

How does the Cultural Political Economy approach help to explain the political and hegemonic role of firms?

The case of Smart City paradigm in the framing of the Italian urban agenda

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Paper outline

1. Starting points and research questions:

Political role of firms in the context of neo-liberalisation and depoliticisation processes of public action

2. Theoretical aim:

Exploring the analytical usefulness of CPE approach in connecting the theoretical to the empirical level

3. Case study:

The Smart City paradigm in the framing of the Italian (and EU) urban policy and the production of hegemony

4. Answers to the research questions

Evidence about an “ideational turn” in the hegemony of firms provided through CPE analytical tools

1. Starting points and research questions

Political role of firms:

- from “old” forms of state/firm relationships within the “KWNS”, to...
- ...regulatory role of private actors within neo-liberal governance at various scales
- ...firms as *indirect* providers of cognitive and normative models for public action

Depoliticisation processes:

- remove issues from political contention
- transfer collective issues to the private sector
- point out market models for public action
- open up new spaces for private actors to play political roles

- **Research question: is a new political role emerging for firms?**
 - Which forms of action?
 - Which political impacts ?

2. Analytical usefulness of CPE

Aims at unveiling material and semiotic processes and their mutual relations through:

Imaginaires

Semiotic systems that:

- make possible complexity reduction
- provide narrational bases for legitimising policy frames
- are produced through an evolutionary process

Knowledge brands (KBs)

Discursive apparatuses that:

- provide pragmatic toolkits and flexible templates
- are not neutral with regard to interests
- appeal to both rational and non-rational motives

How to use CPE concepts to answer the questions posed by this research:

- Specific functions and mutual relationships of imaginaries and KBs
- How and why are an imaginary and its KBs successful

3. Analysis: the Italian and EU urban policy

- **A multi-scalar agenda**, coherent with Europe 2020 and provided with funds

The Smart City urban imaginary:

- holistic approach, covering several dimensions
- coherent with wider or pre-existing imaginaries
- resonating with common sense and the myth of rationality

Three types of Smart City knowledge brands (see Annex):

- saleable commodities
- with semiotic properties:
 - performative effects
 - persuasive effects, even through shaming



Consequences of discourses connecting material and semiotic components:

- legitimating allocations, thus providing funds for short-term profits
- institutionalising favourable regulations at different governmental levels
- framing a whole policy agenda

4. Answers to the research questions

1. Is a new political role of firms emerging?

- Firms steer state actions, shaping and legitimating business-friendly urban policy agendas
- They do so *more directly and intentionally*, by producing an urban imaginary and related knowledge brands














2. Political impacts:













- Further depoliticisation of processes regarding urban policy
- Adoption of a specific paradigm within a roll out neoliberal policy frame
- Isomorphic adaptation of state actors and actions to market patterns
- Achievement of hegemony in power relations by combining material and semiotic processes

ANNEX: Smart City knowledge brands: selection of examples from the Italian case

ACTORS	KNOWLEDGE BRANDS
ICT (and consultancy) companies	
 Microsoft	CityNext – Technological solutions for smart (safer, smarter, healthier, digital, and sustainable) cities (http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/citynext/default.aspx)
	Smarter City – Technological solutions for healthcare, airports, mobility, sustainability, retail, territorial development, social services, education, railroads, urban safety (http://www-05.ibm.com/innovation/it/smartercity/)
	Smart + Connected City – solution portfolio including meeting spaces, connected personalized spaces, remote expert solutions for government services, safety and security, city traffic, city wi-fi, city parking, residential, city lighting, city operations center (http://www.cisco.com/web/strategy/smart_connected_communities.html)
	Città sostenibili (sustainable cities) - solution portfolio for energy/environment, building technology, lighting, traffic and public transportation, ports, water and sewers, public administrations, healthcare, metropolitan security, sports and fair events, financial services (http://w5.siemens.com/italy/web/citta_sostenibili/soluzioni/Pages/Default.aspx)
	Smart City - Technological solutions for energy, buildings and infrastructures, transportation (Italy) + city communication platforms, electricity grids, water networks, district heating and cooling (global) (http://new.abb.com/it/smartcity)
	Technological solutions: Hi Reply - PRISMA - Interoperable Cloud Platforms for Smart Government ; OPEN CITY PLATFORM (OCP) - Cloud Computing for Smart Government ; OPLON - Opportunities for active and healthy Longevity; ROMA - Resilience enhancement of a Metropolitan Area (http://www.reply.eu/en/content/better-cities-for-smarter-people)
	Sulla strada per la Smart City – solutions: Web, social and mobile, interpretive models (of data), public administration open services, sensors networks (http://www.dedagroup.it/static/content/Smart-Cities-177.aspx)
	Technological solutions (measurement, communication networks, management centres, analytics systems) and strategic planning consultancy (http://www.indracompany.com/it/soluciones-y-servicios/solucion/smart-cities/18045/sintesi)
	Law-compliant technological solutions for public administrations (http://www.smartpolis.it)
	Solutions for geo-spatial information – geo-portal for e-Collaboration (http://www.planetek.it/soluzioni/temi_chiave/smart_cities#)
	Technological solutions: Cloud Shelter - Cloud Computing, Digital Expo (http://www.expodatacenter.it); For example, Digital Island in Milan (outdoor hyper technological space) (http://www.telecomitalia.com/tit/it/ambiente-sociale/smart-cities/sole-digitali.html)
 COMMUNICATIONS MAKERS sicetecom.it	Technological solutions for territorial management, the environment, lighting, water, traffic (http://www.sicetecom.it/prodotti/smart-city)
	Technological solutions for urban security and organization intelligence (http://www.b-intouch.it/soluzioni/pubblica-amministrazione-smart-city/)
 A Finmeccanica Company	Technological solutions for urban security, transportation systems, intermodal logistics, smart grids (energy), e-government, cyber-security (http://www.selex-es.com/it/domains/soluzioni-smart/smart-

	cities)
	Technological solutions: NFC Heritage (http://www.smartid.it/it/smart-city)
	Technologies and services for mobility, sustainable development, involvement of citizens, services accessibility, communication, streamlining of resources (http://www.urbanocreativo.it/smart-city)
	Technological solutions for data processing, smart mobility, risk assessment (http://www.esriitalia.it/eventi/1651-con-le-soluzioni-per-la-smart-city-il-cittadino-diventa-protagonista.html)
	Minos System – Technological solutions for city lighting and communication (http://www.umpi.it/it/minos-system-smart-city)
	Technological National Cluster SmartCommunitiesTech: Technological solutions for energy/environment, mobility, security of territory, healthcare and wellbeing, education and training, cultural heritage and tourism, e-government (http://www.smartcommunitiestech.it/piattaforma/)
	TETRIS – Smart City/Mobility - hardware and software for urban mobility (http://www.grupposcai.it/soluzioni/iot-smart-city-mobility-tetris/)
	Technological solutions for parking and urban mobility (http://www.solari-smartcities.it/soluzioni.html)
	Technological solutions for data sharing and connectivity related to smart government, enterprise, hospital, education, community, tourism, Park , safe city.. (http://www.techweekurope.it/projects/public-sector/le-smart-city-secondo-huawei-79205)
	Technological solutions for lighting and energy (http://www.enel.com/it-IT/media/news/le-tecnologie-di-enel-soluzioni-chiavi-in-mano-per-la-smart-city/p/090027d982430039)
 	SmartcityItalia.net: Technological solutions for mobility, environment, lighting, waste, architecture, water, telecommunications, smart grid (http://www.industriaenergia.it/categoria/smart-city ; http://www.smartcityitalia.net)
	Lynx Digital Innovation: Technological solutions for Open data and Open source (http://www.lynxlab.com/it/opensource-smartcities.html)
	Technological solutions for city sensing (distance control) (http://www.algorab.com/ambito5/Smart-city)
	Technological solutions for energy, mobility, water, waste (http://www.gruppohera.it/gruppo/com_media/dossier-smartcities/)
	Technological solutions for energy and heating (http://www.caleffi.com/italy/it/i-nostri-prodotti-smart-city-

	energy-torino)
	Technology solutions by entraincittà: SMASPO SYSTEM Technological solutions for lighting (http://entraincitta.it/index.php/component/k2/item/230-smart-city)
	Technological solutions for mobility, building, environment, security, waste, lighting (http://www.evolvea.it/soluzioni-tecnologiche/smart-city/)
	Technological solutions for urban security (http://www.lutech.it/portfolio-item/smart-cities-soluzioni-mobile-in-the-cloud-al-servizio-dei-cittadini/)
	Technological solutions for urban mobility, environment, Asset management and inventory, Content Management (http://www.sirti.it/IT/progetti/soluzioni/pagine/smartCity.aspx)
 	Kes Security Management (security), iCity (mobility), Noticity (communication of criticality) (http://www.kesitaly.it)
	Technological solutions for urban safety, energy (http://www.trilogis.it/?page_id=187)
	Technological solutions for waste, heating, energy, lighting (http://www.cpl.it/smart-city)
	Technological solutions for lighting (http://www.smartcitygreenpower.it/web/azienda.html)
	Technological networking solutions (http://www.metroweb.it/milano/smart-city/)
Institutional promoters, think tanks and communication initiatives	
EU Commission's Smart Cities and Communities European Innovation Partnership 	Initiative supported by the European Commission bringing together cities, industry, SMEs, banks, research and other smart city actors: Smart City Stakeholders Platform - Marketplace of the EIP on Smart Cities and Communities; Action clusters (assembly of partners) - provides an opportunity for stakeholders in Europe to communicate (https://eu-smartcities.eu) (http://ec.europa.eu/eip/smartcities/index_en.htm)
europeansmart cities	Wien Technische Universität – europeansmartcities: Rankings and benchmarking of Smart cities (http://www.smart-cities.eu/)
	National Association of Italian Municipalities' (ANCI) information platform on 105 Italian local governments and 1.201 projects (http://www.italiansmartcities.it)
	Forum PA' (company of PR, institutional communication and advice to public administrations, state agency for innovation in public administration): SmartInnovation – newsletter on Open Government, Social Innovation, Smart

 <p>Supplemento a FORUMPA.IT</p>	City (http://smartinnovation.forumpa.it)
	FORUM PA – Icity Lab: ICity Rate 2014 (ranking of Italian cities' smartness and competitiveness through 89 indicators, http://www.icitylab.it/il-rapporto-icityrate/edizione-2014/)
	Smart Cities Observatory of the National Associations of Italian Municipalities in Partnership with FORUM PA: Vademecum per la città intelligente (guide to plan change according to the SC paradigm; compilation of operational tools and best practices; tool for benchmarking among cities) (2012 (http://osservatoriosmartcity.it/il-vademecum/))
	Smart City Exhibition, since 2015 “Citizen Data Festival” - Yearly fair connecting local governments to producers and consultancy firms (http://www.smartcityexhibition.it)
 <p>La via italiana alle Smart City</p>	Città sostenibile (sustainable city) – Fair exhibition regarding sectors: ICT, building, energy, mobility, waste, water, management of territory, Safety and accessibility in the territory (http://www.cittasostenibile.net/en/)
<h3>Consultancy firms</h3>	
	Smart City Index 2014 (ranking of cities' smartness based on 422 indicators in which to the 6 dimensions are added those of Smart health, mobility, government, Culture&Travel, Urban Security and Justice, http://www.between.it/ita/smart-city-index.php)
between & 20 ICT companies operating in Italy, including IBM, FastWeb, Microsoft, Wind, Ericsson, Cisco, hp, Olivetti, IT Telecom	CITY+: pre-competitive dialogue between demand and offer in the purchase-supply (of ICT and services) process, “aims at improving life quality, sustainability and competitiveness of Milan metropolitan area and to decrease public expenses by increasing the innovation rate” (http://www.between.it/en/smart-cities-best-cases.php)
MPB – “smart cities for a smart future” 	MPB Approach (Metropolitan & Public Backup) – Consultancy for Smart City projects (http://www.mpbresearch4innovation.it/)
	Dhitech S.c.a.r.l (state-funded Hi-tech district project): Puglia Smart Lab - Puglia@Service - Knowledge Intensive Services (http://www.pugliasmartlab.it)
	SOCLOO (Social School) – Teaching social network, free for customers, funded by private sponsors and crowd-funding (https://www.socloo.org)
	Ouishare – Sharitories: Collaborative Territories Toolkit – step by step guide for collaborative economy for local policy-makers (http://www.sharitories.net/sharitories-cct-alpha-release/)
	Smart(er) Cities Manual (frame for a SC strategy, with best practices, http://www.carloratti.com/project/smarter-cities-manual/9)
	Shareable (news, action and connection hub for the sharing transformation http://www.shareable.net) Sharing Cities Toolkit (compilation of resources comprised of a mix of How-to's, Project Guides, example Policy and tried and true Models and Advice, http://www.shareable.net/sharing-cities-toolkit)



Software, training and consultancy for smart cities
(<http://www.innovation.it/cosa-facciamo/smart-city/>)