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Mixed results in the early experience of a place-based European Union former program implemented in Campania

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Abstract

The social and economical development from the exploitation of local resources is a newly objective pursued in the European Union cohesion policy, of which some early example can be found in the 2007-2013 programs. In the metropolitan area of Naples this strategy has been consolidated in the "PIU Europa" and Jessica programs where the polycentric framework chosen by the regional territorial planning has meant that the so-called medium-sized cities emerge from their peripheral condition, to be considered poles supporting local and regional development and competitiveness. This article is an account of research on this subject carried out at the University of Naples thanks to a cooperation agreement with the municipality of Castellammare di Stabia aimed at supporting local community in the program PIU Europa especially for the regeneration of the city waterfront.

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1. Introduction

The social and economical development from the exploitation of local resources is a newly objective pursued in the European Union cohesion policy, including former programs aimed to regional development and to the spread of growth all over Europe. Some early example can be found in the 2007-2013 programs.

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In the area of Naples such a strategy has been consolidated in the PIU Europa program where the polycentric framework chosen by the regional territorial planning has meant that the so-called medium-sized cities emerge from their peripheral condition, to be considered poles supporting local development and competitiveness (Rossi, 2007).

The Urban Integration Program “PIU Europa” aims to significantly change the living conditions of Campania’s towns, improving their attractiveness, in order to turn them into poles of the regional network for competitiveness.

With the exception of Naples, whose integration seems more related to a compromise solution rather than genuine consistency with the program, the action has involved all communities with at least 50,000 inhabitants that, unless the provincial capitals, are all included in the current perimeter of the newly formed metropolitan city. The program corresponds to an advanced experiment of decentralization of Structural Funds management to medium-sized cities.

Although it is debatable whether these cities actually correspond to strategic centres of development and how funded projects fully correspond to the same purpose (Moccia & Sgobbo, 2013a), we cannot deny the positive developments of the regional consultation table where they came face to face 19 Campania’s cities evolving in the planning process thanks to the interaction arisen. Another quality of the program is its established procedure according to a sequence of stages in which they are in turn involved different local authorities. This is to overcome the failure that typically characterizes the processes that require the proactive and collaborative participation of several stakeholders.



Fig. 1. Waterfront of Castellammare di Stabia: industrial warehouses along via De Gasperi

Finally the approach that distinguishes the PIU Europa plans to tailor solutions and projects to the characteristics of each territory by extracting and aggregating preferences and knowledge of local actors (Barca, 2009), but also the respect of some fundamental rules trans-territorial: to innovate local institutions according to the principles established at European level; to use criteria and evaluation metrics universally recognized and able to develop an ongoing debate on the results; to try to overcome inequalities in favor of actions effectively inclusive (Guarini, 2013).

This article is an account of research on this subject carried out at the University of Naples thanks to a scientific cooperation agreement with the municipality of Castellammare di Stabia aimed at supporting local community in the program PIU Europa especially for the regeneration of the city waterfront.

The project’s results were somewhat limited as forcefully emerged the difficulty and distrust with which you are forced to face up in certain regions in acceptance of modern and inclusive rules (Mangoni & Sgobbo, 2013).

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