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The paradigmatic case of the Metropolitan city of Florence

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Abstract

In 2015 was held in Barcelona (13th March, 2015) the first conference *On territorial competitiveness and social cohesion in European Metropolises*, organized by European Metropolitan Authorities. The Conference went around four key words: Competitiveness, Governance, Social cohesion, Cooperation and ended with a ten-point final Declaration and a Document of conclusions. The points touched by the document may be considered the “problematic background” for European metropolitan areas. This background should develop a new kind of governance, both vertically and horizontally, to give political recognition and perception of belonging to metropolitan areas. Starting with the difference between metropolitan cities and metropolitan areas, which have many differences between them. Although the seminar attended by only fifteen metropolitan institution issues arising and the omens indicated can be generalized to the entire European area. The paper will use the final document as compared to discuss the knot of governance in the case of the metropolitan city of Florence. The case is the “light” of superficiality with which implemented the choice of metropolitan areas in Italy. It is a fine example of the distance between the territory of the real economy and the institutional territory one.

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1. The metropolitan questions referred in Barcelona Conference 2015

In 2015 was held in Barcelona (13th March, 2015) the first Conference on metropolitan governance and territorial competitiveness. The Conference has provided a forum for political debate around the future "European metropolis" led by proactive, dynamic, and innovative metropolitan authorities. Four were the "key" words: Competitiveness, Governance, Social cohesion, Cooperation. The Conference ended with a ten-point final Declaration and a final Document (EMA, 2015). The points touched by the document may be considered the "problematic background" for European metropolitan areas.

The *first*, perhaps obvious, some not yet defined in its political and administrative capacity is this: «Discussing Europe means discussing its cities and their capacity to transform at social, economic and technological level». Discuss the city only in a vision of metropolitan area or within a vision of towns that tend together to be metropolitan city? Metropolitan City or Metropolitan Area? The issue is not trivial because it identifies various forms of space which can have different levels of Government and, therefore, different forms of Governance. In the reality of Europe there are different models of Metropolitan Government and different approaches to governance. In Europe there are certainly different institutional models, born at different times and with different institutional architecture; but, only the metropolitan cities, or the heart of the metropolitan area, have become essential agents for material and symbolic production

The *second* is linked to a national agenda, a "project country": if a country wants succeed at economic and social level, it must make sure that its metropolises work properly, since they are the place where social and economic innovation takes place and, therefore, metropolitan policies are more and more important at national level. The issue opens new scenarios because it means calling into question not only the metropolitan levels present in a country, as engines of development, rather redrawing the map of power in the territories outside of metropolitan areas. The political mosaic drawn by metropolises still generates opposition and tension, even because the cities/metropolitan areas work better in decentralised government systems.

The *third* question is a matter of political and social nature together. Cities or metropolitan areas were created by the market economy, they generally are been guided by money (Agnoletti, Camagni, Iommi, Lattarulo, 2014). The metropolitan territory is drawn up, planned and built by the markets, and these will not take into account social inclusion, but will accentuate segregation. In this sense, the bigger challenge is to successfully communicate to citizens that it's necessary to build a metropolitan authority, and make them feel included and identified with it. It is necessary to have a transformation of public institutions and a change in mentality, and all politicians should assume this metropolitan challenge as their own.

The *fourth* is of political nature. The governance in the metropolitan scope is more "subtle" than in a municipal council, since it is necessary to learn to collaborate regardless of political stances. However, the metropolitan area is a political reality where all great structural projects begin from and when the representatives are directly elected. The metropolitan area is a political reality where all great structural projects begin from and when the representatives are directly elected. It should be an autonomous political entity in national and European space.

2. The paradigmatic case of the Metropolitan city of Florence

The metropolitan city of Florence is a paradigmatic case. It is a fine example of the distance between the territory of the real economy and the institutional territory one. Between the two there isn't a lot of dialogue.

The metropolitan city is one of 14 set up in Italy with the law 56/2014. The law assigns to the metropolitan cities the strategic role of the country's economic recovery badminton. In these cities are concentrated the main worldwide economic, social and cultural energies, which should play a leading role to strengthen competitiveness of territories. The new institutional dimension also requires the creation of an architecture of strategic and administrative Government can predict and carry out promoting the competitiveness of the territory as it pertains to the metropolitan city.

In the case of the metropolitan city of Florence this is not possible, because the metropolitan city coincides with the former province of Florence, while all economic activity has historically developed along the interprovincial basin from Florence to Pistoia (fig. 1).

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