Looking at other urban spaces: intermediate cities

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1 – Why should we speak about intermediate cities?

When we speak about urbanisation processes, and above all the results of these processes, and when we use the term "*city*", there is a general tendency to refer almost exclusively to the largest urban agglomerations. The fact is that the largest cities are the ones that have been studied most and are the ones that are best known and admired or criticised. They are the ones that have been most filmed and featured in world of cinema, arts and audiovisual media. As David HARVEY observed, in these cities we tend to find the extremes of the urban reality; they present both metaphors and metonymies of all that is urban. Even so, these centres represent only a small part of the urban phenomenon.

According to data from the United Nations, in the year 2000, there were only 20 cities with over 10 million inhabitants, while 31 others had populations of between 5 and 10 million (UNITED NATIONS, 2002). In fact, a relatively small number of cities house a very small percentage of the planet's total urban population: cities with over 10 million inhabitants contain 7.9% of the world's urban population and those with populations of between 5 and 10 million house a further 5.9%. The largest urban agglomerations therefore form a rather select club with relatively little weight within the global context of urban population.

The majority of the world's urban population lives in small and medium-sized cities, which are also notably more numerous. According to the previously cited source, 62.5% of the world's urban population resides in cities with fewer than one million inhabitants ([1]).

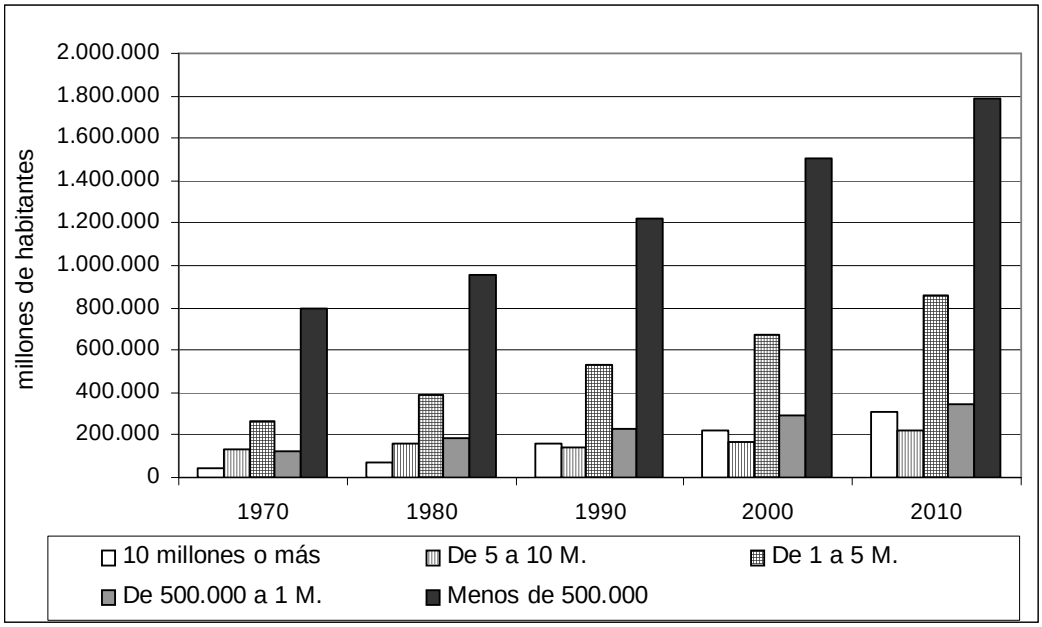
At one extreme, there are the largest urban agglomerations, at the other, there are the smallest urban nuclei, and in between, occupying an intermediate position, we find the medium-sized cities ([2]). As these intermediate situations tend to find themselves between two extremes, they tend to be defined in a negative way: they are neither too big nor too small. Here, there is an underlying question of quantity that is never easy to define, because each context tends to present a completely different set of circumstances. As a result, what would constitute a medium-sized, or intermediate, city

[1] - El crecimiento de las grandes aglomeraciones urbanas y los procesos de concentración han resultado más moderados de lo que se preveía pocos años antes. Véase, por ejemplo, las previsiones que la ONU realizaba en 1996 (UNITED NATIONS, 1997), cuando se apuntaba que, en el año 2000, en las ciudades de más de 10 millones residirían el 9'6% de la población (7'9% en la revisión del 2001).

[2] - Se emplea este concepto cuando se hace referencia a la densidad demográfica del asentamiento o a la dimensión física de la ciudad. Sobre el uso de los conceptos 'ciudad media' e 'intermedia', véase BELLET, C.; LLOP, J.M., 1999.

in Europe, may correspond to a small, or even very small, city in a context such as China or India in which there are many cities with far more than a million inhabitants ([3]).

Figure 1 – The evolution of urban population according to the size of the urban nucleus



Source: Based on data provided by the UNITED NATIONS (2002), *World urbanization prospects: The 2001 revision*

Trying to delimit the object of our study using rigid quantitative criteria would be almost impossible. Intermediate cities are not only defined in terms of their demographic size and according to specific dimensions (that are coherent with their geographic context), but, above all, on the basis of the functions that they perform: their role in the mediation of flows (of goods, information, innovations, and administration, etc.) between the rural and urban territories within their respective areas of influence and with respect to other centres or areas, that may be more or less distant from them. These mediating functions are performed between local/territorial spaces and regional/national, or even global spaces.

The adjective *intermediate/intermediary*, whose use was first registered in academic circles in the mid-1980s, expands on the meaning of the term that it has now all but replaced: *medium-sized city* (GAULT, M, 1989; BOLAY, J.C., et alt., 2003). Dimension, demographic size and physical extension were the variables that mainly contributed to the delimitation/definition of the medium-sized city, but these variables are now considered too rigid and static. On the other hand, the terms intermediate/intermediary introduce three new dimensions:

- they add the idea that the potential and importance of the city does not depend so much on its demographic size as on the way in which it interacts with the other elements within its system: its capacity to create relationships and create a network and also the characteristics of this network.

[3] - Con cierta ironía el profesor Roger BRUNET (2000) define 'ciudad intermedia' como un "Objeto Geográfico No Identificado, OGNI", considerando las dificultades que presenta la estricta delimitación de dicho concepto.

- they add value and introduce more dynamic and strategic aspects that offer new possibilities for self-affirmation, reinforce the city-region and pave the way for/consolidate relationships at other levels: at regional, national and even international levels.
- they imply replacing the static and notably hierarchical conceptualisations of the urban system identified in the most classical theories with a new and more open, dynamic and interactive concept (DEMATTEIS, G., 1991).

It is curious how a concept that we can only define in the vaguest of terms can be such a universal reality: where there is a minimum expression of urban structure, there are intermediate cities. They imply highly varied and widespread realities that are present in each and every context, but which are considerably less visible than those configured by the largest urban agglomerations. In contrast to the powerful, global and highly mediatic character of the former, intermediate cities tend to be more discreet and less noticeable.

They are settlements that we discover when we look at territory at more specific scales. They are "*the other* cities". They are quieter cities whose characters contrast with the liveliness and frenetic pace of the lifestyle of the global cities and largest urban agglomerations. This discreet, almost secretive (yet not isolated) presence makes these cities less visible and less present, unless there is an appropriate observation point or, in its absence, an efficient observer. And this is precisely one of the aims of the CIMES (Intermediate Cities and World Urbanization) project: to make these cities more visible and to present and indeed highlight their characteristics and their transversal and common elements while at the same time as studying their diversity ([4]).

2 – What is the CIMES programme and what does it involve

The CIMES, "Intermediate cities and world urbanisation", programme, which has been organised by the *Ajuntament de Lleida* (Lleida City Council, Spain) and sponsored by the International Union of Architects (UIA) and the MOST-UNESCO programme, originated in 1996 with the following objectives:

1. To create a specific institutional and professional field in which to debate and carry out work on intermediate cities.
2. To reflect on the role that architecture and urban planning should play in these cities within the framework of globalisation and the accelerated process of urbanisation on a world scale.
3. To establish a network for collaboration on a world scale, based on sharing information, experiences, technical criteria and working practices, shared by the members of the Programme.

It is evident from these objectives that, more for practical than academic reasons, the Programme seeks to establish a framework within which to promote collaboration, debate and the sharing of information between the technical experts, professionals and academics involved in the practical day-to-day work of urban planning in intermediate cities. This is a framework for work and contacts that allows members to share and comment on their experiences.

The Programme is organised and developed around three different work groups:

[4] - Para obtener más información sobre los objetivos y el desarrollo del programa CIMES, Ciudades intermedias y urbanización mundial, se puede visitar la web: www.paeria.es/cimes

- The programme management team is formed by the signatories of the present article.
- The group of is formed by some 240 people from various different disciplines (architects, urban planning technicians, geographers, sociologists, political scientists, etc.). From time to time, these members are consulted about the methodology, strategy and results relating to the work carried out.
- The present group of up to 96 collaborators (including professionals, technical experts and/or academics), who most actively participate in the Programme and who, as correspondents representing the intermediate cities in which (or with which) they work, provide the information and input that feed the Programme.

2.1 – The first phase (1997-1999).

During the first phase, we established a series of focus points and a framework within which to begin this debate. We also set about creating a network that, by the end of this period, included 47 cities. In order to promote further debate, during the first phase we organised a series of quite general seminars. In the second phase, these activities became more strictly contextualised and were combined with activities that promoted the sharing of information via mail, fax and/or e-mail.

The fruits of the work carried out in this first phase of the Programme were presented in two international publications (*Intermediate cities and world urbanisation*, 1999, the first book of the CIMES Programme and *Intermediate cities. Urbanisation and sustainability*, 2000, which was the product of presentations by academics and specialists at the 8th Urban Studies Week (www.udl.es/dept/geosoc/seu.html), which was held in Lleida (Spain) from 30th March to 3rd April, 1998) and various other documents that can be consulted via the same programme web site (www.paeria.es/cimes) or via the UNESCO web site (www.unesco.org/most).

2.2 – The second phase (2000-2002)

The second phase, which finished with the celebration in Berlin of the 21st Congress of the UIA, from 22nd to 26th July, 2002, had the following aims and lines of work:

- To extend the intermediate city network. By the middle of 2003, the network already had 96 collaborators from 39 different countries; its composition is detailed in Figure 2.
- To work using the data obtained from the surveys and graphic documents and photographs sent by the collaborators working in the network. This analysis sought to examine the characteristics of the different cities in greater detail and to identify the problems and key themes that architecture and urban planning needed to work on and address.

Figure 2 – Locations of the cities in the CIMES network

Source: Data base and cartography from the CIMES programme

- To hold territory-specific seminars in order to work on the theme within more specific contexts. During the second phase, the following meetings were organised:

a) "*Amélioration des conditions de vie dans les villes intermédiaires en Afrique*» at Sfax (Tunisia) from 8th to 10th November, 2000.

b) «*El rol de las ciudades intermedias iberoamericanas*», held at Resistencia (Argentina) from 4th to 6th December, 2000.

c) "*Recompositions urbaines*" held at Beirut (Libya) from 15th to 16th February, 2002.

d) "*La segunda fase del Programa CIMES*", held at Barcelona (Spain) on 23rd February, and at Lleida (Spain) on 25th February, 2002.

The territory-specific seminars and analysis of the surveys made it possible to not only present common and transversal elements (the mediating functions, territorial role, strong relationship between these cities and their *hinterlands*, and scale, etc.) but also to highlight the enormous diversity of the reality contained in these cities. Through the study of common/transversal elements and diversity, we sought to reflect on some of the results obtained from the Programme. These were presented in greater detail in the second book of the CIMES programme, which was published in 2003: *Intermediate cities: profiles and agenda*.

3 – A general view. The elements that characterise CIMES and what they want to be.

3.1 – Mediating functions. From specific to global territory

The medium-sized/intermediate city cannot simply be defined on the basis of its physical or demographic size. As, or even more important, is the role and the function that the city plays within its more or less immediate territory, the influence and relations that it exerts and maintains with this territory, and the flows and relations that it generates towards the exterior. Some of the characteristics that help to define the role that a medium-sized/intermediate city plays in its territory on a local/regional scale include:

- Centres providing more or less specialised goods and services for the population of the same municipal area and for other municipalities (urban and rural settlements) that are more or less near to it and over which it exerts a certain influence.

- Centres of social, economic and cultural interaction. What Hardoy and Satterthwaite referred to as: "The economic heart of large rural areas associated with Third World cities" ([5]).

- Centres associated with infrastructure networks that connect local, regional and national networks, some of which may also have easy access to international networks (as in the case of medium-sized cities on metropolitan peripheries). They are nodes that structure flows and points of reference and access to other levels in the network.

- Centres that normally house levels of local and regional government administration through which the demands and needs of a wide range of social strata are channelled. The decentralisation of administrative and governmental functions to these levels and at these scales carries with it a better understanding of the medium in which projects and measures are to be developed. This means that the resulting initiatives tend to be more in keeping with the needs and realities of this context.

Other, very general, characteristics that are also associated with the intermediate scale and with the relationships that these cities have with larger urban settlements:

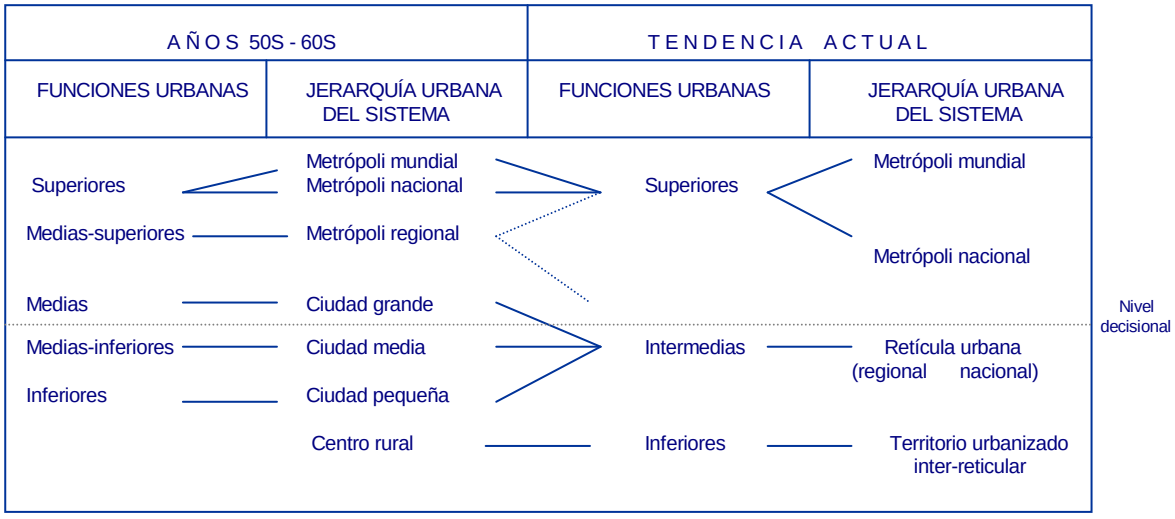
- More balanced and sustainable systems (due to their scale) that produce more balanced relationships with their respective territories. Even so, some intermediate cities, especially in parts of the Third World, act as centres that exploit large rural areas or exploit the natural and human resources of their areas of influence. Due to their scale, these cities can, in theory, maintain more open, harmonic, and balanced relationships with their respective territories.

[5] - HARDOY, J. - SATTERTHWAITE, D. (1986), *Small and intermediate urban centres*, Hodder and Stoughton, London.

- These are centres that are easier to govern, administer and control and centres that, at least in theory, allow greater participation by citizens in the governing and administration of the city.
- They are settlements with more human and understandable scales. This makes it easier for citizens to identify themselves with their respective cities. They are also cities in which it is relatively easy for people to maintain their own identity (although this is more difficult in the case of medium-sized or intermediate cities that lie within the area of influence of large metropolises).
- They do not have the environmental problems associated with the mega-cities. This gives them clear potential and it is an important factor in favour of the social and economic success of these cities and the image that they project.
- They are less socially conflictive and have smaller associated social costs.
- They are less socially and culturally diverse, which tends to result in what could be described as a certain level of social endogamy.
- They are less economically competitive than the metropolises which tend to concentrate the higher level functions in the urban system.
- They have greater difficulties in accessing the main flows of information and capital than the largest cities.

So far, we have only defined and referred to the characteristics of medium-sized/intermediate cities with respect to their regions and territories. We have therefore been working at the more or less local and regional scales: the scales that most relate to their day-to-day urban and territorial administration. But, it is also important to mention the changes that take place at other scales. Globalisation processes have implied a profound restructuring of the urban hierarchy on a planet-wide scale. As shown in Figure 3, which is based on studies by the Italian geographer Giussepe DEMATTEIS ([6]), this has tended to lead to its simplification.

Figure 3 – Simplification of the levels in the urban hierarchy
Source: based on DEMATTEIS, G. (1991).



The main nodes in the global network are the main urban territory systems. These are mainly configured around the global cities and the main global and national

[6] - DEMATTEIS, G (1991), "Sistemi locali nucleari e sistemi a rete: un contributo geografico all'interpretazione delle dinamiche urbane", en Bertuglia, C.S. - La Bella, A. (Ed) (1991), I sistemi urbani. Vol.1: Le teorie, il sistema e le reti, Milano, Franco Angeli, pp. 417-441.

metropolises, as they control the main flows of information and capital: the higher-level and management functions of the system.

The order of the new hierarchy and the positions that the different cities occupy within the global network now have little or nothing to do with population size. The models of relationships and flows within the network remain relatively hierarchical and rigid, and therefore continue to follow the vertical directions within the hierarchy described by the central place theory of Walter Christaller. Even so, the territorial flows and relationships described by Christaller have been largely undermined by increased mobility, the tendency for places to specialise and develop complementarity, and the process of decentralisation that has moved some non-decision making related activities and functions to other smaller centres. Processes of economic globalisation and the movements of flows within the global network have tended to favour certain specific points and this tendency for polarisation has tended to penalise medium-sized cities and urban agglomerations that are not well located within the network. But at the same time, these tendencies have provided an opportunity for small and medium-sized centres to reposition themselves within the global network, because in the context of globalisation, context and the physical and population size of the city are not so important.

What do the dynamics and success of these settlements depend on? How is it possible to pass from being a medium-sized city to playing the role of an intermediate city within the global network?:

It depends on:

- The relative positions of each of these cities and their possibilities of forming connections with larger scale networks and flows: small metropolises and urban poles in rural settings, medium-sized cities on metropolitan peripheries, medium-sized cities that form part of regional networks or lie within corridor systems. To this group, it is also necessary to add correcting factors related to the socio-economic and territorial context of each individual city, as it is not the same to be on the periphery of the centre as on the periphery of the periphery.
- The level of social cohesion and cooperation in each of these cities and the ambition of their main social agents.
- The attention and importance given to the education, training and qualifications of their citizens.
- The way in which their institutions manage their immediate environments and resources at the local and territorial scales.
- Their capacity to improve the physical and environmental quality of their city spaces and territories and thereby guarantee minimum levels of habitability and quality of life for their citizens.
- Their will to develop a “city project”, whose influence would also extend to cover their respective territories.
- The strategies for competitive and complementary specialisation that they develop.
- The creative capacity of their environment and its ability to adopt innovations. Each city should develop its own strategies and act locally, though think globally.
- The capacity of each city to take full advantage of its own endogenous resources and those of its territory.
- The local and territorial capacity of each city to create its own identity, with this identity being socio-culturally appropriate for its urban and territorial environments.

And the possibilities open to intermediate cities are magnified when they work together as part of a network and when complementary and cooperative relationships are established with other nodes, other points and other cities. But above all, they are

increased when the city project is coherent with the needs and realities of an intermediate city, designed with these in mind, and applied in a responsible way. Some of these proposals may coincide with, or be similar to, the one outlined below, which were presented and debated by the group of experts from the CIMES Programme.

3.2 – Proposals for work in intermediate cities

One of the first documents of the Programme sought to establish a series of reflections on planning and urban planning in intermediate cities. These proposals were debated with some of the programme collaborators and a summarised version of their final form is presented below. The resulting text could be understood as a clear, basic manifesto of what intermediate cities could and should do.

1 – There is a basic need for c*ooperation between intermediate cities in the face of world-scale urban concentration (urbanisation):*

Intermediate cities can and should play a more active role in the face of the process of urban concentration. They should help to balance and compensate processes of polarisation and even work to prevent the excessive growth of the largest urban agglomerations (mega-cities-megalopolises). However, this objective, which we could term “territorial balancing”, should also take into consideration the diversity of the different patterns of urbanisation and the fact that different urban systems work in different ways. It should also consider the different potentials and roles that the different nuclei/municipalities play in their own specific territorial contexts.

2 – *Medium and long term strategic planning is an essential facet of the city project or programme (strategy):*

a) Medium and long term strategic planning may be beneficial for this type of city as it can establish a general framework in which urban policies can be defined and delimited and help to establish a city project that has been developed with the active participation of the main (public and private) urban agents (GANAU,J.; VILAGRASA, J, 2002).

b) The city project-programme should complement and be coordinated with the physical (urban and/or territorial) planning of the city and with subsequent urban planning and architectonic interventions (urban policy).

c) Furthermore, if this methodology is correctly applied, the development and subsequent management of the city plan-project should make it possible to involve all of social agents who are active in the city. It should also be open to public participation, creating synergies in the pursuit of a common dream.

3 - *Physical or urban planning is more coherent at the intermediate city scale (urban scale):*

CIMES are cities whose spatial and human scales make them easier to understand and define; they are therefore also easier to physically plan and structure. Cities of these scales have physical and population sizes that allow more efficient urban planning than the largest cities. Even so, it is important to stress that this is a rather general observation and one that needs to be examined with reference to different types of cities and urban plans, whose specific structural contents and/or zoning, general organisation and/or planning will have a definitive influence.

4 - *Problems relating to housing and habitat should be priorities for the team of professionals (habitat):*

The basic problems facing modern-day and future urban planning, at least for the great majority of the planet’s urban population, continue to be those related with the most basic need: accommodation. The authorities and professionals involved with CIMES

need to understand that they can, and must, play a substantial role in trying to provide an urban setting that favours dignified human development. To achieve this, they need to take the following issues into account:

a) Dignified housing must be hygienic, safe, human and intimate. It must also be based on the development of global planning and management policies.

b) The criteria for architectural aspects of urban planning should not simply be limited to using international forms and technology, but must incorporate the housing materials, forms and structures that are traditionally associated with each territorial context.

c) The basic problem of habitat should not only be contemplated at the project or individual (house to house) scale, but also at the urban or general (space to space) scale. The city should be a place in which to live and cohabit. The design of shared free space and public space is therefore a key consideration.

5 - *Monuments are heritage items and today this status should also extend to new constructions that serve community-related functions (urban symbols):*

a) We should not only protect, rehabilitate and destine for new functions those elements that form part of the cultural, historic and architectonic heritage of cities. The new public service buildings and those that serve community uses also form part of a community's heritage and/or serve symbolic functions within our cities.

b) It is important to promote awareness of representative forms of architecture that are intrinsically related to (geographical, historical, cultural, etc.) notions of place and these should inspire the architecture and urban planning found in CIMES. These factors should not only be considered at the scale of individual or isolated projects, but also with everything relating to the field of urban planning: the composition of the images, places and sights of these cities.

c) Nowadays, greater attention should also be given to the relationship between architecture and its users, so that the elements of formal symbolism that are employed are not just the product of the art of building.

d) Old quarters tend to be the original centres of contemporary cities. The histories, images and identities of these old quarters are inseparable from them. In the specific case of intermediate cities, their physical impact is very significant.

6 - *The physical or urbanistic plan should be adapted to the physical territory and natural environment of the city (sustainable urbanism):*

Today, it is not possible to develop a form of urban planning that fails to incorporate the criteria of sustainability and respect for the environment. For this reason, physical and urbanistic plans and their subsequent management need to meet the main objectives that have now been formulated as working hypotheses:

a) Urban plans should promote and take full advantage of the ecological advantages of cities and, at the same time, introduce the natural environment and countryside into their respective models for territorial organisation and development.

b) It is necessary to move away from technocratic models for urban planning that are only based on a quantitative analysis of population and activities and on planimetric visions and analyses. These could and should be complemented with other, more qualitative, focuses such as: the diversity of the landscape, analyses of areas of land and water, climate, and geographic diversity.

c) Urban plans should organise cities in function of the specific physical conditions of each place. To do this, they should seek to combine zoning (quantifiable elements on the basis of how they are used and built) and urban structures (social elements and items of infrastructure related with general services).

d) The physical lay out of each city must be basically related to a concrete definition

of the relationship between its total surface area and zone densities, maximum distances and global urban form, and zoning of uses and means of transport, etc. This could help to reduce transport costs and/or the cost of individual journeys and unavoidable movements of people, between their places of residence and work.

e) Urban plans should also take into account sustainable criteria: promote the integration of the informal (family) and formal (business) economies; promote sustainable cycles of production and the recycling of waste; promote the use of local, non-polluting and recyclable materials; and help to conserve natural resources (water and land).

f) Urban planning should offer a more integrated conceptualisation of functions and activities, permitting a form of mixed urban organisation with no segregation between the different zones within the city.

7 – *One of the basic principles is the active participation of the population in the design and administration of CIMES (participation):*

a) The inhabitants and users of intermediate cities should actively participate in the design and management of where they live. The city can only become a space for individual liberty and social cohesion and a place of economic and social progress if certain minimum conditions for civic participation are guaranteed. In the words of Aristotle: “the city is a political construction”.

b) The formulation of proposals relating to cities is not a question that can be objectively assessed on the basis of purely empirical and/or physical data. It is important to understand that the shaping of what is urban, and indeed of the very idea of the city, is the fruit of a historical process. This process, in turn, has various different (cultural, economic and social) dimensions which help to explain the diversity and peculiarities of the urban medium. And it is precisely in these peculiarities, together with the topological and geographical features, that we can find the key elements that have conditioned the development of each particular city.

8 - *The general objective of intermediate cities is to guarantee the quality of life of their citizens (global):*

The definition of this objective depends on each specific context and on its starting position. The objective of quality of life implies first meeting the basic needs of each settlement: dignified housing, running water, drainage and sewer systems, education, health and hygiene. Once the basic needs and services have been covered, it is necessary to focus on more qualitative objectives.

9 – *Proposals should respond to the basic problems facing each city and each population (local):*

Any proposals must refer to the specific place and society in order to avoid the negative effects of the homogenization of cities, which are usually the result of a poor application of the influence known as globalization. To achieve this, it is necessary to support urban planning and architectural proposals based on elements with a local character.

4 - A look at diversity. CIMES in detail

The exploitation and analysis of the available data initially shows the great diversity and wealth of the cases studied within this programme. Physical and population sizes, densities, ways of occupying space, types of ground plan, levels of amenities and infrastructure, geographic framework…, etc. These are all interesting concepts which academics tend to classify with the establishment of typologies and models. Although, as we are fully aware, there have probably not been enough studies yet to create

specific theories about intermediate cities, we feel that there have been sufficient to at least illustrate the diversity and complexity of these settlements.

First, in point 4.1, there is a general overview of the different forms of the ground plans observed which is based on an analysis of the street maps submitted by the collaborators. The urban forms and sites (the topography of each place) provide the base on which we have constructed our models. Point 4.2 goes on to analyse statistical data relating to population, physical size, levels of amenities and infrastructure, and information relating to governance and administration. The figures include presented reflect the arithmetic averages of some of the data facilitated by the cities. These are presented in relation to the demographic size of the city in question, its physical dimension and geographic context.

Point 4.3 analyses the documentation that was submitted relating to the most representative monuments and images of the different cities. This survey required collaborators to cite the most significant monuments and/or other significant points of reference in their respective cities. The references were coded and after quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results (for the data that required such treatment), a series of general reflections were made. Finally, point 4.4 relates to another of the questions contained in the survey: a list of the most important projects carried out over the previous 10 years and of what were seen as key projects either currently underway at the time of the survey or projected for the future.

4.1 - Typologies, forms and ground plans

The collection of ground plans for the cities in the CIMES network is quite varied and tempts classification. That said, any form of categorisation that might be attempted, would be of limited use given the tremendous diversity of the objects of study. The classical typologies of the architect Kevin LYNCH (1954), based on metropolitan forms, and that developed by the French geographer Jean TRICART (1954), as a guide for understanding ground plans, still have a certain degree of validity, but they present schemes that are rather rigid and which are difficult to apply to the ground plans of many of the cities studied in this project.

In the context of our small collection, it would perhaps be best to reflect on the relationship between the different forms of these ground plans (urban planning model) and the characteristics of each specific place: its site and situation. These last two classic urban geography terms refer to the characteristics of the physical setting in which the city originally developed (its topography, natural constraints, etc.) and to the territorial and geographic context in which the city conducts its relations and which it organises (transport routes, economic space, etc.).

Figure 4 – Models of the ground plans of the CIMES network

From the relationship between the form, which is the result of the different urbanisation processes (both planned or unplanned), and constraints or characteristics of the specific location, arise interesting readings that show the different weights and forces of the variables in each case: the way in which development has been conditioned by the ground plan and physical structure of the city: its natural and/or environmental constraints.

In the models analysed, it is possible to observe the interplay between the configuration of the urban model and the geographic and topographic conditions of the specific place. This interplay is also conditioned by historical, cultural and social

factors. The last of these also tends to explain the regular or irregular character of some of the resulting forms and the patterns of their historical growth. Orthogonal patterns are determined by the main influences in certain contexts and this is particularly true of Latin American cities, where the typical gridiron lay out has a significant influence on their form. The importance weight of these patterns was largely associated with the process of colonisation, which saw the colonial powers seeking to impose the urban pattern that was easiest for them to control (CAPEL, H., 2002). Orthogonal and gridiron patterns dominate the street lay outs of Latin American CIMES, which also develop following totally regular forms when local topography and territorial logic so allow. This is perfectly visible in the street lay outs of cities such as Resistencia, San Miguel de Tucumán, La Plata, Bellavista, Posadas and Chivilcoy, in Argentina, the cities of Franca and Pelotas, in Brasil, of Mexicali, in Mexico, and of San Felipe and Valdivia, in Chile, amongst others.

In other locations, although it is also possible to detect certain orthogonal patterns, organic patterns and irregular growth have prevailed, as typically seen in the cities of the Maghreb and Asia and also in a good number of European cities. Irregular patterns and organic forms of growth are clearly visible in the street lay outs of European cities including: Kolín, in the Czech Republic; Ciudad Real, Vic and Zaragoza, in Spain; Thessanolinki, Volos and Larisa, in Greece; and Bologna and Reggio nell'Emilia, in Italia. But this pattern is also evident in other geographical contexts, as shown by the cases of Nakano (Japan), Tunis (Tunisia), Nador (Morocco), Sayda (Lebanon) and Agadez (Niger).

Behind these forms and street lay outs, it is also possible to discern a more localised configuration that is related to the position and relationship that the particular node establishes with its immediate environment through the performance of its mediating functions. This would, for example, explain the important influence that the axes that structure territory have upon the different street lay outs, the importance of radial forms in a good number of the ground plans and the socio-economic functionality of certain natural elements, such as water fronts (rivers, lakes and sea fronts), as points of access to, and contact with, other cities and territories.

The overall composition of the urban systems derived from the urban planning model, the layout of the geographic location and the influence of the territorial axes, which allow the development of mediating functions, is responsible for generating this rich diversity. Intermediate cities therefore constitute extraordinary laboratories in which to reflect upon urban forms and try out new technical proposals. These proposals should help to construct cities that offer better living conditions to both their users and the people who live in them.

4.2 – Physical and population size – contexts and scales

- The urban dimension

One of the most frequently cited characteristics of intermediate cities is their human scale. This refers to a certain physical dimension of the city that allows its citizens to move from place to place on foot without too much difficulty and to have access to its main services and amenities, and move around it, without too much effort, wherever they may be within its urban space. In other words, these are cities that are pedestrian-friendly and reasonably useable for all citizens.

Within the Programme, we wanted to find some way of defining the factors that condition this human scale. With this in mind, we included a series of data in the survey that would allow us to define this concept with greater precision. These reference parameters were: surface area; population; density; radius of the circle (in km) that

would include 70% of the city's population; and length of the line (in km) that would join the two most distant points within the consolidated urban space. These data would define the compactness of the form of the city (density and dimension). But the urban scale cannot only be defined on the basis of the physical size of these parameters, but must also take into account the shape and characteristics of the site and the urbanisation process (densities, ways of occupying space, etc.). Due to the factors that condition their sites or the characteristics of the settlements themselves, small-sized cities may actually present scales that are not particularly pedestrian-friendly or easily useable; examples would include linear cities and extensive cities with low population densities, etc. As a result, the Programme contemplates the physical and population sizes, densities and characteristics of these settlements as indicators of scales of place, and of the human or pedestrian scales of these cities.

The first indication of the profile of the CIMES (figure 5) presents statistical averages of variables considered to measure the human scale of the city (surface area, population, radius, line and index of compactness), which are grouped together according to population size. In principle, the data presented in the figure show how demographic size influences scale. Cities with smaller populations (fewer than 140,000 inhabitants) have radii (the radius that circumscribes approximately 70% of the urban population) of less than 2.5 km, a distance that can be covered on foot in less than 40 minutes. The average compactness of these cities (index of compactness=1/(area of the radius in Ha./inhabitants per housing unit)*100) is also greater than that of larger settlements, the most extreme points of whose urban areas lie beyond 6 km: the distance that can be walked in an hour and a half. Even so, as demographic size gradually increases the length of the radius and the line separating the most distant points in the city, its index of compactness correspondingly decreases. The quantitative jump produced by the metropolitan phenomenon expands the largest cities to more than double the radius of smaller ones and causes the line separating the most distant points to extend beyond the key distance of 6 km.

Figure 5 – The compactness of intermediate cities by population size

Inhabitants	*Radius in km (a)*	*Area of the radius (km) Πr^2 (Ha)*	*% Area radius/ Municipal surface area (b)*	*Index of Compactness (c)*	*Line length in km (d)*
Fewer than 140,000	2.2	2,022	103.5	0.47	6.4
From 140,000 to 390,000	3.7	5,259	34.7	0.27	10.4
From 390,000 to 640,000	4.5	7,601	67.7	0.12	17.3
More than 640,000	7.9	24,178	55.0	0.04	26.1
Overall averages	*3.8*	*7,224.1*	*70.5*	*0.30*	*12.5*

(a) – Radius in km of the circumference that includes 70% of the urban population

(b) - % of the area of the radius / municipal surface area

(c) - 1/ (Area of the radius / average number of people per housing unit in the city) * 100

(d) – Length in km of the line between the two most distant points in the city

Source: Statistical data from the UIA-CIMES programme survey.

However, a more detailed analysis of the city surveys provides an even richer insight into the general pattern observed from these averaged statistics. Some cities with populations of fewer than 390,000 inhabitants, or even fewer, do not follow the general logic. Examples include cities like Encarnación (Paraguay), Sikasso (Mali) and Saydâ (Lebanon) which have radii and lines that are much longer than those typically corresponding to other cities of their demographic size. At the other extreme, some metropolitan scale cities have radii and/or lines that are shorter than the typical lengths

corresponding to their population intervals. This is the case of Río Grande (Brazil), San Bernardo (Chile), Santiago de Cuba (Cuba) and Beirut (Lebanon).

In these cases, the street map and data relating to the density and compactness of the settlement (and in relation to the historical patterns of the process of urbanisation and the occupation of space in the specific context) are what explain and help to measure the character of the scale of place in each situation. The relatively low densities of a good number of Latin American cities would, in this way, tend to increase the lengths of radii and the distances between the most distant points, while the traditional compactness and density of Mediterranean cities, and particularly those in North Africa and the Near East, would tend to do the opposite: shortening the radii and lines.

Physical size, site specific (topology and ground plan patterns) and settlement characteristics (the density and compactness of the urban space) would therefore be the main elements that would define the physical condition of the human scale of the city. But the physical variables that we have cited should not be understood as determining the condition of the scale of place. A good urban mobility policy (with good public transport services and networks, pedestrianisation policies, and controls over the use of motor vehicles, etc.) and an appropriate urban planning policy (with a mixed regulation of uses and activities, decentralised services and neighbourhood amenities, well-designed open spaces and urban routeways, etc.) may prove even more decisive in this respect. Intermediate cities of metropolitan scales that are not too dense and quite extensive may therefore, with good mobility policies and urban planning, be as, or even more, human than other smaller cities.

- *The territorial dimension*

We are speaking about a group of cities that house 35,062,498 inhabitants and which, through their mediating role, serve a much wider population, if we include their respective areas of influence (65,757,852 people in the case of the 73 cities for which we have received data).

Figure 6 – The intermediate city within its territory - CIMES

Inhabitants	*Inhabitants of the municipal area*	*Inhabitants of the hinterland*	*Radius of the hinterland (km)*	*Distance in km to larger cities (a)*	*Distance to an airport (km) (b)*
Fewer than 140,000	84,628	213,234	39.0	121	83.5
From 140,000 to 390,000	241,339	810,258	51.0	151	24.0
From 390,000 to 640,000	511,791	997,102	45.9	206	7.9
More than 640,000	1,312,177	2,535,857	60.0	223	11.5
Overall averages	389,583	898,299	46.5	156	45.5

(a) – Arithmetic average of the distances in km to the two nearest cities with larger populations.

(b) – Distance in km to the nearest airport

Source: Statistical data from the UIA-CIMES programme survey.

The radii of their hinterlands or direct areas of influence range from 40 km, in the case of the cities with smaller populations (fewer than 140,000 inhabitants), to 60 km, in that of metropolitan scale cities and those with larger populations.

Transport and communications infrastructure are of vital importance if these cities are to perform their mediating functions. As we shall later see, in the section dedicated to the analysis of facts and figures relating to urban projects, this is evident from the

numerous interventions relating to mobility and territorial connectivity: rapid communications channels; bus, coach and railway stations; ports, and airports. Within these same projects, and with reference to the mediating functions that these centres perform, there were numerous references to the organisation and distribution of goods and logistical areas.

- The socio-economic dimension

It is in the description of the socio-economic characteristics of the profiles of cities that the geographical context assumes its greatest importance and where it is possible to appreciate the most substantial differences between the different settlements.

• Sectors of economic activity:
Mediating functions are related to the concentration of the specialised activities and services that also reflect the occupational structures of these cities. A large part of the population, 50-60% of the working population, is usually involved in tertiary sector activity, though with great differences according to the precise geographic context, economic base and administrative-territorial role of the city in question. These same, more or less specialised, functions are also reflected in urban amenities, which will be examined in greater detail in the next point.

Figure 7 - % Working population by economic sectors - CIMES

Region	*% Primary*	*% Secondary*	*% Tertiary*	*% Unemployed*
Europe	3.7	31.7	64.0	10.3
Latin America	12.9	27.6	58.2	16.6
Asia	12.3	36.4	48.2	15.1
Africa	39.7	21.6	36.9	20.4
Overall average	12.8	29.5	56.8	14.4

Source: Statistical data from the UIA-CIMES programme survey.

• Networks and levels of services and amenities:
It is basically the different socio-economic and economic contexts that explain existing differences in the provision and levels of urban infrastructure and amenities. Even so, the data examined in this section also show the roles and capital functions that these cities perform in their respective territories and, above all, the influence that capitality has on the provision of urban amenities. Hence, for example, cities that play an important regional role tend to house a good number of specialised amenities (universities, hospitals, sports centres, libraries, etc.), which must serve wide areas within the area of influence of their central nuclei.

Figure 8 – Levels of urban amenities - CIMES

Region	*% university students / population (1)*	*Libraries / 1000 inhabitants*	*Hospital beds /1000 inhabitants (2)*	*Sports centres / 1000 inhabitants.*
Europe	2.1	0.014	4.6	0.009
Latin America	3.9	0.047	3.3	0.036
Asia	5.4	0.013	6.1	0.010
Africa	10.0	0.061	7.5	0.060
Overall average	5.4	0.045	5.0	0.039

1 – Percentage of university students over total population

2 – General hospital beds for every 1000 inhabitants

3 – Covered municipal sports centres for every 1000 inhabitants

Source: Statistical data from the UIA-CIMES programme survey.

It is important to stress that CIMES tend to have a notable presence of university level education centres, with an overall average of about 2.2 universities per city. In some cities, the weight of the university student population is also notable, to the extent that we can speak of university cities. Outstanding examples of this phenomenon include Bologna (Italy) and Chambéry (France), where university students represent over 20% of the total population. In general, this factor is most evident and pronounced in European CIMES, regardless of their size. In other contexts, the importance of the university varies according to the capitality of the city in question and its demographic size.

Health care functions are also significant for the role that the city plays within its territory. As a result, almost all CIMES have at least one general hospital. Even so, differences between cities may be substantial, particularly when the number of hospitals is related to population (beds per 1000 inhabitants). Similar differences can be observed with respect to the provision of other types of amenities, such as cultural and sports facilities.

Figure 9 - % Coverage of networks of urban services - CIMES

Region	*Drinking water*	*Drainage and sewer services*	*Energy*
Europe	57.1	47.8	70.1
Latin America	85.7	64.7	91.7
Asia	84.6	68.5	83.4
Africa	98.8	94.7	99.4
Overall average	86.0	71.9	90.8

Source: Statistical data from the UIA-CIMES programme survey.

With reference to basic urban service networks, it is important to highlight the fact that drainage and sewer systems continue to constitute one of the main problems that CIMES must solve. Even so, data for different contexts show enormous differences between cities in the most developed areas, where the percentages of provision are close to 100% coverage, and those in less favoured contexts.

• Local government and administration:
Despite the diversity of competences and funding systems observed in the municipal administrations of CIMES, the figures received present quite a clear picture of context-related differences between cities and differences in the capacity of different municipalities to deal with the problems facing them.

Figure 10 – Local government and municipal funding - CIMES

Source: Statistical data from the UIA-CIMES programme survey.

Región	*Media de dólares USA por ciudad*	*Dólares USA por habitantes*	*Número de concejales en el gobierno municipal*
Africa	24.420.021,2	27,9	118,0
A.Llatina	107.982.707,6	763,8	37,4
Asia	129.161.586,1	210,1	91,9
Europa	165.693.028,7	1.001,9	32,3
Media	120.825.378,1	715,7	50,0

The most extreme cases in our study were $6,254 dollars (USA) per inhabitant in the case of Lausanne (Switzerland) and $1.6 dollars in the case of Brazzaville (Congo).

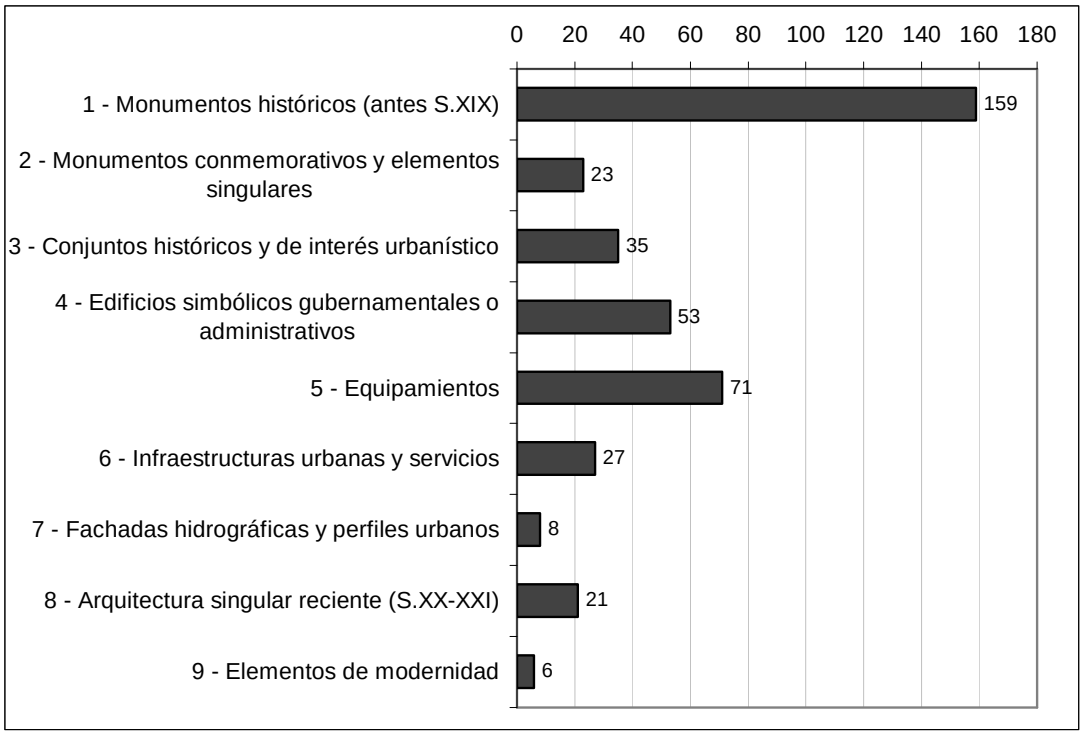
African cities tend to have the most limited budgets.

The sizes of municipal budgets often contrast quite strikingly with the number of elected local government councillors in the different contexts. The relationship between these two variables seems to suggest that the lower a city's budget is, the more councillors it tends to have, and therefore the greater the need to debate how to manage and administer the city in question.

4. 3 - Monuments, urban symbols and representative elements

One of the points in the survey required collaborators to identify the monument and singular/patrimonial elements that were most representative of their respective cities and, whenever possible, to provide the name of the element in question, its date of construction and the functions/uses that it now serves. It is important to point out that within the CIMES programme, the concept of a "representative element" is understood in the most general of terms. It is therefore possible to include not only heritage works, but also other lesser works of historical, architectonic and artistic interest and also spaces (public works and natural spaces) that – on account of their distinctive form, exceptional nature or collective recognition, have become urban symbols or landmarks.

Figure 11 – Coding references to monuments and elements that are representative of the city - CIMES



Source: CIMES programme survey.

This section, which is certainly unique in terms of its subjectivity, includes a wide range of examples (403 in total) that we have tried, not without difficulty, to divide into the 9 different groups presented in figure 11.

According to the replies from the collaborators, the most representative elements in their CIMES usually include buildings and elements which have become regarded as urban monuments on account of their historic or artistic value (these include places of worship, noble buildings of a civil character, monumental remains and archaeological

groups, etc.). Another group of key elements mainly includes urban amenities, some of which are of great historic value (old markets, exchanges, hospitals, theatres, etc.). On account of their uses and meaning, some of these buildings have become points of reference for local citizens, regardless of their date of construction and artistic value. Seats of government and different levels of the administration are also often cited, regardless of the historic or architectonic value of the buildings that house them.

The historical-artistic value and the meaning or symbolism of the uses that different spaces house may, therefore, be the variables that most contribute to making a given element representative. But other distinctive components of the urban landscape are also often cited, including bridges and sculptures, as well as other elements that help to qualify public space.

We received a wide range of responses on this subject. These ranged from the document referring to Santiago de Cuba, where “the whole city is a monument”, to that referring to Suriapet (India), where “there are no important monuments”. In between, a wide range of situations reflect the historical and cultural contexts of each city. Collaborators and experts from the most recently founded Latin American cities tend to liberally cite buildings and elements of more modern consolidation: residential buildings (villas and country houses) and public spaces (parks and squares), etc. References to Chinese cities are also curious in that they tend to highlight recent elements and buildings that give the city a sense of modernity, hence, the key references in the city of Hefei are identified as the telecommunications tower and new rail terminal.

This same idea of modernity is also cited for some European cities: after references to historical and heritage elements (such as churches, cathedrals, palaces, and historic centres, etc.), they also refer to some more specialised amenities, including media libraries, congress centres, and new railway stations, etc.

- Monuments and elements of historical and artistic interest:

The majority of the cases cited in this section (182 in all, 45%) highlight works that would fit perfectly with the most classical notion of a monument: a piece of urban furniture to which society attributes a certain cultural or historical value and which in some way reminds people of the past or commemorates some historical event. The majority of these works relate to buildings that are places of worship (cathedrals, churches, mosques, pagodas, etc.), major works, such as palaces and noble buildings or defensive constructions (including walls, fortifications and castles, etc.), commemorative elements (such as tombs, mausoleums, and commemorative sculptures, etc.), monumental remains and archaeological sites.

Within this very wide group, it is important to highlight references to buildings and spaces that are places of worship. There were 92 such references out of 403 returns: almost 23% of the total. These are mentioned as important points of reference in almost all of the cities surveyed and in some cases they are cited as the main symbol or image of the city. The majority of the places of worship that were cited have retained their original use.

Another group that received numerous references was that including noble civil buildings, with the majority of these being old palaces, manors, or merchant’s houses. The majority of these noble buildings and buildings of historic and artistic interest form part of the city’s urban heritage. It is therefore not only necessary to conserve, renovate and maintain them in good condition, but also to make sure that they continue to remain alive, as representative spaces and/or buildings that can be used and thereby more easily understood. The majority of these buildings house public or community uses, which in many cases have a cultural or administrative character.

- Historic centres, emblematic areas and water fronts:
In some of the surveys, the concept of a monument or element of heritage extended to cover areas or groups of buildings of historical significance. Historic centres are frequently referred to as emblematic areas within cities, and areas that are deemed to be worthy of conservation on account of their historical, heritage or cultural value for the city. This will be more fully explained in the section dedicated to urban projects.

Parks, squares, gardens and routeways of special interest constitute another group of the spaces mentioned. Although some of these have unquestionable historical-artistic value, in the majority of cases they are probably mainly mentioned on account of the value of their collective and community uses. We were surprised by the great number of references to open spaces in Latin American cities where, in general, these elements (squares, parks, and gardens…) are usually presented as significant elements of city heritage. As well as parks and gardens, there are also references to other public spaces (pedestrian zones, shopping arcades, and avenues…) which have great collective use and are attributed considerable social value.

The coasts and/or waterfronts of some maritime cities, and indeed waterfronts in general, are also recognised as emblematic and significant areas of the city. These urban facades often become the classic urban profile of their respective cities and to constitute one of their most representative images. Good examples of this can be seen in the seafronts of Quseir (Egypt), Beirut (Lebanon), Vólos (Greece), Manta (Ecuador) and Nador (Morocco) and the freshwater waterfronts of Lausanne (Switzerland) and the banks of the River Guadalajara in Buga (Colombia). In the case of A Coruña (Spain), many of the elements referred to in the survey are directly associated with the city's maritime location.

- Amenities and elements of urban and service infrastructure:
After monuments and historical sites, amenities are the most cited elements (with 71 mentions: 17.6% of the total). Despite their number, they occupy third and fourth place in the ranking of mentions, after the main historical monuments and government buildings. The majority of these elements are considered on account of their historic or artistic value, but in a large number of cases the significance attached to them mainly derives from the functions that they perform as spaces of collective use. A large number of mentions make reference to educational centres, which are some of the most valued urban amenities in all parts of the world, regardless of the conditions and characteristics of the citizens. Other spaces that also receive a lot of mentions are markets and health centres. Within the educational centres, it is also appropriate to mention the large number of university centres and spaces referred to, which tend to occupy buildings of historical and artistic interest.

Museums are cited in the majority of cities and are mainly housed in emblematic buildings (whether historical or modern). But in this case, their meaning derives from the value of their documents and the collections that they house and from their external projection and appeal to tourists.

The historical value of the element and the symbolism associated with its use also combine in the case of references to urban infrastructure and services. Thus, railway stations are emblematic urban landmarks that are also perfect gateways to the city-territory and are therefore frequently mentioned. Some of these stations are modern (as in Hefei in China), while others are older and have great artistic and architectonic value (as in the cases of Izmir in Turquía, Valencia in Spain, Vólos in Greece, and Palmira in Colombia). In some cities, railway stations continue to be cited despite the loss of their original railway function, as in Granada (Nicaragua), Resistencia

(Argentina), Encarnación (Argentina) and Franca (Brazil). In these cases, their new uses are of a public or community-related character.

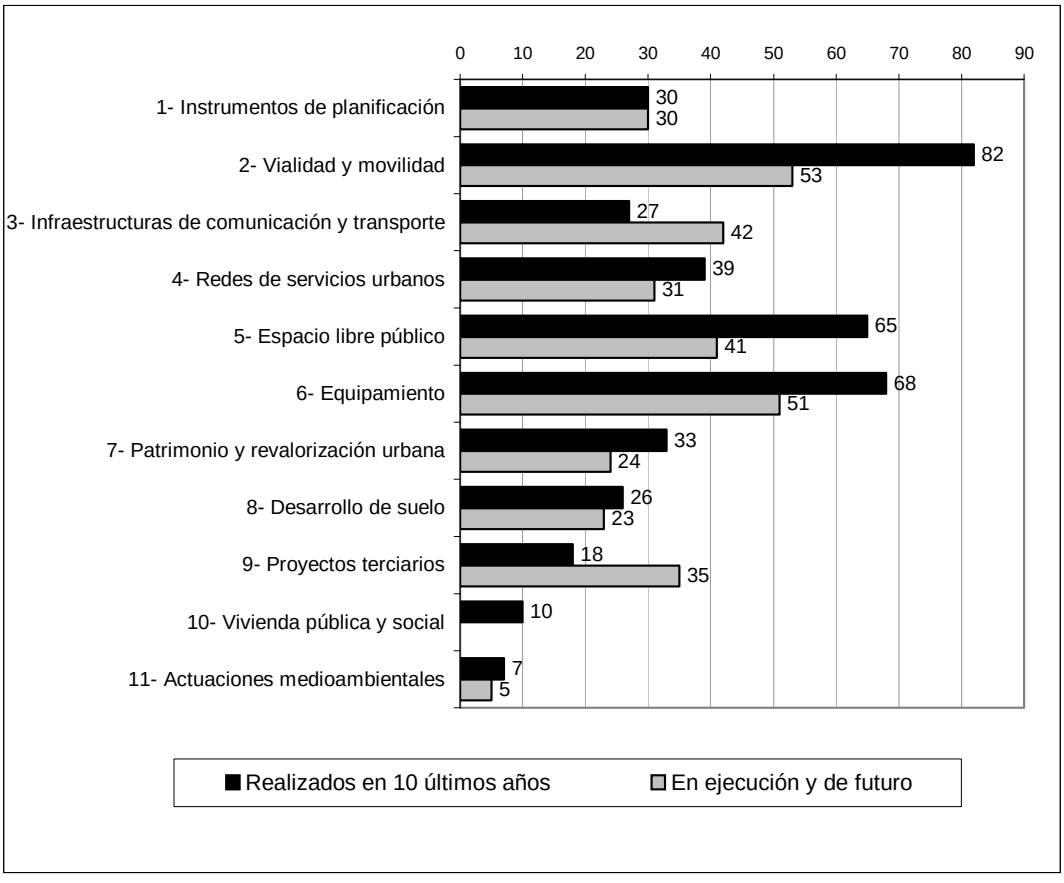
- Symbolic buildings used for governmental and/or administrative purposes:
Buildings used governmental and administrative functions are also mentioned in the majority of cities, and in the highest positions. As commented at the beginning of this section, the fact that they are mentioned could be more related to the collective symbolism of their functions than to the value of the buildings themselves, although in many cases, both are relevant. In this group it is usual to include seats of local government, which may have various different titles: the centre of the municipal administration, city or town hall, municipal palace, seat of local government, governor's residence, council hall, consistorial house, etc.

4.4 – Urban projects

Another of the points in the survey asked collaborators to cite what they considered to be the most important projects undertaken in their cities in the 1990s, currently being undertaken, and planned for the near future. The replies received that related to these projects were classified into 11 general types, with 55 subtypes based on more detailed descriptions. In total, 740 projects were classified, 405 of which had been undertaken in the previous ten years and 335 of which were either currently underway or planned for the future.

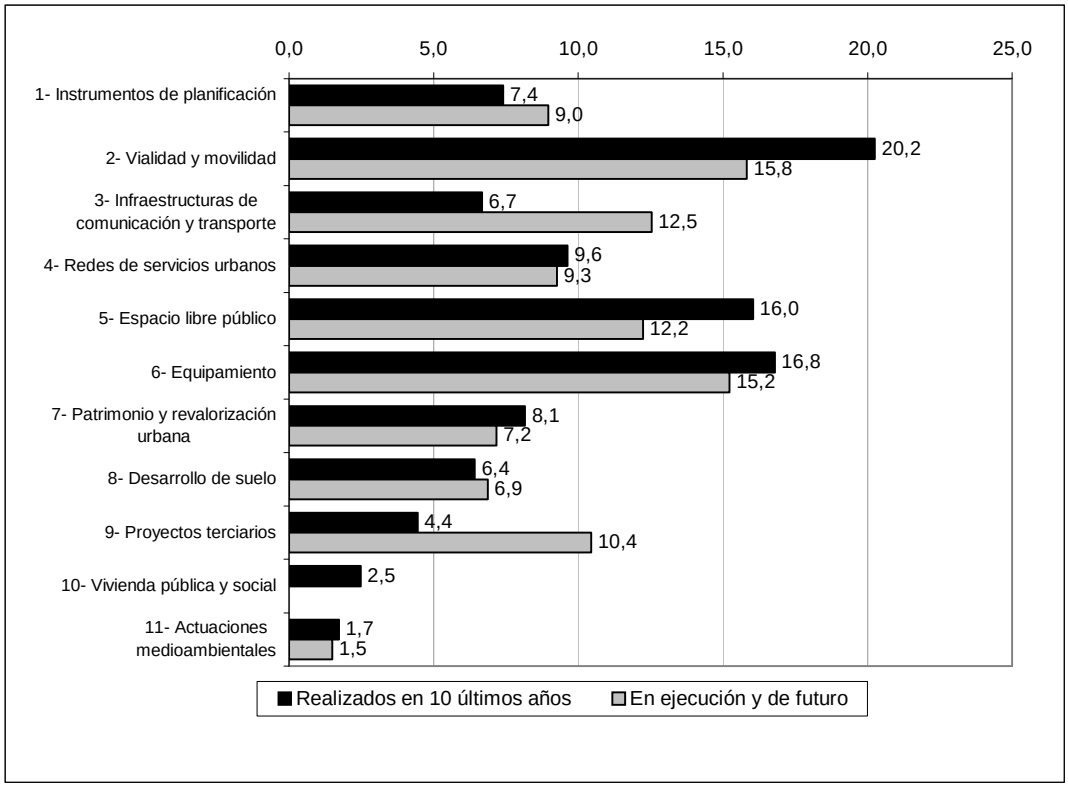
As shown in figures 12 and 13, the most frequently cited projects were related to transport and communications: 28% of the total. Connectivity would therefore seem to be one of the top priorities for this type of city. This priority is easily related to the mediating and territorial roles that these cities play. Urban amenities were the second most cited typology.

Figure 12 – Classification of projects by basic types (absolute numbers)



The differences between contexts are clearly evident in this section of the survey. In the case of intermediate cities in less developed countries, it was usual for the projects cited to relate to making general improvements to living conditions (improving marginalised neighbourhoods and those with poor sanitation services), involving the provision of drainage and sewer systems, electricity and water supplies, and the construction of basic amenities (such as schools, health centres, wholesale markets, etc...). These cities also seek measures to deal with the high indexes of growth that face many of them (by urbanising new areas and constructing new housing, etc...) and to control this growth (by producing new planning documents).

Figure 13 - % Project type according to its state of completion



The majority of the projects cited in intermediate cities located in more developed countries address issues relating to the provision of more specialised services (auditoriums, theatres, and specialist museums, etc.) and are aimed at offering a better quality of life to local citizens through environmental infrastructure projects (waste treatment and water treatment) and projects related with the external image and projection of the city (congress centres, airport spaces, technology centres, and communications centres, etc...). Urban projects related with growth and expansion were only cited in intermediate cities that form part of metropolitan contexts or that have been subject to processes of rapid growth and expansion in recent years.

- Connected cities

Highway administration and mobility projects are some of the most cited initiatives in both categories (135 projects already undertaken or planned for the future). Improvements to existing urban route ways (the resurfacing of roads and extension of road networks, and construction of ring roads, etc.), the construction or improvement of territorial transport routes (with the majority becoming fast tracks and access routes) and the treatment of pedestrian zones, are the most frequently cited works in the case

of projects carried out in recent years. In the case of future projects, the same themes recur, but with different priorities. Once internal deficits have been overcome, the city starts to look outwards, with projects focusing on achieving greater territorial interconnectivity become more frequent than those aimed at increasing internal mobility.

The themes of connectivity and mobility recur with respect to the typology of transport and communications infrastructures, with reference to 69 projects in total. In the case of projects that had already carried out, the main priorities were urban public transport (buses, underground systems, and trams, etc.) and territorial communications and transport infrastructure (airports, ports and railways). These are also the main protagonists of future projects, together with ports, logistics centres and interchange points for transport and merchandise. In fact, the 42 references to future projects for transport and communications are more than the number of projects already completed. Again, intermediate cities show their interest in improving connections with their respective territories by projecting improvements to their transport and communications infrastructures and thereby promoting their role as centres of logistics.

The regulation of traffic flows and work undertaken to achieve more sustainable mobility are visible in a good number of these projects: promoting public and collective transport; pedestrianisation schemes and improving the mobility for pedestrians, regulating motor vehicle transport, and/or creating bicycle lanes.

- Well equipped cities

a. Urban amenities

Providing urban amenities is another of the main objectives of the projects mentioned by intermediate cities, with 119 references (16.1% of the total). However, one surprising point in this section was that the largest number of references referred to the most specialised amenities (museums, exhibition centres, and auditoriums, etc.) and to cultural and sports facilities. This tendency was even more striking in the case of future projects. For example, when educational and health-related amenities are mentioned, this refers to high level (universities, regional libraries, general hospitals, local district and regional hospitals …) or quite specialised (children's hospitals and maternity hospitals, etc.) projects. This distinction again alludes to the role that intermediate cities play within their respective territories: as service centres and providers of more or less specialised amenities to populations that extend beyond their own municipal limits. This also tells us that they are cities that take pride in both their external projection and internal cultural dynamics. This is even more evident when we analyze their future projects: almost all of the projects cited in this section referred to the provision of specialised amenities.

b. Urban open spaces

Working to provide open spaces in urban areas seems to be another of the priorities of intermediate cities. There were references to 106 projects that had been carried out with this objective: 14.3% of the overall total. Improving, revitalising or providing new squares and parks are aims common to various projects presented in recent years, and this work has been undertaken with great intensity. Although the characteristics of these projects vary considerably, a good number of them seem to address the need to create quite versatile public spaces that combine areas for rest and meeting with other places for play and that can also be used as venues for public acts and/or performances. It was also surprising to note the number of references to works involving the creation, improvement or recovery of parks and green spaces in the city. Some of these projects imply ambitious and wide-ranging responses to the demand for free public spaces. Examples of this are provided for various Spanish cities and include

a system of parks along the banks of the river Ebro in Zaragoza (Spain) and the gardens of Turia in Valencia (Spain).

The treatment of waterfronts and water spaces has also been the subject of a good number of projects. These interventions normally go beyond what could be strictly regarded as the regulation of river courses or providing protection and defence against floods. In the majority of these projects, it is possible to recognise a much wider objective: that of recovering these places as urban spaces and integrating them within the structure and day-to-day life of the city as areas to be used by local citizens. For this reason, together with measures relating to control and regulation, it is normal to find actions related with water treatment and the conditioning of spaces on the banks of rivers or along coasts in order to turn them into open and public spaces.

c. Networks of urban services
The characteristics and level of coverage of service networks are also good indicators of the quality of urban life. The majority of the 70 projects cited in this group refer to drainage and sewer system services, which tends to be one of the areas in which CIMES exhibit some of their most important deficits. To a lesser extent, there are also references to the treatment of urban waste waters. In the case of cities in less developed countries, these projects generally refer to quite basic considerations such as the construction of sewer systems or rainwater drains in already consolidated urban areas. In other contexts, there are references to improving and extending existing treatment plants, etc.

- Cities with plans and projects
a. Urban planning and management
Although there are references to traditional urban planning documents (physical planning and land use planning) this section includes a very wide range of instruments and documents. On one hand, there are still references to the use of classical instruments at the local scale (the creation of property registers and the drafting of general plans, development plans and master plans) and to documents for developing land and carrying out urban reform. But at the same time, there are references to economic planning documents, such as integrated and sector-specific development plans and some strategic planning documents. These tend to be cited as future projects and are not necessarily plans for particularly large cities (Ambato and Manta, Ecuador; San Miguel de Tucumán and Trelew, Argentina). To a lesser extent, there are references to new instruments for the management and control of urban planning, such as the application of geographic information systems (GIS) in Asunción (Paraguay) and Sabadell (Spain).

Sectorial planning and the organisation of specific areas, also plays a key role in intermediate cities: transport plans, drainage and water sewer system plans, plans for coastal fringes, structural reform plans for outlying neighbourhoods and reforms and improvements in central areas. References to processes for reforming and revitalising historic centres and central areas are quite widespread and not just in the section relating to planning (6 documents) but also in that relating to interventions related with heritage in already consolidated areas (26 projects). These works tend to focus on physical rehabilitation and on recovering the patrimony of central areas and also on working to make these cities more socially and economically dynamic.

b. The transformation of urban space
In recent years, quite a lot of work seems to have been undertaken with the aim of reforming and improving already consolidated parts of urban areas in intermediate cities. All of these projects aim to improve the characteristics of public spaces and heritage items in these cities and the quality of life of their citizens: amenities and

services in peripheral and marginal areas, the redynamising and improvement of central areas, etc.

Historical areas have been targets for interventions in all the different contexts, with: conservation plans and projects for historic centres (in Quetzaltenango, Nicaragua and Pune/Poona, India); social and economic redynamisation projects (in Vic, Spain; Larissa, Greece; Porto Alegre, Brazil; Caxias do Sul, Brazil; and Holguin, Cuba); reform, improvement and reconstruction plans (La Plata, Argentina; Beirut, Lebanon; Chambéry, France; Valencia, Spain; Mexicali, Mexico; and Franca, Brazil) and integrated plans (in Buga, Colombia; and Lleida, Spain). The different references suggest a wide field of interventions that go beyond what could be strictly regarded as the physical recovery or urbanistic reform of historic areas and encompass aspects of economic and social redynamisation.

These reform projects also focus on improving residential districts, including interventions that range from the provision of services, amenities and basic infrastructure, as in the project to improve *slums* in Pune (India), to the improvement of public spaces. Some projects explicitly refer to physical interventions in tertiary areas (areas with functional centrality), as in the cases of the recovery of commercial areas and axes in Holguín and Trinidad (Cuba) and the improvements to urban sub-centres and neighbourhood functional centres (in La Plata, Argentina and Porto Alegre, Brazil).

The recovery and integration of unused urban spaces (unused spaces, abandoned amenities and infrastructure, etc.) also receives a good number of mentions. Old industrial areas, railways and military installations are targets for urban recovery with projects that seek to change their functions and to convert them into new spaces that provide urban amenities. Examples of such initiatives include: the conversion of the old Balcells factory into an educational centre in Manresa (Spain); the transformation of the railway station into a cultural centre in Neuquén (Argentina); and the conversion of the old industrial area of El Sucre into a new central area in Vic (Spain).

c. Developing land, housing and activities
The construction of social housing is not cited very many times in the survey replies. It is only referred to in cities that have undergone notable growth and that have a great need for new accommodation. This does not mean that housing is not a priority issue in these cities; but this concept should perhaps be understood as a specifically professional issue that belongs to a different scale from that of urban projects. In fact, quite extensive mention has been made of projects for preparing and developing land for residential uses in all types of context.

Intermediate cities also give attention to the development of land for economic activities and dynamisation projects. The development of land for industrial activities and for the previously cited transport and merchandise interchanges is often cited in the most dynamic cities. However, at the project scale, there are also numerous references to classical tertiary sector activities and to new functions and uses associated with the new economy. These are spaces that establish new urban polarities: commercial centres, hypermarkets and hotel amenities; trade fair parks; office and business parks; convention and congress centres; areas of new technology; and areas of new economic centrality… The first of these: projects associated with commercial and hotel uses, are usually cited in all the different contexts, but the latter (office parks, convention centres, areas of new technology, and areas of new centrality…) are much more selective. These receive far more references in European cities (regardless of their size) and in large cities (regardless of their context) that have a certain degree of international projection (Tunis, Tunisia; Beirut, Lebanon; Porto Alegre, Brazil and Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic).

Tourism seems to be regarded as another important resource for the economic dynamics of these cities, regardless of the context. References range from the construction of hotel amenities in cities like Sikasso (Mali) and the construction of theme parks (Ciudad Real and Valencia, Spain) to integrated tourism development projects, like those of Al-Qusayr (Egypt) and Granada (Nicaragua). The majority of the projects related with tourism are cited as projects for the future.

5 – The future of the Programme

The Programme now enters its third phase with its sights set on the UIA Congress that will be held in Istanbul in the summer of 2005. The experience acquired over the last few years has led us to centre the debate on rather more concrete themes.

Exchanging information and documentation with other cities in the network has allowed us to discover other very interesting and imaginative experiences and initiatives in the field of urban policy, some of which are barely known. Examples would include:
. Resistencia (Argentina)
. *L'Atélier d'urbanisme* of Perpignan (France).

The work carried out in these cities deserves to be known and their good practices should be studied and analysed. From the Intermediate Cities and World Urbanisation programme we have therefore proposed putting together a compendium of "*Good practices for urban policy in intermediate cities"*. These good practices will be analysed by the board of the Programme and made public after a selection process.

The third phase of the programme will also centre on work relating to specific themes that caught the eye, for one reason or another, in the initial phases and became their protagonists:
. the market, spaces of exchange and markets
. public space
. space for worship

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