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Collaborative and Multiscalar Practices for a New Metropolitan Identity: Naples and its Sea

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Abstract

The metropolitan dimension is an important resource to improve the competitiveness of the territories in economic terms and the quality of urban life in social and environmental terms. In Italy this topic is long overdue and the Law n. 56/2014 dealing with metropolitan cities proved to be ineffective. Particularly, these cities does not seem to have a real metropolitan identity.

The best results seem to have been achieved in those contexts where there was already an awareness, or even a real metropolitan identity, and where communities have been involved in processes of information, consciousness and participation.

Naples is one of the major European metropolitan cities, the third in Italy, and it is a potential laboratory for an innovative process in building a metropolitan identity based on culture, integration, enhancement of human capital, with particular attention to the sea resource.

In this context, in order to recognize into this new metropolitan identity and to accept it, it is possible to undertake collaborative processes and operate territory transformations through more effective collaborative strategies among institutions, stakeholders and citizens.

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1. The Topic of Metropolitan Culture

The debate on the concept of metropolitan area and metropolitan city, started in the mid '80s, led in 1990 to the Law n.142 (Testa, 2013; Pacente, 2013; Moccia, 2013; Allulli, 2010; Bartaletti, 2009; Costa & Toniolo, 2009; Forte, 2003; Fubini & Corsico, 1994; Beguinot, 1993; AA.VV., 1991).

Almost thirty years have passed and we this topic is long overdue: the Law Delrio- 56/2014- on metropolitan cities proved to be ineffective. Specifically, it does not seem to be a real metropolitan identity in all the cities involved in the law.

On closer inspection, it would be more exact to talk about districts turned *ope legis* into metropolitan cities: something which has become a reality only in an institutional dimension (Guida, 2015).

The study conducted by Cittalia (2013) shows that Italian citizens still have a quite aloof attitude in considering the process of building metropolitan cities and are quite uninformed about the effects of this institutional change¹.

Such a complex process, indeed, can effectively be carried out only when a set of factors converge. These factors are: uniform vision of metropolitan area's future, multiscalar perspective, cohesion in citizens community, various institutions involved and in stakeholders group (or, at least, absence of relevant infighting), participation and co-operation of the various existing social groups, balance among the various sustainability dimension.

The contrast is instead at every level: in institutional field between the regional capital and other towns in the metropolitan line (generally, the latter weighs more than the former)² between various urban communities with different goals, between territorial stakeholders with specific objectives.

Therefore, it's becoming clear the need for innovative approaches able to establish relations between the various actors (whether institutional or not) of the metropolitan city building process, the need to enhance the conflicts solving and to develop "shared plans" for the area in which different targets overlap.

In this context, city planning gains new interpretive and implementation modality which gives priority to activities dealing with cross-sector knowledge, mediation and negotiation.

Considering the powerlessness of the top-down politics and the weakness of the active rhetoric, it's possible to react with collaborative processes (Rifkin, 2014; Ostrom, 2006; Healey, 2003, 1997; Ostrom, Gardner, & Walker, 1994), able to affect the territory transformation processes suitable to contemporary scenarios. This is an innovative process aiming at realizing more effective strategies of collaboration among institutions, stakeholders and citizens in order to identify and turn into this new metropolitan identity. This approach may represent the key to undertake a cultural change in a historic time in which political system is unable to generate development opportunities.

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This approach entails the transition from a "vertical" vision to a "lateral" vision: that is to say, the creation of a collaborative metropolitan city, where prosumers (Toffler & Toffler, 2007, Toffler, 2006; Rifkin, 2014, Tapscot, 2015) become urban prosumers (Clemente & Giovene di Girasole, 2015), city consumers connected through a (virtual and real) network and are producers of their main need, namely the territorial sustainability, sharing goals and results, enhancing the productivity.

The building of metropolitan cities, therefore, involves local communities in a project which is first of all cultural. In fact, the best results seem to come from those environments (such as Bologna and Milano) where there was already an awareness, or even a metropolitan identity, and in those communities involved in processes of information, consciousness and participation.

This means the building by urban community, prosumers and institutions of a shared vision about the future of metropolitan city; a vision based on its culture, seeing the building of the metropolitan city as an opportunity to realize urban regeneration processes and sustainable development processes.

¹ The study shows that the citizens have positive expectations about the enhancement of public transport, economic development of territory and cut in political expenses, however citizens prove to be worried about the possible worsening in services and in matter of local taxes (Cittalia, 2013).

² Out of the 14 metropolitan cities, only in 3 (Genoa, Rome and Milan) the urban belt is less populated than the regional capital (The European House - Ambrosetti, 2016a).

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