University of Palermo | Department of Architecture
Master Programme in Spatial Planning | Year II
Academic Year 2026-2027 | First semester

Urban and Regional Policies

Module of Planning 2 Studio + Urban And Regional Policies Integrated Course

Prof. Ignazio Vinci

Actors and policy-makers in urban policy (Part II)

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Lectures

- Policy challenges in contemporary urban areas
- Actors and policy-makers in urban policy
- Targets of urban policy
- Urban policy as a process
- European Union urban and regional policy
- Case studies

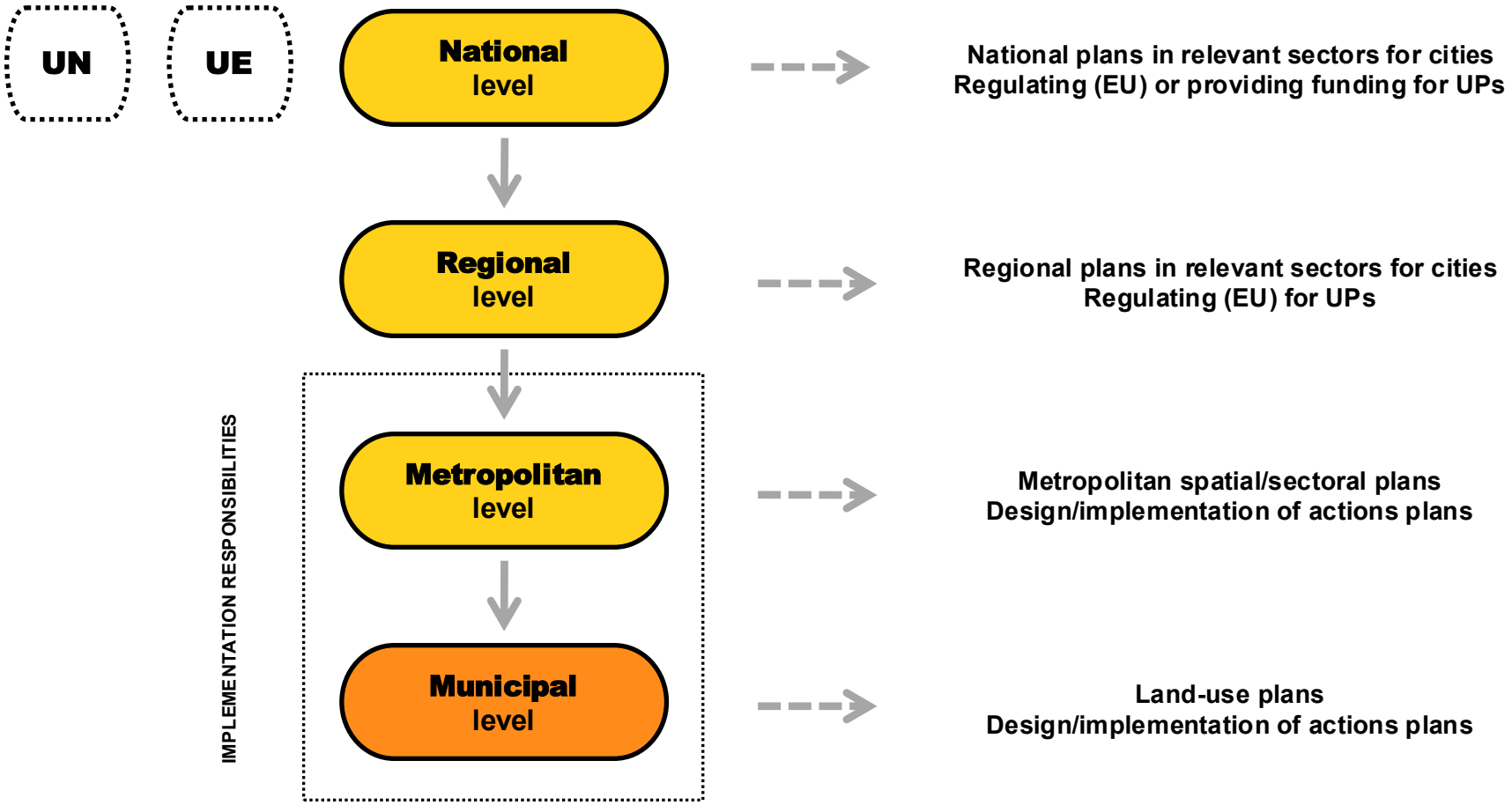
Readings

- Articles and papers

Project Work

- Policy analysis exercise

INSTITUTIONAL HIERARCHY AND URBAN POLICIES (UPs)



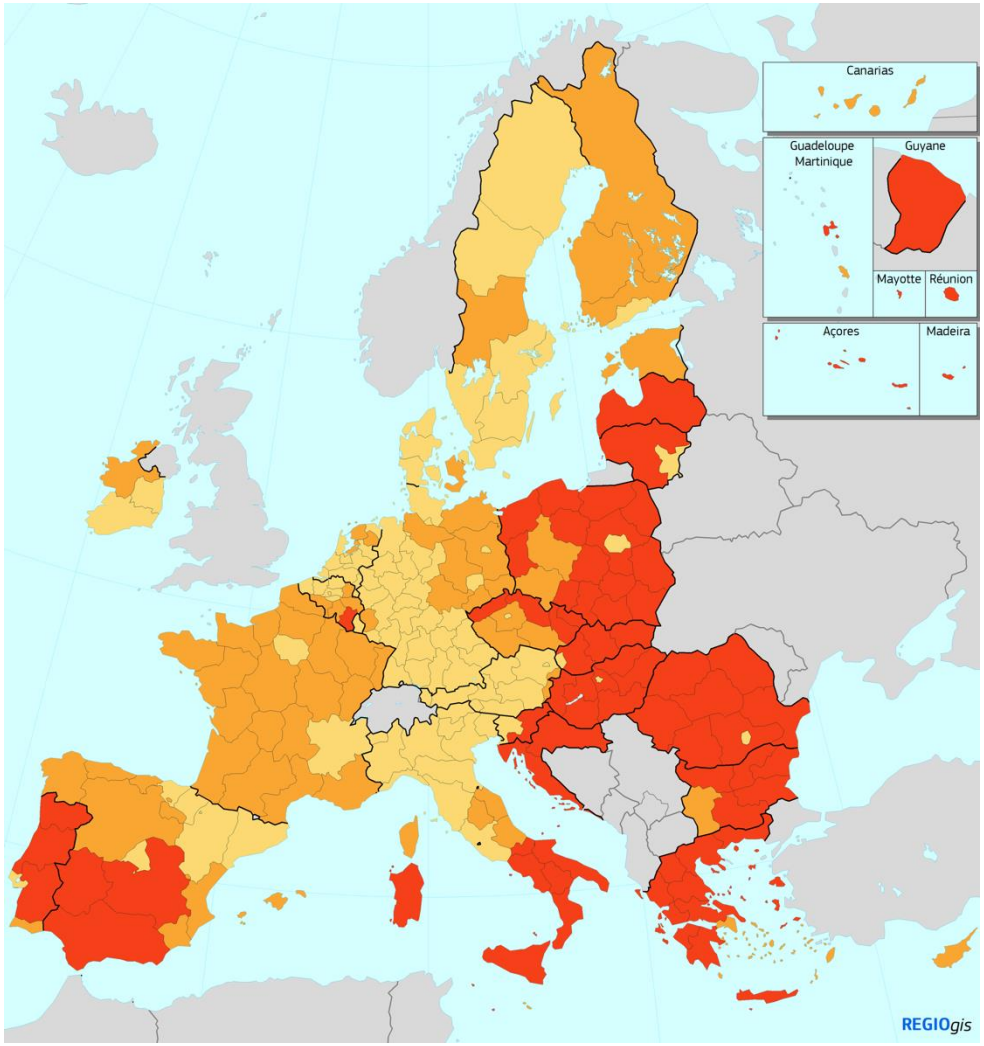
REGIONS (IN EUROPE)

The **role of regions** in the promotion/regulation of urban policies depends on the level of autonomy they have been granted within their own institutional system.

- In countries with a federal organisation (e.g. Germany), regions can have their own **strategies** and **budget** to **support sustainable urban development**.
- In highly decentralised countries (e.g. Italy, Spain), they may have an important role in **regulating** and **delivering policies** with key implications in **urban development**, although overlapping with national policies and programmes.
- In other countries with lower regional autonomy, however, regions are the main **implementing authorities** for the **Cohesion policy** and a wide range of EU strategies, including those for **regional cooperation** and **sustainable urban development**.

REGIONS (IN EUROPE)

Geography of regional unbalances



Investment for jobs and growth goal (ERDF and ESF+) eligibility, 2021-2027

Categories of regions

- Less developed regions (GDP/head (PPS) less than 75% of the EU-27 average)
- Transition regions (GDP/head (PPS) between 75% and 100% of the EU-27 average)
- More developed regions (GDP/head (PPS) above 100% of the EU-27 average)

- All regions are responsible for an **Operational Programme** for each of the European **Structural Funds**.
- The **intensity of investment** in each region depends on its **level of development** according to GDP.

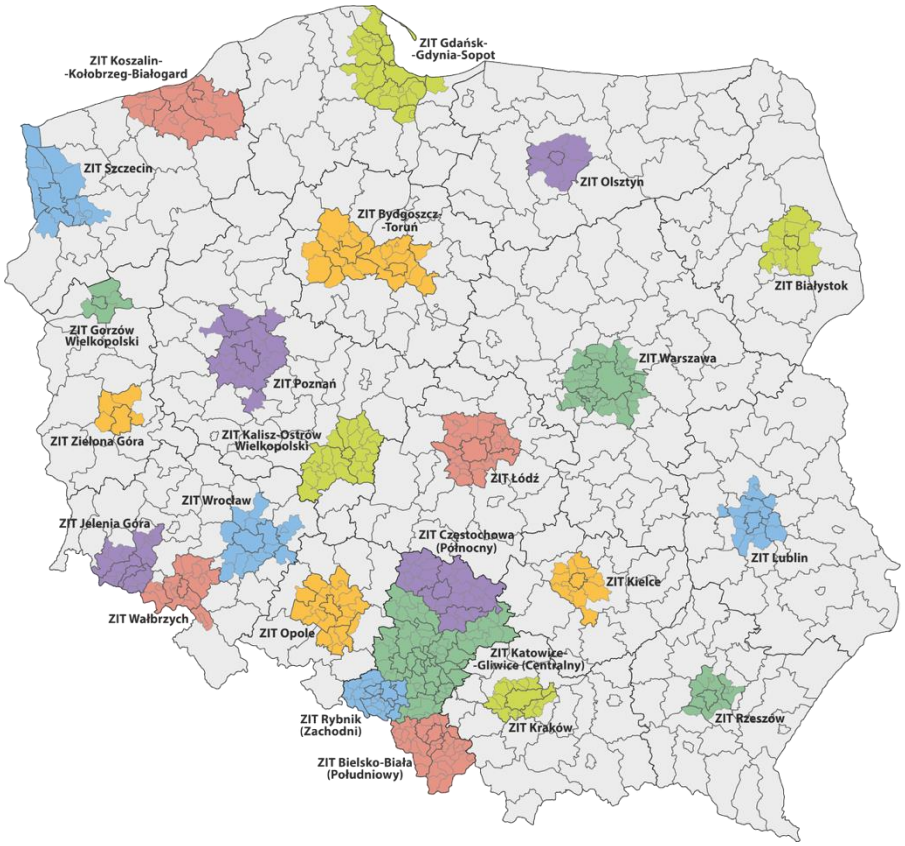
REGIONS AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND



Polish regions (Voivodeships) manage a substantial share of **European Regional Development Fund** (ERDF) allocations directly via the **Regional Operational Programmes** (ROPs), tailoring spatial, environmental, and economic investments to local needs.

The ERDF addresses also historical disparities in **less-developed eastern regions** (such as Podlaskie, Lubelskie, Podkarpackie) by focusing on entrepreneurship, **green energy transitions**, and **sustainable urban mobility**.

REGIONS AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND



In the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 programming periods, a percentage of ERDF funds is directed to **integrated strategies directly designed by cities**. This is largely executed through **Integrated Territorial Investments** (ITIs) covering **functional urban areas** (FUAs), **metropolitan centers**, and sub-regional agglomerations.

Spatial and physical infrastructure upgrades funded via the ERDF are frequently paired with the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) to simultaneously tackle **social exclusion**, and **community revitalization** in **degraded urban neighborhoods**.

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT

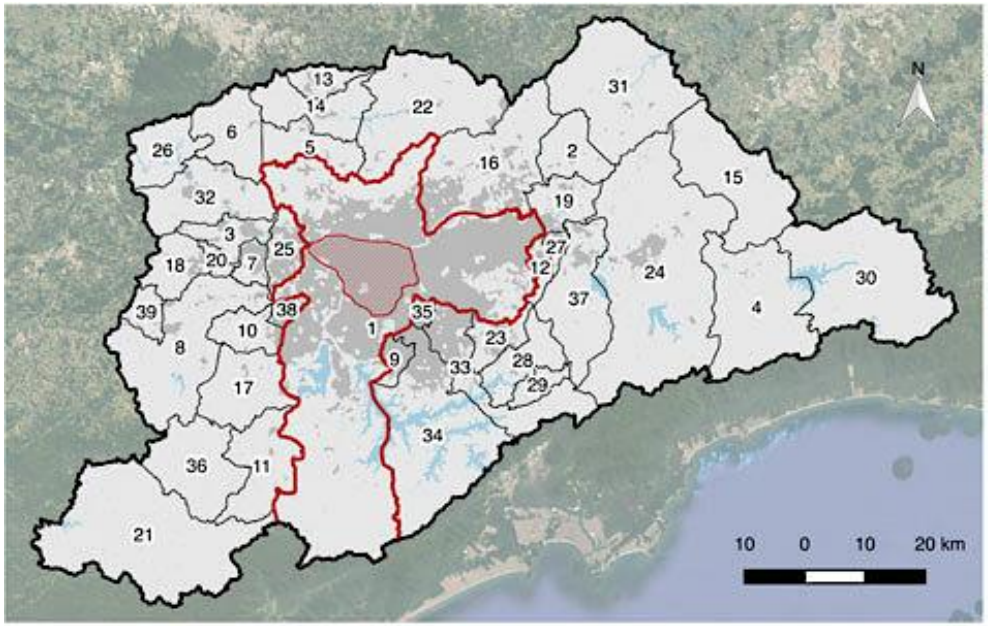
Metropolitan government started to become popular in North America and Europe after **large cities' conurbations across municipal boundaries** created **new demand for coordination** on a wide range of services.

- In **North America**, the first metropolitan authorities were established in Toronto (1953), Nashville (1963), Minneapolis-Saint Paul (1967), Portland (1979).
- In **Europe**, early forms of metropolitan government were created in London (1965), Lyon (1969), Barcelona (1975).

More recently, some countries have established **metropolitan governments** as the result of **nation-wide institutional reform** (e.g. France, Italy, Portugal), while in other cases metropolitan government is a combination of different models even in the same country (e.g. Germany, Spain).

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT

São Paulo Metropolitan Region (SPMR)



MRSP Municipalities

1 - São Paulo
2 - Arujá
3 - Barueri
4 - Biritiba Mirim
5 - Caieiras
6 - Cajamar
7 - Carapicuíba
8 - Cotia
9 - Diadema
10 - Embu das Artes
11 - Embu-Guaçu
12 - Ferraz de Vasconcelos
13 - Francisco Morato
14 - Franco da Rocha
15 - Guararema
16 - Guarulhos
17 - Itapecerica da Serra
18 - Itapevi
19 - Itaquaquecetuba
20 - Jandira
21 - Juquitiba
22 - Mairiporã
23 - Mauá
24 - Mogi das Cruzes
25 - Osasco
26 - Pirapora do Bom Jesus
27 - Poá
28 - Ribeirão Pires
29 - Rio Grande da Serra
30 - Salesópolis
31 - Santa Isabel
32 - Santana de Parnaíba
33 - Santo André
34 - São Bernardo do Campo
35 - São Caetano do Sul
36 - São Lourenço da Serra
37 - Suzano
38 - Taboão da Serra
39 - Vargem Grande Paulista

Population

São Paulo > 12,310,000

Metropolitan Region of São Paulo > 21,860,000

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT IN EUROPE



State	Metropolitan body	Competences	Instruments
CZ	ITI Office*	ITI implementation as Intermediary body	ITI Strategy
DE	Metropolregionen	No predefined competences, each metropolitan region defines its competences and instruments	From more comprehensive strategies and frameworks to flagship projects
FI	MAL Agreement*	Spatial planning, housing and transport	MAL agreement
FR	Métropole	Spatial planning, economic development, innovation, housing, energy, tourism, culture, etc.	Schéma de cohérence territoriale – SCOT) Plan local d'urbanisme – PLU Other environmental plans
IT	Città Metropolitana	Strategic, spatial and mobility planning, organisation of coordinated systems for the management of public services, mobility and transport, promotion and coordination of digitalisation and economic and social development, etc.	Metropolitan Strategic Plan Metropolitan General Territorial Plan Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan
NL	Metropoolregio	Transport, economic development, energy strategy, accessibility, and rural environment transition	Samenwerkingsakkoord (Cooperation Agreement)
PL	ITI Unit*	ITI implementation as Intermediary body	ITI Strategy
PT	Área Metropolitana	Public transport, spatial planning and strategic planning, but also waste, health, education, natural conservation, security and civil protection, tourism and cultural heritage, etc.	Mobility and strategic planning
RO	Zona Metropolitane	Management of EU resources under the Regional Operational Programs	Peri-urban/Metropolitan Territorial Development Strategy (SDTZP/M) Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan
UK	Combined Authorities	Varied, pooled by the districts or decentralised by the government; often involve urban transport, strategic planning, economic development, urban planning, housing and police.	Varied, depending on the respective competences

Source: Casavola et al., 2025

CITIES

Municipalities are – historically and all over the world – the **public authorities closer to citizens** and, for that reason, **shaped to deliver a wide range of public policies and social services**.

The key policy sectors in which city governments usually retain exclusive or significant responsibilities are the following.

- **Land-use planning**: Zoning, urban development, building regulations, and local spatial planning.
- **Local welfare**: Social assistance, community support, and local social services.
- **Public transport** (municipal): Management, organization, or funding of municipal transport services.
- **Primary and secondary schools**: Provision, maintenance, or administration of local schools.

CITIES

At the same time cities are the main **implementing authorities** for other key urban policies driven by national or regional government.

These may include sectors such as:

- **Public or social housing**: often the social housing stock are in the hands of national or regional agencies, while cities are responsible for public space, green areas, public services
- **Public transport** (metropolitan) and **rail network**: in these cases, infrastructure and services are not managed by cities, but they're responsible for accessibility and interface with the built environment.
- **Environmental protection**: apart from public gardens, wider green infrastructure is under the responsibility of regional or national authorities.

Designing urban policies in all these fields requires agreements that link cities to other government tiers.

PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS



Institutions

Government Agencies

Individuals

Businesses

PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS



Third Sector
Associations

Social Enterprises
Cooperatives

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

A **public–private partnership** (PPP or P3) is a long-term arrangement between a **local government** and a **private operator** to finance public projects or infrastructures.

On the base of **long-term concessions**, private operators draw revenues from taxpayers and/or infrastructure users over the course of the PPP contract.

Public-private partnerships are now used in multiple countries and at different scales, from **single-purpose infrastructure** to wider **integrated and multi-functional projects**.

Infrastructure and services for which PPP solutions are used include, among others:

- water supply and sewerage systems;
- transport infrastructure (public transport, parking);
- large sport facilities (stadiums, arenas).

SAMPLES OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

City of Palermo



Multi-storey car park ‘Tribunale’

SAMPLES OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

City of Palermo



New Palermo FC Stadium

AN EXAMPLE: CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL HOUSING

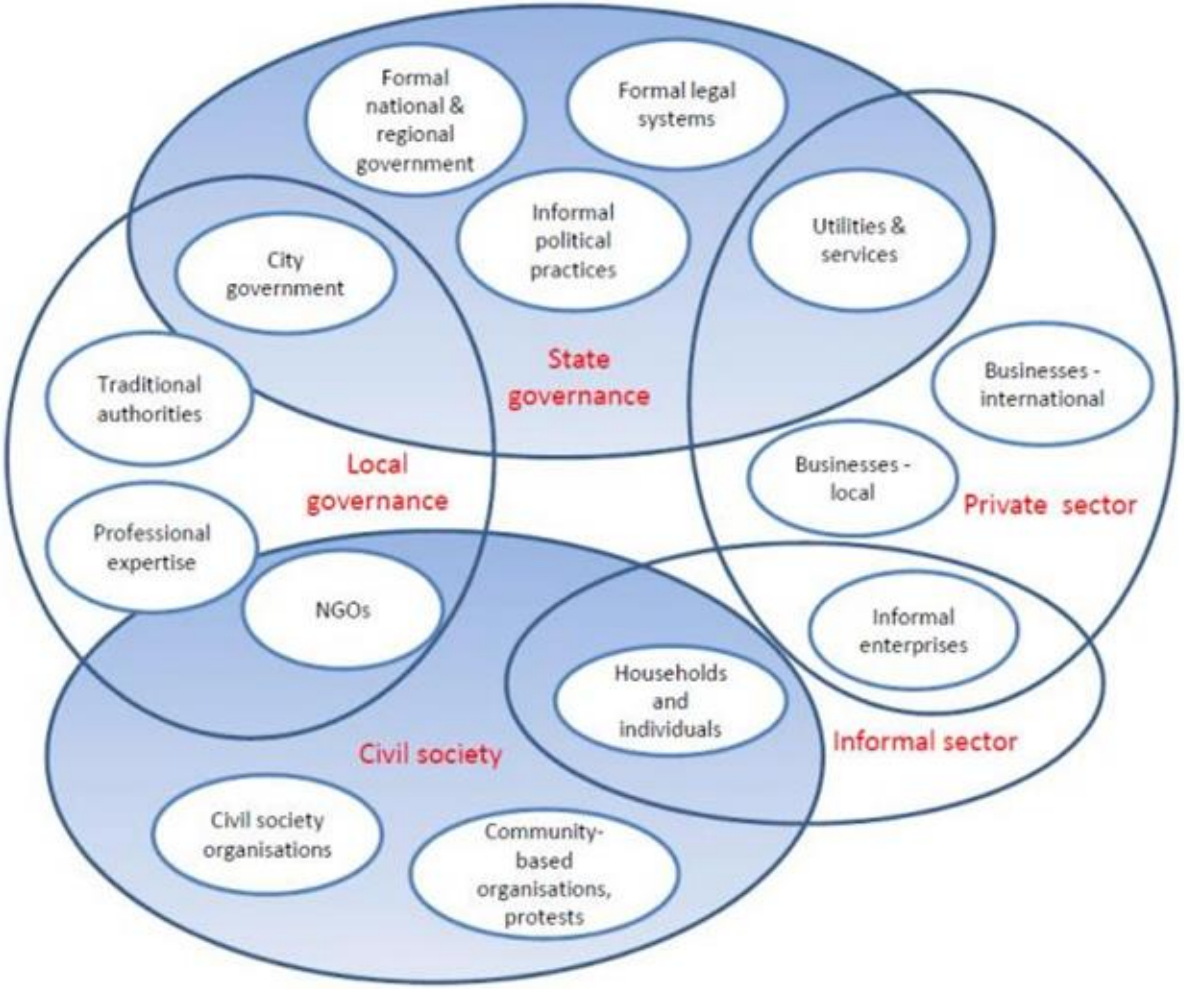
City of Milan



Via Cenni Social Housing project

URBAN GOVERNANCE

City as an ecosystem



Source: Brown, 2015

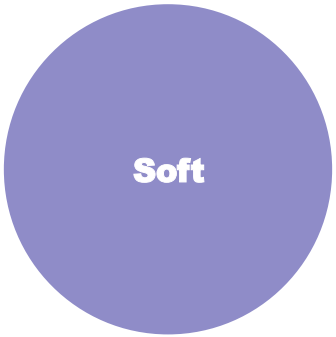
WHAT IS THE THIRD SECTOR

The 'third sector' is an umbrella concept that covers a **range of different organisations with different structures and purposes**, belonging neither to the **public sector** (i.e., the state or local government) nor to the **private sector** (profit-making private enterprise).

This term describes organisations which share some common elements:

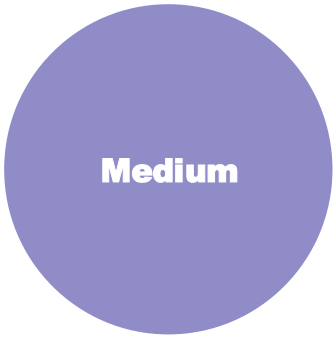
- **Non-governmental**: although they often work with or alongside government agencies, and may receive government funding or commissions, third sector organisations are independent from the government.
- **Non-profit**: third sector organisations raise funds and generate financial surpluses to invest in social, environmental, or cultural objectives.
- **Values-driven**: organisations that pursue specific goals which are often aligned with particular social and political perspectives.

HOW THE PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS ARE INVOLVED



Consultation

Informed on ongoing strategies



Co-design

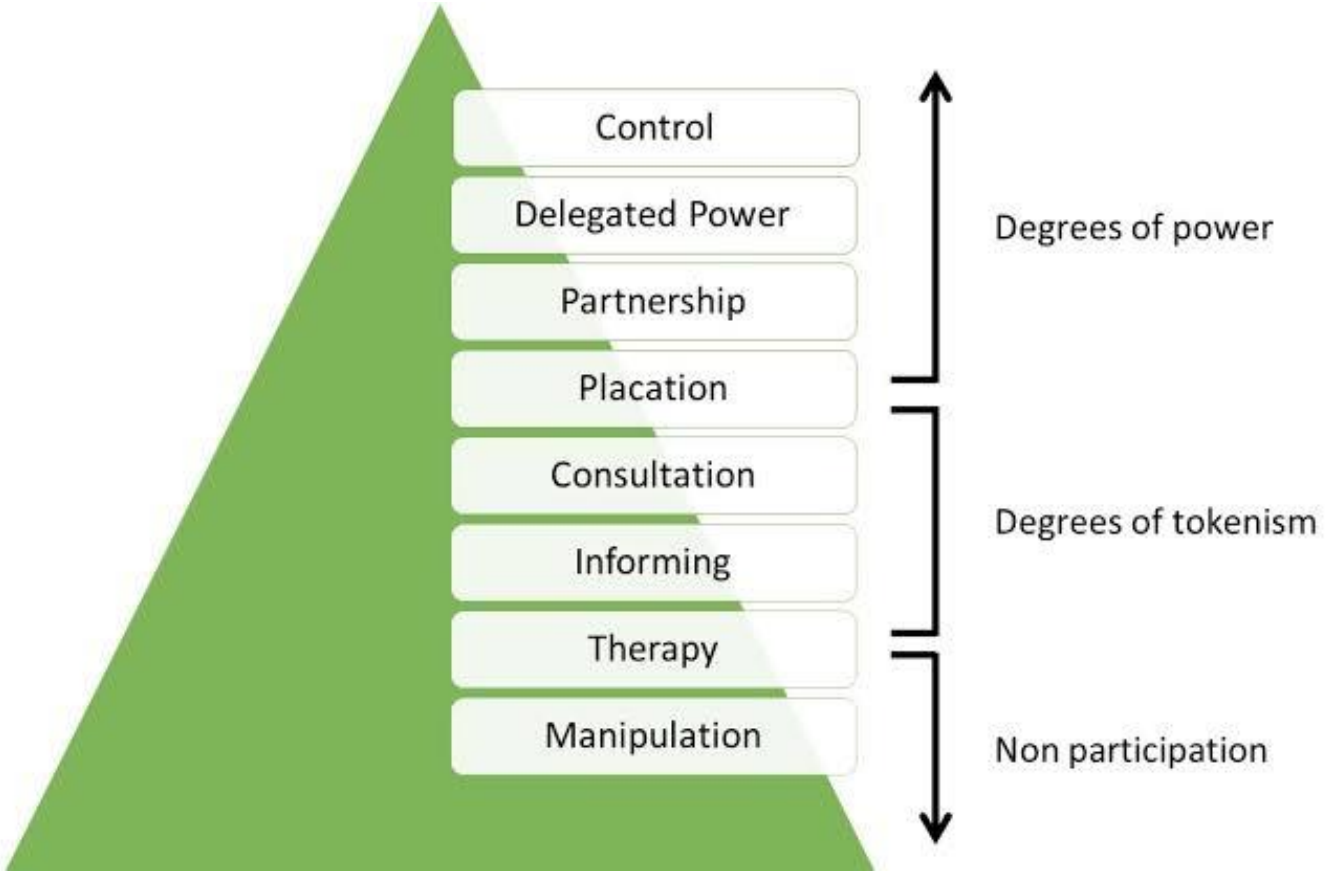
Involved in the design of action plans



Implementation / Funding

Involvement in project implementation and/or management

INVOLVING LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS



Source: Arnstein, 1969

CONTACTS AND MATERIALS

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Teaching materials for the course will be published on a web page at the following link: **www.ignaziovinci.net**