

Bi-regional Relations



EU-LAC Foundation

The Covid-19 Crisis and Pathways to Sustainable Recovery in the European Union, Latin America, and the Caribbean

Keynote Lecture Series 2021



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2022

The European Union – Latin America and Caribbean International Foundation (EU-LAC Foundation) was created in 2010 by the Heads of State and Government of the European Union (EU) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) member states. Its Members are the Member states of the EU and CELAC as well as the EU itself. The Foundation is a tool of the EU-LAC partnership and its activities feed into the intergovernmental dialogue, in line with the bi-regional Action Plan.

The EU-LAC Foundation was entrusted with the mission of strengthening and promoting the strategic bi-regional relationship, enhancing its visibility and fostering active participation of the respective civil societies.

Based on this mission, the Foundation organised, in collaboration with the Latin American Studies Programme of the University of Hamburg, between July and September 2021, a Keynote Lecture Series on economic, political and social areas in which the Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact in Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe. The main objective of this Keynote Lecture Series was to contribute to the generation of knowledge and exchange between scientists, civil society actors, public officials and decision-makers on concepts, good practices and public policies that have been developed in Latin American, Caribbean and European countries in order to lead to a better and sustainable recovery of the sectors and areas that have been particularly affected by the pandemic.

The publication of this Keynote Lecture Series can be accessed through the following link: <https://eulacfoundation.org/en/covid-19-crisis-and-pathways-sustainable-recovery-european-union-latin-america-and-caribbean>

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Federal Foreign Office

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PRESENTATION

The EU-LAC Foundation is pleased to present the publication "The Covid-19 Crisis and Pathways to Sustainable Recovery in the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean" which compiles the interventions presented during a Keynote Lecture Series 2021 held virtually from July to September 2021 in collaboration with the Latin American Studies Programme of the University of Hamburg.

These conferences were implemented with the objective of contributing to the generation of knowledge and the exchange between scientists, civil society actors, public officials and decision-makers on the impacts caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in different political, economic and social sectors particularly affected by the pandemic, as well as on concepts, good practices and public policies that have been developed in Latin American, Caribbean and European countries to lead to a better and sustainable recovery of these sectors.

In doing so, the 2021 Keynote Lecture Series responded to some of the common priorities identified by the high authorities of both regions. In December 2020, at the EU27-LAC Informal Ministerial Meeting, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean countries expressed their deep concern about the devastating impact of the coronavirus and "reaffirmed their determination to step up joint efforts to overcome the multidimensional challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, which risks exacerbating existing structural gaps, inequalities, social, economic and financial exclusion".¹

This Keynote Lecture Series was set in the midst of "year 2 of the pandemic" in which several countries faced new "waves" of infections and implemented new containment measures or other restrictions, to save lives and prevent collapse of their health systems. At unprecedented speed, laboratories in different regions of the world have developed vaccines against Covid-19, and while several European, Latin American and Caribbean countries have managed to carry out - in distinct rhythms - vaccination campaigns, starting with the most vulnerable and prioritising mass production and rapid and equitable distribution of these vaccines to the world's population.

The pandemic increased poverty and widened social, economic and ethnic gaps in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) found the worst contraction of gross domestic product since 1946 and an increase of structural problems such as low productivity, high labour informality, low social protection coverage, thus causing a considerable increase in poverty.² Limited fiscal space, insufficient investments in the health sector, public education and decent housing, and also the low regional presence of institutes, laboratories and companies specialised in medical equipment, vaccines, medicines and logistics, meant that countries found themselves with limited capacities to adequately respond to the enormous challenges of the pandemic.

1 Joint Communiqué: EU27 – Latin America and Caribbean Informal Ministerial Meeting, Berlin 14/12/2020: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/90561/joint-communiqu%C3%A9-eu27-lat-in-america-and-caribbean-informal-ministerial-meeting_en

2 See: <https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/46504-preliminary-overview-economies-latin-america-and-caribbean-2020>

In 2020, the European Union (EU) countries also experienced a contraction in several economic sectors, accompanied by rising unemployment rates and income inequality, which was at least partially offset by the financial support packages put in place within countries and the EU recovery fund. The pandemic highlighted the consequences of the prioritisation of principles such as austerity and efficiency in hospitals and underinvestment in health personnel, as well as the heavy reliance on medical supplies from producers based in other regions of the world.

Beyond the impending health challenges, the pandemic has highlighted the fragile state of our planet and our societies. Unequivocally and sharply, the coronavirus outbreak drew attention to what science has been warning us about for some time now: that in the Anthropocene epoch, it is the actions of humans - such as overexploitation of land and natural assets, deforestation, pollution, and the expulsion of wild animals from their habitats - that lead to imbalances in our ecosystems and considerable losses in biodiversity and, not least, to the spread of zoonotic viruses such as the coronavirus which, as of the moment of writing (12 December 2021), has been associated with the deaths of 5.3 million people globally.³

In both regions, medical personnel were stretched to the limits of their capacities. Millions of school children and adolescents have lost valuable time for learning and developing skills needed to assume important tasks and roles in their societies in the future. From the perspective of gender relations, the pandemic led to a sharpening of inequalities between men and women, as both in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, many women have left their jobs and/or faced a high burden of roles such as education and care in households.⁴ At the same time, however, the pandemic offers an opportunity to openly discuss and question not only gendered social norms and orders, but also our ways of living and living together - for example in cities, or in view of migrant populations.

Faced with the question of how to respond to this crisis that has exacerbated the structural problems in our societies and our relationship with the environment? - to return to a “business as usual” or the status quo ante, or to bet on new ways to foster sustainable human development and alleviate planetary pressures? - the foreign ministers of the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, stressed their determination to pursue the second option: “The crisis is an opportunity to “build back better” in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ... By joining forces, including in strong green and digital partnerships, the two regions can ensure a common better future for their citizens”.⁵

Along these lines, the Keynote Lecture Series took place in six virtual sessions. Each session focused on a particular area, such as public health systems, educational institutions, the economic sector, gender relations, urban development, and a particular vulnerable group - migrants. For each Keynote Lecture, we invited speakers from the EU and LAC with leading expertise on the topic to analyse and compare strategies, solutions and transformative measures that have emerged in the past months in one or several countries from both regions towards a better recovery. The conferences were moderated by a representative of the EU-LAC Foundation and a representative of the Latin American Studies Programme of the University of Hamburg. The sessions were open to the interested general public and their recordings are available at the links indicated at the beginning of each chapter of this publication.

3 As of the moment of writing (12 December 2021), the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center recorded 5,304,505 deaths associated with the pandemic; see: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu>

4 See: <https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/46634-economic-autonomy-women-sustainable-recovery-equality>

5 See footnote 1

It should be noted that these Keynote Lectures formed part of a variety of initiatives promoted by the EU-LAC Foundation in the course of 2021 addressing Covid-19 and a sustainable recovery, such as, for example, the EU-LAC Dialogue Sessions on “Initiatives for the financing and equitable distribution of vaccines against Covid-19 in middle-income countries of Latin America and the Caribbean”, the XII Reflection Forum “Contributions of the bi-regional strategic partnership to the shaping of a greener recovery”, and the elaboration of a study about “Labour participation policies in the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean in the context during and post-pandemic Covid-19” commissioned jointly by the EuroSociAL+ Programme and the EU-LAC Foundation.

The EU-LAC Foundation is especially grateful to the distinguished speakers who provided substantial and high-quality inputs to this series: **Andreas Schleicher**, Director of Education and Skills at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); **Dulce Baptista**, Specialist in the Labour Markets Division of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB); **Georg Fischer**, Senior Research Associate at the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (WIIW) and Associate at the Austrian Institute for Economic Research (WIFO); **Lidia Farré**, Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Barcelona and Associate Researcher at the Institute for Economic Analysis; **Bibiana Aído Almagro**, UN Women representative in Colombia; **Jesús Marcos Gamero**, Professor in “Global Environmental Challenges” and member of the Research Group “Sociology of Climate Change and Sustainable Development” at the University Carlos III of Madrid; **Guillermo Santos**, Researcher at the Institute of Studies on Science and Technology (IESCT) of the National University of Quilmes, Argentina; **Abdel Camargo**, CONACYT Professor at El Colegio de la Frontera Sur (ECOSUR), Tapachula Unit, Chiapas, Mexico, and Collaborator of the Migration and Cross-border Processes Studies Group; **Francisco Javier Moreno Fuentes**, Senior Researcher at the Spanish National Research Council (IPP-CSIC); **Paula Caffarena Barcenilla**, Researcher and Director of CIDOC and Professor at the School of History, University Finis Terrae, Chile; **Sabrina Montante**, Senior EU Policy Advisor at the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS), Italy, and Member of the coordination team of the EU project “TO REACH”.

We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to **Adela Toscano**, intern at the EU-LAC Foundation, who translated the lectures into English/Spanish, respectively, and the intern **Francisco López**, who assisted in the review of this publication.

Finally, the EU-LAC Foundation would like to thank **Gilberto Rescher**, Coordinator of the Latin American Studies Programme at the University of Hamburg, and **Inke Gunia**, Deputy Executive Director of the Institute for Romance Studies, for their collaboration in the implementation of the Keynote Lecture Series 2021.

Enjoy your reading!

Adrián Bonilla | Executive Director

Anna Barrera Vivero | Senior Programme Coordinator

4. Session 4 (12 August 2021): SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY OF CITIES

Link to recorded session:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ci5vGq4Vyo>

A. INTRODUCTION

The exceptionality of the pandemic led us to question how we educate and work, but also how we live and connect with the urban environment and technology. Especially because educational, economic, and social inequalities - such as gender inequalities - took place in these cores, where most of the planet lives: cities. Therefore, the objective of this fourth session was to open a bi-regional dialogue on the major threats and opportunities exposed in the reconfiguration of urban centres. Once again, the current turning point can allow us to make, of our living environments, sustainable spaces from a social and, especially, an environmental point of view.

The speakers invited to this session offered complementary perspectives from both sides of the Atlantic and opened a space for a multidimensional reflection on the cities of the present and the future. Jesús Gamero, PhD in Social Analysis from the Carlos III University of Madrid and member of the Research Group on "Sociology of Climate Change and Sustainable Development" at the same institution, exposed about the double challenge that European and Latin American cities are facing: the health crisis and the climate crisis. The ability to rethink cities and overcome both would, according to the panellist, make cities fairer, more supportive, and sustainable.

Guillermo Santos, PhD in Social Sciences and Humanities from the National University of Luján in Argentina and researcher at the Institute of Studies on Science and Technology (IESCT) of the National University of Quilmes, complemented the equation with another crisis: the crisis of social inequality. In his presentation, he focused on technology and the need to generate adequate, efficient, viable and environmentally sustainable socio-technical solutions for sectors such as transport, housing, energy, health, communication, food, education, to tackle this crisis.

B. SPEAKERS



Jesús Marcos Gamero is a lecturer in “Global Environmental Challenges” and a member of the Research Group on “Sociology of Climate Change and Sustainable Development” at the University Carlos III of Madrid. In addition to his area of specialisation - climate migrations – based on his doctoral thesis on this issue, Jesús M. Gamero has focused on the socio-economic impacts of climate change and the responses that should be articulated between social and political structures. Jesús Marcos Gamero holds a degree in Political Science and Administration from the Complutense University

of Madrid, a Master of Law from the Irish Centre for Human Rights, National University of Ireland, and a PhD in Social Analysis from the Carlos III University of Madrid.



Guillermo Santos holds a PhD in Social Sciences and Humanities from the National University of Luján in Argentina, a Masters in Social Sciences with a major in Social History, a BA in Sociology from the University of Buenos Aires (Argentina) and is Professor of History at the Instituto Superior del Profesorado, “Dr. Joaquín V. González” in the city of Buenos Aires. He is a researcher at the Institute of Studies on Science and Technology (IESCT) of the National University of Quilmes (UNQ) and his areas of research and teaching include Social History and History and Sociology of Technology and Innovation.

He is currently Director of the Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences and Humanities (virtual mode) at the National University of Quilmes (Argentina) and Associate Professor in the Department of Social Sciences at the UNQ. He teaches Social Studies of Technology and Social History of Science and Technology in the Master's Degree in Science, Technology and Society (UNQ). He is the academic director of the postgraduate course in Specialisation in Technology and Innovation Management at the National University of San Martín (Argentina). He has published studies on the social history and sociology of technology in various national and international journals and is co-author of several books on technology and innovation. Among them are “Innovar en Argentina” and “Tecnologías para incluir”. He is a developer of graphic and ludic divulgation contents in the field of social sciences for several public and private institutions in Argentina.

C. LECTURES

JESÚS MARCOS GAMERO: CITIES OF SOLIDARITY AND SUSTAINABILITY IN THE FACE OF COVID AND THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Major crises and disasters can amplify or expose previous social inequalities. **During the Covid-19 pandemic, cities have served as an example of spaces where structural weaknesses and social discontent have been exacerbated.**¹⁶ And we will also see this pattern as the impacts of climate change increase. In this regard, the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) sixth assessment report on the physical basis of climate change, present a global scenario where climate change is widespread, rapid, and intensifying.

Likewise, it is too late to reverse some of these effects, irreversible for hundreds or thousands of years (IPCC, 2021). Meanwhile, the solutions proposed by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement are highly ineffective given the magnitude of the problem. As a result, these physical impacts are followed by social consequences that demonstrate the climate change capacity to destabilise and push social, political, and economic systems to their limits.¹⁷

Cities and urban environments

Cities emerge in this context as a fundamental space:

- a) whether in terms of greenhouse gas emissions by our civilisation;
- b) as places where these physical and socio-economic impacts are being critically felt;
- c) but also as spaces from which to articulate transformative responses capable of maintaining the social cohesion necessary to confront the problem.

Regarding the first factor, it should be remembered that, according to 2016 data, cities are home to 54.5% of the total world population, projected to be more than 70% by 2050. These urban populations are the ones that make use, globally, of more than 60% of energy consumption, produce more than 70% of greenhouse gas emissions, or are responsible for more than 70% of global waste.

For its part, and concerning impacts, the report "The Future We Don't Want" (Rosenzweig et al., 2018) explains how climate change may impact large cities and a growing population and go hand in hand with increased vulnerability and inequality. Considering six key cli-

¹⁶ Moloney, A. (2020). How Covid-19 is exposing 'hidden poverty' across unequal cities. World Economic Forum, 4 November. Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/11/pandemic-exposes-hidden-poverty-unequal-cities/>

¹⁷ This is an issue that I have discussed based on the case of Syria and that can serve as a reference to observe the evolution of social discontent in the face of the impacts of climate change and its capacity to destabilise our social, political and economic systems (Gamero, 2018).

mate vulnerability conditions - extreme heat, poverty and extreme heat, water availability, food security, coastal flooding and sea-level rise, energy supply and sea-level rise - the following figures are being projected for 2050:

- 1.6 billion people in more than 970 cities will be regularly exposed to extremely high temperatures;
- more than 800 million in 570 cities will be exposed to sea-level rise and coastal flooding;
- 650 million in more than 500 cities will be at risk of water scarcity due to climate change;
- 2.5 billion in more than 1,600 cities are expected to face national food supply threatened by climate change;
- supplying energy to 470 million in more than 230 cities will make them vulnerable to rising sea levels and;
- 215 million poor urban residents, living in slums in more than 490 cities, will face increasing climate risks.

Those immense numbers should lead cities to plan and implement solutions in response to a variety of climate risks and increasingly concentrated poverty processes, which – combined – pose serious risks for the health and well-being of residents, as well as for urban economies and infrastructure systems.

Experience in protecting the most vulnerable during the pandemic

Protection of the most vulnerable groups forms part of the third aspect related to the responses that can be articulated to face climate change, and which calls on the importance of transforming urban societies and maintaining social cohesion in the face of climate impacts. At the outset, it is worth noting that from the experiences that arose during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is possible to extract the necessary lessons to address the social impacts and challenges of climate change with greater guarantees. In Spain, as in other countries, many of the measures implemented during the pandemic were reactive and temporary but facilitated to expand the population receiving social assistance among urban populations.

In first place, we consider the permanent implementation of the Minimum Vital¹⁸ Income by the Spanish Government, which emerges as a measure capable of providing support to people in need, as well as developing an inclusive approach to tackle poverty and inequality. Also, administrations such as Autonomous Communities, Provincial Councils and City Councils have implemented other measures such as the transfer of food and food vouchers, guaranteeing affordable access to housing or ensuring electricity supply to meet the

18. Moncloa (2020 May 29). El Gobierno aprueba el Ingreso Mínimo Vital. Retrieved from <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/consejodeministros/resumenes/Paginas/2020/290520-cministros.aspx>

energy needs of families and the fight against energy poverty, which has allowed a fairer allocation of space and urban resources.¹⁹

Other measures of labour, economic, and fiscal nature have been the increase in unemployment benefits or the prohibition of dismissal, aid to the self-employed, or changes in taxation, rendering them more progressive and sustainable and oriented towards furthering social progress.²⁰

In addition, universal access to vaccines, with Spain having one of the highest vaccination rates worldwide²¹, is fundamental, given that Covid-19 will continue to be present as a disease in our societies for years to come.

Other social lessons during Covid-19

On the other hand, during the pandemic in Spain, we found a series of social, economic, or organisational dynamics that also require our attention when observing and planning future responses to the climate emergency.²²

Firstly, the need to influence geographical redistribution within the Iberian Peninsula as a way of releasing population pressure from the cities in the face of climatic emergency is a case in point. The problem of “empty Spain” (“España vaciada”), that is, the depopulation of rural and inland areas, has raised public attention with the relocation of many families and workers from urban environments to these areas, even temporarily, to avoid the impact of the pandemic in the cities.

Considered as a factor for moving to rural environments, the improvement in telecommunications, together with advances in teleworking, have also been important during the pandemic and have opened a wide range of possibilities for avoiding travel and reducing emissions when traveling within cities. On the other hand, the pandemic has made it possible to improve the capacity for adaptation and response of health systems, but also of the rest of the administrative and governmental structures in the face of supervening crises, which is a positive experience in the face of possible extraordinary climate-related impacts.

And finally, societies have been able to assume restrictions in the exercise of their fundamental rights, such as home lockdown, for the sake of the common good, which raises the question of whether these or similar measures limiting rights, will be needed in the face of the climate emergency and the capacity of the citizenry to assume them.

19 Some examples of measures carried out by Spanish administrations for vulnerable families during the pandemic are proposed, such as aid for food supply by the City Council of Huelva, the implementation of a Social Impact Coin Card by the Provincial Council of Barcelona; rental aid to families in the City Council of Malaga or the City Council of Andraxt; or aid to ensure household supplies as in the City Council of Getafe or Cordoba.

20 Other measures carried out by Spanish administrations in the field of aid for job loss are those of the City Council of Gijón or Valencia; aid to the self-employed in the City Council of Ponferrada or Daimiel; or to alleviate the economic burden in the payment of municipal taxes to families in vulnerable situations as in the City Council of Estepona or Terrassa.

21 France 24 (2021 August 12). How Spain took the lead on vaccinations against Covid-19. Retrieved from <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210812-how-spain-took-the-lead-on-vaccinations-against-covid-19>

22 Gamero, J. (2021). Will the pandemic experience help to tackle climate change? The Conversation, 25 May 2021. <https://theconversation.com/servira-la-experiencia-de-la-pandemia-para-afrontar-el-cambio-climatico-161294>

Urban social protection mechanisms in the face of climate emergencies

The report "Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future" (UN-Habitat, 2021) addresses these issues and the transition that cities must make from the experience of Covid-19 towards a more sustainable future marked by the impact of climate change.

In the words of UN Secretary-General António Guterres in the foreword to Report: "Cities are engines of dynamism and innovation and can help us overcome development deficits. They can spearhead reforms towards a New Social Contract to tackle poverty, strengthen social protection, restore public trust and reach people who are on the margins or who face discrimination."

In the same way, these objectives are translated into four fundamental ideas:

- the need to rethink the structure and function of the city by reconfiguring urban morphology and systems at different scales, not only improving its resilience to the effects of the pandemic;
- the importance of addressing systemic poverty and inequality in cities through targeted interventions to mitigate the impact of Covid-19;
- the rebuilding of a new urban economy that should include a set of tailored economic support and assistance packages to help businesses and families with an emphasis on "building back better", promoting the transition to greener and more equitable urban economies;
- and finally, recognizing more integrated urban legislation and cooperative multilevel governance and developing more flexible and innovative institutional and financial frameworks.

The importance of shaping a **new approach to social protection in cities** is an issue that runs throughout the report and is evidenced by the experience of Covid-19 and the increasing poverty of the most vulnerable groups in the face of climate impacts. Some of the measures implemented during the pandemic, of a temporary and extraordinary nature, should be necessarily made permanent so as to have an impact on their long-term transformative nature and to foster urban resilience in the face of climate change. This implies continued extension of social guarantees to a greater number of the urban population, considering different associated risks related to gender, age, ethnicity, migratory status, etc.

The high concentration of population and poverty in urban contexts will act as risk amplifiers when it comes to suffer from the impacts of climate change, whether due to physical or socio-economic issues, which will require the implementation of more effective public policies for social protection. In this regard, the development of Social Protection

Floors (ILO Recommendation No. 202), considered as a set of basic social security entitlements and transfers, aimed at helping to promote human rights and support decent living standards, become relevant (ILO, 2011). These measures for the expansion and implementation of social protection policies are fundamental, especially if we consider their variant of socio-environmental protection floors, defined for the first time at the Rio Summit in 2012 (MDS, 2012), which would increase the resilience of communities in the face of climate impacts, in addition to promoting sustainable development. In other words, this is a mechanism that connects the protection of people with the protection of the planet.²³

From this experience, we are able to articulate more just, solidary, and sustainable responses, including better access to safety nets, social services, housing, supplies, and employment opportunities adapted to urban environments. Thus, sustainable livelihoods and social protection measures have a vital role to play in ensuring urban resilience and recovery. Indeed, urban environments represent some of the most critical and strategic frontiers for social protection especially in the context of climate emergencies.

Electricity supply as a right in the face of climate emergency

The lack of electricity supply that the poorest and most vulnerable urban dwellers will face in the face of climate change reminds us that energy poverty is part of the inequality problem faced by these populations. The price of energy, which, among others, is influenced by the decline of fossil fuels, is leading to a reinforcement of the hoarding logic of the prevailing capitalist economic system, which, in turn, furthers unequal access to these supplies and increases the vulnerability of the most disadvantaged groups.

However, it is necessary to remember that, to maintain resilience and public health in the face of increasing situations of urban social degradation linked to climate change, energy supply emerges as a critical factor, as it is fundamental in the process of providing drinking water, food, transportation, sanitation, communications, or medical care, among others. This issue implies that the right to energy should be guaranteed universally and permanently in the face of intertwined health, climate or energy crises that are increasing in intensity. Therefore, the need exists to integrate the right to energy supply within these new structures of social protection (Primc and Slabe-Erker, 2020), in addition to accompanying these processes by the development of green, renewable energies and the achievement of a higher level of self-sufficiency by the communities.

Maintaining social cohesion and fostering participation in the face of climate emergency

It is in cities where most of the world's population lives and where population growth will go hand in hand with increased population and with increased poverty. The higher incidence of Covid-19 in urban neighbourhoods is a recent example of how risks can increase in areas with higher density and poverty, which can also be reflected in increased social unrest,

²³ The debate on the importance of social protection mechanisms to cope with the impacts of climate change has been very vital in recent years. Please allow me to mention my doctoral thesis linking these mechanisms to climate migration (Gamero, 2014), as well as other recent reports on the subject (Aleksandrova, 2019 and Costella et al. 2021).

protests, or the spread of violence. However, and in the face of climate change's capacity to weaken and limit our social, political, and economic systems, these more disadvantaged urban environments have the capacity to generate solidarity networks, exchange goods and be factories of ideas in the face of adversity.

But to achieve these goals, there is a need to establish a new social contract focused on maintaining welfare and rights in the face of the climate crisis and reducing inequalities, prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion. Solidarity must be a recognised value, but also to combat the culture of privilege that is becoming increasingly entrenched in many societies and cities.²⁴ If we also want cities to be key elements in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the fight against climate change, we must focus on expanding capacities and improving education, health, and access to technologies in vulnerable and disadvantaged neighbourhoods and individuals.

The response to the climate emergency in cities will require all their inhabitants to be able to apply their knowledge and capacities in the search for innovative and imaginative, but also traumatic and disruptive measures, which implies capitalising on the knowledge, networks, and infrastructures of all the groups that make up the city (privileged and marginalised). This participation should also be applied in the field of decision-making and involve all citizens. The Citizens' Climate Assemblies are an example of the development of concepts such as deliberative democracy, understood as collective decision-making procedures, which include institutional redesign and the active participation of those who are potentially affected by those decisions.²⁵

These initiatives already exist in various countries, regions, and cities, and are much more than forums for participation. The Assemblies are a way to channel the interests and needs of citizens to understand, participate in the debate, and generate responses to the growing impacts of climate change. At the same time, these are vehicles for integrating and involving marginalised and vulnerable groups that could be excluded from decision-making that will affect everyone.

Some final thoughts

The future of humanity in the face of climate change depends partially on the ability of cities to advance in reducing their emissions and dealing with its impacts. Many cities have been able to respond with measures that have increased citizen protection and resilience during the pandemic, and it is from that initial experience that we can take home some lessons, and particularly the following one: how we emerge from this crisis and protect the most vulnerable within urban environments will have a lot to do with how we manage the climate emergency.

24 Bárcena, A. (2018 February 13). Hay que terminar con la cultura del privilegio. Retrieved from <https://news.un.org/es/story/2018/02/1426952>

25 Ajuriaguerra Escudero, M.A. (2021). Asambleas ciudadanas para el clima: ¿por qué son fundamentales? The Conversation, 7 July 2021. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/asambleas-ciudadanas-para-el-clima-por-que-son-fundamentales-161910>

For it is all about this idea if we want to maintain social cohesion, equity, and solidarity in our society in the face of the climate emergency. One will not work without the other. We will only be able to cope with the impacts of climate change if we respond in a united and supportive manner as a society. In this sense, and given the impact of climate change on cities and their most vulnerable populations, these measures must be permanent and directed to foster urban resilience both socially and environmentally. Clearly, there is still much to be learned about how to build safety nets in urban environments. However, maintaining and improving measures of access to food, water or energy supplies is critical. In general, these measures imply the development of advanced social protection systems adapted to the reality of urban environments, capable of ensuring decent living standards.

These socio-economic rights must be accompanied by civil and political rights adapted to the new climate reality, where deliberative democracy structures (Dryzek and Nyemeyer, 2019) such as the Citizens' Climate Assemblies allow the participation and optimisation of the skills and knowledge of all those who are part of the city. Against this background, the establishment of a new social contract will become viable, which should necessarily be adapted to the realities of cities and allow for the implementation of measures to recognise and address an uncertain but alarming reality such as climate change.

GUILLERMO SANTOS: SOCIO-TECHNICAL CITIZENSHIPS: CONCEPTUAL NOTES AND EVIDENCE FOR A SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY OF CITIES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The Covid-19 crisis as a socio-technical problem

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 caused unprecedented global health and social crises. Since its outbreak in December 2019, all levels of the functioning of social life were affected: health, education, and work were some of the spaces of social interaction that were affected by the pandemic and forced citizens to make new and complex adjustments. As the historian, George Mosse said when referring to the ruins caused by the First World War, "all certainties dissolve". This Covid-19 crisis is no exception.

In Argentina the Covid-19 pandemic had a particularly dramatic impact. To the effects caused by the coronavirus, we must add a precedent situation of economic and social crisis that has been affecting the Argentine population for several years. By means of illustration, during the first semester of the year 2020, poverty in Argentina had reached 40.9% of the population. Between 2019 and 2020 alone, 2.5 million Argentines became new poor²⁶. New approaches and new perspectives are therefore essential to think about sustainable and inclusive solutions. The socio-technical perspective can contribute towards this end.²⁷

26 See <https://www.cippec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/197-DT-PS-Impacto-social-del-COVID-19-en-Argentina.-D%C3%ADaz-Langou-Kessler.-1.pdf>

27 For a more detailed description of the socio-technical perspective it is recommended to consult Thomas (2008).

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