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Towards metropolitan regionalism Stuttgart and Rome: two models in comparison

Carmela Mariano

University Researcher in Urban Planning
Department of Design, Tecnologia dell'architettura, Territorio e Ambiente - "La Sapienza" University of Rome
carmela.mariano@uniroma1.it

ABSTRACT

The process of “metropolisation” that has characterized the development of urbanization in contemporary cities over the last few decades, is being subjected to a transformation process oriented towards “regionalization” dynamics, where metropolitan regions become the engines of economic development and competitiveness on an international scale. The objective of a comparison between the experience of the Stuttgart region and that of metropolitan Rome, the largest municipality in Europe, is to contrast an example of an efficient, democratic and dynamic regional government with the difficulties in administering a territory as complex as Rome, in an institutional and political framework that does not tend to foster chances of constituting new government models at a supra-municipal scale.

The traditional model of metropolitan organization of the most important urban agglomerations, over the last few decades, has changed remarkably. Relationships between the central city and the neighbouring municipalities

have been profoundly modified. Commuting from the home to the workplace is no longer mainly registered towards the municipal capital, but there is a balance between the two directions with an increase in overall commuter flows within the entire metropolitan area.

New social and economic dynamics, related to territorial *metropolisation* processes (Indovina, 2005) and the decentralization of functions of metropolitan rank, have determined a new configuration of the metropolitan areas. This has led to larger territories, namely the *metropolitan regions*. These are economically inter-dependent, compared to the city, and include the surrounding non-urbanized territory whose principal market and financial centre is the metropolitan city itself. Moreover, a growing number of residences located outside the city are accompanied by the relocation of business activities over the whole territory. This generates new forms of widespread polarity and a new balance between residential areas and business hubs over the entire territory. This territorial model is therefore a new type of metropolisation model, a definite *metropolisation-regionalization* model (Camagni, 2003).

These new settlement dynamics are recognised in the *meta-city*¹ definition, a term used by the urban sociologist Guido Martinotti to describe a new entity that has overcome (meta) the traditional physical makeup of the «first-generation metropolis» - typical of the 20th century with its core and its rings; a metropolis in which the physical extent of the agglomerate no longer coincides with institutional boundaries and where new dynamics, which accompany the transformation processes of the contemporary city, produce an array of cross-cutting conflicts: the daily conflict between different categories of citizens – *inhabitants, city users, commuters, metropolitan businessmen* (Nuvolati, 2002); the institutional conflict between governing bodies of the large municipalities and the neighbouring ones, between comuni and municipalities, between the central government and the regions. These conflicting aspects are in need of greater democracy, new government

1 The term “metapolis” is to be attributed to F. Ascher in *Metapolis ou l’avenir des villes*, Paris, Editions Odile Jacob, 1995. In this context, Martinotti has redefined the term using a different meaning, in *Metropoli del XXI secolo – Sconfiamenti e reti*, Round Table of the CSS (Italian Board for Social Sciences) Commission for City Governance at the Turin Book Fair, 13 May 2010.

measures and an integrated approach to urban complexities (Prigogine, 1997). Ensuring the territorial efficiency of the metropolitan system therefore becomes an objective for the government and for territorial politics. Subsequently these may establish the most suitable programming forms and tools for the smooth functioning of a complex system, for the proper administration of the territory and its competitiveness on an international scale; for overcoming common resistance to the hypothesis of a common strategy, shared between the central municipality and the neighbouring ones; and finally for ensuring participation of an array of public and private bodies involved in decision-making processes for the future of the city. Research into models of metropolitan government, in the European sphere, outlines some theoretical reference models corresponding to situations in which the metropolitan government problem has been dealt with using strict and strong institutional solutions, creating levels of government by direct election (*theoretical metropolitan reform model*). But although the problem has been faced at the institutional level with unconvincing results, some independent experiments are underway envisaging cooperation and coordination networks between municipalities, various levels of government agencies and private subjects (*theoretical public-choice model*). And ultimately there are situations in which the two components at the government level, namely the authoritative model and the voluntary component (*theoretical neo-regionalism model*) co-exist. Neo-regionalism fosters cooperation agreements towards the consolidation of public and private stakeholder networks intervening in the field of public policies (Heinelt, Kubler, 2005).

The European context provides a vast and articulated array of alternative forms in the field of metropolitan government models. There are some well-known examples, such as the *Greater London Authority*, *Planungsverband in Frankfurt*, *Grand Lyon* and even the *Metropolitan Area of Amsterdam* or the French scenario envisaging the inter-municipal cooperation of the *EPCI (Etablissement Public Coopération Intercommunale)*; this reference framework allows the identification of strong points and weak points compared to the effectiveness of one or other theoretical reference model that has been put forward (Mariano, 2011).

In the areas that chose a government of an enlarged area, inspired by the *theoretical metropolitan reform model* (as in the case of the *Greater London Authority* and the *Verband Region Stuttgart*), there are some evident factors determining government success: in fact, responsibility of a sole government level settles the conflicts between different administrative levels and local associations by the elimination of the fragmentation of government levels involved in decisions. Studies also indicate that agglomerations with forms of metropolitan government inspired by the first theoretical model are the richest from the economic standpoint since common municipal efforts flow into a unique synergy for the benefit of the metropolitan area (Rosemann, 2005). But, at the same time, metropolitan governments are cumbersome institutions for the political burden they exercise and for their tendency to encounter hostilities and mistrust on behalf of governments with provincial or regional status; nor are they well-received by local governments located “below”. On the other hand, when resorting to soft institutional forms, often inter-municipal and non-elective, of the theoretical *public-choice* model, as in the case of French inter-municipality, one risks giving local issues too much space, being paralysed by vetoes and preventing the attainment of a global vision if not sustained by strong direction.

Similarly, reference to the *neo-regionalism* theory and therefore resorting to *governance* (Le Galès, 1998) as opposed to *government*, does pose some risks, for example in the case of the *Planungsverband* in Frankfurt. In fact, governance may be the formalization of consensus-building procedures regarding strategic decisions and projects; but it can only function when the promoting public agencies are able to govern, being strong and authoritative, with an incontrovertible role in the control and supervision of different stages that ensure the effectiveness of the process.

Three success factors can be distinguished on the basis of these considerations, which strengthen the *metropolisation* process at the regional level. This paper will then compare two experiences, which are profoundly different in their outcomes: the metropolitan government in Stuttgart and the one in Rome, to ultimately evaluate their reciprocal effectiveness.

The three success factors are:

1. *Capacity for building the metropolitan identity.* One of the main objectives of government should be the construction of a metropolitan

identity, a common and participated vision of the future of the territory, with the aim of fostering a path towards the constitution of the metropolitan area. One of the strong points of a metropolitan government must be that of outlining a *vision* for the wider area, as an internally cohesive and structured territory. This territory will be surrounded by the support and common purpose of all those participating in the development of the entire area through participation, discussion and listening processes. Therefore local and urban communities are considered active subjects and their participation becomes a core element, not only towards legitimizing the fairness of choices as much as for their contribution towards the construction of scenarios that will guide the choices;

2. *Capacity for promoting competitiveness.* Metropolitan areas represent territorial realities that most contribute to the economic growth and increase of the Gross Domestic Product. This is due to the fact that population density, human capital and infrastructure indicators are higher in these areas. In this setting of growing globalization and European integration, the perception of widespread consensus, the winning picture of a form of politics able to blend development, culture, social cohesion and economic promotion together is the key to success of government policies aimed at the competitiveness of the territorial system and towards the attraction of investment capital. These *policy* programmes are an opportunity for setting up more or less open stakeholder coalitions, assuming the form of a “public-private partnerships that are legitimized in terms of flexible capacities and public actions” (Le Galès, 2006). These converge into the production of public actions oriented towards international competitiveness for the cities where policies for the promotion and representation of these areas have become essential;
3. *Guaranteeing the principles of democracy and effectiveness.* The lack of communication that exists between the daily life and problems of citizens and those who are summoned to solve them, that is the political and technical-administrative bodies, increases the gap between the governed city and the experienced city. The problem involving the need for democratic representation, whatever the

institutional forms that might be defined for governing these large areas, gives rise to the question involving the correct balance between forms of democratic representation and the capacity and timeliness of decision-making, involving factors of organization, procedures, flexibility; between the necessity for leadership and the capacity for maximum consensus. For these reasons, the direct election of members of the institutions of metropolitan government constitutes a strong point for its legitimacy and for social consensus.

EFFICIENCY, COMPETITIVENESS AND DEMOCRACY: THE VERBAND REGION STUTTGART MODEL

In Germany, in accordance with its approach to competitiveness and its re-launching at an international level, the term “metropolitan region” defines a high-density agglomeration of more than one million inhabitants. These areas experience specific development dynamics in terms of economic criteria, such as value-added, economic power and income, having a prominent international position and commitments.

There are substantially two cooperation models at the regional level that have been adopted in German metropolitan areas:

1. “*functional units*” (Zweckverbände), describes a type of cooperation created to solve specific problems, such as the case of the Regionalen Planungsverband München (Munich’s Regional Planning Association). The drawbacks of this model derive from the fragmentation and weakening of the regional level due to the large number of associations comprising a variety of authorities covering different areas according to specific objectives. Moreover, this approach does not guarantee transparency in decision-making and only provides for indirect democratic control.
2. regional associations are considered as the ideal form of intra-regional cooperation in the *länder*. Regional associations may have direct democratic legitimacy, for instance the Verband Region Stuttgart has its own regional parliament. When the government level covers all the sectors of regional competence, as in the case of the Hannover region, then we can speak of regional authorities.

In contrast to other urban sprawls of average dimensions, the city of Stuttgart is surrounded by a ring of wealthy cities with a total of 590,112 inhabitants – approximately the same as the number of citizens living in the capital. Due to the polycentric structure of this territory, urban-suburban conflicts have always been very evident. An association for regional planning (Association Region Middle-Neckar) was set up in 1974 for these reasons. But it soon revealed its inadequacy for problem-solving because of the dominant interest of local authorities rather than any common interests in developing the “Greater Stuttgart”.



Figure 1 – The Verband Region Stuttgart in the Land of Baden Württemberg

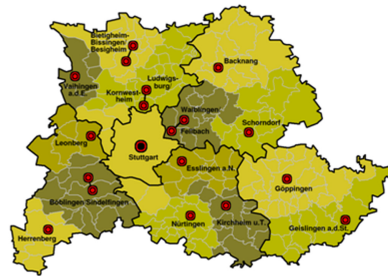


Figure 2 – Administrative division of the Verband Region Stuttgart

The economic slump registered in the 1990s and the establishment of the European integration process fostered a series of public discussions. These discussions (Walter Rogg, 2004) concluded that network fragmentation was the problem causing the negative economic trend, later formulating the hypothesis that the solution could envisage identifying one single institute for regional representation. The new constitution of the Federal State in 1992 and the regional political reform allowed the Baden-Württemberg region to adopt a law aimed at strengthening cooperation within the region. On 7 February 1994, the Baden-Württemberg regional Parliament issued the “Act governing the establishment of the Verband Region Stuttgart” that constitutes the VRS and delegates legislative authority to it.

Verband Region Stuttgart follows the Regional Associations cooperation model and its organizational structure makes reference to the so-called forms of *top-down government*, with a highly centralized institutional authority,

organized into hierarchies, inspired by the theoretical *metropolitan reform* model. According to this model, the fragmentation of authority in the metropolitan area must be dealt with through government consolidation, through a metropolitan authority, with extensive competence and autonomy. At the same time, the Regional Association seems to possess characteristics of the *bottom-up* model in which authority is democratically legitimized through direct election of the Regional Assembly; so there are traces of the theoretical *public-choice* model. The VRS organisation also uses of a network of public and private² agencies that revolve around the association while promoting regional development, after the theoretical *neo-regionalism* model, fostering the establishment of cooperation agreements that consolidate stakeholder networks participating in the drafting of policies (Steinacher, 2004).

This institutional structure appears to recognise the three success factors desirable for metropolitan government. The *principle of democracy* is guaranteed by direct elections, according to the system of proportional representation. These take place every five years, electing 93 members of the association that will constitute the Regional Assembly, chaired by the Honorary President and by the Director. Another strength of this government model lies in the capacity of the central institution in outlining a *vision* of

2 A series of stakeholders and partners revolve around the Regional assembly, who cooperate with the Verband Region Stuttgart. The task of the Stuttgart Region Forum is not only to heighten the profile of the Region and maximize cooperation, but also and especially to support social activities and reform regional powers. Sport Region Stuttgart (1996) is a regional voluntary association of local authorities, sports clubs and sports groups. It supports the region by organizing and coordinating sports events of regional relevance or by supporting ideas and projects in the field of sports. For the most part it is funded by the VRS. Moreover, the VRS is also a member of Kulturregion Stuttgart and the regional women's association called FrauenRatschlag (1995) whose objective is to sustain and promote specific activities and interests of women in regional policies. Jugendregion Stuttgart gives voice to the activities and contributions of young adults in the political and public sphere. Its role is to establish the foundations and develop the apprenticeship of young leaders who might contribute to regional politics. Dialogforum der Kirchen is constituted by institutions and individuals from the Rottenburg-Stuttgart diocese and from the Wurttemberg Church of the Protestant State. IHK Region Stuttgart (chamber of commerce and industries of the Stuttgart region) and Handwerkskammer Region Stuttgart (chamber of arts and trades) offer their technical support to small and medium-sized enterprises having to acquire know-how in the trade sector that is volatile according to circumstances and political imperatives.

the region that is appropriately communicated and strongly shared by the population. It is important to involve the citizens, who play a decision-making role for the policies to be adopted and this, together with the directly elected institutions, means that policies have more meaning for the population, through their direct participation. This sets off a series of self-controlling mechanisms that generate more trust and virtuous civic behaviour (decrease in tax evasion, etc.) by being accessible and intelligible both for citizens and for the local governments. These are the basic premises for the acceptance and support of metropolitan government systems.

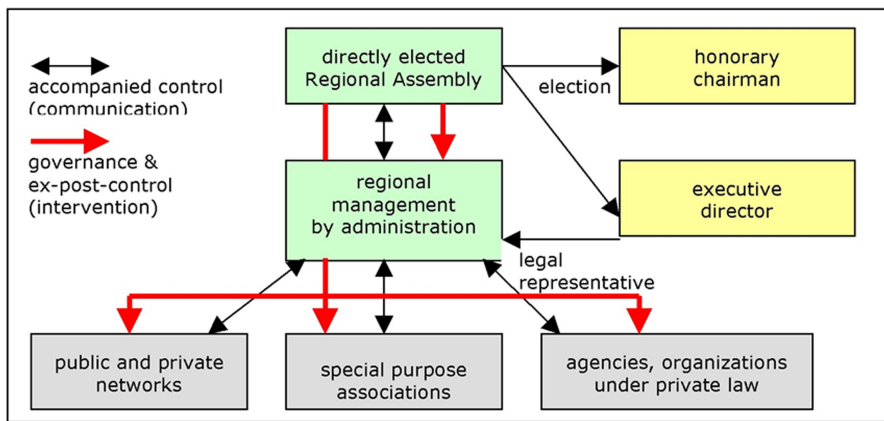


Figure 3 – The structure of government in the Stuttgart Region

Today the Stuttgart region is one of the richest and most competitive territories within the Lander Baden-Wuttemberg and also in Europe. It has 30% of the entire region's GDP and a very low unemployment rate. The industrial plants in the region, whose international fame is based upon manufacturing in the fields of automobiles, software, communication means and biotechnology, are especially characterized by high-technology and their great impact in the export sector.

In the field of development, the VRS region has established *Wirtschaftsforderung Region Stuttgart GmbH* (WRS), a corporation for economic development in the Stuttgart region, that has been created to coordinate all the activities that might contribute towards the implementation of the Region's cooperation and development at an international level. It is the

central meeting-point for investors and companies in the city of Stuttgart and the neighbouring municipalities. It assists companies in scouting for favourable business locations, production facilities and offices; it also offers information regarding economic benefits offered by the region. WRS carries out these activities in close collaboration with experts on the economic development of its 179 municipalities and 5 districts. It supports local economic development, offers its assistance to companies and works in close touch with a broad range of public and private institutions.

Thanks to the establishment of policies for economic and social promotion, *Verband Region Stuttgart* has successfully set up a *vision* for the Stuttgart Region and has sparked sharing and growth processes towards metropolitan identity. This is a fundamental prerequisite for consensus and even agencies of metropolitan government have contributed towards steering strategic-programmatic policies aimed at strengthening and promoting the local economy.

In fact, the fields of action of the Verband Region Stuttgart include regional territorial planning with particular attention towards the balance between protection of environmental areas and parks and new urban development; planning public transportation and regional infrastructures; promoting business, tourism, culture and sports through conferences, sports and cultural events of regional relevance; organizing trade fairs at a regional level; sustainability of the vitality and living conditions in cities and towns; and economic competitiveness.

Verband Region Stuttgart regional policies demonstrate that government reform not only depends upon particular spatial conditions connected to the historical tradition of cooperation and to the problems of each specific region, but also upon the consideration of shared objectives capable of overcoming the conflicts of the stakeholders involved and steering sustainable development into the metropolitan area.

Verband Region Stuttgart is a good example of “*regional government*”, coordinated by a strong central institution but with a role as mediator and providing effective leadership in the networks between public and private agencies, who may be less formally organized, who work at the promotion of regional development.

According to scholars, this institutional framework makes the Stuttgart

model one of the most interesting and effective ones (Benz, Lefevre, Walter-Rogg). This is also in consideration of the fact that it is the result of a top-down political reform at the state level and of bottom-up cooperation that was initially voluntary and then became institutionalized.

BALANCE BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS AND THE ECONOMY OF THE ROME MUNICIPALITY AND ITS “METROPOLITAN AREA”

In Italy the debate on metropolisation-regionalization processes, although evident in some territorial situations, for instance in the Milan urban region, conflicts with the extremely fragmented reality of the country. There are in fact more than 8000 municipalities, most with a strong local identity. These local identities actually represent a hindrance to the construction of any *metropolitan identity* and attempts made towards creating new levels of intermediate local government. The strong power of the local systems and the traditional autonomy of the municipality that characterizes the Italian constitutional system are, together with the hostile position of the Regions, some of the principal obstacles for the establishment of “Metropolitan cities” as envisaged by legislators in 1990 through Law No. 142/90.

The dimensions of the Rome Municipality, with 129,000 ha and a population in excess of 3 millions, has certainly played a role in defining the relationship of Rome with its hinterlands; it also possesses a rooted a “*pro-Roman*” vision and political culture that has always seemed like a constraint in establishing new territorial dynamics.

The development of Rome over the last two decades has in fact taken place through a binding process with neighbouring municipalities, along some of the historical communication routes that have constituted the roads along which continuity with nearby municipalities has been established; initially there was simply a continuity in houses but subsequently these axes also became locations for mixed functions and activities. This gave rise to a true urban sprawl with its own specific features: namely radial development, being star-shaped, with broad empty spaces that separate the various radial axes. The urban shape of a vast area that constitutes the negative of a great environmental system, which wedges into the heart of the capital.

So the current situation is a metropolitan system which is the result of

spontaneous settlements determined by the absence in the metropolitan area of hubs around which new mixed industrial-residential areas could grow, ultimately giving rise to a totally disorganized spatial area, even without that hierarchical model defined by classic metropolitan form of a core and rings. In an attempt to redesign the classic metropolitan model, the strategy of “new centralities” has been affirmed and represents a cornerstone of the development plan for Rome approved in 2008. Considering the key of “territorial transformation” (Marcelloni, 2003), centralities have been conceived to correct the anomaly of a metropolitan system, where suburban centres do not exist, in an attempt to rebalance the metropolitan area. The objective was to relocate some functions of excellence from the central hub, decongesting it and actually strengthening the many peripheral locations. The presence of new centralities in the Roman suburbs was and still is an indispensable choice if one does not wish the outskirts of Rome to be “skipped” by new location logic that is more and more metropolitan, with the consequence of some areas remaining as suburbs forever.

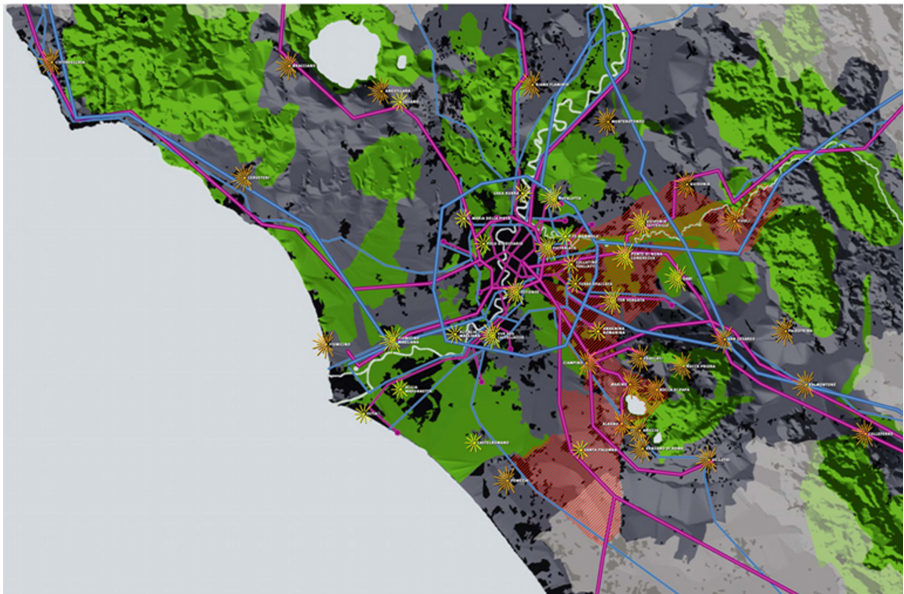


Figure 4 – Metropolitan strategy of the City plan of Rome

But today the situation regarding the implementation of “new centralities” seems disappointing. The projects in progress are those already planned before the approval of the PRG General Development Plan (Bufalotta, Eur Castellaccio), whereas the processes set off for the new centralities (Romanina, Acilia-Madonna, Pietralata, Torre Spaccata) have been stalled (in some cases the *Schemi di Assetto Preliminare*, preliminary planning schemes, have been pending evaluation in municipal offices for years); in those cases where the procedure seems to be running smoothly, the plans that have been presented possess an evident distortion of the concept of centrality. While the objective of promoting *territorial competitiveness* of the suburban areas is established with the localization of urban functions of excellence, ongoing projects witness a progressive loss of these functions to the benefit of the residential ones. These produce, as a result, a further reduction in the infrastructural and economic conditions in these areas.

One must add to this the decision, forced upon the PRG because of administrative boundaries, to single out as many as 18 centralities, all within the municipal perimeter, which does not support the process of metropolisation that spontaneously tends to invest in the territories of the province.

Therefore the metropolisation model for the Rome area presently requires reconsideration of the polycentric model at a supra-municipal level to solve structural and social issues that can no longer be solved within the Rome municipality³.

The provincial territory is a vast one, therefore the necessity is for a network that pivots upon centralities within the municipal perimeter, with an appropriate selection in terms of feasibility and sustainability, and on other new centralities within the municipalities belonging to the second ring, some of which are already identified by the Piano Territoriale Provinciale Generale. Thereby are identified the strategic development hubs even in terms of productivity and reduction in the consumption of land cover, with the objective of blocking spontaneous trends still present in the peripheralization process and systematically strengthening the metropolisation process in the area.

3 Asse 2 del Progetto strategico della Provincia di Roma - “Riorganizzare il territorio della capitale metropolitana” (Part 2 of the Strategic Plan for the Province of Rome. Reorganizing the territory of the metropolitan capital)

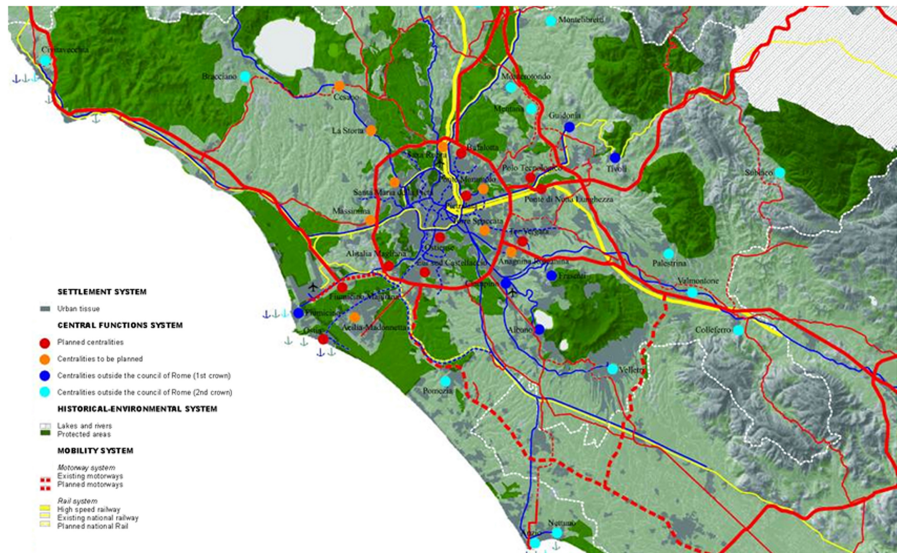


Figure 5 – Territorial effects of the Piano Territoriale Provinciale Generale

A new territorial and social-economic model which, within the vision of the future metropolitan city, should include the broader metropolitan area made up of 121 municipalities belonging to the Province in addition to 19 municipalities belonging to the Municipality of Rome.

But the activities of the metropolitan area of Rome are intertwined with those relative to its role as capital of the Italian State and consequently with the eventual recognition of a specific legal status, which could result in different planning and functions for the metropolitan area.

It is worthwhile recalling that Law No. 142/90 was proclaimed during a period of uncertainty regarding regional problems and during a lull in the debate regarding the overall future of the City of Rome, while awaiting the passing of the law regarding “Roma Capitale”, that was definitely approved in December 1990. Red tape regarding the drafting of coordination territorial plans, which had begun approximately ten years earlier, had been lagging in the absence of a regional framework of reference.

3 Asse 2 del Progetto strategico della Provincia di Roma - “Riorganizzare il territorio della capitale metropolitana” (Part 2 of the Strategic Plan for the Province of Rome. Reorganizing the territory of the metropolitan capital)

In fact, the activation of all the previously described procedures has not led to concrete results towards the definition of a metropolitan city to date. In 2009, the Law “Government Mandate on Fiscal Federalism” outlined the possible institutional destiny of the Province of Rome which, within this legislation, has the chance to take part in the setting up of a new body, namely Città Metropolitana di Roma Capitale. In addition to the traditionally attributed functions, these will include the planning of the territory in general and that of the infrastructure networks, setting up coordinated administration systems for public services, promotion and coordination of economic and social development (Art. 23 Law 42/09).

In this sense, it is obvious that politics were running behind in conceiving government tools to be used for the metropolisation process. In fact, even the second Legislative Decree (hereinafter Law No. 42/2009 and Legislative Decree No. 156/2010) for conferring new powers to Roma Capitale in the field of transportation, construction, commerce and city planning demonstrates all of its limitations. This is due to the fact that, once again, it remains within the confines of Rome instead of establishing the needed Ente Metropolitan (Metropolitan Authority) that has been postponed to a time yet to be determined.

Political and territorial limitations

Considerations regarding the fate of “Metropolitan capital”⁴ on one hand have to deal with the opposing policies between a possibility to open up the provincial dimension and the will to continue thinking of the metropolitan dimension as enclosed within the municipal perimeter and, on the other hand, an extremely fragmented and articulated territorial situation.

The 121 municipalities that make up the provincial dimension indicate a strong local identity that has become deeply-rooted over the course of decades, a lack of *vision* of the whole and a sceptical attitude towards the hypothesis of a supra-municipal level of government. As already underlined in the introduction, the subject of *metropolitan identity* is a fundamental prerequisite towards the success of the Metropolitan City.

On the contrary, the individual municipalities that make up the Province in

4 Progetto strategico della Provincia di Roma, 2010.

the Rome territory sometimes possess dimensions and populations that are so small, some of only 200 inhabitants, that it is difficult to imagine a shared regional vision that is internally cohesive and structured, that maximizes resources and creates the conditions for well-balanced development between the different urban and territorial systems.

The lack of institutional and democratic recognition of the government level, which in any case is opposed by many, has in fact compelled political action within the single administrative perimeters. This consequently makes unlikely the success of any initiative aimed at promoting development and competitiveness in the territory, as for instance in the case of centrality.

But in the territory belonging to the Province of Rome there are many forms of inter-municipal cooperation, (“Municipal Unions” Law 267/2000) that seem to be implemented in particular by those municipalities with rather low populations and resources in terms of quite strategic and complex territories where the administration and provision of services is a considerable burden to the municipal funds. Within this perspective, resorting to associationism is an obvious choice for administrations, in order to continue in guaranteeing the production of public goods at a local level.

Therefore inter-municipal cooperation (Fiorillo, Robotti, 2006) assumes the form of internal dynamics that is somewhat contrary to the process of metropolisation characterizing metropolitan areas where local authorities are traditionally very strong and do not normally lend themselves to surrendering parts or all of their prerogatives. Concrete actions that have the task of building up relationships needed by the metropolitan dimension (*metropolitan identity*) can be located in this context, thereby creating conditions, from below, for the construction of the metropolitan city, beyond the one that will be identified as the most suitable form of metropolitan government. In this sense it may contribute, in a significant manner, to the path towards the construction of the “Metropolitan Capital” with the inclination on behalf of municipalities to become associates (in an autonomous form) proposing strategies, policies and interventions, giving life to a form of self-government from below (*theoretical public-choice model*). The potential of these “Unioni dei Comuni” (Union of Municipalities) is still

4 Progetto strategico della Provincia di Roma, 2010.

an open issue; time is needed to accumulate experiences and reach a steady organization of this form of cooperation and its use for governing the process of rationalization and reorganization of services, functions and frameworks of the local bodies. But setting off from these premises, one can reasonably affirm that today the Municipalities are equipped with an innovative tool. This may be used to start upon a path which will certainly be a complex one, that contains more stimulating perspectives, and which could foster concrete answers to the issues raised by ongoing new dynamics in the metropolitan areas.

4 Progetto strategico della Provincia di Roma, 2010.

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