City Futures 09 – EURA, June 2009, Madrid

TOWARDS NEW MODELS OF METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE – THE CASES OF MADRID, BARCELONA AND LISBON

Mr. Rui Filipe Arango Florentino [1]
Mr. José Miguel Fernández Güell [2]

[1] Portuguese Catholic University – Scholl of Engineering
Estrada Octávio Pato, 2635-631 Rio de Mouro, Portugal
rflorentino@fe.lisboa.ucp.pt

[2] Madrid Polytechnic University – Scholl of Architecture
Avda. Juan de Herrera, 4, Ciudad Universitaria, 28040 Madrid, Spain
josemiguel.fernandez@upm.es

ABSTRACT

The regions of Madrid, Barcelona and Lisbon present an interesting array of different approaches, in ways of dealing with metropolitan governance. While Barcelona is regarded as an example of good practices in strategic and collaborative planning at both city and metropolitan levels, Lisbon and Madrid are two examples of strong national or regionally centred governments, respectively, which follow the traditional Napoleonic spatial planning system. But despite their differences, regarding geography, socio-cultural patterns and economic development, these three metropolises share similar needs, challenges and uncertainties, concerning the context and practice of governance.

The paper concludes that under their specific conditions, the ongoing processes are representative of the different paths towards new models of metropolitan governance: in Barcelona, the cooperation between local authorities in the association of municipalities, led by the central city; in Lisbon, despite the relevance of national policies, efforts for ongoing planning processes and the decentralization of some legal responsibilities to local levels; and in Madrid, voluntary private initiatives in planning decision-making within a framework of urban and regional policies deregulation. These different processes can be regarded as the basis in each region for the construction of an efficient model of metropolitan governance.

Key words:
Metropolitan Governance; Madrid; Barcelona; Lisbon; Regional Planning.

1. INTRODUCTION

The improvement of metropolitan governance is a big challenge for major cities in Spain and Portugal, especially for the metropolitan regions of Madrid, Barcelona and Lisbon. Historically, large capital regions have generated positive externalities for businesses and citizens. They have also produced negative impacts, reflected in environmental, social and traffic problems. The greatest challenge for these metropolitan regions, undoubtedly related to these issues, is how to introduce innovative and efficient governance processes that are capable of satisfying current requirements without compromising future needs.

In a state of the art review, we claimed that the terms of governance and sustainability are condemned to mismatch in urban and spatial policies (Fernández Güell, 2004).[1] If we accept that sustainability, competitiveness and equity are the necessary strategies for tackling the environmental, economic and social challenges of our time, we can also understand that governance is the appropriate tool to achieve a correct balance of these (necessarily) different issues, based on the empowerment of civic bodies and the improvement of public policies and organizations.

Elsewhere, we had the opportunity to argue that an adequate governance model should be guided by six elements (Florentino, 2008):

- legitimate responsibilities and legal framework;
- human, economic and technological resources;
- democracy and leadership;
- citizen participation and social capital development;
- spatial metropolitan strategy;
- and private-public collaboration on spatial projects.

The analysis of these six principles in the metropolises of Madrid, Barcelona and Lisbon has allowed us to explore a number of interesting questions. Are these three metropolitan regions taking the same path to improve their governance models? In order to achieve better practices, should they change their institutional models, or strengthen their specific conditions? Is it possible to identify a set of common requirements and processes to improve metropolitan governance? Are there any innovative processes regarding the planning and governance of these regions? These are the questions that guide the present analysis.

The argument is addressed by the traditional comparative methodology of case studies, based on two research tools: the analysis of trends in spatial indicators and personal interviews to relevant stakeholders about the governance processes in these regions.

[1] Available on line in Spanish: http://habitat.aq.upm.es/boletin/n31/ajfer.html

2. SPATIAL DYNAMICS ANALYSIS

The analysis of spatial evolution begins with the recognition of the basic spatial structure of metropolitan regions, especially those that have developed monocentric patterns, like these regions and indeed most other European cities. Therefore, we define three different spaces that are clearly identified in urban studies literature: the central city, the metropolitan (or suburban) belt and the peripheral region.

The central city is the core of the region, generally with a high density, an historic heritage, central business district(s), social-economic diversity and the nineteenth residential areas. Naturally, we consider that the central municipality defines its own spatial limits.

The metropolitan belt is the natural physical urban area that expands into the surrounded municipalities, based on railway lines, stations and the main roads. Generally, it supports green metropolitan parkland, industrial and logistical infrastructure and "new towns" for residential areas, with medium or low densities.

The peripheral region completes the metropolitan territory, certainly with a large surface area, but less urbanized. A political or administrative institution that coordinates spatial planning can define the limits of this peripheral area, which is more dependent on the others with regard to business, employment and public services.

To establish these areas in the regions, we consider previous work in Madrid (López de Lucio, 2003) and Barcelona (Serra, 2003) that is worthy of academic and institutional respect (see Figures 1 and 2, respectively). In the Lisbon region, the division between metropolitan belt and peripheral region is not very clear, perhaps because of the smaller number and larger surface area of the surrounded municipalities. However, the presented in the Figure 3, based on other previous studies that use inhabitant and density indicators (Serra, 2002) and our own knowledge of spatial patterns, is also justifiable.

The basic data needed for spatial indicators analysis are provide by the public institutions with responsibility for spatial planning, at metropolitan or regional levels, which deal with the Statistics Departments and produce their own specific documents for urban studies and socio-economic development.

In the case of regional administration level, our source was the *Madrid Autonomous Community* (CAM). In the other two regions, we consulted the information provided by the *Barcelona Metropolitan Area* (AMB, a voluntary association of municipalities for planning and environmental and transports management) and the *Lisbon and Tagus Valley Regional Development and Coordination Commission* (CCDR-LVT). Some of their main statistics can be used to present these different metropolitan regions.

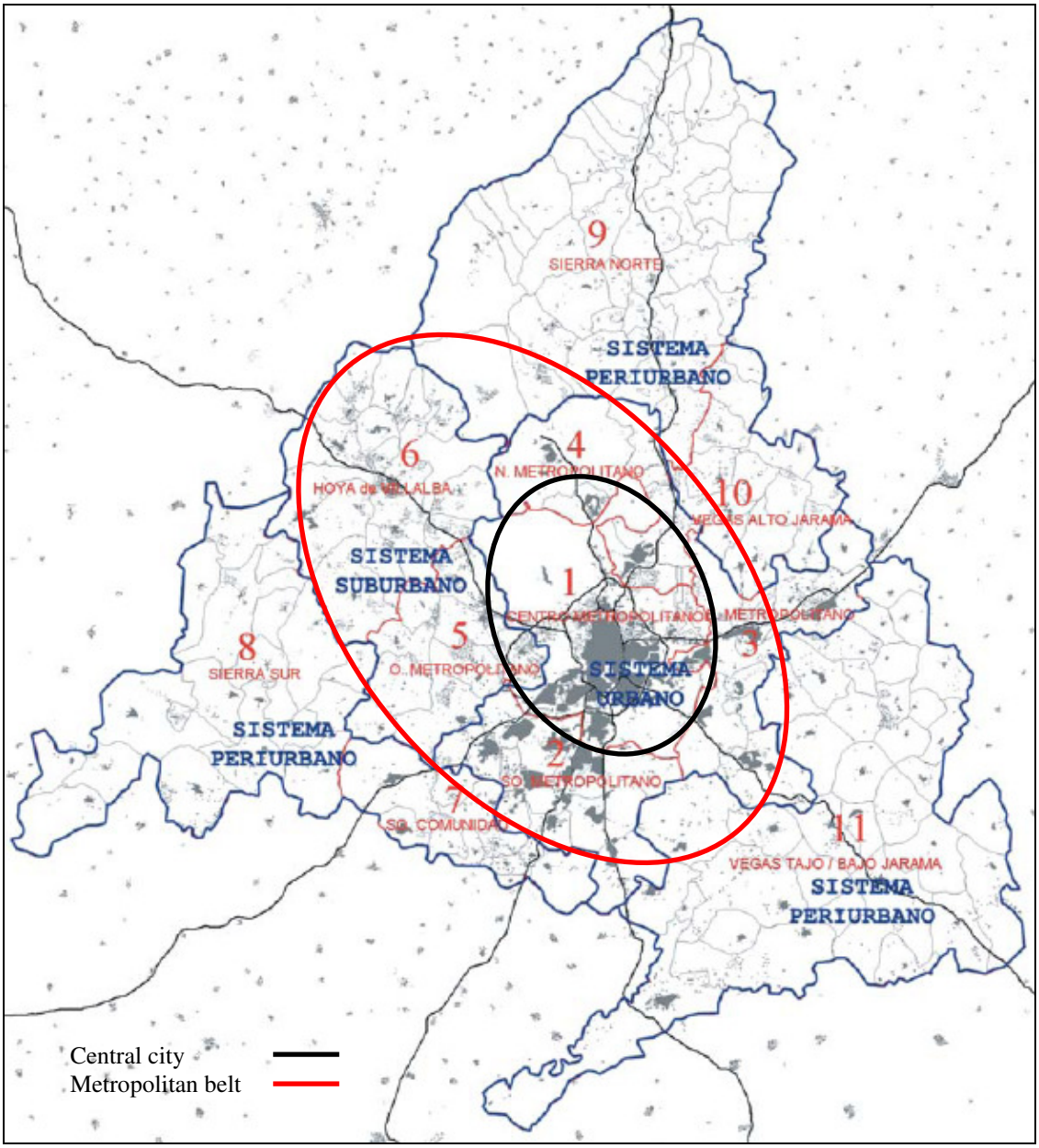


Figure 1. Madrid region (López de Lucio, 2003).

The Madrid Autonomous Region covers 8.000 km2, with more than 5,5 million inhabitants (almost 3 million in the central city). Twenty-four of his 179 municipalities were considered in the metropolitan belt, which contains approximately 32 % of the population.

Trends in the 1990's show a large, growing population in the cities of both the metropolitan belt and the peripheral region (around 27 and 45 thousand inhabitants per year, respectively), which contrasts with the decreasing in the capital municipality.

Despite the growth of urban land in the three areas between 1996 and 2001 (around 17 km2/year in Madrid city, 14 in the metropolitan belt and 12 in the peripheral region), the central municipality still accounts for approximately 64 % of the regional employment. As a consequence of the new ring roads crossing the cities, the mobility also grows, especially with private cars, despite the increasing investment in public transport.

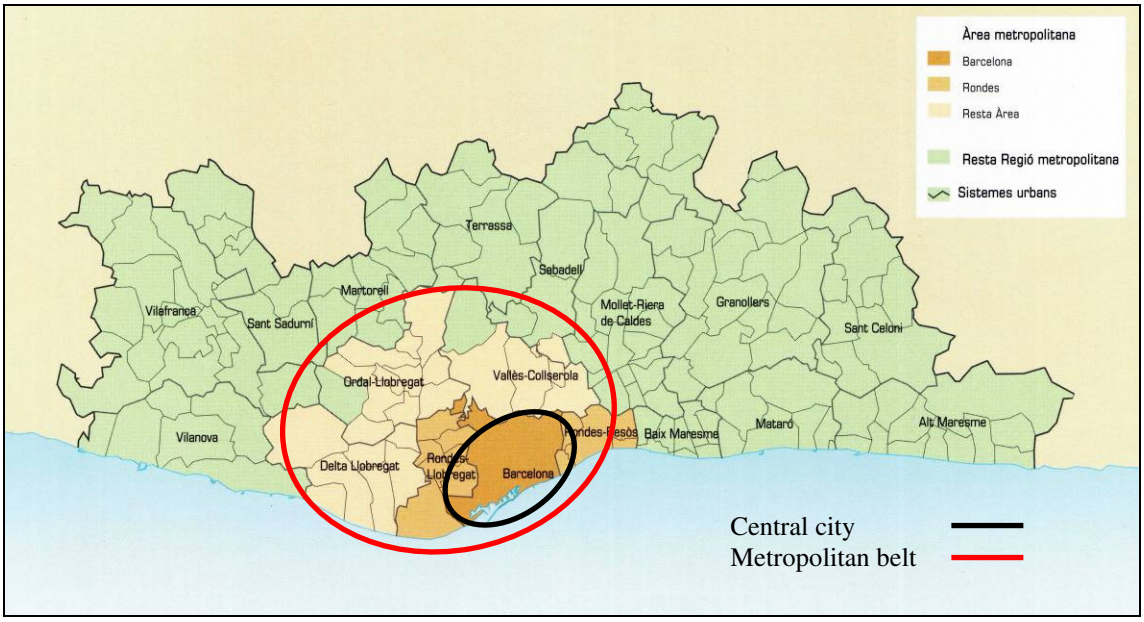


Figure 2. Barcelona region (Serra, 2003).

Barcelona has a voluntary association with 36 municipalities, named Metropolitan Area, also considered its metropolitan belt in this paper. The 127 surrounded municipalities complete the region, which has around 4,5 million inhabitants and 3.200 km2.

The smaller size of all three areas is the basic reason why the demographic, housing and employment trends have been less spectacular than in the Madrid region, with the exception of the demographic decline in the capital municipality, which lost around 14.000 inhabitants/year in the 1990's, approximately double that of Madrid city.

The population is growing, especially in the peripheral region, and the demographic analysis now shows a similar number in these different areas: 33 % or almost 1,5 million inhabitants in each one. The central city accounts for around 42 % of regional employment, but the metropolitan belt and the peripheral region are also increasing strongly, with 5 and 6 % respectively, or approximately 20 or 25.000 jobs per year between 1996 and 2002.

Unquestionably related to this population and employment trend, in the Barcelona city, public transport now "only" accounts 58 % of trips, compared to 65 in Madrid and 61 in Lisbon.

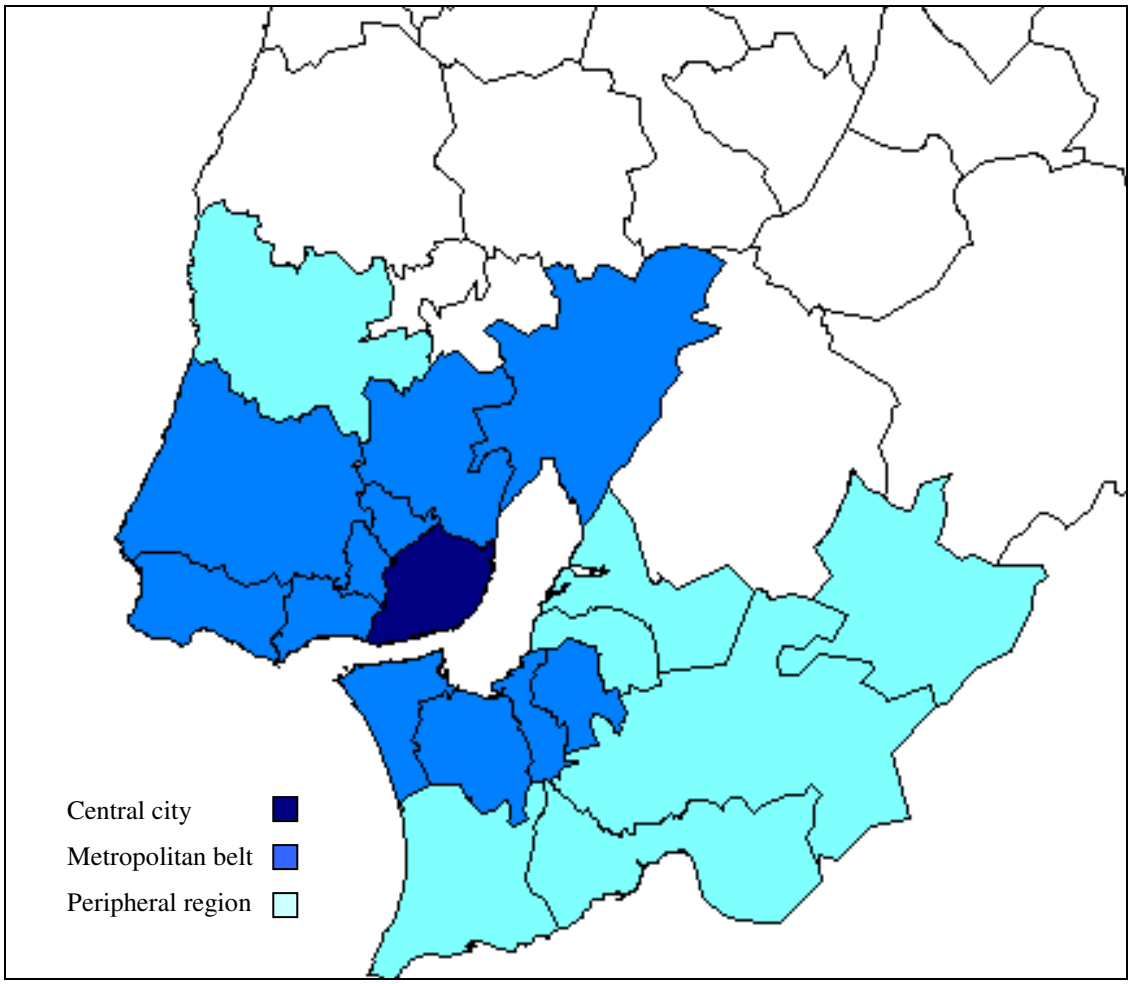


Figure 3. Lisbon region.

Lisbon is also a metropolitan region, covering almost 3.000 km2 (similar to Barcelona), spreading on either side of the Tagus River basin. In the centre of the north side, the capital municipality has 85 km2 and approximately 560.000 inhabitants ("only" 21 % of the 2,65 million in the entire region). Density criteria provide the division between the eleven municipalities that we considered to be its metropolitan belt and the other six representing the peripheral region, that have larger forest patterns.

The spatial indicators show the development of the metropolitan belt, not only the urban and residential trends in these 11 municipalities (which grew by an average of 19.000 inhabitants/year in the 1990's), but also employment growth (around 13.000/year in the same decade), when compared with those of the central city, which nevertheless still accounts for 43 % of all jobs in the region. Despite environmental protection laws, housing trends have been especially considerable in the peripheral area, increasing almost 4.000/year in the 1990's, some of them holyday homes near the waterfront. However, public transport in Lisbon possibly has better indicators in comparison with Madrid or Barcelona.

Using these basic data, it is possible to provide a brief study of quantitative indicators, considering the above-mentioned spatial areas: four indicators show the annual percentile trends in population, housing, employment and urban land; the others link the results for overall, housing and employment densities, the urban footprint, housing occupancy and the percentage of public transport in all trips.

Figure 4 – Spatial dynamics indicators in comparative analysis

Indicator	Unit	Area	Madrid	Barcelona	Lisbon
Global Density	Inhabitant / km2	CC	4.849	15.346	6.643
		MB	1.448	2.673	1.420
		PR	121	559	192
Housing Density	Houses / urban ha.	CC	41	92	
		MB	24	37	
		PR	11	20	
Employment Density	Employment / 10 houses	CC	13	13	18
		MB	14	8	7
		PR	2	8	8
Demographic Trends	% / Year	CC	- 0,24	- 0,85	- 1,49
		MB	1,80	0,20	1,21
		PR	6,57	1,96	1,76
Housing Trends	% / Year	CC	1,69	0,53	0,50
		MB	3,33	1,65	2,46
		PR	5,68	2,55	3,09
Employment Trends	% / Year	CC		3,58	- 0,30
		MB		4,99	3,08
		PR		5,91	3,03
Urban Land Growth	% / Year	CC	6,99	0,29	
		MB	7,31	1,05	
		PR	3,96	4,58	
Urban Land Footprint	M2 urban land / Inhabitant	CC	113	52	
		MB	154	111	
		PR	501	241	
Housing Occupancy	Inhabitant / Houses	CC	2,16	2,07	1,93
		MB	2,68	2,41	2,12
		PR	1,76	2,13	1,92
Modal Split	% Public Transport / Total trips	CC	65	58	61
		MB	40	48	59
		PR	31	35	51

Despite the common trends in distribution of population and activities (decreasing in all central cities of these regions) and urban land and housing trends in the peripheral areas, along with the related traffic problems, we can interpret some of the particular differences between these spatial dynamics indicators.

Two metropolitan belts with similar areas like Madrid and Lisbon (1.203 and 1.258 km2 respectively) allow us to see their different overall results (1.448 and 1.420 innabitants/km2) and employment densities, better in Madrid, which has double the number of jobs of Lisbon in this same area. On the contrary, the peripheral region of Madrid is almost an exclusive residential area, with only 2 jobs per 10 houses, as against 8 employees in Lisbon and Barcelona.

In fact, when we read the population and housing trends per year, the peripheral regions of Barcelona and Lisbon have had more construction proportionally than Madrid, which has had a clearly heavier demand in demographic trends, possibly related to immigration growth. But Madrid also has problems with the explosion of the real state business, shown by housing occupancy in the peripheral region: only 1,76 inhabitants per house, lower than the figures for the same areas in Barcelona and Lisbon. On the contrary, Lisbon seems to be the city with more non-occupied houses in its central municipality, revealing problems for the regeneration of the historical boroughs, while the city centres of Madrid and Barcelona still have more than two inhabitants per house.

Urban land per inhabitant naturally increases with de distance from the centre, but for example the steps between these indicators in Barcelona – 52 m2 in the central municipality, 111 in the metropolitan belt and 241 in the peripheral region, are different from those in Madrid, which has a larger increase in the peripheral region (500 m2/inhabitant) and less differences between the city centre and the metropolitan belt (113 to 154), posibly be a consequence of urban planning coordination in the recently built urban areas.

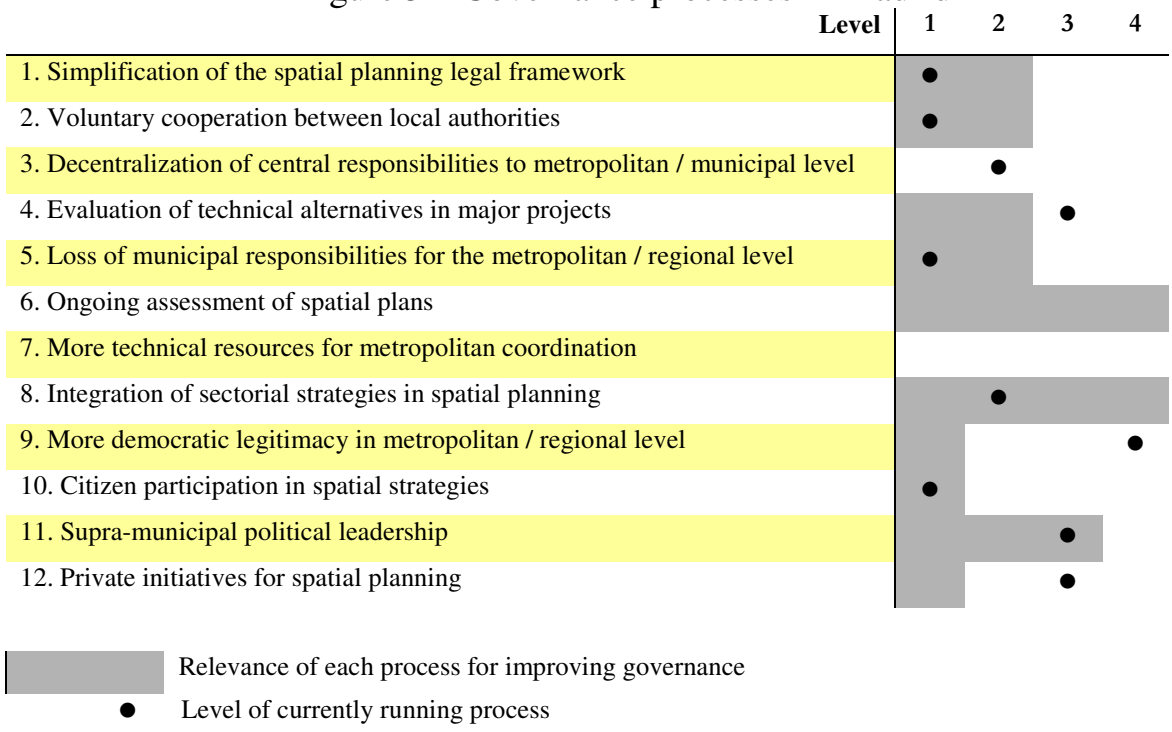
These indicators are not only useful to understand the metropolitan trends in these regions, but are also a spatial consequence of the governance processes in operation. We have seen that the urban patterns can be improved in all three cases, in either their physical or their economic development. Governance practices are therefore a key issue, as they reveal the state of the current ongoing debate.

The following section discusses the context, the needs and the possibilities of changes in these governance models. The argument is based on the analysis of twelve processes that develop the guidelines – responsibilities, resources, democracy and leadership, participation and social capital, strategy and cooperation.

3. GOVERNANCE PROCESSES

The proposed framework shows the current process at work in these metropolitan regions and the relevance of each process considered by four important stakeholders.[2]

Figure 5 – Governance processes in Madrid



Madrid is known as an (good) example of a metropolitan region that has a corresponding level of government, which is directly elected for broader responsibilities. Despite the design of a strong legal framework in the early years of the Madrid Region (CAM, 1980's), no integrated strategy has been approved for the entire region, which is spatially managed only by environmental restrictions and plans for public (national and regional) investments in new infrastructure projects.

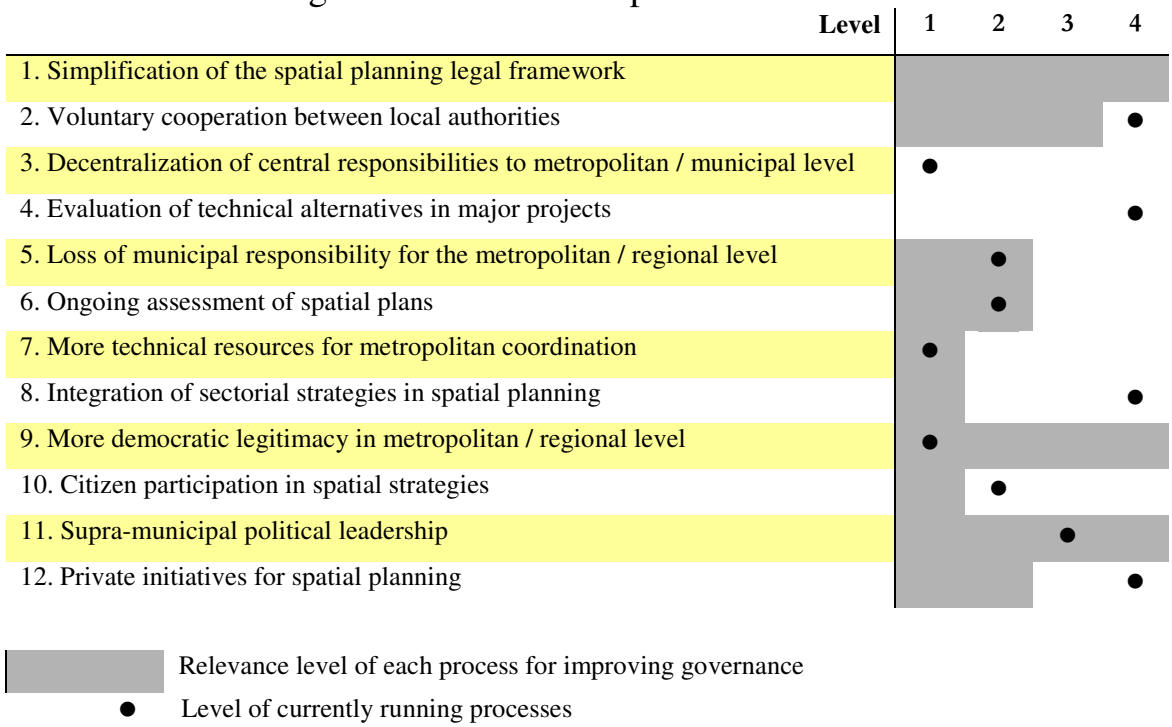
To improve metropolitan governance, it is certainly relevant to start operative processes such as the integration of different strategies for common spatial planning and its ongoing assessment. However, there is no doubt that regional leadership can also play a technical role, which at present may have been overshadowed by the political one.

[2] We must thank the following people for their answers: Abel Enguita, Enrique Villa Polo, José Manuel Rodríguez and Pedro Ortiz (about Madrid), Monica Madrigal, Malcolm Burns, Juli Esteban and Albert de Pablo (Barcelona) and João Cabral, Pedro George, Carlos Pina and Maria do Rosário Partidário (Lisbon). Without their input, this paper would not be possible.

The simplification of the legal framework, cooperation between the local authorities and citizen participation in spatial strategies are other current issues. The best-run processes are the evaluation of technical alternatives in major projects and private initiatives for spatial planning led by the Chambers of Commerce.

In the case of Barcelona, on the contrary, there is no correspondence between the elected level of government and the metropolitan area or the region, because the Catalonia Autonomous Community has a larger administrative territory. This is the primary reason for the relevance of cooperation in local authority projects, set in the tradition of the former metropolitan corporation, now updated by the current practices of the voluntary AMB, which manages environmental and transport services and urban and strategic planning policies.

Figure 6 – Governance processes in Barcelona

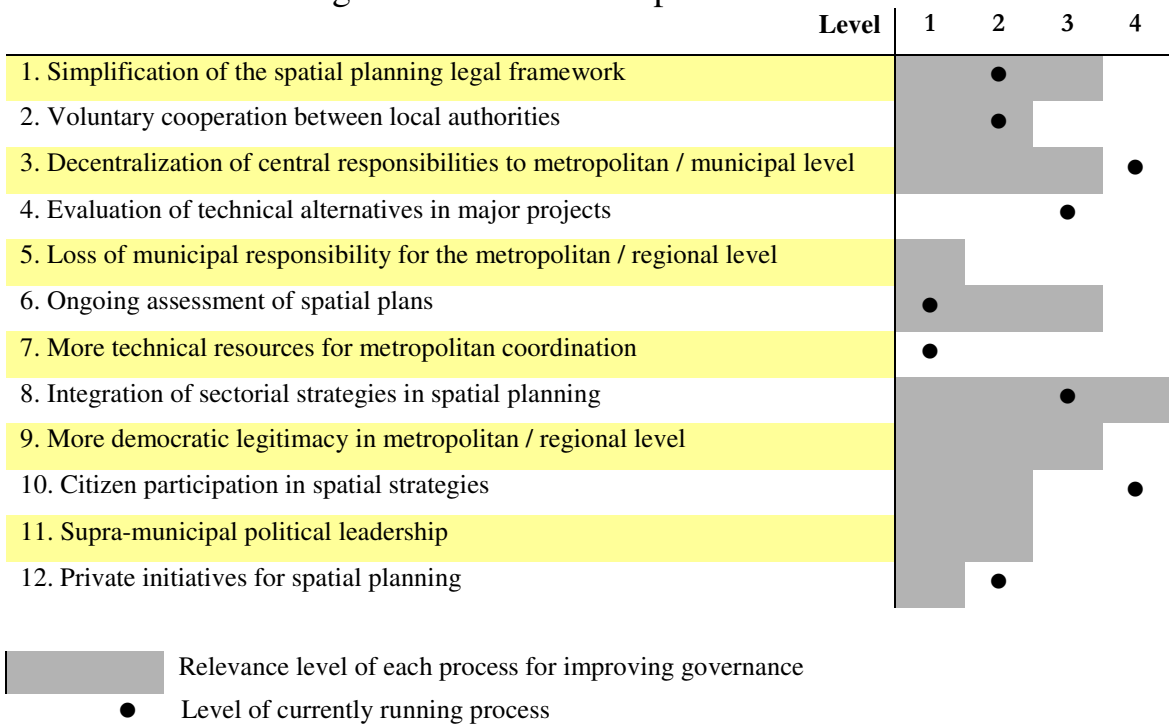


The relevant processes for improving metropolitan governance also seem to be three aspects closely related to responsibilities and leadership: once again, the simplification of the legal framework, the lack of democratic legitimacy at the metropolitan level and political leadership at the same level. The fact that the Mayor of Barcelona is always the highest AMB representative has proven to be a good solution, providing the necessary political strength to coordinate the metropolitan projects. The current processes, besides the voluntary cooperation amongst local authorities, are practical issues such as the evaluation of alternatives in major projects (a legal issue for the EU), the integration of partial strategies in spatial planning (the Metropolitan Plan is now completed and near

to approval by the Catalonia Government) and private initiatives for spatial planning (coordinated by the AMB think-thank).

Finally, the case of Lisbon also has its own specific issues. Although Portugal only has central and local governments, and lacks the regional administrative level found in Spain and most other EU countries, there are regional tasks, "led" by coordination bodies under the auspices of the Environmental and Spatial Planning Ministry. One of these bodies (CCDR-LVT) corresponds to the Lisbon and Tagus Valley region (geographically larger than the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, naturally regarded as the Lisbon region), which is responsible for spatial planning.

Figure 7 – Governance processes in Lisbon



In these regional and metropolitan issues, the coordinating body often does not have the strength to impose certain desirable options, under the different ministerial and local policies. The lack of democratic legitimacy at this regional level is certainly a contextual problem, like the "political leadership" in the association of metropolitan municipalities.

However, the metropolitan spatial plan is accepted and its review is currently proceeding well in technical terms (see Figure for processes 4, 8 and 10). The key issues for improving governance (the processes considered relevant but not running) are still institutional problems such as the lack or inefficiency of metropolitan leadership. Nevertheless, this is an issue that is understandable in geographical terms: municipalities cooperate more and have common

behaviours in each side of the river, leaving empty the metropolitan political centre.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The brief descriptions of the results set out in the figures above permit several provisional conclusions about the initial questions. The first one is no, these three metropolitan regions do not seem to be taking the same path towards improving their governance models. Despite its "comfortable institutional framework", Madrid is not developing a corresponding level in operative issues regarding coherent spatial planning, citizen participation and voluntary cooperation between municipalities. On the contrary, Lisbon and Barcelona are making efforts in both fields – the administrative context and the technical issues of governance.

In order to achieve better practices, they certainly have to strengthen their specific conditions, rather than change their institutional models. The above-mentioned analysis of governance processes and spatial indicators shows that no model is perfect in its own right. Perhaps only simultaneous effort on the basis of the six principles will respond to the different demands. However, detailed legal aspects (for example the simplification of the spatial planning framework in Barcelona and the decentralization of responsibilities to the metropolitan level in Lisbon) are also relevant.

We can thus identify a set of common requirements and processes for the improvement of the metropolitan governance, although the six principles do not require the same level of approach in all the regions. A clear example is that more democratic legitimacy at the regional or metropolitan scale is not relevant in Madrid, given that the process has been running since the first regional elections in 1983. More technical resources for metropolitan coordination also seem to be irrelevant in the current context of public financial restrictions. However, particular issues still remain for both processes, considering the political options and the trends in technical skills respectively. All the other processes, even with different levels for each region, are in fact necessary requirements for the improvement of metropolitan governance.

Finally, a difficult task remains if there are any innovative processes concerning the planning and governance of these regions. It's certainly possible to find good running processes and specific conditions, as mentioned before – in Barcelona, voluntary cooperation amongst local authorities, under the association of municipalities, led by the central city; in Lisbon, despite the relevance of national policies, efforts are underway to foster ongoing planning processes and the decentralization of some legal responsibilities to local levels, while in Madrid, equally voluntary private initiatives for planning decisions lie

within the framework of deregulated urban and regional policies. These different processes can be regarded as the basis for the construction of an efficient model of metropolitan governance in each region.

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