

# Processes of Adaptation and Creation of a Territorial Governance: The Experience of the Cities of Benevento and Salerno (Campania Region, Italy)<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This paper presents some considerations about the definition and role of “medium-sized cities” in the processes of urban governance of the Italian regional systems, in line with the objectives of European programming 2007-2013. Beginning from some theoretical considerations, the research objective is to delineate the features of the “new urban geography” of Campania region as it has been formed on the base of the social and economic processes that in the last 30 years have modified the regional urban system in the widest context of Mezzogiorno. To such aim, the paper is articulated in two parts: the first one in which the fundamental passages are re-called in the processes of development of Italian urban areas that have carried to new paradigms object of theoretical approaches still in course of definition, and the second one in which such processes are considered regarding the model of urban development of Campania, on which the research is concentrated. Specifically, the paper presents the case of two “middle cities” in the Campania region: Benevento and Salerno, which play a particularly important role in the design and development of a “regional network of medium-sized cities”.

## Keywords

Urban areas, polycentrism, territorial governance, regional development

The continuing slowdown in major centers and the establishment of progressive and expansive dynamics of dispersal, which characterized the urban systems of the economically advanced countries in the last decades, has meant that the discussion on the transformations of urban geography focused first on the birth of “new spatial hierarchies” and then on overcoming the same that led to a reading of contemporary urban space according to its own characteristics of a “polycentrism” tied to a redistribution not only of the residences but also of the urban functions.

The urban model of the Campania region, as it

appears in its physical and functional form today, and the vision contained in the basic documents of the current regional planning and economic programming seem to entice the king to the hypothesis of a evolution of the urban region toward a model of such “integrated and balanced polycentrism”, in which a new role is assigned to the “medium-sized cities”. The

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verification of this evolutionary hypothesis and the understanding of the role played by the “medium cities” in reshaping the geography of urban development in Campania is the principal question of this study.

Particularly, in this paper two cases of “middle city” of Campania region are analyzed: Benevento and Salerno. In the first case, it will be underlined the multilevel model of territorial governance adopted by Benevento in relationship to its specific function of “middle city” of the inland areas of Campania region. In the second case, it will be analyzed the role of the city of Salerno in the processes of regional territorial governance as “middle city” of the coastal area.

The objective of this paper is also to reconstruct the processes of transformation of the two cities, in their forms, functions, connections, and finally planning policy that the two cities act as stimulus to a general process of urban regeneration, facing to sustain internal processes of cohesion and development but, also, external processes of rebalancing in a new urban asset in a “plural Campania”.

## **POLYCENTRICISM AND NEW SPATIAL HIERARCHIES IN CAMPANIA**

Since the 1980s, based on the studies of American urban geography made in the 1970s by Berry (1976), also in Italy people started talking about “counter-urbanization” in relation to reducing tension demographic in central cities and to move the growth toward the first, the second, and sometimes even to the most distant urban crowns. A phenomenon, which though initially marked the development of urban regions of Northern Italy (Lombardia, Veneto, and Emilia Romagna) and some areas of Central Italy (Toscana and Marche), has gradually manifested itself also in the South and Islands (although with specificity and local variations) showing, therefore, all its pervasiveness and its capacity to unsettle the

traditional structure “concentrated” of the Italian urban network (Baioni 2006).

As is known, the approaches and the models resulting from the interpretation of these processes are many: some researchers have spoken of a process anti-urban accepting fully the idea of the American studies; other authors have emphasized the existence of an urban cycle of development and decay in a process of “de-urbanization” the world as claimed by the Chicago school and announced by Hall (1983) in his studies. Dematteis (1983) has spoke of an Italy of “territorial revaluation” in relation to those areas that, if until then had supported rural depopulation and the urbanization, became in those years place of a strong demographic dynamism due to an urban growth non-contiguous.

Beyond the approaches and modelling, from region to region, the urban sprawl has transformed the landscape of the suburbs and non-urban areas, contaminated by a housing residential low density, from production activities spread (usually small and medium-sized businesses located outside of areas equipped and specialized) and large metropolitan functions (shopping centers and entertainment centers) that often become catalysts for new mobility and urbanization. There has been the creation of real “city-regions” such as areas of urban decentralization which has failed the traditional conflict between town and country and have established new models of urban-rural life (Bolocan Goldstein 2008).

Driven by diffusive dynamics of the population, driven themselves by a reorganization of the production system, the compact city has assumed, therefore, the appearance of urban sprawl, urban form without borders, branched along the lines of traffic, with wide inclusions of unbuilt areas, green spaces and infrastructure and permeated by a pervasive “city effect” as “trivial widespread tertiarization” (Gibelli and Salzano 2006).

Next to these diffusive dynamics, there have been processes of re-centralization of top-level urban

functions determined, once again, by an economic reorganization of functional spaces that have led to re-evaluate the role of major centers in the territorial organization in terms of a “re-urbanization” linked to an “urban quality” and the location of residential and quaternary activities.

The urban sprawl and repolarization have dictated, therefore, the characters of the new urban geography of the nineties: it is characterized by an urban model that takes the form of “network structure”, where in addition to metropolitan areas that specialize in functions more qualified, there is the development of new polarities—middle city—which identify “a new human habitat and a new urban form” alongside, not replace, the previous one (Martinetti 1999).

In this context, also the large southern cities and their metropolitan areas cease to be the exclusive places of wealth production and organization of the most dynamic economic forces, in favor of middle which if confined in previous decades in a state of marginal or peripheral geographical and functional, are currently considered as nodes to support local development and the site of competitive dynamics (Rossi 2007).

The Campania region, as well as other regional systems of the Mezzogiorno (South of Italy), has not been a stranger to these processes and now has a complex urban model whose evolutionary dynamics give way to interesting analyzes and reflections.

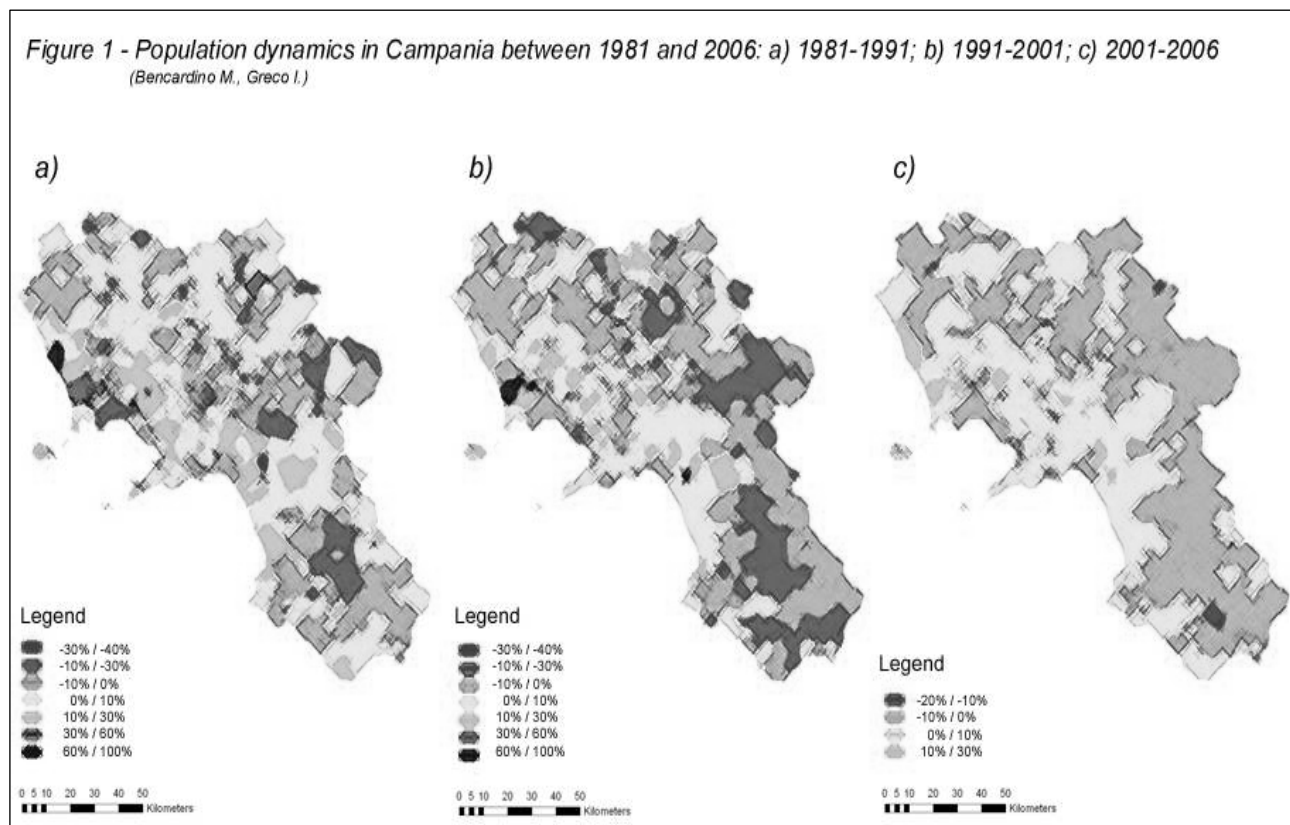
The territorial structure of the Campania region—divided into two geographical sub-regions largely differentiated by physical, social, and economic connotations—along with the events that have historically marked a break between the flourishing development of coastal cities and the marginal development of inland areas, has greatly influenced the urban structure and regional settlement: the regional urban structure for most of the last century has developed along the Vesuvius and the coast—the so called Campania coast—in which even today the urban areas of greater dimensions are

concentrated, in which the main business activities and service are established, and in which most of the regional population live, compared to a system of internal areas—the so-called Campania inland—characterized by strong discontinuity, with a prevalence of smaller centers with small populations and with reduced functionality.

Since the late 1970s, when for the first time the metropolitan area of Naples is defined<sup>2</sup>—considered by size and frequency of relationships among its components, the only metropolitan area in the South—the urban structure of the Campania region appears centred, more than in other southern regions, on a “mono-centric system” with a strong concentration of population and economic activities in the metropolitan area of Naples, embracing a territory of 800 square km with 4.4 million people, form an area with a strong “over urbanization in quantitative terms and under urbanization in terms of quality” (Mazzetti and Talia 1977: 157). The metropolitan area of Naples is considered in those years as a vast and populous area destined to spread gradually to the hinterland “cannibalizing” other provincial capitals (Viganoni 2007; Bencardino 1980; Bencardino and Gasparini 1992).

A vision, as is known, is refuted in subsequent years in which even in Campania the territorial model based on the development of the centers of greater population size is exceeded by a spatial development more diffusive and deconcentrated.

During the 1990s, the strong economic, social, and financial crisis and the equally important political and institutional crisis due to the permanent closure of the Extraordinary Intervention Program for the South in 1992, accelerate in fact the processes of sub-urbanization and counter-urbanization taking place in the region leading to an increase, often unregulated, the population density in suburban areas of large metropolitan agglomerations and in small-medium centers, with spatial and socio-economic effects, especially along the coast,



**Figure 1.** Population Dynamics in Campania.

ranging from the enormous consumption of land for the creation of unused urban spaces, the development of infrastructural facilities and basic services for the population to forms of social and environmental degradation (Dematteis 1983, 1985; D'Aponte 1992; Coppola and Viganoni 1994).

These processes, as is clear from a reading of the regional demographic trends registered in the decennial census of the population (1981-1991-2001), initially affect on the common areas around the town and along the coast, then spreading rapidly throughout the region, both along the north/north-west and along the north-eastern inland from Salerno to Nocera.

At the same time, there is the densification of the coastline from the city of Salerno, through the Sele flatland, reaches the area of Cilento, and the development of the central towns of the inland areas

(Benevento and Avellino) that, still physically distant from core, are candidates to become gravitational areas of the multiplicity of urban centers to small or very small size linked to them by physical proximity and relational interdependencies. In many systems of internal areas—high Irpinia (Avellino), Fortore (Benevento) Cilento, and Vallo di Diano (Salerno), instead, the process of desertification of rural areas has continued to grow: If this phenomenon appeared in the decade of 1981-1991 limited only to certain territories, in the following decade (1991-2001) has expanded greatly, and is still in progress (see Figure 1).

These transformations mark, therefore, the beginning of a process of rebalancing between the urban center of Naples and the other pole “strong” in the regional system that will gradually begin to

acquire a meaningful autonomy. Also in Campania, the model of “polar opposites” leaves then gradually replaced by “new territorial configurations” that put an end to the sharp contrast between the “bone” and “pulp” (Rossi Doria 1968).

The need to exceed contradictions that have traditionally characterized the reading of the dynamics of urban development in Campania seems recently to have found full recognition—at least formally—even in the basic documents of territorial planning and regional economic planning which aims at a “balanced development, sustainable and polycentric” of the regional system. “... Developing polycentric system of cities, through integrated development plans aimed at increasing social cohesion and raise the level of quality of life, competitiveness and attractiveness of urban and regional systems...” (Official Bulletin of the Campania Region, Special Issue of November 23, 2007, p. 100) is, in fact, declined in the objective “urban regeneration and quality of life” of the Regional Operational Programme (POR) Campania 2007-2013, European Fund for Regional Development (FESR)<sup>3</sup>.

In the same guidelines of the Regional Territorial Plan (PTR), of which the region was endowed in 2008, such expressions are found as “region plural”, “lattice structure”, “Campania plural” made up of “cities, districts, aggregate with relative autonomy”<sup>4</sup>.

### **SALERNO “EUROPEAN CITY”: TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES AND TERRITORIAL POTENTIAL**

The city of Salerno is certainly an interesting case study for several factors, among which some will certainly assume a greater significance. First, Salerno is the second most important city of the Campania region for its demographic dimension (140,000 inhabitants), with some complex urban connotations that are worthy of a detailed analysis; in the same time, Salerno is fully located in the range of medium-sized

cities and in the range of those considered wealth and the backbone of European and national urban network; finally, Salerno was and is crossed, particularly in the last two decades, by a interesting and noteworthy series of processes of urban transformation.

Therefore, these factors make Salerno to be one of interesting and complex investigations. To the factors taken in analysis it must be added that, for its wide and variegated province, Salerno deals with both the issues surrounding the complex system of inland areas and of mountainous and foothill areas, and the typical problems of coastal areas with the coastal strip extending from Positano to Sapri and meeting at least three different local coastal systems: the Amalfi coast, the Sele flatland, and the Cilento.

Already in the 1980s, Svimez Institute begins to redefine the territorial boundaries of the metropolitan area of Naples, adding to the same new emerging urban areas for residential and economic dynamics, including some tourist destination as the Gulf islands, the Sorrento-Amalfi peninsula, and, in the south-east, the node of Salerno between the Agro Nocerino-Sarnese and Sele flatland (Coppola and Viganoni 1994). More recently, areas of densification of the coastline from Salerno to the foothills of the Cilento wedging in the wide Sele flatland are added to the first ones (Amato 2007). In fact, these changes in the urban systems in Campania have drawn a true urban metropolitan system in the province of Salerno, which runs from Angri up to Eboli.

It can be said that this system is made up of a superior level urban area, including the towns of Salerno, Pontecagnano Faiano, Montecorvino Pugliano, Bellizzi, Battipaglia, and Eboli, which runs along the axes integral with the State Road 18 from Vietri and Cava de' Tirreni and from Pellezzano, Baronissi, and Fisciano up to Eboli. In addition, there are two peripheral systems: the median system of the Agro Nocerino (Nocera Inferiore and Superiore, Sant'Egidio, Pagani, and Angri) and the internal system of the Agro Sarnese (Mercato San Severino,



solving specific problems. They range from the historic center (divided into two: north and south) to the urban waterfront, from coast to the Irno Valley, through the median neighborhoods (“Italia”, “Europa”, and “Mariconda”) between the sea and the mountains, focusing the attention in the “compact city”, denser and more ancient settlement.

The results of the actions envisaged by Bohigas were important and significant, especially in the redevelopment of the south historic center of the city, restoring the central area, redeveloping it physically and functionally, through community “urban” program, and repopulating it. Indeed, the “Bohigas plan”, never fully implemented, is slowly distorted through the approval of variations to planning, to be finally dismissed in 2006 with the approval of a new instrument, the municipal urban planning (PUC). The new PUC was inspired and shaped by the study “Salerno European City. Analysis and Predictions for the New Plan of the City”, created in June 2000 by Censis in collaboration with the foundation Carisal-Sichelgaita of Salerno.

In this analysis, the comparison with similar European cases reveals the delay of Salerno on the tourist and relational side and foreshadows a population size to aim for about 180,000 inhabitants, aiming to provide accommodation facilities, conference, trade fairs and liaison with distinctive characteristics, as the other European port cities of medium size and not playable on metropolitan areas with high urbanization and high population density.

So the implementation of the new PUC passes for the realization of one million square meters of residential buildings and about 800,000 square meters of housebuilding to be allocated to service industries, production, tourist accommodation and services, strengthening transport infrastructure, logistics and tourism projects ranging from shipbuilding to the hotel network. It tends to give to the city a meaningful demographic dimension, so that the presence of equipment and superior services is allowed and

suggests a younger population and stratified, a more dynamic economy, with more opportunity for development and employment.

In this context, it is also included in the “MORE Europe” projects from 2008. The “MORE Europe” of Salerno has the following goals, in close continuity with the urban planning: (1) to reduce the isolation of the upper part of the historical center by creating new physical connections and demolition of architectural barriers; (2) to reduce the unemployment rate through supporting the location of new businesses and supporting existing business activities; and (3) to reduce the main factors of environmental degradation, with particular reference to the factors of air pollution, through the polarization of the parking areas, the pedestrianization of central areas, and the use of alternative modes of transport.

Then, the positioning of Salerno in the strategic framework of the European and national urban net of the innovative cities is yet to be defined; in fact, looking at the efficiency parameters such as the urban research and development, advanced accounting services, financial advisory, and administration of firms, Salerno still assumes a position of delay in comparison to other Italian cities of similar size (Riitano 2007; Bencardino 2007).

Instead, in the Campania region Salerno is the only city outside Naples that can offer the full range of services, with a radius of influence over the provincial, unlike Caserta, Avellino, and Benevento, which, however, manage to play the role of medium-sized cities of the territory, only thanks to their function of the provincial capital.

As said before, special attention should also be given to the context of the province of Salerno, which is extensive and varied. The main feature of the settlement of the province is a settlement pattern where the population is present in a larger size class in the towns of between 20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants in addition to Salerno. The presence of this class for this province comes from its ability of the city of Salerno

to strengthen its strong centrality.

The transformations of the province have concerned above all the north area of Salerno, bordering Naples, and the south area toward the Sele flatland, up to the coast between Agropoli and Capaccio. The evolutionary dynamics in this area have been and continue to be very complex and heterogeneous. In fact, the changes have taken a particular character; these purely agricultural areas, such as the Agro Nocerino-Sarnese, have become densely populated areas, also with a series of urban-industrial systems with high density of capital and work.

At least seven different spatial systems and significant in the province can be distinguished, beyond the urban area of Salerno: the aforementioned median system of Nocera and internal system of Sarno, the Amalfi Coast, the coastline of the Cilento, the system of Diano valley, the Sele flatland, and finally the smaller local system of Picentini mountains, each of which is deserving of a specific investigation.

The Amalfi coast and Cilento coast are “great attractors” of regional and supraregional tourist flows: the first, together with the Sorrento coast of the province of Naples, represents a unique territorial system and one of the main poles of tourist attraction not only Campanian or Italian but also certainly international, having a strong appeal for its natural resources and landscapes, and the second is a high vocational tourism system both for the presence of archaeological sites of great interest (the excavations of Velia and Paestum) and extraordinary natural sites (National Park of Cilento and Diano valley), but still not completely exploited.

The territorial system Sele flatland is a relational complex system both for its territorial structure and in its politico-administrative organization and in the historical evolution of the territory. So, for this fascinating complexity it can be said that it is both an urban system and a rural system, surely a productive system and perhaps even a tourist potential one.

According to several documents of territorial planning, from the PTR to PTCP (Provincial Territorial Coordination Plan) and to the “Report on the State of the Economy of the Province of Salerno”, in these area policies to enhance and strengthen the strategic role of Pontecagnano coast with reference to the congressional and cruising tourism, and, more generally, the great potential of “services center” for tourism on both coasts should be pursued.

In addition, there are other minor but very interesting systems such as Picentini mountains, natural and agricultural production system and location of the Regional Park Picentini, and the Diano valley, natural system that belongs, together with the Cilento, to the already mentioned National Park, home of great cultural attractions (such as the Chartreuse of Padula) and recently has entered into the World Network of Biosphere Reserves of the MAB (Man and the Biosphere) UNESCO programme, for its valuable natural habitats.

According to the above, it can be said that, on the one hand, the future of the city of Salerno is undoubtedly linked to increased attention and exploitation of tourism and natural resources, which are often untapped in their potential, and on the other hand, it is closely connected to processes of urban transformation in place that make it today an urban laboratory of undoubted interest. In fact, the most important structural and retraining interventions of artistic and cultural exploitation of the city are all directed to make it rise to the rank of “European city”.

## **BENEVENTO “MIDDLE CITY”: A MODEL OF ENLARGED GOVERNANCE**

In recent years, under the impulse of strong internal dynamics and external factors, the planning of the city of Benevento has been elevated to the rank of “project area” which includes traditional instruments of planning as the PUC, and the new instruments as the District Contracts (CQ), the Urban Rehabilitation



Program (PRU), the Urban Mobility Plan (PUM), and the Strategic Plan (SP), aimed at creating a new model of development based on the identification of the city as a promoter of a “project territory of wide area” focuses on three elements: the local resources, a model for future development “open” capable of building relationships, alliances and connections with neighboring municipalities and the whole province, and a strong infrastructure framework which promotes the role of Benevento as the connection node in the system of regional and European networks of cities.

It is a transformation process that starts in the city of Benevento (engine of change) but that, unavoidably, involves the neighboring municipalities and the whole province through development guidelines that gradually are becoming more and more defined and recognizable characters not only in the local context but also within the more complex pattern of regional development.

The size of Benevento as a capital city and middle city gives itself the status of a benchmark in terms of quality of life, social, historical, and cultural factors of identity and recognition especially in the tourism sector, and in the technological and cultural innovation. Benevento as capital is a city of a higher order, and thus capable of offering specialized services and rare both in social, cultural and welfare that productive; at the same time it acts as a functional reference, administrative, but also urban for the whole province and beyond.

The city of Benevento, in fact, is the centroid of the whole province in terms of physical, social, economic, and political dimension: in the whole of the 78 municipalities, only two other municipalities in addition to capital city exceed the threshold of 10,000 inhabitants (Montesarchio and St. Agata dei Goti), the remainder 10 exceed the 5,000 inhabitants, 36 have a population ranging between 2,000 and 5,000 inhabitants and 32 have a population of less than 2,000 inhabitants.

Over the past four decades, the urban system of

the city of Benevento has experienced a slow but steady transformation that culminated in the last decade, in a real dynamic of explosion both in form and in function. The current settlement pattern is configured, in fact, as “an urban structure to radial or constellation” that involves an urban area of the top level, composed of the city of Benevento, which extends along three main lines (Caudina, Benevento-Ceppaloni-Arpaia, and director of the Medio Calore), two peripheral systems to define, for its geographical position, the north-western peripheral system and north-eastern peripheral system, which are important dynamics of active industrial and commercial development, and a territorial spread of human settlement in the south-east of the capital where the process of urban expansion to the neighboring municipalities (including San Giorgio del Sannio, San Nicola Manfredi, and Sant’Angelo a Cupolo) has generated a genuine transfer of housing functions and through the so-called “territorial access doors to the city” (Olivola, San Cumano, Appia-Pontecorvo, Mosti-La Francesca). The same PUC of Benevento, in describing the present scenario speaks of settlement pattern of the “city exploded”, the “enlarged city”, with complex polarity and territorial doors.

Focusing on the whole province, the network system provided by PTCP Benevento, in addition to urban polarity complex of Benevento, is made up of centers of provincial level, centers of sub-provincial level, and local polarity with functions, respectively, provincial, sub-provincial, and local<sup>5</sup>.

The areas with the function of “centers of provincial level” are few (Montesarchio, Sant’Agata dei Goti, etc.); they are poles of the urban structure of province with features rare and of connection between the different sub-systems of the province. The other larger centers (Cerreto Sannita, Guardia Sanframondi, S. Marco dei Cavoti, Telese Terme, etc.), although characterized by a significant population growth, continue to live—like the smaller systems—in a

certain functional isolation; they are configured as centers of sub-provincial level, acting in the provincial network to support the centers of provincial level, with simple functions of overseeing internal and mountainous areas.

In such systems, the structure to “the prevailing rural matrix” in a few years has become a system of urban fringe to “the prevailing urban matrix” highly susceptible to interference and pressures of urban activities. These territories are, in fact, increasingly shaping up as a “continuum rururbano” not country, and not yet the city, where agricultural production systems have evolved significantly, with the drastic decline of traditional promiscuous crops and the widespread use of arable land and irrigation vegetable crops and in which there are clear “remains” of an industrial system never took off, the so-called “empty rural”.

All other centers (small and very small below 1,000 inhabitants) are to be considered as a separate local urban polarity. They are accorded with a high tourist potential along different vocations: religious tourism (Pesco Sannita, Pietrelcina), nature tourism (Ceppaloni, Cusano Mutri, Vitulano, etc.), cultural tourism (Airola, Cerreto Sannita, Guardia, etc.), and rural tourism (Castelvenere, Colle Sannita, San Marco dei Cavoti, Solopaca, etc.). This “system of small towns” depopulation and/or the progressive aging of the local population resulting in stalling of the social and economic development of the territory is the first emergency handle, especially for smaller centers dimensionally; at the same time, the creation of new homes without a programming has, in many cases, given the high consumption of agricultural land causing some fragmentation of the countryside.

Compared to this system of provincial centers, centers of sub-provincial level and local polarity, the city of Benevento has a number of functions both centripetal “from province to the city of Benevento” (think of the university, services of high rank such as health, taxation, etc.) and centrifugal “from the

province to Benevento” (the city as a hub for the rural, religious, cultural tourism, as a node of the logistical access to the province, etc.), but there is no real connection, in many cases not only physical and functional, between the city, its territory and the province.

For the development of the province of Benevento and the entire system of internal areas of the Campania region becomes, therefore, essential create a “network of medium-sized cities” as connection nodes of the inland areas. At the same time, it is necessary to build a system of connection to Trans-European Networks (TENs), participate in regional ecological networks, develop innovative projects for energy efficiency in synergy with a new model of multifunctional agriculture, and support the development of knowledge networks (network of universities, research institutions, science and technology parks, etc.).

On this perspective, the city of Benevento may engage its own peculiarities: a central position with respect to the Apennines and the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic sides, a rich system and river basin that supplies the city and its territory, an urban historic plant of considerable cultural and architectural value, a strong relationship between the urban and the rural landscape surrounding, a local production system strongly related to vocations agro-food and craft traditions of the area (think of the production of Strega liqueur or pasta Rummo), but at the same time, pointing innovative clean energy and looking forward to internationalization into emerging markets, and a close connection between the University of Sannio, the city and territory.

### **THE EVOLUTION OF THE URBAN MODEL OF THE CAMPANIA REGION TOWARD FORMS OF REBALANCING**

From the analysis of complex evolutionary regional dynamics and from the analysis of the two urban

systems of Benevento and Salerno, the urban development of Campania actually presents the features typical of a “metropolitan polycentrism” focus on Naples and its metropolitan area.

This vision finds its first confirmation in some evidences of Naples. In fact, this city, with almost one million inhabitants and a total concentration of higher-ranking services, preserves the characteristics of urbanity to undisputed regional and often southern scale, representing the strategic center of politics and economics of the entire regional system; moreover, almost all the middle-size centers, which for residential and socio-economic functions represent the “new spatial hierarchies”, are concentrated in the urban region in the metropolitan area of Naples.

Despite the transformations that occurred in the last two decades—the spreading of development, the creation of horizontal relationships between centers that are connected by relational proximity, the creation of new local governments—about 70% of municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants (the middle city), 60% of those between 30,000 and 50,000 inhabitants and over 70% of those between 20,000 and 30,000 inhabitants still fall within the province of Naples. However, the rest of the region is characterized by the prevalence of small centers with less than 10,000 inhabitants, densified in the remaining territories county: 96.1% of the total municipalities in the province of Benevento have a population of under 10,000 inhabitants, the same is true for Avellino with 95%, Salerno with 85.4%, and Caserta with 76.9%.

So far 12 of 20 middle cities belong to the province of Naples, four centers to Salerno, two centers to Caserta and, finally, in the provinces of Benevento and Avellino the system of middle cities is represented by the only chief town.

As well as other provincial systems, Benevento and Salerno represent territorial contexts that are only marginally included in the plan of development and consolidation of “regional network of middle cities”

average by number of medium-sized centers; as provided by the POR FESR Campania, they are candidates to become “nodes of the network for competitiveness”, because sub-delegation for the development planning of the territory may be assigned to them, according to a different degree of intensity and specificity in the context of integrated urban development plans, pursuant to article 8 of Regulation (EC) 1080/06.

Nevertheless, the analysis shows how it must be recognized and assigned an important and although different role to the middle cities, in the process of regional rebalancing and creation of new urban geography that is emerging in Campania.

In the province of Salerno, the new urban structure that is emerging is complex and involves a wide geographical area in a varied and diversified system.

The urban system, which starts from Agro Nocerino-Sarnese, in the north of Salerno on the border with the province of Naples, and extends southward in the direction of regional systems of the Sele flatland (the axis of Pontecagnano-Battipaglia-Eboli), is naturally stretched to include its future evolution, the coastal strip running from Capaccio to Agropoli. That area contains all the 14 municipalities of the province with more than 20,000 inhabitants (Agropoli, Angri, Battipaglia, Capaccio, Cava de' Tirreni, Eboli, Mercato San Severino, Nocera Inferiore, Nocera Superiore, Pagani, Pontecagnano Faiano, Salerno, Sarno, and Scafati) and forms the metropolitan area of Salerno, in which lies more than 50% of the population of the entire province.

To compound this perspective, it's possible to argue that, especially in the province of Salerno, many people are looking, with increasing interest, to the birth of a new region that would unite the Sannio and Irpinia to the same one. This hypothesis, which captures the favors of many citizens and on which some city councils have already expressed, is seen as the answer to a need for regional rebalancing of political strategies, historically too unbalanced on the

metropolitan area of Naples.

Instead, the urban processes that take place in the province of Benevento are of lower intensity and geographical spread, so the population growth has characterized only a few centers, leaving the remaining part of the province still isolated both from the core (Benevento) and the regional system.

Therefore, the settlement pattern of this system is similar more to a form of organization of “integrated monocentrism” than of polycentrism, because the functional specialization locally organized depends on a few well-identified urban cores.

In fact, Benevento continues to be the center of irradiation of relationships—often one-way—to the outside, centralizing superior functions and “uncommon” service as the university, the public health, the new proposal to build a logistics platform of Ikea, the Swedish industrial group, for the whole South, the Centre of Excellence of Information and Communication Technology in the territory of San Giorgio del Sannio, which are evidences of an important activism for the future of the province, although without difficulties. They remain largely centralized.

The rest of the province, dominated by a “system of small towns” with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants, has difficulty to take off. In these areas, as happened on the inner part of the province of Avellino, the birth of new residences in a disorderly way has, in many cases, determined the use of land with high production capacity and some fragmentations of the countryside. In fact, many areas of the inland plains of Benevento and Avellino are passed, in a few years, from a structure to “prevailing rural matrix”, shaped by high continuity, a fringe trim to “prevailing urban matrix”, highly vulnerable to interference and pressures of urban activities configured as a “continuum rururbano” not countryside, but not still city, where agricultural production systems have evolved significantly, with the drastic decline of traditional crops promiscuous and the widespread use of arable

irrigation and horticultural crops, open field, and the predominantly “remnants” of an industrial system never took off.

In this context, the strategy of strengthening the competitiveness of Campania seems to pass, necessarily, through the consolidation of the “network of its medium-sized cities” and their respective territories, strengthening the peculiarities and healing social emergencies and urban decline, although Naples is called to play an important role of “anchorage” for the other regional territorial systems, as the only Metropolitan European Growth Area<sup>6</sup> and “poles of excellence” of innovative north-south axis (Torino, Milano, Firenze, Roma, Napoli) (Vanolo 2003).

Finally, it is necessary that especially in inland areas where they are so small, the medium-sized cities carry the role of intermediate cities enhancing their ability to mediate between small nucleus and large metropolitan areas. The hypothesis of an integrated and balanced polycentric structure of the Campania region passes both through actions of reorganization of the metropolitan area of Naples and decentralization of activities from the capital cities of Campania, in order to build new identity and central places, and through a development action defined to “decentralized concentration”, which aims to reduce regional imbalances by creating networks of social, economic, institutional, and planning interaction between the central metropolitan and medium-sized urban centers of the inland areas, such as centers—although of different level—of a single regional pattern.

## Notes

1. The paper is the result of a common reflection of the authors. However, the single sections can thus be attributed to: Massimiliano Bencardino—Salerno “European City”: Transformation Processes and Territorial Potential/The Evolution of the Urban Model of the Campania Region Toward Forms of Rebalancing; Ilaria Greco—Introduction/ Polycentricism and New Spatial Hierarchies in Campania/

- Benevento "Middle City": A Model of Enlarged Governance.
2. For a discussion on pioneering studies on the perimeter of the metropolitan area of Naples by Svimez, see Cecchini (1983, 1988); for further studies on the identification of this area, see Mazzetti and Talia (1977), Coppola (1997), Forte (2003), and Sommella (2009).
  3. POR Campania FESR 2007-2013, Specific Objective 6a—"Urban regeneration and quality of life, priority, competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and urban systems"; Axis 6—Urban development and quality of life. Chapter 4, p. 100, Official Bulletin of the Campania Region, Special Issue of November 23, 2007.
  4. Regional Law No. 13 of October 13, 2008, "Regional Territorial Plan", Official Bulletin of the Campania Region, No. 45a of November 10, 2008.
  5. Provincial Territorial Coordination Plan of City of Benevento (2009), Reference Framework and Programmatic Planning, Sez. A, Vol. Ao, pp. 16-19.
  6. The six Italian centers of the 76 Functional Urban Areas (Fuas) at European level regarded as Metropolitan European Growth Areas (MEGAS) are identified in: Milano, Torino, Genova, Bologna, Roma, and Napoli.
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