An American political scientist, D. Yates, when reflecting on New York in 1977 wrote a book about the “ungovernable metropolis”. His argument was that there were too many interests, too many actors, too many diverse populations, too much inequality, too much informality, too many problems, too many suburbs, too many economic sectors. The city had become ungovernable. Since then the theme has become popular and has been widely mobilised to analyse the governance of the large metropolis in different parts of the world. In my lecture I will try to challenge the often-made assumption that large cities are so complex and big that they have become ungovernable or that globalisation pressures make political and policy choices irrelevant. Are large metropolises governed? Together with Patrick Le Galès I have attempted to nuance this question, exploring what is governed, and what is not governed, comparing different metropolises in the world. By focusing on a governance framework to analyse large metropolises and their dynamics, we implicitly or explicitly underline the limits and discontinuities of governing processes. Governing a city has to do with public policies with collective action, institutions, collective actors, protest, implementation; and something is always not governed at all. Does it matter? Not always, but modes of governance, even incomplete, or chaotic, and full of discontinuities have long term consequences for cities’ inhabitants, and governing failures may have severe negative effects.