EDITORIAL

Editorial

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Towards a Resilient and Inclusive Urbanism

The relentless progress of urban growth and contemporary global challenges have placed our cities at the epicenter of the 21st-century problems. More than half of the world's population lives in urban areas, and this figure continues to rise, putting pressure on social, economic, and environmental systems. However, cities also represent a unique opportunity to promote sustainable development. To take advantage of this opportunity, it is crucial to have clear guidelines and specific requirements tailored to local needs.

With its unique geography and a history marked by natural disasters, Chile is uniquely positioned to reflect on the challenges of modern urbanism. The country has demonstrated a remarkable ability to respond to emergencies, from earthquakes and tsunamis to droughts and floods. However, the traditional reactive approach is no longer enough. The future demands cities that can withstand adversity and adapt, transform, and thrive in a context of constant change. This is the axis of urban resilience, a concept that goes beyond mere resistance to include the ability to transform and adapt to uncertainty.

In this context, Chile has begun implementing regulatory frameworks such as Law 21,364 on disaster prevention and response. This legislation establishes a basis for local action, but its practical implementation requires a comprehensive approach that combines resilient infrastructure, community education, and data-informed territorial planning. A prominent example is Nonguén, a Concepción neighborhood where one-dimensional and poorly evaluated public policies have perpetuated vulnerabilities instead of mitigating them. This case shows the need for urban interventions to repair the damage and transform territories into more equitable and sustainable spaces.

Risk management is not the only challenge. Structural inequalities also shape our cities and affect the quality of life of their inhabitants. Santiago de Chile faces deep disparities in access to basic services such as preschool education. The unequal distribution of available education, influenced by economic factors such as the value of the land, perpetuates a cycle of inequality that limits the opportunities of the most vulnerable communities. This problem is not limited to education, but also affects other groups, such as older adults, whose geographical distribution reflects a lack of adaptive urban planning for this growing population.

Despite these challenges, public spaces have the potential to act as catalysts for positive change. Research in La Reina Alta, in Santiago, highlights how resilient public spaces can address geological hazards while fostering social cohesion. Beyond their recreational role, these spaces can serve as meeting points that strengthen community relations and promote equity. Investing in their quality and accessibility is not a luxury, but something necessary to ensure social cohesion and collective well-being.

The analysis of international cases provides valuable perspectives. A study on walkability in Ibagué, Colombia, demonstrates how the quality of pedestrian infrastructure directly influences urban health and well-being. Similarly, the community project "Camino al Barrio", in Cali, reinforces the importance of citizen participation in transforming public spaces. These initiatives show that the design and management of these spaces are essential tools for building resilient and inclusive cities.

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Figure 1, 2   Arica Market. Source: Ignacio Sáez. 2018

Technology and innovation also play a key role in this process. Advanced tools such as geographic information systems (GIS) and computational models are redefining our ability to understand and address urban problems. In Ecuador, the use of GIS made it possible to map climate vulnerabilities and design data-driven solutions, while in Iran, advanced technologies helped to assess the quality of urban sidewalks. These methodologies not only improve the accuracy of the analysis, but also democratize planning by making the information accessible to everyone.

However, technology alone cannot solve urban problems. Its effectiveness depends on integrating it into a holistic approach that combines technical innovation, participatorygovernance, and strategic planning. Adopting a proactive approach that prepares cities for future scenarios of change and uncertainty is essential.

The studies presented here show that urban resilience transcends the simple ability to resist shocks. It is about building cities that can adapt and thrive in a dynamic landscape. This requires a commitment to equity, sustainability, innovation, and active citizen participation. Solutions cannot be imposed from above; they must arise from a continuous dialogue between governments, communities, and experts, recognizing the diversity of needs and perspectives that shape our cities.

The future of Chilean cities and the cities of the world will depend on our ability to address these challenges with creativity and collaboration. Public policies must go beyond superficial and fragmented solutions, adopting comprehensive approaches that reflect the complexities of urban life. Investing in public spaces, reducing structural inequalities, and strengthening local capacities are not isolated objectives, but essential components of a broader vision of sustainability and resilience.

Cities should not be seen as merely physical spaces, but as living ecosystems, interconnected and deeply influenced by our decisions. This holistic approach will not only allow us to face the challenges of the present, but also to build a legacy for future generations. Resilience should be a collective effort to integrate social justice, environmental sustainability, and technological innovation into a comprehensive framework. With that in mind, the studies presented in this edition offer a clear roadmap towards this goal.