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.

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.

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 then the others, characterized by rural use and urban sprawl. Besides this main framework there are other two secondary systems. The first one in 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 (Ionian 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
develops in the municipalities of Cosenza and Rende, from Cosenza's historic center, far south, to Quattromiglia
neighbourhood of Rende, and between the SS107 on the east side and the A3 motorway, on the west one.

The old town of Cosenza is the only historic centre, among all the municipalities of the urban area, which has a
continuity with the metropolitan area. From the foot of the old town started the modern urbanization that has affected
the whole valley of Crati. The new urban fabric is affected by infrastructures and by morphology of the soil that
compromise its continuity. In areas further north, on the border with the territory of Rende, the urban fabric is even
less coherent because of the constant recourse to the building for individual interventions and the progressive loss of
the relationship between street and building.

The urban area of Cosenza therefore forms a continuous and complex built now consolidated in its longitudinal
physical extension from south to north; as one real city for the community that lives or that lives daily and/or
occasionally. It is a driving urban context for an even larger area than that actually urbanized, it is a potential
metropolitan city that the Strategic Plan “Cosenza-Rende and urban area” is trying to define and develop through an
overall plan for territorial reorganization where the highway A3 takes the role of the thematic corridor, carrier of the
development of the infrastructure system and of the connected urban centers system. In particular, in the re-cross-
connections identifies the elements for creating a network of valley systems of the hill with media centers, depositories
of memory and culture and still densely inhabited today, as well as to create an interesting and active circuit between
the modern and contemporary parts of the city the historical parts. But also able to give an address at the urban and
territorial reconnection, as well as able to give strength to the landscape and socio-economic development.

The vision of the Strategic Plan is aimed at creating an area leader of the South of Italy for urban quality, intelligence
and innovation, so as to ensure the Calabria region of significant extra-regional, national and international
interconnections. The declaration of the strategic vision follows, first of all, the route of the thematic areas related to
the welfare and the labor market, the economy and local development, the environment, urban and regional planning,
culture and knowledge institutions. The strategic objective is to promote experimentation of intervention models and
innovative tools, based on the creation of integrated networks of stakeholders but also the additions of interventions.

3. Polycentrism as regeneration model of the contemporary city in the metropolitan city

Cosenza and the suburbs, as many contemporary cities, appears to most as a confused amalgam of disparate
fragments, in which you can not recognize any order rule, no principle of rationality that makes it intelligible. The
contemporary city seems to put up a fierce resistance to the description. Urban planners, sociologists, anthropologists,
ethnologists and economists generally rely on terms with a great latitude semantics as a fragment, heterogeneity,
discontinuity, disorder, chaos (Harvey, 1990). When you try less vague descriptions, touching the "vertigo of the
analogy", frequent use is the pictures of the game, puzzle, domino, patchwork, hybridization, zapping, layering, layers
of overlapping and partially intersect, the labyrinth, hypertext, the network, the fractal figure (Bouveresse, 1999). The
city became more and more the place of the difference, accumulation of minority cultures, religions, languages and
ethnicities, income levels, lifestyles, architecture and the knowledge that tend to shut themselves through complicated
processes of exclusion-inclusion within its “villages”, enclaves or "forts", themed city, in the best case "of the
community traces" floating in a sea of mass solitude and this happens in a period in which, however, each subject and
activities are increasingly attracted within the different aspects of globalization (Miller, 1993). Place of the mixture,
the contemporary city is, by nature unstable, home to the continuous changes that give rise to the formation of critical
situations and transitional solutions of problems: houses that become workshops, workshops to become theaters, quiet
roads that become axes of high traffic. The output from modernity, as already it was to the ancient city, is also disposal
transformation and reuse of many parts (Amendola, 2008).

The contemporary city is a place of continuous destruction of positional values, progressive standardization and
democratization of urban space; place of destruction of established systems of symbolic and monetary values; place
of continuous formation of new privileged routes, new places of business, of leisure, communication and social
interaction, the site of a new geography of centrality, of new systems of intolerance, compatibility and incompatibility.
The instability of the contemporary city, the constant move and reorganization of the different activities, the
degradation and filtering-down they give rise to, the actions of reuse, recovery and up-grading, which eventually
ensues, the parts of gentrification policies of which is the theater, are at once the cause and the representation of a
continuous destruction-reconstruction-democratization of positional values and horizons that appear under the guise of chaos.

The contemporary city, through the continued destruction and democratization of positional values, is especially equipped to handle the difference and mixing, namely the change of system compatibility and incompatibility between subjects and activities. Cities with large meshes, it still offers the space to respond effectively to the radical questions, often incompatible with each other, advanced by the various parties. It, with their unstable and perpetually unfinished character, urges, as he did the modern city at its beginnings, doubt, exploration, experimentation. It requires more complex projects and stratified than imagined for the historic and modern city. Much more dilated than the latter, the contemporary city, even in its metropolitan declination, covers of unusual extension territories. In this city, which it does not yet exist, but which has long been under construction, although it lacks a clear plan, the individual fragments are assumed with its own formal autonomy, functional and even their job responsibilities.

The fragments of the contemporary city are the materials of an open system. Available to the repetition, the connection and composition, they shall aim to experimentation as urban materials. Some overlap and interlock into each other until losing their identity, others take great distances from one another. Other gin cotton with linear trend along minor roads. Others are made from the districts of public housing that are slowly becoming the new formal and conceptual hubs within the peripheral tissues of the modern city; still others consist of large areas and different forms, sizes and sequences of the constituent materials of the open space, and although all are the result of a more or less obvious design device, some have taken aggressive forms and clearly recognizable, while others are struggling often to assume its own clear identity in which they recognize specific lifestyles, roles and formal features (Vicari Haddock, 2004).

The debate about the optimal size of the contemporary city must assume boils down to that of density / distribution. Two principles of organization of the space, otherwise related, have effects on density and distribution in attempts to schedule them in the most efficient manner possible: the replication of diverse units within them, independent and the same time connected and interrelated, and their organization in a reticular system of diversified centrality for both the rank of functions hosted and that for the identity specificity.

The idea of a polycentric city structure seems, therefore, inherent in current urban planning, as a method to sort the inordinabile and to structure the new metropolitan city. This structure, however, is not based on the centrality of the hierarchy, as in so ironclad going on in the central theory of Lösch or in a more complex way as they did in overlapping catchment areas of Alexander, because in reality it would still be difficult to maintain in complex organizations as the metropolitan city. The limits of the hierarchical-functional model can be traced back to the fact that demand is not referable only to an area more compact, without taking into account how demand will shape and change, specialization and increased mobility that make the urban parts less dependent on distance and hierarchical relationships between central places replaced by specialization-complementary relationships. The city can no longer weigh on a center, but on a central pattern connected to each other. What happens is a leap in scale. The relations of interdependence that once existed between the districts and the city center and then between the city and the land, now extend to the scale of the metropolis. It tends more and more to a vision of a city organized in various multinuclear areas (Lynch, 1996).

Lynch, in fact, so this option defines: "... the city should be equipped with a number of centers in which the service areas are integrated between them. Many of the most important services can serve the entire area for some purposes and simultaneously serve more limited areas for other purposes. No area can be assigned exclusively to a single center, although each center may have its own catchment area". Unlike the hierarchical central planning this sense provides the most flexibility of use and less social determinism.

The spatial model that is getting ahead is polycentric and reticular, that knows how to act better on local territories through a complex approach, which is namely able to make best use of existing urban structures and to involve different social actors. Stakeholder involvement, among other things, plays an important role in the resolution of the other great problem of the contemporary city: that of the lack of identity of its parts and in particular the suburbs. The homogeneous city of shopping malls and perimetral residential buildings, forms the largest urban and architectural lost opportunity of being able to create a real city to polycentric structure, designed to cool-down the city center; it represents, with its intellectual emptiness, the largest expropriation of soul of urban land reduced to a territory to conquer the trade of large multinational corporations. With this you do not want to undermine the economic function of the city, because without it would lack a basic requirement of the raison d’être of any urban cluster, but want to be hoped the refocusing of the government policy to the enhancement of each territorial sector , providing it with a
culturally recognizable heart and totally unique: a central role around which the inhabitants of the peripheral center can catalyze its own original identity; where they can exert their creativity and feel part of a bigger whole of their experience. This is the visceral basis around which the polycentric city work; any other solution that does not grip on the souls of the people is bound to generate malaise and poor civic education. The polycentric city, in the contemporary urban situation, looking at the transformations of some European cities, has the strength to overcome the impersonal can catalyze its own original identity; where they can exert their creativity and feel part of a bigger whole of their souls of the people is bound to generate malaise and poor civic education. The polycentric city, in the contemporary urban situation, looking at the transformations of some European cities, has the strength to overcome the impersonal soul within them. Where they can exert their creativity and feel part of a bigger whole of their experience. The polycentric city is the model city built on the urban centralities that bring the citizens to live their space. It is the city of the gathering places, is the city built around its many possible centers, is one in which the urban and architectural design play a leading role in development, of change and dynamization of hybrid conditions. It is the city that acts through a "power differential" between urban areas; experiencing different interconnection and polarization strategies, subjecting them to a critical design discussion to build places of sensitive and shared places. It seeks the well-being of users, the quality of living. This burden of responsibility is to be fully assumed by the urban design and strategic plans. Project and strategy are confronted with irregularities, with dispersions of the city and find their own reasons to conceive an urban environment in which you live, you work, you think, you walk, you are driving, you meet and so much more. The structure polycentric metropolitan city becomes a city model seen as the space of experiences, plural and no absolute rules, without a single form, but inclusive, open, free, changing, heterogeneous. Issues to be analyzed and to which try to give shape through: the conceptual content; the innovative contribution compared to the problems of the contemporary city; the relevance of the individual intervention programs proposed to the programming frameworks of the sites; the relevance of the solutions respect to social and urban issues; the innovative aspect of the individual building types; the relationship between residence and other functions; the socio-economic viability; technical quality; architectural quality (Morandi, 2004).

The regeneration project of the contemporary city in a polycentric metropolitan cities, creative and inclusive, can explicate in certain urban forms and in determinants forms of potential of urban space; in forms of delimitation of the interior and exterior spaces that resonate with the landscape; in joints of the common space and the private space; rethinking the concepts of distance, proximity, of connection, as well as notions of limit or transition between the private and the public, the intimate and the collective, local or community interests and the general interest. Starting from interpretations of historical types, the square, the park, the building and the public space, of all the types of effective urban planning, dynamic and interpreter of our time, the integration of different functions must be sought. It is necessary to implement the articulation of built and open spaces and their integration into a fluid and dynamic continuum. The projects, in this logic, tend to materialize in detections of volumes aiming to reflect on the conditions of consolidation of each area, of every context, whatever its value, a view directed to the extension of the periphery avoiding the impoverishment of inter-urban fabrics. It is concise idea from which comes (must stem) a comprehensive strategy, in a process that grafts transformations set on permeability of pathways, quality and diversity of spaces, in an attempt to re-establish through architecture and urban spaces, new centrality in hybrid contemporary fabrics.

The project, working on relations with the different urban fabrics interrelated, research aggregation and re-composition in a urban image of identity; test, in foreshadowing a constructed space, to define the tools, the size, the distributions and forms suitable to be transposed into the contemporary local aspects, as it must necessarily take account of the local in order to entrench. The model of the polycentric metropolitan city, which comes from the urban project, which is investing some European cities, it is a sustainable model, in which the marginalization and degradation become a distant memory; a model which triumphs the urban environment, space for people in a recognizable identity relationship with the places. Architecture and urbanism come together, intertwine, complement; everything is part of an urban design that goes beyond the traditional concept of the planning and proposes changes for significant projects, for architecture, for the regeneration of the city.

The polycentric structure, clearly, is not the only structure to which they are holding out some contemporary cities in the race to their new redefinition in metropolitan cities; is rather the lesson that you are having in the transformation and regeneration process of European cities large and well known as Paris, Lyon, Barcelona, Rome, Amsterdam. Nothing for now it seems simple, but a new architectural and cultural vitality is pushing the scientific debate to hope in the future because these interventions may involve the entire genesis of urban development in metropolitan areas.
4. Conclusions

The consolidation of existing centrality and the creation of new ones thus represent a strategy to spread prosperity, cohesion and urban regeneration in the territory of Cosenza, for his new vision of the metropolitan city. The creation of new centers, by implementing economic and territorial development strategies capable of grasping the idea of a polycentric city that is over the center-periphery dichotomy, determines new images of urban parts on which you operate and structure a network of specific roles, so that even today the peripheral areas have their own connotation and can develop a sense of identity and belonging among the citizens. The features that will make the metropolitan area is configured as a network of new centers can be summarized as complexity, connection, attraction and sharing. These are aspects that live together in coexistence, interacting and adding value to the sum, but above all, are those characteristics that differentiate any redevelopment in an authoring intervention us a polycentric metropolitan cities.

The complexity tells the centrality as urban fact. This feature, in fact, based on the mixing of concepts and variety, is defined by the variety of spaces, and functions typical of cities architectures. Complexity is, therefore, that characteristic of urban centers which is outcome of the urban regeneration project and that is configured in the plot by which it may act all other aspects of the centrality. It is also that aspect that the intervention produces so as to perceive the city users that part of the city in its role of engine of urbanity.

An intervention of urban regeneration defines a central, even when this has strong characteristics of physical identity and connection with the urban context. The urban centers, in fact, are increasingly integrated to the city is through ease of access, and through the localization of intermodal centers and strategic infrastructure for the urban territory. This feature tells how the centrality is inserted into the urban network; as there are no internal barriers and how all its parts are interrelated to the city by means of easy access, but also and above all, enhancement and correlation of public spaces and open spaces as elements not only of that part of the city, but of ‘entire metropolitan context. The connection also aims to formally reassemble the parts to the whole, also focusing on new openings and views on the definition of an urban landscape that creates identity recognizable and shared.

Closely related to the connection and complexity of centrality is also the attractiveness, that is characteristic of the centrality of recalling for the attention of all the inhabitants of the city, but sometimes also of the territory, because of the presence of those large containers of functions public, we can define large attractors. Locating specific urban functions, resulting often in strong architectural signs, means that are localized in urban centers, or in their immediate vicinity, significant urban income values, which reconnects the centrality to the city through economic flows, roles and territorial level functions.

When we are talking about the urban centrality sharing, talking about two fundamental aspects, related to the time and duration of the centrality, which are: the economic and social aspect. Sharing, then, is that aspect which summarizes the results of participation and consultation processes that generate an urban center.

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