

THE DIMENSIONS OF AN URBAN WORLD

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The magazine [Foreign Policy](#) has published its issue for the months of September and October and has dedicated it to the galloping process of urbanization at a global level, a topic to which we have dedicated space in this blog. The issue includes a new edition of the [Global Cities Index](#), which tries to measure the position of different urban centers in the flows of economic globalization. Just [one more ranking](#), just one more way to look at what's going on in the cities. I love the [photos](#) above all, but also the [full list of the 65 cities included](#) can be accessed at the one that continues to stand out is the [Asian momentum](#).



More interesting is the article by [Parag Khanna](#), author of the book [The second world. Empires and influence in the new world order](#), which we dealt with a while ago to hypothesize that Central Asia could host the [Dubai de the next few years](#). That book is a complete look at the world's gray spots, those parts of the world that slip through the gaps of the great powers, between instabilities and unknown phenomena. One of those unknown phenomena is the rapidity of the global urbanization process that we are witnessing, a fact that the author barely mentioned in his book only in passing when talking about the Chinese case and, nevertheless, it is a fundamental aspect to understand the new economic order. international. It seems that with the article you are now publishing in Foreign Policy ([Beyond city limits](#)) the author has found the opportunity to focus on the subject and I think he does it correctly by summarizing in a few paragraphs what is happening, the dimensions of the phenomenon, where they are the new spaces of urban expansion and, above all, how it affects the configuration of the new economic flows and the emergence of new areas of opportunity for technological development, also pointing out some of the problems that this accelerated urbanization is generating although, in this period, I think the article is too scarce. Either way, it's worth reading.

The following article is a classic of recent urban criticism. [Joel Kotkin](#) tries to demystify the power of urban centers in his article [Urban Legends](#), in which he appeals to the urban peripheries as the true answer to the problems of urban life. And it is that in the United States there has been an interesting debate in recent months about whether the redensification of cities is the answer to the economic crisis that, among other things, is emptying large industrial urban centers such as [Detroit](#), a debate in which Kotkin stands as staunch [defender of the values of the typical American suburbanization model](#). According to Kotkin, it would have created a state of opinion -close to conspiracy- favorable to opening a war against the urban suburbs ([The war against suburbia](#)) and has become a defender of the traditional model of land occupation together with a colleague of his, [Wendell Cox](#), author of clarifying book title, [War on the Dream: How Anti-Sprawl Policy Threatens the Quality of Life](#). Of course, the other coin in this debate is the ubiquitous [Richard Florida](#), who, with His new book, [The great reset](#), raises the need for return to urban centers to achieve dynamic cities that are capable of becoming springs for economic recovery. Both Florida and Kotkin have always had their [small individual battles](#).

Continuing with Foreign Policy, the magazine includes another article, [Chicago on the Yangtze](#), which presents with a striking headline the city of Chongqing, the city that is growing so fast that authorities and mapmakers are [always out of date](#), a good example of [what is happening in China](#) without hardly knowing it.

[Don't Try This at Home](#) is another article worth reading. The (again) striking headline hides a review of the roots on which Silicon Valley rests and how this model cannot be mimetically repeated in a planned way:

Six years ago, I wrote a book about the origins of Silicon Valley. Ever since, international investors, foreign officials, and urban planners from multiple continents have been asking me for advice on how to re-create the magic at home. I've met with officials from Bangalore, Barcelona, Chennai, Dublin, Fukuoka, Helsinki, Shenzhen, Stockholm, and many American cities as well. They all want to know the same thing: How did the Valley do it? And how can we duplicate its success?

Unfortunately, there are a lot of wrong ways to go about building the next Silicon Valley. High-profile visitors like [Russian President Dmitry Medvedev](#) frequently make the rounds of the glass-clad, high-

tech headquarters of Google, Apple, and others in suburban Santa Clara Valley, the southern region of San Francisco that put the "Valley" in Silicon Valley. They take in the sprawling Northern California aesthetic, exclusive subdivisions, and well-manicured lawns; talk to young engineers working in research parks; and convenient earnest round tables with the big brains at Stanford University. They examine the latest iPhones and open Twitter accounts, to great public fanfare. They announce, "OK, we're going to go back and make one of those." If only it were that easy.

The article, in reality, apart from stating the obvious about the impossibility of repeating the model, is more interesting as an analysis of the emergence of Silicon Valley as an economic power. Among other things, the author emphasizes that, in contrast to the traditional vision that the creative force of so many garage entrepreneurs arose by spontaneous generation, it is a case of extensive public economic investment

Finally, another of the notable articles is the one dedicated to exposing some [graphics with data on urban sprawl](#) worldwide.



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