

**The clue for success in urban governance: the integration of
governance, institutions and civil society**

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This article is intended to show how urban governance – intended as the whole set of institutions and actions that settle conditions for urban territorial policy - has supported the implementation of more successful regeneration strategies and policies that promote a sustainable economic evolution, aimed at qualification, innovation and reduction of social disparities. This requires joint physical, social, economic and urban interventions. The study reported in this article is intended to show how metropolitan governance in the city of Porto (Portugal), has lead to successful regeneration policies and promoted social cohesion and socio-economic development, based on the integration of a set of competitive advantages underlying Porto's governance structures and practices. The city council has assumed itself as a motivating and integrative entity, and has successfully joint together economic entities, social organs, sports clubs, higher education institutions, cultural agents, and general population (irrespective of their economic and social status), giving outstanding importance to their critiques and suggestions, and heading all of them in the same direction. This flexibility, popularity and identification of the stakeholders and general population with their own leaders have given governance bodies a strong cohesion and legitimacy. This has assured a balanced management of interests, as well as successful opportunities to capture funding for urban regeneration, always keeping in mind the overall mission to promote welfare and population's quality of life.

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