

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

for a panel proposal to the 2023 Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Annual Conference
(Vancouver, Canada, May 24-27, 2023)

The Mobility of Innovation Spaces in Latin America: Governance Models, Equity in Policymaking, and Spatial Outcomes

In recent years, cities around the world have set up *innovation spaces* for designing novel and inclusive policy solutions to urban planning and development issues (Wellstead, Gofen, & Carter, 2021; Caccamo, 2020; McGann, Blomkamp, & Lewis, 2018). These innovation spaces are referred to with different labels (e.g., city labs, policy labs, urban labs, incubators, innovation hubs, design studios, etc.), but they share the purpose of fostering innovative approaches to policymaking. Innovation spaces act as mechanisms to incorporate citizens and experts into urban planning and decision-making (Whicher, 2021) to respond to the contemporary call for more flexible, democratic, and multidisciplinary approaches to policymaking (Hassan, 2014, Nabatchi, 2012). These spaces also tend to share principles and methodologies, such as open and collaborative processes, experimentation, human-centered design, and rapid development (i.e., small loop design-test-adaptation) in their approach to innovation (Gryszkiewicz, Lykourantzou & Toivonen, 2016). Indeed, they can be created by governments, the private sector, civil society, and other actors to attempt to solve diverse systemic urban problems within larger institutional systems (Gryszkiewicz, Lykourantzou & Toivonen, 2016).

While innovation spaces offer novel approaches to policymaking in urban planning and development by acting as an alternative to the traditional approach of rational instrumentalism, they also face challenges and dilemmas (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2019; Peters, 2020, Clarke, & Craft, 2019). For example, innovation spaces often invoke different, and sometimes conflicting, models of governance that include a focus on democratic and collaborative processes, economic competitiveness, and digital technology (Mergel & Desouza, 2013; Gascó, 2017). Furthermore, despite their celebrated potential to create more democratic policy and project outcomes, they can perpetuate decision-making by privileged actors who are more connected to globalized norms of policymaking than the local contexts in which they work (Jirón et al., 2021; Whitney, 2022). Finally, although innovation spaces are often put forward as strategies to achieve broader equity in cities, the distributional criteria within their programs can sometimes lead to spatial outcomes that reproduce existing urban inequalities (López-García & Heathcott, forthcoming; Delgadillo, 2018).

While these innovation spaces for designing policy first emerged in cities of the global North (Tonurist et al., 2015; Williamson, 2015), they have also been widely adopted across Latin American cities. Therefore, understanding *how* (and from *where*) these innovation spaces have been adapted in Latin America, including how they are shaping local policymaking, is fundamental to understanding cities across the region. Furthermore, despite the growing adoption of policy innovation across Latin America, little research has explored the mobility of these spaces and their governance forms, leading to questions about how exactly they are contributing to innovation (Ferreira & Botero, 2020).

Within this context, we call for abstract proposals on innovation spaces in Latin America. We seek contributions exploring how these spaces are being structured to impact urban planning and policymaking as well as their implications on equity and the spatial allocation of urban infrastructure and programming. Proposals may study innovation spaces within city governments, universities, civic society organizations, or the private sector.

The call has two goals. First, the accepted proposals will be proposed as a panel to the 2023 Latin American Studies Association Conference. Second, the accepted proposals will be included in a book proposal tentatively titled “The Mobility of Innovation Spaces in Latin America: Governance Models, Equity in Policy Making, and Spatial Outcomes.” We expect to submit the book proposal to an international editorial indexed in Scopus.

Submitted abstracts must be related to policy innovations in urban planning and policymaking in Latin America fitting under one of the following three themes:

1. Governance Models. What models of governance are being used when governments are designing innovation spaces? Here we are interested in contributions that explore the choices made by governments to configure how public managers relate with citizens and other actors in innovation spaces.
2. Equity in Policymaking. Who exactly are innovation spaces benefiting and how are they fostering more democratic policymaking processes and outcomes? Here we are interested in contributions that explore the outcomes of the policies, programs, and projects of innovation spaces, focusing on how they are, or are not, fostering more democratic and equitable outcomes as well as their potential to do so.
3. Spatial Outcomes. How do the programs developed in innovation spaces contribute to an equitable distribution of infrastructures and resources across urban space? Here we are interested in the kinds of urban infrastructures that receive attention from innovation spaces, the politics for site selection, the configuration of their distributional criteria, and their overall spatial outcomes.

If interested, please send a 250-word abstract in English, with a title of no more than 25 words, to César Rentería (cesar.renteria@cide.edu), David López-García (davlogar@gmail.com), and Ryan Anders Whitney (ryan.whitney@tec.mx) by **August 20th, 2022**. In the email, please specify which one of the three themes your contribution fits under.

-The book project is partially funded through [Transversal Think Tank](#) -

Relevant dates for contributors

Date	Description
July 15 th , 2022	Open call issued
August 20 th , 2022	Deadline for 250-word abstract proposals
September 1 st , 2022	Notification of acceptance/rejection of abstracts by panel organizers
November 16 th , 2022	Notification of acceptance/rejection of panel from LASA
March 10 th , 2023	Deadline for all LASA2023 participants to pre-register.
April 14 th , 2023	Deadline for full chapter
May 24-27 th , 2023	LASA 2023 Conference

Organizers



**Administración
Pública**

Dr. César Rentería Marín
Profesor Investigador
División de Administración Pública
Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE)



Tecnológico de Monterrey
Escuela de Arquitectura,
Arte y Diseño

Dr. Ryan Anders Whitney
Profesor Investigador
School of Architecture, Art and Design
Tecnológico de Monterrey



**URBAN PLANNING
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS**
Department of Urban Planning and Policy

Dr. David López-García
Postdoctoral Research Associate
Department of Urban Planning and Policy (UPP)
University of Illinois at Chicago



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Dr. David Gómez-Álvarez
Profesor investigador
Departamento de Políticas Públicas – CUCEA
Universidad de Guadalajara

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