Chapter 65

Urban Governance in Europe: What Is Governed?

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The urban government/governance debate has proved quite fruitful in contributing to the understanding of the transformation of cities. By contrast to classic views about local government, scholars from various origins have tried to understand the political capacity of groups within cities to steer, pilot, change the urban society, to adapt to outside pressure, to be transformed by state new policies or by market competition logics.

In the European context, the urban governance/urban regime debate was particularly useful in understanding new modes of governance (John 2001) (through democratic participation or networks) and to contrast different explanatory models of transformation. Opposition between urban governance models based upon transformation of the state in relation to new demands of globalized capitalism (Brenner 2004) and those based upon the lesser constraint of the state allowing some cities to develop collective actor strategies in the logic of the Weberian European city has been drawn and sometimes exaggerated (Bagnasco and Le Galès 2000; Kazepov 2005; Giersig 2008).

Classically, the literature on urban governance (or urban regimes or urban growth coalitions) aimed at pointing towards various mechanisms to create collective capacity to go beyond market and state failures (Stone 1989; Logan and Molotch 1987). Political scientists working on urban governance have rightly emphasized government/governance as capacity to change urban society on the one hand, and to raise democratic issues and the participation of inhabitants on the other (Heinelt and Kübler 2005; Denters and Rose 2005). This has proved particularly relevant to the case of European cities which were originally mostly cities that represented points of articulation between trade, culture, and a form of political autonomy.

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However, as Jessop suggested, and beyond the rhetoric of governance used by political actors, there was no reason to believe that governance failures would not be as spectacular as government failures (Jessop 2004). In other words, governance and government are not linear, and if analyzed as process are always incomplete. Urban societies are more or less governed over different period. Studying the limits and discontinuities of government and governance is therefore particularly interesting for urban scholars, a classic way of thinking for scholars working on the large metropolis. In this chapter governance is defined as a process of coordinating actors, social groups, and institutions to attain particular goals, discussed and defined collectively in fragmented, uncertain environments (Le Galès 1998). Thus, governance relates to all the institutions, networks, directives, regulations, norms, political and social usages, and public and private actors that contribute to the stability of a society and of a political regime, to its orientation, to its capacity to direct, and to its capacity to provide services and ensure its own legitimacy. In other words, this conceptualization based upon regulation is useful to answer the question "Who governs when nobody governs?" In other words, the point has been made that governments do not govern all the time. On the other hand, there is rarely no government at all, more or less strong, precise, codified, forms of government. Some sectors of the city can classically be organized and steered according to market logics and actors who may, or may not be dependent upon government resources to develop their project. But market regulations can be combined with other type of regulation.

This chapter reviews arguments about the governance of European cities and then suggests new avenues for urban governance research.

Government of European Cities

The argument of the modes of governance of European cities has been developed to make sense of the remaining strength and collective capacities of European medium-size cities. It started from the limits of urban governments in order to make sense of what was observed in a number of cities.

Urban governments are classically defined, first, as political arenas and instruments for enhancing democracy and participation and steering local societies and, second, in terms of service provision and public policy. Urban governments are usually related to the nation state in terms of democratization and legitimation of forms of territorial management.

European cities are back on the political agenda of Europe, not as the old medieval cities, but as more autonomous political authorities within a European governance in the making. They make a fairly general category of urban space, relatively original forms of compromise and aggregation of interest and culture which bring together local social groups, associations, organized interests, private firms, and urban governments. However, the pressures created by property developers, major groups in the urban services sector, and cultural and economic globalization processes, provoke reactions and adaptation processes of actors within European cities.

The modernized myth of the European city remains a very strongly mobilized resource, and is strengthened by growing political autonomy and transverse mobilizations. It is based on the medieval autonomous cities of the Middle Ages analyzed

by Max Weber. Urban governments played a key role in providing basic utilities and services such as water, sewage, street lighting, later gas and electricity, fire services, and transport not to mention the slaughterhouse. Urban government pioneered policy programs in housing, planning, basic elements of welfare, and education. This development was diverse, fragmented, and contested between a conservative petty bourgeoisie and the municipal socialism movement, and more consistent in the north of Europe than in the south. Most local government in Europe gained legal recognition in the second part of the nineteenth century. Gradually, a professional local bureaucracy emerged to deal with those developments. The rise of urban government was not just a local or national phenomenon. Exchanges of experiences of ideas, for instance in planning and social housing, were crucial.

Urban governments were understood either as a functional entity to deliver services, in particular welfare services (hence the long lasting debate on size and amalgamation) or as a political unit. In their classic comparative research, Goldsmith and Page (1987) have suggested that local government autonomy in Europe should be analyzed in terms of autonomy through two major criteria which encompass or are closely related to other dimensions: legal status and political status That analysis clearly stressed the differences between the welfarist northern European urban governments and the more political (sometimes clientelistic) southern European urban governments.

Urban governments were contested in the 1970s and 1980s by urban social movements. The bureaucratization, hierarchies, urban regeneration projects, and complex and fragmented decision-making processes of urban government were attacked in cities all over Europe. Conflicts entered the realm of urban politics in relation to housing, planning, large infrastructures projects, economic crisis, and cultural issues. New groups, beyond class basis, organized to raise new issues (quality of life, democracy and participation, economic development and culture) and to promote urban change against elected urban leaders. New middle classes were gradually incorporated within political parties (social democratic and green) and played an important role in many European cities to promote a new set of urban policies to deal with those issues. In the most radical cases, squatters in Amsterdam or Berlin for instance, urban government officials have learned to cooperate, to provide sources of funding, and to incorporate those groups in more loosely defined structures of governance. Preventing large social conflicts and including various groups have become the norm for urban governments. Urban governments in Europe were also facing political pressure related both to the restructuring of the state and to questions about representative democracy and changes of political culture (Hoffman-Martinot and Sellers 2005).

These movements, and changing patterns of governing elites, led both to structural changes and experiences in urban governments all over Europe Beyond the UK, market friendly ideas associated to "new public management" are having an impact in urban government, in particular in the north of Europe. Issues of citizen participation in urban governments were associated with growing issues of management efficiency in the delivery of services to customers. The restructuring of the public sector led to increased confusion in public policies and the fragmentation of urban governments (Pierre 1999), hence the growing interests for issues of leadership, management, coordination, and governance (Borraz and John 2004). The

fragmentation of urban government was also accelerated by the large privatization movement in infrastructures.

European cities are not immune nowadays to common pressures in terms of immigration, rising inequalities, suburban sprawl, and network fragmentation. However, European cities remain strong within metropolitan areas in the making; governance issues are now more visible within European cities, as are interdependence and interrelation between different actors and organizations – all things that used to be represented and made visible on the national and European scene. This new-found visibility of interdependence gives opportunities to social and political actors to be involved in modes of urban governance or, by contrast, to increase the fragmentation and dislocation of European cities. European cities have not been dislocated and they have considerable resources, including strong urban governments, which they can draw on in adapting to or resisting the new frame of constraints and opportunities.

Every city is characterized first and foremost by structural conditions that relate to the market, to the state, or to civil society, as well as by a culture and an identity that are more or less established and congruent. To avoid the stumbling-block of fetishizing the local requires, for example, consideration of the situation of each city in relation to the market and to conditions of economic development, which will vary according to period (Harding 1997). Modes of governance of European cities can vary along four dimensions: (1) variables in the structure of local society; (2) political orientation; (3) the institutionalization of collective action; and (4) results or outcomes.

What Is Governed?

Governments govern of course, like workers work, but what exactly? Classical thinking about the government meant looking at either the formal apparatus of government, the institutions, or at the general functions and activities. Governments are defined in terms of rules of the game, constitutions, organizations, and actors, processes of aggregation and segregation, and outputs (Leca 1996). The governance debate started from the limits of government. This debate has led to a dynamic governance research domain, beyond the "who governs?" question, organized around the following questions: Can government govern, steer or row (Peters 1997)? Could cities be considered as collective actors with governance capacities (Pichieri 1997, Le Galès 2002)? Do governments always govern? What do they govern, and how? What is not governed (Crosta 1998)? Can we identify dysfunctions of governments over time? Can groups or sectors escape from governments (Mayntz 1993)? Who governs when governments do not govern? Can governance replace government or will governance failure replace government failures (Jessop 2004)? How does government or governance operate (Lascoumes and Le Galès 2007)? What does it mean to govern complex urban societies and networks of cities (Pierre and Peters 2005; Perulli 2000)? Do utilities networks govern large cities (Le Galès and Lorrain 2004)? What sort of framework is constructed through governance (Bevir 2010)?

James Scott's famous *Seeing Like a State* (1999) underlined the role of planning and the creation of street maps as examples of rational modern government aiming

at making society, including the urban society, "legible" so that it could be governed. Tax could be raised and men mobilized for war. Some activities of government take place routinely. However, most government activities are not continuous (Favre 2003: 165). What is governed is a key question. That may change over time. In period of war, governments increase their control on a range of activities and sectors. There is a massive increase of public policies, tax, and control. By contrast, when times are more peaceful and security threats are not on the radar, when there is no massive economic crisis or threat to social and political order (secessionist movements, waves of riots) governmental activities may be far less important. Similarly, some sectors, some domains, are heavily governed with dense public policies and laws. By contrast some sectors are not governed at all or weakly governed. As became obvious in the recent period, loans for housing and sub-primes were weakly governed and regulated. As is well known, many groups and individuals in societies spend considerable time and energy in avoiding being governed, hence a famous question on the ungovernability of societies (Mayntz 1993). It is also worth mentioning that regulation is only one part of government. In some cases, regulation may not mean much more than setting the rules of the game for the actors without giving a direction, without the steering element.

In urban terms, this question is particularly interesting. What part, sectors or groups of the city are really governed? What is weakly governed? What is left out? What is escaping government? Historically, the rise of urban governments was about the institutionalization of governments against illegal activities, slums, mobile populations, rejected poor neighborhoods. Analyzing a city requires not just focusing on governments but also on the understanding of the illegal side of the city, the invisible activities, from undocumented immigrants in clandestine rooms to gangs controlling drug traffic or private developers illegally financing political activities in order to build new developments. This is not just some dark side of the city which will disappear on the road to rational progress but an irreducible part of any city.

In her book *Ordinary Cities* (2005), 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). In his wonderful book on "the city yet to come," Simone's characterization of African cities as "work in progress" (2004: 1) is a good reminder that what is not governed in a classic governmental rational way may be more central to understand what works in a city. Following Robinson's suggestion, the governance of European cities should also be understood in relation to what is illegal, what is clientelism, what is not governed. This may take different forms from illegal activities to suburbanization and the limits of metropolitan governments and governance.

However, who is governed in the city? Government or governance is a two-way process. Whatever government processes may be depends a lot upon the population which is governed. Governing a large city is a difficult task because the population is so fluid and diverse.

Urban riots now take place regularly. Reports after the riots usually signal the failures of local schools and of social services, discrimination against young people from immigrant background on the labor market, isolation of some ethnic groups, police violence, the rise of illegal trafficking, and the absence of legality in some neighborhoods. In other words, some sections of European cities are not really

governed. Some inner cities and some outer city developments are not completely left out but many have weak infrastructures and public services support. Drug trafficking and informal markets are also part of the urban life. In some neighborhoods, the police are not welcome and only intervene when problems emerge and then with significant numbers of police. Waves of riots in the UK, France, and sometimes Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy, point to the development of parallel lives between immigrants and their children and the rest of the population. Analysis points to discrimination, intense segregation in some cities, and the lack of policies to integrate some of those groups (Garbaye 2010; Lagrange and Oberti 2006; Waddington *et al.*, 2009).

Are those neighborhoods governed? More or less, it depends. In France or Britain, the making of large outer-city social housing schemes in the 1960s was not matched by services to the population. In French poor suburbs where some estates concentrate the poorest populations and recent immigrants, local authorities did not have resources, social services, police, or schools and transport systems were very weak. Those places were not governed, or only weakly governed. The development of public policies to integrate and incorporate different groups leads to some success and many failures – governance failures. In most cities, the question of how to provide services to those populations, how to include them in the democratic debate, how to help children to do well, but also how to control these groups and neighborhood, how to make the law respected, is very high on the agenda. In the American case, Jones-Correa and his colleagues show the challenge of ethnic diversity in *Governing American Cities* (2001). Similar challenges are very much at stake in European cities and there are numerous cases of problems and lack of governance capacity in relation to ethnic groups in particular.

The "who is governed question?" can also be linked to questions of mobility. In his seminal contribution, Martinotti (1993) identified different groups of city users beyond the classic groups of those who work and live in the same place, a minority in most cities. By contrast he pointed not only towards the classic regular suburbanite working in the city center but also the rise of occasional "city users," visitors, with different levels of professional constraints or levels of segregation at a different scale. A wide literature has developed on "cities and visitors" (Hoffmann *et al.* 2003). The literature on immigration (Favell and Smith 2006) has also pointed to the development of transnational networks and the mobility of groups between two places. Who governs transnational networks of retired Moroccan, Pakistani, Senegalese, or Turkish pensioners who spend half the year in the home country where they build a house and half a year in a host country where the children have organized their life? John Urry's "sociology of mobility" (2000) points to the end of a form of a "garden state," when people travel or become more mobile. Census agents have more problems with those students, families, or often pensioners, traveling, or organizing their life in two different places for a number of years or immigrating for a number of years. Who governs mobile populations? This raises numbers of questions about the provision of services, about tax avoidance, about school populations, or the provision of housing. As Scott and Foucault argued, the rise of modern governments was related to the development of new technologies of government to make society "legible." One could argue that increased mobility of different sorts make urban society less legible and therefore far more difficult to govern.

Regulating is not governing. However, the economic sociology of regulation is helpful to understand regulations. In analytical terms, cities are more or less organized around markets or governments, in more or less conflictual or combined ways. Regulations can be seen as mechanisms of governance and 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). Consequently, the word "regulation" can be used, for example, when highlighting relatively stabilized relationships between actors or social groups, relationships which allow the distribution of resources according to explicit or implicit norms and rules (Lange and Regini 1989). Three ideal types are usually defined. The first is state regulation (frequently identified with hierarchical or political regulation), where the state structures conflicts, distributes resources, and coordinates activities and groups. This type of regulation implies domination and control as well as the capacity to sanction. This description can also fit certain large, hierarchized organizations where authority is the principal moving force, even if only informally. The second is market regulation. Since the emergence of capitalism, this type of regulation has played a growing role in organizing exchanges between supply and demand, adjusted through prices (or sometimes through volume). The third is cooperative/reciprocal regulation (sometimes called regulation through social or political exchange) based on values and norms, on a single identity, and on the trust that expresses forms of exchange and/or solidarity between the members of a community, a clan, a family, or a district (Crouch *et al.* 2001).

The three types of regulation are mixed in the governance of cities. Government never completely govern a city because they have to deal with market forces (private developers in urban growth coalitions), and with religious groups, familial interest, social movements, or non-governmental organizations.

A classic form of regulation in the third category (exchange reciprocity) is clientelism, patronage, corruption. An underdeveloped research agenda has in particular suggested to take seriously cooperation/reciprocity regulation beyond the "enchanted" view of governance through traditional regulation. Patronage is defined as: "the complex social arrangements known as patron–clients relations denote, in their fullest expression, a distinct mode of regulating crucial aspects of institutional order: the structuring of the flow of resources, exchange and power relations and their legitimation in society" (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984: 209). Corruption is classically defined as a system of exchange whereby public officials obtain financial resources in exchange for decisions. The "community" or "cooperative/reciprocal" regulation is also a broad church where one can at least distinguish between the logic of reciprocity and the logic of social/political exchange. As far as urban politics is concerned, the latter is more relevant. There is a long tradition of research to examine patronage and corruption as one type of social or political regulation in anthropology in particular, and later in sociology and political science, particularly taking into account the bureaucracy or factions in urban political machines. In urban politics, classics include, in the US, Banfield and Wilson, *City Politics* (1963) or Percy Allum's monograph on Naples (Allum 1973). In the last two decades in many European cities, some forms of patronage, clientelism, or corruption have been identified for instance with the *manu pulite* operation in Italy seeing the demise

of the socialist domination of Milan; in Paris several leaders of the Chirac post-Gaullist party were condemned by the courts; and also in the northeast of England or in Liège in Belgium. In other words, part of the city is regulated according to non-classic governmental principles but with the participation of governmental actors.

Who governs when nobody governs? Corrupt elite networks sometimes do. Illegal organizations are also a classic case where they can "run," organize, possibly govern, some sectors, some neighborhoods, some part of the city. The case of the Camorra in Naples has become a classic, but more limited examples could be found in different settings.

Finally, urban governance, and most public policies, are part of the world of overlapping powers within the global and regional (such as European) governance in the making: municipalities, metropolitan authorities, regions sometimes, federal states or autonomies, the nation state, the EU and sometimes the OECD urban group, the UN (Habitat Summit) with international rules comprising environmental norms, can all play a role in urban policies. There are endless cases of urban policies where the norm is now for the overlapping funding and influence of different levels of government, for better (i.e. more targeted and coordinated effort), or worse (more piecemeal fragmented actions). In most countries, the territorial organization of the nation state has been facing serious reshaping, an ongoing process which leads to the pluralization of territorial interests within the state. Associations, voluntary sector organizations, from neighborhood groups to giant utility firms, have a say and some power in urban policies. Urban policy therefore covers a wide range of actors from different sector of societies, with different status, acting at different levels. Emerging problems raise questions which cross horizontally over bureaucracies and sectors, and vertically over different levels of government. In that world, one wonders if governance is more than the aggregation of various incremental choices, and random developments.

Territories of Urban Governance: Uncertain Metropolitan Governments

What is governed and what is not governed should also be considered in relation to local government boundaries. The city is proving more elusive, populations more diverse, but governments are being rescaled and new modes of governance are being structured.

The classic European city, contained within city walls, has disappeared a long time ago. Although the city in a classical sense has remained relatively robust, sub-urbanization has also developed all over eastern and western European cities. In territorial terms, what is governed is everything but an obvious question. This is a classic theme in the urban literature. Those writing on megacities, gigacities, or the rise of global urban regions (Scott 2001), point to the rise of networks and governance failures related to obsolete governmental boundaries. Another way to think along the same lines relates to the idea of the end of cities and the triumph of urban sprawl, in other words the suburbanization of cities and the urbanization of suburbs (Dear 2000). In that line of analysis, the dissolution of the city is taking place within a large fragmented, chaotic, unstable urban world which is not governed. Is the

urban world becoming ungovernable? A classic argument dismisses this view because the relatively stable core of Europe's urban system is made up of medium-sized and reasonably large cities, which are fairly close to one another, and a few metropolises The importance of regional capital cities, of medium-sized cities (200,000 to two million inhabitants), remains a major feature of contemporary European societies (Le Galès 2002). However, there is also serious suburbanization (Phelps *et al.* 2006) based upon the departure of population from both the city and the metropolitan area because of deindustrialization, for instance, and the rise of the metropolitan area (in the case of London and Paris for instance, or Brussels, Milan, Marseille, or Lisbon). Increasing urban concentration has been accompanied by apparently inescapable, unlimited dispersal into conurbations and urban regions with fluctuating outlines. Cities have expanded, fragmented, and sometimes organized into networks like those in northern Italy or the Netherlands, and this is said to be rendering traditional urban governments obsolete. Europe is made of few declining cities, many dynamic medium-size and large cities, and two dynamic large global cities, whatever that means. European cities make a fairly general category of urban space, relatively original forms of compromise, aggregation of interest and culture, which bring together local social groups, associations, organized interests, private firms, and urban governments. The pressures created by property developers, major groups in the urban services sector, and cultural and economic globalization processes, provoke reactions and adaptation processes of actors within European cities, defending the idea of a fairly particular type of city that is not yet in terminal decline. The modernized myth of the European city remains a very strongly mobilized resource, and is strengthened by growing political autonomy and transverse mobilizations.

Despite sprawling movements in most European cities, the resistance of the old city centers epitomizes their peculiarity. Lévy (1997) takes the example of large public collective transport (in particular the tramway) together with pedestrian areas and cycle paths to demonstrate the remaining strength of the idea of European city. There is a continuing representation of the city as a whole; Crouch (1999) suggests a "Durkheimian" view of the city which still exists in Europe. The increased legitimacy of political urban elites sustains and reinvents this presentation. European cities are still strongly regulated by public authorities and complex arrangements of public and private actors. European cities appear to be relatively robust, despite pressures from economic actors, individuals, and states (including welfare states) being reshaped within the European Union. Processes of exclusion, strengthening and transformation of inequalities, segregation, and domination are also unfolding in these cities. The development of residential suburbs separated from the city and of polycentric cities; the isolation of disadvantaged districts; the development of cultural complexes, leisure facilities, and shopping centers, as well as diverse cultural models and migrations, all clearly demonstrate the pressures exerted on the traditional medium-sized city. The urban regions of Milan and the Randstadt are good examples of more polycentric structures and interdependent dynamics between the city center and other cities.

These developments have led in most countries towards never-ending debates about the rescaling of metropolitan governments, the making and unmaking of metropolitan governments (Lefèvre 1998), and the developments of all sorts of

collaborative forms of governance, including private–public partnership, charters, plans, contracts, or joined-up government.

In most places in Europe, the reorganization of urban governments has given salience to the particular status of (big) cities, now comprised in terms of metropolitan areas and often organized under state pressure (Brenner 2004). Firstly, in comparison with a century or 50 years ago, the larger European cities have more autonomy and much more vigorous local leadership (Borraz and John 2004). The major capital cities of Europe have only in the last years or decades had an elected unified government and mayor (Paris in 1977, London in 2001). Despite some resistance, a metropolitan government is being recreated in Britain, and slowly, in Italy. In France too, the restructuring of local government based on a mix of direct constraints and strong financial incentives is creating an original and powerful structure of inter-municipal urban government benefiting from strategic and public policy delivery powers together with important financial and human resources. Metropolitan government emerged in the Stockholm area in the l970s and has developed in the other Nordic capital regions too. In Eastern Europe, reforms of local government in the 1990s led to a differentiated set of legal statuses, in particular for the capital. During the negotiations for these countries to join the EU, a particular emphasis was put on decentralization reforms supposed to undermine existing bureaucracies and to reinforcing the democratization of the political regimes. Within that decentralization trend, cities did particularly well in terms of new powers. In the Hungarian two-tier system, the capital has been granted a special legal status with specific powers given to the district government of Budapest and the urban mayors are directly elected. The same applies to the Czech Republic where the 2002 restructuring of local government applies a special status to Prague and to 19 statutory cities. In Poland too, 65 cities were given county status. Relatively high levels of devolution were also granted to Baltic state cities.

To conclude, there is a good deal of urban governance going on in European cities but not all the time, not for all groups, not for all neighborhoods, and not so much for the peripheries of the city. That feeds the rise of new policy instruments to increase governing capacity (Pinson 2009; Lascoumes and Le Galès 2007). Governance discontinuities should therefore be analyzed more systematically.

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