Abstract

The Italian concept of metropolitan city is quite different from European realities in which cities were not set up ex ante, but over the years and until a natural legitimacy of their status, they gained identity thanks to a long cultural, geographical and administrative process. Metropolitan cities in Italy come from a craving for reform path of local authorities, well defined with Law Delrio promoting the transformation process of all the 86 Italian provinces. This law praiseworthy pointed to Italian cities as a priority issue to the integrated territorial development. One of the pillars of this reform is definitively the establishment of the first 10 Metropolitan cities, that is Turin, Milan, Venice, Genoa, Bologna, Florence, Bari, Rome Capital area (with special authority), Naples and Reggio Calabria (to be launched in 2016), with the replacement of the corresponding provincial administrations. Unlike provinces, metropolitan cities will have complex purposes, such as the general region planning including communication facilities, service and infrastructure networks, public services organization of general interest, traffic, mobility and economic development. The chance to have a new governance model had been long awaited, something suited to urban areas which not quite smoothly have to manage difficulties as transport, environmental quality, waste organization and management, mobility etc. all not related to the canonic administrative boundaries. Dealing with the main territorial matters in just one administrative decision-making center means, for these urban areas, to handle them completely in a conceptual and territorial way, but also it ensures efficiency and more facilities for the population even peripheral.

This rising process throughout the country, especially in southern Italy, is based on the acknowledgement of its own identity, and concern the understanding and the approval of the new boundaries, seizing the opportunities derived from the new layout. Connecting places and territories it is obviously a great chance, but can take place only through those slow understanding processes of the unavoidable developments of urban, social and administrative transformation. As regards the province of Reggio Calabria, for example, it is a well-known fact that many hinterland municipalities have demographics under a thousand inhabitants due to a relentless drive of the population to the main cities and to the Northern Italy, which offers definitively more. Not to mention the European cities, where the effects of the economic crisis are not as obvious as in Italy. Therefore, the establishment of the

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metropolitan city despite the crisis, such as the one of the province of Reggio, can certainly be an opportunity for the revitalization and integrated development. It also entails the overcoming of the unsolved issues related to the mobility of municipalities’ interconnection that is a key point of the Metropolitan Agenda.

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1. **Structural opportunities**

For years, the European Community has focused on cities its strategies of economic and territorial development. This is because cities are great places for testing and starting new innovative policies to improve the quality of life of their inhabitants. The majority of Europeans lives in urban areas where commercial and financial activities lies mainly, but where above all the leading networks of mobility and social relations are directed. Although cities concentrate 75% of energy consumption and 80% of polluting emissions, they are also places where innovative technologies to reduce pollution and energy consumption are applied. This explains the fact the cities take on most of the problems from the environmental and social point of view, so they need specific policies to solve these contradictions. The multi-fund National Operational Programme “Città Metropolitane” (NOP Metropolitan Cities) is part of the Italian National Urban Agenda and Sustainable Urban Development outlined in the 2014-2020 Partnership Agreement & Programme. It focuses on the urban development and provides for action plans in the Digital Agenda and for energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, housing deprivation and social economy sectors that should be realized with a financial endowment amounted to EUR 588.1 million granted from the European Structural Funds and on National Co-Funding of EUR 304.833,333, for a total of EUR 892.933,333. According to EU Commission estimates, 678 associated municipalities will guarantee the interoperability of their information systems and 70% of municipalities of the metropolitan areas will offer fully interactive digital services to citizens. In brief, the NOP impact can represent the main key to many areas, especially in southern Italy, since 70% of municipalities of the metropolitan cities will have full interactive services. Furthermore, it will provide integrated information systems for the 678 associated municipalities and incite to a decrease of annual primary energy consumption of public buildings (2.2 GWh/year) through 38,000 square meters rehabilitated. NOP provides also more than 200 km of bike trails, new houses to homeless out of an estimated 34,000 population, accompanying socio-economic activities to 485 individuals out of 18,000 from marginalized communities and the regeneration of more than 2,250 spaces and more than 35,000 square meters for activities with a social objective.

2. **The metropolitan view, from Europe to Italy**

The metropolitan area is an American-type topic relatively new, born in response to issues concerning the need of coordinating public policies on territorial services mainly related to transport and taxation, and requiring a single referent skilled at international level. Undoubtedly, we should not consider the metropolitan city under its quantitative aspects related to demographics or to the size of the urbanized area, but as a metropolis with its own typical purposes. The metropolitan city represents a network system able to attract and integrate population and territories, so it does not identified itself with the simple merger of towns and suburbs (Pellegrini, 2005). However, our system detects the metropolitan poles beforehand, according to functional criteria that do not refer to any demographic criterion, nor to physical boundaries (Censis, 2013). Actually, the research commissioned by the Union of Provinces to Censis reveals that the Italian debate on metropolitan areas has taken on a character of absolute specificity being unique in Europe, since no European country force for a single model. This leads to the fact that metropolitan cities develop themselves regardless of their political and administrative institutions and that they are not imposed. All that underlies the birth of a metropolitan city is lacking in Italy: from size to debate and from the same motion that leads to the establishment of the metropolitan city (Salvaggiulo, 2014).

In times of crisis, it seems that the achievement of the metropolitan city rank is a strategic goal in Italy and it aims at improving the quality of life of its citizens through the interception of Community funds needed for those implementations of development strategies required from the Community itself. Indeed, the Italian idea of
The metropolitan city is quite different from that European. Europe counts on the legitimacy of a state of fact for the establishment of the metropolitan city that occurs ex post as result of a cultural, geographical and administrative process consolidated over the years. Moreover, in Europe, there are only ten metropolitan governments ranging authority with full statutory powers to voluntary groupings of authorities with advisory powers and naturally we have considered countries as Germany, United Kingdom, France, Spain, Holland and Austria with their over 110 wide urban areas and 280 million of people (Read, 2004). In Italy, the new metropolitan cities are twice than European counterparts, despite a population five times lower.

Actually, Europe does not have a unique model spread to different locations, but rather realities totally different, born and consolidated over the time by virtue of those needs they expressed over the years. As evidence of this, Barcelona and Lyons are the finest examples of cities with diametrically opposed systems of government (Censis, 2014).

On the other hand, the establishment of the metropolitan cities in Italy is not a simple state of fact, but rather a result of the spending review necessity to the public expenditure decrease and it is also an opportunity for the economic-structural upgrading of urban areas.

The awaited main result is the considerable cost retrenchment of policy ensued from the removal of the Provincial Council and of all combined roles; more than 700 councilors will cease to exercise their jobs as well as about 2,700 provincial councilors. Through this action and according to data from SIOPE (Information System on the Operations of Government bodies) developed by the Court of Auditors, the expected savings will be at least of EUR 100 million per year (see Tab. 1).

Table 1. Provinces costs related to political bodies and to electoral consultations during 2010-2012 three-year period. Court of Auditors, 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Costs for institutional bodies - benefits</td>
<td>96,544</td>
<td>95,416</td>
<td>88,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs for institutional bodies - refunds</td>
<td>17,091</td>
<td>16,604</td>
<td>16,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total costs for institutional bodies</td>
<td>113,636</td>
<td>112,020</td>
<td>105,173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The annexation of municipalities to the new territorial body could moreover foster a change of vocation economic specialization. Actually, the secondary sector is the one prevailing on all potential metropolitan cities (46% of municipality specialization) with considerable peaks for the metropolitan cities of Milan, Florence and Genoa. The metropolitan cities of Bari and Reggio Calabria, instead, would end up being characterized by an urban area with strong prevalence of primary sector, while the city of Naples would become a tertiary sector micro.

Table 2. Economic specialization in 10 metropolitan cities. Documentation and Studies Center Anci-Ifel, Istat and Infocamere data, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>primary</th>
<th>secondary</th>
<th>tertiary</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bari</td>
<td>75,6%</td>
<td>9,8%</td>
<td>14,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bologna</td>
<td>48,3%</td>
<td>41,7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florence</td>
<td>27,3%</td>
<td>70,5%</td>
<td>2,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genoa</td>
<td>22,4%</td>
<td>61,2%</td>
<td>16,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan</td>
<td>1,5%</td>
<td>76,1%</td>
<td>22,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naples</td>
<td>15,2%</td>
<td>19,6%</td>
<td>65,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reggio Calabria</td>
<td>72,2%</td>
<td>10,3%</td>
<td>17,5%</td>
</tr>
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1 The city of Barcelona has a very complex system of government with functions and powers allocated to its 10 municipalities and connected areas; the city of Lyons has instead a centralized power affecting over all the 55 municipalities.
Law Delrio praiseworthy pointed to cities as a priority issue to the integrated territorial development, at the same time includes debates among provinces, and sets up metropolitan cities with physical and administrative scenarios not so clearly defined.

The main points of Law Delrio focuses on three issues: identity, democracy and plan (Sbetti F., 2015). A metropolitan area needs to achieve its own identity first by accepting and understanding its new boundaries and naturally seizing the consequent opportunities coming from the new asset. Indeed, one leading step is to be ascribed in the chance of connecting places and territories facing with slow understanding processes of the unavoidable developments of urban, social and administrative transformation. As regards the province of Reggio Calabria, for example, it is well-known that many hinterland municipalities have demographies under a thousand inhabitants due to a relentless drive of the population to the main cities and to the Northern Italy, which offers definitively more. Not to mention the European cities, where the effects of the economic crisis are not as obvious as in Italy. Therefore, the establishment of the metropolitan city despite the crisis, such as the one of the province of Reggio, can certainly be an opportunity for the revitalization and integrated development. It also entails the overcoming of the unsolved issues related to the mobility of municipalities’ interconnection, a key point of the Metropolitan Agenda.

Democracy issue is strongly associated to the Statute, for its useful role to govern relations among municipalities and metropolitan cities and pledging organization and activities of their functions. Indeed, with the regulation of functions, roles, governance and economic planning, the Statute is the instrument through which it is possible to define the programmatic structure of the territory in democratic form using also the Council and the Metropolitan Conference, as the same law provides. As regards the plan, Law Delrio not only includes the functions assigned to the metropolitan city, but also identifies the general territorial planning, thus communication facilities, utility networks and infrastructures with the chance to fix obligations and aims in the activities and performances of municipalities’ duty included in the area (art.1). Therefore, a new urban setting comes out outlined within the coordination of territorial planning, the protection and enhancement of the environment inherited by the Province. Not to mention as well, the strategic planning which means the coordinating act through the three-year plan of the metropolitan territory valid for bodies and performances of municipalities’ duty and unions (art. 44). Moreover, the aim of the Strategical plan is to overcome the meaning of plan coordination entrusted to provinces with prescriptive character estimations.

2.1. The Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria

In order to launch the Metropolitan City Project for Reggio Calabria we have to wait for the provincial authorities’ deadline expected in June 2016, that is, when the Mayor of the capital municipality will be also Major of the metropolitan city, this means that he will be finally able to perform its roles with the approval of the Statute. The Calabria Region has approved the Law 14/2014, listing functions already transferred to those Provinces with a pending legislative action aimed to order the overall reorganization of provincial roles. Besides, two proposal, that is Law n. 28/10^ and Law n. 99/10^, are submitted to the Council Commission. With the first one, the Region, waiting for the expected constitutional reform, intends to work on the reorganization of the provincial roles respecting subsidiarity, adequacy and differentiation principles. It also considers the needs and speeding up imposed by the latest financial measures demanded from the Stability Law n. 190/2014. This should take place with a process giving to municipalities and its associative forms those roles closer to citizens, and giving to Region those purposes requiring greater unity. The second proposal would enable the Region carrying out the system required for the establishment of the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, and thus promote and enhance the new local authority. It will hold on conducting those tasks remained temporarily to the Province of Reggio Calabria and referred to the Regional Law n. 14/2015 (considering the pending approval of the regional reorganization law), always with the assistance of its staff and with the commitment of the Region to transfer the financial resources already established by a technical task-force.

In brief, the three regional laws defer the identification of territorial scope to the performance of non-core functions ascribed to provinces to following normative actions.

As regards the operational level, the municipality of Reggio Calabria has already started the work of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Democracy</th>
<th>Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turin</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venice</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
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Decentralization and Metropolitan City Committee to arrange the Statute in two years’ time estimated, whereas the same Province has started arranging the Strategical Plan based on the Territorial Plan for Provincial Coordination. The regeneration of the future perspective of the metropolitan city of Reggio Calabria is the principal aim, seeing that in recent years the city has suffered too much from several problems and from the economic crisis indeed. Making up a Strategical plan does not disregard the intention for having a governance able to motivate the cooperation among all sectors to an active participation of the citizenry all².

Despite the other growing metropolitan cities, Reggio Calabria is that one who waits for the benefits of this huge and interesting political and economic action with confidence, as it is one of the most populated city of Calabria Region, but also one of the poorest.

According to the regional ranking by level of disposable income per capita in 2014, Calabria takes the latest place with EUR 12,300, whereas the Autonomous Province of Bolzano reaches the top, with almost EUR 22,500. More specifically, the city of Reggio Calabria has a high unemployment rate, especially in vulnerable categories, as women and young people (41% above the average of 27.4%), as well as by the widespread presence of undeclared work (31% irregularity rate). In socio-cultural terms, tough difficulties mark the city, such as promoting its touristic potential being the center part of the Mediterranean (apart from the endogenous financial means) and adapting to the various regulation forms. Nevertheless, it still waits for the big occasion to relaunch its territory and thus conferring the right status of modern and active Mediterranean city, supported by an equally adequate and careful political class and leadership. The hinterland economic situation is definitively not encouraging. Many of the 97 provincial municipalities are dealing with an increasing depopulation inclination; many services are lacking as well as job opportunities; unsurprisingly they denounce and complain for physical and institutional exclusion due to weak land connections and lacking of needed funds able to guarantee the survival.

In this context, the imagination of being a metropolitan city suits perfectly with the strong will of redemption, but inevitably reflects an historical weight of these huge territorial procedures and the enabled changes they carried out. In 1927, Reggio was the diamond point of “Grande Reggio” project, when, during the Fascist regime, 14 municipalities joined the city extending its territorial boundaries from Punta Pellaro to Scilla³. Supported by the prior government, this action aimed to improve social, sanitation and roads conditions of the city especially to mend the visible injuries of the 1908 earthquake. The municipality of Reggio Calabria became soon one of the largest in Italy, reaching more than 100 thousand citizens, but the expected economic development failed, probably for the inability to manage a so large territory. Beside this, during 1927 came out that some municipalities did not agree positively with the project, for joining the big city could also mean losing its own identity. To five years away, Villa San Giovanni was the first district who won back its independence with a government decree, as well as the districts of Campo Calbro and Fiumara, to ten years away.

Even before owning the peculiarities, the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria arises with the hope of overcoming those ancestral problems that prevent instead its take-off, through structural actions. Naturally, the ruling class can make the difference by taking charge of this phase and avoiding the waste of an outlay that is actually effective, that points directly to a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as required from the European Community for Europe 2020 strategy.

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Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee and to the

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² The work on the Strategical Plan will pass through four stages starting from the definition of the Manifesto to the final approval of the Plan after three months from the start-up. The Manifesto will include strategies and will promote the contents sharing of the same plan. The second stage will totally work on the participation aspect through the Metropolitan City Forum, the official Website, the definition of focus groups of macro areas. The third stage will focus on economic financial feasibility of the strategical plan. The last stage will fix the monitoring system on the occurring changes in the territory and on projects implementations.

³ At the end of 1926, Reggio went under the authority of the Admiral Giuseppe Genoese Zerbi and was integrated in the economic development and expansionist plan of Fascist regime, so it joined the districts of Campo di Calabria, Cannitello, Cataforio, Catona, Fiumara, Gallico, Gallina, Podargoni, Pellaro, Rosali, Salice Calabro, Sambatello, Villa San Giovanni and Villa San Giuseppe.
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