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City planning and management has increasingly become fragmented by a wave of concepts that seek to define and frame the new trends in urban development. Terms such as "sustainable city", "green city", "eco-city", "ubiquitous city" and more recently "smart city" have been gaining more traction among urban planners, policymakers and practitioners. They attempt to embrace new models and approaches that help them to design urban policies aimed at meeting pressing challenges such as environmental degradation, climate change, mass urbanisation, migration, growing inequality and the fourth industrial revolution, to name a few.

Notwithstanding this, these concepts have not always been able to generate consensus on which urban models should guide policymakers who, regardless of their political ideology, take a long-term view that transcends partisan governments. This also has repercussions on the private sector, which is often conditioned by the vision and strategy framed by the city council. Against this background, we ask ourselves a fundamental question: **what is the highest aspiration for a city**?

Amidst volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, leading urban development policies and initiatives requires a holistic vision and approach that conceives of cities as open ecosystems of actors and policy areas that are interrelated and interdependent, but which have a shared aspiration: maximising citizens' well-being. Often given as the supreme objective in nation-states' constitutions, in practice national, regional and local governments often dismiss the nature of such statements in the current political system, which is still dominated by the axioms of infinite economic growth and paternalistic international development.

In this new paradigm, local governments have the advantage of being closer to their citizens and, thus, of being aware of their dreams and worries much better than national governments, meaning their capacity to respond to their problems and foster their goals should be higher. Such a comprehensive, integral view is reflected in the concept of Wise Cities. Wisdom is the ability to think and act using knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense and insight. This involves

an understanding of citizens, contexts, events, situations, and the willingness and ability to apply judgement and action in keeping with the understanding of the optimal course of action. Thus, wisdom involves doing good (the right policies and actions for citizens' well-being)) by doing it well (the most efficient mechanism to achieve it).

Against this backdrop, the guiding principles of a Wise City are the universal values (or virtues) relating to justice, democracy, care of the natural environment, kindness, compassion and excellence. Indeed, one of the big challenges for this century's urban planners and managers will be to design an urban model that is human-centred and takes into account each city's idiosyncrasy and cultural trajectory in order to avoid a "one-size fits all" approach. The ultimate goal of this model should be the improvement of citizens' quality of life, including the fulfilment of basic needs, the creation of a safe environment, access to opportunities and the pursuit of happiness.

This conceptualisation does not disregard those that have gone before, but includes and transcends them. Sustainability and ecological, green or technology-smartness are also features present in a Wise City, but they are not the end objectives per se: they are a means of improving citizens' quality of life. The Wise City concept can help us align all interdisciplinary areas of study that take place in the complex ecosystem of cities, organising a science of cities into a common direction or framework. There are no more purposeful approaches to development than wisdom.

This vision is conveyed by "**Wise Cities - a glocal think tank network"**, which is shaped by fourteen research institutions from all over the world. This initiative aims to influence and inspire local governments, international organisations and policy researchers to better adapt to the current transformations and future challenges that affect urban development.

The Wise City is characterised by the following seven principles:

- People-centred approach: citizens' well-being is at the heart of policy setting;
- Resilience: adapted to each city's cultural idiosyncrasy, socioeconomic context, environmental setting and overall sustainability;
- Techno-culture: technology as a means to improve citizens' well-being;
- Quadruple helix: integration and engagement of stakeholders through public and private partnerships (citizens, government, private sector, academia);
- Trust-building: as a result of stakeholder collaboration, building and consolidation of social capital;
- Experiential learning: benchmarking best and worst practices, monitoring and evaluating policies and sharing knowledge gained by experience (intra-city and international cooperation);
- Brand identity and reputation: adopting solutions that suit citizens' culture, building a brand that inspires.

This joint paper presents five state-of-the-art articles analysing challenges and trends through paradigm shifts in environment, competitiveness, social cohesion, transportation and global governance. The analysis is enriched with the views and experiences of the different cities that are part of the network. This approach renders a global perspective of

local issues. In every thematic area, the topics chosen are trends that are significantly changing the way cities and metropolitan areas address their challenges. Therefore, they emerge as paradigm shifts, that is, new approaches to addressing existing problems, or new conceptualisations of global problems that challenge existing local solutions.

Network

The network's purpose lies in the following dimensions of analysis and research:

i) improving the quality of citizens' life (by minimising urban threats/challenges and maximising citizens' well-being);
ii) advising and empowering urban enablers such as mayors, local authorities and international organisations that work on urban development issues;
iii) influencing the global debate by providing a fresh, new international relations narrative around cities and the global urban agenda;
iv) the foundation of a global network of think tanks as a unique opportunity to include North-South and East-West views and relations in an initiative of global reach and local impact;
v) to influence the UN-SDG localisation process;
vi) to engage citizens, especially the youth, in fostering greater visibility at social level.

List of members

Coordinator: Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB)
Agencia de Cooperación e Inversión de Medellín y el Área Metropolitana (ACI)
Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CESPI)
EU-Asia Global Business Research Center
Ecologic Institute Berlin
Gateway House (Indian Council on Global Relations)
Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV)
Gulf Research Center
Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, IASS Potsdam
Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam
Istanbul Policy Center (IPC)
Lagos Business School (LBS)
OCP Policy Center
Yonsei University