

## **The continued city** **Permanence and innovation on morphogenetic processes of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area**

**Heraldo Borges**

Faculty of Architecture, Technical University of Lisbon

Lisbon, Portugal / +351 926436146

heraldofborges@gmail.com

The beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century is marked by an important turning point: for the first time in the history of human civilization the majority of the world's population inhabits urbanized areas. However the term "urbanized areas" does not necessarily represent the canonical city. This conclusion is easily verified in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area where two thirds of the population live outside consolidated urban centers. Result of global economic restructuring started in the 70's of the last century, these processes of deterritorialisation and decentralization is directly reflected mainly in the increase of the spatial and functional dynamics as well as in the emergence of new uses and new forms of occupation.

In this context, since the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, arises a new debate about the transformation of cities in large urbanized areas, the metropolises (here understood metropolitan area). Harvey (1990), Ascher (1998) and Soja (2000) were the first to study this phenomenon. Koolhaas (1994) highlights the qualities of the anarchic aspect of this new form of agglomeration. Recently Viganò (2005), Secchi (2007) and Sievert (2007) updated the question by combining the concepts of uncertainty and indeterminacy to the recent economical and populational downturn dynamics of most European metropolises towards the development of new planning and design strategies.

Nowadays the metropolises, especially those of the Mediterranean Europe, presents a landscape and a territory characterized by a palimpsest of successive "antropizations" in time and space, which we should denominate "the continued city" where we can identify at least three main spatial typologies: the clusters (enclosed spaces, public or private, heavily determined such as malls, airports, industrial complexes, logistic centers, amusement parks, recreational and leisure facilities, gated communities), the interstices (not built open spaces such as forests, woodlands, riverbanks, agricultural lands, brownfields) and the channels (the infrastructural networks, of mobility mainly, and its edges).

If there is still no consensus on how to act in times of uncertainty, it's true that if one leaves the preconceptions aside, this new urban configuration of metropolitan level that arises can

be understood as a field of opportunities still unexplored "in need of fresh views and new creativity" (SIEVERTS, 2007: 28).

Therefore, the research and the understanding of the multiplicity and richness of the metropolitan landscape and territory, its current dynamics and transformations and how this challenges the status quo of the traditional Architecture and Urbanism, assume an evident relevance and pertinence to the development of planning instruments and project tools for future interventions.

What then would be the best way to address these issues in a real context and possible such as the Lisbon Metropolitan Area? The diversity of the nature and the evolutionary states of the landscape and the territory and the current and the future "changes in the internal structural factors of the region, with emphasis on the relocation of the airport and the network of accessibilities that breaks with the historically prevailing radial logic" (PNPOT, 2007) were decisive for the choice of the object of study and the approach perspective.

Through the basic elements of territorialisation such as city plan, buildings, plots and urban regulations, the present investigation aims to identify, in time and space, the dynamics of permanence and innovation that were decisive for the morphogenetic processes of the landscape and the territory of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. Using only official georeferenced cartography, a series of interpretative morphological readings of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area is made over seven consecutive periods since the mid-nineteenth century to the present: 1856, 1911, 1937, 1949, 1971, 1993 and 2009.

To provide a diachronic approach, this series of readings will be combined with a general contextualization (political, economic and social) and with an identification of the conceptual and organizational guidelines detailed in the various documents from the different public institutions responsible for the urban planning.

Keywords: Urban planning, territory, landscape, morphogenesis, Lisbon Metropolitan Area.

## References

- Ascher, F (1998) *Metapolis: Acerca do futuro da cidade*. Oeiras: Celta.
- Corboz, A (1983) *El territorio como palimpsesto* in Ramos, A (ed.) (2004) *Lo urbano en 20 autores contemporáneos*. Escuela Superior de Arquitectura de Barcelona. Barcelona: Edicions Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya.
- Domingues, A (coord.) (2006) *Cidade e Democracia, 30 Anos de Transformação Urbana em Portugal Ciudad y Democracia. 30 Años de Transformación Urbana en Portugal*. Fundação da Juventude / Secção Regional Norte da Ordem dos Arquitectos Portugueses/DGOT-DU. Lisboa: Argumentum Edições.
- Font, A (ed.) (2004) *La explosión de la ciudad. Transformaciones territoriales en las regiones urbanas de la Europa Meridional/The Explosion of the city. Territorial Transformations in the South Europe Urban Regions*, Ministerio de Vivienda. Barcelona: COAC Publicacions.
- George, P; Morgado, S (2004) *Dinâmicas de Uso e Ocupação do Solo da Área Metropolitana de Lisboa 1940-2001*. Faculdade de Arquitetura da Universidade Técnica de Lisboa.
- Graham, S; Marvin, S (2001) *Splintering Urbanism. Networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Harvey, D (1990). *The condition of postmodernity: An enquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Koolhaas, R (1994) *La ciudad genérica* in Ramos, A (ed.) (2004) *Lo urbano en 20 autores contemporáneos*. Escuela Superior de Arquitectura de Barcelona. Barcelona: Edicions Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya.
- Morgado, S (2005) *Protagonismo de la ausencia. Interpretación urbanística de la formación metropolitana de Lisboa desde lo desocupado*. [doctoral thesis in urbanism] Departament d'Urbanisme i Ordenació del Territori – Universidade Politècnica da Catalunya, Barcelona
- Portas, N; Domingues, A; Cabral, J (2004) *Políticas Urbanas. Tendências, estratégias e oportunidades*. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.
- PORTUGAL/MAOTDR/DGOTDU (2007). *PNPOT Programa Nacional da Política de Ordenamento do Território*.
- Secchi, B (2005) *La città nel ventesimo secolo*. Roma/Bari: Editori Laterza.
- \_\_\_ (2007) *Rethinking and redesigning the urban landscape* in Places 19.1 *The Future Metropolitan Landscape*. [www.places-journal.org](http://www.places-journal.org)
- Sieverts, T (2003) *Cities without cities. An interpretation of the Zwischenstadt*. London/New York: Spon Press/Routledge.
- \_\_\_ (2007) *Metropolitan landscapes: Attitudes, research and practice* in Places 19.1 *The Future Metropolitan Landscape*. [www.places-journal.org](http://www.places-journal.org)
- Soja, E (2000). *Postmetropolis. Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- \_\_\_ (ed.) (2005) *New territories*. Roma: Officina Edizioni.