opportunity would appear: to build innovative schemes that allow metropolitan policies of social inclusion, spatial justice and ecological transition to be forged; that incorporate the metropolises, in a democratic sense, in multilevel governance networks.

Three main metropolitan coordination structures have been implemented to date:

- The *supramunicipal government* model involves the existence of a territorial metropolitan institution – a space of self-government with the capacity to design and provide the suite of policies and services that allow the metropolis's challenges to be addressed from the public sphere, beyond market logics. The authority may be directly or indirectly elected (based on municipal results). It may involve municipalities merging, or a framework of competence distribution with the metropolitan institution.
- The *intermunicipal governance* model involves building a flexible governance structure in the metropolis, coordinating capacities for joint action between cities, and providing such action with a model for cooperative formalisation. The institutional scaffolding can take two forms: **a)** a *commonwealth* of municipalities as a space for shared policy production; or **b)** a *strategic planning device* as a space for defining a metropolitan model and coordinating actions between actors of diverse natures.
- The *management agencies* model involves choosing to maximise the autonomy of metropolitan municipalities. This results from a double consideration: *politics* – it is assumed that it is within the scope of every city to decide where citizen preferences are best; and *benefits* – it is assumed that inter-municipal competition leads to better services and maximises conditions of economic or residential attractiveness. All of this is considered to be compatible with the existence of *sectoral agencies* at metropolitan level to administer all services where cooperation is advisable.

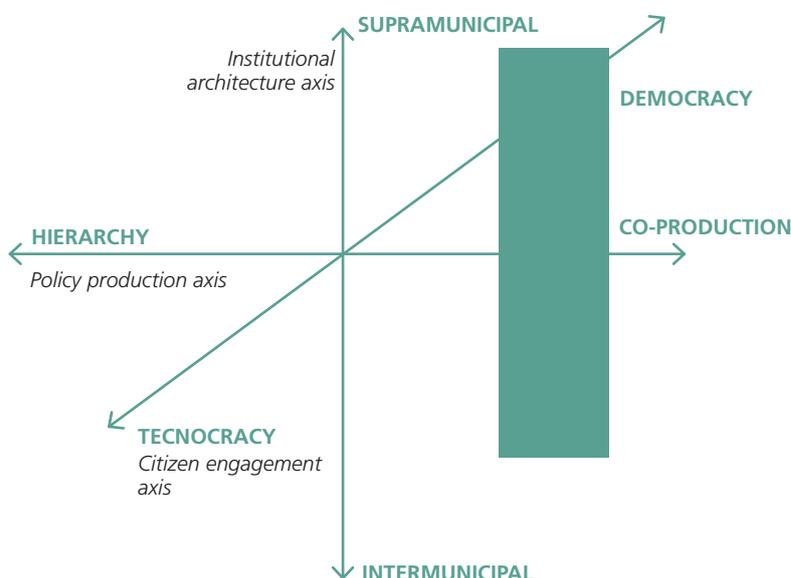
What forms does this take in practice? A great deal of diversity is observed at European level. Among the main metropolises 29% opt for the supramunicipal government model; 60% for intermunicipal governance; and 11% for agencies. If we consider only those that have taken on the *supramunicipal formula*, in all cases there is a two-tier system (municipal/metropolitan); some metropolises (London, Manchester, Liverpool, Stuttgart, Hannover) adopt the direct election of the mayor's office and/or the metropolitan council; others (Barcelona, Lisbon, Lyon, Helsinki) follow that of elections at a sec-

ondary level. A high degree of overlap exists in the *policy areas* bloc upon which some type of metropolitan competence is being built: planning and territorial planning, mobility, ecology, and socioeconomic development. Diversity reappears when the focus slides towards taxation: in 44% of the cases, the main source of metropolitan resources are transfers from higher levels (regional or state); 35% of metropolises fund themselves through their own taxes; whereas the remaining 21% mainly receive municipal contributions. In all cases some kind of *mix* of financing models exists (Martí & Tomàs, 2019).

Beyond this reality, is it possible to articulate a metropolitan scheme that overcomes the rigidities, weaknesses and anachronisms of existing models? Is it feasible to explore an innovative proposal for governance with the capacity to build the right to the metropolis within 21st century parameters? (Table 2).

Is it feasible to explore an innovative proposal for governance with the capacity to build the right to the metropolis within 21st century parameters?

Table 2. Axes and models of metropolitan governance



To be sure, there are no simple answers, even at some remove from the political-cultural contexts of each metropolis, but some coordinates for reflection can be plotted. First, imagine a system – in the institutional architecture axis – of hybridisation between the metropolitan authority (broad policy agenda) and the network of municipalities: a model of cooperative metropolitan self-government. Secondly, imagine a system – in the democratic and policy production axes – of direct election, co-production and instruments for participation: a metropolitan model with a strong link with citizens. The intersection between *cooperative self-government* and *citizen engagement* outlines the space for *innovation in metropolitan governance* (the blue rectangle in Table 2). The democratic dimension can also become a lever for strengthening the *demos*: a collective subject at metropolitan level able to produce coordinated actors and practices at that same level, able to crystallise their own field of identification on the basis of neighbourhood and city identities that should be preserved and projected into the future.

The right to the metropolis provides effective content in multiple fields to the right to the city.

Moving towards a metropolitan setting with the capacity for self-government that is horizontal and networked and open to citizen co-production and direct representation is the aim. *This setting would make it possible to construct the right to the metropolis, and do so by means that are democratic, cooperative and community-based.* In short, metropolitan democratic governance appears to be a key factor – along with the new municipalism – in strengthening local institutional architectures. Similarly, the right to the metropolis provides effective content in multiple fields to the right to the city in our era of change.

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