Arraigo: urban citizens competing institutions for spatial justice to confront climate risks

Duván Hernán LÓPEZ MENESES [1], Sonia HITA CAÑADAS [2]

[1]Ph.D. Candidate on Sustainability, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC)/ Former deputy on risk management of Bogota, Colombia / Associated Researcher – UNESCO Chair on Sustainability UPC & Recycling the City Network (RECNET Colombia), duvanhernan@gmail.com

[1]Audiovisual Communicator Universidad de Granada, Spain / Associated Researcher – UNESCO Chair on Sustainability UPC & Recycling the City Network (RECNET International)

Non-formal settlements in Bogotá represent a permanent solution for milliards of citizens. The government has been forced to recognize them as legal so these have become valuable in terms of urban land tenure. But in Colombia, with a geographically complex environment, the precarious origins of these settlements and the historical absence of governance have resulted in setting up several risks.

Facing with these conflicts, public administration promotes the execution of engineering solutions or the imposition of restrictive measures on land use and the resettlement of populations.

A series of discourses legitimize or socially validate this type of intervention: First, the risk is associated with the mechanisms of access to rights and demarginalization of human settlements that are inscribed in the "fight against poverty". This perspective projects an assistance relationship between the State as an expert benefactor, as opposed to the role of a "beneficiary" citizen, uninformed and passive. Another aspect that converges repeatedly, validating the displacement of population through resettlement, has to do with the ignorance or underestimation of the exercise of rights over the land based on the categories of illegality, clandestinity, irregularity and informality.

Resettlement is legitimized on poverty and illegality to deploy a control over space through an imposition that determines an injustice: the uprooting of the population as the only way out for the treatment of a risk condition that has been constituted with multiple responsibilities or irresponsibilities from the entire society.

Different social organizations from the zones impacted by resettlement in Bogota have joined forces, into what is being shaped as a Platform of People Affected by Risk and Resettlement, called ARRAIGO (term in Spanish for Rooting). Their purposes are to promote the discussion of the public policies that implied the resettlement and joint efforts to defend or restore the rights of population

"Rooting" is understood as a force that links the human being with its territorial construction and manifests itself inherent in the process of inhabiting space. The testimonies of that "rooting" express a content in whose investigation rests a programmatic proposal of the populations induced to the politics of resettlement in Bogota in code of right to the city. This exploration could provide elements to reverse the logic of state-society relationship in the resettlement processes, and formulate a completely different equation in the moment of approaching this problem of risk, so that the justice demands of the population affected by risk and Resettlement.

There are two research questions to give a concrete scope to the proposed research in the face of the problems raised: What aspects of culture are manifested in the tensions between the population subject to resettlement and the institutions that intervene in the territory for the control of risks?, To what extent do these cultural aspects offer answers as mechanisms of adaptation to the problems of risk in the territories ?.