Envisioning contemporary transformation of Lisbon from its metropolitan-regional processes and models.

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Envisioning contemporary transformation of Lisbon from its metropolitan-regional processes and models.

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ABSTRACT

Lisbon's new dynamics of urban transformation are generally framed by socially recognizable concerns, such as housing, mobility, public space and heritage, but oblivious to the structural role of metropolitan-regional spatial reorganization. In the context of metropolitan epistemologies, although Lisbon's functional and relational spaces were never socially and politically recognized as legitimate scales of urbanism, strategy and governance, metropolitan-regional scales have been constructed according to specific urban models and processes rooted in the metropolitan paradigm of centre hegemony and distinction from peripheries. In this paper we'll argue that a metropolitan-regional vision, reorganization of urban space and territory is intrinsic to Lisbon's new urban dynamics. And that metropolitan-regional scales of decision and urban policies are - pre-condition and structure – to territorialisation of urban competitiveness and rescaling processes.

KEYWORDS

Metropolitan, regional, urbanism, metropolitan paradigm, city, Lisbon, Metropolitan Area of Lisbon

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1. INTRODUCTION

Note to architects: You though that you could ignore Junkspace, visit it surreptitiously, treat it with condescending contempt or enjoy it vicariously…because you could not understand it, you've thrown away the keys… (Koolhaas 2002, 182)

New dynamics of Lisbon's urban transformation have lead, for some time, to general surprise and disorientation. However, witnessing the development of change as made its reasons more tangible for scientific research and social movements, here and abroad, where similar processes are occurring. Envisioning the contemporary transformation of Lisbon from its metropolitan processes and models means to question the analytical obsolesce of the city concept and the framework that its persistence as a social practice sets for a metropolitan-regional vision built on competitiveness urban models and rescaling processes. This means we must question Lisbon's metropolitan models and processes beyond views of disintegration or lost of the urban condition that derive from univocal, primordial or exemplary views of urbanity in which the metropolitan paradigm is constructed upon (Boeri 2016, 14). Our argument proceeds as follows: (1) we need to question how the traditional idea of the city to conceptualize contemporary urbanization processes, fails to describe, analyse or include the multiplicity of urban realities, problems and models that either superseded it and produce it. (2) We also need to understand how absences and fears[1] (Pavia 1996) that mostly characterize the metropolitan subject in the fields of Architecture and Urbanism, result from (and lead to) choices put forward for decades, that exclude as phenomenological pertinent to those fields of knowledge, dynamics and processes of urbanisation unrecognizable through the traditional city spatial characteristics. (3) And finally, we need to understand how in the absence of a metropolitan scale of planning, strategy and governance of Lisbon this scope of urban transformation becomes pre-condition and structure to uneven urban development.

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1 Rosaria Pavia develops the following Urbanism fears: *Fear of urban growth, of value, of individuality, of demolition, of infrastructural spaces and of new forms of building.*

01 – View of Lisbon towards Odivelas municipality from a high building in Campo Grande.

2. BEYOND CITY, METROPOLIS OR CITY-TERRITORY

City is a problematic concept when used to explain urbanization processes that suplant it (Koolhaas 1995; Ascher 2006, Wigley 2002; Font, Portas, Indovina 2004; Bourdin 2011; Portas, Domingues, Cabral 2011, Wachsmuth 2014). It persists as the main conceptual urban framework in public and academic spheres but has long ceased to explain what it should represent. From an analytical point of view, city is a superseded type of urbanization - a place where we could identify a centre, its limits and its shape, most commonly represented in medieval and renaissance images of walled or fortified settlements. Some authors have therefore explored the nostalgia and contradictions in the persistence of its primordial imagery, rules and frameworks, that guide its scientific irrelevance and further production of tools and means to urban intervention (Koolhaas 1995, 959, Domingues 2012).

Additionally, the dominant use of the traditional city concept conceals behind univocal ideas of urban space, the multiplicity of ways of life and the *radical new order* of its spatial and territorial organizations (Ascher 2006, 28). The city as an idealized representation of contemporary urbanization frames what urban spaces, models and processes – so which populations and social contexts - are phenomenological relevant to research. As well as, which

ones benefit or feel represented by this misfit between social practice/representation of the city concept and spatial dimensions of the places we live in. For which Wachsmuth argues:

> the city-*as-a-representation is not neutral or innocent, but rather ideological, in the sense that its partiality helps to obscure and reproduce relations of power and domination that critical spatial theory seeks to expose and confront* (Wachsmuth 2014, 76).

Post-industrial modern debates developed urban visions of universally infra-structured, self-contained and typified urban systems that we find in views of the metropolis as a big scale city, structured between an urban-city centre and suburban-peripheral satellites – the metropolitan paradigm - *which privileged permanent solutions, collective, and homogeneous to answer to needs and search for housing, urbanism, transports, leisure and shopping* (Ascher 2010; 84, 85).

However, the central transformation from the pre-industrial city to contemporary urbanization is how the *urbis, polis* and *civitas* dimensions don't have a unique correspondence but a multiplicity of formalizations (Portas, Cabral, Domingues 2011)[2]. For this reason, metropolitan epistemologies confronted the *crisis of the city* debates (Choay 1994, Lefebvre 2012) with theoretic developments that assert the persistence of the urban condition beyond its typological and morphological transformation. And consequently, imagined the inclusion and order of diverse ways of living, settlement and social interactions in a shared urban space. The *city-territory* (Portas 2007), the *Territorial Metropolis* (Indovina 2004), the *Metapolis* (Ascher 2006) or the *Postmetropolis* (Gregotti 2011) to name a few, assume nature of urbanization has changed beyond issues of scale, therefore exceeding three main constructs that spatially delimit urbanity to the characteristics of the traditional city:

- Dichotomous views of mutual distinction or definition mainly rooted in the opposition city-country and urban-suburban.
- System views structured by order and coherence of an independent, self-contained urban space where connecting and mobility define its scale.

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[2] A clear vision of this mismatch is the *Republique du Sommeil* idea developed in *La Metrópole des Individus* (Bourdin 2005) in analysis of the classic metropolitan model of hegemony of the center over the pheripheries and the inherent routines of working in the center and sleeping in periphery where the author found civic participation and political projects (representation/voting) scopes don't correspond to the new scale and spatial multiplicity of our ways of live. *Republique du Sommeil* idea realizes that the scope of civic and political democratic praxis doesn't have a direct correspondence to material space of most people's lives functions and relations (we vote where we sleep) therefore neglecting the metropolitan-regional scales of life conditions democratic values and practices in which our political systems are based.

- Idealized views on urbanization based on physical continuity, proximity and diversity of functions, as well as, urban hierarchies which top; representative, exceptional and heritage buildings and spaces.

The polycentric urban framework and the *New Urbanism Principles* (Ascher 2010) necessary to the pursuit of spatial democratization, territorial equity and even development were already aware of present urban dynamics to Lisbon's transformation, that started to be visible in more relevant urban nodes to global networks of finance and investment (Sassen 2001). We are not watching previous urbanization processes of Lisbon's metropolitan growth marked by concentration, expansion, explosion (Font, Indovina, Portas 2004) but the development of a *radical new order* that seems to define a *shift from a distinctively metropolitan mode of urban development to an essentially regional urbanization process* (Soja 2011, 1). The *Splintering Urbanism* (Graham, Marvin 2005) emerging in this new phase of urban growth and transformation of Lisbon is based on urban competitiveness (Soja 2011, Wachsmuth 2014), territorialisation of means of connection, mobility and technological mediation (Santos 2012, Sucena-Garcia 2010) and rescaling processes (Brenner 2011).

3. LISBON'S METROPOLITAN PARADIGM

Our plan is an idea, a plan for something that is living, for something that is growing (from the film *Proud City*, Forshaw and Abercrombie 1945, 7")

The modern metropolitan structure is set in the early plans of Lisbon municipality, national state level urbanization plans to Costa do Sol and other new urban nucleuses around the capital. Lisbon's metropolitan paradigm is mostly influenced by the work of Sir Leslie Patrick Abercrombie, namely the 1944 Greater London Plan, the Garden-City ideas, the discussions held on the International Congresses of Modern Architecture specially the IV in 1933 about The Functional City and the V in 1937 about the Dwelling and Recreation (Groer 1948), as well as, the meetings by the International Federation for Housing and Planning.

The growth of Lisbon was draw as a reflection of simultaneous political scales that still define contemporary urban development. *Political centralism which led to the idea of an homogeneous country* since its foundation (Mattoso 1987, 9) was during the XX century dictatorship the centralism in Lisbon an urban and architectural coincidence of city, country and imperial political projects that converged to the same agents, processes, plans and building goals.

The first plan that overlooks and draws a bigger scale of the territory was the Master Regional Plan of Lisbon presented as pre-plan but never further developed or approved. It notes dynamics of Lisbon's metropolitan growth and frames it's near future. Although useful as a supplementary analytical source and pertinent to understand Regional Planning development in Lisbon, its late production, when concentration dynamics where already rooted, means its not the best source to explain initial transformation and its structure. In fact, analysing the elements (even if incomplete) that show which and how decisions were taken when concentration and pressure became substantial is more fruitful.
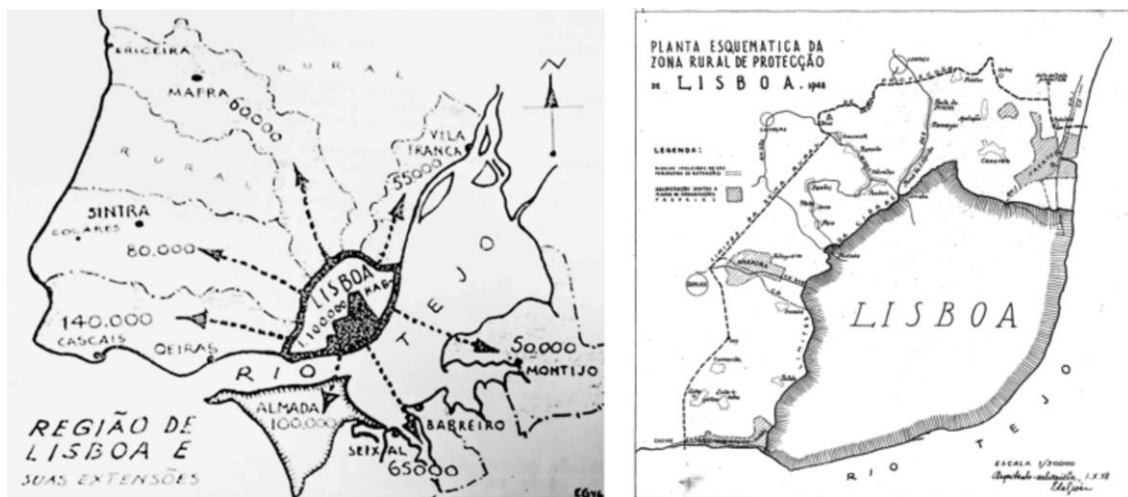
The General Plan of Urbanization and Expansion of Lisbon approved in 1948 is the piece of urbanism that embodies the thinking of Etienne de Groer through the goals and fears of the dictatorship. As in other countries, fast and disproportioned concentration of people in bigger urban areas was very hardly managed. In Lisbon it's was the garden-city model and the metropolitan paradigm that were seen as suitable urban models for separation, distinction and health that provided security, order and a much invested historical architecture and urban constructions. The fear of unlimited growth, infra-structural space and new forms of building (Sucena-Garcia 2010) were expressed in written reports of the urbanization plans at the time. For example, in the mentioned Lisbon's urbanization plan de Groer says: *Beyond this limit*, *we implement a green belt, named "rural zone", which goal is to first, build a reservoir of fresh air, and secondly, isolate it from neighbour urban formations and prevent their fusion with these, fusion that would have as result an unmeasured increase of the surface of Lisbon* (Groer 1948, 4).

This documents reveals the idea and decision that metropolitan centre-periphery/urban-suburban model, was oblivious to the complexity that metropolitan and regional planning requires and the specificity of the affected and highly transformed territories. It was also, as the Greek origin of the word *metropolis* points out, an appropriation of other territories from the one that had the power to decide the broad organization of space. There was no shared decision over shared spatial dimensions. Spatial and territorial transformation was built on the needs and visions of the centre of the metropolis being formed – Lisbon as mother city – simultaneously the center of the country and its imperial/colonial ideology.

Two drawings are essential to understand how Lisbon's contemporary urban space is still structured by schemes and principles that supported the construction of the *Capital of the Empire* (Ferreira 1987). First *Region of Lisbon and it's Extensions*, showing the prospects for the future population (quickly supplanted) plus main axes of growth and connection. Secondly, widening of

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Lisbon's administrative limits by the Schematic Plan for the Rural Zone of Lisbon's Protection all signed by Ettiene de Groer. It is also visible, acoording to the elements that have arrived to us, that such a complex and unprecedented task - setting a metropolitan model and structure to Lisbon – didn't further developed scientific surveys of *Elements for the Study of the Urbanization Plan of the City of Lisbon* finished in 1938 and supervised by engineer António Emídio Abrantes. So these drawings are not only synthesis of that previous analytical social-urban study, but show the architectural and urbanism proposal to such radical transformation.

02 and 03 - *Region of Lisbon and it's Extensions* in Urbanization Plan of Almada report 1948 and *Schematic Plan for the Rural Zone of Lisbon's Protection* in General Plan of Urbanization of Lisbon report named *Today's Way of Building* (Modo Actual de Construir) 1948.

With this approved municipal plan and the majority of municipal land as state property after the substantial expropriation of land in the 30's and 40's of the XX century, metropolitan Lisbon was built over a centre connected through a radio-centric mobility infra-structure (car, tram and train mobility mainly) to new areas of urban development, created along the main lines of growth that are afterwards registered in the Regional Plan of 1964 (Portela-Moscavide Sacavém; Loures-Odivelas; Amadora-Queluz; Algés-Carnaxide; Almada-Cova da Piedade). In Lisbon's plan these nucleuses would be specifically planned by Urbanization Plans and afterwards included in *Rural Protection of Lisbon Zone,* as delimited spaces of dwelling. This barrier was similar to the Green Belt of the Greater London Plan, imagined as a material limit to growth and continuous urban space. This was supposed to employ the hierarchic spatial construction and urban model of the garden-city schemes for which the main goals for the Portuguese capital were *limiting Lisbon's*

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population, limit it as surface, by a perimeter, over which the municipality doesn't allow the construction of buildings, urban character settlements and doesn't provide public services (Groer 1948).

The centralized model that substantially still defines Lisbon and Portugal meant, during the dictatorship, bigger polarization of power with local fragility of places transformed from rural to urban areas. Although based in a careful scientific survey of social and technical conditions of growth, the modern settings of universal infrastructure and services as well as the creation of a self-contained system delimited by the extension of commuting movements were never achieved. The metropolitan space of Lisbon was an uneven urban space where the centre was diverse, unique and representative and the peripheries where in general, monofunctional, deprived and generic.

4. SPATIAL REORGANIZATION OF LISBON'S METROPOLITAN-REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There are different frameworks to identify metropolitan development[3]. Although the definition of Standard Metropolitan Areas in the United States, established in the 50's of the XX century, was the first attempt to statistically register and analyse urban space defined by the *territorialisation* of the *urban society* (Lefebvre 2012), it was *Megalopolis: The Urbanized Northeastern Seabord of the United States* (Gottman 1969) that showed the persistence of urban interdependence over new spatial configurations, supported on technical possibilities of moving and communicating. Several authors (Ferreira 1987, Morgado 2005, Pereira e Silva 2008, Cavaco 2009, Santos 2012) have worked on the metropolitan development of Lisbon converging to a sequence of phases determined by distinctive dynamics of growth: (1) embryonic phase based on the imagery set by *Plan of General Improvements of Lisbon* signed by Ressano Garcia from 1903; (2) project, model and structuring of the *Capital of the Empire* (Groer/CML 1948, Ferreira 1987); (3) fixation of the metropolitan paradigm centre-periphery through centrifugal urbanization and infrastructural

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[3] The need to define urban areas has been part of international and national debate. Mainly, from a statistic, economic, demographic point of view. The OECD has addressed this issue in the 2013 report *Definition of Functional Urban Areas (FUA) for the OECD metropolitan database.* In Portugal, the 2015 report *As Novas Unidades Terrritoriais para Fins Estatísticos*, explains some changes were done in the last decade to make the statistic data (by INE), administrative delimitations (NUTSII), functional space and funds distribution (specially european) more adjusted.

consolidation (MOP 1964); (4) explosion of urbanization into a *mono-centric structure with disperse growth* (Font, Portas, Indovina 2004).

Due to its recent democracy, Portugal experienced modernity in very contradictory conditions (Domingues 2003, 172) that also determined main areas of concern to metropolitan debate and creation of metropolitan areas in 1991 (Law: 44/91); significant urban inequities and segregations, as well as, public infra-structure, systems and services [4].
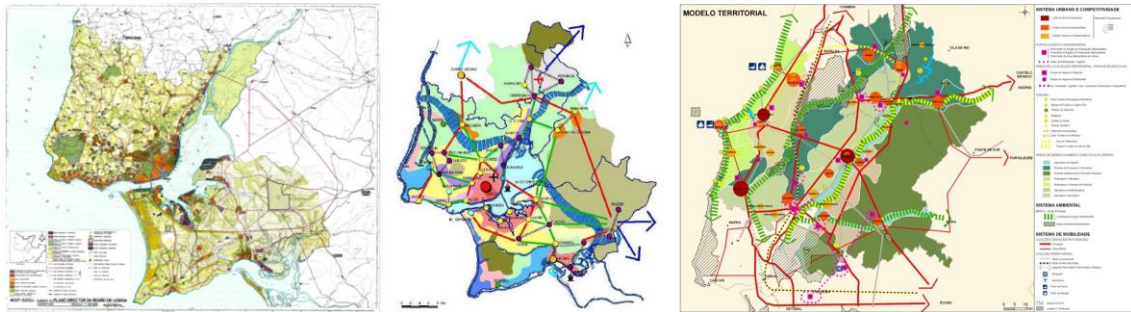
04 - Regional Planning of Lisbon had over time three plans, all them national-state level initiative: Master Regional Plan of Lisbon 1964; Regional Plan of Territorial Planning – Metropolitan Area of Lisbon (PROT-AML) 2002; and Regional Plan of Territorial Planning – West and Tejo Valley (PROT-OVT) 2009. The first and the last were never approved or further developed.

If Urbanism scales *are not pregiven but socially constructed and politically contested* (Brenner 2002, 4), it's relevant that Porto and Lisbon metropolitan areas were never given the necessary political scope of decision and intervention to represent a collective project, and also were never *socially recognized or identifiable therefore never represented a specific identity* (Ferrão, 2002, 195).

And yet, metropolitan and regional scales are viewed today as foundations for national economic competitiveness[5]. The appropriation of this concept as an urban development model marks a deep transformation. The modern metropolitan paradigm of city surrounded by satellites or any form of metropolitan self-contained system that kept the central urban core hegemony over the region,

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4 The article *A Instituição Metropolitana* by Nuno Portas in 1987 as well as the *I Internacional Seminary Metropolitan Area of Lisboa, What Future?* in Caloute Gulbenkian Foundation with Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas in 1987, show time and subjects of the debate at the time: Metropolitan Pipes; infrastructure; local governance and resources; housing; mobility.

5 Notions of competitiveness started to be used in economics in the 1980's. Seen today as problematic and polysemic, competitiveness is defined by the World Economic Forum as *the set of institutions, policies and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country.* Is also measured since 1979, http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-index-2017-2018/

built on welfare policies to which social concerns were given priority, is becoming superseded by an extended regional urbanization of multi-nodal and multi-scalar interconnections competitive for the global marketplace and built on economic policies to which growth and prosperity is central to urban transformation (Soja 2011, 7).

However, contrary to other cases in the Atlantic North where the implementation of sub-national strategies and policies to place cities and regions within globalization of capital, labour and culture – that define the nature of rescaling processes - is generating debates around *new regionalism* and *metropolitan regionalism,* the appropriation of Lisbon's metropolitan and regional dimensions for national prosperity and growth is developed without its social and political recognition and produced by national state level and sporadically municipal level (Lisbon mainly) initiative, perspective and decision. As we can trace with the following table and by reading the Regional Plan strategic vision (CCDRLVT 2002, 12):

The Metropolitan Area of Lisbon occupies a very unique position in the Region and at the national level, playing a specific and fundamental role, as it integrates a large part of the structural and strategic components of the country's development and its internationalization. Great pole of production and consumption, concentrating the main national resources in research, scientific and technological development, as well as advanced services to companies and transport, cultural and sports infrastructures, AML has an essential role in strengthening the country external competitiveness and in the process of European integration, in the improvement of living standards and in social and territorial cohesion, at national level.

In this table we have been able to systematize relevant examples of distinctive dynamics of urban transformation to previous phases of transformation, by linking social-economic dynamics of urban competitiveness and institutional frameworks that shape urbanization processes and consequent spatial reorganization. These processes also seem to show important characteristics of shift from a metropolitan scale and scope of urbanization processes to an extended metropolitan-regional, unbounded urbanization.

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Socio-economic dynamics	Institutional frameworks	Urbanization processes	Spatial Reorganization
Global and transnational finance and real estate capital revalorization of abandoned, central and exceptional locations	National state level government law (citizenship access and temporary residence, changes of rent regulations)	Re-*Desurbanization* of Lisbon's centre with reinvestment and gentrification strategies	Regional explosion of permanent housing locations
Building or reequating major infra-structure such as MARL, Airport, Ports, Bridges.	National state level government laws	Extension of regional urbanization	Regional decentralization and interconnection of main infra-structure.
Agenda of big scale international events (Lisboa Capital da Cultura 1994, Expo 98, Euro 2000, Websummit 2016 – 20, Jornadas Mundiais da Juventude 2022)	National state level government law	Big scale urban renovation of abandoned, deprived areas deindustrialized urban voids. of central	Change of functions, urban and architectural characters of river fronts
Central, consolidated or exceptional location of significant and representative public works	Lisbon municipality initiatives, plans and strategies	Polarization of urban development	Restructuring and requalification of public space
Big scale alienation and transaction of state properties for private ownership.	National state level government law + subnational (interscalar) strategies.	Urbanization of big scale areas or voids.	Consolidation and urban continuity

5. DISTINCTIVE DYNAMICS OF URBAN TRANSFORMATION LISBON.

This widening of Lisbon's place in global and transnational networks of investment and finance, the competitiveness model of development and the conditioning set by infra-structure/technological mediation allows us to trace relevant dynamics of transformation that form, in fact, an *invisible transformation* of urbanization processes (Sassen 2001). This difficulty to apprehend transformation emerges to public debates framed by recognizable social concerns namely; housing, mobility, public space and heritage, further questioning architecture and urbanism traditional tools, methodology and inter-disciplinarity. In fact, if space and territory reorganisation are pre-conditions and structure to establish a new urban model, we now need to identify, draw, map and understand, in order to critique, the morphological and typological transformation of Lisbon.

6. CONCLUSION – THE VIOLENCE OF AN IDEALIZED URBANITY

The persistence of the traditional city concept is a partial and idealized representation of contemporary urbanization processes. Therefore, intrinsic to ideas of fragmentation, polarization, fantasies of unique ways of life or stability of urban form that urbanism seeks to denounce. The notion of scale, hierarchy and order, structural to metropolitan models and systems that attempted to relate the *urbis, polis, civitas* dimensions of life in broader urban areas seem to fail the description or critique to the *neoliberalized, customized infrastructure networks that privilege competitiveness over equity* (Wachsmuth 2014, 84).

The metropolitan-regional debates are today concerned with understanding urbanization processes that significantly supplant a traditional view on territorial or urban dimensions. In Lisbon reasons and impact of transformation doesn't seem to be grasped by the traditional morphological and typological analysis in which urbanism is set upon. This was previously understood by metropolitan epistemologies that saw the *drawing of processes* (Portas, Cabral, Domingues 2011) as much more defining to contemporary urban space and society *than interpretative explorations of space with composition goals* (Boeri 2016,14).

The present dynamics that set Lisbon's contemporary transformation are distinctive from the previous ones and its study points to new spatial and territorial reorganization of metropolitan-regional impact. The absence of metropolitan or regional scales of planning, strategy and governance doesn't mean an absence of metropolitan and regional development of Lisbon. Instead, it means structural decisions, in terms of infrastructure, mobility, communication networks, big scale projects, and bench marketing are not being determined by local necessities, problems or participation, but apprehension of sub-national scales to source in global and transnational circulation of capital, jobs and culture reasons for urban transformation. This reinforces pre-existing strengths and new ones based of their relevance to economic growth. Which sets up an uneven development framework for urbanism.

If urban research main purpose it to illuminate a reflexive approach to contemporary urbanization processes we then need to promote a constant dialectic between concrete research and conceptual improvement. Urbanism exists through interpellation to political projects, and its fragility to the debate about scale and nature of contemporary life as relevant phenomenological disciplinary field is an exercise of violence that reinforces pre-existing vulnerabilities.

05 – Lisbon's Regional Supply Market (MARL) on a Friday night, 9 p.m..

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