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Introduction

> L'ordre routier et urbain est, par excellence,
> l'ordre humain de la Méditerranée.
>
> [Fernand Braudel, 1949]

CITIES OF THE SOUTH

The Mediterranean is one of the richest and most complex regions of the world. This richness and complexity have come about as the result of a profound and long-built cultural and socio-economic history, and are intrinsically connected with the evolution of its cities.

In this issue we will open and in many ways synthesize several points for reflection concerning the present governance tendencies, possibilities, and dilemmas facing the urban territories and societies of the south of Europe. This focus is supported on several bases. On one hand, bringing an overview on today's most pressing city policy developments and debates — namely those concerning urban socio-political (re)positioning tendencies in face of social and economic transformations. On the other hand, by following some reference works developed upon the differences or even uniqueness of the realms of the Mediterranean city, on its urban landscapes and its socio-political pulses. Finally, in the eight papers included in this issue we also explore and analyse the specific realities posed to the south European urban regions, ranging from Lisbon to Istanbul.

There are other criteria here included. We focus on the urban nodes and systems of the vast territory that Braudel (1949) named the "true Mediterranean" — the Southern European socio-cultural landscapes geographically and historically defined by the limits of the olive and fig tree. For some centuries the two sides of the Euro-Mediterranean world — the Ottoman and

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Orthodox East and the Catholic West — gave rise to deep religious and political clashes. But the effects of recent and strong influential elements such as the political democratisation processes, the European Union, and even more recent cosmopolitan social and cultural tendencies, quite visible in urban daily life, in social movements and civic expressions — all lead most of the South European urban world from a peripheral to a semi-peripheral, if not central, condition (Leontidou, 1990 and 2010). This has reduced the importance of religious and political regional differences. It is an evolution, however, that in quite an interesting manner is probably permitting the beginning of a better comprehension of the importance of common Mediterranean socio-cultural structures, and that has effectively set a different pace for capitalist transformation and development itself — and most surely, a different pace for its own urban growth and urban condition.

The Mediterranean cities might configure themselves not only through some common specific geographical and morphological elements and formations, such as the combination of resourceful and compact urban centres with vast rural hinterlands — albeit these nowadays mostly urbanised and configuring strongly diffused metropolitan regions — but also through concrete forms of social and cultural expressions that have been configuring quite complex urban social humus. This is a cultural complexity erected in long-standing dense cities but presently sprawled urban structures, through highly spontaneous and intricate forms of social interactions and relationships, mixing both local and international networks (due both to historical immigration as well as to more recent emigration patterns), and where similarly complex urban *genius loci* have developed (Pace, 2002; Coletta, 2008). As Leontidou (1990, pp. 2-3) wrote:

> The most striking similarities among Southern cities mostly stem from the coexistence of "modernity" and informality (not "tradition") on many levels as their class structure approaches the pattern of late capitalism, self-employment remains widespread; managers and executives coexist with artisans, shopkeepers and free labourers; in the location of economic activity, as CBD are rebuilt with modern office blocks, missed land uses predominate; in housing allocation, as modern apartment blocks spring up, self-built neighbourhoods continue to mushroom; in urban development, several private and public, customary and irregular (illegal and informal) strategies coexist and affect the systems of production and reproduction.

Certainly, and as Braudel (1949) so well expressed, the Mediterranean complexity has being composed of a continuous superposition of civilisations, several and differential layers that always defied or even refuted any idea of unification or common characterisation. In fact, in not a few epochs

it looks as if Mediterranean history and politics have been making their own way relatively apart from cultures and societies. This is a seemingly strange but above all intricate socio-cultural harmony, in our belief mainly projected by the lights and shadows expressed by the Southern *polis*.

These perspectives direct to the understanding of the city as a vast world of social, economic and cultural interactions, thus as a local society with its own ecological dynamics and processes (Bagnasco and Le Galès, 2000). Likewise, it is relevant to focus our lenses upon some main conceptual (and steadily applied) socio-political debates such as the ones around the cultural and relational notions of social capital and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997; Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1993) and obviously, on the notion of governance (Jessop, 1998; Maloney, Smith and Stoker, 2000; Jouve, 2003). Relatively different social and cultural urban scenarios shape relatively different socio-political structures and correspondingly different governance networks and actor's stakeholding. It might therefore be the case for the discussion of Mediterranean forms of urban governance, with its specific cultures, communities, processes, achievements — and dilemmas.

There are surely several common and specific socio-political tendencies shaping Mediterranean urban societies. And today, with a recognisably growing role being placed on cities as actors for human and sustainable development, it also shows to be truer that the ways these urban societies might face their common and specific future — as better or worse organised and strategy-supported collective actors — will certainly shape the future of the entire Mediterranean region itself, and a quite significant part of the future of Europe as a whole. Cities were always the main actors shaping the evolution of the Mediterranean world, as well as the whole of the European world. Empires were built from Rome, Carthage, and Madrid; spiritual expansions were made from Jerusalem, Córdoba, Cairo; mercantile worlds were erected from Venice, Lisbon, Seville; strong cultural lights shone from Athens, Alexandria, Florence, Istanbul. More recently, specific forms of industrialism, modernism, and even post-modernism have been sustained in Paris, Milan, and Barcelona. And symbolic battles for political liberty and autonomy were fought in cities like Algiers and Sarajevo. All in all, these are pictures that reveal both an absolute diversity and a systemic developmental nature in a continuously socio-political and cultural construction, strongly owning to city pulses, certainly continuing today in an ever-growing complex and polycentric world.

It shows to be quite clear that these cities are today facing the rise and the consequences of considerable new urban pressures. However, for many observers it does not look as evident that their corresponding civic societies, institutional and political systems and governance networks are sustaining the socio-cultural and political capabilities to adequately accompany the

paces of urban changes and demands. Most pressing challenges such as several types of economic imbalances, social inequality, indebtedness, world immigration, peak-oil horizons, financial and real-estate crashes — along with the steady rise of new forms of cultural, labour, and family rearrangements, different forms of political cultures and citizenship expressions (Clark and Hoffman-Martinot, 1998; Leontidou, 2010) are certainly configuring high doses of political uncertainty.

The last couple of decades have seen the emergence of several political proposals to parallel and tackle some of these urban challenges, from State restructuring to new types of urban policies, governance and participation structures — and maybe urban politics itself. But serious doubts remain — more and more with the rise of the most recent and extremely pandemic global economic and institutional crisis, surely withdrawing resources from several local spheres — whether or not these most important political tendencies might be able to muster capacities to make collective enforcements through the thousands of local, partisan, and considerably weak meridional forms of subsidiarity.

In other perspectives, new types of questionings also arise with the restructuring of the semi-organic meridional governance forms of urban regimes. This might be the case if the new types of empowered urban configurations and political communities approach those that Brenner (2004) characterised and named as "glocalizing competition State regimes", and whose practices accord to what Mozzicafreddo, Gomes, and Baptista (2003) described as forms of "institutional particularism". These are new types of sub-national governmentally coordinated and highly project-driven "state-spaces", semi-democratic sub-regimes with strong control from corporate elites and specific political communities whose focuses and strategies are arranged around important urban resources, such as highly symbolic large projects and high yield returning real-estate investments.

However, at the same time evidence is also showing that the growing political role of cities is coming from paradigmatic shifts upon socio-cultural cognition and expression of urban societies. Namely in the development of much more cosmopolitan forms of education, of social and spatial identification, and of concomitant expressions of urban activity, labour, and political attitudes. Strong cultural tendencies that are surely opening new dimensions of urban civic exigency, of governance stakeholding and dynamics, and of democracy itself.

The combination of the long Mediterranean history with the most recent but surely enduring global processes might show to us that the next future of Southern European cities will certainly have much to depend — and thus to interpret — upon its own socio-cultural networks, dynamics, and cosmopolitanism evolution. This, in turn, gives a central role to such rela-

tional and cultural dimensions as the ones concerning urban governance configurations, conflicts, strategies, and choices.

MEDITERRANEAN URBAN GOVERNANCE

The eight papers presented in this issue are quite varied, both in their empirical objects of analysis as well in their analytical and critical positioning. They reflect and expand in very stimulating manners the overall reflections above expressed.

Based on empirical evidence taken in several Southern European cities, Christian Lefèvre does not focus his text on a single urban region or specific process or policy. Nonetheless, his analysis of the difficulties in the production of new urban political spaces that might better configure and tackle the scales of main urban challenges, fits extremely well into the bulk of the dilemmas presently facing most of the Mediterranean cities. Focusing his attention on the scale of the metropolis, he states that this most relevant urban functional scale has not been the focus of most enduring and highlighted processes such as the political decentralisation ones in France and Italy, or the steady empowerment of local societies in many other urban territories. It is considerably ironic to realise that the only big city to have an effective metropolitan government of its own right — Madrid — had it established by chance. This means that most of the proposals of institutional transformation and reform tendencies of the last decades did not, after all, effectively manage to configure the city or its urban realities and needs, as the main objective of change. There are, nonetheless, some processes such as the ones of Barcelona or Turin, where the main purpose has been to slowly build political thickness at the metropolitan scale through governance procedural and sectorial arrangements co-opted by different urban institutions (public and private) in each metropolis. At the same time, the local and neighbourhood political empowerment processes followed in various cities might also provide support conditions for the wider reconfiguration of the political city. Some authors refer to these governance constructions (developed through the most varied projects, although not so many under a global strategy) as a sort of *variable geography,* which by its flexibility to the formation of sub-collective choices might better raise new kinds of identity, namely at the metropolitan scale, and thus achieve the new political reinforced spaces that are desired. But Lefèvre remains relatively cautious about these possibilities, stating not only the risks of partial governance empowerment processes being mainly built on opposition to broader collective objectives, but remembering as well the fragilities themselves of socio-political edifications mostly sustained by governance networks.

The paper of José Luís Crespo and João Cabral follows these preoccupations. These authors expose the paradoxical situation of the Lisbon metropolitan area — namely in its dependency on the important but highly uncertain urban governance future developments. In face of a nonexistent effective metropolitan political institution and of ever peripheral and incomplete urban planning capabilities — contributing decisively to the fragmentation not only of many socio-economic metropolitan dynamics, but also to the fragmentation of several political responsibilities — the authors also emphasize the role of governance in the possible shape of the future metropolis. Here, even the strongest planning instruments — the municipal plans — are themselves a reflection of considerable local, albeit quite diverse, compromises. In a metropolitan area like Lisbon, if the most recent regional strategies and policies show to be almost absolutely dependent on the materialisation of cooperation networks, it is still also evident that stronger political or institutional enforcements might prove to be rather difficult *vis-à-vis* powerful interests ranging from the vast and complex public and municipal universes to the most varied private or single-project oriented strategies. Within this focus, therefore, they warn of the uncertainties and weaknesses that remain — more than limitations — regarding urban governance enhancement and capabilities, stating that "governance definitely opened up a field of research that is far from being explored".

Francesca Governa states that the emergence and consolidation of new means of governance is not so much a consequence of the decline of the power of the State and public administration, but rather of their (in)capacity to adapt to external and internal changes. To substantiate such changes, Governa begins her essay with a broad review of the transformations observed in the political and institutional ordination of the Italian public administrations, and especially the consequences of several changes in the territorial and urban management, well evidenced through governance tendencies and dilemmas, and the growing orientation to see urban issues mostly through symbolic and populist themes, likes those surrounding security, immigration, and mega-events. Likewise, Governa quite critically reveals the inadequacy of the institutional changes operated in Italy and the impossibility to speak of a genuine urban policy presently being followed in her country. In terms of public strategies, mainly discursive, all of the changes have revolved around two seemingly intrinsically incompatible concepts — competitiveness and cohesion — which are nevertheless presented as simultaneous and interdependent objectives in the Italian urban policies.

Gilles Pinson's text embraces the considerably complex but likewise notably interesting French situation. Defending the perspective for a new form to look at urban governance in France — not so much anymore through regulatory and functionalist analyses of vertical or centre-periphery

relationships and combinations between the different layers of governmental power, followed by a somewhat secondary view of horizontal local governance stakeholdings — he writes upon the recent consolidation of French cities as much more empowered political actors. Concomitantly expressing that today it is the local level and the local actors which are fully responsible for the ways urban policy is oriented and implemented in each city, putting a high weight on local governance interactions, on specific local actors and socio-cultural structures, on political economy local strategies and influences, and thus on corresponding forms of urban regimes. Pinson concludes therefore that the regime approach shows itself to be one of the most interesting forms to deepen the comprehension of the political tendencies of such particular urban societies as certainly are the ones of the varied Southern European cities.

Oriol Nel·lo's considerably differential text shows in a very stimulating manner the relatively specific paths of some of Catalonia's urban policies. He presents the details (objectives, results, and limitations) of the "Law on neighbourhoods" approved and implemented annually since 2004 by the Autonomous Government of Catalonia. This Law is in itself a fairly atypical but extremely positive example of the fact that it is possible to implement quite interesting formulas of institutional governance through effective urban policies based on agreements between different public administrations (even governed by divergent or clearly opposed political parties). The exceptional nature of this case also lies in its dimensions (the high number of people and neighbourhoods that benefit from it and the total investments committed) and its characteristics (with an emphasis on transversal projects able to boost new resources and action; acting on neighbourhoods of medium-sized towns in semi-rural surroundings as much as in metropolitan areas). The tacit and coherent distribution of functions between regional and municipal administrations, and the involvement of residents in the entire process appear to be the potential keys to the success of the experiment, reflected in the effective transformation of these neighbourhoods and the prevention of a number of prospective problems. On the basis of the process initiated through this Law, the author proposes "ten lessons" as an example of "good practice" for participative, proactive, and effective governance.

Ioannis Chorianopoulos begins his article with a reference to the fact that over the course of the 20th century and unlike what has happened in many other European countries, the significant growth of Greek cities is not owed to industrialisation processes. When Greece was granted European funds for urban development (namely with the URBAN programme) during the 1980s and 1990s, these were essentially structured and intended through a northern Europe logic in mind, according to which the main issues to be addressed were the consequences of deindustrialisation on urban centres and suburbs.

All in all, Chorianopoulos focuses on showing the impact of the regulatory and cooperative formulas imposed by the EU regarding the allocation and management of these funds. The strong interventionism of the central Greek state (in the decisions, control, and implementation of funding) along with bureaucratic rigidity and the lacking tradition of citizen participation and partnership with local and private initiatives are constant features which also reflected the relatively reduced urbanistic transformations and the limited innovations ultimately applied to city management and local governance itself. In the support of these reflections, the author presents two case-studies addressing the cities of Keratsini-Drapetsona and Iraklion, both of which were granted EU funding at separate times — thus confirming not only some concrete positive progress verified on known socio-political inertial dimensions (both at local and national perspectives), but also the slow (yet positive) pace of transformation in Greek cities' local governance.

Nil Uzun shows how in Istanbul the restructuring and reinforcement of urban governance positioning and corresponding dynamics are evident. Although not directly influenced by elements that are as relevant to its Southern European sister cities, such as EU policies and processes, the large metropolis of the Bosphorus is certainly influenced by globalisation issues, such as those concerning political economy, State devolution, and civic empowerment. Here the repositioning of the city as a stronger political actor seems to have also taken place, along with greater local socio-political and cultural complexity. These tendencies are nonetheless far from having clear conclusions about if they are conducting the socio-political millieux in Istanbul toward more effective and democratic policy deliveries, especially when partisan and patronage stakeholding might well reinforce positions. Uzun's reflections upon Istanbul and its socio-political developments lead us to consider even more the perspective that the debates and questionings around the thematic of urban governance and urban regimes are highly important both for deeper analytical research and for policy criticism.

The volume is completed with a more general concluding text written by the coordinators of this special issue. The article re-opens and somewhat tries to synthesize most of the main tendencies and reflections facing Southern European cities' governance. As understood, the enlightening perspectives of cooperation, participation, and collective construction have been increasingly accompanied by shadowed fears of public demission, oligarchic regimes, and less local democracy. These lights and shadows of urban governance and the dilemmas they bring along are particularly relevant to the cities of the south of Europe, whose socio-cultural specificities (namely considering their complexity and organicity characters) very much determine local political and policy materializations. The EU has been an important factor in bringing objectivity and rationality to public policy and governance

networking — notwithstanding remaining a considerably distant frame-worker. The text conjoins the relevance of specific urban Mediterranean socio-political and cultural perspectives — including when gaining cosmopolitanism and thus in a certain sense reducing North-South dualisms — and thus proposes a systematization of both governance tendencies and concomitant areas for deeper analysis and reflection upon the Mediterranean urban world.

AN URBAN AND ROAD ORDER

We remember well our fascination at the moment when heard from a local public officer that in a single kindergarten in the centre of Barcelona the children spoke 25 different languages. Undoubtedly a completely new sort of cosmopolitanism is presently developing in the Mediterranean world, an evolution that will shape its socio-cultural landscapes in the near future, providing not only different life-styles but also differential and much more demanding social movements and civic needs in the cities of the south of Europe.

The *spirit of place* of the Mediterranean world has long been under a socio-cultural complexification trend. As Matvejevitch (1992) wrote in his passionate book, the Mediterranean "is not only a geography". The profound cultural heritage and the corresponding complexity of the symbolic and socio-political reflections have for many centuries developed a landscape where "the tendency to confound the representations of reality with reality itself tends to perpetuate […] an amplified identity of being that surpasses the identity of doing, not so well defined". Here, governance is not at all a mere projection of objective project-driven and resource-capture strategies and stakeholdings — it is above all a reflection of social and cultural strati-fication.

The theme here proposed for reflection — urban governance in the Mediterranean cities — appeals to view the city especially as a place of power, of pilgrimage, and of interchange. Most notably, as a place of po-litical empowerment — thus comprehending the roads that configure its connections, its networks and its stakeholdings. The way Braudel expressed the human order of the Mediterranean world — "an urban and road order" — highlights the relevance of better understanding its urban governance panoramas and its respective lights and shadows.

Amidst the most marking traces of the Mediterranean cities might be their characteristics as trading hubs for goods, ideas, and cultures — joining three vital connecting elements: a maritime (today globalised) expanse for com-merce and interchange, rich hinterlands, and a large and varied population

available for relational and trading activity — thus continuously forming dynamic spaces of interchange, as much of passage as of permanence. Yesterday a strong civilizational root, today the Mediterranean world and its crossroads positioning between different cultures, societies, and ways of development, positions itself as a trigger territory for humanity. The choices might be between a dispersed, individualist, and fearful future, or a cosmopolitan, diverse, and connected world. In a most crucial manner, the stages where these choices will be made are undoubtedly the stages of its cities – once again civilizational hubs.

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