

# Extitutional Urbanism: Civic Labs in Latin America

by Domenico Di Siena

# Commons  
# Civic Innovation  
# Collective Intelligence

The objective of this research is to analyze what we call Civic Laboratories, certain practices, spaces and projects for public and citizen innovation in Latin America. We are interested in establishing whether the nature of these practices could be defined as extitutional, with the public institutions activated to improve the scope of synergy between the inside and the outside (Tirado & Domènech, 2001, p. 201). A methodology following a phenomenological and inductive approach aims to clarify what the term “Civic Laboratories” refers to, before identifying the main patterns which could be considered as the basis of an extitutional practice in these labs.

We have interviewed more than 10 Latin American experts in public innovation, all of whom play key roles in the activation of some of the main laboratories in Latin America, analyzing 20 cases in Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador and Brazil. The wide range of approaches, methodologies and objectives encountered allowed us to define the four main guidelines that make up the matrix we propose as a result: 1) the prototyping of solutions co-created by citizens and the administration; 2) the activation of co-learning processes and the promotion of civic commons; 3) the empowerment of citizens; 4) the consolidation of government institutions.

In conclusion, we can say that in Latin America extitutional experimentation in different cases, together with a focus on establishing protocols and opportunities for dialogue, co-learning and experimentation, is activated as part of a strategy through which public administration (the institutional) can strengthen itself.