

When markets reset, will we regain? Planning lessons from across the Atlantic Ocean



Carlos J.L. Balsas

Geography and Planning, AS 210, University at Albany, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222, USA

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ABSTRACT

Globalisation and economic integration has brought new territorial and governance challenges. The interconnectedness of the economy, the need to remain competitive and to plan cities and regions sustainably has created new risks, given the uncertainty and magnitude of economic crises. This paper analyses how metropolises in Arizona (Phoenix and Tucson), U.S., and Portugal (Lisbon and Porto) have developed recently and how their stakeholders have been dealing with processes of metropolitan transformation. Recent regional planning is examined with the intent to understand whether stages of maturity, compact urban development patterns, regulatory and administrative planning traditions, and socio-economic and cultural systems influence territorial coherence. Two key findings stand out: First, anticipatory regional planning has the capacity to adapt to changing conditions in order to maintain and develop more sustainable and resilient territories; second, public spending oversight and programmatic firewalls allow corrections to be made before problems escalate out-of-control.

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1. Introduction

Globalisation and economic integration has generated new territorial and governance challenges and transformations. The interconnectedness of the economy, the need to remain competitive and to plan cities and regions sustainably and comprehensively has created systemic risks, given the uncertainty and magnitude of economic crises and increasingly neo-liberal responses (Kokushkin and Pettys, 2015). Regional resilience is required to ascertain positive dynamics and to withstand, and above all, to cope with the ripple effects of crises.

The aim of this paper is to analyse how metropolises in Arizona, U.S., and Portugal have developed in recent years and how their stakeholders have been dealing with processes of metropolitan transformation, adaptation and resilience, mostly as a consequence of the 2008–2009 global financial crisis. According to Fujita (2011, p. 265), the global financial crisis can be operationalized as having been ‘the biggest financial crisis since the 1930s, and the economic recession which followed in many parts of the world’. However, as Ponzini (2016, p. 1237) as recognized, ‘despite the fact that several years have passed, international planning debates have not fully highlighted what we have learned from this challenging phase’.

The metropolitan areas of Phoenix and Tucson in Arizona, U.S., and the metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto in Portugal have many nuances but they also share a few commonalities. Fig. 1. shows the case studies’ locations. Despite being the larger administrative areas in these two supra-regional jurisdictions, they structure most of the development and economic activity in each state. Their almost radical differences in temporal stages of development, urban settlement patterns and built up form, transportation networks, suburban sprawl, facilities and equipment can perhaps only be compared in terms of how they dealt with the negative consequences of the most recent economic crisis. The high concentration of real estate investment in the southwest, according to many the epicenter of the global financial crisis, and its fierce propagation to southern European countries partly justifies this choice of case studies (Knieling and Othengrafen, 2016).

It is known that European metropolitan areas have higher levels of local and regional planning when compared to those of the United States (Savitch and Kantor, 2002; Healey, 2006). In the U.S., most planning happens at the local level and, usually, municipalities experience fierce competition for revenues and public investment. Most cities in the metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto are older than the municipalities in the southwest. The hilly terrain and geomorphology of both Porto and Lisbon metropolitan areas contrast markedly with the mostly flat topography and arid desert of the Phoenix and Tucson regions. Contrarily to the Arizona metropolises, Lisbon and Porto are impacted by plans for areas

E-mail address: cbalsas@albany.edu

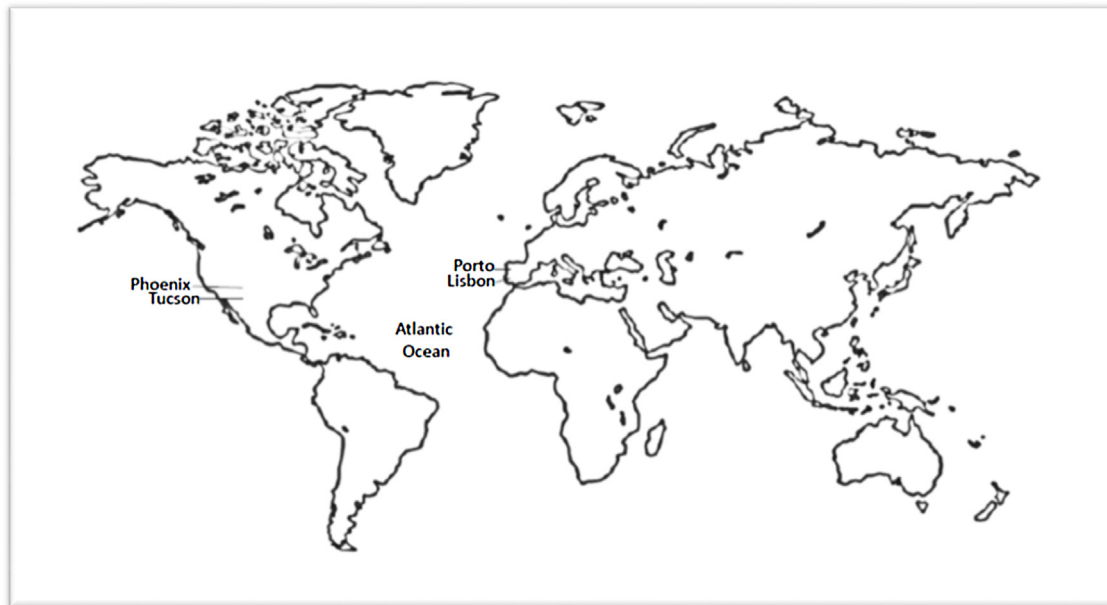


Fig. 1. Map depicting the case studies' locations.

that go beyond the legal metropolitan jurisdictions. This is a direct result of the need to articulate investment priorities and to promote a more functional organisation.

Gober (2006) has characterised the evolution of the Phoenix metro area over the last century with particular incidence on its most recent urban development. Guhathakurta and Stimson (2007) analysed some of the conditions influencing the creation of growth regimes responsible for municipal and metropolitan growth in Phoenix. Logan (1995) has documented expansive development and resistance to rapid suburban growth in Tucson. Balsas (2008) analysed sustainable urban regeneration programs in Phoenix partially due to market inversions caused by the global financial crisis. Lang and Knox (2009) have examined the emergence of the Megapolitan Sun Corridor connecting and structuring development in the area between Phoenix and Tucson.

In Portugal on the other hand, Ferreira (2005) has thoroughly reviewed planning processes and plans for the Lisbon metropolitan area in the last two decades. Silva and Syrett (2006) reviewed governance changes in Lisbon. Zegras et al. (2013) paid particular attention to the financial aspects of transport planning in both Portuguese metropolitan areas. And Balsas (2012) also studied the evolution of sustainable development programs in the two largest Portuguese metropolitan areas. However, so far no one has attempted to examine comparatively how metropolises in the United States and Portugal have addressed the consequences brought forward by the 2008–2009 global financial crisis.

It is argued that stages of maturity, compact urban development patterns, regulatory and administrative planning traditions, and socio-economic and cultural systems all influence territorial coherence in order to lead to higher levels of territorial resilience. Furthermore, anticipatory regional planning has the capacity to adapt to changing conditions in order to maintain and to develop more sustainable and resilient territories.

Broad cross-national comparisons such as those analysed here are relatively uncommon, and their value in terms of middle-range theory interlacing the spheres of territory, politics and governance is quite observable, mostly in terms of how, for instance, 'notions of economic "crisis" and "recovery" are politically and ideologically constructed, and that conditions of vulnerability, often simply taken for granted as part of the normal social landscape when they

affect marginalized populations, become regarded as crises when they affect dominant groups' (Strolovitch, 2013; p. 167).

In this context, the European Union (E.U.) Directive of Territorial Coherence proves to be the unsung sage, which provides direction to processes of territorial change as a consequence of insurmountable consumption and ever growing globalisation and technological innovation (Luukkonen, 2010). Territorial coherence is one of five E.U. principles of good governance, the others being openness, participation, accountability and effectiveness. Such principle pertains to the extent to which sector policies impact spatial dynamics within a particular unit of analysis.

Sustainability, anticipatory planning and regional coordination of major public investments are also broad guiding principles needed for the implementation of public policies, and to cope with increased economic competition, at capacity and outdated infrastructure, dwindling resources, climate change impacts, and social vulnerability problems. Evans and Karecha (2014) have shown that multi-level governance and a strong urban system, marked by multi-layered and sustained leadership and entrepreneurialism, is critical to a structurally diverse economy and to the combined strength of its many institutions, innovation system and networks.

A rigorous and systematic comparative study of *Stakeholders, Plans, Processes, Visions and Implementation* was conducted using the SPPVI analytical framework of regional planning activities in these four metropolises in 2014. The methodology comprised semi-structured interviews with professional planners and policy-makers at the various metropolitan planning organisations, reviews of medium and long range plans and other agency documents, and an extensive analysis of internal agency press releases and regional newspapers (Hantrais, 2009). Two key findings stand out: First, anticipatory regional planning has the capacity to adapt to changing conditions in order to maintain and develop more sustainable and resilient territories; second, public spending oversight and programmatic firewalls allow corrections before problems escalate out-of-control.

This paper consists of five parts. Following this introduction, part one is the development of a four-fold conceptual framework addressing: Spatial development; regional planning and metropolitan governance; sustainability and climate change; and economic crisis and community resilience. The research assertions in the

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