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Creative and inclusive centrality for the metropolitan city

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Abstract

The paper intends to conduct a debate on the role that the metropolitan city can take in terms of inclusion, creativity and competitiveness in areas such as that of Calabria, characterized by conurbations formed by a central core and a larger area covered with small settlements connected and related between them. The development of the thesis will explain briefly how the territorial and urban polycentrism can be a model for a metropolitan city, dynamic and open to innovation, but above all shared and co-created by the different actors.

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1. Introduction

In Italian territorial context, composed of 8103 municipalities - of which 5836 with less than 5,000 inhabitants - the discussion on metropolitan cities is configured more as a discussion on metropolitan areas, designed as a territory bound to one or more central cities by functional interdependence, measured either directly or through the identification of areas of homogeneity or propinquity. It comes to conurbations, or urban areas, formed by a central core and a large area dotted with settlements connected by a dense network of transport and roads. The peculiarity of Italian metropolisation is that it does not take the forms of urban gigantism, typical instead of other European countries, but on the contrary is based on a scheme which, for simplicity, could be defined polycentric, made of different rank

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and cities size, firmly anchored and supported by an urban structure composed by a high number of small municipalities, the expansion of which involves widespread phenomena of the conurbation. The territory thus regains its appearance and becomes the protagonist. This is known as local territorial systems, in which the territory not appears as a sum of prerogatives and performance, or as a support for their actions, but as an actor in the first person. Unique and original, with precise features and recognizability. A living organism in constant transformation, that under certain conditions knows to reproduce and govern itself and which nevertheless has very fragile equilibrium.

It is clear that the government of the cities, and especially that of the Italian metropolitan cities, can not be entrusted exclusively to the traditional planning tools, but instead should be set on a type of reticular and multi-level planning model, into which the coordination and the integration are able to ensure the effectiveness of the plan and the feasibility of the choices. It is believed that the metropolitan city should adopt a high strategic content plan. The strategic planning request comes from the need for an approach reticular and integrated planning, aimed at the creation of consensus and participation in the overall design of the city, first by identifying the actors, defining the specific tasks and building a permanent network, that supports and controls the entire operation. To facilitate the delivery of policies and to create consensus, strategic planning creates the network of actors, promotes the construction of comparative tables, it favors enlarged consultation. The creation of a permanent network of actors (functional network) produces a consensus on the idea of local development, letting it grow stronger over time. The most notable aspect of the reticular model is, therefore, its complexity, generated by the number of actors, by the conflict between the interests, goals and preferences. Therefore the government decisions become the result of complex problem-solving activities. In this way the metropolitan city becomes inclusive city, a city individually lived in many different ways by its citizens, a city that provides opportunities and support mechanisms that allow all residents to develop their full potential and achieve the benefits of urban reality. In an inclusive city, citizens see themselves as an integral part of the decision-making process, which include both the political issues as the most ordinary aspects of daily life. Active participation guarantees all citizens to be involved from the benefits of urban development.

Therefore in this paper we want to discuss a specific metropolitan area in Calabria, that relating to the conurbation of Cosenza-Rende, proposing polycentrism as a possible open and dynamic models for the regeneration of urban areas in metropolitan cities inclusive.

2. Urban area of Cosenza: a possible metropolitan city

Urban area of Cosenza assembles the towns of Cosenza and the most densely inhabited areas of the municipality of Rende, Castrolibero and Montalto Uffugo, in addition to the little towns put on the hills surrounding Cosenza (Casali Cosentini). It represents a well-defined urban area that could be considered the subject for a discussion on metropolitan city. This conurbation is included in the list of metropolitan areas attached to QTR (Regional Plan) of Calabria where it's named "Area metropolitana Cosenza-Rende e dei Casali" (about 216.000 inhabitants). This urban area has the most complex urban framework amongst towns of Calabria because of the large number of urban nucleuses it contains. It's located in the middle of the valley of Crati river and extends to the hillsides of the district and in part even to the Sila upland. The central part of this urban area is composed of Cosenza and Rende town centres, where is located the main university of Calabria, that represents a landmark and whose scientific importance attracts students and researchers from Italy and abroad. All around this urban centre there are 15 smaller centres, among which the most important are Castrolibero and Montalto Uffugo, that are more densely inhabited and equipped with facilities than the others, characterized by rural use and urban sprawl. Besides this main framework there are other two secondary systems. The first one is composed of 10 municipalities on the Sila. The other secondary system is composed of 10 municipalities sited in the northern part of the Crati river valley.

If we look from above the urban area, it is possible to identify the macroscopic forms and define the territorial limits in general terms. The dominant elements are highlighted: the mountains to the east and west of the valley; the bed of the Crati river, strong element of demarcation of city to the east; the river course of Campagnano stream, the natural border between the municipalities of Cosenza, Rende, and Castrolibero; the highway A3; the railway line directly connected to the railway junctions of Paola (Tyrrhenian railway line) and Sybaris (Ionic railway); the compact urban fabric, mainly and continuously distributed between Cosenza and Rende. These real physical limits, influencing spatial relationships, have constrained the development of the city along the south-north direction. The dense core area

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