

REGIONAL DISPARITIES AND SOCIAL COHESION POLICIES. THE CASE OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF BARI (ITALY)

ROSALINA GRUMO¹, LUIGI BELLINO²

ABSTRACT – The role of Regions appears reconfigured by the “reshaping” of national States. Besides, under a sub-regional scale, forms of governance have been launched, redefining a new territoriality. In Italy, the role of the Regions and Cities is more and more important in the decision-making processes of the territories and it is also characterized by the recent establishment of the metropolitan cities, but still not geo-politically defined. There is, in fact, a constitutional reform process through the region’s reorganization legislative autonomy and strengthening of local governments. In this context, some areas are characterized by social unrest that includes new forms of poverty, urban malaise and marginalization, due also to the financial and economic crisis whose signs of recovery are still very weak. In the European Union, the programming decisions considered the policy of development and cohesion also at the local scale. The 2014-2020 EU programming cycle, in fact, has defined the main role of metropolitan cities, but also of cities and internal areas. The contribution will analyze Puglia, region of southern Italy, and the metropolitan area of Bari, the regional capital, in order to verify policies concerning the social field, both through “strategic planning” and launching the so-called “smart city” experience. In the metropolitan city, indeed, there is already an orientation towards the “social innovation” to address the issues of social cohesion and inclusion, consistent to sustainable development.

Keywords: regions, social and territorial cohesion, social innovation, metropolitan area, Bari

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the Italian economy has been affected by structural issues grown throughout time, similarly to other European countries. The level of the global competitiveness in the production system has been influenced by scarce scientific and technological innovation for business purposes, by poor competition in the service industry and by unsatisfactory public services. This difficult structural situation became more evident due to some other factors such as the inability to use currency devaluation in order to foster export and an increased competition with newly industrialised countries (in particular Asian countries). A constraint derived from the serious situation of the public finances has slowed down the necessary modernisation of the country especially as for investment in infrastructures on a national scale, and in Southern Italy in particular. The degree of development of Italian regions has always been diversified. Within the same national economy, there are both the richest and poorest regions in the European Union, thus depicting a very contradictory picture. Even though it shows relevant dissimilarities on a regional scale, Southern Italy is a policy area to be considered as a whole and a territory in which all the different regional potentialities should be fostered since it represents a connection with northern

¹ Professor of Economic and Political Geography, Università degli Studi di Bari, Dipartimento di Scienze economiche e metodi matematici, Largo Abbazia Santa Scolastica 53 – 70124, Bari, Italy.

E-mail: rosalina.grumo@uniba.it

² Employee of the Ministry of Education, Italy & Research Associate, UMR GRED, Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier, IRD (France), 911 av. Agropolis, BP 64501, 34394, Montpellier cedex 1, France.

E-mail: bellinoluigi@libero.it

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Italian and European regions as well as with southern non-European areas and South East European countries.

There are also some differences in some target sub-areas to be analysed in depth. In particular, two issues come to light. The first considers the need not to ignore the persistent necessity to enhance infrastructures in the northern regions of Southern Italy (Abruzzo, Molise) since they are mountain areas with a marked rural diffusion, and hence they show some disparities notwithstanding they are closer to more dynamic markets located in Central and Northern Italy. The same issue involves Sardinia as well, even though with different features (due to its island status it has a great potential, though it is inevitably decentralised). The second issue deals with the need to consider all social emergencies of the southern Italian regions, not only because of infrastructural delays, since a significant percentage of Italian population lives in this area.

Considered the above-mentioned context, the first part of this paper aims at verifying the cohesive actions provided for in order to reduce these disparities in the light of the completed Financial Programming 2007-2013 and the ongoing one for the period 2014-2020. At the same time, in a geopolitical perspective a series of reforms and territorial reorganisation aiming at strengthening regional governments is taking place. This process also seeks to give Italian metropolitan cities a primary role as for social cohesion issues. In this sense, smart cities will be analysed as a feasible model of social innovation and strategic planning. The second part of this paper analyses the above-mentioned framework on a regional scale (Apulia) with particular focus on the metropolitan area of Bari - the regional capital city - in order to define the tools to be used to cope with cohesion issues, social inclusion and sustainability within a metropolitan city.

EUROPE OF THE REGIONS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EU COHESION POLICY

On May 1st, 2004, the European Union introduced ten new Member States thus accomplishing the biggest expansion ever made. The EU area increased by 35%, its population grew from 395 million to 493 million people but, at the same time, the average GDP per capita shrank due to the underdevelopment of most of the new Member States (European Commission, 2014). Regional differences became more evident, introducing new economic and social issues. The reform carried out in 2007-2013 aimed at challenging the issues of this expansion by enhancing competitiveness and the promotion of the underlying social and economic fabric. The European Union with 27 Member States had 268 regions showing deep economic and social differences.³ All strategic interventions provided for in this programme aimed at achieving growth and employment as well as supporting actions for sustainable development (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2005). The former 27-Member State EU, now counting 28 Members as Croatia was introduced in the Union, counts upon 347 billion Euro, that is 35% of the overall EU financial resources.⁴ The Community area shows therefore diversified economic scenarios: their differences should be fostered but also faced and overcome. The achievement of all objectives (investments for economic growth and employment, territorial cooperation) is carried out via Structural Funds.⁵ In this new framework, these two Cohesion Operational Programmes (2007-2013 and 2014-2020) represent a change in the course of action. Its core arises from the relationship between development policies and their territorial contexts, now with an overturned perspective when compared to traditional viewpoints. Traditional economic growth theories in the 1950s concluded that the economic development, when supported by elements such as wealth and

³ One out of four regions had a per capita GDP 75% lower than the EU average.

⁴ The Treaty of Lisbon in force since December 1, 2009 provides the EU with a definite legal framework and instruments to cope with future challenges and citizens' expectations. Territorial cohesion, social and economic cohesion are new objectives of this European Union Treaty.

⁵ These are: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), Cohesion Fund (CF), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). These funds are now called European Structural & Investment Funds (ESIF).

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employment would have attracted its related factors (development, infrastructure, services, institutions); the contemporary view considers that these factors should be established before any economic development as they represent essential conditions. The consequence is that policies for citizens and companies and those that guarantee the accessibility to environmental, cultural and social resources have a growing importance (European Commission, Panorama Inforegio, no. 40, 2011/2012, p. 15).

URBAN SYSTEMS AND PLANNING IN ITALY

The urban structure in Italy has some specific features that characterise it. Unlike countries such as Germany and the Netherlands, and partially in Spain and England where the urban structure is made up of a structured network of cities, the Italian context is made up of lively, intermediate cities. The administrative boundaries of Italian municipalities do not allow for an adequate understanding of demographic and socio-economic dynamics. Nevertheless, the available data and analytical processing identify urban areas by means of criteria such as functional areas beyond a capital city that often coincide with the so-called Local Labour Systems that assess long commutes. Some urban systems have grown around big cities; on the other hand, the urban spreading involved larger areas thus creating new or at least potential connections among areas with similar phenomena (the current tendency is towards the metropolitan city).

Some ongoing analyses have highlighted that discomfort in suburban and peri-urban areas raised the necessity of interventions with specific objectives in order to fight their detached status (with particular emphasis in southern Italian areas). This is why operational programs and strategic planning should provide an answer to the need to cope with social emergencies and social-economic rehabilitation (Ministero dello sviluppo economico, 2013).

EU guidelines that highlight the contribution of cities and urban systems in supporting qualified and balanced development dynamics can be found in some Italian policies enforced since the end of the 1990s, that is when the Community Support Framework, Objective 1 referred to the “Urban” programme for urban policies.⁶ For the period 2014-2020, the Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion Policy by the European Parliament and the Member States allocated 325 billion Euro for regions and cities.⁷

Many Italian cities have become metropolitan cities and they try to implement operational policies within an institutional framework. Recently, several projects aiming at local decentralisation were suggested in Italy. In 2013, a draft framework law meant to abrogate Italian Provinces (as an intermediate institution between Regions and City authorities). New regional and provincial scenarios are reshaped in favour of enhanced autonomy, even though the previous circumstances still tend to be considered. In the process of reorganisation, large city-related areas are taken into account. In order to implement social policies, there are ten metropolitan cities in Italy (Rome, Bari, Bologna, Florence, Genoa, Milan, Naples, Turin, Venice, Reggio Calabria) (Ministero Coesione territoriale, 2014). In this light, the case study will focus on a territory in Southern Italy: the metropolitan area of Bari, Apulia.

Considering the above-mentioned innovations realized from the administrative organization point of view, the planning stage should be reconsidered on a larger scale thus

⁶ These policies were implemented by promoting integrated urban projects aiming at considering the need for competitiveness and social cohesion, attracting private capital flows and regulating a governance system that may foster a cooperation system between regional and local administrations.

⁷ At least 23.1% of the Cohesion Policy balance sheet (70 billion Euro) will be employed in investments within the European Social Fund (ESF) which will support educational activities, poverty reduction strategies, actions for social inclusion and employment. In addition, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aims at strengthening political urban contexts by allocating financial resources to urban integrated projects, representing a priority in this sense. The main aim of these projects is to promote social inclusion and to reduce poverty rates (European Union, 2012; European Commission, 2014).

including radically distant territories (Dematteis, 2011).⁸ At the same time, many cities have carried out rescaling processes by promoting urban policies meant to create partnerships, networks and resource sharing (economic, social, financial, project-based) with other cities, stakeholders and territories thus creating systems organised on a larger scale (Sassen, 2006; Brenner, 1999). Cities and local administration live a systematic lack of economic and financial resources, though. This is why the development of smart cities should be considered as both an effective urban policy and the result of a legitimate social and spatial cohesion.

SMART CITIES: A NEW EXPERIENCE

The aim of the article is to see how cities are able to plan the integration among available resources and confirm the need of coordinating public and private entities and the sharing of choices about citizenship.

During the Renaissance, the idea of smart city would have represented the “Ideal City”, or an entity based on both aesthetic and functional community aims, in which beauty, harmony, social organisation, and enlightened administration could coexist. At present, even with multiple meanings, smart cities have this quality because they meet sustainable criteria, guarantee high life quality standards, optimise space and resources, contribute to both personal and social enhancement, aim for liveable spaces, environmental quality, economic growth, social participation, an effective urban governance, mobility programs (The European House, Ambrosetti, 2012).

“Smart cities and communities” are concepts conceived by the European Union for medium cities and deal with six parameters: economy, people, governance, mobility, environment, and living.⁹ Actually, the ideal dimension for the implementation and testing of innovative and cutting-edge projects was represented by medium cities (less than 500,000 inhabitants) as they could welcome and put innovations into practice. In Italy, the concept of smart cities involves cities with much more inhabitants than the amount suggested (such as Milan, Genoa, Turin, Rome, Naples and Bari) (Anci, 2013) and they overwhelm all the potentialities and operational possibilities of smaller cities. Starting from the core model based on the six above-mentioned parameters, further models can be used in the world depending on the features of the territorial contexts, on the community requirements and on the local resource management.¹⁰ Even though the concept of “smartness” has not been the subject of a structured scientific debate, it emerged that smart cities do not match a solid theoretical paradigm. On the contrary, it refers to a complex set of ideas that can involve different stakeholders and institutions, mainly in private sectors, in projects and transformations related to the contingent aspects of the cities rather than to their structure (Hollands, 2008).

The employment of the smart city model refers to a complex set of practices that might be difficult to understand. On the one hand, they focus almost exclusively on the technological dimension and, on the other hand, they fix on the particular smart operations that, in concrete terms, are experiments and projects limited to specific areas, neighbourhoods or even to single residential buildings (Forum Pa, 2013). From the point of view of social-spatial justice in relation to smart cities (<http://www.jssj.org>), it is important to highlight that the urban dimension can be recognized from a complex connection between material and immaterial elements and from the

⁸ In this context, cities are not seen as passive entities within the reshaping process. International competitiveness (in invitations to tender, projects, programmes, events) is an established practice carried out by local administrations. The aim is to carry out urban development procedures and to attract private capital flows and investments.

⁹ The six parameters have been defined by the Polytechnic University of Vienna, in collaboration with the University of Ljubljana and the Polytechnic University of Deft. This idea was first developed in the 1970s, but only over the past ten years it has been recognized by the institutional authorities and considered in the drafting of territorial policies.

¹⁰ Amsterdam, Stockholm, Parades (Portugal), Tallinn, Curitiba (Brazil), and Seattle (USA) are good examples of these models and, in particular, Hong Kong is a real textbook case.

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changes in these connections throughout time. An example can be the link between networks of energy distribution and of relations between citizens, institutions and the rules governing the relationship between citizens and their sense of belonging, as well as the infrastructure and the social system. Therefore, this aspect of the model still needs to be verified and this case study will be helpful in order to understand it.

The city, considered as an area of democracy and respect for the human rights, together with the call to a 'territorial justice' contribute to highlight the need for an urgent new interpretation of smart policies concerning social inclusion, sustainability, and development (Soja, 2009). The future of the territorial development depends on the strong urban dimension and on the urban areas that appear less smart. In the same way, the concrete elements for a social and territorial innovation can be found in the forms of resistance and of definition of alternative scenarios.

TERRITORIAL REFORM AND URBAN GOVERNANCE FOR SOCIAL
COHESION

The territorial reform in Italy, introduced in 1990 and "accelerated" after many years by the spending review policies, has been approved in 2014.¹¹ This reform, with a centralist nature, has not received a bottom-up consensus and some of its parts remain incomplete; moreover, it results asymmetric compared with the federalist viewpoint already adopted.¹² The law governing the territorial reorganisation has established ten Metropolitan Cities (Figure 1), without considering the possibility of taking into account large non-metropolitan areas, and prospecting only hypothetical "unions and mergers between municipalities". In this unclear, scattered administration framework, no multidisciplinary approaches or strategic analyses have been carried out (Zilli, 2013); the planned abrogation of Italian provinces by framework law (non-metropolitan, large areas) adds territory-related issues due to geographical and administrative hesitancy (Ranieri, 2014).

In southern Italian regions, these issues are combined with long-lasting structural problems: in this scenario, therefore, policies aimed at fighting inequalities cannot be easily implemented. What is more, the significant reduction of employees in non-metropolitan areas (Italian provinces), as well as the metropolitan cities, lead Regions to reacquire all the functions previously managed by provinces or to delegate these tasks to municipalities.¹³ When social-economic policies that aim to reduce the gap between poor and wealthy regions are innovated, a non-defined administrative framework, which is the result of the recent territorial reorganisation, can obstruct the achievement of efficient strategies that try to reduce inequalities.

In this methodological framework, one of the functions of metropolitan cities is the "strategic development of metropolitan areas" that should be reached by adopting a strategic plan for municipalities' functions.¹⁴ Considering this context, then, two new issues emerge: 1) the

¹¹ Italian Law no. 56 of April 7, 2014 establishes ten metropolitan cities; autonomous regions may establish new metropolitan cities. This law, issued under Renzi's government (but reconsidered under Monti's government) has no adequate consideration of the role played by territories on the geographical-administrative and social-economic level.

¹² Since 2009 (Law no. 42/2009), Italy has embraced a federalist approach in order to make territorial institutions responsible for the administration of financial resources. Nevertheless, the law concerning the Italian territorial reorganisation (Law 56/2014) and other laws impose a centralist approach.

¹³ At the time of writing, most regions have not issued laws on competences to be reacquired or to be delegated considering that, in a very short time, Italian provinces will reduce their employees due the expected abrogation. This creates an unclear situation even in terms of some important functions to be implemented such as those concerning education.

¹⁴ Activities of metropolitan cities include: general territorial planning, the achievement of coordinated management systems of public services and the related management, mobility, promotion and coordination of social and economic development. There is also the direct relationship framework with other European metropolitan cities.

relationship between metropolitan cities and regions; 2) the network system between municipalities within a metropolitan city and the "capital city", the latter being consolidated in terms of institutional power.

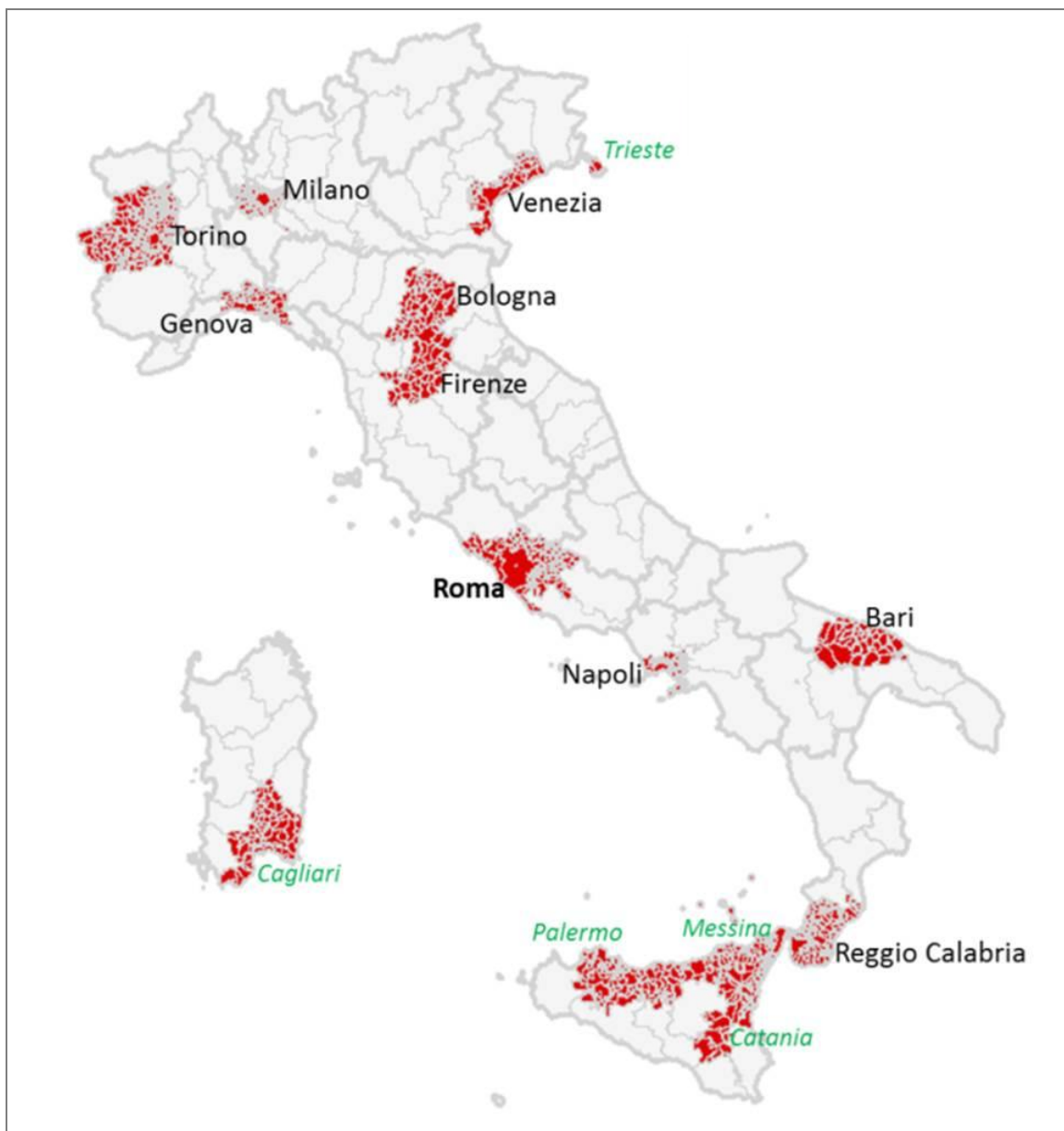


Figure 1. *Italian metropolitan cities to be set up in the regions with special statute and their related territories, 2014*

Source: Bellino, 2014

These issues become relevant in the light of territorial and social cohesion policies. Due to their functions, metropolitan cities have a marginal role in the implementation of these policies as regions and municipalities have this responsibility: in particular, the coordination of activities carried out by municipalities determines the achievement of regional cohesion policies. A vast though variable area (sub-region or sub-metropolitan areas) becomes the ideal context to achieve several policies (such as social policies) to compensate for a weak territorial reorganisation. A precise definition of these new environments is then needed (metropolitan cities have considered

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the creation of homogenized areas in their charters) so that a multi-level governance may deal with social cohesion and development in broader urban policies and may be consistent with sustainable-oriented and territorial purposes. These considerations are called for to underline the need of complementary dynamics between regions, metropolitan cities and other vast areas.¹⁵ However, the *Sixth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion* underlines that “poor governance limits the impact of Cohesion Policy” (European Commission, 2014). In the strategic perspective that aims at reducing regional disparities it is important to consider that metropolitan cities are new local stakeholders with their own and derived resources (PON METRO), and this new scenario alters some power-related relationships.¹⁶ Therefore, the interaction between EU, Government, Regions and metropolitan cities becomes more complex but interdependent in order to make sure that regional challenges may challenge globalised processes.

SOCIAL INNOVATION IN APULIA: THE METROPOLITAN CITY OF BARI
AND SMART CITIES

Apulia (4,090,266 inhabitants, 19,540.90 km²) is located in Southeastern Italy; though it has been facing important and innovative challenges for a decade in order to enhance its social and economic development, it still represents one of the poorest regions in the European Union. This situation has worsened during the latest economic crisis, and the upturn is yet to happen (Figure 2).

Considering this scenario, it is clear that the existing gap with other Italian and European regions implies the synergetic reinforcement among territorial institutions (regions, metropolitan cities, cities, municipalities) in public policies. This is particularly true for the period 2014-2020, as the European Union has guaranteed huge financial resources to metropolitan cities, cities and inland areas (Ministero Coesione Territoriale, 2014). For this reason, a multi-level governance - including non-institutional stakeholders - has to be structured with actions preordained with a shared methodology so that it may support partnerships and the related programming activities in order to reach the expected aims in an European perspective (Eurostat, 2015).

Public policies subject to this analysis are achieved in a "smart" context and with an ever-growing use of digital technologies and innovations. In 2014, the regional administration of Apulia has launched a programme called “SmartPuglia 2020” drafted in cooperation with its local community. The programme is part of the regional policies of “smart specialisation” and aims at creating smart integration policies for the local territory. Some of its policies, in accordance with the aim of this paper, deal with social inclusion as well as environmental and cultural awareness towards sustainable development. Local administrators state that this programme is both “the starting and final point” Apulia has in order to make this region “attractive, competitive, inclusive, well-aware and responsible, connected and integrated” (Regione Puglia, 2014).¹⁷ In this transition context, Apulia plays an important role and gets enhanced exposure on a national and European scale. It is now a hub for new efforts and solutions, and it is clear that “technology is a decisive and essential element to combine innovation, sustainability and social inclusion” (Pirlo, 2014).

¹⁵ Multi-level governance can also be meant as inter-institutional governance in which models and practices are aimed at guiding and favouring a synergetic and convergent cooperation among institutional stakeholders with no hierarchical relationship and between the latter and the civil society (Parmentola, 2005). The last decade of multi-level governance, especially in southern Italian regions, proved to be demanding in the management of social policies in relationship to the related functions and resource management.

¹⁶ The social-economic role of metropolitan areas worldwide is really relevant. At the political and institutional level, metropolitan mayors will play a relevant role also because they will be elected members in the Italian Senate as provided for in the ongoing constitutional reform.

¹⁷ Together with this action, Regione Puglia has also ratified the “Programma di agenda digitale PUGLIA2020” (Regional Committee Resolution no.1732, August 2014).

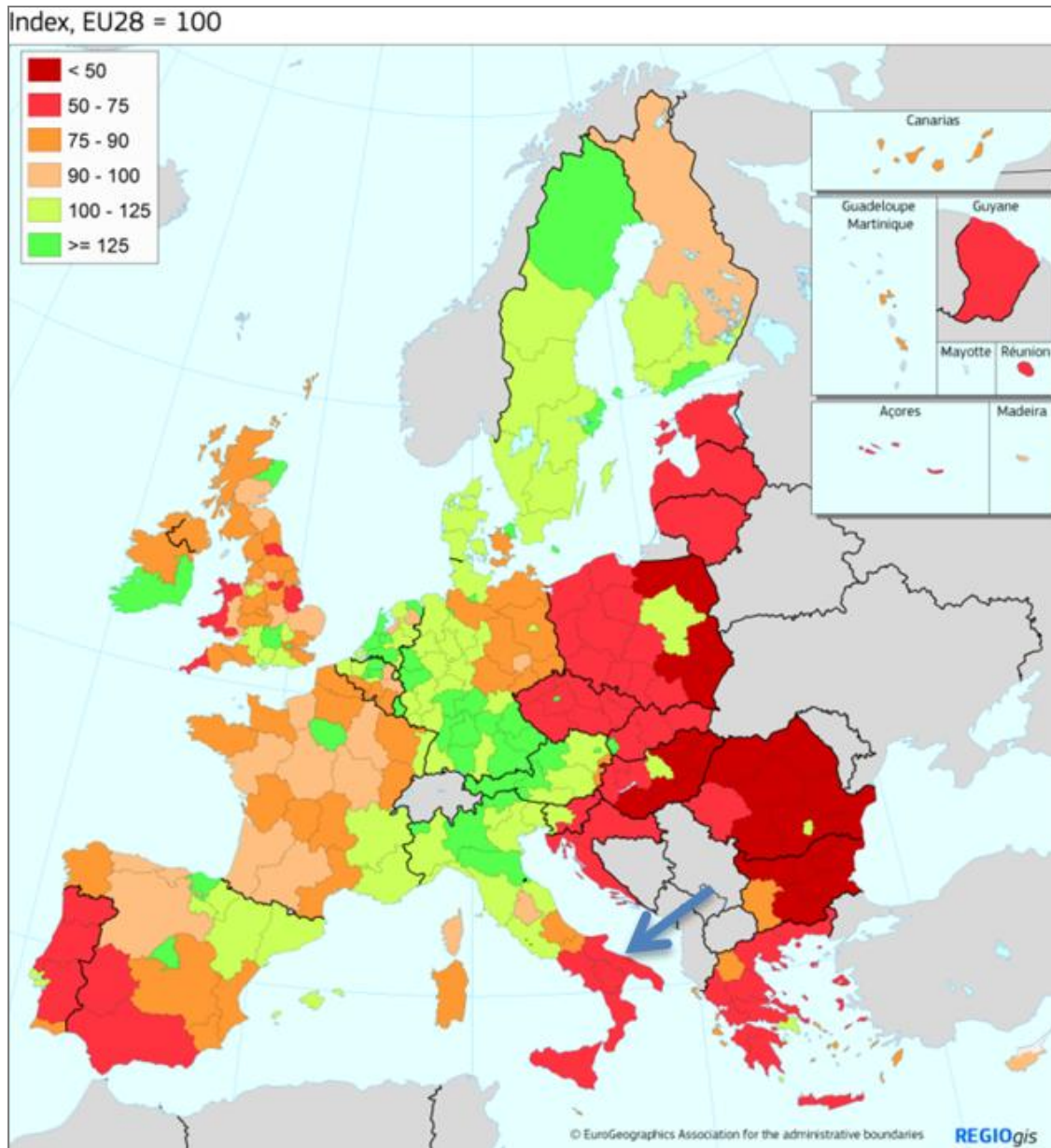


Figure 2. *Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per head (pps) in the EU regions, 2011*
 Source: European Commission, 2014

Within the social policies for the period 2014-2020, aiming at raising employment rates, social inclusion and human capital quality, there is a tight connection with the aims determined by the Italian "Digital Agenda" (Milella, 2014). These factors combine social inclusion and "expertise, education and lifelong learning", proving that "[...] digital expertise represents a strategic factor for social inclusion, literacy, innovation and active citizenship". Educators with digital expertise result in an enhanced competitiveness in order to reduce disparities on a regional scale (Cammalleri, Veronico, 2014). This perspective, together with other innovative policies implemented by the regional administration towards territorial and social cohesion, can create a common thread towards the reduction of regional disparities. Pursuant to the territorial reform (see section 4), the former Province of Bari (3,825.41 km²) situated in Apulia and made up of 41 municipalities, has become a Metropolitan City (1,261,964 inhabitants).

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In the period 2006-2009, the “Piano Strategico Metropoli Terra di Bari - BA2015” (Strategic Plan of the Metropolitan Area of Bari - BA2015) was carried out, involving 31 municipalities in a “testing stage” of metropolitan city activities.¹⁸ During this innovative experience, issues such as welfare or the reduction of disparities had no tangible results, thus marking its inefficacy. After 2009, only some activities of the strategic plan were implemented such as the “Development of the regional *e-government* system in the Metropolitan Area of Bari” (Bellino, 2013).

In 2011, the municipality of Bari, in the light of innovation and sustainability projects, joined the initiatives “Covenant of Mayors” and the Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP), thus starting its Smart City project. Joining these initiatives, the administration of the municipality of Bari underlines that the “Smart City concept” includes “[...] urban development policies from different perspectives; it should generate new ideas, helping its citizens in fulfilling their dreams, reducing social disparities and guaranteeing equal opportunities” (Capezzuto, 2012). The aim is to make Bari “[...] a creative, dynamic, inclusive and sustainable city”, providing “[...] its citizens with adequate services and guaranteeing social cohesion and welfare” (Lacarra, Ranieri, 2014). The same perspective was seen in a holistic perspective that broadens the Metropolitan City's horizon though reminds us some visionary ideas of the “Strategic Plan - BA2015” (Figure 3).

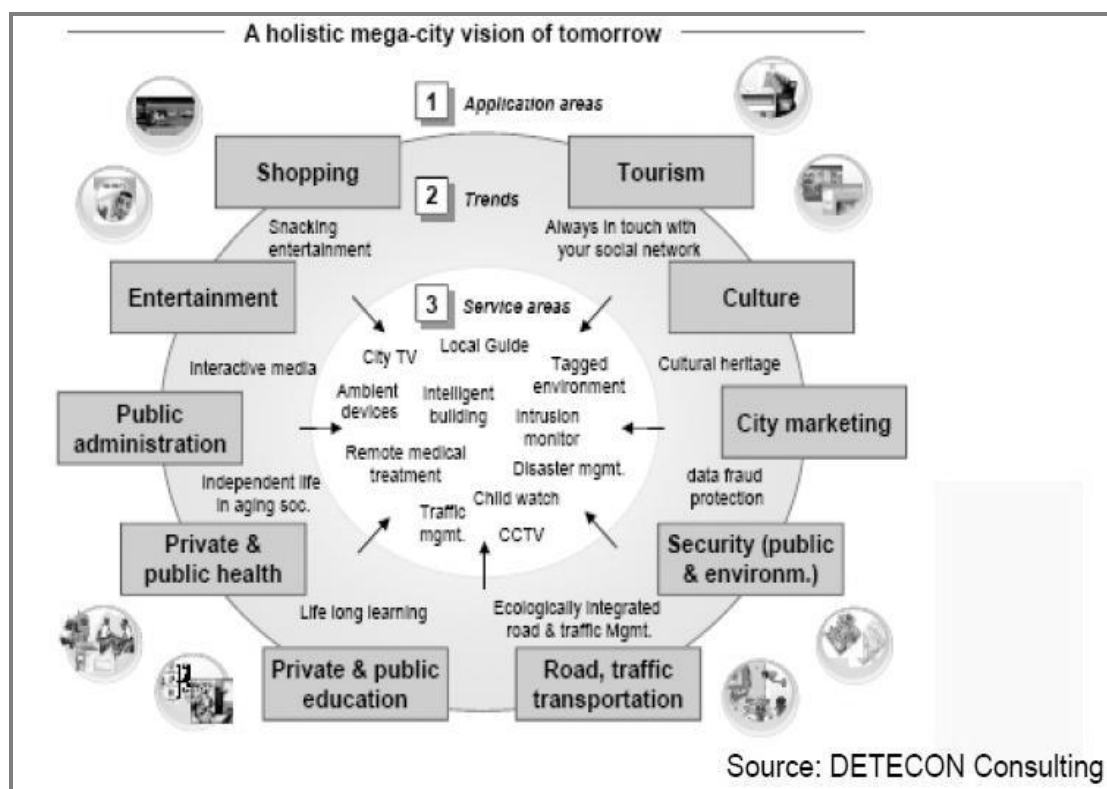


Figure 3. "Bari Smart City". Holistic view
Source: Comune di Bari, www.barismartcity.it , 2011

The above-mentioned contexts are coordinated and consistent with this study in relation to ideas and practices aiming at reducing regional inequalities by means of social innovation

¹⁸ During that period, Apulia experienced some metropolitan-like tests. At present, the Metropolitan City of Bari includes both the Strategic Plan of Metropolitan area of Bari and two other strategic planning policies, called Area Vasta "Città Murgiana" and "Valle d'Itria".

policies¹⁹, even though the popular trend represented by Smart cities generates some doubts and further considerations. A. Granelli (2012) refers to this issue by identifying four main areas that may provide the city of Bari with urban and smart innovations: 1) The old town centre; 2) The seaside; 3) Fiera del Levante (Bari's Trade Fair); 4) Basilica of San Nicola.

In order to introduce measuring criteria for smart-related projects an innovative initiative is represented by the monitoring platform being developed by Comune di Bari and ISTAT, the Italian National Institute of Statistics. With this methodology, smart-related activities work “together with strategic programming”; thanks to the interaction with citizens, “information on the objective status and the subjective perception of the city” will be gathered in order to establish mid- and long-term measurable objectives. The final aim is to organise a “[...] congruent system of markers [...] that can assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the implemented actions [...], assessing people's wealth by means of *sentiment analysis* procedures” (Ferrara et al., 2013).

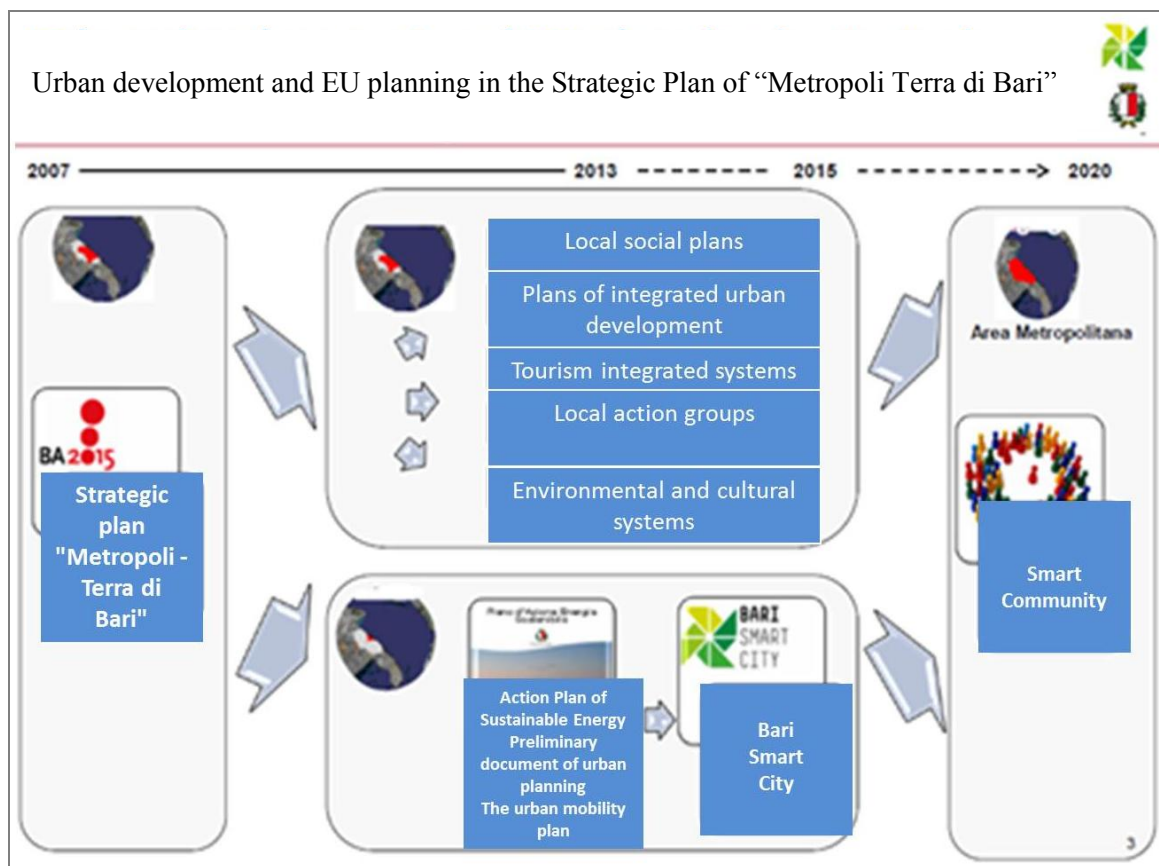


Figure 4. “Bari Smart City”: towards a metropolitan community
Source: Ranieri, 2012

According to our perspective, the scenario outlined for the city of Bari could be theoretically and pragmatically applied to a larger, metropolitan context, in accordance with

¹⁹Municipalities like Bari and Lecce could start social innovation projects after Regione Puglia implemented the project Apulian ICT Living labs – Apulia Innovation in Progress; the programme for Youth policies called “Bollenti Spiriti” helps young people in the development of entrepreneurial projects (Anci, Osservatorio Smart City, 2013).

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regional cohesion policies referred to in this section.²⁰ Thanks to the Metropolitan Strategic Plan, the Metropolitan City of Bari can predetermine and organically join welfare policies in the area, as provided for in the aims of the “Piano Regionale delle Politiche Sociali” (Regional Plan for Social Policies) and implemented by the “Piani Sociali di Zona” (Local Social Plans), considering the potential offered by smart cities.²¹ In this perspective, strategic governance policies can develop the idea of a metropolitan development that calls for the integration between social policies, urban development plans and city/town urban plans, thus considering all actions for smart cities in an inclusive perspective of the urban contexts pertaining to Bari. This new approach, namely “all services that meet citizens' needs” can represent an early challenge that can be projected on a metropolitan perspective by means of a series of coordinated systems and plans. This could give birth to a “smart community” in which both stakeholders and citizens play an active role in the governance policies (Figure 4).

CONCLUSION

In recent years, similarly to other European countries, structural issues grown throughout time have affected the Italian economy. Both in the Italian and European context it is possible to highlight the spreading of a model tending to widen the gap between rich and poor areas. This raises the need for an evaluation of the results of the previous planning and of the expected outcomes of the current planning (2014-2020) concerning cohesion, social inclusion and sustainability issues.

The analysis carried out in this paper aimed to verify to which territorial scenarios the Community guidelines are addressed, considering both the city and the urban systems. Italy is carrying out a territorial reorganisation that involves the establishment of ten metropolitan cities, but its organization and intervention framework still seem to be unclear. At the same time, at a global level, various cities have started a rescaling process by promoting urban policies that aim to establish partnerships, networks and resource sharing (economic, social, project-based, financial) with other cities, stakeholders and territories. In addition, the strategic planning and the smart city model, as described in this paper, seem to correspond to a vision rather than to a solid theoretical paradigm, linked to the structural transformations of the city and aiming at establishing a social-spatial justice. By means of this paper focused on the Italian situation and, in particular, on the social innovation of the southern region of Apulia, the above-mentioned elements are shown in their actual context.

The analysis reveals that the territorial reform in Italy does not provide a clear competence framework; on the contrary, it leaves a gap in the transition stage of the EU Financial Programming 2014-2020. As for the social innovation and the smart city experience of Bari, it is not sufficient to evaluate the “smart” applications and the digital competencies, even if they prove to be important. In the wide area of the Metropolitan City of Bari, as well as at a European level, it is also necessary to implement some sustainable welfare policies that include coordinated systems and plans for the establishment of a “smart community”. Here, both the stakeholders and the citizens can play an active part in the governance policies. Therefore, at the moment, this process seems to be incomplete and it needs further verification.

²⁰ The town council of Bari has been developing a smart city strategic plan for Bari since 2011, joining the initiative “Smart cities and communities” in which an inclusive city is part of a strategic governance policy for Metropolitan Cities (Comune di Bari, Delibere G.C. 24 e 492 del 2011 e Delibera C.C. n. 87 del 2011).

²¹ For further reference to social policies in Apulia see: Regione Puglia - Department of Welfare, Social Policies and Health, 2013, Regional Plan for Social Policies 2013-2015; for further reference to the Local Social Plans in the municipality of Bari see: Comune di Bari - Department of Welfare, IPRES, 2014, Local Social Plan 2014-2016.

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