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São Paulo, city-region: constitution and development dynamics of the São Paulo macrometropolis

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This article deals with the emergence of the city-region in São Paulo (Brazil), called ‘macrometropolis’, and highlights some of the challenges facing this new territorial or spatial configuration in terms of globalisation and governance. It also stresses the productive changes that gave rise to it and sheds light on the constituent dynamics of the macrometropolis at different scales. The article affirms that metropolitan problems can no longer be interpreted without taking into account the new determinants of the macrometropolis of São Paulo, which implies considering the interaction of the metropolis with other urban centres bearing social, economic and environmental singularities.

Keywords: city-region; macrometropolis; São Paulo; spatial dynamics; productive configuration; globalisation; governance

1. Introduction

City-regions have been studied since the 1980s when Los Angeles and San Francisco – California’s two largest cities and their respective areas of influence – became a laboratory for new forms of production and work organisation in the contemporary world. Authors like Allen Scott and Michael Storper (1986), Manuel Castells (1989), Edward Soja (1990) and Anne Saxenian (1994), among others, recorded facts and conceptualised the key trends within these territories, characterised by the combination of high technology, knowledge production and flexible specialisation, largely inspired by Silicon Valley’s development and by Los Angeles’ highly dispersive urban configuration. As expected, these studies began an enthralling debate in several metropolitan areas around the world that were experiencing similar, though not necessarily analogous, trends and processes.

The renewed debate suggested by these authors pointed to an economic crisis in industrialised nations, relocation of factories to Southeast Asia and other developing countries (such as Brazil), accompanied by the emergence of a new model of production and organisation, characterised by the diffusion of high-technology companies (primarily information technology) supported by high-density network infrastructure equipment.1 In this context, the city (or the metropolis) took on an evident regional dimension by spatially integrating productive processes that were traditionally separated by the concentrating logic of industrial organisation. As such, urban peripheries and nearby cities became part of new and renewed metropolitan dynamics. As stated by Scott Allen et al., ‘[While] most metropolitan regions in the past stood out mainly by one or maybe two urban centres clearly defined, today’s city-regions are becoming increasingly polycentric

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According to these authors, this occurred because of several factors, including the crisis of Fordism (or of economic and social development based on large-scale industry), emergence of new forms of production and work organisation, thus increasing diseconomies of agglomeration in large cities, opening of national economies to globalised flows and territorial reconfiguration of local productive processes. Consequently, many older, traditional and consolidated agglomerations experienced significant transformations in their ‘internal’ course of development. Concomitantly, new urban growth centres gained value, ‘stretching and fixing the urban fabric in a recentralised regional constellation of cities’ (Scott et al. [1999] 2001, p. 17). The city-region, therefore, appeared as a consistent spatial unit for understanding territorial dynamics of contemporary capitalism.

The productive linkage between the city-region and contemporary capitalism is also explored in Brazil by Magalhães (2008). According to the author, it is a reorganisation of the general forms of production that were predominantly based on the linkage between the metropolis and the vertical integration of production chains, giving way to the rise of new industries with a high technological coefficient and, generally speaking, logistical transformations (i.e. distribution centres, industrial parks, inland port) of industrial structure. As such, the morphology of the city-region, agglomerating several urban and metropolitan centres, interconnected through powerful means of transportation and communication, established the emergence of a new scale of territorial action for development, public policies and governance.

Although São Paulo’s case has singular and specific characteristics, the city can be seen through this lens. In effect, the city of São Paulo presently has 11.2 million inhabitants, but considering its metropolitan area, which includes 39 municipalities in the State of São Paulo, that number rises to 19.6 million, turning it into one of the largest urban agglomerations in the world. However, the novelty is that despite its importance and weight in terms of population and economic development, dynamics in recent decades show that it is increasingly difficult to consider it separately from other relatively close metropolitan areas, such as that of Santos and Campinas and the recently created Metropolitan Region of Vale do Paraíba, or without considering other cities such as Sorocaba and Jundiaí (see Box 1). In these terms, this expanded metropolitan complex (or macrometropolis of São Paulo) takes on city-region characteristics, surpassing 27 million inhabitants and concentrating a productive force equivalent to the gross domestic product (GDP) of Switzerland in 2010 (US$ 325 billion) (EMPLASA 2012).

However, the conditions of this change of scale in the territorial development of São Paulo are unclear and require an effort to understand and interpret both the number of urban phenomena accompanying the expansion and the factors explaining it. Below we highlight some important elements of the relationship among the city, the metropolis and the macrometropolis of São Paulo to identify strategic issues to help scale the challenges facing the governance of this vast new productive territory in south-eastern Brazil.

2. São Paulo: a brief historical description of urban development (of the city and the metropolis)

Throughout its 457 years of history, the city has gone through several development stages that are worth mentioning, such as the ‘pioneer’ past during the colonial period; the coffee expansion cycle during the Imperial period and, finally, the industrialisation process that took over the city’s development from the 1930s onwards (Santos 2005). However, it is from the 1950s that São Paulo’s pace of growth gained momentum, becoming Brazil’s largest metropolis. As shown in Table 1, which highlights the distribution of Brazilian industrial GDP between 1930 and 1985, there is a tremendous acceleration in the State of São Paulo’s participation in the national production index until the historic mark of 58.1%, reached in 1970. Moreover, the posterior decline requires consideration of
Box 1. Main cities of the macrometropolis

The São Paulo Metropolitan Region occupies an area of 8047 km² and encompasses 39 municipalities that are home to a population of 19.7 million inhabitants. Besides the city of São Paulo, this region is also composed of the cities of Guarulhos, São Bernardo do Campo, Santo Andre and Osasco. Although a process of industrial decentralisation has occurred in recent decades, it still is an important industrial centre in the country, even experiencing an expansion of industrial activity, albeit with a reduction in the number of jobs in the sector. Thus, unlike other large cities in developed countries, the RMSP has not undergone a process of deindustrialisation, maintaining itself as an important industrial centre.

The Campinas Metropolitan Region consists of 19 municipalities, centred around the cities of Campinas, Paulinia, Sumare, Santa Barbara d’Oeste, Americana and Jaguariuna. Currently, it has 2.8 million inhabitants. It is the second largest region in economic importance, where the industry is the largest source of jobs with a concentration and diversification level above the state average. The productive services also have great economic importance, which suggests that the region can be a supplier of additional or alternative services to the RMSP and that RMSP’s industry can rely on production services from the region, especially those which are more modern in character. In this region, there is a strong specialisation in IT, concentrating a large number of companies from various productive segments, educational institutions, research laboratories and specialised research centres. Following São Paulo, the metropolitan region of Campinas is the second largest in the generation of innovations in Brazil and one of the most advanced in terms of industrialisation.

The Metropolitan Region of Vale de Paraíba, composed of 39 municipalities, is strongly interconnected by a network of highways with the major Brazilian cities – São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro – and with the Metropolitan Region of Campinas and is centred around the municipalities of São Jose dos Campos, Taubate, Canas, Jacarei and Pindamonhangaba. Similar to other regions, its cities are densely populated, with 1.8 million inhabitants in 2010. This metropolitan region has a typical industrial and technological innovation profile, being the region with the highest density of technological and technical occupations in the State of São Paulo and the fourth in number of research and development centres and laboratories in the state. The presence of the Technological Institute of Aeronautics (ITA), the most important aerospace industry in the country, enabled the development of productive skills, techniques and technology in the sector.

The Urban Agglomeration of Jundiaí, which occupies a strategic position between São Paulo and Campinas, the two most dynamic cities of the macrometropolis, consists of seven municipalities and is distinguished by its industrial characteristics. Its most important cities are Louveira and Jundiaí.

Finally, the Urban Agglomeration of Sorocaba, formed by 19 municipalities, stands out for its diverse agricultural and industrial characteristics. Highly developed industrial municipalities coexist with economically less-developed municipalities, with activities mainly focused on the primary sector. Sorocaba is still the main urban centre of the agglomeration, aggregating also municipalities with larger populations, such as Votorantim, Itu and Salto.
Table 1. Distribution of gross industrial product in selected states of Brazil (%).

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<tr>
<td>Pernambuco</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bahia</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minas Gerais</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.9</td>
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<td>6.4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rio de Janeiro</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>17.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>São Paulo</td>
<td>35.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paraná</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Catarina</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rio Gde. do Sul</td>
<td>8.0</td>
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Source: IBGE, Research Coordination, Department of National Accounts.

several factors such as the economic crisis and the productive restructuring of the 1980s, decentralisation of the manufacturing industry and specialisation in advanced technological and financial services in the 1990s. Nevertheless, in 2008, the State of São Paulo accounted for 33.1% of Brazilian GDP and 33.9% of the industrial GDP (IBGE 2010).

Some issues should be highlighted regarding the pattern of urbanisation that accompanied this long process of industrialisation and development. First, the existence of a centre–periphery relation, between the city of São Paulo (as the epicentre) and the municipalities comprising the metropolis, is reproduced by the city’s existing centralities, with emphasis on the Central and the Southwest sectors as its major tertiary centres. Second, is the establishment of a strong spatial socio-segregated formation, which clearly defines the areas where elite and poorer populations concentrate (Santos 1990; Maricato 1996; Villaça 1999). Third, is the coexistence, outside the more densely populated areas, of low-density residential patterns with ‘islands’ of vertical integration, demonstrating a strong trend of horizontal sprawl – fostered by conurbation areas or by neighbouring municipalities characterised by lower occupation densities. Fourth, and as a product of the aforementioned trend, is a significant dispersion or metropolitan fragmentation, resulting in ‘chaotic’ provision of mobility and transportation, network infrastructure equipment and services such as health, education and public safety. Fifth, as we shall see in detail later, is the occupation of land by factories and tertiary companies along the main roads connecting the city of São Paulo with Campinas, Santos, Sorocaba, Jundiaí and São Jose dos Campos. Ultimately, this land-use pattern led to the construction of a macrometropolis that emanates from São Paulo, integrating a vast and discontinuous territory, but that maintains close production ties among its elements, as parts of a single system.

This sprawled and fragmented pattern of metropolitan growth is supported by the vast predominance of automobiles and buses as the main means of public transportation. In the city of São Paulo alone, there are more than 5.1 million cars (73% of the fleet of vehicles) and more than 800,000 motorcycles, excluding buses, trucks and utility vehicles (Detran/SP 2011). In total, there are more than 7 million vehicles, mostly concentrated in the macrometropolis, which represent a third of the fleet in the State of São Paulo. The primary effects of this predominance are widely known: congestion, pollution, traffic accidents, additional costs for urban mobility (in terms of infrastructure, equipment, insurance and parking) and conversion of urban spaces into elements of the road system to attend the metropolitan scale.

The preference for road transport modes and the large spatial dispersion of the metropolis hinder the implementation of an efficient mass transport network. Thus, in addition to the aforementioned transportation and mobility problems, a severe shortage of public transport also affects the metropolis. The evolution of the subway system is an indicative example of the deficit between urban growth and passenger transportation. Between 1972, when the first line was inaugurated, and September 2010, when the Tamanduatei station was partially activated (integrating with the metropolitan railway system), the network reached an extension of only 69 km – against London’s current 400 km, New York’s 368 km and Paris’...
214 km – all of which are smaller cities than São Paulo.5

At the same time, the bus system suffers from structural problems including overcrowding, poor coverage, lack of integration and interconnection between lines and modes, a deteriorating fleet, poor quality service (in terms of comfort, regularity and safety) and high cost rates, among others.6 According to Biderman, ‘since the 1950s, the transport policies of the Metropolitan Region of São Paulo, as well as in most other metropolitan regions, have neglected public transport, pedestrians and cyclists. The result is an inefficient and chaotic system, with long commuting times, especially for the poor’ (2008, p. 3). In this sense, the State Traffic Authority (CET) estimated that 20% of workers spend more than 3 hours a day on buses. Another 10% spend more than 4 hours to get to and from work.7 Aggravating this scenario is the low degree of public transport connection between São Paulo and other cities belonging to the metropolitan area and among other cities in the metropolitan area, including connection among the main labour hubs (such as the ABC region8).

Moreover, the constant vulnerability to rain owing to soil impermeability, exposing city streets to dangerous flooding risk, and the sense of exposure to urban violence – real or imaginary (a characteristic of large Brazilian cities) – turns mobility into a critical issue in the development of the metropolis and of the macrometropolis. However, neither of these issues prevents São Paulo from leading the Brazilian economy.

3. Between the metropolis and the macrometropolis: the city-region

As mentioned earlier, the metropolis (i.e. Metropolitan Region of São Paulo or RMSP) currently extends not only over a vast spatial contiguous territory – over the 39 constituting municipalities – but also over a wide cities network that today make up the so-called macrometropolis whose main effect is the remodelling of the sheer scale of metropolitan development. In fact, the emergence of a metropolitan region-wide structure in the State of São Paulo, extending to a 150 km radius around the capital, has been observed since the 1990s. This immense structure, which according to the Empresa Paulista de Planejamento Metropolitano (EMPLASA), São Paulo’s urban planning authority, was consolidated over the last 10 years, brings together four metropolitan areas, São Paulo, Campinas, Santos and Vale do Paraíba, and two ‘urban agglomerations’, Jundiaí and Sorocaba, radiating through a network of highways, linking the capital to the interior and to other states (see Figure 1). This new spatial configuration, formed by the systemic and functional integration of several different areas, constitutes an unprecedented large urban area in the country. As such, it poses new challenges to interpret the processes determined by this dynamic. Inevitably, this will require the expansion of the scale of analysis to the macrometropolis level, rather than focusing explicitly on the metropolitan region of São Paulo alone.

According to Cunha (2008), the formation of this macrometropolis is a result of São Paulo’s metropolis sprawling zone of influence towards its adjacent interior.9 However, this process did not occur randomly but rather followed a hierarchical approach based on the degree of modernity and dynamism proper to each activity, locating the most modern activities in the RMSP and decentralising to its adjacent areas’ routine activities, in search for low-cost location areas, but with access to good infrastructure. Research results indicate that industry is more concentrated in the macrometropolis of São Paulo than in the RMSP itself, while the productive services are relatively more concentrated in the latter. This indicates that other metropolitan areas benefit from the agglomerative advantages of the RMSP, especially the most modern productive services, which are primarily located in the São Paulo municipal area.

The scope of a wide transport network10 is one of the strategic dimensions of the macrometropolis’ configuration, supporting the emergence of numerous shopping centres, business centres, logistics platforms and residential condominiums, among others, transforming this enormous region into a vast area of commuters, used daily by millions
of people.\textsuperscript{11} The RMSP concentrates on most of these commutations, mainly occurring between the municipalities of the metropolitan area itself. It is noteworthy that a significant number of these commuter flows are from other metropolitan areas and urban agglomerations in the process of expansion, such as Jundiai and Sorocaba (EMPLASA 2012). The relatedness and the functional integration observed in this area result in the formation of a regional area of high complexity.

This spatial dynamic matches its economic importance. In 2007, the three metropolitan areas of the macrometropolis jointly accounted for 68.2\% of the state’s GDP. The RMSP contributed significantly, accounting for 56.4\% of the state’s GDP and for 47.9\% of the population (EMPLASA 2012). Moreover, these industrially developed regions also benefit from important networks of educational and research institutions located there, with 72\% of research and development centres and laboratories of the State of São Paulo located in Campinas, São Paulo and São Jose dos Campos (the main city of the Metropolitan Region of Vale do Paraíba). This accounts for the great concentration of technological occupations in these regions, especially in São Jose dos Campos, followed by Osasco, São Paulo and Campinas. For this reason, these regions also concentrate on the most intensive
technology industries and the largest number of innovative companies (Suzigan et al. 2006).

It can be concluded that the formation of the macrometropolis of São Paulo is the result of the advancement of production units and enterprises towards the interior regions of the state, within a context of deep transformations in the accumulation regime. As noted by Magalhães (2008, p. 16), ‘another important element in the formation of the city-region is the contemporary production of the space of the industry, marked by flexibility of production processes and the strong need for an agile and easy access to the connecting infrastructure of the industrial space of globalisation’. However, this occurred in a selective manner, since the business functions that require higher qualifications are still concentrated around a few centres and a few geographical axes, polarised by the cities that already had a regional economic role. As such, the macrometropolitan region is polarised by a network of large and medium cities that, owing to their size, tend to concentrate the main economic activities within their respective regions, resulting in higher productive complexity. This, in turn, creates a network of surrounding smaller municipalities, dependent on the centres for jobs, health services and education, among others. That is, although the macrometropolis of São Paulo occupies a privileged economic position on the national scene, it embraces municipalities with varying degrees of urban living quality and development.

4. Challenges of the macrometropolis: discontinuity, imbalance and asymmetries

As mentioned earlier, the São Paulo macrometropolis consists of structures that elevate its status as the nation’s key economic hub: productive units, mass consumption, port and airports, technological centres and so on. However, in its hinterland, the spatial occupation exemplifies large asymmetries: sectors in some cities that polarise and concentrate on economic activities, work and affluence in contrast to other regions that exhibit peripheral conditions and dependencies, with large concentrations of low-income population, dormitory cities, distant from employment and service centres. Although it extends over a vast territory, the macro-region continues to exhibit a radial-centric model, featuring weak ties among its various components. These manifestations of imbalance and asymmetry result in excessive pendulum movements on the centre–periphery axis. This, in turn, overloads the public transport system and consequently inhibits intra-urban/metropolitan mobility, reducing the population’s access to quality urban spaces and infrastructure.

Hence, one of the challenges is to invert this situation of discontinuities, imbalance and asymmetries. Among other things, this depends on the improvement in the quality of peripheral spaces and on the creation of multiple centralities in the macrometropolis, transforming it into a polycentric city model. This structure would improve the distribution and decentralisation of jobs, commerce and public and private services, reducing the level of dependency in relation to the currently existing nuclei, thus creating opportunities and development in areas that are presently defined as peripheries. These new centralities should be serviced by privileged modes of accessibility and should be conceived as highly dense economic areas, heterogeneous in land use and functional complexity, capable of offering diversified concentrations of employment, commerce and public and private services.

Similarly, an integrated mobility policy framework is required to overcome the current radial-centric model, creating a network-based macrometropolitan structure, improving accessibility, especially of peripheral spaces. To achieve this, it will be necessary to improve the road system and the public transport network interconnecting the region’s various municipalities and reducing private vehicle use.

Notwithstanding, although the macrometropolis of São Paulo manifests itself through the interdependencies of production, consumption and labour, that is, through people’s daily activities, this spatial organisation is not accompanied by an equally integrated public management and
administration model. In fact, public management continues to be fairly departmental, circumscribing its action to a strictly municipal territory, often governed by politically divergent and competing agendas (whether in terms of political partisanship or in terms of the adoption of competitive mechanisms to attract public and private investments). Although the region is officially subdivided into metropolitan regions and urban agglomerations, it does not have an administrative body with powers and managerial capacity to deal with the territory in its totality. The RMSP was officially created in 1973, but this did not result in the implementation of effective planning measures, which were often restricted to specific issues such as transportation. Even then, the planning effort did not result in concrete region-wide policies. Similarly, the remaining and recently created metropolitan regions lack spheres of governmental coordination.

5. The strategic agenda: globalisation and governance

Returning to the article by Allen Scott et al. ([1999] 2001), the authors note that the city-region (polycentric, comprehensive and socially and spatially segmented) resembles a chessboard, in which the strategic position of the pieces (investments) could be decisive to extend or reduce competitive power in an increasingly globalised world. They also point out that this new territorial and productive configuration relies often on inadequate institutional structures and planning for the maintenance of economic and social health. Accordingly, we believe we can take a step ahead by framing the challenges of the macrometropolis of São Paulo in terms of globalisation and governance.

5.1. Globalisation

Saskia Sassen affirms that São Paulo is the most powerful city in Latin America, ahead of Mexico City, Santiago de Chile and Buenos Aires, leading in power to attract resources and in the sophistication of the knowledge economy. The author notes that ‘[The city] is appropriate for associated complex sectors, such as finance, software development, legal knowledge, accounting, consulting, and advertising. It has a good stand in economic power, but not so much as a business center’ (Sassen 2008, p. 21). Although the author avoids applying the adjective ‘global’, it is without doubt that in São Paulo the effects and the dynamics of globalisation acquire a strong territorial expression, now understood in its metropolitan and macropolitan dimensions.

We can see this from the debate on the ‘deindustrialisation’ process of some traditionally industrial sub-metropolitan areas, such as the São Paulo’s ABC region. During the 1980s and 1990s, there were great and profound changes in the productive profile of this region that, in general, were linked to loss of competitiveness owing to globalisation’s economic effects. However, when the analysis is extended to the micrometropolitan scale, one can observe the emergence of new productive spaces based on the development of industrial technology and innovation complexes, which is the case in Campinas and São Jose dos Campos. Thus, globalisation opportunities (at least for large companies) appear more clearly outlined in the State of São Paulo.13

What about the other dimensions (social and environmental)? In fact, this is the great challenge for São Paulo’s metropolis and micrometropolis. On the one hand, the new integrated regional territories ‘decompress’ metropolitan problems via the opening of new ‘frontiers’ of occupation, whether in housing or in terms of economic activities. On the other hand, the tendency exists to reproduce and disseminate urbanisation patterns that have and still continue to characterise the city of São Paulo: dispersion, fragmentation, segregation, speculation, illegal occupation and risky areas, with the consequent deficits – housing, mobility transport (public), education and health, among others, depending on income levels and on the location of the different social groups in the micrometropolis. Hence, and this must be highlighted, globalisation does not seem to favour the resolution of old and persistent problems of urbanisation in Brazil.
5.2. Governance

The institutional challenges embedded in the developmental dynamics of the metropolis and macrometropolis lead us to another point to be highlighted: governance. As is well known, the concept of governance is polyvalent, and its use to designate governmental practices to alter the traditional nature of state policies has gained strength and legitimacy since the 1990s. In general terms, while ‘governability’ refers more to the dimension of the exercise of state power, ‘governance’ refers to coordination and cooperation standards between social and political actors participating in public policy agenda-setting (Gonçalves 2005). Therefore, the concept of governance comes into play to designate a strategic vision of development that involves articulation, recognition and participation of social actors in government decisions. It also refers to the conditions and processes leading to this practice.

We can test the concept of governance in the case of the ABC region in the metropolitan area of São Paulo based on the liaison movement among municipalities that belong to the region: Santo André, São Bernardo, São Caetano, Diadema, Mauá, Ribeirão Pires and Rio Grande da Serra, which occurred in the second half of the 1990s (Klink & Cidade-Região 2001). At the time, the so-called regional movement coalesced around the Intermunicipal Chamber and the Greater ABC Intermunicipal Consortium that brought together local governments, entrepreneurs and representatives of civil society for the development of the region. Simultaneously, the process raised questions regarding the viability of a metropolitan government sphere linked to the state apparatus and the traditional forms of planning – institutionally designed in the 1970s, but with no success. Although the movement was unable to continue in this demarche, it bequeathed a regional development agency, an innovative experience and, as such, a new governance perspective to be renewed in the future (Cocco & Silva 2001).

Yet again, the change in the scale of the metropolis’ development dynamic towards that of a macrometropolis raises new challenges. Insofar as the set of cities (some with metropolitan status, as seen earlier) work in an increasingly intertwined mode (see, e.g. the expansion of shuttle services between São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, via the Viracopos airport in Campinas), the definition of public investment criteria and ways of planning and managing land require at least an update of strategies. What would be the sphere to negotiate or agree on the cities’ demands? How to establish investment priorities? What are the institutional conditions that make this new configuration more productive? Certainly, the propositions cannot be framed within traditional models of metropolitan agencies, especially when we consider they never left project proposal status.

6. Conclusion

Until very recently, research related to the growth of large cities in south-eastern Brazil concentrated on development dynamics of the São Paulo metropolis. With its 19 million inhabitants, it was (and indeed still is) the main centre of industrial and financial development of the country, in addition to being the main hub for the production of scientific and technological innovations. However, what we attempted to show in this article is that the scale of reference has changed and that the metropolitan question can no longer be interpreted without taking into account the new determinants of the São Paulo macrometropolis, taking into consideration the interaction with other metropolitan urban centres characterised by social, economic and environmental singularities, and which cannot be considered as mere outskirts.

The macrometropolis of São Paulo provides sufficient evaluative elements to consider it in terms of ‘city-region’: productivity growth based on the dissemination of productive arrangements of a new kind (flexible, logistic and high-tech); territorial expansion in regional scale; scope of urban and rural areas and strategic importance of transportation and communication networks. It is worth mentioning the fact that this dynamic
development corresponds with the ongoing global integration processes, which provides this area a special interest: on the one hand, as a territory of productive activities and technological innovation (either in major urban centres or adjacent to major traffic routes) and on the other hand, as the territory of social life and work linked to these economic activities.

In view of this, the question remains of understanding how development processes at the various scales and productive dimensions can be territorially articulated to avoid favouring perverse effects such as the dominance of corporations or the state’s technocratic rationality over the opportunities for all those who inhabit the city-region (after all, the socio-spatial contradictions that have accompanied the development of the city of São Paulo have not disappeared overnight with the emergence of the macrometropolis; to the contrary, these have become more imperative). In this sense, Baudouin and Collin (2012) argue in favour of mechanisms of governance that are capable of mobilising the creative and initiative potential of citizens and which collectively achieve solutions that are up to these challenges. How to do this?

Although the answer to this question is obviously beyond the scope of this article, our analysis provides elements for a broader agenda. First, more analytical work and debates on the concept of the macrometropolis should be undertaken to provide it with theoretical and empirical consistency (as a precondition for knowledge). Second, a more intense dialogue should be set up between the institutions of the state, academia, the third sector and social movements and aimed at building a working agenda of common interests in these complex territories (as a precondition for strategies of public governance). Third, and finally, we should not lose track of the political dimension of these discussions, contrary to the technocratic perspective that usually permeates the state in Brazilian approaches to urban and regional planning. Although the above set of issues does not represent a definitive ‘solution’, it could provide a starting point for an agenda of broader transformations in the São Paulo macrometropolis.

Notes
1. In Brazil, the geographer Milton Santos called these environments ‘the technical and scientific informational domain’ (Santos 1997). On the implications of the concept of the technical and scientific informational domain in Brazilian metropolisation process, see Silva (2009).
2. The importance of the logistic dimension in the new industrial world is often underestimated. At best, it is seen as a function of the supply chain and, at worst, as an appendix of transportation activities. In fact, logistics is now the very matrix of industrial organisation, whose circulation and distribution networks enable the integration of entirely different productive territories into the planetary or global scale (Silva 2003).
3. The Metropolitan Region of Vale do Paraíba was created by state law in January of 2012.
4. ‘Bandeirante’ means a socio-historical figure of São Paulo characterised by boldness and the ability to organise the penetration of unexplored frontiers of Brazil during the colonial period, looking mainly for mineral wealth and native slaves. In later times (contemporary), that figure was used as a symbol or representation of part of Brazilian identity.
5. Even considering subway and train lines dedicated to passenger transportation in the metropolitan area, the network of 313 km represents only half of London’s, Berlin’s or New York’s system.
6. Biderman (2008) points out that the introduction of the Single Ticket, in 2004, which allows users to pay a flat rate regardless of distance or number of transshipments, reinvigorated the use of public transport.
7. The origin–destination survey of the São Paulo subway, conducted in 2007, also indicated that the walking trips accounted for 33.13% of total mobility. This decreased mobility is due to the combination of reduced real income with the rise in the transport fare rate, which means that most of the population living in slums, housing projects and poor neighbourhoods have restricted their daily lives to their own district or neighbourhood (Diretoria de Planejamento e Expansão dos Transportes Metropolitanos/SP 2008).
8. The ABC region of São Paulo, located in the metropolitan area of São Paulo, is considered the cradle of industrialisation, especially by the predominant presence of the auto industry since the 1950s. It is the main reference in Brazil of a Fordist-type industrialisation model, which entered into crisis in the 1980s and 1990s (Klink & Cidade-Região 2001).
9. Zanchetta (2008) describes this process as sprawling urbanisation linked to the development of a circulation system that brings together different metropolitan areas, without geographical contiguity; ‘the growth of the macrometropolis refers to highways, the wide roads of the United States [that line up] the condominium, the university just ahead, a few miles down the mall, next to the slum, and linking them, only the highway’ (Zanchetta 2008, p. 63). The author refers to the recent installation of companies such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi, AGA and Akzo Nobel along roads in the Campinas–Itu–Jundiaí triangle, which shows the type of logistics strategies in play in this new context of the macrometropolis.

10. The macrometropolis support network began to be built in the late nineteenth century through the Santos–Jundiaí and Sorocaba railroads, linking the state capital to the port of Santos and the coffee-producing areas in the state. The old network was superposed, in the 1950s, by an important road network centred on the city of São Paulo. These train and bus networks not only allowed the expansion of the city of São Paulo but also transformed the city into a real crossroads network that connected the various producing regions, consumers and suppliers of inputs and raw materials, being fundamental to its conversion to the greatest service and industrial centre of Brazil. Currently, the fact that this macrometropolitan region is the site of three major airports in the country – Guarulhos, Congonhas and Viracopos – and the main port – Santos – reinforces its centrality not only in relation to the national territory, but also in its communications with the international network of cargo and passengers.

11. The transportation of cargo produced in the macrometropolis equals approximately 65% of the State’s total. The movement of passengers has also a significant density corresponding to 95% with respect to the sources and about 97% in relation to the destinations (Governo do Estado de São Paulo 2010).

12. The concept ‘regime of accumulation’ was developed by the French Regulation School to characterise ‘the set of regularities that secure a general and relatively coherent progression of the accumulation of capital’ (Boyer 1990, p. 71). It refers to an intermediate category between the traditional concept of mode of production and the economic and social determinations in the short term.

13. Certainly, the concentration and synergies of different components of the macrometropolis favoured the accumulation of large capital, facilitated by mergers, acquisitions and the concentration of infrastructure and highly skilled workforce in this region. It was on these terms that São Paulo took on globalised functions of productive command and control.

14. In Brazil, the metropolitan areas were created in 1973 with the establishment of eight metropolitan areas, including São Paulo (Rio de Janeiro would be integrated in the following year after it resolved issues resulting from its status as the country’s former capital). Despite this, none of them managed to establish themselves as major agents of metropolitan development. As for the metropolitan regions of Campinas and Santos, they were created via state complementary laws in 1996 and 2000, respectively. As mentioned on Note 3, the Metropolitan Region of Vale do Paraíba was also created by state complementary law in January 2012.

15. The (strong) relationship between the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo is founded largely on the ‘shuttle service’ between Santos Dumont airport (Rio de Janeiro) and Congonhas (São Paulo). With a much smaller role, Galeão (Rio de Janeiro) and Guarulhos (São Paulo), both international airports, are also used for this function. However, recently, the Viracopos airport (Campinas) was also integrated via a shuttle service with Rio de Janeiro, re-enforcing the strong integration between the two macrometropolitan cities of São Paulo and Campinas, which have become alternative airports.

16. The difficulty for the metropolitan agencies to surpass the ‘project phase’ is explained, in part, by the very configuration of federalism in Brazil, which only recognises government, states and municipalities as instances of the Union. This configuration does not institutionally favour coordinated actions in the metropolitan areas (Garson 2009).

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