Ignacio Cardona Pecha Kucha

00:10 - Hi, can you hear me? Hello. Ok, we don't have much time so I'll get right to the point. They've asked me to speak about the future, so to do this I'm going to share my current screen view with you. Great. I want to start

00:30 - with the reminder that our cities are very fragmented. This collage by Enrique Larrañaga explains this. To walk in a city like Caracas, for example, is to encounter thousands of fences, walls, barriers. Fractures that impede you from going from one place to the next. And the matter isn't just aesthetic. This video shows the daily commute that Fina has to make from her house in Petare to the nearest metro station, at a distance of only 800 meters. The actual commute lasts 90 minutes.

01:00 - This route is so long and torturous that I have to speak simultaneously of other things, because urban fragmentation also promotes violence. Here for example, it shows that the most dangerous places in the city are borders, or better said, fractures between different urban forms. Meanwhile, Fina is still trying to get to the metro station, traveling, in part, by these fractures. And urban fragmentation also promotes the appearance of hundreds,

01:30 - thousands, of "no man's lands." They occur on the slopes of hillsides, on steep terrains, esplanades under highways; places excluded from the urban story. So on this side, finally, Fina arrives, I think at the metro station. What comes to my mind is the concept of Medieval modernity. Amid this fragmentation, forms of order appear in urban enclaves that are disconnected from metropolitan infrastructure. I'm talking about a crook, independent of his socioeconomic level,

02:00 - who says, "This place is mine; either you do what I say or I break you." And we could spend hours explaining why a fractured city full of isolation can't function. Anyone who has tried to walk a city as fragmented as Caracas can realize this. Sure, this gets worse if you add the fragmentation of the State. Think of how many institutions

02:30 - intervene in the places where you live, how many competing interests, the great impossibility of coming to agreement. The fragmentation of the state doesn't facilitate urban connectivity, but it does facilitate political patronage, the discretional use of state resources, corruption. What can be done? What institutional, social, urban fragmentation gives us is violence, lack of productivity, conflict. The response is obvious: the solution is to create connections.

03:00 - It's easily said, but we know it's not easy to do. I'd better be quiet for a moment.

Translation of onscreen text
What's important isn't the names of the stars
but the distance between them.

How do you name the house you long for
if you don't know the name of the street?

Igor Barreto

We need to name
the spaces between us

03:28 - It's not like just any connection will work.

03:30 - The concept of Medieval modernity establishes that there are connections that are not good. Saint Matthew wasn't the only one who said, "He who is not with me is against me." Because connections cannot be obligatory, they must allow for flexible, changing space, where the possibility exists that I can connect with the other, or not. It's not about blocking connections among people, but leaving

04:00 - a public space so that they can happen freely, without obligation. To have this space of possible connections is the future I'd like to imagine for you. There are researchers who talk about a collective effectiveness as a strategy. It seeks to generate links and shared expectations of action in order to transform reality. The concept that's established is that these links are effective

04:30 - only if they are flexible. Where diversity is accepted and celebrated, we find tolerance. And this tolerance has to be institutional, it has to be for everyone. Since I seem like a preacher, I'm going to paraphrase a metaphor from another preacher. Sergio Fajardo utilizes the wall and the door to explain how this represents

05:00 - inequality, fracture, a project that's not shared. On the other side are opportunities. On the other side is also credit, food, help, a well-appointed house and also those you're forced to love. Resources are distributed by discretion via obligatory connections. And on the other side of the wall is a door, it's a door offered to you to access the other side and unite with a mechanic solidarity: "Well, if you enter, I'll take you off the blacklist, I'll put you in the game, you know."

05:30 - So this wall facilitates the quick way: corruption, discretion. This person decides who enters, decides who has access to the resources. Of course, these doors, these kinds of agreements, aren't the solution. The answer would seem to be obvious, not just to close the door but to tear down the wall. The wall is a metaphor for social processes, but it is also evident in physical spaces, in the fractures that occur in the city. So, it's our turn to dream

06:00 - about the possibility of transforming them into places of encounter, into public spaces. That social processes could be spaces that are public, transparent, freely accessed.

And that in an equal way, that urban fractures are transformed in public spaces, plazas, parks, schools, for free and tolerant connectivity among different citizens. That these be the stages for human connections. So, the future may not be a great mega-project,

06:30 - it's not the great and huge project we find so seductive, but one of small and medium projects for public space made by each of us: If they are connected among each other, they can create a system that allows us to connect.