FLORE
Repository istituzionale dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze

The Paradigmatic Case of the Metropolitan City of Florence

(Article begins on next page)

20 December 2021

2nd International Symposium "NEW METROPOLITAN PERSPECTIVES" - Strategic planning, spatial planning, economic programs and decision support tools, through the implementation of Horizon/Europe2020. ISTH2020, Reggio Calabria (Italy), 18-20 May 2016

The paradigmatic case of the Metropolitan city of Florence

Giuseppe De Luca[a],*

[a]University of Florence, Department of Architecture (DIDA), Regional Design Lab

Abstract

In 2015 was held in Barcelona (13th March, 2015) the first conference *On territorial competitiveness and social cohesion in European Metropoles,* 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.

Keywords: Metropolitan cities; Metropolitan city of Florence

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +39-055-2756475; fax: +39-055-2756488.
   E-mail address: giuseppe.deluca@unifi.it

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).
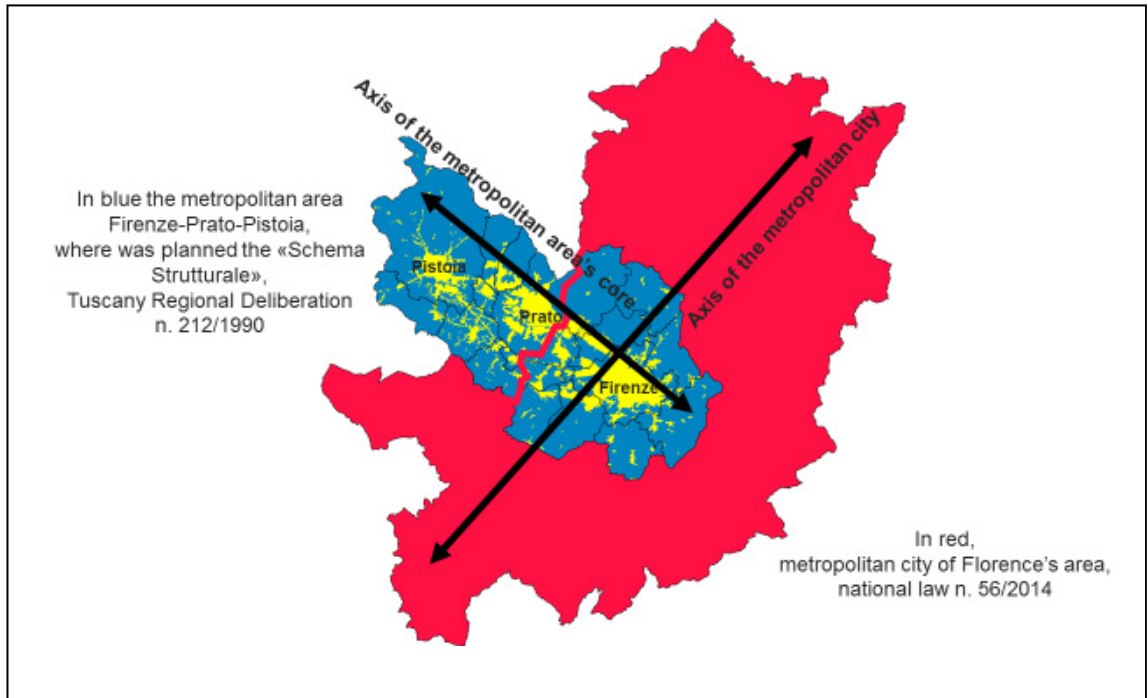
Fig. 1 – Axises of the metropolitan

Since the middle of the 800 inter-provincial basin has gradually structured in a conurbation of Metropolitan public transport, supported by the extended type, the establishment of supra-municipal services increasingly broad scope, moving important activities from larger cities to smaller towns and the morphology of the land that held everything together. Over time, these processes have created a complex economic-territorial system mesh, regulated not by explicit supra-municipal level coordinates public policies, as well as by strength of the mix of public and private investments forced to coexist in a single large metropolitan basin: the plain (fig. 2).

Having carved out a piece of this long plain Metropolitan to define it is a naïve violence to economic, social and environmental urban and also facts together. The provinces of Florence, Prato and Pistoia, over an area of 4.800 square kilometers (equal to one fifth of the surface area of Tuscany), 40% of the population and enterprises in the region, hence half the total regional GDP. In 1990 the Tuscany Region approved a territorial planning document, called "Structural plan for the metropolitan area Florence-Prato-Pistoia". Is still the most important attempt made by the region to support and guide the development of this crucial area of Tuscany through the prefiguration of a spatial structure arranged on lines and recognizable landmarks.

The intersection of the metropolitan area "historically" recognized – and governed by a planning tool for large areas like the Structural plan – and the metropolitan city as identified by the law no. 56/2014, only in the borders of the province of Florence, shows unequivocally the orthogonal directions of the two axes and, therefore, of possible territorial development policies. The perimeter of the metropolitan city becomes an issue of utmost urgency. We cannot have, on one hand a leading city like Florence, at international level, which has a catchment area of influence that only partly overlaps with that of metropolitan institutions; and the other to a metropolitan basin, with two medium-sized towns like Prato and Pistoia, which has a completely opposite to the direction of the city leader.
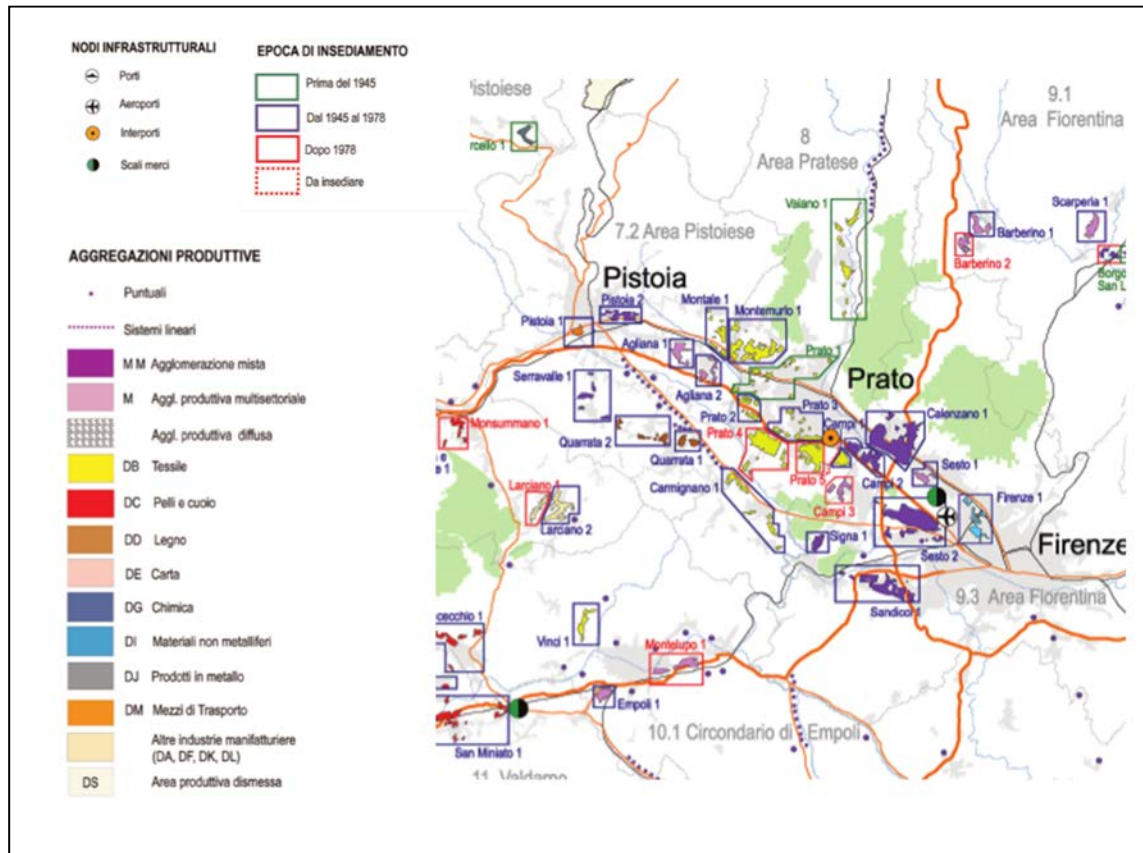
Fig. 2 - The concentration of economic and productive activities in the basin between Florence and Pistoia (PIT 2005-2010)

3. Conclusion and directions for further research

We respond now to the four questions posed in the Barcelona Conference, applying them to the case of the metropolitan city of Florence.

First: «Discussing Europe means discussing its cities and their capacity to transform at social, economic and technological level». Answering that question means also consider why *European programming 2014-2020* is focusing on the cities to boost the development of the Union with a view to sustainability. Contemporary metropolitan areas are increasingly from "city networks" that do not coincide with the administrative boundaries of metropolitan cities formally recognized, but seek to respond to the challenges of globalisation and economies «in search of the city». According to this author: «In Italy there aren't cities, but urban systems waiting to become a city, where the historic towns dissolved [...]. The Italy urgently needs a spatial, relational and institutional reorganisation plan of the area from repainting the boundaries and structure of urban systems, turning them into efficient city» (Calafati, 2009). If this is true we cannot have a metropolitan city opposed to another city system, with which it competes in the same geographic space. And of course we cannot translate the concept of metropolitan area as metropolitan city without any misunderstandings and conceptual confusions also strongly non-linear (Messina, 2014). The case of Florence poses this dilemma.

Second: «metropolitan policies are more and more important at national level». The weakness of the case of the metropolitan city of Florence is the son of a wrong setting at the national level. The Italian legislation chooses a

monocentric city model that expands from a central urban core of the city, extends to its hinterland, until you reach the whole province (Tortorella, Alulli, 2014). The size of the polycentric governance for cities is not substantially addressed and thematised, just because it lacks a national urban agenda and a national policy for metropolitan areas (Calafati, 2014).

Third: the metropolitan territory is drawn up, planned and built by the markets. If we limit our gaze to the city of Florence, the market is strongly influenced by the tourist economy. It is an economy that does not generate social inclusion, but rather forms of social segregation. Need integrated policies, which cannot be done without a metropolitan area of reference (De Luca, Moccia, 2015).

Fourth: metropolitan governance. The size of the polycentric governance for metropolitan cities is not addressed by the national law, and for now it is not even addressed at the local level (Cremaschi, Delpirou, Rivière, Salone, 2015). Yet this is the crucial point. If we want to address the issue of the most appropriate forms of governance for the Government in the strategic sense of a vast area subway, before looking to the shape of the container should analyse institutional and administrative borders the metropolitan functions, their articulation in the territory and organisational models more appropriate to the context (Messina, 2014).

Only by answering these four questions the paradigmatic case of the metropolitan city of Florence could find a real organizational and functional.

References

Agnoletti C., Camagni R., Iommi S., Lattarulo P. (2014), *Competività urbana e policentrismo in Europa*, Il Mulino, Bologna.

Annoni P., Dijkstra L. (2014), "EU Regional Competitiveness Index. RCI 2013", *JCR Scientific and Policy Reports*, European Commission, Luxemburg, http://www.jrc.ec.europa.eu/

Calafati A. (2009), *Economie in cerca di città. La questione urbana in Italia*, Roma, Donzelli.

Calafati A. (2014), *Città tra sviluppo e declino. Un'agenda urbana per l'Italia*, Roma, Donzelli.

Cremaschi M., Delpirou A., Rivière D., Salone C., (2015) *Métropoles et régions entre concurrences et complémentarités: Regards croisés France/Italie*   http://www.planum.net/planum-magazine/planum-publisher-publication/metropoles-etregions-entre-concurrences-et-complementarites-1

D'Amico R., De Rubertis S. (2014), eds., *Istituzioni per lo sviluppo tra Comune e Regione. Unione europea e prove di ente intermedio in Italia*, Milano, F. Angeli.

De Luca G., Moccia F.D. (2015), eds, *Immagini di territori metropolitani*, Inu, Roma

European Metropolitan Authorities, Conclusion del seminari sobre competitivitat territorial I cohesió social de les metròpolis europees, Barcelona 2015 http://www.amb.cat/documents/11696/2235908/CON_EMA_Barcelona2015_CAT+web.pdf/fddee475-c2cd-405e-abc0-a25198c2bc20

Messina P. (2014), "Innovazione del policy making per lo sviluppo locale ed europeizzazione. Il caso del Veneto", in R. D'Amico, S. De Rubertis (a cura di), *Istituzioni per lo sviluppo tra Comune e Regione. Unione europea e prove di ente intermedio in Italia*, Milano, F. Angeli

Regione Toscana (2007), *Piano di indirizzo territoriale 2005-2010*, Firenze

Tortorella W., Alulli M. (2014), *Città metropolitane. La lunga attesa*, Venezia, Marsilio.