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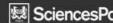
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Governing the large metropolis

A research agenda

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Abstract:

Our starting point is to challenge the often-made assumption that large cities are so complex that they have become ungovernable or that globalization pressures make political and policy choices irrelevant. By going beyond rational or positivist views of governance, it argues that the process of governing a city is never fully complete, nor linear. The paper refers to a systematic review of the academic literature. Urban societies are more or less governed and that may change from one city to the next, from one period to the next. Processes of government and governance are always work in progress, but make crucial differences over time. Case studies show that modes of governance have long-term consequences for their inhabitants and governing failures may have severe negative effects (e.g. housing shortages, low levels of educational attainment, crime, low productivity, health). The systematic analysis of the literature shows the need to describe and document at the same time (1) how processes of governance operate in relation to major urban development projects, the implementation of public policies and (2) the implications of such practices for inequalities; so to say articulating an analysis of the governance processes and their outcomes. The paper suggests that the link between metropolitan governance and inequalities allow considering inequalities not only as the outcomes of policy choices, but also as part of the way in which metropolitan policies are implemented.

1. Introduction

The paper aims a preliminary framework to analyse the interaction between governance and inequalities at the metropolitan level. It is a starting point of a project which will aim, in due course, to compare Istanbul, London, Mexico, Paris, Sao Paolo, with colleagues in those different cities. The core theme of the paper is that the literature on large cities has sidelined the question of governance sometimes for good reasons, but not always[1]. We use a still partial literature review to elaborate a conception of urban governance which is less positivist or centred on planning.

We want to arrive to a framework able to sustain explanation about the making, the process and the effects on inequalities of modes of governance in large metropolis, via the tools of comparison. Our hypothesis is that metropolitan governance, or governance altogether is not a linear process (Le Galès, 1998, Miller and Rose, 2005, Favre, 2005), not always rational (Vitale, 2010), incomplete (Le Galès, 2011) and prone to discontinuities (Borraz, Le Galès, 2010; Tosi, Vitale, 2013). Governments govern but more or less, how, what and for which results?

Also the paper aims at developing a comparative framework which would apply both to the metropolis of the south and to the metropolis of the North. Rather than opposing rationally governed western middle-sized cities to unruly ungovernable large metropolis, it's time to reconceptualise governance and to develop comparative empirical projects beyond the case of the robust governance of European cities and the supposedly ungovernable chaotic megapolis.

2. Ungovernable Metropolis? The Chaotic "Urban Leviathan"

Our starting point is to challenge the often-made assumption that large cities are so complex and big that they have become ungovernable or that globalisation pressures make political and policy choices irrelevant.

An American political scientist, D. Yates, writing about New York in 1977 (a time of many policy failures in New York) wrote a book about the "ungovernable metropolis". His argument was that there were too many interests, too many actors, too many diverse populations, too much inequality, too much informality, too many problems, too many suburbs, too many economic sectors. The city had become ungovernable. The theme has become popular and has been widely mobilised to analyse the governance of the large metropolis in different part of the world. Recent debates about European cities (Jouve, Lefèvre 2002), le Grand Paris (Gilli, Offner, 2009) or London (Gordon, Travers, 2011) follow a similar line of analysis.

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[1] A counterexample was the research produced within Richard Stren Governance project at the university of Toronto. However, the paper does not review the American literature on urban governance, ie not yet.

Beyond the modern metropolis, researchers try to make sense of those large urban areas: "Mega cities" "postmetropolis," "global cities," and "global city-regions". Processes of globalisation, including transnational migration architecture, financial transactions, transport flux, clustering of specific skills for service economy, presence of key asset logistic infrastructure, or dissemination of technological innovations contribute to the rise of mega cities in different part of the globe (Scott 2002). The traditional ideas of the city, the modern metropolis or the industrial city are now associated or replaced by contradictory images of those mega cities where one either emphasizes cultural diversity and infinite range of interactions or the strength of control and capital accumulation by dominant groups.

By contrast to the modernist view of the metropolis, cities have been a major subject of the cultural turn in social sciences which consist of theory and research based on the overall notion that the keys to understand contemporary cities and to transforming them lie in the ways that culture orients our behaviour and shapes what we are able to know about the world, hence an hyper relativist conception of knowledge and action. According to cultural studies, within cities, question of identities and culture have become central and culture appears as the major integrating paradigm. Immigration and the pluralization of identity pave the way for the image of the city as mosaics, fragmented. After all, from Simmel to Benjamin or Sennett, the city is about "the others", the mix with foreigners, different people, the stimulation and the risks associated to this diversity.

The rise of mobility and transnational flux within more globalized capitalist metropolis raise new issues about assimilation, social order, politics and culture in cities. Cities are reshaped by local groups and culture interacting, adapting or protesting against globalized flows. Collective action, is mostly seen as contentious politics, and barely considered as a way of governing population, collective goods and redistribution. The globalization literature takes as its starting point the proliferation of interactions and flows on increasingly distant scales, facilitated by technological changes, which has contributed to the emerging consideration of a world perceived as a whole. Interestingly, all those categories make little notice of political elements and rather emphasise the endless city, the post city, the post metropolis age, and fragmented forms of resistance.

Large cities are not a relevant unit of analysis one might say, frontiers are ever changing, and they are ungovernable anyway. There is little doubt the scale of current very large metropolis is a new phenomenon in urban history (Bairoch, 1988; Hall, 1998; Scott, 2002; Lorrain, 2011). The emergence of urbanized areas with a population ranging between 10 and 20 millions, or beyond, is not only a change of absolute proportions, but it implies changes of scale as well as in New Delhi, Istanbul, Sao Paulo, Mexico, Calcutta, Los Angeles, Cairo, Tokyo, Shangai, New York, Dakkha, Mumbai, Djakarta…. Most of these metropolises are located in large emerging countries; this fact certainly has particular implications in terms of their sustainable development. Typically, large cities concentrate higher shares of GDP and greater wealth creation per capita. They generally also have higher educational, technological and service economy levels, and thus constantly attract new talents and creative minds, which completes a virtuous cycle. An illustration of this is the metro-city of Seoul, which accounts for about half of the South Korean national GDP (48.5%), for only 25% of the national population (UN Habitat, 2011).

There are many ways to study and understand them, from networks to crisis, from illegal settlements to running elites, from disaster, informal markets to violence, from economic production and clustering to segregation and inequalities, most of the time suggesting chaos and complexity and the absence of rational government. Thus, one brand of literature tends to consider the whole debate about megacities as not so important. That relates to the question of the city versus the urban. It may well be the case that the distinction between different types of cities, metropolis, and megalopolis is now becoming useless. The rate of urbanisation at the level of the world is such that it is becoming more and more urbanised. Many authors are now thinking at the level of the urban world, the urban becoming the dominant condition and structuring the rest in an inescapable way.

It follows that thinking sociologically about cities or different kind of metropolis may not make sense any more. Beyond the scientific argument, there is always the strand of "urban prophets" who, are making various claims about the end of the city, once again or the "post city" and 'post metropolis age". Some postmodernist authors from Los Angeles have in particular promoted a view taking the Los Angeles urban region as the new paradigm for the whole current trend of urbanisation[2]. Ed Soja's much quoted work on "third space" (1996) and "Post metropolis" (2000) or Michael Dear (2000) "The postmodern urban condition" are vivid example of that tradition of research which, among other things just get rid of the sociological tradition.

'Metropolitan catastrophe' has made the city a 'centrifugal territorial aggregation' (Dematteis 2000), which is said to mark both the triumph and the end of cities. Increasing urban concentration has been accompanied by apparently inescapable, unlimited dispersal into conurbations and into urban regions with fluctuating outlines. Cities have expanded, fragmented, and organized into networks like those in Northern Italy or the Netherlands, and this is said to be rendering traditional spatial representations obsolete. Many writers stress the unending extension of the suburbs, the development of 'non-places' (Augé, 1995), anonymously similar urban spaces (motorway slip roads, shopping centres, residential developments, areas of commodified leisure facilities, car parks, railway stations and airports, office blocks, and leisure parks), and megalopolises ('post-cities') in different parts of the world. In that line of analysis, the dissolution of the city is taking place within a large fragmented, chaotic, unstable urban world. In short, this is the time of 'citizens without cities' (Agier, 1999), or of insurgent citizenship (Holston, 2008) where new forms and experiences are being invented. Architects and urban planners are rushing passionately towards a sort of urban world, apparently liberated from the classic constraints (of the state, of rules, of slowness, of the social substrate, of fixedness, of social conflicts), and dazzled by the speed, fluidity, and scales of urbanization of Asian or African megalopolises, by a globalization of innovative urban thought at the cutting edge of the cyberworld, and by the invention of forms that are feasible thanks to technologies[3].

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[2] M. Dear (2000) considers the LA school of urban research as the successor to the Chicago school. For a sobering critique, see the response by Harvey Molotch (2002).
[3] See R. Koolhas (1997), and some developments of the « Urban Age project » at the L.S.E.

A last argument against taking into account the governance of cities emphasise the important of illegal activities in large metropolis from the north as from the south. M. Davies "Planets of slums" (2006) has made clear the scale of informal settlements and their huge growth in most cities. The "Shadow city" (Neuwirth, 2004), the city of squatters sometimes represent half of the population as in Mumbai, sometimes more, sometimes less. But even in New York, Paris, or Tokyo, those questions of squatters, illegal immigrants or travellers cannot be ignored (Aguilera, 2012).

A. Simone careful writing about African cities or Djakarta provides a series of insight about the city as a living experience, about those day-to-day strategies to survive and act strategically, about informality as resources for the population. The city is a "promise" and those insights on informality are essential to move beyond the more positivist thinking about law and government. The mix of size, differentiation, unruly world has opened new avenues to reflect upon urbanization, the metropolis and what A. Simone calls the "cityness". These are very important insights to built a cumulative knowledge about metropolitan development. We will be back in the next on the relevance of the writing of AbdouMaliq Simone, but here we want just to emphasize the fact that most of the literature on informality has not taken this issue as entry point to discuss a city modes of governance.

Let's have a look for example at the literature on Cairo. There a wealth of excellent books on informal arrangements, on family life and women, on particular neighbourhoods, on the slum city (i.e. the Cairo cemetery), on the development of new semi private developments built quite effectively on the outskirts of the city for the new middle classes with opaque partnership between interests related to the army, some branches of the governorate and private developers (Singerman, Amar, 2006; Singerman, 2009). But it's hard to find in the literature any systematic analysis of the "governance" of Cairo: there is not a thick description of the power structure[4], of the coalition of actors and interests within and outside the army, the relationship between the State and the city, the way of coordinating the different governorates which divides the metropolis, the overlapping of planning agency active in regulating the development of the city.

Let's consider also the literature on Istanbul. Once again we see how the complex institutional architecture (with a municipal government directly elected by citizens, governors named by the national government, 39 districts, independent agencies, and lots of utilities coordinating the core city with the small cities of the metropolitan area) is not described at whole for how it works, with what kind of relationships with corporate actors and civil societies, what kind of outcomes, taking into accounts the transformation of the main political party (AKP), currently governing the city as well as the national government, and so on.

After reading this literature, we barely resist to ask if those cities are governed. Moreover, if those cities are governable. Does it make sense to reflect on modes of governance of large metropolis?

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[4] On the contrary, the work of Eduardo Marques (2011) provides a clear account of relations among public policies, power and social networks in Brazilian urban policies.

The scale of large metropolis makes the question of their governance slightly difficult to apprehend (Brenner, 2009). Critical urban studies have been central to undermine domination logics associated to institutions, inequalities reinforced by government, the illusions of rational governance, the manipulation of democracy or the irrationality of policies (Marcuse, 2009). They rightly emphasise cultural shifts, the chaos of the large cities and structures of inequality and domination. This is an important part of the story about urban change today. Another large body of research has taken the research agenda on neo liberalisation put forward in particular by Brenner, Peck and Theodore (2002, 2009) with important contributions about different dynamics of neo liberalization as an incomplete project taking different forms. However, this sophisticated line of research has too often led to rather simple analysis of transformations quickly interpreted in terms of neo liberalisation without much attention paid to more long term of differentiated public policy implementation. In other words, the paper derives both from our intellectual agenda and from some dissatisfaction with papers about the neo liberalisation of cities, hasty interpretation about the dominant logic of policies, the rise of networks and urban sprawls making policies irrelevant, or the general "ungovernability" critical standpoint.

Are large metropolis governed? Yes and no, always in part, but only up to a point, It may be more or less significant to explain the dynamics of cities, it may be partly explained – or not- by changes related to capitalism and there are many failures (Davis, 1994, Le Galès, Lorrain, 2003). By focusing on a governance framework to analyse large metropolis and their dynamics, including the legacy of history[5] we implicitly or explicitly underline the limits, or engage a dialogue with some of the trends we see in urban studies: the post politics claims which is very thin empirically and tends to throw the politics baby with bathwater, one part of the critical urban studies literature which tends not to dig into policies and governance, empirical researches on practices of urban resistance which are rich of details about interactions but tends to ignore macro forces and meso dynamics, and to a lesser extent, the simplistic use of neo liberalisation to explain any policy change[6]. We also question the somehow illusion of heroic and powerful decision makers reshaping cities thanks to their vision and leadership, either as a director of agency (the case of New York Port Authority) or an heroic mayor. Governance as public policies is about collective action, institutions, collective actors, protest, implementation.

Does it matter? Not always but modes of governance, even incomplete, or chaotic (Gandy, 2005) have long term consequences for their inhabitants and governing failures may have severe negative effects (e.g. housing shortages, low levels of educational attainment, crime, low productivity, health). However, as political sociologists, taking seriously politics as a specialised field of social activities, it is also clear that there is nothing inherently good about politics. The state apparatus may support violence, of extraction of wealth for the benefit of predatory elites. Also, political elites may try to expand political regulations in order

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[5] See for example the great book of Diane Davis on Mexico, 1994
[6] Also the growing body of literature recurring to the Foucaultian notion of *governmentality* tends to consider States and metropolises as invariant entities (Wacquant, 2012). We do not discuss the governmentality question in this paper but it will be done in a further version but see Le Galès 2010 for a preliminary discussion

to strengthen control or to extract resources from other social and economic fields for no other reason than the accumulation of political power.

3. Political Regulation, Urban Experience and Metropolitan Development

In a way in this paper, we want to keep going our exchange and dialogue with our colleague AbdouMaliq Simone whose writing has been essential for our understanding of cities. The large metropolis but the urban experience is not taking place in a vacuum. As A. Simone writes when he analyses movement in and between cities and immediate rules to navigate into the city also recognises that (2010, p. 1-2): "the coding of cities with their various designation of names, districts, functions, and zones; transport infrastructures which shape dominant ways of circulating through urban space: and the distribution of services and facilities that link together the provision of specific consumption needs – all are a means of structuring our urban experience". So to say: governance is only a one angle, one element to structure and explain cities. He rightly stresses governance dilemma by emphasising movement and experience together with what he calls the "*cunudrum*" of urban development i.e. "buildings, layouts, provisioning systems and organisations that try to hold together and stabilize relationships between materials, environment, bodies and institutions" (*ibidem*, p. 3). In other words, one has to understand cities both from the point of view of day-to-day or minute-to-minute experience, interactions, uncertain short-term rules and the attempts to structure, create social order, maintain domination and inequalities or progressive transformations, to "keep the city in line".

"Concerted efforts have been made to govern cities through zoning, cadastre, property administration. Yet these efforts do not completely erase the unruly yet dynamic intersections among differences of all kind to which the city offer both a setting and a cause... Even efforts to use every aspect of the urban environment in order to observe, calculate, and order the behaviour of urban residents-through smart buildings, CCTV cameras, traffic systems, 3G cellular technologies, GPS and other locational systems – are limited of how comprehensive they can be". (ibidem, p. 12).

This is an implicit definition of urban governance as one could define politics as an attempt to provide order, to rationalise, to solve conflicts between conflicting interest, to develop tools, devices and policies to deal with the plurality, movements and contradictions of social life, and capitalism. It is very important. By the contrast with the other body of literature we have analysed, here the phenomenological dimension of experience is not considered as the final goal of urban research. It is a crucial dimension to take into account, at the crossroad with a description of policy instruments, meso dynamics and broad macro forces. It goes beyond classical dichotomies of the '80s between structure and agency (Giddens, 1984), and it allows us to relate to actual development in social theory, where experience is highly valorised within a weberian legacy but taking into account that it is not possible to develop sociological theorizing considering *only* action, interaction and agency (Boltanski, 2012), that the microfoundation of meso and macro dynamics is too limited, and not enough for improving empirical research (Turner, 2012) and that collective

action explanations needs to deem the mechanisms and processes that structure fields and allow strategies (Fligstein, McAdam, 2012)[7].

Coming back to our main point, we argue that the literature we have analysed in the previous paragraph is relevant, pushing us to go beyond rational or positivist views of governance. We argue that the process of governing a city is never fully complete, nor linear. Urban societies, urban economies are more or less governed and that may change from one city to the next, from one period to the next (Le Galès and Lorrain, 2004, Borraz and Le Galès 2010). Studying the limits and *discontinuities* of government and governance is essential to the understanding, analysis, sometimes explanation of governance processes in large metropolis (Le Galès, 2011). Processes of government and governance are always work in progress, but make crucial differences over time. So we define governance as a process of co-ordinating actors, social groups, and institutions to attain particular goals, discussed and defined collectively in fragmented, uncertain environments (Le Galès, 1998).

In our view it would not make sense to assume that governance should be central to understand urban changes: social, cultural, economic dynamics have their own dynamics more or less mixed with nature or politics. However, by contrast, it may be premature to get rid of any serious analysis of this political dimension, of public policies and governance arrangements. If consider why a city growth, surely specialization and human capital are important factors, but institutions and governance too (Storper, 2010). Additionally, we share the critical points made by Koonings and Kruijt (2009) in their collection on megacities: they are becoming a site of deprivation and violence and the lack of effective governance in the peripheries of those cities is a massive problem for the poor: "urban policies are of direct importance in a broad range of issues related to poverty alleviation and social inclusion. [...] Violence has become the alternative for "parallel" forms of order, control, resources distribution, legitimacy and identity" (*ibidem*, p. 2). Thus, we have no intention to contest governance failure (Jessop, 1998), or to come back to classic models of governments as the only way available to understand urban change. In large cities even more than in other contexts, policy failures are the norm, governments do not often achieve very much, inequalities remain massive, informal arrangements are crucial.

Therefore, we assume that governance is not the only and principal factor explain urban change, and we state that it is an incomplete and discontinuous process. But, following Koonings and Kruijt (2009) we consider also that the form of government and the capacity for steering collective action at the metropolitan level is one of the most relevant topics for understanding and explaining current metropolitan development and to contribute to the life of millions of poor dwellers. Actors invest to stabilize fields of collective action where encompassing different issues such as urban planning, the creation of governmental bodies and institutions allowing the redistribution of powers, effective intergovernmental coordination, decentralization, the efficient supply of services as well as the fostering of economic development and of a better life quality

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[7] The new emphasis on meso dynamics and macro forces is particularly relevant because it is highlighted by authors that previously focused their contribution on action in situation (Boltanski), emotional forces (Turner) or cultural factors and networks (McAdam).

for residents. In other words: there are actors that try to govern large metropolis, there are activities of governance, there are results – often very different from the objectives of the goals.

Governments are defined in terms of rules of the game, constitutions, organisations and actors, processes of aggregation and segregation, and outputs (March, Olsen, 1995). To govern is "to take decisions, to tax, to solve conflicts, to produce and deliver public goods, to coordinate and regulate private behaviours, to regulate markets, to organise elections, to extract resources –tax-, to spend" (Jean Leca, quoted in Favre, 2003, p. 268), but also to measure, to rationalise, to protect property rights and to control land use, to create rules, norms, codes, to influence behaviour. Previous analysis of European middle size cities, make us cautious about the social and political extension of governing activities: local governments do not always govern. In this sense, the answer to the question "who governs when nobody governs" (Favre, 2005) can be very interesting. Formal or informal actors are sometimes effective (markets, groups in societies, families, churches) in controlling and orienting metropolitan development, but they may be sinister (mafias, gangs). And we know from the literature about state failures (Rothberg, 2004) that the existence of a state is not equivalent to a mode of governance/government[8]. Some group may use state capacity to steel or kill their populations, or part of it (notably ethnic minorities).

3.1. What part, sector, groups of the city is really governed? What is weakly governed? What is left out? What is escaping government? How and why?

For European cities, the rise of urban governments was about the institutionalization of governments against illegal activities, slums, mobile populations, rejected poor neighbourhoods. Studying European cities we have understood that to understand a governance mode requires not just focusing on governments but also the understanding of the illegal side of the city, the invisible activities, from undocumented immigrants in clandestine rooms to gangs controlling drug traffics or private developers financing illegally political activities in order to build new developments (Le Galès, 2011). And what about large metropolis, when we can make the hypothesis that governments govern through informality, and not against it, notably by forms of patronage, clientelism or corruption, as well as through very sophisticated strategies of tolerance and abandon of specific groups and areas.

Are those strategies really a specificity of large metropolis of the so-called Global South, or isn't it an irreducible part of the governance of any city? In her book on "ordinary cities" (2005), J. Robinson calls for more systematic comparison of cities from the North and the South. Governance could well travel in those terms, as suggested by McCartney and Stren in particular (2003). Coming back once again to A. Simone's

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[8] On the debate about the conceptualisation of state and governments see the special issue of Revue Française de Sociologie, n.3, 2011, « Sociologie de l'Etat en recomposition », and in particular King and Le Galès (2011).

characterization of African cities as "work in progress" (2004, p.1), what is *not* governed in a classic governmental rational way may be more central to understand what works in a city.

Large metropolises are growing, and the informal sector is increasing inside them (Sassen, 2009). Scholars do not agree on a common definition of the informal sector, in the South and in the North. Informal city, informal activities, informal sector: in urban literature, these labels refer to slums and illegal building for housing, as well as to several forms of economic exchanges in the neighbourhood, from street vendors (Brown, Lyons, Dankoco, 2010) to forged commodity makers (Cross, Morales, 2007); but references to the informal sector are present also in the literature on job under the table (Lindell, 2010). Scholars do not agree on a definition, but tend to settle on the fact that these phenomena are not a pre-modern residue, but they are strictly connected with actual dynamics of urban development (Hernandez, Kellett, Allen, 2009; Simone, 2009).

If some of these dynamics have been explored, literature has not paid a great attention to the political dimension of informality, especially on how local governments deal with informality, and how it affects urban policy, urban management and political choices. A large debate in facts has developed around the housing sector and the problem of slums expansion (Huchzermeyer, 2008; Tayyab, 2010), or on the complementarity between formality and informality (Williams, et al., 2011). The debate has been highly polarized by the work of the Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto, partisan of a policy to sustain the access to the private property to help people entering in the legal sphere (De Soto, 2000). Reducing informal housing, and promoting its institutionalization has been discussed deeply[9], to understand local economic development, struggle against poverty, and policies for wellbeing, with tenants and criticisms (Samers, 2005). But empirical researches have not focused on how informality is governed and regulated, resources are allocated, and conflicts are mediated. Missing researches on this point is crucial, because politics is always contradictory: on one side it contributes to interest aggregation, and actors, coalitions and exchanges formation. On the other side politics is constitutive of polity boundaries and norms. Thus governing is always challenged, having to articulate and accommodate the building of a legitimate political order and to contribute to a social order too (*ibidem*), managing contradictions and mediating social conflicts (Commaille, Jobert, 1999). Therefore "Les problèmes d'intégration sociale et de régulations systémiques sont traités par le politique en fonction de sa propre logique d'accumulation, d'extension de son emprise et de préservation des coalitions politiques au pouvoir". Once again, politics is relevant to understand meso dynamics of metropolization, and it cannot be dismissed, forgot or caricature as a simple process of privatization and retirement of the state.

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[9] Aguilera (2012) suggests distinguishing two types of institutionalization: from the top (when a government tries to organize the informal sector, controlling and repressing, but also providing resources and revising regulation) or from the bottom (with a sort of self organization through which informal workers or inhabitants try to enter into the governance framework). In this sense, what matters is to understand the source of the institutionalization process.

Also the ecological and spatial consequences have not been so explored, and rarely by comparative studies. Informality is governed in the space, and informality activities (or places) are moved and displaced, within a dynamic of conflict among local authorities within metropolitan regions. What is at stake is to grasp and explain how the relation between governance and informality affects urban change and metropolitan development.

The last point of informality and governance imply to articulate the question of *what* is governed with the question of *who* is governed in large metropolis. Governing is a two ways process. Whatever government processes may be, a lot depends upon the population which is governed. Governing a large city is a difficult task also because the population is so fluid and diverse. A precise, classical sociological knowledge of urban ecologies remains very useful to understand urban governance.

The question about who is governed implies to reflect also on the supply side of governing, and about who receive what kind of services and public goods. Issues of school segregation, housing segregation, accessibility to downtown and city centers, inequalities in infrastructures and in the quality of public services, absence of legality and police control, or police violence and excessive discretion in some neighbourhoods… all these phenomena signal that part of the population of these large metropolises is not really governed, and that someone else governs when and where governs do not govern. Who governs when nobody governs? Corrupt elite networks sometimes. Churches, or other kinds of vertical networks in other cases. Illegal organizations are also classic case where they can "run", arrange, possibly govern, some sectors, some neighbourhoods, some part of the city.

Researches on the communicative sphere of large metropolises would be of great interest. How the public discourse is structured around how to provide services, what is the limit of legitimate violence exerted by political authorities, how to help children to do well but also, and so on. We know the dynamics of public opinion are loosely coupled with governance modes, and that they can influence or not decision making and daily implementation. But we do not enough about this fundamental class of political process in large metropolis.

Beyond the recognition of citizens and elites voices in the metropolitan public sphere, the whole issue of social and ethnic diversity is a major issue to understand the meso dynamics of large metropolis. In the American case, M. Jones Correa and his colleagues show the challenge of ethnic diversity in the process of "Governing the American city" (2001). Current literature collects a lot cases describing problems and lack of governance capacity in relation to ethnic conflicts and tensions among "categoric units" (Turner, 2012). But the explanation remains weak in most of the cases, or deliberately absent.

These two main questions, about what and who is governed push us to try to overcome some of the main limitations we saw in social science about urban governance. Governance has become a chaotic concept that is often used in incompatible and even contradictory ways. This confusion and complexity has limited the operationalization of precise comparative research projects. Case studies of projects have been widely written often without looking at precise policy developments over time and without comparing

different sectors. In the rare comparative researches, metropolises have been considered as independent units, that could compared without assuming their interdependence (with exchanges of policy ideas, actors, commodities, ruling class and major economic actors).

What we suggest is to learn from public policy literature, and from the political sociology of public policy in particular (Lascoumes, Le Galès, 2012) to look at the implementation of the policies as they are clear indicators of *modes of governance in action*. But looking at policy sectors alone is always fraught with difficulties as the unit of analysis might be an illusion: urban governance research has shown that interventions in specific policy sectors are always relationally influenced by multi-scalar rules or norms and goals defined at a variety of scales. And above, to fully understand a political process it is necessary to look at the dynamic as well as at the consequences: policy outcomes and effects on macro variables as population, redistribution, production, reproduction, as well as innovation in regulation (Vitale, Podestà, 2011; see also Turner 2010). Also, according to Hubert Heinelt and David Kübler (2005), the governance capacity in large cities is linked to context variables (economic, social and political patterns) as well as to the development of incentives to cooperate and to political leadership[10].

4. To govern large cities is to plan and to develop utility networks?

The broader question is the extent to which some form of political steering plays a role in the transformation of those cities, of the organisation of services to the population. Those large metropolis from the North and from the South are not just chaotic irrational spaces. Sewage, street lighting, gas and electricity, firemen and slaughterhouse are provided. Water systems are organised – but not always for all-, some housing is built, schools are developed, new neighbourhoods are built, some transport are planned, elections take place, some social assistance exists, conflicts arise about the use of land, the price of the bread, the development of a business district, about taxes or about laws. Protests take place, coalitions are put in place, corruption and clientelism structure relations, and various kinds of policies are tried out, including more neo liberal oriented policies. In very different large cities health and social care services, as well as some form of welfare protection for the most vulnerable people are empirically present, with their typical debates on size, amalgamation and contracting out. Governance is only part of the story of those large cities, but it is not absent at all.

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[10] These general assumptions include several theoretical issues and empirical approaches have to be tested (1) looking at the growing differentiation of political systems in large metropolises, and the articulation among various implementing agencies, administration bodies, representative arena, executive stances, and expertise consulting groups; (2) focusing on local institutions' changes and reforms to face new challenges, trying to understand if and there is a shift in public intervention modes, from leadership and orientation to control over policies; (3) exploring relations between public and private actors, questioning the steering of both public and private investments and the regulation of non-public actors; (4) questioning the legitimacy and accountability of these governance systems, taking into account the growing role of NGOs and democratic participation; (5) verifying if the State has a specific interest – but not necessarily the capacity – in steering the governance of these large cities and maybe of their metropolitan area (District and Region); 6) describing if political parties are concerned with governing large metropolises, and how far do changes in politics impact the urban government.

One possible answer to the question of the governance of the large metropolis is to be found in the literature on planning. In urban studies, there is a long tradition of planning research which has given great insights to the understanding of cities. In the American and English tradition, the glorious "planner" with wisdom, knowledge and authority has been seen as the leading force to keep city development in sight and to control and organise urbanisation. Legendary figures such as R. Moses in New York, or Haussman in Paris, have given a structure to the development of the metropolis.

It follows that a lot of the literature about cities development is to be found in planning studies. This angle usually provides a way to have access to rationalised knowledge about the city: planning is related to the accumulation of a wealth of data, of a rationalisation process, of the making of maps, zones, the anticipation of developments, or rules and taxes. Planning epitomizes modern government. Tellingly, in his acclaimed book "Seeing like a state", J. Scott (1998) uses planning as key example of the modernising schemes implemented modernist governments, as a way to accumulate knowledge and to transform societies in a rational way. He shows how the development of new technologies of government has been made to make society "legible". It has been a fundamental political process, but often ideologically underestimated as simple technicalities. As Kornenberg put it (2012), "traditional urban planning has been firmly rooted in the scientific tradition and has attempted to remain outside of politics". The sort of objectivity of the rational planner, designing the city and calculating the consequences of its choice, was rooted in an ideology of technical expertise. Recent literature on planning as a concrete process, as well as some normative literature on what planning is expected to do stress either the post modern, the democratic governance of the strategic dimension of planning (Healey). It is not just a technical expertise of listening, negotiating and co-producing with reflexive citizens. Not only in large metropolis, planning is explicitly overcoming the boundaries between technical objectivity and political decision making: "strategy represents a new regime connecting politics and science" (*ibidem*).

On the contrary, most of the research on planning in "global cities" emphasises either the "experimental" dimension, the complexity, were sometimes a little bit of spatial planning provide coherence or the transformation in relation to a simple analysis of neo liberalism, with social relations and city dynamics often reduced to a residual role in explanations of change. But even if those cities are weakly governed, even if market mechanisms play an increasing role, even if there is more mobility making effective governance an even more difficult challenge, it remains the case that government and governance processes matter. Public authorities define rules, tax rates, regulations on private behaviour, the form and character of utilities networks, and urban processes of change. There are also protests, elections, political parties, democratic participation innovation, active interest groups and others who play a key part in shaping the implementation of policies. Such policies and politics still matter very much for globalised cities but this emphasis has all but disappeared from the radar of much urban research and geographers and planners (as well as the rare political scientists who engaged in this field) remain cautious and are prone to generalisations when thinking about large cities.

Another branch of the literature emphasises the role of utility networks, from water to transport or high tech networks. Governing is related to the capacity of a political regime to provide services, produce and maintain collective goods, and thus ensure its own legitimacy. Empirical research on this subject is

scarce and underdeveloped. While it is possible to find some technical account of these utility networks (especially in engineering), what is missing is exactly empirical researches comparing how these utilities are governed in various large metropolis. And we do not know exactly who are the member of the coalition investing in urban utilities. Researchers have shown that firms in charge of technical networks can largely run these metropolises. Is there a divide between "old" metropolises still run by political institutions and "new" metropolises run by urban services firms? Hypothesis could be advanced also about the power of emerging entrepreneurial coalitions do not interested primary in growth machine, land price, rent seeking and real estate, but on ICT, smart infrastructure, privatization of education and health.

Traditional tools of industrial economics have been applied for the analysis of various utility sectors in large metropolis, with important accumulation of knowledge describing growth and its geography. Classical concepts of comparative political economy (markets, interactions between corporate and public actors, regulatory frameworks) are still underexploited to grasp a deeper public-policy analysis of urban governance issues, fully considering the political dimension at stake. Let's think at ubiquitous struggles contesting utilities privatization, or the enhanced public intervention designs in the energy sector (like in the case of Caracas nationalization of electricity providers) or the huge political difficulties of multi-level coordination for transportation systems, especially for emerging new Mass Transit System (in Curitiba first, and then in Bogotá, but also in Seoul, Bangkok, Lima, Manila, etc. …). Emblematic is the case of logistic platforms, which organize the control of the stocks, the storage process and the management of transport and distribution (Maggioni, 2012). They are undoubtedly fundamental for connections and development of large metropolis, while we have no concrete idea of how these logistic parks are governed and are transformed in metropolitan areas by contrasting (or articulating) market and political forces. In addition to having a great economic impact at both global and local level, logistic parks stress other issues that are crucial in the development of metropolitan areas: such as political mechanisms and processes which nourish an informal economy, the opacity of relations between legal and criminal economies and the way in which they influence each other, redistribution choice, the governing of urban mobility, and – for their role in the built environment, some effects also in terms of ethnic segregation and social exclusions. But looking at the literature, at the moment we are unable to answer to very basic questions about the role played by local government in the political integration of the different actors involved, like: how local government governs the logistic parks, and when the key actors get out of hand? In which way private firms, property developers, major economy groups are no longer under the local government control in the regulation of logistic parks?

In some sense, we are still missing a serious urban comparative political economy of large metropolis, with a strong legacy of sociology and political science. We need explore how large cities are governed between local and national government, and how political economy shapes the production and reproduction of these metropolises. The focuses on different corporate actors (firms, political parties, public agencies, consulting groups, NGOs) as actors central to metropolitan processes with core competencies

that depend on the quality of the relations that they develop among them and with other actors, at different level, outside the metropolitan environment. Urban political economy stresses the fact that those relationships depend, in turn, on the institutional support provided for them by urban governance modes that provide a particular regulatory framework[11].

5. Tentative conclusion: the relative autonomy of both governance and inequalities

Urban sociology, regional economics and economic geography have traditionally studied inequalities insisting on two different kind of explanation: those emphasizing individual preferences and aggregation effects, as in the well renowned Schelling's model; and those underlining broader economic and social factors. Urban sociology has produced some nuanced explanations looking at social interaction between groups and ecological effects.[12]

For what we said in this paper, we consider that looking at what and who is governed or not, and how, allows to enrich causal explanation of metropolitan inequalities *and* our knowledge of metropolitan governance. Three main points justify this statement.

1) Looking and describing who is governed means to describe the social structure of a metropolitan region and to measure its level of social and ethnic segregation. Looking and describing what is governed allows to describe the metropolitan structure of opportunities, inequality in goods and service delivery and its localization in the space.

2) This way of framing governance modes assume a certain level of autonomy between governance and inequalities. Metropolitan governance is not determined only by the social structure of the metropolitan region, as well as the level and shape of inequalities in a metropolis are not determined only by governance processes. They interact, maintaining certain autonomy. Social and ethnic inequalities are structured by factors at different scales, and cannot be reduced to governance choices; governance modes and politics cannot be reduced to mere mechanical expressions of class divisions and cleavages in the social structure.

3) Looking at this interaction enrich our knowledge because it allows to overcome the simple idea that inequalities are just relevant parameters to evaluate the consequences of metropolitan policies. Surely

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[11] Here a regulatory framework is intended as the system of as mechanisms of governance. It is defined on the basis of three dimensions: 1) the mode of co-ordinating diverse activities or relationships among actors, 2) the allocation of resources in relation to these activities or these actors, and 3) the structuring of conflicts (prevented or resolved), having three main ideal types: state regulation, market regulation, co-operative regulation (Lange, Regini, 1989).

[12] In this paper we have not analysed how State – metropolis relationship have huge consequences on territorial inequalities: in many European States policies has been re-oriented to invest on existing success rather than advancing new or previously underprivileged places, cutting policies for helping backward areas and those for generally ensuring evenness of development see Crouch, Le Galès (2012); on State – metropolis relations, see Le Galès, Vitale (2012).

governance has an impact on inequalities, but the relation is bi-univocal. Dramatic inequalities are part of the way in which urban policy *are implemented*: they have to be considered for their structuring effect on implementation processes. Steering collective action, collecting resources, delivering collective goods, managing conflicts: this is the ordinary governance of metropolitan policy making and the *mode* of this governance is influenced by well-structured, long term inequalities: who receives resources and public goods (schools, hospitals, transports, and so on) and who do not benefit from it. Social choices on who is governed and who is not are a crucial point to understand metropolitan policies implementation. So, looking at the interaction between governance and inequalities do not only enrich explanation of metropolitan inequalities but allows us to better understand governance modes too.

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