

# MEGACITIES. EXPLORING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

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[Megacities](#) is one of the latest editorial novelties of < a href="http://www.010.nl/" target="\_blank" rel="noopener">010 Publishers and focuses on one of the most characteristic phenomena of our time: the rise of a new urban scale, the **megacities**. A term with different edges and very prone to confusion but which, beyond the conceptual debate, explains some of the economic and social processes of the last two decades. The work is a compilation of the conferences organized by the [Megacities Foundation](#), an institution that has its origins in previous seminars that, starting in 1994, were prepared by the [International Academy of Architecture](#). Those conferences have been organized over time until the organization of an international congress at Delft University in 2008, which closed the cycle always focused on the study of the phenomenon of megacities. Of all the conferences, the most relevant to edit this book have been rescued, which means a great compilation of authors and topics related to megacities. The book is structured around four elements related to megacities: their **definition**, the **identification** of their characteristics in economic, social and environmental terms, their **organization** (urban form, relationship with economic dynamics, the role of planning, urban governance, etc.) and its **design** (mainly the role of architecture professionals). Added to this are some chapters analyzing the context of urban policies in the Netherlands and, finally, a brief chapter on conclusions for a future urban agenda. Behind this logical structure, what we find is a series of very relevant names in urban thinking in recent years, most of which have already appeared in one way or another on this blog over time. The chapter of [Peter Hall](#) is the one that is in charge of presenting the origin of the term and other more or less related ones (global cities, world-class cities, etc.) while [Saskia Sassen](#) is in charge of presenting the springs of the globalized economy that have favored the hegemonic position of large cities. [Edward Soja](#), another of the reference figures of urban criticism in the academic field, represents an alternative reading when proposing one of his great endeavors, which is the need to frame the logic of megacities in a regional context.



The identification section of the structuring elements of megacities is more unbalanced. The chapters related to the economic dimension are somewhat scarce (except for [Peter Nijkamp](#), which in the article *Megacities: lands of hope and glory* does a good analysis of the different perspectives that try to explain the economic importance of large cities), but does include at least one chapter related to the role of infrastructures in urban production that is worth reading now that we find ourselves with so many failed public works. In the chapter on environmental aspects, [John Tackara](#) dares to present some keys to low entropy urbanism, while the one dedicated to social aspects presents three classics with two essential articles: [Richard Sennett](#) (*Megacities and the Welfare State*), [David Harvey](#) (*Possible urban worlds*) and [Deyan Sudjic](#) (*Identity in the city*). Without a doubt, the best closed part of the book.

**David Harvey** contributes with two more contributions (*The spaces of utopia and On architects, bees and "species being"*), and they are not lacking either < a href="http://staffprofiles.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/Profile.aspx?Id=Erik.Swyngedouw" target="\_blank" rel="noopener">**Erik Swyngedouw** (with a particularly incisive article on the effects of large-scale urban project politics) and [Richard Rogers](#), who also makes his particular contribution to the role of architects in the chapter *The fragmented city and the role of the architect*.

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