BOOK REVIEWS

Andreotti, A. *(eds. 2019), Governare Milano nel nuovo millennio,* Bologna: Il Mulino.

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*Preliminary note

This book review has been written during the COVID19 pandemic. The book was published in 2019, when the city of Milan was experiencing a moment of economic and demographic growth. This review describes the contents of the book at the moment of its publication, as many of its chapters rely on long-standing governmental processes enacted in various policy fields. Accurate data (or forecasts) on the effects of Coronavirus crisis in the city of Milan are currently lacking and do not allow one to trace new possible trends. Whether the leading research paths traced by the authors might be reorientated in the next years would be briefly addressed in the concluding chapter.

Introduction

The book is grounded in the longstanding debate on government and governance (Hooghe and Marks 2001; Rhodes 2007; Piattoni 2009; Kazepov 2010), the terminological difference between which cannot find a proper translation in the Italian language. Indeed, the verb *governare* (i.e., to govern) that provides the book's title can refer to both centralised forms of powers (i.e., government) or more fluid networks of actors and their social and economic relations (i.e., governance). Stemming from this twofold interpretation, the book focuses on the one hand on the central role of public institutions (i.e., state and local bodies), whose action is often framed in terms of a state being 'hollowing out' (Rhodes 2007, p. 6), and on the other hand on the ever-changing patterns of interaction of non-state actors. Starting from the focus on the city of Milan, these networks of social groups and institutions are analysed at various territorial and jurisdictional levels (Piattoni 2009, p. 172) and in various policy fields. Although it is not declared in the introductory chapter, this perspective can be framed in terms of the debate on *multilevel governance,* an approach to policy

analysis and implementation that has become common in a number of disciplinary fields (Kazepov 2010). Along with the notion of multilevel governance there is an emphasis on the concept of *subsidiarity*, introduced in the regulative framework of many European countries as a reorganisation of competences and knowledge to the smallest (or lowest) competent authority (Kazepov and Barberis 2013, p. 198). Many chapters of this book refer to this notion, and in particular to horizontal subsidiarity, to highlight the repartition of responsibilities and powers among different bodies participating to both policymaking processes and policy implementation. As Le Galès (2002) argues, subsidiarity and multilevel governance are two inseparable concepts, the first associated with different competences at various levels of power, the second with their interactions.

In particular, the book considers these aspects in the city of Milan, whose organisational and operational 'model' in various policy fields has been spread over the whole country and abroad as forms of best practice.

To ground the current Milanese governance, most of the authors decided to trace its evolution considering the period since the 1990s. The 1990s represent a decade of consolidation of policy rescaling processes in Italy. Several reforms enacted in this decade, and confirmed at the beginning of the century, reshaped the duties and responsibilities of the local authorities (i.e., municipalities and regions), giving cities unprecedented powers and creating a multilevel governance framework. Beside these normative changes, the 1990s also represented a watershed in the Italian context due to the *Tangentopoli* crisis (circa 1992) that affected both the economic and political development of national and local governments. The book considers this event as a turning point for the city of Milan in a two ways. First, it reshaped city politics, making room for a right wing local administration that lasted until 2011. Second, it modified the narratives of the city, for it signified the shift from a dynamic *Milano da bere* to a static representation of a decaying city, fostered by the use of 'inertial discursive regimes' (Pasqui 2017, p. 17). From this downfall up to the new 'renaissance', this book considers Milan through the actors that regulated, orientated and enacted its transformations in various policy fields, with various instruments and types of interactions.

Structure and contents

The book is divided into 10 chapters. Except for the introduction by Alberta Andreotti and Patrick Le Galès that traces the general aims and purposes of the book, each chapter focuses on the governance of a particular policy field or programme in the city of Milan. Developed within the international network WHIG (What is governed and who is governing), the book focuses on a variety of policy fields, from security and social assistance to urban planning and public services, from the fashion industry to the rising sharing economy. As Andreotti and Le Galès set out, all the contributions develop around three main areas of analysis. The first is the diversification of the actors involved in city governance. As mentioned above, this aspect is intrinsic to the concept of governance itself and has already been analysed in the Italian debate by various scholars at the beginning of the century (Bifulco and Vitale 2006; Bifulco, Bricocoli and Monteleone 2008; de Leonardis and Vitale 2008). Nevertheless, the panorama of actors participating in policy-making in cities is constantly widening and changing, on the basis of each policy field's specificity, of the availability of resources and of specific strategies activated at different spatial and political levels (Bricocoli, 2018).

The second area of analysis deals with space. Indeed, Andreotti and Le Galès, as well as the authors of the different chapters, refer to the context-related features of socio-economic and demographic trends. In particular, space is interpreted in a trans-scalar perspective through the *political economy* approach (Le Galès 1998), underlining the increasing interactions among different institutional levels. Further close-ups on

narrower spatial levels (Bifulco 2003; Caravaggi and Imbroglini 2016), are not tackled by their contributions.

The third area of analysis refers to a temporal and processual dimension, interpreted as both the path dependency and the legacy of actors' strategies over time and their global, national and local effects.

From this viewpoint, these contributions could be also framed under the general notion of *embeddedness* (Granovetter, 1985; Ghezzi and Mingione, 2007), since they analyse the spatial and processual nature of social actors within a micro-macro perspective.

In the second chapter, Fabio Quassoli, Monica Colombo and Andrea Molteni go into more detail on the topic of security as a tool for urban governance in the city of Milan. The chapter stems from the analysis of a shift from 'social security' to 'urban security' that characterises the beginning of the twenty-first century, based on Castel's work on social insecurity (2003). In Milan, this process started with the advent of a right-wing municipal government (1993-2011), and it was fostered by the rising migration flows of the 1990s as well as by the introduction of national regulations that entrusted local administrations with the provision of additional police forces. The authors underline a continuous investment in urban security in the last two decades, even after the election of the left-wing local public administration in 2011. Also, they argue that there has been a spread of a 'risk thinking' mentality, fostered by political discourses as well as by citizens' involvement in security-based programmes. The authors underline the role of Expo 2015 in activating security programmes in the city.

The consolidation of security policies and their governance goes together with changes in social welfare services provision. As Pasqui pointed out (Pasqui 2017, p. 17), the increasing attention dedicated to urban security was also exacerbated by the rise of social vulnerabilities, linked on one hand to the 2008 economic crisis, on the other to a drastic reduction in welfare services provision. A similar viewpoint was set out by De Leonardis (in Fiani 2008, p. 4), who acknowledged a shift in citizens' demand of security 'from social protection to public order'. Nonetheless, such perspective is not addressed in depth in the chapter by Quassoli, Colombo and Molteni. Conversely, social welfare policies are treated separately in the third chapter of the book, written by David Benassi.

Benassi analyses the evolution of welfare services and their governance in the city of Milan. After introducing the concept of 'fragmented subsidiarity' (Costa 2009) that has characterised this policy field in the Italian context, the author focuses on social assistance services and their multilevel governance. A strong emphasis is given to processes of externalisation and privatisation introduced at the regional and local level since *Tangentopoli*. Benassi particularly addresses the involvement of the Fondazione Cariplo bank foundation in local social welfare programmes. Furthermore, he describes the reorganisation of welfare services provision introduced by the left-wing administration elected in 2011 and some of the projects developed by that bank foundation under the coordination of the municipal government.

In the fourth chapter, Gabriele Pasqui outlines the changes in the governance of urban regeneration from 1992 to 2016. Again, specific attention is paid to the 'pluralistic nature' of the Milanese programmes and their actors. The author focuses on four main dimensions: the real estate market and its evolution in the period under consideration; the main urban regeneration programmes in the city; the changes in the range of actors involved in urban planning governance; the redefinition of institutional assets and the urban agenda. Pasqui highlights the lack of a unitary strategic vision in both city planning and governance in this period. He suggests the creation of new governmental tools for the years to come, able to foster new development strategies within a limited form of city expansion. The author also introduces the role of big private players in the post-crisis real estate market, stressing the spread of urban financialisation dynamics. A specific final

insight is dedicated to the weak capacity of the different local administrations in forecasting social and economic changes.

From a similar perspective, the fifth chapter by Guido Anselmi addresses the governance of the urban renewal of Garibaldi-Porta Nuova area, known worldwide for its architectonical resonance. This case study is selected for its unprecedented involvement of private actors in processes of land acquisition and management, but also for the strong directive role of the public administration.

The sixth contribution by Alberta Andreotti deals with the management of local public services and the related providers (e.g., water or public transport). The aim of the chapter is to analyse the nature of the actors involved in their governance, with a particular focus on their managerial or political character and their networks of interaction. Based on the corporatisation processes introduced in the last decade that reformulated the public sector's role in these enterprises, Andreotti investigates their boards of directors through a complex analysis of different professional figures and their networks, discovering meaningful political 'cores' with high degrees of power and strong directive functions.

On another subject, the contribution developed by Alessandro Maggioni investigates the governance of the urban renewal programme on the wholesale market area (*Mercati Generali*). Maggioni outlines a meticulous reconstruction of a complex and never completed project that is representative of the trans-scalar and processual nature of urban programmes and of the multilevel governance mentioned above. These themes, set out in the introduction and already highlighted by Pasqui in his chapter, are discussed at greatest length here. The case of Mercati Generali is framed in terms of a more general transformation of large-scale food retail that changed the roles of big infrastructures in local distribution and questioned the appropriateness of a partially underused complex in an attractive urban area. In addition, the fragmentation of the local institutions and the enactment of blame avoidance mechanisms hindered every project proposal and impeded communication with other levels of governance and external actors.

Using a trans-scalar perspective, Marianna d'Ovidio and Valentina Pacetti analyse the governance of the fashion industry in Milan and its metropolitan area. As was the case in the previous chapter, the reference to supra-local economic dynamics and their effects at the local level is particularly stressed in this contribution. Within the overall 'fashion system', the authors analyse three different policy fields (education, innovation and internationalisation) and trace the networks of actors involved in their governance. Starting from the analysis of the territorial distribution of fashion industries at a regional scale, d'Ovidio and Pacetti point out the relevance of physical proximity in the fashion value chain. The authors describe the role of the city of Milan as the core of this region. Focusing on the municipality, they highlight its limitations in governing the supra-local relationships among different districts but also its centrality in guaranteeing international visibility to the whole system.

Similarly, Ivana Pais, Emanuele Polizzi and Tommaso Vitale stress the directing role of the municipality of Milan in fostering initiatives in the sharing economy. The authors describe the rise of a 'collaborative city' in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis, supported by the left-wing local administration. In line with the previous chapter, Pais, Polizzi and Vitale highlight a supportive and promotional role of the local government towards the economic stability and competitiveness of such firms. The authors speak about a 'pressure' of the local government towards innovation processes, enacted through the creation of networks. Following their argumentation, the Milanese collaborative model has two main limitations. The first is linked to the lack of evaluation of the impacts of such collaborative initiatives, with specific reference to their inclusiveness towards the most fragile categories and their economic sustainability. The second is related to the political agenda and its ability to guarantee a continuity of implementation in a collaborative direction.

Finally, the contribution by Diego Coletto analyses the governance of informal economies through an empirical study of the open-air markets in the city. Informality is hereby studied as a complex process, embedded in different norms and involving different levels of governance. Through a bottom-up observation of uses and practices, this chapter focuses the fuzzy boundaries between formality and informality, licit/illicit actions, and legal/illegal behaviours, enacted in the complex regulative framework of open-air sales and of public space occupancy.

Conclusions

The book examines a comprehensive framework on the evolution of governance models and governmental strategies in various policy fields in the city of Milan. The ten chapters described in this review outline three main research paths that are representative of the consolidation of a 'Milan model' (*Modello Milano*[1]) and pave the way for further analysis. The first path refers to the complex panorama of actors that emerges from the analysis of the governance of all the policy fields and projects considered. This aspect constitutes the guiding thread of all the contributions and clearly emerges from the in-depth structural analysis developed by Alberta Andreotti in the sixth chapter. In this regard, it is necessary to underline that all the contributions refer to public or private 'big players', rarely mentioning the relevance of 'smaller' actors (in terms of scale and/or political power) in governmental processes. Yet, the current Milanese context is currently characterised by emerging cultural initiatives, social cooperatives and associations that are increasingly involved in decision-making processes and call for the attention of local administration. This aspect has been addressed by Pais, Polizzi and Vitale from a sharing economy perspective, but it seems likely also to affect social welfare services provision and urban planning policies at different territorial scales (Blanco *et al.* 2016; Bricocoli and Sabatinelli 2017; Marani 2017). The decision to dedicate a huge part of the post-COVID19 mutual fund to local cultural enterprises seems to point in this direction.[2]

A second research path deals with the complex processual nature of urban transformation programmes. This aspect is investigated in particular by Pasqui, Anselmi and Maggioni, who emphasise that urban projects strongly depend upon the reciprocal interests of a variety of actors and how they might change over time according to different socio-economic trends. In this sense, the attractiveness for private investments that has characterised the city of Milan in the last two decades might be seriously undermined by the current emergency, with severe drawbacks on those private construction fees that have supported the available public resources. Therefore, the directing role of the local administration would be fundamental to orientate investments in the next years, as well as its perseverance in concluding the ongoing big urban projects (above all, the railway yards and the new underground lines).

A third research path focuses on the interplay between large scale economies and local development. This viewpoint is particularly relevant in Maggioni's chapter, and in d'Ovidio and Pacetti's contributions, which call for a renewed interaction between local and supra-local actors to improve both the city's visibility in the international scene but also to access economic resources available at different levels of governance. The coronavirus emergency has highlighted the relevance of local production by also questioning the efficiency of a globalised market. New patterns of interactions among different policy levels and new policy tools are likely to be experimented in the near future.

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[1] The expression 'Milan Model' (*Modello Milano*) refers to the pioneering role of the city of Milan in the governance of different policy fields. The term has spread all over the country in the last decade and has fostered positive narratives of the city.
[2] More information can be found here: https://www.comune.milano.it/-/bilancio.-in-arrivo-i-primi-aiuti-del-fondo-di-mutuo-soccorso

However, two fields of investigation that have strongly characterised the evolution of the city and its current governance seem to be missing. The first is housing, which is only briefly mentioned in Pasqui's contribution. This policy field has undergone great changes in the past decades and was one of the most affected by both *Tangentopoli* and the economic crisis. Problems of availability and affordability have affected both the private and the public housing stock, fostering dynamics of housing and social exclusion, but also paving the way for new actors in housing provision. In light of the increasing rental prices in the city of Milan, of the increment of private-led investments in the residential market (Agenzia delle Entrate e Associazione Bancaria Italiana, 2019) and of a still limited social housing stock (Bricocoli and Cucca, 2016), further insights on this topic and its governance might have enriched the overall framework on the Milanese challenges.

A further missing field of research relates to migration and the Milanese reception system. References to the governance of migration in the city are addressed with reference to urban security (see Quassoli's chapter) and to informal job opportunities (see Coletto's chapter). Given the relevance that welcoming policies and structures have acquired in the period under consideration and the original traits of the reception system implemented in the city in the last decade (Costa 2017), a chapter dedicated to this might have completed the analytical framework on the 'Milan model'.

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