



Editorial

Historical evidences that technologies reshape cities abound. We could further argue that cities are technological artifacts. Hard infrastructures such as sewage, water supply, electricity, and telecommunications are intrinsic parts of cities, and are so deeply blended with the urban fabric that they become invisible. However, any technology is a social construction, and these infrastructures are results and triggers of social, cultural, and economic disputes and negotiations, inequities and emancipation. Once a technology become part of the urban physical and social tissue, stabilization makes it difficult to explore the controversies that constitute its historical construction. But when a technological framework is emerging, conceptual and methodological approaches help to see beyond the mere application, the mere impact of a technology. Emerging technological moments help to grasp a new urbanity in the making.

That is the main purpose of this special section of **urbe**, a journal intended to present a critical perspective in urban studies. Personal and locative communication tools are spread all over the world. We dare say that for the first time in the history of urban technologies, in the same technological framework we may identify global infrastructures like submarine cables, satellites, and extensive physical networks, and personal media transforming daily activities and behavior, as an extension of the body and soul of urbanites. In this section, we have the idea of Habitele as the conceptual framework, and its author, Dominique Boullier, as our guest-editor. Boullier had already published in **urbe**, and has been working on the tense amalgamation of technologies and personal behavior for decades. His concept of Habitele may help us to see critically the deep and spreading presence of personal locative media in our cities. Not surprisingly, articles from different continents were submitted to this section, confirming the global awareness among urban researchers that personal locative media have the potential to change how people interact with the city.

The other three papers in this issue could be reunited in another special section, as they deal with a still severe problem of Brazilian cities: illegal and informal settlements. Madianita Nunes da Silva analyzes the informality in housing settlements in the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba, a problem aggravated as poor families have virtually no access to the expensive formal housing market.

Clarissa Figueiredo Sampaio Freitas focus on another state capital, Fortaleza, discussing how high- and low-income housing projects occupy environmentally fragile areas, highlighting the divergences between environment legislation and urban settlements.

The third article, by Sandra Maria Fonseca da Costa, Jéssica Andretta Mendes, Viviana Mendes Lima and Bruno Henrique Colombari Moreira, show that this problem is not restricted to capital cities, but may also be found in small cities in the Amazonian region.

The thematic difference between these two groups of papers shows the complexity of urban studies. Discuss this complexity is the purpose of **urbe**.

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