

## DIFFERENT POLITICS IN A DIFFERENT CITY?

### NEW PERSPECTIVES OF INTERPRETATION AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON THE GOVERNATION STRUCTURES OF THE CITY OF LISBON

*João Seixas*<sup>1</sup>

*Abstract:*

This paper is structured into three sections. Firstly, it seeks to present new perspectives for addressing the overall question of how to interpret urban politics in the contemporary European city. We further set out the need for a possible new theoretical structure for conceptual reflection, in accordance with the new governing structures and reconfiguration dynamics emerging in European cities in the first decade of this century. We correspondingly identify an essential interaction between what might be entitled *the city-system* and *the city socio-political system*; and consequently propose the adoption of a different concept – that of *governance* – different from *governance* while also including it – as a more systemic and integrative concept for the differing dimensions and values of socio-political urban structures and dynamics. Secondly, according both to the proposed theoretical structure, and to an empirical analysis developed through several methodological settings, there follows critical analysis upon the structures and networks of administration, of governance and of socio-cultural capital in the city of Lisbon. Thirdly, we highlight some ideas for furthering discussion with the double objective of improving contemporary governance structures in the city of Lisbon and deepening the theoretical and academic debate on the overall fields of governance and urban politics.

Key-words: Urban Governance, Urban Governance, Urban Politics, Lisbon

“Considering politics as a free act, everything may recommence,  
but not in any manner or in any place”

José Bragança de Miranda

#### **The new urban paradigm**

The present process of change towards a new civilizational paradigm, towards a *pathos* whose driving forces are increasingly understood in the urban and cultural senses (Soja 2000, Ascher 2001, Touraine 2005), is placing the city at a particular historical crossroad. In previous texts, we have proposed an interpretative framework for such

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<sup>1</sup> Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon. Contact: [jseixas@ics.ul.pt](mailto:jseixas@ics.ul.pt)

urban mutative patterns through analysis of perceptible tendencies in the contemporary city: its new position on the planet; its significantly more competitive attitudes; its greater dependence on imagetic and symbolical elements; its more diffused and fragmented morphological meta-structures; its new social and identitarian personalities; its more disturbed urban soul; and, precisely, its key positioning in consolidating new – and old – hopes for human development (Seixas, 2006).

The confrontation between the magnitude of ongoing changes in the city and the discomfort experienced by the political-institutional and social-cultural systems whether in the intelligibly grasping the changes or in the concomitant development of political and cultural answers, is not at all surprising. This gap has allowed for the emergence of a global panorama of relative disorientation and consequent difficulties in strategically leading public and collective action. Notwithstanding, this panorama has been faced through diverse manners in different European cities representing quite an extensive universe of city responses to the present challenges. Urban responses, ranging from almost absolute passiveness to the development of wide-reaching socio-political attitudes, bring new possibilities for urban politics on diverse scales across Europe.

Borja wrote: “The city is the best opportunity for political innovation. Through the complexity of public policies and through dimensions that might enable straighter relationships with the population” (1998: 55). In fact, the current panorama of relative disorientation should also be understood as a panorama packed with potential for reinventing politics in the city – widening horizons, refocusing responsibilities, restructuring systems, opening new procedural and democratic perspectives. In that sense, it is essential to review and understand what the real needs of the city and its urban society actually might be. This approach may be made through two deeply interconnected dimensions: firstly, looking at the challenges specific to the city-system (sustainability, social inclusion, quality of life, qualified urbanism, etc.); secondly, looking at the challenges within and with the urban socio-political system of the city.

### **Interpreting the City-System**

The ‘long period of disorientation’ surrounding the city and urban environment, which Lefévre was already defining in 1970, remains with us almost four decades on – and on an imposing scale. This disorientation (or nebulosity as some have termed it) in our knowledge and interpretation of the real city inherently carries two major consequences. On the one hand, opportunities for strategic development and broader, better integrated and more collective transformative processes have been squandered. On the other hand, the persistence of political-administrative structures and systems and regulatory

frameworks that are relatively out of step with the deeper needs and potentials has weakened the city and urban environment driven by structures paying far greater attention and support to models, agents and projects that might not be able to best ensure effectively sustainable patterns of urban development.

Hence, there emerge essential forms and structures of intelligibility and cognitive awareness of the city that simultaneously well – and broadly – reflect its symbolic, identity, philosophic and functional characteristics, within a broadly contemporary perspective, able to promote a new, more motivational and better system fostering both cultural and political action and dynamics among its urban actors.

Within these core spheres of contemporary urban critical analysis, we would add that the need for newly intelligible lenses for perceiving the city-system might be of particular significance given this period of global paradigmatic changes further opening up the gaps between political-institutional structures and the multiplicity of urban issues and demands. That is, as we wrote previously, when the real city is continually withdrawing from the political city (Seixas, 2002). According to Ferrão, “*it is this displacement, between the characteristics of the real city and the representations and categories that we produce upon it, that must be clarified in order to boost our collective capacity to strategically think about it*” (2003: 222).

Within these perspectives, we focus our attention on certain readings of the city – and of the corresponding urban society – that seem of especial pertinence:

- a) On the one hand, we point to a need to set out more holistic and simultaneously integrative visions of the city, seeking to consolidate the foundations for sustaining more overarching and collective visions, strategies and projects. We further recognise the prevalence of essentially sector based and specialised perspectives on the city – in a certain sense also circumscriptive and discretionary – that in more recent times have generated more dispersed and unsustainable consequences than would have first been forecast,
- b) On the other hand, and following a more *Weberian* approach and returning to those fields of the social sciences attentive to the city – which in truth should be understood as a social construction – hence emphasis is placed on the logics and dynamics of social order, perceptions and identities in the processes, strategies and practices deployed in the actions of the multiple actors and communities living within the city’s extent. This correspondingly recognises that *socio-cultural capital*

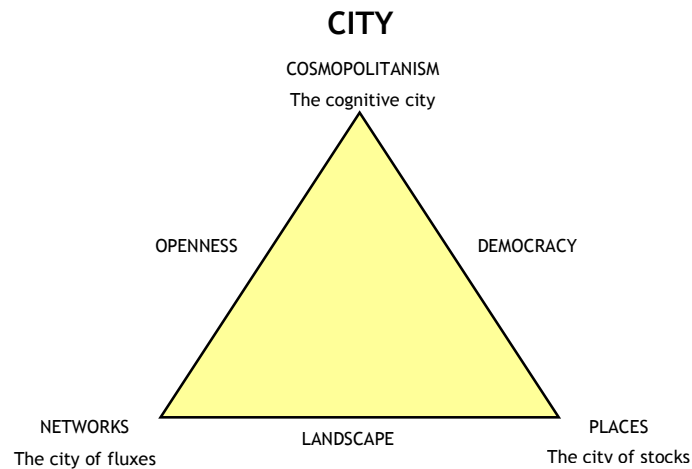
and what the literature refers to as *systems of action* in a city are not bound only to specific urban designed or planned configurations but also incorporate the support structures and daily energies that leverage the city's destinies.

Within this scope, Harvey (1996, p.53) stated, already more than ten years ago: "I believe it necessary to reconceptualise the urban question not only as a problem when studying almost natural entities, whether called cities, suburbs, rural zones or whatever, but rather as something of essential relevance to study of the social processes that produce and reproduce spatial-temporalities, which are, frequently, of a radically new and distinct type".

Through their observations on the experiences and transformations occurring in real European city-system scenarios and their corresponding socio-political urban systems, various social scientists have put forward conceptual proposals for interpreting emerging urban political structures and dynamics. There are, however, an open ended range of issues that need more thorough examination including: tracing the evolution of city values and principles; the consolidation and deeper enforcement of strategic planning; institutional and administrative reforms; as well as greater attention to qualitative dimensions such as quality of life, public spaces, landscape, urban rhythms; spaces and processes for deeper citizen participation and community involvement; the new scientific perspectives on areas like the cognitive economy, reflexive urbanism, or citizenship urbanism.

Embracing the noble objective of "*a greater harmony between science and action*" (Guerra, 2002: 51) and within the scope of politically reinventing the city, we might suggest three concrete spheres for deepening critical urban analyses: the development of normative and orientational guideline structures for values and principles that might be defended by a city (Borja, 2003); the reinterpretation of the role of the State in the city (Brenner, Jessop, Jones and Macleod, 2003); and the deepening of the scope and practices of governance in the city (Bagnasco and LeGalés, 2000).

Let us closely follow Ferrão (idem), in his conceptual proposal for interpreting the contemporary city. This is an intelligibility proposal which establishes quite an interesting conjugation between a desirably systemic conceptual exercise and its transformational capacity for concrete governability and the purposes of social-political action. In a clear allusion to the city as a living being – or the urban system as an ecosystem – the author suggests an interpretation of the city through three main elements personifying the body, the life and the soul.



The conceptual triangle for *City* interpretation (Ferrão, 2003)

1. The body of the city is its *places*: land, neighbourhoods, streets, public spaces and diverse facilities, riverfronts, residential areas, brownfield sites, etc. This is the urban space, across its multiple scales and mainly understood through its classical and morphological forms.
2. The life of the city can be personified through its *fluxes and networks* (such as the nerve system, language, and other connective structures of a living being): the diverse infrastructures, mobility networks, social and economic networks, ecological structures, linkages and bondages.
3. The soul of the city might be understood as its *cosmopolitan spirit*. It “supports the cognitive city, the city that thinks, intuitively and feels” (idem: p.223). This adds to the city’s meanings, attitudes and behaviours as well as to its skills, norms and social conventions. It shapes “a collective intelligence that only the cities seem to achieve” (ibid.) culturally, socially and politically.

Three main value dimensions, reciprocally strengthened, exist between the three main elements: landscape, democracy and openness. These values are no less important than the elements of the city themselves, in fact they are an integral part, both cause and consequence of the whole city-system conjunction:

- a. The city *Landscape* is the union between its places and its networks, as “*the infrastructure that supports the cosmopolitan city*”. It is more than a mere morphological reality: it extensively translates the vigour and the meaning of the choices taken by each urban society.
- b. *Democracy* has been materialized in the city, combining the occupation of space with social and political human structures. In a healthy society, democratic citizenship becomes enriched “as a response to the tensions and needs that the city imposes, but also to the expectations and ambitions of those who live and work there” (ibid.).
- c. The *Openness* of the city translates its accessibility, mobility and connectivity conditions, from the sharing of information and knowledge to comprehensiveness and multicultural reciprocity. The openness of the city “reflects, undoubtedly, the potentialities of creativity and innovation that each urban agglomeration possesses.” (ibid.).

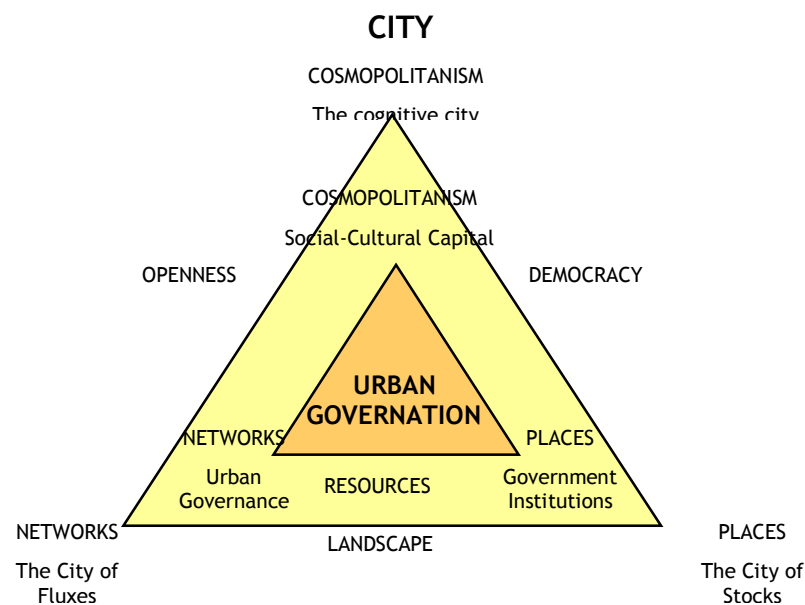
Albeit the intrinsic urban complexity, this is in our view a proposal that searches for clarity in reflections upon the interrelationships existing between the main features and values in which the city experiences its own existence and vigour. In fact, the understanding of the city as an organism – a collective organism – helps us to envision it within a natural assumption of the need to take options and define strategies, both in the short, medium and long term – implying the existence of systemic and active reasoning, particularly important in times of significant challenges, as well as – for science – when searching for a closer proximity between theory and action.

### **Interpreting the Socio-Political City System**

The expansion of the universes of intelligibility towards the inclusion the social and political dimensions of the city compels us to conceptually review other structures. For our purpose of searching for a new theoretical structure for the city, we propose the development of a systemic structuring similar to that previously expressed for the city-system. After all, the *polis* comprehends an umbilical connection between the *urbs* and the *civitas*. This interpretative proposal for the socio-political urban system is furthermore structured around a possible new concept in the field of urban politics, in our view more comprehensive than those of government, governability or even governance, and actually including all of these: *Urban Governation*. According to one author working the concept mostly within the field of sociology – Guerra (2002) – in the task of comprising structures, cultures and relations of power and action in the city, “*the concept of govornation includes and combines knowledge on political processes for*

social regulation, along with the compromises made in several institutional, organizational and management based forms” (id: 55). Simultaneously, it may also be understood as both an integrated and dynamic system: “the concept of governance appeals to the existence of proper aims for public intervention, which would stretch beyond a simple generation of consensus to become a real search for social equity”, implying “a constructive perspective (...) an interpretative pluralist perspective, where articulated processes and the learning capacity of ‘action systems’ are valorised.” (id: 56).

These perspectives evoke similar systemic understandings of the city previously called for. Therefore, and extending the conceptual premises of Ferrão interpreting *the city as a collective system*, we propose a symmetrical theoretical structure, with the same three elements representing body, fluxes and soul of the socio-political city-system: the city of institutions and organisations, the city of governance, and the city of collective social-cultural capital:



The conceptual triangle for interpreting *Urban Governance*

1. The body of the political city is its *institutional and organizational government scenarios*, involving the different public and para-public organisms that, in the most varied of forms, govern it: municipal councils, metropolitan and/or regional governments, parish councils or urban districts, etc. The institutions of urban

government must strive to be positioned and act within the scope of simultaneously symbolical and operational representation, and are obviously vital to the coordination and regulation of the urban socio-political system, even when (or especially when) they include empowerment sharing.

2. The life of the political city (or the fluxes of socio-political interaction) should be interpreted through its *structures and dynamics of urban governance*. Let us recall the interesting definition of governance of Bagnasco and LeGalés: “*a process for the coordination of actors, of social groups and institutions in order to achieve collectively discussed and defined goals in a fragmented or even obscure environment*” (2000: 26). The city as a collective actor emerges out of both interrelationship networks and the interconnection of forces, pressures and influences amongst its different actors (from the business-related to the environmentalist, from the institutional to the social, etc). A possible panorama for more concrete rationality in governance management might imply the existence of dialogue structures across several scales: spaces, instruments and mechanisms, both formal and informal, through which cooperation fluxes are processed with considerable proximity and the formation of interdependencies and partnerships is materialized with considerable doses of objectivity.
3. The soul of the political city, or its political cosmopolitanism, is affirmed by the *solidness of its social and cultural capitals*. It is its collective political intelligence, structuring perceptions, values, attitudes and behaviours of the city as a community. These features strongly and mutually reflect in the cultural and motivational structures of political and civic expression in each city, consolidating the global quality of its government system.

This conceptual government system of the city attributes equal value to landscape, openness and democracy:

- a. In urban government, the *Landscape* frames the city of institutions with the city of governance. A pleasant government landscape needs adequate support in terms of resources and political instruments, directly or indirectly connected with the city's government. Amongst these resources, there might be core normative elements such as a charter of values and principles for the city, together with more operational elements such as strategic plans, as well as appropriate levels of human and financial resources.

- b. *Democracy* in urban governance is constructed out of the cultural guidelines and social processes of its civic and collective values consolidating the institutional panoramas of urban government. The political cosmopolitanism of the city enables and supports the development of governmental and democratic solutions.
- c. *Openness* in urban governance interrelates governance networks with the city's structures of social and cultural capital. A governance framework, established through considerable doses of openness, proximity and connectivity across its networked spaces, enables the comprehensiveness of urban actors fostering a more deepened sense and exercise of citizenship, consolidating the *public space of city politics*.

### **Critical Analysis of the Lisbon Governance Structures**

Based on the systemic conceptual structure set out above, focusing - for the moment – mainly on the three vertices of the theoretical triangle (places, networks and the cosmopolitanism of urban governance structures), and on a corresponding empirical investigation incorporating different research methodologies (75 interviews with urban actors<sup>2</sup>, the development of 5 case studies<sup>3</sup>, wide data, documental and organisational research, etc.), we have undertaken a critical analytical approach. This, in conjunction with the theoretical framework proposed, gave us a profound insight into the cosmopolitanism, the places and the networks of the governance system of the Portuguese capital.

This paper goes onto provide an extended summary of the main conclusions arising from this research and its corresponding critical analysis<sup>4</sup>.

#### *A. Cosmopolitanism: Social-Cultural Capital in the Governance of Lisbon*

Despite of a series of strengths within the scope of its urban culture and identity, and within its neighbourhood social structures, the socio-cultural capital of Lisbon's urban society shows to attain a relatively fragile consistency, especially when in projections of community intervention dynamics. Very recent research has shown how, in Lisbon, there are important distances between passive citizenship and active citizenship attitudes (Cabral, Silva and Saraiva, 2008).

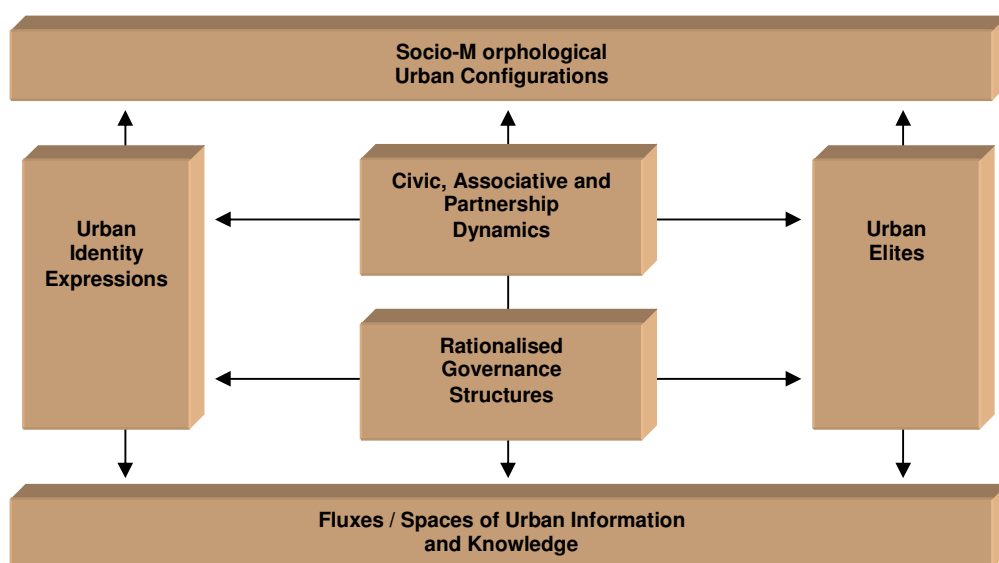
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<sup>2</sup> From city's councillors, local politicians and public functionaries, to private developers, NGOs and civic associations.

<sup>3</sup> The five case studies were: a municipality department, a local urban district, a para-public development agency, an urban planning procedures, a local civic organisation.

<sup>4</sup> The complete research project is being prepared in book form, due for publication in the near future.

Our research, developed throughout six different vectors of urban socio-cultural capital embeddedness (Socio-morphological urban configurations, urban identity expressions, urban information and knowledge, associative, civic and partnership movements, governance structures, urban elites involvement) showed structural limitations still existing today: the limited traditions of Portuguese society's civic involvement and participation, with public questions not being easily understood as a collective responsibility; there is a perception of a relative superposition between public involvement and civic involvement; the magnitude of socio-spatial fragmentation trends in the metropolis over the last three decades, fractionalizing urban energies and urban benefits; knowledge deficiencies on urban and city problem issues, with a state of 'relative ignorance' in effect as to what is at stake in the contemporary city, thereby permitting the maintenance of cultural and administrative structures with little capacity for transversal and multidisciplinary approaches. Simultaneously, we confirmed a great absence of open channels of governance, 'public spaces' for dialogue and participation established beyond the usual debates held during days of electioneering and public consultation procedures established in normative planning frameworks. We have also analysed weak levels of interest among Lisbon's urban elites, in participative processes or even in concrete professional and political involvement in urban government and urban governance systems – an important factor that in our view does not facilitate the development in Lisbon urban society of 'local political communities' (Jouve and Lefèvre, 1999), beyond political communities linked to more specific and particular goals, therefore to a significant extent leaving local city government institutions 'to their own devices'.



## Dimensions of Valorisation of the Socio-Cultural Capital in an Urban Society

However, notwithstanding this panorama of undeniable fragilities, we equally registered interesting signs showing the development of wider social perceptions in Lisbon – and corresponding political and civic involvement attitudes – around the city, both in neighbourhoods and communities, the NGO, academic or media dimensions: more debate, more civic intervention and social pressures (even beyond common NIMBY type concerns), more scientific and cultural debate on the city's facets, more spaces given over to urban issues in the media. These developments reflect an undoubtedly growing existence of urban social interest and urban cognition. Even the fast growing current expansion of individualized expressions of citizenship through the Internet, supposedly quite fractal and kaleidoscopic, also translate our identification of a rising stock of awareness based on a relative consolidation of a cultural capital of urban cosmopolitanism.

All this shows to be quite visible and increasingly influential within the socio-political structures of Lisbon. Nevertheless, it is still not at all clearly understandable how these expressions will, firstly, develop stronger structures of socio-cultural capital, and secondly, materialize in any form of more modern and democratic governance development.

### *B. Places: Institutions in the Governance of Lisbon*

Notwithstanding the fundamental daily public deliveries made by the wide public administration organs to meet the city's needs, our critical analysis on the local institutional and governmental fields also found important gaps – and structural difficulties in reducing them – between the places of the governance of Lisbon and the city-system's pulses and challenges.

We would just reference two obvious shortcomings on two quite different scales: firstly, there is still no metropolitan scale government in Lisbon; secondly, the administrative division of the city (configuring the local government structure at the neighbourhood level) is widely recognised to be completely inadequate and deprived of resources. These political-administrative gaps on these different scales, are broadly due not only to party political structures based on classical administrative divisions, but also to a closed-circuit state – or, as we have called it, a state of considerable *zeitgeist* – that seems to be prevailing in the cultural structures and *ethos* of most municipal organs. On the one hand, the power hypertrophy existing around executive

political offices proved to be simultaneously cause and consequence of the lack of pro-activeness across most local administrative levels. On the other hand, the very levels of administrative efficiency, of delivery and of accountability revealed important weaknesses. Even assuming there might be a proper universe for politicians and another for technicians, each with differing expectations and distinct attitudes and strategies, both seemed here to stand together before situations of high political and administrative complexity with a dispersed and poorly rationalised capacity of action – condensing a state of *a-topia* in the city administration, withdrawing motivational capital, the capacity to conceive and discuss strategic objectives, not focusing on long term and structural reforms, uncomfortable to work with the city and its citizens. Notwithstanding, this *autarchic autarchy* has not prevent local political action embedding with processes and actors mainly linked with more competitive visions, strongly based on the financial, real estate and marketing fields – in a similar tendency as the regimes analysis developed by known critical urban policy researchers such as Jessop (2000 and 2002). This situation leaves some of the main urban political agendas, in Lisbon, to a large extent and for too long, dependent on determinate actors and private strategies.

We have, however, also noticed political and administrative pro-activity in several directions. After all, with the existence of a wide and otherwise consolidated normative and political-institutional structure of government, even with important gaps and malfunctioning situations, the city of Lisbon also revealed several areas of administrative modernity, of strategic thinking and of democratic improvement. These areas bring perspectives for some change, together with other types of pressures and incentives deriving from other origins: first of all, the demands of the city-system and urban society itself; but also pressures from other levels of government, like central government or the European Union, through administrative decentralization enforcement, together with stronger local autonomy perspectives, or through new legal and fiscal frameworks like the new law for local finances, and the new central government city politics in Portugal – all of them, implying new demands, new attitudes and new positioning for local urban governments.

### C. *Networks: Governance in the Goveneration of Lisbon*

Our research also points to important weaknesses in this dimension. Beyond institutional structures founded on the classical logics of political representation, Lisbon does not contain any governance structure of a permanent character that might include any type of more open and plural participatory processes. The organicity existent in the dialogue and partnerships within the urban panorama, although natural and obviously healthy in any

city, is however the complete mirror reflection of the organicity existent in a governance structure not based on clear and recognisable forms of strategic planning, of rationalised public action and of public openness attitudes. This situation leads to high doses of uncertainty and instability in urban governance processes and shapes a panorama that is naturally dominated by the dynamics and strategies of the most compelling stakeholders that follow the perspectives of urban competitiveness, and also of urban most symbolic cultures and images. In fact, cultural pressures and the expenditure of energies by Lisbon governance system actors – including the citizenry – in their attention to the most mediatic, symbolic and competitive urban projects were quite visible in our interviews.

Therefore, and as expressed above, local political agendas are to a significant extent dominated by these logics, overshadowing other political projects and local-type attentions and leading the administrative frameworks to clearly prefer *new public management* attitudes to the detriment of *new public administration* actions (Mozzicafreddo, 2003), perceptively more complex to develop and surely much more delicate to negotiate in the present institutional, party political and union labour contexts. In reference to one of the main questions proposed by the French literature on these fields – *who governs the city* (Joana, 2000) – although we do not consider that the urban regime of Lisbon has evolved towards a structured global competitive statist regime (as Brenner conceptualized for several urban regimes in the USA and Europe, 2004), we might not have many doubts in considering that there is presently in the Lisbon system of urban governance a considerable degree of power hypertrophy, sustained through semi-closed political communities (Mozzicafreddo, idem).

### **Final comments**

The hard diagnosis above summarised around the three vertices of the city of Lisbon governance system, might not exclusively report on the socio-cultural and political-institutional structures of the Portuguese capital. This understanding, after all, does not extract the main debates on the socio-political challenges facing Lisbon from the main debates and from the most relevant questioning currently ongoing on the global evolution of city politics. Furthermore, given the paradigmatic transformations in course, from those of the post-Fordist political economy (Swedberg, 1987) to the most recent ones, on the search for new senses and strategies – both public and private – around the 'spatial capital' dimension (as defined by Paul Krugman), reconfiguring urban power systems in contemporary European cities (Bagnasco and LeGalés, 2000).

In the institutional and political urban fields, the tensions, games and crossed strategies framing the main city's actors and stakeholders of the current governance system of

Lisbon are still largely structured by logics and rhythms based on old paradigms of administrative representation and power. However, before and beyond these different actor expectations and attitudes in the urban governance system, there exists a continuous pace of evolution and of change in the city's own realities. The perceptions, and consequent logics of action, displayed by most of the main actors in the present Lisbon governance system – in particular those connected with institutional structures of government and administration – still do not reflect a clear consciousness of the changes occurring in the urban socio-cultural paradigms. They still search to understand the city, and its new challenges and complexities, through cognitively safer functional and Cartesian perspectives. Occupied both in the complex and bureaucratic legal and administrative procedures and in the built up reciprocity networks, most do not achieve a clear visualisation of vital elements – not few and undoubtedly new – in the city-system and its corresponding urban governance system. As Michel Crozier wrote some years ago, in his rather interesting essay titled 'The Crisis of Intelligence': "it is not anymore society that is blocked, as I wrote in 1970, it is its political-institutional system, or better said, the system of its elites and, within them, that intelligence itself is to be found blocked. It is therefore in the mutation of intelligence that it is necessary to invest" (1995, p.12).

To provide some form of post-conclusions, and benefiting from the fairly enriching viewpoints obtained through this rather qualitative empirical research process, we below introduce several brief hypothetical scenarios for the possible qualification of the main vertices of governance in Lisbon.

a) Action proposals for fostering the socio-cultural capital structures of Lisbon must surely include the valorisation of its main catalyst elements: enhancing the city of proximity, the 'urbanism for the quotidian', the network and quality of public spaces, the expressions of urban culture and urban identity (including new identities under formation); the encouragement of spaces of knowledge and information about the city; the support for associative and civic urban dynamics; their inclusion in pluralist governance structures, thus maximising their integration into structures for reflection and even political decision making in the city. A collective structuring that might consolidate a base of more communal urban knowledge and urban action founded on fundamental principles and values.

b) The modernization of Lisbon's institutional structures proves to be an arduous task, given both the weight of existing problems and certain difficulties inherent to processes of change hardly easily acceptable to actors whose status was consolidated in the

frameworks of the old paradigms. In particular, there is the need to inject significant doses of strategic capacity, efficiency and a flexible administrative culture of meritocracy, innovation and motivation; and also, of ethics and accountability into local administration structures. For such endeavours, important organisational reforms to municipal universes are necessary – giving prominence to underworked dimensions, such as new autonomy configurations and both self and independent evaluation processes. On other hand, the governance of the city will only achieve effective global institutional effectiveness, if some form of strategic and political bondage of metropolitan scale is assumed – bringing new perspectives to national decentralisation, or regionalisation debates. In the much more local and daily life scales (or in the proximity scales), the reconfiguration and strengthening of the urban parishes, building mezzo-scale urban district governments appears equally central to the transformation of the city’s administration – these ‘municipal decentralisation processes’ being potentially good drivers of municipal administration reform. There is also the need to have a consolidated voice near central government, most especially on vital matters for the city and its administration, in areas like local autonomy reorganisation and on issues like the administration of the Lisbon riverfront. Additionally, it is necessary to induce innovation into the spaces and cultures of urban planning, which includes more open and multidisciplinary interpretations and working configurations.

C) The strategies for developing a more inclusive governance panorama in Lisbon do seem to compete, in an important measure, with the present political-institutional structures. On the one hand, through the development of support policies for the socio-cultural capital dimensions present in the city, as expressed above but also through the institutional structuring of spaces for dialogue and for participation in the governance of the city, even if these spaces are to be merely of a consultative nature. However, due to its own severe incapacity for internal transformation, it is much more probable that the main attitudes and demands for the development of wider governance channels, will come from civic society pressures. Particularly from actors belonging to a certain socio-cultural and more demanding elite, presently reconfiguring its own networks of political stress within new types of political urban culture (Clark and Hoffman-Martinot, 1998). Notwithstanding, governmental institutions shall need to have, at least, an obvious response role to these growing pressures and somewhat corresponding pro-active attitudes, implying these processes undergo some cultural changes in their own structures. The more instrumental issues here assume particular importance: the public spaces of city politics will need to be developed through more directly communicative and cooperative forms, via forums and councils, via participative or even deliberative democratic

processes, and through the deepening of both partnership practices and accountability instruments.

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