



A.A. 2013/2014  
Politecnico di Milano  
School of Architecture and Society  
Msc. Urban Planning and Policy Design

*Master Degree Thesis*

# COOPERATION IS THE ONLY WAY

Why cooperation could better govern our territory

Luca Tomaino - 781750  
Advisor: Prof. Gabriele Pasqui









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Entrato nel territorio che ha Eutropia per capitale, il viaggiatore vede non una città ma molte, di eguale grandezza e non dissimili tra loro, sparse per un vasto e ondulato altopiano. Eutropia è non una ma tutte queste città insieme; una sola è abitata, le altre vuote; e questo si fa a turno. Vi dirò ora come.

Italo Calvino - Le Città Invisibili (1972)



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## Abstract

The policy making process is influenced by the territory on which it is implemented: the contemporary situation of this "stage" is dominated by the phenomena of coalescence and spatial integration, that could not be managed with the public authorities built on rigid administrative boundaries. There is not only this kind of affection, but also the economic crisis of these last years requires a reaction towards a more effective and efficacious management of the public affairs.

This thesis tries to give the elements able to demonstrate that inter-municipal cooperation could be considered as one of the best modalities for governing the territory. The development of the thesis is built on two different, but intersect, paths: the first one is directed to the definition of a theoretical background, able to give a solidity to the previous assumption, while the second one is represented by an exposition of practical experiences, able to show directly which could be the implementation's process and the possible obtainable results. The focus of the theoretical analysis is particularly oriented to the identification of possible tools and effects, afferent to political and juridical, economical and managerial or territorial contexts, that could be used or obtained for an effective and efficacious inter-municipal cooperation. The practical part is related to urban and territorial planning, due to its centrality for a better management of the territory, but also for its solid background about cooperative experiences. The attention is dedicated to tools, rules and strategies as the fundamental elements available to urban and territorial planning for managing the territory and they are inflected towards three case studies: the cadastral function in Brianza Occidentale about the tools, the building regulations of Alta Valdera about the rules and the structural plan of Nuovo Circondario Imolese as an example of shared strategy.

Key words: inter-municipal cooperation, coalescence, urban and territorial planning, public management.



## Riassunto

Il processo di elaborazione delle politiche è influenzato dal territorio in cui esso viene implementato: la situazione contemporanea è dominata da fenomeni di coalescenza e di integrazione spaziale che non possono essere gestiti con i soggetti pubblici attuali costruiti sulla base di confini amministrativi rigidi. Non c'è soltanto questo tipo di ostacolo, ma anche la crisi economica di questi ultimi anni richiede una reazione che tenda ad una gestione più efficiente ed efficace della cosa pubblica.

Questa tesi cerca di fornire gli elementi capaci di dimostrare che la cooperazione intercomunale potrebbe essere considerata come una delle migliori modalità per il governo del territorio. Lo sviluppo della tesi è costruito su due percorsi differenti, ma intersecati: il primo è diretto alla definizione di una base teorica, in grado di dare una solidità alle affermazioni precedenti, mentre il secondo è rappresentato dall'esposizione di esperienze pratiche, capaci di mostrare direttamente quali potrebbe essere sia il processo di costruzione di una cooperazione intercomunale che i suoi possibili risultati. Il focus dell'analisi teorica è particolarmente orientata all'individuazione di possibili strumenti ed effetti, afferenti a contesti politici e giuridici, economici e manageriali o territoriali, che potrebbero essere utilizzati o ottenuti per una cooperazione intercomunale efficiente ed efficace. La parte pratica è particolarmente legata alla pianificazione territoriale e urbana, poiché questa disciplina assume un ruolo centrale nella gestione del territorio, e possiede inoltre un solido background di esperienze cooperative. L'attenzione è dedicata agli strumenti, alle regole e alle strategie come elementi fondamentali a disposizione della pianificazione urbana e territoriale per la gestione del territorio e sono declinati attraverso tre casi di studio: la funzione catastale nella Brianza Occidentale per quanto riguarda gli strumenti, il regolamento edilizio dell'Alta Valdera relativamente alle regole e il piano strutturale del Nuovo Circondario Imolese, come esempio di strategia condivisa.

Parole chiave: cooperazione intercomunale, governo del territorio, gestione pubblica, coalescenza



# INTRODUCTION

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The economic crisis, that directly affected Italy in these years, produced its worst effect for local administration. The municipalities are undergoing to constant financial cuts that inevitably had strong negative reflections on the supply of social services, the maintenance of public goods and the investments for future development. The dominant fragmentation, that characterizes the contemporary management of the territory, has produced only a progressive decline: no public administration is able to answer alone to the great questions, connected to the environmental, economical or social aspects, that are diffuse and strong in this period of crisis. This framework depicts a difficult situation from which it is possible to find an "escape" only through an increase in political and economical sharing and cooperation among municipalities. The increase of economic interdependency among near municipalities, the continuous movements of people among cities, the shared uses of services located in different municipalities and the physical welding among different cities are only few examples of evidences able to underline the need of a shared planning for the future development of a territory. The centrality of inter-municipal cooperations seems to be understood also by the national legislator that approves few weeks ago the so-called Legge Delrio: it represents an important innovation for the Italian administrative levels, mainly thanks to the reinforcement of metropolitan authorities and unions of municipalities, as public bodies able to govern the services and give a strategy for a wide area. This thesis starts, from this framework, expressing a strong assumption, already presented in the title: cooperation is the only way for managing (and consequently saving) our territory. The main hypothesis, that guides this work, is oriented to demonstrate the reality of this statement through the research of the political, economical and territorial reasons that could support the idea of cooperation as

the preferable - and almost unique - possibilities for governing the territory. The attention is focused on the cooperative systems and in particular to the survey of tools, usable for the its construction, and effects, achievable through its implementation. The aim is to track down a wide set of issues that could be characterized by an optimal use of the resources or by the forcefulness of obtaining a results, with also an attention to the indirect aspects. The presented approach to the research question is focused on cooperation in a wide sense and to its processual dimension: this perspective is not enough, it should be more specific in order to give also a practical and a content-oriented answer to the statement of cooperation as the only way for governing the territory. It is essential to give centrality to the territorial dimensions, that represents the fundamental "work bench": it is an unicum over the boundaries, consequently it lends itself to be govern through a common view established in a cooperative way among the municipalities. Consequently it is important to understand how cooperation works on urban and territorial planning, as the main discipline that can be referred to the govern of the territory. It has a wide theoretical and practical background of studies and experiences that could be useful for supporting the idea of cooperation as managerial modalities of decision making process. The final aim is the need of giving an critical reading to the situation of territory, dominated by integration and coalescence, and the need of building shared vision and strategy for the future that could: for obtaining this results it is crucial to think about a cooperative urban planning, mainly based on shared tools, rules and strategies.

## Structure of the thesis

This thesis could be divided into two main parts: one is based on the reconstruction of a theoretical background, able to demonstrate which are the diverse reasons that support cooperation, while the other one is focused on the practical aspects and the analysis of three case studies about urban planning cooperation in the Italian context.

The first part starts with an in-depth analysis of the literature about cooperation and the consequent re-construction of a theoretical background, oriented to the individuation of the main reasons able to demonstrate the centrality of cooperation as mechanism for the decision making process. The first chapter is dedicated to the political and juridical background and it is oriented to demonstrate the importance of cooperation among municipalities in managing public utilities and municipal functions.

The second chapter is dedicated to the description of the advantages and disadvantages, derived from cooperation between municipalities in public services and municipal functions, from an economic and managerial point of view and according to the international debate. The key issues of this chapter are the transaction costs, the economies of scale and the economical networks: each of them is analyzed for demonstrating the possible advantages obtainable through cooperation.

The third chapter - and the last one of the first part - is dedicated to the territorial reasons that support cooperation, the starting point is the construction of a definition of territory able to give order and to underline the intrinsic presence of cooperation inside it, next to this there is the description of the territorial condition of Italy in particular and the final part is dedicated to the presentation of coalescent phenomena as a possible interpretation of territory and prodromic element able to support the develop of cooperation

among municipalities.

A bridge between the two main parts is made by the representation of the tools and the effects about cooperation that could be used or should be expected in the construction of a decision making process: they are a fundamental element for summing up the theoretical discussions and giving a structure to the implementation of the practical part.

The second part of this thesis is dedicated to the presentation of three case studies: they are three example of cooperative situation in the management of urban planning, mainly about tools, rules and strategies. The first one is about the shared cadastral function inside the Brianza Occidentale and it represents, while the second one is the cooperative making of a building regulations in the Alta Valdera and the last one is about the shared structural plan made inside the Nuovo Circondario Imolese.

**What means cooperation?**

A first approach to the cooperation should start from the understanding of the social reasons that are behind the decision - made by singular actor - of working together. It is a crucial starting point because under this theoretical background, it is possible to recognize also some practical implications that could represent a mark of behavior for people. The scholars focus their attention mainly on the idea of collective action as a tool that epitomizes the theoretical and practical issues of the cooperation. Mancur Olson (1990) defines the collective action as a situation in which people work together in order to achieve a common result. Jon Elster (1995) gives a critical reading to the notion of collective action. He underlines that is a set of individual contribution able to produce little distributed advantages for many actors, but heavy costs only for those who cooperate. This lecture of the collective action expresses the difficulties presented inside the cooperation itself reducible to an uncertainty of costs and benefits distribution that inevitably cause a crystallization of the individual position. Even Elster (1995) points out that it is important to explain how the single actor decides to join a cooperative game and he individuates two main issues: the need of knowing something about the real distribution of advantages and disadvantages and the grade of cooperation, i.e. the amount of actors that cooperate. The first one is the crucial point for the cooperation, as it is already underlined, nobody will cooperate without the certainty of having some advantages, the second one is probably less relevant but underlines a quantitative aspect that is not secondary: each actor has a minimum and maximum thresholds that establish its faith to the effectiveness of the cooperative game. Starting from these reflection, Jon Elster proposed a possible categorization of cooperation that is based on the distribution of costs and benefits.

**Table 1 - Typologies of cooperation (Elster, 1995)**

Typology of cooperation	Description
Externality	Individual cooperative acts without a reciprocity. The advantages are little, shared and diffused
Helping behavior	Characterized without advantages or benefits for the cooperator, that - nevertheless - acts with the aim of obtaining favors.
Convention's equilibrium	Based on the presence of some rules, it is characterized by the sharing of advantages and the concentration of costs to the cooperator.
Collaboration's firm	Characterized by the co-presence of the all involved actors, with a sharing of advantages and costs.
Private's organization	Based on the presence of some actors, but with a distribution of advantages for community and the costs concentrated to the cooperators.

This categorization allows to understand that there are different degrees of cooperation, that could diverge considering the involvement of the actors and - as it was already said - the balance of costs and benefits. Elster (1995) describes a vary list of possible form of cooperation that try to give a mark for the other opened possibilities: he tried to define the all possible combination based on the quantity of actors and the distribution of advantages and disadvantages. The main theme of this thesis - the intermunicipal cooperation - could classify as a form of collaboration's firm because they are characterized by the co-presence of the all involved actors, that is a constituent element of an effective cooperation among municipalities, and by a perfect sharing of costs and benefit, that is generally built on distributions made on populations or territorial dimensions.

### *The Sennet's idea of cooperation*

The approach to cooperation presented by Elster is mainly focus to the attempt of building a theoretical background able to explain the solidity of cooperation as human behaviour, to individuate the

social content of cooperation. For the continuation of the thesis, this approach is not enough because it has not a practical dimensions that instead is crucial for understanding how cooperation could really work and could be managed. In order to appreciate also this side of cooperation it is taken into account the contribution of Richard Sennett that gives an interesting lecture of cooperation through a solid practical background. His last book 'Together. The rituals, pleasures and politics of cooperation' is the second one of a trilogy dedicated to the relations about the mankind e the art of making: the first one 'The Craftsman' is dedicated to the description of the features of the homo faber, the second one to the relations among human beings and the last one is related to the construction of the urban environment, as the results of the work made described by the previous two book. In one of the first passage, the author gives a simple, but very precise, definition of cooperation as «an exchange in which the participant benefit from the encounter» (Sennett 2013: 5), inside these few words there is the all essence of cooperation: that is mainly related to the need of being together in order to achieve the results, that are impossible to obtain in solitude. Sennett identifies the cooperation as one of the main element for the foundation and improvement of human development, the author says that «we learn how to be together before we learn how to stand apart». It is based on the study of Erik Erikson<sup>1</sup> about childhood and society, but it is easily applicable also to the early stage of human beings: in which we are obliged to find the way of cooperate for our survivor and - in the same way - to the institutions made by people. The work of Sennett tries to examine deeply the features of cooperation through some exemplifications: coalitions, community and workshops,

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<sup>1</sup> His studies are collected in a book 'Childhood and Society' (W. W. Norton & Company, 1993) that is - as it is clearly understandable - based on the analysis of child condition.

each of them represents a different ways of making together with a different aim and perspective. The interesting attempt is the translation of these three examples in the institutional context in order to explain why cooperation is so important. The coalitions are described starting from the political field because it is the place in which they are more experimented. The analysis of Sennett underlines that they are a weak tool because this kind of cooperation «produces a structural problem [...]: the loss of connection of the apex to its base» (Sennett, 2013: 46); even he takes a stressed example - the construction of political coalition - it is clear that a form of cooperation based on a temporary encounter it is not solid and strong. The problem of coalitions is not only the weakness of the linkages, but also the difficulties of this kind of cooperation is related to the used way for problem solving. In this case, it is typical the strategy of the back-room that is not usable for finding the solutions in complicated situation, where clarity and precision are useful, and also it represents the worst possibility for achieving a positive solutions to a problem because of the pressures made by external or internal stakeholder and convoluted modality of taking decisions. These weak points could be taken as an example for saying that an institutional cooperation should be based on stronger premises than the ones proposed by coalitions. After the analysis of the coalitions, the author focuses his attention on the community is compared to the coalitions starting from the way for problem solving: the negative aspects of the back-room strategy suggest that it is better to “put on public” the process of taking decisions, as Saul Alinsky underlines: «by getting together people who have never really talked, providing them with facts they did not know and suggesting further contacts to sustain dialogic talk» (Sennett, 2013: 51). The interesting thing in this approach is the ability of creating a sense of community, before



the community itself, the aim of Alinsky - and re-taken by Sennett - is not to give a precise solution to a problem, but to find the solution starting from the research of it in a shared way. This idea is perfectly translatable also to the institutional context, the need of "put on public" should be seen as the starting point for solving the controversial situation also in this field: at the same moment, it could be considered as the sharing among institutions or with inhabitants, in both cases it is the correct way. The last example is related to the workshop, that is probably the best expression of cooperation, as Sennett identifies it as «the most important institution anchoring civic life» (Sennett, 2013: 56) because it epitomizes the perfect society in which there is - at the same time - the sharing of aims and the sharing of the ways for achieving them. As Robert Owen underlines the workshop could be seen as: «an institution which combines long-term mutual benefit and loyalty with short-term flexibility and openness» (Sennett, 2013: 58). The idea is that the workshop represents an ideal way of working, but - at the same time - an ideal way of cooperate that could be translate in institutional context. The presence of mutual benefit is fundamental for having a positive and stable collaboration among institutions, the loyalty, together with the trust, represent the premises for each kind of relations and even more for cooperation; the flexibility and openness are two requisites that the institutional cooperation should try to achieve for increasing the potentiality of cooperation.







# CHAPTER 1

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Political and juridical  
effects and tools of cooperation



The first paragraph is dedicated to a general overview about collaborative policy making starting from the studies of David Booher and Judith Innes that are mainly based on the reconstruction of the most important features of these cooperative approach to the decisional processes. It is decided to taking into account the studies of two urban planners about collaboration in decision making process for two main reasons. The first one is about the theoretical development of their studies, that is one of the most advance in the international debate, and also are not based on abstract conjectures but they are directly experimented in the fieldwork; while the second one is connected to the content of the thesis that is mainly focused on the cooperation among municipalities in the management of the territory, consequently it is interesting to use, as a theoretical background, some studies that are pertinent. This general passage tries to give a framework in which it is possible to insert the in-depth analysis about the inter-municipal cooperation, that represents an effective example of collaborative policy making. The second paragraph is dedicated to a short description of what inter-municipal cooperation is into the European context: this analysis tries to follow the fundamental aspects described in the work of Rudie Hulst and André Von Montfort, mainly based on the attempt devoted to the construction of a possible categorization of the different inter-municipal forms. The third paragraph represents a turning point because the attention shift from the general to the specificities of the Italian context: in fact this part is dedicated to the description of municipal services and functions, that represent the issues on which inter-municipal cooperation has to work. The last part speaks about the inter-municipal cooperation into the Italian context and legislation: it is an overview about the laws that describe the different typologies usable for sharing aims and decisions.

### **1.1 | Cooperation as a response for managing the public affairs**

A starting point for answering to the main question of this chapter, presented in the title, is - as it emerges in the introduction - the theoretical background about the mechanisms of cooperation in decision making process. A first set of considerations should be made taking into account the process of making decisions: as it is quite evident, the analysis of the modalities, with which decisions are made, is an obliged passage before all other possible reflections about the contents. There a lot of different studies about the so-called policy making that try to investigate its different shades, in this context the focus is only on the cooperative way of making decisions, mainly about the public sphere and - consequently - with a direct involvement of municipalities or public authorities. Here it is presented a brief theoretical background useful for underlining which are the general effects that could be produced using a set of cooperative strategies for making decisions, and particularly for building public policies.

#### *The collaborative policy making: a possible model of cooperation.*

A first passage should be dedicated to evidence which is the contemporary situation of policy making in order to have a framework, on which it is possible to set up the successive steps about the collaborative policy making. David Booher (2004) proposes an interesting review about the key challenges of policy making in the contemporary society, he identified a set of different issues, here the attention is focused only on three of them. The first challenge focuses on the mutation of the decisional space, from a traditional hierarchical distribution of government institutions, in which the roles and responsibilities are clear and well distributed, to a more open and diffused network made not only by the institutional actors, but also by social movements, stakeholders



and other sets of possible interested people. Consequently this represents clearly a set of new spaces that: «create an important need for new ways of interacting, increased communication, a high level of trust, and new processes and rules for accountability» (Booher, 2004: p.33). The second issues is the complexity of society, already emerged from the growth of the actors, that inevitably causes the increasing sense of uncertainty. This change is not paid by a positive and reactive response by the traditional decisional space, that instead gropes because of the obliged limited rationality: a possible “cop-out” - as Booher underlined - is to face this uncertainty «played in encouraging and than challenging the collaborative practices» (Booher, 2004: p. 33). The final one is connected to the emergency of interdependence as a dominant factor inside the policy making, mainly caused by the sharing of the same physical space or the same problems. These contextual or factual proximity allows to recognize that a choosable solution is the collaboration among public actors, that - in this way - could create: «the capacity to interact, share power and find shared problem definitons with paths to solutions» (Booher, 2004: p. 34). According to this framework, it is now crucial to understand what is the collaborative policymaking and which are the main differences with the traditional model used for making decisions, also for this part, it is useful to take into account the studies of Booher and Innes (2003). The two author underline that collaborative policy making is not only a method that «can solve problems when there is conflict in the traditional policy system» (Booher and Innes, 2003: p. 36): this idea about is quite reductive, mainly because it is not able to demonstrate that this policy making process has also a crucial constructive part about the establishment of new networks and the distribution of knowledge among the diverse players. Inside this definition it

is evident the centrality of diversity and interdependency about the collaborative policy making. As Habermas (1981) underlined, all interests should be considered inside the process of making decisions, consequently it is necessary a direct involvement of the actors that are bearer of the specific needs, i.e. the stakeholders. They should be also diverse «in order to take full advantage of the creativity that can come from trying to find actions that can respond to a wide set of competing interests» (Booher and Innes, 2003. p. 40), from this passage it is clear that the audience of a collaborative policymaking is wide and diffuse in order to have a comprehensive representation of each points of views. The stakeholders are also interdependent because - in this way - they could achieve the results able to allow them to create an effective system of cooperation: the interdependency is not relegated to a simple networking element, but it also underlined a sharing of interests and destinies. It is important to underline that there are also some possible obstacles that could limit the effectiveness of collaborative policy making. The author underline the difficulties driven by the constraints of the hierarchical structures of the public bodies that discourage the free construction of policies and decisions. This situation needs a continuous experimentation able to modify and make more flexible the existing modalities of conventional policymaking. There is a mistrust of public authorities related to the open of decisional process to a wide set of stakeholders: this approach is completely in contrast with the idea of collaborative policy making that instead works with the main attempts of involving a wide set of actors not related exclusively to the public sphere. As it is quite clear, it is not easy to qualify precisely this modality, only through a practical experience inside a context it is possible to understand if this collaborative policy making is really effective or not. It is also evident that

probably one of the best example, of a real application of this modality of making decisions and policies, is the cooperation among municipalities. They are characterized by a presence of stakeholders - mainly public - that are in a condition of reciprocity and interdependence because they live inside the same territory and face the same problem: as it is already emerge, through a collaboration they could be able to find the solutions the difficulties of the context.

*The local governments and cooperation: an European history.*

After the explanation of a theoretical background about cooperation in the decision making process, it is important to focus the attention on a practical framework, for this reason in the following paragraph it is presented a study about the European inter-municipal cooperation that could be useful for presenting an interesting stage, full of successful experiments and from which it is possible to take some suggestions. The local governments are considered as the backbone of all European countries from the thirteenth century and they are recognized as fundamental tile for the self-government of local communities and for the delivery of public services (Hulst & Van Montfort 2007). The municipalities are not in a stable status and devoid of changes, but instead they are in a constant variation due to the endogenous and exogenous pressures regarding their role or functions. As Hulst and Van Montfort underline, it is possible to recognize three different developments that put pressure on local governments: the increasing scale of production of public services to meet the rising public standards, the huge mobility of population and the consequent 'demolition' of the administrative boundaries and the increased presence of market. This situation is experimented by all European countries and it requires a precise strategy able to

cope and reduce these pressures, the two authors recognize that the inter-municipal cooperation is one of the most considered possible solution. The definition is used in a wide meaning, that include «cooperative arrangements between municipalities, between (group of) municipalities and authorities and agencies at other levels of government, and between municipalities and private sector organisations» (Hulst & Van Montfort 2007: 6). The diffusion of inter-municipal corporations in Europe is old as the local governments: initially, they are not linked to administrative functions or services, but they are based on commercial, political or military reasons as for example the Hanseatic League. The inter-municipal cooperation, in the way that we know «has boomed since the 1950s in a wide variety of forms and shapes: from single purpose to multipurpose; from mutual consultation to joint operation of inter-municipal agencies, involving small and large municipalities and including different territorial scales, sometimes involving private sector organisations and upper level governments» (Hulst & Van Montfort 2007: 7).

The last quoted sentence demonstrates the set of different typologies of cooperation among municipalities that are spread in European countries: this situation derives from the different roles and functions that local governments perform in each country and also to the flexibility, determined by the law, able to modify the territorial organization in an easy way. The inter-municipal cooperation represents a balance able to achieve the advantages derived from the economies of scales without removing the policy domain of local government: there is not a permanent transfer of local tasks and functions and the local authorities keep stable their control over the all decisional process and also their democratic systems (see Hulst and Van Montfort, 2007). Even if this passage reinforces the idea that the inter-municipal cooperations are not a new form

of governance, it remains stable a sense of representative lack because of the citizens could not clearly understand in which context decisions are taken and which are the relations among voters and elected people that could be perceived vague and uncertain. This problem could be solved increasing the share of informations between public administrations and citizens, contemporarily it is crucial a direct involvement of the citizens to the construction of the inter-municipal cooperation in order to decrease the possibilities of contrary reactions. In the conclusion of their work Hulst and Van Montfort try to make a brief categorization of the possible inter-municipal cooperations, working mainly on the tasks that they try to manage. Their work is based on the issues managed by the inter-municipal cooperation, from a qualitative point of view (service delivery vs. policy coordination) and from a quantitative point of view (single purpose vs. multi-purposes). The qualitative analysis is based on two types: the first ones could concern the service delivery, it is referred «to join production of public services, where municipalities strive to overcome the limitations or inefficiencies of small-scale local government» (Hulst and Van Montfort, 2007: 4), while policy coordination concerns «the regulation of externalities of local policies and the allocation of resources and costs that is rational from a supra-local perspective» (Hulst and Van Montfort, 2007: 4). These two approaches derive from a different perception and sensibility: the first one tends to be focused on the administrative aspects and the research of efficiency, while the second one is more direct to a strategical purposes related to a shared management of the whole territory. Another categorization made by the two authors is related to the scope that moves their actions: some inter-municipal cooperations are built for working only on a single purpose (it is self-evident the relations with the service delivery types), while other ones are dedicated to multi-

purposes (connected with the policy coordination type). Also here it is visible two different approaches that could drive the politicians: one is connected to the sectorialism, that generally affects some administrations, the other one is related to the aim of being wide and all-embracing.

## 1.2 | What are municipal function and services?

The definition of what are public utilities and municipal functions are important in order to establish a common framework to the discussion about the tasks of the local authorities, it has also a crucial role because in the Italian context there was some fundamental variations in the last five years that underline a conceptual and legislative mobility about these two themes. This chapter is present in order to give only the most fundamental aspects related to these two issues with the aim of creating a useful framework for the other analysis deeply related to inter-municipal cooperations. It is taken into account both municipal function and services because they are the fundamental objects of each inter-municipal cooperation: as it is emerged they are the mains tasks of the municipalities, consequently they could be shared with others for an effective and efficacious management: just as an example the three case study are one about a service (the cadastral service in Brianza Occidentale) and two about a function (the structural plan of Nuovo Circondario Imolese and the building rules of Alta Valdera).

### *What are municipal functions?*

The starting point for analyzing the characteristics of the municipal functions is represented by the Italian Constitution that - mainly after the reformation of its Title V in 2001 - has a wide and deepened space dedicated to the governmental level. The article 118 underlines that the all administrative functions are attributed to the municipalities, and it also adds that is better to manage them in a coordinated way on the base of the principle of subsidiarity, differentiation and adequacy: in this passage there is the constitutional origin of the inter-municipal cooperations. This framework is enriched by two main laws that specify the all issues. The first one is the T.U.E.L. (Legislative Decree 267/2000),

specifically the article 113 (with also the following one) identifies what are the administrative functions owed to the municipalities: registry services, welfare services, urban planning, public works and the economic development. The second one is the law 135/2012 that - modifying the article 14 of law 122/2010 - introduces the list of the fundamental functions owed to the municipalities: the general organization of the administration; financial, accounting and control management; the organization of the public utilities; cadastral functions; urban and building planning; civil protection; waste management; welfare services; educational buildings; municipal policies; registry services and statistical services. This list allows to clarify the real tasks of the municipalities and tries to prevent the possible misunderstands about the assignment of the functions among the different territorial levels.

### *What are municipal services?*

About the municipal services, it is important to start with a precise definition, it is useful to take into account the definition given by European Commission: «they are services that public authorities of the Member States at national, regional or local level classify as being of general interest and, therefore, subject to specific public service obligations» (European Commission 2013). It is related both to economic activities and non-economic ones, the services related to the first one are defined in a better way in the same document: «they are economic activities which deliver outcomes in the overall public good that would be supplied by the market without public intervention». The European Commission decided to introduce a framework that could be useful for helping the member states in order to build a common idea about the municipal services: from this point of view the last Italian legislature (the XVI one, from 2008 and 2009) was productive of news about this



topic. It is interesting to recall the stages of this process because it allows to make more clear what are the legislative framework of municipal services at this moment.<sup>1</sup> In 2008 there was the complete abrogation of the article 113 of T.U.E.L.2, through the legislative decree 112/2008, that identify and regulate the municipal services in order to proceed to a partial liberalization of this sector for obtaining a more competitive market. The following years are characterized by a progressive reinforcement of this new approach mainly through an improvement of the managerial aspects connected to the commitment process. The whole legislative system has been dismantled in 2011 thanks to the abrogative referendum that completely deleted the article 23 of the legislative decree 112/2008 and for this reason the Italian government was obliged to promote a new discipline linked to the public utilities. One of the interesting innovation is related to the identification of the territorial range for the management and the organization of the services. This defined dimension should be built in an optimal and homogeneous way for the all economic services and, according the article 3, law decree 138/2011, their functions are related to: the organization of the services, the choose of the managerial form, the commitment and the control of the management and the determination of the fare. As it is clear through this short dissertation, the municipal services are an important issue in the government because they represent the instrument used by public authorities for managing the common goods as - for example - water, gas, waste and public transportation. Inside the municipal services it is possible to recognize many managerial possibilities that could be differentiated, considering - as a tool for making a comparison - the grade of presence of public inside the governance.

1 The summary made by the Camera dei Deputati was very useful for making clear the whole process (Camera dei Deputati 2013)

2 Testo Unico degli Enti Locali, also known as the legislative decree number 267/2000.

**Table 2 - Typologies of managerial system of services (Camera dei Deputati, 2013)**

Typology of society	Description
In House	It is characterized by a completely public capital, without the presence of private actors and with a direct control made by the municipalities
Mixed	It is characterized by the presence both of public or private capital, in which it has also an operative role.
Complete private	It is characterized by the presence only of private capital, it is the perfect realization of economic competition.

As it is clear they represent a set of diverse typologies of management that inevitably prefigure a different scenario for the governance point of view, but also for the possibility of an inter-municipal cooperation. Each of these typologies is able to adapt to a possible cooperation among different municipalities and the effectiveness is connected mainly to the presence of public inside the typology itself. The in house society represents probably the better situation in which the municipalities can collaborate for the implementation of a good management of public services: they could work for the creation of a society in which they share the economical capital and they could also exercise together the control on the management, in this kind of society they also share the possible difficulties and problems that could come. The mixed society works in a very similar way, the municipalities could share the public capital part and they could search together for the private actors: as in the all other typology, they maintain the public control over the entire process and also they share the possible managerial or economical difficulties. The last typology is the complete private society that works similarly if it has created by a single municipalities or by more than one: in the all case the public authorities have to search for a private actor that could manage the services, their role is limited to the definition of the

public announcement and to the control of the respect of the procedures. As it is emerged, each of these typologies carried out a set of problematic aspects in the management of public services, Sabrina Iommi (2013) tries to simplify the possible categorization individuating two main difficulties: one is related to the huge amount of resources (in terms of financial and technical ones) used for managing inside the municipalities this kind of services and the second one is connected to the excessive fragmentation from an administrative point of view. An answer to each of these two problems are given by the form of inter-municipal cooperations that are able to introduce important economies of scale for reducing the amount of expenditure and - at the same time - could work in a less fragmented way and achieve the optimal size dimensions.

### 1.3 | The differences between agreement, consortium and union.

This paragraph is dedicated to the construction of a juridical framework to the inter-municipal associative forms, it is based both on the Italian laws, but also it presents some interesting regional examples that could give some ideas for the construction of national context more solid and coherent. It is important to underline that there is not a punctual restitution of the whole set of laws about local governments, but the focus is only on those laws that introduce something about the inter-municipal cooperations: this is valid both for the national and for the regional context.

#### *The evolution introduced by the 'Testo Unico degli Enti Locali'*

The administrative reorganization of territory is an historical problem for Italy. As Fedele and Moini (2006) describe, it is not simple to individuate a coherent and stable systems for a country characterized by an high level of fragmentation: there are both high pressures, as secession from the country, from a region or from a province, and low pressure, as a continuous reposition of parochialism, that are in a direct contrast to the research of a stable administrative organization. The central government is not also able to impose a change into this context: the first version of the 'Testo Unico delle Leggi sull'Ordinamento degli Enti Locali' was approved in 1934, not so different from the law 2248/1865 and derived from the historical context of the postunification, and it was reformed only in 1990 with the law 142/1990. There is a century of total immobilism, that caused for territorial reorganization of local authorities a delay of about twenty years in comparison with the other European country. Only thanks to the reformation of the Title 5th of Italian Constitution in 2001, it was ratified that the local self-governments have a constitutional role for the Italian republic and - at the same time

- it was established that they have administrative duties (Fedele & Moini 2006). This important change of paradigm has been accompanied by a previous passage: the approbation of 'Testo Unico delle Leggi sull'Ordinamento degli Enti Locali'(legislative decree 18<sup>th</sup> August 2000, n. 267), that is the fundamental law of the Italy about local authorities. It defines the framework in which the public administrator could move regarding the institutional and financial order and it was written in order to simplify the mass of laws about the structure and the operation of local authorities. This law plays an important role also for cooperation among municipalities, starting from the Article 1 Paragraph 2 in which it is written that: the municipality, for practicing its functions in an adequate territorial boundary, could realize decentralization formalities, but also cooperation formalities with other cities. The entire regulation of associative forms is transferred to the Chapter V, in which are individuated three typologies of cooperation among municipalities, as it is reported in the following table

**Table 3 - Typologies of associative forms**

Typology of society	Description
Agreement (Accordo)	A juridical tool for managing functions and services in a coordinate way. The municipalities should determine the aims, the formalities, the duration, the consultation modalities and the financial relations. They could decide to create an ad-hoc office.
Consortium (Consortio)	It is a company for managing function and services in a coordinate way. Due to its nature, it is characterized by a statute, an assembly (made by delegate of municipalities) and a administrative committee
Unions of municipalities (Unione di comuni)	It is a local authority, made by two or more near municipalities, with the intent of managing in a coordinate way a plurality of functions. It is characterized by a statute, a president and a committee. It is considered as a municipality to all intents and purposes.

The institution of agreement represents the most simple juridical tool for giving a sufficiently solid background to the inter-municipal cooperations, it is characterized by a non-structural intervention on the administrative order and a disorganized collaborative dimension, but nevertheless it is efficient and efficacious mainly thanks to the high degree of flexibility (ANCI 2012). ANCI (Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani - National Association Italian Municipalities) produces a deep survey on agreements<sup>3</sup>, as tool for creating a inter-municipal cooperation: it is mainly related to the little municipalities, i.e. the local governments with less than 5.000 inhabitants, because it is the segment more interested by the cooperation. The first element, that emerges from this survey, is the general diffusion of associative forms in an extensive sense (only 66 municipalities on 1.011, equal to the 6,5 %, have not any forms of cooperation) and in particular 775 municipalities on 1011: these data reveal the high adaptability, that can be referred to the facility in the drawing up of an agreement, but also to the perfect overlapping with other agreements and institutions of cooperation. Secondly, the object of the agreement is - for almost all municipalities - the shared management of a unique service (it is about 95,6%), that is generally the organization of the administration or the basic functions and services: i.e. the town clerk, the local police, the social and welfare service and education (these functions and services are more than the half of the total object). Finally, it is important to focus the attention on the collaborative profile, i.e. the typologies of agreements in terms of quantity of municipalities, numbers inhabitants and duration.

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3 This survey is made for having an evaluation of the existing agreement, in order to give a solid benchmark to the new mandatory cooperation among municipalities. This duty derives from the Legislative Decree 31st may 2010 n.78 that - with the article 14 - obliges the municipalities under 5.000 inhabitants to manage through a union or an agreement at least three fundamental functions of municipalities.

From this part of the survey emerges that more than 35% of the agreements are promoted by two municipalities and a similar quantity is attributable to the agreements among three, four and five municipalities. The medium size - in terms of population - is about 19.000 inhabitants with an equal distribution of agreements that concern up to 5.000 inhabitants, from 5.001 to 10.000 inhabitants and from 10.001 to 20.000. There are a wide variety referring to the duration of the agreements: more than 60% of the analyzed cases have a duration from 2 to 5 years, only less than 15% are annual and more than 20% go from 6 to 10 years. The last point of the collaborative profile is about the structural organization: in some case (more than 30% of the studied cases) there is the constitution of a common office, delegated to the direct management of the shared function or service. In conclusion, the survey allows to emerge a precise idea about the agreements and their use in the Italian context: this institution is oriented to the management in a medium period of a unique function or service, that is - in general - referable to the most simple administrative sphere, through the sharing of personnel (i.e. town clerk or local policeman) or of a decisional table (i.e. for the decisions about education or welfare). It is possible to underline also that the grade of flexibility and adaptability emerge from this analysis due to the absence of particular constraints or limits imposed by the law for the adoption of an agreement: it really represents the most simple juridical tool for the diffusion of cooperation among municipalities.

*The consortium: an unstable tool.*

This institution represents an headway in comparison with the agreement, as it is described in the previous table, the consortium is less flexible and more structured: the compulsory presence of an assembly and of an administrative committee are a

symptom of a certain rigidity, but contemporary there is a low level of reversibility, that should be bearer of more political view and economical caution (Monni 2003). If the attention shifts to the external issues, the flexibility increases: this institution can guarantee the associative management of one or more services (or functions) with the participation of all type of local authorities (i.e. municipalities, unions of municipalities, provinces) (Caselli & Iommi 2003). About the services and functions that can be committed to the consortium according to the Italian law, there is a big controversy. As it is reported by Caselli and Iommi, the consortium was used for the management both of services and of functions, the crucial discriminant factor is the absence of without industrial (or in a broader sense economic) importance, but the financial law of 20104 abolished the consortium of functions in order to limit the public expenditure. This modification causes inevitably a weakening of this institution, fortunately it is contrasted by an extensive consideration of services, in which are comprised also, for example, welfare and healthcare, so it maintains its attraction as juridical tool able to guarantee an efficacious and effective management of public services in a shared way. The uncertain situation of the consortium is also visible from the absence of deep survey about the operation of this institution: there is not analysis dedicated to the discover of dimensions and profiles, as for the agreements, this situation probably derives also from its intermediate nature.

*The union of municipalities: a solid tool.*

This juridical tools for the management of inter-municipal cooperation represents the maximum level of sharing decisions among municipalities: it is the more structured from an administrative

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4 The Article 2, Paragraph 186, Letter e of Financial Laws 2010



point of view, characterized by a low reversibility and by a strong political support. The diffusion of this typology of inter-municipal cooperation makes easy the construction of a comprehensive description, both in a quantitative and qualitative sense. According to Fedele & Moini 2006 the unions of municipalities are the most cooperative examples and the most adaptable tool both for defining policies and for supplying services. The author underlines that the unions could promote policies decision and guarantee a more efficient management of complex services, in conclusion they are recognizable as an «multifunctional associative process, based on an effective voluntary choice of single municipalities» (Fedele & Moini 2006: 83). A short excursus about the progressive normative steps about the unions of municipalities is important in order to understand also the contemporary situation.

**Table 4 - Laws about union of municipalities**

Law	Description
Law 142/1990	It introduces this associative model with a precise temporal time (10 years) within the unions should have been turned into a fusion and a consequent new municipalities
Legislative decree 267/2000	It is also known as 'Testo Unico delle Leggi sull'Ordinamento degli Enti Locali', it introduces some innovations as the abandon of the temporal time, the presence of a president, an assembly and a council and the application of the same laws of municipalities.
Internal affairs minister decree 318/2000	It establishes the criteria for the distribution of the national economical funds for the unions of municipalities based on population, number of associated authorities and number of services managed in collaboration.
Law 112/2010	It introduces important changes about the management fundamental functions of local authorities: it becomes compulsory the associative administration for the municipalities under 5.000 inhabitants and also it obliged the regions to determine the optimal territorial dimensions for the management of the fundamental functions.

It is important to sum up which are the political reasons that push to this kind of inter-municipal cooperation. A first element is represented by the presence of normative and financial issues: both a duty (i.e. the presence of a specific law) and an incentive (i.e. the presence of an economical support), but - as it is underlined in Baldini et al. 2012 - they are not the exclusive determinant factors for the birth and growth of unions of municipalities. A second aspect is expressed by the dichotomy between localism and the state of need, as described by Baldini et al. 2012, the public administrators are often in the front of a difficult crossroads between the wish of maintaining the own local identity and the real needs of the municipalities, they could untie this knot only if they take a precise political decision. The last aspect is related to the need of create a critical mass able to reinforce the political weight of a territory: «the add value of a unions of municipalities consists in the presence of an organism that increase the value of the territory transforming it in a credible interlocutor in the eyes of the other local authorities.» (Baldin et al. 2012: 77).

The statutes of the unions of municipalities represent an important instrument for the description of their management, both from a political point of view and from an administrative one: about this issue there is an interesting analysis presented in the report of Cittalia "Lo stato delle Unioni. Rapporto 2010 sulle Unioni di Comuni"<sup>5</sup>. The first important element, that is possible to underline, is the final aim of the unions: in 25 statute of the 36 examined the fusion in an unique municipality is considered a fundamental purpose, this element reveals the political strength of the taken decisions and the consequent low grade of reversibility. It clearly emerges that the new associative situation is not occasional or

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<sup>5</sup> Cittalia is the studies and research foundation of ANCI (Associazione Nazionale Comuni d'Italia - National Association of Italian Municipalities and the report is edited by Paolo Testa.

accidental, but: «it is oriented to characterize the unions as a local authorities substantially assimilated to the exponential nature of the municipalities and, therefore, it has the same autonomous feature» (Testa 2010: 36). Talking about more practical aspects, from the statute appears that the unions of municipalities are authorities for the exercise of a plurality of functions or services: the implied aim is the individuation of an optimum dimension for the management and supply of functions and services, that is linked a consequent need of re-modulation (or re-distribution) of tasks from the municipalities to the unions. Another element able to reinforce the role of this juridical tool is the attempt of creating a sort of financial autonomy: this issue is fundamental for an independent and impartial management of the functions and services and it underlines also the faith and the trust among the different municipalities. The last aspect is the administrative one, the general idea is to consolidate the image of the unions as strong authorities that is connected to the creation of own offices, the hiring of personnel and form of collaboration among the offices of the different municipalities.

After this two passage about the juridical background and the political reasons behind the inter-municipal cooperation, it could be useful to give a quantitative description to the phenomenon, taking the data from the report of Cittalia "Lo stato delle Unioni. Rapporto 2010 sulle Unioni di Comuni". The first aspect is the distribution, there was (in 2010) 313 unions of municipalities including 1.561 municipalities. The following table underlines the distribution in the different region: it emerges that the Northern Italy was the area in which there are more unions of municipalities (only 103 in the North West, 33% of the total amount), even in Sicily and Sardinia there are 85 unions (about the 25%). This says that the unions of municipalities are widespread in the whole Italy.

Table 5 \* Distribution of unions of municipalities in Italian Regions (Testa, 2010)

Region	Number	Region	Number
Lombardia	53	Calabria	9
Piemonte	50	Molise	8
Sicilia	35	Abruzzo	6
Sardegna	30	Friuli Venezia Giulia	5
Veneto	28	Trentino - Alto Adige	1
Emilia Romagna	22	Toscana	1
Lazio	22	Umbria	1
Puglia	22	Valle d'Aosta	0
Marche	11	Liguria	0
Campania	9	Basilicata	0

From a population's point of view, there were 5.758.607 people that lived in a unions of municipalities, that is about the 9,5% of the entire Italian population. It is important to underline also the distribution of population for the unions of municipalities: about 35% is characterized between 10.001 and 25.000 inhabitants, 24% between 5.001 and 10.000, 20% less than 5.000, 14% between 25.001 and 50.000 and only the 7% more than 50.000. This data demonstrate that the dimension 10.000 - 25.000 inhabitants probably represents a sort of "ideal size" that allow «to answer to the growing question of services personalization and, simultaneously, to the generation of economies of scales adaptable to the contraction of resources» (Testa 2004: 26). In terms of population it is possible to identify a sort of ideal size, unfortunately the same operation is not simple to do for the number of municipalities that comprise the unions. On average they are made by 5 municipalities with the following distribution: 16% by 2 municipalities, 36% between 3 and 4 ones, 44% between 5 and 10 ones and finally 4% by 10 or more ones. A last interesting passage of the analysis made by Citalia is the attempt to identify

some models about the types of relations that are built among municipalities:

satellite model, a number of little municipalities around one or two bigger cities; only little, a union only made by little municipalities (less than 5.000 inhabitants); only big, a union made by big municipalities (more than 5.000 inhabitants); the couple, a union made by only two municipalities) and finally archipelago characterized by the absence of a precise model.



# CHAPTER 2

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Economical and managerial  
effects and tools  
of cooperation





The analysis of the economic and management reasons, that support the improvement of an inter-municipal cooperation, is a fundamental pillar: without a certainty of economical sustainability and enhancement, the process itself is compromised. The decision to cooperate is not easy and simple to be taken: not only for the intrinsic difficulties of cooperation, but also because this kind of process could have an high grade of irreversibility and it represents a radical change from a local perspective<sup>1</sup>. These sketched issues leave out that the decisions have to rest on solid base, consequently it is important the definition of managerial and economic aspects that should be examined and considered at the beginning of inter-municipal cooperation processes, in order to individuate some criteria able to demonstrate their real utility and effectiveness. The international debate is centered on three main aspects: the weight of transaction costs, the role of economies of scale and the importance of networking among cities. Each of these is related to an economic issue: the first one to the effectiveness of the whole process, the second one to the importance of agglomeration for a positive and sustainable development and the last one to the power of relations among cities. These aspects, and consequent issues, answered to the main economic and managerial problems that could emerge in a process of cooperation: the real economize of cooperative approach, the advantages both from a specific and general points of view and the positive effects of networking. The following three paragraphs are an exploration of these issues for understanding deeply their role in determining the success of inter-municipal cooperation: made by a theoretical framework and a deepening on the relations with the main topic.

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<sup>1</sup> The level of reversibility depends from the diverse forms of cooperation, while the radicalness of this process emerges from the scarcity of inter-municipal unions (even if they are increasing) and from the managerial difficulties experimented by the existing ones (Cittalia, 2010)

## 2.1. | The role of transaction costs

The starting point of this paragraph is a brief reconstruction of what transaction costs are from a general point of view in order to give a precise theoretical framework; after that there is an in-depth analysis of its relations with the inter-municipal cooperation, as mainly based on the idea that they can be an instrument for measuring the economic costs of this process.

### *A framework: the theoretical and practical base.*

The definition of transaction costs is attributable to two different economists, Ronald Coase and Oliver Williamson; they work independently (rather in a sequentially) but the results are complementary: this conceptualization is clear only if both studies are taking into account.

Coase introduced the concept of transaction costs for the first time in 'The Nature of the Firm', a paper published in 1937; as it is already understandable, the field in which this concept emerged is related to the firm's organizational features. The starting point is represented by the analysis of different organizational way for allocation of firm's resources. The main form is identified in the use of price mechanism, which is characterized - as each other forms - by some costs; according to Coase (1937), this organizational form needs to know what are the relevant prices of each exchange between firms that composed the market. These exchanges could be recognized as transactions, to which the author refers as: «the operation of a market costs something and by forming an organization and allowing some authority (an "entrepreneur") to direct the resources, certain market costs are saved. » (Coase 1937: 392). He specifies the working mechanism of firm's organization explaining that it will tend to expand until it equalizes the costs of organizing and extra transaction within the firm and

the costs of carrying out the same transactions. This one is the key point of transactions costs: they represent a cost related to the mechanism of the resources allocation of the firms and they play a crucial role for determining how to manage this phase. This study represents the base for the works of Williamson that gives a systematic contribution in reinforcing and examining in depth the transaction costs, also in an interesting direction for the development of this topic. His approach is not referred to the simple definition of this concept, but he is oriented to establish that: «transaction costs are central to the study of economics, identifies the critical dimensions for characterizing transactions, describes the main governance structures of transactions [...]» (Williamson 1979: 234). He examines the aspect related to the need of industrial economizing, for which the transaction costs represent the second main voice of costs, only after production ones. Two main purchase sources are individuated: the external relations (such as exchanges or procurements) that are already identified by Coase and the governance structures, identified as “part of the optimization problems” due to their role in managing the transactions. This second issue is the most interesting aspect for the content of this thesis due to its attention on the relations between the governance structure and the transaction costs. From the description of the different governance structures<sup>2</sup>, it is important to take into account the transaction-specific governance that concern: mixed transactions (i.e. transactions common, but specific as purchasing customized equipment) and idiosyncratic ones (i.e. transactions uncommon and specific as constructing a plant): their non-standardized nature counts on the market governance, while their recurrent nature allow to recover the costs for their specialized treatment. Within this kind of governance, Williamson identifies -

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2 For a broad and precise dissertation see Williamson, 1979.

as specific category - the unified governance: a form of vertical integration useful for both sides of the transactions, it occurs in case of high specialized human and physical assets that could reach economic advantages both for the buyers and for an outside supplier. The advantages of this kind of integration are related to the possibility of taking decisions and making adaptations in a rapid and sequential way without the need «to consult, complete or revise inter-firm agreements» (Williamson 1979: 253).

### *Transaction costs in the public sphere*

After this theoretical framework, a shift from a private point of view, as it is definable the approach of Coase and Williamson, to a public one is useful for understanding the role of transaction costs in municipal administrations and - consequently - in their cooperation. An interesting analysis<sup>3</sup> of this issue is made by Trevor Brown and Matthew Potoski (2003, 2005). Their focus is on the possibilities of using the transaction costs theories as a tool able to evaluate the government contracting: i.e. the commitment of goods and services, for which - generally - public administrations are the exclusive provider, to nonprofits and private firms. The authors argue that governments procedures, for establishing the production mechanism, are address «to minimize risks associated with delivering services under alternative institutional arrangements» (Brown & Potoski 2003b: 441), i.e. risks related to the type of services being produced, the nature of the marketplace and the possible incongruence between government and the vendor. At the same time there are «a range of different factors that influence positively the use of contracting as an alternative

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<sup>3</sup> Here, the works of Brown and Potoski is considered only as a useful example for demonstrating the linkages between transaction costs and municipalities. For their in-depth analysis on how to use transaction costs theory as a tool for evaluate the efficiency and enhancement of different contracting modalities see Brown and Potoski (2003, 2005).

to in-house production» (Brown & Potoski 2003a: 276) that includes physical and bureaucratic aspects, but the most important ones are represented by the need of obtaining an economic enhancement. Transaction costs are used in order to evaluate this economic enhancement because they are a cost item in the contracting procedures about the « [...] planning, adapting and monitoring task completion under alternative governing structures (or contracting modalities [A/N]) » (Williamson 1981). Brown and Potoski (2003b) underline also that it is not simple to use transaction costs as a tool for analyzing economic enhancement of contracting because of ambiguous goals, complex environments and internal constraints, typical of municipalities and public administrations. Through this short dissertation, it is possible to demonstrate that there is a strong relation between transaction costs and governance, that could be extended to municipalities, comparable to the firms: the first ones are characterized by the presence of transactions for the delivering of services to the citizens, as the second one. As Williamson (1979) underlines: the problem about transactions costs is not resolved when their weights in the delivery of a service is determined, but it is fundamental the using of these data for finding the proper management solutions. A lot of scholars focus their attention on these problems, due to the centrality that the service delivery assume in the daily life of a municipality, and they encounter – in each case – the same dichotomy between privatizing or internalizing the provision of services. An interesting analysis about this issues is made by Mildred Warner (2011), she proposes a simplification of the dichotomy that was reduced to a “contrast” between competition and cooperation: where the first one is generally preferred because it promotes efficiency, choice and innovation but the second one is able to reduce the problems related to transaction costs and to the presences of

private actors. For the recomposition of this dichotomy, Warner used a new economic theory, defined by Botsman & Rogers 2010: the collaborative consumption, that «is being articulated which harnesses some of the benefits of market-style organization, but maintains the potential for other forms of social engagement to break down transaction costs, reduce information asymmetries and promote attention to sustainability and equity» (Warner 2011: 421). Starting from this, Warner (2011) identifies in the inter-municipal contracting a possible managerial and legal translation of collaborative consumption: it represents a public market of cooperating governments, in which it is possible to avoid the losing control or the ending up with private monopoly with the advantages of markets. Transaction costs play a fundamental role also here, as it was already seen they are the most important voice item in the choice of inter-municipal contracting and cooperation (Fageda and Bèl 2008). They are intrinsically related to the rise of economies of scales: the choice of inter-municipal contracting is taken when the advantages derived from the economies of scales are able to overtake the transaction costs related to this form of contracting. Consequently, only through a sharing among different municipalities the transaction costs could be reduce in an sensible way able to produce effects not only for the administration but also for the citizens (Bel et al. 2011).

#### *Reducing vs. keeping stable costs.*

The management of public services, in which the transaction costs have – as it is demonstrated - a fundamental role, is one of the most difficult issue of public sphere. In order to take a decision about them, a local administrator should take into account a wide range of variables, that could be reduce to a simple problem of efficacy and efficiency. Here, the transaction costs make the scene: as it is

emerged, they can be used as a touchstone for demonstrating the presence of some advantages in a comparison among different managerial solutions. Consequently, it is possible to individuate a crossroads in the front of a public administrator: he could reduce the costs of planning, adapting and monitoring tasks related to the services or he could decide to keep stable them. As it was written, there is not a universal recipe able to give a certain solution about service providers, nevertheless these two different approaches are a useful synthesis of the wide range of managerial possibilities for public services. In a translation of this crossroad from a specific context - as the service delivery - to a more general context - as the inter-municipal cooperation - it is possible to represent this broad variability using a different intensity graduation, connected with the different institutional associative forms.

**Table 6 - Relations among associative forms and transaction costs**

Associative forms	Importance of transaction costs
Union of municipalities	High
Consortium	Medium High
Agreement	Medium Low
Non associative forms	Low

As it is clear from this table, the importance given to transaction costs grows according to the complexity of the associative forms. It is clear that the union of municipalities represents the best situation for the reducing of transaction costs, consequently they are the best solution in comparison with the other typologies of associative forms. It is important to underline that this reflection is made only taking into account the relations among the transaction costs and the associative forms, because the economic advantages driven by transaction costs could be achievable also without a collaboration with other municipalities, as for example with private firms.

## 2.2. | The economies of scale: a driver and a pillar.

The transaction costs are intrinsically related to the scale economies, as it was written, they represent the touchstone for taking decisions about service providers. Nevertheless it is not possible to confine their role here, these economies represent one of the fundamental stimuli for each economic actors to search for collaboration with other similar actors in order to achieve the advantages connected with the increase of scale and density. Forasmuch as the cities – and consequently the actors that supervise to their management – could be considered economical actors: the economies of scale represents, also for them, a stimulus for collaboration. The brief analysis, presented here, take into account two different aspects of economies of scale that could be seen – at the same time – in a complementary or contrasting way. The first way focuses its attention on the economies of scales as a driver for agglomeration that is mainly internal to the city because it is linked to the crucial role played in its growth, while the second way considers these economies as a pillar for inter-municipal cooperation, that is oriented to the external relations of the city.

### *Economies of scale: a driver for agglomeration.*

A clear definition of scale economies<sup>4</sup> is given by Joseph Stiglitz it identifies them as «factors that cause the average cost of producing something to fall as the volume of its output increases» (Stiglitz & Walsh, 2002) and, according to the studies of Alfred Marshall, it distinguishes between two type of economies of scale: internal ones, i.e. cost savings that increase without relations with the

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4 The first definition of scales economies is made by Adam Smith (see Smith 1975) and many classical economists work in order to improve and perfect this concept. A fundamental contribution is given by Alfred Marshall (see Marshall 1920) mainly on the dichotomy between internal and external scales economies. It is important to point out that the diffusion of this concept is strictly linked to the second industrial revolution and fordism.



industry, market or environment; external ones, i.e. benefits related to the way in which the industry is organized. The quoted studies are mainly related to the industrial economy because it is the field in which the concept of scale economies is grown, but there are a wide range of studies that use this issue also in regional and urban economies in order to explain some phenomena presented in our cities and territory. An interesting survey of these relations is given by Roberto Camagni in the analysis of agglomeration principle for which the scale economies are identified as origin. The author says that the element of agglomeration results always as a fundamental feature and as a genetic principle for the cities, that exist and have existed in the history because men have found more advantageous the management of their personal, social, economical and power relations in a concentrated spatial way (Camagni 2002). The economies of scale are consequently identified as the economical expression of the advantages derived from the agglomeration. In order to examine in depth the differences among the economies of scales, it is useful to identify three categories (of which here only the last two are explored): economies internal to the firm, economies of localization and economies of urbanization. The economies of localization are, according to Philip McCann, «economies which accrue to a group of firm within the same industrial sector located at the same place» (McCann 2001, p. 58), it is possible to transfer this concept also in the management of public goods and consequently the same advantages could be identified as, for example: the information exchange, the mutual understanding and familiarity, the exchange of personnel and consultants, the reduction of transaction costs and a general improvement of the work quality. The economies of urbanization are «externalities that typically occur in an urban environment, aimed indiscriminately to all economic activities and not specific to individual sectors

of production» (Camagni 2002, p. 52), they are directly related to the presence of specific features in urban areas as the high concentration of public goods (transportations networks, technological networks, public services...), the presence of a vast market area and the presence of productive factors (differentiated market labour, high services, communication and informational economies...). According to Camagni, these elements are intrinsically connected with the urban dimensions: the economies of scales stop their effects beyond a certain urban dimension, they could turn into a negative effects – so they became a diseconomy – or they could be replaced by other effects.

*Economies of scale: a pillar for inter-municipal cooperation*

Until now the economies of scale and the agglomerations are seen in an exclusive relation with the life-cycle of a single city, as the sign of the state of health of urbanization processes, and the concepts are not considered in all of their potentiality. The reasonings are focused on the dimension of a single city and on the reasearch of an optimum size, they are related to a subjective sphere with the absence of relations with the other cities. This point of view could be seen as a constraining because it does not take into account the fundamental role played by the relations – considered from an economical, political, social, environmental, managerial point of view – among near cities, that could be seen as an extension of agglomeration concept. This extension has the aim to enclose the cooperation among municipalities that could be seen – with full rights – as a political and managerial translation of the geographical image of agglomeration. Starting from this reasoning, the economies of scales could represent an important aspect to consider in the debate about inter-municipal cooperations for two reasons: at the same time they are a benchmarking for

the evaluation and an aim to achieve for public administration. These two reasons are well analyzed by Angela Frascini and Francesco Osculati that propose an accurate study focused on the economical theory of associationism among municipalities. Their work identifies the inter-municipal cooperations as an instrument able to solve the dimensional problem of local insitution that it is related to the inability to take an adequate advantages from the economies of scale (Frascini & Osculati, 2006). The authors underline that it is not simple to produce an in-depth analysis because of the presences of many difficulties with the data collection, nevertheless they underline that it is possible to make a simple, but useful, reasoning about the per capita administrative costs (Frascini & Osculati, 2006). As the authors do, it is useful to take into account the work of Isabelle Jourmand and Tadashi Yokoyama about the management of decentralization of public sector in Japan. The starting conditions of Japan are not so different from the Italian one: in both case the local governments «face difficulties in efficiently providing public services that are characterised by scale economies, are redistributive by nature and may affect residents from other jurisdictions» (Jourmand & Yokoyama 2005, p.7). In order to change this situation, but mainly for exploiting scale economies Japan has relied, among other strategies, the promotion of amalgamations of municipalities. For determining the optimal dimension, they take into account the studies<sup>5</sup> about the use of per capita administrative costs as the unit cost of local public services, in which these costs follow a U-shaped curve: «they are high for the smallest municipalities, tend to decrease until around 120 thousand inhabitants, and increase as municipalities grow beyond this threshold»(Jourmand & Yokoyama, p.8). Consequently, it is possible to deduce that it is fundamental

<sup>5</sup> For an in-depth analysis of these studies see – as an example – Hayashi, 2002.

the research of this optimal level - that could be generally considered in term of population –for each services and through a collaboration with other municipalities. The two last specifications are important because it is not possible to image a static system for obtaining the economies of scales; as the authors underline, there is a problem of efficiency and efficacy: the dimension of the local body could be appropriated for improving the efficiency, but not for improving the efficacy. The conclusions mark that the work for achieving the economies of scale is complex and it should start from taking into account at the same time: the type of service (with all costs, features and dimensions), the amount of population, the degree of efficacy and efficiency and the flexibility.

*Taking into account vs. avoiding economies of scales.*

The complementary dichotomy, presented in this paragraph, could be easily recomposed into a unique description of economies of scales that takes into account contemporarily two different dimensions. They are described as the sum of two different forces: one is referred to the internal growth of the cities, that is intrinsic to the nature of the city itself, and the second one is relative to the external relations with the other municipalities, that is also intrinsic but mainly connected to the political decisions. The intensity of these two forces is different due to political interests: a city could be more oriented to increase the internal agglomerations instead of working for the construction of a collaboration among others municipalities. The increase of internal agglomerations is generally referred to productive system of a city for which the local political actions could be direct to the enhancement of the contextual features. The construction of a collaboration among city is wider than the previous one, it is generally involved a set of different capabilities but mainly it is related to a precise political will. These

two orientations are complementary and generally both of them could be implemented in a city in order to achieve a maximum grade of economies of scale able to guarantee a positive effect for the city. So, it is possible to recognize the presence of a new crossroad in the front of a public administrator: he could decide to taking into account the advantages driven by the economies of scale or he could avoid it. As it is evident, this dichotomy is excessively radical, so a middle way is generally preferable and it can be reached if a grade of intensity is considered. Similarly to the work presented for transaction costs, also in this case is useful a construction of a table that put in relations the institutional associative forms with four different level of intensity related to the economies of scale.

**Table 7 - Relations among associative forms and economy of scale**

Associative forms	Importance of transaction costs
Union of municipalities	High
Consortium	Medium High
Agreement	Medium Low
Non associative forms	Low

Thanks to this table, it is possible to underline that - as for transaction costs previously - the importance of economies of scale change according to the level of cooperation among municipalities. In particular, it is crucial to underline that the level of importance is correlated to the reaching of a coherent and useful spatial dimensions, able to obtain these advantages. The role of associative forms could be linked to the stabilization of the positive effects because they represent a framework with - generally - a low degree of flexibility that consequently is able to strengthen the continuity of the economic advantages.

### 2.3. | The networking of cities: an economic and spatial representation

The analysis of the economical reasons, on which the inter-municipal cooperation is rested on, is until now oriented to two issues: the modality of analyzing the possible economy in the management of public services and the advantages derived from the proximity of economic activities and cities. These two aspects are characterized by a tension towards the network of cities: it is clear – in each of them – that one of the most effective and efficacious solution is the increase of relations among cities, in order to implement situations in which the municipalities could cooperate for achieving positive effects for the citizens.

#### *The evolution of description of spatial structure: from central place theory to city networks.*

There are a lot of attempts to create a detailed and precise lecture of the relations among cities, each of them is directly connected to the features of the times in which it was conceived because they are mainly based on the empirical observation. The model of central locations of Christaller and Lösch could be considered as the first attempt of describing and theorizing the spatial urban systems<sup>6</sup>. The central location model is characterized by an excessive abstract nature related to the strict hierarchical method that is no more applicable in our period: the idea of a rigid order of cities, that plays a precise role in harmony without any overlapping, is really far from the actual situation of the all urban areas (Meijers 2007). Even though the abstract nature of Christaller and Lösch's model, the theoretical background is still valid, as it was written by Camagni and Salone: «the shape of the urban hierarchy was determined by the interplay of forces like economies of scale, minimum efficient production size, demand density and market

<sup>6</sup> For a deep analysis of the model of central locations, see Christaller 1933 and Lösch 1954.

size, so by the same token other production forces working at the microeconomic and micro-territorial scale may be considered as the driving forces of the new "network paradigm"» (Camagni and Salone 1993: 1055).

From these passage, it is clearly understandable that the theoretical base of the model of central locations are contemporary and still usable to our context with some prospective changes. If the quoted forces of Christaller and Lösch's model are applied to the cities, that is considered the main subject, in the idea of Camagni and Salone the same forces should be applied to the micro-level, i.e. some specific industrial sectors or public functions. Starting from the limits and perspectives of Christaller and Lösch's studies, there is a wide and fertile set of studies about the urban spatial structure, that has not the solidity and the framework typical of theories, but it is more a sum of different contributions, which try to built a possible explanation of an emerging phenomenon. Some authors, in their definitions<sup>7</sup>, emphasize the centrality of cities while other authors express a sort of overtaking of city and focus their attention on regional dimension. It is important to underline that in this different definitions there are some recurrent elements: an attempt to surpass the common idea of city with a broader image, an attention to the presence of multiple cores and a fundamental role of network and relationship between these cores. Camagni and Salone (1993) present one of the most interesting example of describing the urban spatial structure, the authors theorize a new paradigm, the "city-network", that is s defined as: «systems of horizontal, non-hierarchical relationships among specialized centers, providing externalities from complementarity/vertical integration or from

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<sup>7</sup> Some interesting definition of urban spatial structure are: "multicore city-regions" presented in Westin and Östhol 1994, "polynucleated metropolitan regions" proposed in Dieleman and Faludi 1998 or "network cities" defined in Batten 1995.

synergy/cooperation among centers» (Camagni and Salone 1993:1057). The main contrast between this model and the central location model is the different typologies of relationship: in the central place model are hierarchical, gravity-type and static ones, while in the city network model are non-hierarchical and horizontal (Meijers 2007). The following table<sup>8</sup> is useful for understanding the differences between the two model, it focuses its attention on the elements that vary as: the number of hierarchical levels (spatial scales), the set of economic functions and their distribution among the levels, the distribution of population and the typologies of relationships.

**Table 8 - Changes resulting from transition hierarchies to networks**

Networks	Hierarchy
Fixed number of spatial scales	Variable number of spatial scales
Economic functions rising with spatial scales, functions connected to spatial scales	Variable sets of economic functions on the same spatial scales
Urban population evenly distributed across territory	Uneven distribution of urban population across territory
Only vertical relationships between cities	Both horizontal and vertical relationships between cities

The city network , as a common network, are made up of two main elements, the nodes (cities, households, firms, organisations and individuals) and the linkages among them (infrastructure, relationships and ties), there are also the flows (people, goods, information, capital) and meshes (Meijers 2005). The nodes are represented by the urban settlements in their different types of size, role and dimension. As it is written in Camagni and Salone (1993), they have a great importance mainly for the influence of economies of scale and agglomeration externalities, which are sought by

<sup>8</sup> It is originally proposed in Van der Knapp (2002: 168), but here it is presented the translated version of Meijers 2007: 239



firms and services – located in the cities - in an attempt to reach an effective and positive critical mass. This critical mass is able to increase the possibility of relationship, the creation of clusters and a varied group of economies of scale or of agglomeration, but also it is able to decrease the distance between firms and services, the cost of transportation and the efficient productions size (Camagni and Salone 1993). The network is obviously the central part of this model, for understanding its features it is useful the introduction of the notion of synergy, this word comes from the Greek and it refers to: «a situation in which the effect of two or more co-operating or combined bodies or functions is larger than the sum of the effects of each body or function alone can achieve» (Meijers 2005: 766). According to Capello and Rietveld (1998), the synergy concept could be distinguished in three different meanings: a micro-level, i.e. when two or more actors cooperate in order to achieve positive results for both of them, a meso-level, i.e. when cooperative behaviour is implemented for exploiting complementarity in the production and a macro-level when the externalities may be exploited by an individual or firms that are part of a group. These three different meanings of synergy are useful for the categorization of economic networks, shown in the following table<sup>9</sup>.

**Table 9 - Different types of economic networks**

Typologies	Descriptions
Club Type	Actors shared a common objective and activities with similar interests. Advantages related to network externalities. Horizontal synergy: derives from cooperation leading to economies of scale and positive network externalities. Pure synergy
Web Type	Actors have different activities, that are complementary and linked. Advantages are related to specialization and labor territorial division. Vertical synergy: the surplus value following agglomeration or specialization effects, as vertical integration of specialized supply chain Pure complementary

In conclusion, synergy exhibits itself using three different mechanisms, where their types of networks are intertwined: cooperation linked to horizontal synergy and the club networks, complementarity connected to vertical synergy and the web-type networks and externalities.

*The urban network: an economic backbone for cooperation*

The importance of network in the description of urban spatial structure has a double meanings: the first one is related to the economic dimensions (analyzed prematurely), while the second one is connected to the managerial and relationships-wise aspects of inter-municipal cooperation, implied automatically in each reasoning about the city network. As it is underlined by Airaksinen and Haveri (2003), the network is emerged as the fundamental coordinating system of organisational relations because of the constant changing of technical, political, social and economic conditions that make useful a more flexible and adaptable systems as the network is. From the managerial, and consequently organisational, point of view the networks could be divided in two main categories, according to Rhodes (1991): the communities and policy networks and the general networks. The first one are characterized by a stabile, continue and vertical interdependence relationships based on the sharing of responsibilities. While the second one are less specific and could be divided in: issue network, i.e. temporary and with a focal point network with an high number of participants and with a limited degree of interdependence, professionalized network, i.e. object-oriented network based on the interests of a specific category, intergovernmental networks, i.e. local authorities network based on an extensive constellation of interests and finally producer networks, i.e. production-oriented

9 It is composed by references taking from Capineri and Kamaan 1998, Camagni 2002 and Meijers 2005

network based on the economic interests of a specific sector. This wide range of categories covers the entire selection of networks related to the managerial issues and they could be used in a parallelism with the level of associative forms, as it is visible in the following table.

**Table 10 - Relations among associative forms and economic networks**

Associative forms	Organizational networks	Economic networks
Union of municipalities	Communities and policy network	Web and club types
Consortium	Issues networks	Web complementarity -
Agreement	Intergovernmental networks	Club - synergy
No associative forms	No networks	No networks

As it is naturally evident, the first categories – the communities and policy networks – represented the best example of inter-municipal cooperation. The stability and continuity are fundamental for giving a sense of durability and also they ride over the reversibility, the sharing of responsibilities is crucial for increasing the personal, but also political and economical, involvement of decision makers and also of citizens. It can be seen also – from an economic point of view – as the place in which the club type and the web type networks could coexist in order to achieve at the same moment an high grade of complementarity and synergy, both fundamental for an economic, social and political enhancement of an urban spatial structure. Among the other categories, only the issue and intergovernmental ones are feasible for a public context as the associative forms are, because the other two types of organisational networks – professionalized and producer networks – are more specific to an economic sector in which the main actors are firms and entrepreneurs. The issue network are a suitable example of

associative forms based on the sharing of the deliver of a specific public utilities or functions because it is really flexible and open to a shared condivision of the management because it has a specific object that plays the role of driver: for these reasons, it is possible to compare also this couple to the web network because the complementarity is a fundamental features for a positive management of public utilities or functions. The intergovernmental network could be compared to the those kinds of associative forms based on a superficial sharing of decisions, characterized by a general independency of municipalities with the exceptions for the definition of a common framework, as it is clearly understandable are a kind of network in which it is possible to see the presence – from an economic point of view – only of a club network based on a pure synergetic strategy. The following paragraph presents a brief analysis about the Randstad Holland, as a paradigmatic example of the possible implementation of a solid network among cities, also characterized by a strong cooperation.

*An example: he Randstad Holland*

Meijers (2005) defines the Randstad as an excellent case for analysing synergy and the working of a urban networks or – as it is written in this article – a polycentric urban region. Batten (1995) and others authors in next articles describe the Randstad as the “Ring City”: shaped like a giant horseshoe, this complex urban agglomeration contains three major conurbations grouped around the cities of Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht. Other smaller centres such as Delft, Haarlem and Zaanstad serve as additional nodes. (Batten, 1995). The author focus also his attention on a rapid digression on the history of this network and he underlines that it began in earnest with the industrial revolution during 19th century, in this period

there was a great economic development along the Rhine and it represents a great opportunities for a rapid growth of The Hague, as political capital, and Rotterdam, as fundamental port. The resulting of this rapid growth caused a strong decentralization of Randstad spatial structure: no cities have a primary function, but all cities have an important role in a complementary and synergic system. Meijers (2005) underlines also that not only history has a great influence in the birth and mainly in the growth and reinforcement of Randstad system, a great influence comes from a strong Dutch planning concepts: the Green Hearth, it is the core of Dutch planning policies since the 1950s and it is a green region, even if it is attacked by urbanization, in the middle of the two wings that form the Randstad (a north wing, including Amsterdam and Utrecht, and a south wing including The Hague and Rotterdam).

About the networking of cities, it is possible to recognize the contemporary presence of: a co-operative situation or horizontal synergy (i.e. hierarchical network) and complementary ones or vertical synergy (i.e. complementary network). The first perspective, co-operation or horizontal synergy, focus its attention on the administrative levels of Randstad Holland. Meijers (2005) underlines the presence of three different levels, national government, provinces and municipalities, which represent a complicate situation in terms of recognition and integration of policies. This complicate situation is crossed by some other institutions which work in a multilevel governance, co-operation across scales and actors. The first example of these institutions is an attempt to overcome the administrative layers between municipal and provincial level, it is a form of co-operation between the 4 largest Randstad cities and their adjacent municipalities and the platforms of this co-operation is based on: transport, traffic, regional spatial

development and other topics. Other two examples are more recent. The first one is the Bureau Regio Randstad which is based on a formal co-operation between the four provinces, the four regional authorities and four major cities and its objectives are mainly linked to the needs of a balanced and dynamic development. The second one is Delta Metropolis Association that was established by 12 municipalities and 4 chambers of commerce, but now it includes also housing corporations, organizations of agriculture and horticulture, employer's organizations, transport sectors and environmental organizations and water boards. The main peculiarity of this territory is the centrality that it plays inside the national context: the Randstad Holland represents the economic and political fulcrum of The Netherlands, it is the real engine of the country. Without the strong political coordination, mainly managed by the central authority, the high quality level of this network is not reachable.

*Working in a network vs. working alone.*

Through this paragraph are visible the advantages of networks as instrument for correlating the different municipalities from an economical and managerial point of view. It is evident that city network is one the most useful example for the description of urban spatial structure and from an economic point of view the complementarity and synergy are tool useful for achieving a more efficient and effective management of public utilities and functions. At the same time, networks could represent a specific example of organization that is based on the presence of relationships among the main actors: the communities and policy networks, the issue and the intergovernmental ones represent three example of organization perfectly usable for the associative forms. In conclusion, the public administrators face - a third and last from

an economic and managerial point of view - crossroads: they can decide to work alone, without any relations with the near municipalities, or they can be the promoter of a network able to enhance the government of a public utilities or function or of a whole territory.





# CHAPTER 3

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Territorial effects and tools  
of cooperation



This chapter focuses its attention on the territorial dimension of cooperation, that - speaking about cities and urban contexts - it is a fundamental content to taking into account: the attention is oriented to the individuation of the possible territorial issues able to support the centrality of cooperation as policy making tools. The need of considering also the territorial dimensions is connected not only to the roots of this thesis in the territorial and urban planning, but also to the will of giving a solid "stage" for the development of cooperation: only through an in-depth analysis on the territorial features it is possible to understand which could be the real role of cooperative decisional mechanisms. The starting point of the chapter is the recognition of territory as a complex object: this appears as an awareness assumption that the territory should not be considered as a simple and easy to process object, but its superimposed construction of different layers (geographical, economical, social, political and others) does not allow to give a simplicistic lecture. According to this, the all chapter is built in order to underline and find a way for untying the complexity: consequently it is granted a wide space for an attempt of defining the concept of territory through an adding process of different theories. After that the attention is directed to the understanding of the physical complexity of the Italian territory mainly with the attention on the diffuse urbanization, that is the most widespread typology, in order to understand the real conditions of the "stage" of policies and plans. Finally the chapter is closed with a part dedicated to the territorial coalescence and the idea of *città in nuce* that could be perceived as a possible interpretation of territory, able to help the management of it.

### 3.1 | The difficulties of defining the concept of territory

The concept of territory is not characterized by a dogmatic solidity, but instead it has a strong uncertainty and variety of definitions. Different scholars focus their study on the attempt of finding a definition for the concept of territory<sup>1</sup>, that is a less immediate idea in comparison with space or place: it based on the relations among the space/places and the actors that play on this “stage”, it is radically connected to the idea of power. It is through the actions of the actors that the territory is built, it could be described as a process based on three steps: giving names to the space/places, giving a structure through the definition of boundaries and working on it. The co-presence of space/places and - mainly - of actors is the “guilty party” for the uncertainty and the variety of definitions: the different set of actions that could bring to the identification of territory are inevitably afoot of diverse conceptualizations of territory based on different shades of the relations among space/places and actors. It emerges the complete uncertainty of this definition and the consequent need to choose an useful and possible strand of the researches and studies about the territory. The approach to the concept of territory proposed in this thesis is rooted on the Italian debate because its conceptualization could be made only in a very narrow contact in order to appreciate really the diverse shades, but also this debate is characterized by an advanced point of view about the concept of territory in comparison with the foreign specific literature. There is the presence of a solid leading thread that is the centrality of inhabitants in the production of the territory, as the keystone around which the concept moves. Even if there is this sort of guidelines, the Italian debate is characterized by different approaches proposed in the last decades mainly by Alberto Magnaghi, Arnaldo Bagnasco, Pier Luigi Crosta and

1 For a deep analysis of this issue it is useful to consider Raffestin, 1981 and Sack, 1986

Giuseppe Dematteis. The following paragraphs tries to present a possible synthesis of these approaches, that could be considered in a complementary way because each of them try to focused its attention on a specific shade of the concept of territory and only together they are able to give a solid picture of this concept.

### *The new interest for the concept of territory*

The renewed interest about the concept of territory is quite recent, the scholars individuate two different "fuses": one is related to the globalization, while the second one is the territorialization of the policies and plans. About the first issue, globalization is perceived as a sum of «processes of deterritorialization through which social relations are being increasingly detached and disembedded from places and territories on sub-global geographical scales» (Brenner, 1999: 431). Nevertheless the author underlines that the globalisation produces effects on the territory: they are mainly related to the presence of people or freight flows that pass through the physical space and inevitably generates some effects, that could be included in the so-called glocalisation<sup>2</sup>. The traditional idea of territory and - at the same time - the dimension of the "working area" and its boundaries are not able to answer to this new challenge, but it is important to taking into account a fundamental process of reconfiguration and re-scaling of territory before the definition of policies or plans. The second issue is related to the need - and the difficulties - of giving a territorial context to the policies or plans that could not yet been based on the administrative boundaries, but it is fundamental to identify a territory because, as it is described in Pasqui (2001), the presence of a clear territorial reference is an hinge for plans, policies and for the public power itself. The contemporary situation of territory -

<sup>2</sup> For a deep analysis of this issues it is useful to consider Belharz, 2001 and Sassen, 2007

caused by globalization and by the strong urbanization - requires a precise definition of the context in which plans and policies could be applied in order to generate their territory and to build their audience (Secchi, 2005). The re-territorialization of policies is not related only to the physical or economical changes of territory itself, but also it is a result of a renewed interest in the local dimensions of government, that could be seen as a new regionalism «based on the assumption that territorial autonomy will restore local control and democracy, increase economic returns and strengthen sense of attachment» (Amin, 2004: 35). It is not a separate issues, it suffers of the same problematic aspect that are previously underlined, the difficulty of identifying precisely the stage of the policies. Amin (2004) proposes a successful change of paradigm, the passage from an a-spatial or territorial reading of place politics, to a topological ones: i.e. «a politics of place that is consistent with a spatial ontology of cities and regions seen as sites of heterogeneity juxtaposed within close spatial proximity, and a sites of multiple geographies of affiliation, linkage and flow» (Amin, 2004: 38). It is an idea of territory that is not given, but able to be fixed dimensionally itself according to the considered features, that could change the boundaries, and to the policies or plan that should be implemented: the idea of considering them in a topological way allows to root the considerations to the intrinsic nature of territory, that is its multi-scalarity and multi-dimensionality.

### 3.2 | The concept of territory inside the Italian debate

The analysis of the Italian debate about the concept of territory does not followed a chronological order, but it is based on the attempt of giving a comprehensible lecture to this issue: only through the identification of a precise path for the explanation of this concept, the idea of territory becomes more clear and it is also useful for establishing a set of actions useful for understanding in which way could be possible to discover what is it the territory in the different context and for the application of policies and plans.

#### *The territory as a product: the studies of Alberto Magnaghi*

The first step of this analysis is the study about territory made by Alberto Magnaghi, mainly based on his book "Il progetto locale" that speaks about the need of finding new strategic visions for the places in which we live and that requires a new project for overcoming the economic crisis<sup>3</sup>. The starting point of the study made by Alberto Magnaghi is the idea of the territory as an historical product, that is made by the effects generated by the contemporary evolution of human places and environment, it could be perceived - as the author said - as a sort of "highly complex living organism" (Magnaghi, 2010: 24). The production of territory underlines clearly that the territory does not exist in nature and that it is strictly related to the actions of the settle society that - in this way - produces and structures the territory and also builds good or bad relations with the environment. The production of territory is mainly related to the construction of an identity that derives from this productive process characterized by an accumulation

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<sup>3</sup> "Il progetto locale" is a book that is written in two different editions with the distance of 10 years one from the other (the first in 2000 and the second one in 2010) because the author perceives the needs of making an upgrade to the ideas and the actions proposed inside the book. It is mainly written with the idea of giving a possible structure to the process of re-territorialization based on the construction/recognition of the identity of the places, in order to lead back to the local dimensions the effects generated by globalization.

of different territorial acts (as invariants, permanences, material and cognitive sediments) that together determine the value of the territory itself. As it is already emerged, the construction of identity is not an independent action, but it is directly linked to the presence - and mainly their behaves - of actors that Magnaghi identifies as community, i.e. the sum of relations among different people that have a mutual recognition and in some cases an agreement on the development of projects. The role of the community is also fundamental in the process of re-territorialization because only their direct involvement allows to build a renewed identity for a place that is: «a dense and stratified description of places, societies and local milieu» (Magnaghi, 2010: 139). Magnaghi considers the construction of a “statute of places” as the tool for explaining what it is the territory: this instrument is a description and representation of the identity features of the territory and construction of a set of rules able to transform and value the territory, it is made by the reading of the structural invariants and the analysis of the territorialization processes. The main projectual suggestion that emerges from this brief description is the central need of dedicating enough time, during the definition of plans and policies, for a reconstruction of territorial identity: each plans or policies maker has to consider the invariants, the permanences and the sediments of a context from the all points of view as the bases for its work.

*The territory is its communities: the study of Arnaldo Bagnasco.*

As it is emerged from the work of Alberto Magnaghi, the set of inhabitants of a specific places plays a crucial role in the construction/recognition of the identity of the territory in which they live, there is a so strong relations among them and with the territory itself that the author used the word community for identifying them. The community becomes the keystone around which all attempts



have to work in order to give a precise identity to a territory, but also for building policies and plans for the quality improvements. This centrality of the community needs to be examined in depth and for this reasons it is useful to take into consideration the studies of Arnaldo Bagnasco and his book "Tracce di Comunità"<sup>4</sup>. The main attempt of this work is to understand which is the role of the community in the construction of the identity of a territory and which are the relations between the city and the society that lives inside it. Bagnasco describes the community as a set of people that shares a territorial area as the stage for their daily routine<sup>5</sup>: as it is immediately visible this definition is highly rooted on the strong relations between the territory and the actors, that becomes itself the nucleus of the concept of community. Nevertheless it is not possible to reduce the community to this simple relations, for a complete analysis Bagnasco introduces the study of Max Weber about the social relations underlined that they could be defined as a community: "if and in so far as the provision of social action based on a common sense of belonging, subjectively felt by individuals that participate to it" (Bagnasco, 1999: 23). So the community needs also the presence of a solid common background made by values, ideals, uses of the space and ways of uses that should be widespread among people that lives in same place and - consequently - could be made a community. From this brief dissertation about the community, it could be possible to recognize a big element of fragility: the diffuse sense of individualization and the constant attempt of confirming the own

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4 "Tracce di comunità" is a book written in 1999 that tries to propose a deep analysis of the concept of community in an interesting way, mainly based on a research not limited in the field of sociology, but also spread into near disciplines: for example the informal economy, the study about the industrial district or the urbanization processes. The aim is to find the remaining trials of community in an age dominated by the constant fragmentation and a progressive individualization.

5 This definition is derived from the studies of Talcott Parsons, for an in-depth analysis is possible to take into account Parsons, 1937 and Parsons, 1951

identity made by ourselves is in an open contrast with the concept of community, because it does not allow a possible autonomy in respect to the set of people to which you belong. A possible and diffuse consequent of this fragility is the progressive fragmentation into diverse communities inside the territory, that could be characterized by overlaps or conflicts based on the different backgrounds<sup>6</sup>. This complex archipelagos of communities needs a common direction, that could not be identified in a single centre capable of more control, but it should be made of a set of negotiation mechanisms among different groups of actors and networks, comprise the political authorities. The presence of diverse communities could be synthesized only through a space of condivisions able to produce at least a common background for the rules of behaviour and cohabitation, as the fundamental base for a peaceful sharing of the spaces. In the attempt of sketch an appraisal of this brief representation of the studies made by Arnaldo Bagnasco, it is useful to the prosecution of the thesis to underline the crucial needs of identifying for a territory the possible communities that populate it in order to recognize the common backgrounds among the single community and the common set of rules shared among all them.

*The pluralization of territory: the study of Pier Luigi Crosta.*

The addition of the studies made by Guido Martinotti about populations to the idea of territory formulated by Alberto Magnaghi, allows to underline that the territory is not made by a precise identity derived from a single community, but it is mainly a sum of different identity defined by diverse community: this lecture

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<sup>6</sup> This concept is well defined by Guido Martinotti under the name of populations: the set of people characterized by a common background that could have also a common sense of belonging to a group. For a deep study is useful (Martinotti 1993)

is bearer of the need of survey a territory in search of the possible populations and their possible own identity of the space in which they live. In the studies of Pier Luigi Crosta there is a wide space dedicated to the analysis of this co-presence of different identities for a place, in his book "Il territorio 'è l'uso che se ne fa'" the author introduces the idea of plural territory: i.e. «multiple territories made up the various forms of social interaction, overlapping but never coinciding and always interfering with each other.» (Crosta, 2010: 11). The territory is used simultaneously by many actors in different ways that could diverge also from the projected uses, the actors could be conditioned themselves mutually, determined by the features of the territory itself and of social interaction. There is consequently a pluralization of the territory: it is not possible to individuate a single territory able to contain the different images made by the different actors, but only a set of territories that are defined by the each actor, are not coextensive among them and also their boundaries modify over the times. Even if the territory is definable using diverse descriptions, it could be considered as the referential base that is shared among the actors and defined by them, it plays as an aggregating, integrating and identitarian factor that allow to compare the territory with its population and - at the same time - to find the relations with the other populations in case of co-presence or conflictual situations. According to Pier Luigi Crosta, the territory could be considered as the stage on which each actor plays is specific role, using the materials located on it and modified them through the different uses. This situation has inevitably consequences for the definition of plans and policies, the makers should individuate a precise territorial area, as the space of life of a specific population, but also they have to take into account the co-presence situations and the conflictual ones. The makers should work on the territory using a strategic approach

able to consider the efficacy related not to the single actors, but of the interaction among them: it is fundamental to find the consensus that should be characterized by the presence of advantages for the actors, the commonality of interests and the interactive dimension. The emerging element of this brief dissertation about the studies of Pier Luigi Crosta is the direct link between the territory and the uses made by the diverse population, each of them is able to define a different identity of the territory and this process caused a constant pluralization of images able to explain the features of the space. The maker of plans and policies should be able to analyzed this proliferation of descriptions, individuating the overlapped and the opposite parts, in order to individuate a possible common background on which it is possible to set up his work.

#### *The concepts of territory as projectual tools*

The different descriptions proposed in this chapter clarify the idea about the concept of territory inside the Italian debate, the process followed for making an overview about this issue is based on the implementation of a succession of elements able to give back the complexity of the idea of territory. The final result is a definition of territory that tries to be comprehensive and extensive, consequently able to rebind the different issues and propose an idea of territory really efficacious and appropriated to the object itself. The sum of the studies made by the scholars taken into account in the previous passages allows to define the territory as a superimposition of the different images made by the different communities/populations - that lived inside the considered space - through their daily behaving. This definition is characterized by a strong pragmatism that allows to translate immediately the definition into a set of operations able to recognize and reinforce the "stage" of policies and plans, according to Pasqui (2005) this process could be

named “making the context”, i.e. the interpretation - built through some fact finding operations made by different actors - of critical situation, evolutive dynamics and the possible conditions of action, that is a fundamental operation for the planning of territorial development and - in general - for the government of territory broadly speaking. It is important to individuate which could be the sequence of operations able to identify the features of the territory or much simpler what is needed (possible) to look: in this way it is possible to find a guidelines able to support the attempts of implementing the description of territory. They are presented in the following table and made through a parallelism among the simple de-composition of the given definition mainly based on the return to the singular issues and the dimensions individuated in Pasqui (2005).

**Table 11 - Guidelines for the reading of territory (Pasqui 2013)**

Dimensions	Description
Conditions of possibilities	invariants, permanencies and the sediments; physical, economical, social and institutional level; stable and without any alterations provoked by people or time; elements of the consolidated background of a territory; the ties for the evolutive perspectives of a territory.
Stratification of practices	plural images of territory; set of different uses of the territory; set of actions already existing inside the territory; the sparks for future improvement.
Relations	communities or populations located in the territory; competitive or cooperative, collaborative or conflictual; internal or external to the territory; the bearers of positive or negative modification.

These guidelines are useful for each kind of interventions regarding the territory because - as it is already said - they represent a tool able to guide the recognition and reading step that has to precede the construction of plans or policies. Until now the focus point has been related to a generic typology of intervention inside the

territory and also the guidelines are presented in a broad sense without making the relations with the inter-municipal cooperations explicit. All of these passages are referable also to the context on which the inter-municipal relations could be implemented, the concept of territory is applicable also in this situation, as the guidelines that are useful also for identifying the possible "stage" of an inter-municipal cooperations. The proposed definition of territory contains itself the prodromes of a complex identification of a context as it could be in the case of a wide urban area: the acceptance of a pluralization of images, that could define the territory, opens to an extended number of descriptions linked to a huge number of communities for which it is not possible to control the origin, mainly in an urbanized context as the Italian one. The communities or populations live without the constraints of any kinds of boundaries, especially with the ones related to the administrations, and these inevitably produce to a constant set of movements diffused inside a wide territory, that consequently is modified and changed. Regarding the guidelines, it is important to underline that probably it is better to start with the identification of relations because the communities or populations are - as it is emerged previously - are the makers of the territory, not only for the generative sense, but also for the extension and the dimensions: they determine which is the working context. Only after the establishing of a possible boundaries it is possible to analyzed in depth which are the conditions of possibilities and the stratification of practices because the operating area has its perimeter and these issues are rigidly rooted to their territory.

### 3.3 | The territorial complexity

The complexity underlined in the definition of a concept of territory could be easily recognized also in the attempts of discovering its spatial and functional features: it reaffirms the cognitive difficulties around the territory and contemporary its centrality as one of the most examined object. This second grade of complexity is presented by Patrizia Gabellini, «the contemporary territory appears as a continuous and messy combination of heterogeneous settlements» (Gabellini, 2010: 14): this definition is efficacious in its conciseness, it underlines precisely the level of complexity that characterized the territory that does not allow to have a immediate clear view, but it requires a complete immersions for recognizing a possible logic that subtends this shapeless bulck. The open-endedness is also related to the city - from a spatial and functional point of view - mainly because it becomes unclear where it is located the separation between city and territory due to the complete co-penetration of these two spatial objects, this situation is clearly describe by Alfredo Mela: «the city (mainly in the North part of the world) could not be thought as a defined and auto-evident spatial objects, identifiable in opposition with other objects, that represent its contrary. Rather, we should say that the city is omnipresent and for this reason it is an entity in continuous and unpredictable evolution, that seems to escape from each attempts of giving boundaries and permanent features» (Mela, 2005). It could be easily imagined that this fuzziness is translate completely to implementation of plans and projects and in general to the governance of the territory, as it is also clear from our daily life immersed in this situation. The following paragraphs try to explain what are a possible set of characteristics of this heterogeneous object inside the Italian context, which can be a possible explanation of this shapeless bulck and why the

inter-municipal cooperation could be an effective answer to this territorial complexity. The comprehension of the existing territorial situation should not start without a reading of the processes that led to it, according to Bernardo Secchi (2005) it is not possible to reconstruct a perfect copy of the contemporary situation, but the description could be based on the emerging of: «the fragment, the specific, the local, the irreducible difference showing that space of dispersion is not homogenous and isotropic» (Secchi, 2005: 25). The focus of the description inevitably lead to a reading based on an idea of complexity that is derived from the continuous overlapping of practices<sup>7</sup> and the weakness of planning practices, that - also them - are considered as responsible of this fragmented situation. The complexity of the objects is not able to produce a simplification of the possible lecture of them, this situation is particularly true for the European territory and - specifically - for the Italian one: many scholars try to give their personal readings about the phenomenon that caused the contemporary conditions of the territory. Despite the presence of a variety of lectures, it is important to underline that there is a general accord about the identification of the main cause of the complexity of the contemporary territory: that is the incredible urbanization that is in a constant increasing during the last decade derived from the strong motorization and the uncontrolled industrialization.

### *The Italian model of diffused urbanization*

One of the most comprehensive analysis about the Italian territorial conditions is presented by Arturo Lanzani (2003): in this paragraph is presented - in a brief way - the main contents and suggestions about the processes that characterized the decades between the 1980 to 2000 and that are the period in which it is possible

<sup>7</sup> This is what it is already emerged in the previous paragraph about the construction of the concept of territory.



to assist to the continuous increment of urbanized area and the complementary growth of complexity. The author recognizes three different settlement logics, that could be considered as the physical processes that caused the contemporary situation: the sub-urbanization process around the big or medium city, the progressive abandon of mountains in favour of valleys and coastline, the continuous urbanization process of countryside and the process of welding in the industrialized context.

The sub-urbanization process around the big or medium city is a typical logic of the Central - North parts of Italy in which «the urbanization does not spread more in a wild fire way or along some specific directions» (Lanzani, 2003: 86), but in a more undefinable and scattered way: they are sometimes attached to a pre-existent settlement or to an old (or new) infrastructures and other times related to an unpredictable and casual logic based on the projects of a building contractor. It seems to be as an extreme dilatation and explosion of the city, made by the continuous repetition of the same objects that create a landscape that is in an ibrid situation because of the attempt of repeating the features of the central city, but with the absence of density and the presence of an uncertain countryside. The literature is characterized by a series of different attempts that try to give a name to this new kind of territory, probably one of the most effective is - contemporarily - one of the simplest that is diffused city. This image tries to identify the connections of the urbanized features that present this kind of territory with the vastity of the involved space, it also contains the idea of the continuative repetition of the same elements. Francesco Indovina (2009) proposes a precise list of elements that are typical of this kind of spatial organization and are able to make appreciable the physical and functional features of the diffused cities.

**Table 12 - List of diffuse urbanization features**

- a network of little or medium historical cities;
- a pushed process of occupation of the territory among these cities;
- a typical building structure with low intensity and density;
- high-level and diffused services functions;
- absence of a precise specialization;
- an urban used of this territory;
- an high rate of population mobility.

Indovina recognizes also that the changes, brought by the diffused city, inside the set of the possible descriptions of the territory are able to modify the paradigmatic reading of the traditional city, not always in contrast with it, but also - in many case - with a sort of convergence. One of the most interesting issue is about the similar way of functioning of the two cities, the constitutive parts of them - for the traditional city the neighborhoods and for the diffused cities the recognizable towns - works simultaneously in a separate way and in an integrated way from a functional points of view. The contemporary presence of this two working ways also in the diffused city gives to this description the statute of real urbanized territory: it could be defined as a passage from the historical mono-centrality of the traditional city to a multi-centrality of the diffused one.

The progressive abandon of mountains in favour of valleys and coastline is a insediative logic mainly driven two different forces, according to the lecture given by Arturo Lanzani (2003). The first one is the economic and social difficulties of populations that live inwards and are not able to find there the same quality of life offered by the valleys and the coastline, while the second force is the attractive ability played by the infrastructures that are in the valley floor or along the seaboard in which could be located in a better way the productive spaces. The whole Italian coastline and

the mountainous areas are characterized by the presence of these forces, the quality of the realized settlements could be different according to the specificity of each territory: in some case it is possible to recognize the same banality of the sub-urbanization processes around the medium and big cities, in other case there is more attention mainly because the expected functions are related with the tourism. The territory that emerges in the valleys and along the coastline is not so different from the diffused city, in terms of general and specific quality, probably it is recognizable only a different kind of shape, that is related to the physical dimensions. There are some suggestive descriptions that are able to explain in a very good way the configuration of the territory that emerge under the cited forces, one example is made by Marco Belpoliti (2011) that resorts to the image of the room in order to depict the urbanized valley: i.e. an high built up context characterized by a contain size generally determined by the presence of visible and strong boundaries, as mountains or hills, in which the cities are located or in the middle (in which there are the infrastructures and - often - a river) or in the top of some hills. The coastline probably should be describe by other suggestive image, nevertheless it could be effective a description that focus its attention on the continuous sequence of little or medium cities almost completely welded and fitted on the line of the coastline and of the infrastructures, that move in a parallel way.

The continuous urbanization process of countryside and the process of welding in the industrialized context are two insedative logics characterized by a relevant urban dimension and an high endogenous nature, that it is translate into a territory with a mixed composition of urban and rural elements. It is dominated by a network of little and medium cities with an high urban rural: the changes are based on a passage from an urbanized countryside

to an industrialized territory rooted on the presence of the network. The little density of the settlements allows to appreciate the presence of a rural territory that surround the urbanized area that is structured on the little and medium cities and on a dense networks of thin infrastructures. The all functions are located inside the urban centres that are the strong node of the network on which are distributed the residential areas dominated by the presence of single detached house, that are generally self-made by inhabitants, near to little boxes for their productive functions. This territory is «substantially free of unified territory and areas of relatively homogeneous from the point of view typological and functional» (Lanzani, 2003: 113), but it is characterized by the constant and continuous repetition of singular elements with a very rare variation about the typologies and the forms. Again according to Lanzani (2003): this territory could be compared to an archipelagos of islands of different shapes and dimensions, sometimes big and in other case little, dominated by a precise structure, by the repetition of similar typological elements and by the economical logic because of the strong role played the little productive spaces that seems to be the fulcrum.

### 3.4 | A possible lecture of the complexity: the territorial coalescence

The diffuse urbanization, presented in the previous chapter, is able to sketch out physically what means territorial complexity and which kinds of consequences produces: it emerges a chaotic image, that appears not only as completely abandoned from any urban planning policies or plans, but also without a strategic vision able to give a sense to this fuzzy situation. From this background it is evident the need of a lecture that could go over this complexity and produce a vision, able to be fitted, comprehensive and coherent to the features of the emerging image of territory: an interesting work, that goes in this direction, is presented by Antonio Calafati (2009). The author starts, as it is made in this thesis, from a brief description of the territorial context: the chosen approach is a way for demonstrating the need of each example to be rooted in the reality and not built without solidity. The interesting part is about the conclusive image that Calafati gives to the Italian territory, he underlines that - starting from the eighties of the last century - an intermunicipal system emerged, mainly diffused thanks to the industrial roll-out in some specific areas: the presence in that period of a compact form was not able to answer to the need of new spaces and the consequent process of expansion is directly related to a diffusion inside the territory. As Calafati underlines this settlement diffusion «was showed in the history in terms of density growth, but also - and probably mainly - in terms of territorial diffusion, of movements outside the boundaries» (Calafati, 2009: 69): the last reference is not only metaphorical, but it also expresses a real situation of crossing continuously the administrative confines and the creation of physical contact and proximity. The diffusion is not perceived from a physical point of view, but it experimented by the inhabitants in their daily life through the continuous amplification of their circadian movements, through this process the personal

identity of the inhabitants is no more rooted in a specific city, but it gets in an intermunicipal context. All of these steps could be named under the idea of territorial coalescence<sup>8</sup>, that is describable as a process where two neighboring territorial units could increase their interdependency to the point in which these original territorial units are no longer functionally independent, but are a part of a wider area formed by the integration of the two original units (Calafati & Mazzoni 2008). As emerged from this definition, the process is not an unique determinable plan, but it is made by an intersections of different aspects, each of them is characterized by the interdependency among the municipalities: under the idea of territorial coalescence, there is not a physical dimensions but the social and economical aspects are also the fundamental drivers for the growing of this interdependence. The contrasting and lacking part is the political answer to this process, the public body is not already able to find a possible adaptive solution to the growing of integration, it is faced a situation in which there is a territorial coalescence without institutional coalescence: «the territorial integration has remained a territorial event without being able to become a project for institutional adaptation» (Calafati, 2009: 79). The previous passages give a complex image of the territory, in which the classical tools - that could defined the precise boundaries of the different parts and their functioning mechanism - are not able to give back a coherent and effective lecture of the phenomena. The traditionally simple idea of city is now useless, so it becomes crucial a new process of identification starting from a questions: which are the city? which are the territorial manifestations that it is possible to identify as a city? (Calafati, 2009). The answers to this questions are inevitably related to the contemporary image of the territory and, consequently, it is a

8 This process is described also by Francesco Indovina (2009) and defined as territorial integration.

research process and not a simple comparison process. The aim here is to emphasize both the difficulties of a research process and the change of paradigm in the territorial lecture. It is not yet possible to use the archetypal idea of Max Weber<sup>9</sup>, based on the image of a delimited, compact and dense city, because it is far from the contemporary situation. The contemporary need is a long process of research able to identify some possible “filaments” that could be follow for finding the city. The idea of *città in nuce*, introduced into the debate by Antonio Calafati, is probably the most effective for explaining the contemporary idea and features of the urban context, it describes territorial system that could be defined city from a spatial and relational point of view, but not from a political one. These *città in nuce* are clearly identifiable taking into account the social, physical and economical aspects that are completely integrated and interrelated among different urban centers, but politically they are configurable as an inter-municipal system because they are over the existing municipal boundaries. They work as if they are a single city and they could also obtain other advantages if they became a real city through a completion of the territorial coalescence and the creation of an intermediate regulative level (Calafati, 2009).

### *The relations among diffusion, coalescence and cooperation*

The all chapter is pervaded by an halo of complexity around the territory, that is inflected starting from the difficulties about the construction of a definition, passing through the description of the Italian diffuse urbanization and finishing into the depiction of a new interpretative lecture of the contemporary situation. All of this passage could be perceived as disconnected and distant among them: the opening paragraph is absorbed to the re-composition of

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9 For a deep understanding see (Weber 1966)

a possible definition of territory able to transform the complexity into a surplus value, the second paragraph could be seen as a practical support from demonstrating that the fuzziness around territory is not only theoretical but also geographical and physical, while the last part adds a possible lecture able to hold together the previous passage and a strategic ambition. Consequently, it is recognizable a knowing process that is unraveled along this chapters: a beginning with a theoretical tool, a passage through the demonstration of the physical situation and solidity and a conclusion that gives a reading usable as a base for the reasoning development. The following questions is how the inter-municipal cooperation is connected to this complexity and how it is able to answer to the need of interpretation and simplification. It is not under judgement the centrality of inter-municipal cooperation as tool for solving the contemporary situation of the territory, but its ability of being able to give an effective interpretation that could guide the management. A starting point for making an answer to this key question is to understand how the cooperation interprets the definition of territory. The intent of sharing knowledge among different municipalities, and using these strategies as a tool for the decisions making process, should be perceived as an attempt of answering to the need of superimposition the territorial images: taking into account the wide set of interpretations made by different communities/populations, it is fundamental the ability of untangling and reducing to a shared idea the context of plans and policies. This passage is not enough if the diffused urbanization is not considered, the integration and interrelation among the municipalities, that derives from the progressive urbanization, is identifiable as an important clue for the development of inter-municipal cooperation inside a context. It could work as a tool able to give a sense, structure and helps to correct the progresses of the



diffuse urbanization. In this way the description of the contemporary territorial situation as a phenomenon of urban coalescence finds more solidity and becomes the conceptual turning point: the simple identification of diffusion as a physical aspects is quite limitative for the real effects produce by the progressive urbanization, the coalescence expands - conceptually and practically - the fields involved in this phenomena involving the other aspects that make territory, as the economy, the culture, the demography and etc. This upgrading does another steps through the introduction of *città in nuce*: it ratifies the recognition of a city inside the complexity of some urban diffused territory and underlines the presence of urban features in a wide area that is not a city. The inter-municipal cooperation can be considered as an administrative attempt for interpreting the contextual situation: the presence of cities *de facto* that needs a passage to cities *de jure* (Parr, 2007), the need of giving an institutional management (through one of the many possibilities) to an existing situation. It is identifiable as a passage that tries to fill a political gap or absence: in many situations it could be limited to this simple attempt, but in other examples it represents as a strong political decision to take reins of a territory and giving to it shared strategies, plans and policies.



# Chapter 4

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The set of tools and effects of cooperation



This first part of the thesis is completely dedicated to the reconstruction of the reasons beyond the inter-municipal cooperation, it is configurable as an attempt of making a compendium of contents able to guide both the description of the existing cooperative situation and the construction of new ones. The final result is a set of possible suggestions for the construction of inter-municipal cooperation: here it is not presented a model or an ideal type of cooperation among municipalities, but only a set of various issues that could be stressed for the construction of an effective and efficacious inter-municipal relation, able also to produce positive indirect effects not only for the public bodies, but also for the private actors. A full representation of the complexity of inter-municipal cooperation should be give through a systematization of the suggestions derived from the previous chapter, they could be categorized in tools, that could help the construction of inter-municipal cooperation, and effects, that could be produced and achieved through it. The two chosen categories are an attempt of giving a practical sense to this summarizing operation: they are considerable – in a certain sense – as the set of preliminary steps that the municipalities should do or consider in order to cooperate and the final effects through which the inter-municipal cooperation should tend. They try to cover the wide range of aspects considered inside the previous chapter that are not related only to a sort of to-do or check list, but they are a single dowel that work for the composition of the idea of cooperation among municipalities. The two tables are configurable with double entry: on the lines there are the area of interests, i.e. the three fields (political, economical and managerial and territorial) that are analyzed previously, while on the columns there are the issues classified in relation with their efficiency, their effectiveness and their indirect effects. About efficiency and effectiveness it is important to underline the

correct interpretation given, the first one is considered in relations with the process, while the second one is connected with the results: here the efficiency is considered as related to the performances of the process obtainable by the tools or obtained by the effects, on the other hand the effectiveness is connected to the pure final results that could be achieved by the tools or are achievable by the effects. The elements are presented in a simple way, related to the need of being clear and avoiding each possible misunderstanding: this allows to give clearly an idea of the possible features that could present good answers to the problematic of the territory, it should not be seen as a reduction of complexity but as a tool for being more direct on the individuation of the possible answers that could help the individuation of the possible answer. Each content, proposed inside the table, is briefly described in order to understand which is the real meaning and which could be the strength points that could be used as a tool on which it is useful to work.

#### *The tools that could be used for inter-municipal cooperation*

This is the central question that drives the compiling of the first table, as it is already emerged in the introduction of this part, the aim here is to gather together the tools described in the previous chapter that could be used for making an inter-municipal cooperation. The different targets of these contents do not allow to individuate possible subgroups, nevertheless it is possible to recognize that some of them are content-specific while other ones are more process-specific: the first typology is more related to the decisions (and the structure) taken by the inter-municipal cooperation, on the other hand the second one is about the feasible way. This dichotomy allows to cover the whole spectrum of tools that could be useful for the implementation of inter-municipal cooperation.

Table 13 - Tools for cooperation

Area of Interest	Efficiency issues	Effectiveness issues	Indirect issues
Political and juridical	Defining the juridical type of inter-municipal cooperation	Working through a collaborative planning	Avoiding a representative lack
	Promoting a clear distribution of decisional role	Defining the aim of cooperation	Giving a centrality to the stakeholders
Economical and managerial	Defining the content of cooperation	Determining the optimal size dimensions for the economy of scale.	Analysis of the typology of existing network
	Determining the distribution of economical costs and benefits	Allocating rationally the technical and managerial resource	
Territorial	Considering the multidimensionality	Embracing a topological reading approach	Making the context
	Recognizing the different set of actions that make the territory	Individuating the territorial stage	Analysis of the territorial coalescence phenomena
	Recognizing the presence of different communities inside		

About the political and juridical - efficiency issues the attention is focused on one side to the typology of inter-municipal cooperation - i.e. agreement, consortium, union of municipalities - while the other one is concentrated to the mechanism about the distribution of the different role inside the cooperation: both of them try to work on the first steps - and on the first decisions - of the process. Going on political and juridical, they are developed taking into account the centrality for the final results of using a collaborative planning way and - contemporarily - defining the aims of the entire

process: they should be perceived - as the first group - the starting tools that should be used for creating a positive cooperation. Finishing this part the attention is given to the indirect issues, inside of them are taken into account the need of avoiding a representative lack, a problem mainly perceived by the inhabitants, and of giving a centrality to stakeholders. This content answer to the participation need expressed by people, also in this administrative decisions. The economical and managerial - efficiency issues are focused on starting steps of the process, specifically their attention is on the content of the cooperation, that could be service-delivery of policy-delivery, and on the distribution among the municipalities of the economical costs and benefits. About the effectiveness issues, the suggestion is to determine the possible optimal size dimension for reaching economies of scale, while the second one is about a correct allocation of the technical and managerial resources, mainly referable to the personnel. These two contents are fundamental technical questions useful for a good result of the cooperation. The indirect issues about the economical and managerial aspects are about the need of making an analysis of the existing networks among the municipalities and the territory, as a starting point of cooperation. The territorial - efficiency issues are tools useful for creating a good framework of the considered territory in order to start with a good base the construction of policies and plans, for this reasons it is important to considered the multidimensionality of the territory and the different issues that over it are interrelated, it is also crucial the recognition of the set of actions that - in a sequence - make the territory and finally the role played by the different communities (group of people) inside it. About the effectiveness issues the attention is focused on the need of embracing a topological reading approach of the territory, based on the following of actions and stories that could built the



territory. Finally about the indirect issues is considered the need of making a context, as a process of recognizing the real nature/identity of this territory.

### *The expected effects from the inter-municipal cooperation*

As for the previous table, the above question is central for the compiling the following table, here the attempt is related to find the expected effects - and the possible achievable aims - that should be taken into account for starting the work with the best premises. Just for presenting a rapid overview, it emerges clearly that some contents are directly linked to two different sides: one is related to the cooperative and collaborative skills that could be learned during the entire process, while the other one is more connected with the final obtainable results.

**Table 14 - Effects for cooperation**

Area of Interest	Efficiency issues	Effectiveness issues	Indirect issues
Political and juridical	Better political and technical coordination among municipalities  Sharing of decisions and responsibility	Increasing of internal coordination	Advantages for actors and commonality of interests.  More relations among the stakeholders
Economical and managerial	Reducing the transaction costs  Increasing the economy of scale	Increasing of learning about cooperative and collaborative skills	Creation of an extensive network
Territorial	Construction of shared vision of the territory  Reduction of complexity through shared solutions	Improving the territorial identity  Making the context of the working area	Transforming the città in nuce in real city.

About the political and juridical area of interest and related to the efficiency issues the attention is focused on the possibility of achieving a better cooperation during the decision making process, in particular it is underlined the ability of improving the technical coordination (also with an intense exchange of knowledge and skills) among the municipalities, while - at the same moment - the decisions are taken in a shared way. Considering the same area of interest, but the effectiveness issues the focus is quite similar even it is more direct to the increasing of internal coordination. Also in this case there are some indirect issues, in particular it is underlined the possibility for the actors to shared the advantages thanks to the common interests and the interactive dimensions, it is also important to underline that it is strengthened the interdependency among the stakeholders. Considering the economical and managerial area of interest and the efficiency issues, the possibility of reducing the transaction costs and the increasing of economy of scale, it is seen as the most important results that could be achieved. About the effectiveness, it is crucial - for explaining the future steps and the provision of some possible development, to understand clearly the role played by the increasing of learning more about the cooperative and collaborative skills. Also in this case there are some indirect issues that could be related to the increasing of perception of an urbanized area, mainly thanks to the economic activities that are spread inside the territory, and connected with the creation of an extensive network. Finally taking into account the territorial area of interest and the efficiency issue it is important to underline that the main possible effects are related to the construction of a common vision of the considered territory, that could help also for promoting a reduction of the complexity perceived mainly through the sharing of possible solutions, as plans or policies. Considering now the effectiveness issues, it is

crucial to underline that the main achievable result is the improving of new territorial identity and directly connected with this passage there is the need of making a context of the working area, as an obliged passage both for the decision making process and for the implementation phase. As indirect issues, it is important to take into account the possibility of transforming the citta' in nuce into a real city, i.e. destroying the useless administrative boundaries and considering the all territory as an unique city.







# Chapter 5

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Methodology of research





The first part is completely devoted to the re-construction of a theoretical background about the inter-municipal cooperations, the attempt is to find always theories that are rooted in real context or real situation, nevertheless it is important to dedicated a part of a this thesis to some practical case studies that could be seen as tester for the conclusions drawn through the theoretical parts. This preparatory paragraph tries to answer to two main questions, that could be useful also for giving a method to the following research parts.

#### *The reasons for presenting a case studies section*

This is the first fundamental question that is able to give a sense to the entire second part of the thesis, it is possible to find three possible diverse answers, describable as comprehensive and complementary.

A first element - that is partially already emerged - could be the need of having a practical dimensions that allows to experiment and verify the features of inter-municipal cooperations that are given by the theoretical approach: it could be seen as test bench of what is written in the conclusion parts.

A second element is to understand the real connections among the presence of coalescent and urbanized territory and the need of inter-municipal cooperations, this could be perceived as completely internal to the questions emerged from the chapter about territory, nevertheless it is a crucial answer for the whole thesis: assuming that the territory should be managed through a public body able to cover the all areas that are in physical proximity and homogeneity, it is fundamental to verify if the area of the case study have seen a coalescent phenomenon and/or a wide urbanization.

A third element is oriented to the comprehension of the real mechanism of functioning of inter-municipal cooperations in order

to demonstrate the ease of building and managing them, for this reasons it is important to analyze deeply the content of the statute or agreement that supervise the governing modalities.

### *The reasons for choosing these case studies*

This question tries to clarify which is the decisional mechanism that has driven the choice of these three specific case studies, as a positive example of Italian inter-municipal cooperation. It is interesting to know this mechanism because it could drive the research to catch immediately the sense of the examples, but also it could be perceived as a "glue part", able to determine the common features among the different examples.

The first element for case study choice is the affinity with urban planning and policies, as the aim of the whole thesis is to demonstrate the effectiveness and the efficacy of inter-municipal cooperation in the management of territory, the three case studies answer perfectly to this request. The first one is about the cadastral function in the Brianza Occidentale, the second one is the building regulations of Alta Valdera and the last one is about the structural plan of Nuovo Circondario Imolese. The three case studies try to represent in a wide sense the idea of urban planning: only the second one is an "orthodox" experience of planning, while the first one is about the pure management of territory (in form of urban and agricultural lots) and the third one is more connected to the urban regeneration and requalification. The wideness of urban planning idea could not be expressed only by the thematic proximity of the different case studies, but it is directly linked also to the final planning intents, that are subtended on the three case studies: the first one is clearly oriented to the construction of an administrative tool, the second one is referable to the making of shared rules for the building areas, while the last one is focused

on the definition of strategy. Tools, rules and strategies are three key devices of urban planning and consequently it is interesting to understand how they are used and managed inside a context oriented to a maximum cooperation among municipalities.

As it is emerged, these three case studies are representative both of the urban plans and of urban policies, in order to demonstrate the wide possibilities of cooperation in the territorial management. About cooperation, the idea is to present examples that interpret it in a different way, mainly about flexibility and cogency, and consequently use different devices: the cadastral pole of Brianza Occidentale is made on an agreement among municipalities, the building laws of Alta Valdera is based on an consortium and the structural plan of Nuovo Circondario Imolese is built inside a union of municipalities. These brief catalogue of tools allows to cover the whole juridical possibilities inside the Italian law, the fact that each of them is located in a different region is not useful for improving the considerations about cooperation, but only to see different approaches in contexts that have different political and managerial background. Finally the last reason is about the territorial contexts that present different level of territorial coalescence and urbanization, but nevertheless they have a very similar conditions as it could result from the reading of each case studies. It is interesting to take into account also this aspect in the selection phase because it is possible to comprehend better the links among territorial coalescence, as possible lecture of the contemporary phenomena, and the inter-municipal cooperation, as a possible managerial solution.



# Chapter 6

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First case study.

The shared cadastral function in  
Brianza Occidentale



This case study<sup>1</sup> is opened with a critical reading about the territorial complexity of Brianza Occidentale, starting from considering the cadastral objects - as the populations, the real estate lots and the agricultural ones, through this rapid overview it is possible to catch the complex situation both of the territory in general and in particular about the management of a cadastral function. After this, the attention is focused to the reading of the political and economical-managerial context of the cadastral functions: it is analyzed which are the decision making process, its structure and the actors involved, while about the economical-managerial context the point is about the mechanism of costs and benefits distributions that is crucial in a shared service. This structure allows to recognize at the same time the territorial reasons that are subtended to the shared management of the cadastre and the political and economical-managerial advantages derived from this sharing of a crucial function.

### **6.1 | The emerging territorial complexity from the cadastral objects.**

The description of the territorial context is oriented to the understanding of the complexity related to the management of the cadastral function. It should not be seen as a limited approach, but as a way for understanding the fuzzy situation through a sort of "probing" made into a specific field able to epitomize the general features of the territory: through this overview a set of different topics are touched upon in order to represent the complexity both of cadastral functions and territory. An important starting point for understanding the complexity is the data about population, the area covered by this cadastral pole is about 250.000 inhabitants:

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<sup>1</sup> This research for this case study was carried out through: an interview with Dott. Gennaro Rizzo, chief of the cadastral pole of Brianza Occidentale, a in-depth analysis of the book, written by the cadastral pole itself, about their project and finally through the juridical tools produced by the municipalities for making the covenant.

it is equal to - more or less - the 30% of the whole province of Monza e Brianza and it is comparable to many Italian medium city. It is an element of complexity increasing because of it could be indicator of potential wide number of cadastral objects (real estate or agricultural lots) to manage, also in terms of possible users of the services. A focus on the distribution inside the different municipalities is useful for understanding that there are a wide range of populations level.

**Table 15 - Level of population in Brianza Occidentale (ISTAT, 2011)**

Class of Population	Municipalities
over 30.001	Cesano Maderno, Limbiate, Seregno
20.001 - 30.000	Giussano, Meda
10.000 - 20.000	Bovisio Masciago, Lentate sul Seveso, Varedo
under 10.000	Albiate, Barlassina, Ceriano Laghetto, Cogliate, Lazzate, Macherio, Misinto, Sovico

There is not a strong prevalence of one of the population level, but a good distribution among the different classes: this represents in general an element of homogeneity inside the territory, even if the map underlines a prevalence of big city in the middle of the considered area and the borders are dominated by the presence of little cities. Through this passage the need of some cities to collaborate for the cadastral services becomes quite clear, they are very little - in terms of surface and populations - consequently are not able to manage an effective and efficacious service alone: from this point of view they take some important advantages from the decision of collaborate. It is not incorrect to think that the little cities are pulled by the big cities: under this considerations goes the starting initiatives of Seregno for the construction of the cadastral functions. Connected to the distribution of populations there is the density, that here plays a crucial role for two reasons:



the first one is yet linked to some hypothesis about the amount of cadastral object and typology of the real estate market, the second one is another element that support the cooperation among the municipalities. About the first issue, as the map underlined, the density is generally very high in the middle of the considered territory and lower at the border: consequently about the typology of the real estate market is quite easy to suppose that the middle part is dominated by apartment houses, while the border have a quite diffuse tissues of detached or semi-detached houses. Considering the second issue the high density, together with the little surface dimensions of the municipalities, is an element that could be a clue of a high urbanized area, that is considerable as the best place for experimenting shared solutions because of the proximity and the presence of *città in nuce*.

Image 1. Representation of population's distribution

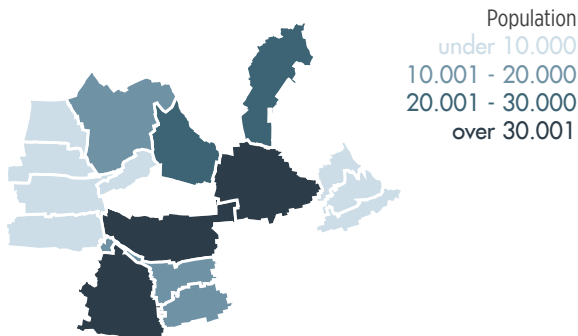
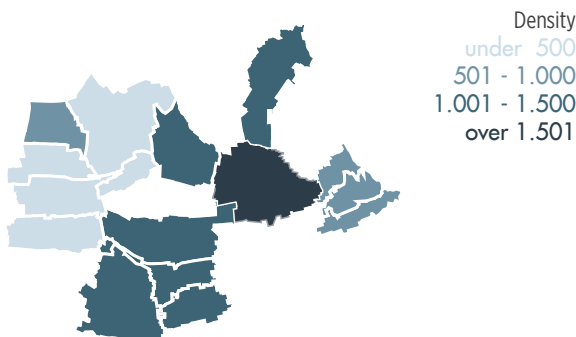


Image 2. Representation of density distribution



It is possible to make some comments also about the distribution of the cadastral objects: flats and agricultural lots. These two elements allow to understand deeply the general complexity of the management of the cadastral functions, at the same time they allow a better comprehension of the features of the considering territory, connected to the image already created by the analysis of population data. About the flat the distribution and the amount of each single city is comparable to the order of magnitude already expressed by population and density: it is quite evident the cities with more inhabitants are - at the same moment - the city with more flats, and also are the city with more density<sup>2</sup>. This distribution is also a support to the concept expressed before about the distribution of apartment buildings and detached or semi-detached houses: the low number of flats underlines a presence that is unbalance to the second category.

The last element to analyze is the agricultural lot that bring some interesting lectures of the territory. It allows to emerge clearly the contrast between agricultural land and high density: here the municipalities at the borders - mainly the west one - are characterized by an huge amount of agricultural lands, at the same time the municipalities with an huge surface could protect better the already green spaces. It emerges also that some municipalities are really poor of agricultural lot and this is a data that underlines the high urbanized situation that is faced in this context.

The critical reading of the territory made in the previous passage is able to underline the complexity of the context that is considered, from the different aspects analyzed before, it emerges that it is an area heavy urbanized that inevitably is linked to an huge

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<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to notice that a ratio between the number of inhabitants and flats is near to 2, i.e. as a medium data the amount of people inside a flat is near to 2, this data has some implications in terms of populations growth (there are less children) and in general has some sociological implications.

quantity of cadastral objects to manage. The high density and the homogenous situation could be considered as an incentive to cooperate and work together for the municipalities that, in this way, are more able to manage in an effective and efficacious way this territory. From the data taken into account the coalescent description is quite marginal, nevertheless the quantitative and qualitative similarities among the municipalities (in terms of density, populations and typology of real estate market) could be sufficient to say that here the coalescence is visible and makes its work.

Image 3. Representation of flat's distribution

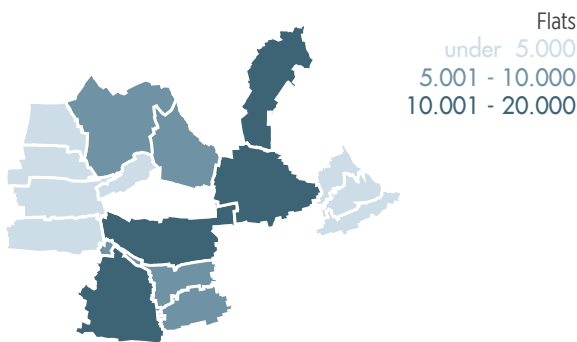
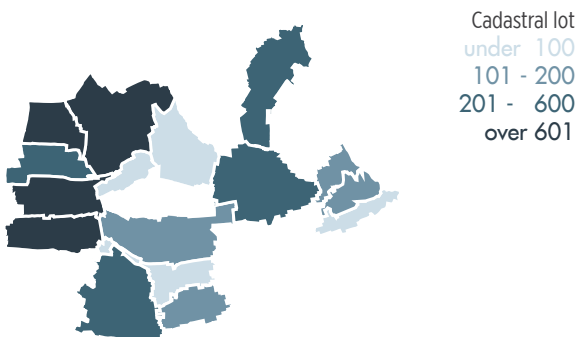


Image 4. Representation of cadastral lot's distribution



## 6.2 | The political construction of a shared cadastral service.

As it is emerged from the description of the territorial context, it is recognizable a situation dominated by a chaotic urbanization in which there is a strong lack of general governance able to supervise this complexity. From a brief reading of sharing policies, it is clear the qualitative and quantitative insufficiency of the attempts of building common strategies about the problems of this territory or - more simply - the municipal functions: they are limited to the prescribed ones or to the more traditional ones<sup>3</sup> and they do not represent an efficacious and efficient example of functional management. The cadastral function represents a unique exception inside this territory because it is characterized by the presence of a unique subject that manage this function for a wide range of municipalities. The reading of this territory has been able to underline the absolute vacuity of intermunicipal cooperation, it inevitably produces an unstable background of practices and policies that do not create a fertile field for the growing of a solid share of practices. This contextual description is able to drive the attention of the analysis about the political context, in particular it allows to individuate the most interesting issues on which should be focused the possible conclusions, they are: the sufficiency of the used institutional tools, the weight of the vacuity of previous practices and policies, the general effectiveness of the political issues that support the sharing of the cadastral function and the possible future perspectives.

### *Analysis of the actors*

The high specificity of the function that it is taking into account allows to have a simple recognition of the actors involved, but

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3 Just as example: the health policies (ASL Aziende Sanitarie Locali, i.e. local health authority), the welfare policies (Consorzio Desio Brianza) or the management of public libraries.

also - at the same time - it is easy to identify the played roles and the build relations among them. It is interesting to underline that the roles are well-defined and without overlapping that could cause difficulties to the management of the function, moreover the relations are clear and characterized by a direct style.

**Table 16 - Actors in the construction of the cadastral pole**

Actors	Role	Aim	Resources
Cadastral pole	Promoter Director	Content	Political Economical
Seregno municipality	Mediator	Process Content	Political Economical
Other municipalities	Ally	Content	Cognitive
National Territorial Agencies	Ally	Process	Cognitive

The cadastral pole is the most interesting actor of the list . It is contemporarily the object of the entire process and the most important subject: it is possible because it is preexisting of the sharing process and consequently it could play as the main actor, for this reason it is important to reaffirm that the main aim is related to the opening and diffusion of an existing service to other municipalities. It is interesting also to underline that it plays two different roles: it is - as already emerged - the promoter of an intermunicipal cooperation about the cadastral services and the mediator of the process. These two positions give to the pole the necessary centrality able to produce important effects in terms of effectiveness and efficacy of the project because - as it is underlined in the table - it has the cognitive resources that could support the reaching of positive results. The quoted clearness and simplicity of the whole map of actors is demonstrated also by the absence of antagonist actors inside the process, the cadastral pole is surrounded only by positive subjects that work for the

real construction of a shared services. Among the other actors, Seregno municipality emerges as the most important one because it plays as the mediator of the entire process: it is configurable as the starting actor of the process since it is the municipality in which the cadastral pole was built and also it recognizes the possibility of spreading the services through other cities. Its features are comparable with the ones of the other municipalities, consequently the Seregno municipality is allowed to play as the intermediate actor able to work as a facilitator of the entire process. At its side, it is possible to recognize the presence of two different actors that play as an ally that provide their resources in order to obtain the achievement of the fixed aims. The first one is represented by the group of other municipalities that join - in different times - the services provided by the cadastral pole, they work in two complementary directions: in one sense they use their political resources as an instrument for contracting the entry inside the usage of this service, in the other one they use their economical resources for increasing the investments and - consequently - the quality of the service itself. The last one actor is the National Territorial Agency, i.e. it is the national public authority that supervise the management of the Italian cadastral, it plays only as a technical ally that could support the work of the cadastral pole in the acquiring process of the needed skills for implementing a successful service.

### *Previous practices*

As it is already underlined, the analyzed context is characterized by a strong fragility in the sharing of processes and practices: even it is a very dense and concentrated territory - from a physical and social points of view - it is dominated by a fragmented development of policies and decisions driven by a parochialism phenomena, that it is not able to focus on the intermunicipal level.

This fragmentation is more visible in the urban and territorial planning in which the complete absence of a shared vision creates a territory that is a collapsing situation: a dramatic level of urbanization, a heavy polluted condition of open areas and a fragility of the transportation networks are only the most visible results of the inability of giving territorial priority and importance<sup>4</sup>. The absence of a sharing in urban planning is the most problematic aspect of this territory and the implementation of a common management of cadastral function represents an important progress for the future. Even if there is not a positive situation of sharing in the nearer administrative fields, this context is not characterized by a complete absence of policy and practices sharing but there are some issues that are managed in a cooperative way. The social and cultural services inside this territory are managed by different municipalities, they built an ad hoc public authorities<sup>5</sup> that could manage in a cooperative and collaborative way these services. The municipalities decide to manage these services together because they individuate several opportunities in terms of simplicity for obtaining final positive results. The managerial work of these kind of services is quite easy, as it is demonstrated inside this territory, it was made through a strong and continuous collaboration and cooperation among the delegated offices, supported by the constitution of a specific technical actor. It is possible to assume that the municipalities learn different things from these experiences: the first one is the mutual trust, that represent a crucial value in order to reinforce the positive relations among different political actors, the second one is the skill of working together, that is a fundamental

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4 An interesting lecture about this territory is presented in "Le tre città della Brianza. Temi e prospettive della nuova provincia" (Centro Studi PIM 2006), in which the authors try to give a description to this complex territory.

5 The examples are the "Consorzio Desio Brianza" about the welfare services and the "Brianza Biblioteche" about the cultural ones, mainly the management of libraries.

pillar for the efficacy of each kind of cooperative situations and here it is related to the technical personnel and finally the positive perceptions by inhabitants that could judge well the results of a cooperative work among municipalities. These elements have not a direct link to the cadastral function, nevertheless they were an important starting point for the construction of this sharing service and they could support the construction of the new ones, because they are a set of absorbed values.

### *Process*

The description of the different phases that characterize the construction of this shared cadastral function could be based on the operative plan, written in 2007 by the office itself: this tool could happen to offer a wide analysis of this successful experience and to explain how these results were obtained. It is important to give also a brief framework from a legislative point of view because the reasons of the construction of this intermunicipal cadastral pole start from some juridical innovation, that was implemented in the last decades. In 1997, the law n.59, 15/3/1997 establishes a reorganization of local authorities in order to obtain a progressive functional decentralization to the low level of the administrative pyramid: among these new functions given to the municipalities there was also the cadastral one, as an issues strictly related to the local context. The municipalities had the discretion to manage this new functions in a single or associated way: inside this passage it is traceable the idea of cadastral pole, i.e. a complete office in which it is possible to manage the all cadastral activities for a territory. This is the road tin which it is located the process of progressive extensions of the cadastral services to the other municipalities in Brianza Occidentale.



Table 17 - Chronological process of the cadastral pole (Rizzo, 2007)

Years	Description
2002	The decentralized cadastral function was started in the city of Seregno
2003	It was stipulated the first agreement among the municipalities of Albiate, Cesano Maderno, Giussano, Lentate sul Seveso, Seregno e Sovico in order to manage in an inter-municipal cooperation the cadastral function.
2004	The agreement was modified in order to allow the entrance of new municipalities: Barlassina, Ceriano Laghetto, Macherio e Meda.
2007	A new agreement was stipulated for the entrance of other cities: Bovisio Masciago, Cogliate, Lazzate, Limbiate, Misinto e Varedo.

In 2007 there is no other relevant innovation in terms of borders or management about these shared functions, the municipalities maintain stable the stipulated agreement and introduce only some improvement from a technical point of view. This stability is a sign of the positivity of the undertaken process, as the continuous enlargement of the boundaries that represent a recognition of some effective and efficacious effects of the shared cadastral functions.

### *Critical reading of the agreement*

In order to understand clearly the features of this shared cadastral function, it is important to have a reading of the agreement stipulated in 2003 that has not been changed in the following years, but only extended to the other municipalities. Beyond the definition of the associated cadastral service the fundamental managerial aspect of this agreement, it is important to underline other issues that oversees to the proper management of this cooperative function. A first element, expressed by the article 5, is the duration of this agreement: it is established that it is equal to six years and it is renewable through agreed measures by the associated municipalities, it is also possible to rescind after three

years of working. The duration of the agreement is quite short and also the time for annulling it, this underlines that it has an high level of flexibility and it is not a cogent understanding, consequently the municipality could decide easily to rescind only with pecuniary consequences: nevertheless the continuous increasing of cities involved and the nonexistent reduction of the boundaries seem to explain that the presence of this flexibility is not used, probably it is also justified by the specificity of the shared function that allows to have less degree of freedom and control by the single municipalities. The article 6, is about the modalities of consultation and participation, the agreement defines the presence of a board in which each municipalities is represented by the mayor (or a delegate) and its tasks are related to the technical management of the cadastral function, but also to the acceptance of new municipalities inside the agreement. About the entrance of new municipalities it is important to underline that it is allowed only in case of unanimity expressed by the members, it is also limited to the cities that are in the North West part of the province of Monza e Brianza and only if the economical and managerial limits of the optimum area are not exceeded.

About the entrance of new municipalities it is important to underline that it is allowed only in case of unanimity expressed by the members, it is also limited to the cities that are in the North West part of the province of Monza e Brianza and only if the economical and managerial limits of the optimum area are not exceeded. This passage is another element that underlines the flexibility of the entire services, the provision of entrance mechanism is a tool able to allow a controlled entry mode of other municipalities in order to verify the real economical and managerial possibilities. It could be considered as a guarantee form for maintain stable the quality of the offered services, i.e. the municipalities and the technical board

should analyze the respect of some parameters connected to the optimum dimension for an effective and efficacious services.

### *A possible category*

This inter-municipal cadastral pole is an example of a single-purpose and service-based cooperation among different municipalities. The aim of this cooperation is mainly related only to the management of a single function, that is the cadastral one, it is configurable as a service-based because it is mainly focus on the management for different municipalities of the land and property register. It is an easy categorization because it is clear the aim from the first steps of the process and it is not characterized by any forms of variations along the years. It is also important to underline that is realized along the route established by the legislative innovations that try to reinforce - for these kind of function - the possibilities of sharing among municipalities some functions in order to achieve some degree of effectiveness and efficiency.

### 6.3 | Economical and managerial advantages of the Brianza Occidentale cadastral pole.

Speaking about a public service, and not about a policy or a plan, this part dedicated to the economical and managerial context plays a crucial role because it allows to understand clearly which are the effects and the results obtained through this cooperation. The attention is mainly dedicated to the operative plan edited during the 2007, when there was the last boundaries enlargement and this cadastral pole reaches its actual dimension: through this document it is possible to understand which are the economical and managerial basis for the construction of the entire service.

#### *Economical issues*

The starting point for the analysis of the financial plan is the identification of the criteria that established the purchase division, given that it is an inter-municipal service consequently it is important to know which is the economical contribution that each municipality has to pay for availing this service. The financial plan identifies a simple set of criteria, based on an three parameters: the total amount of inhabitants (P), the amount of residential properties (F) and the amount land parcels (T).

$$\frac{((P \times 40 + F \times 50 + T \times 10))}{100}$$

This equation is an attempt of making a weighted average for giving to each parameter the real importance, considering also the contextual situation: a great role is played by the population (equal to 247.959 in 2007) that is translatable in possible users, the number of residential properties that is a huge quantity (299.263 in 2007) and represent the main working objects and finally the amount of land parcels that are not many (51.304 in 2007) because of the high urbanized situation. This criteria is

used for determining the modalities for the beginning and the management for each year, even if there are some possible changes in order to upgrade the different parameters according to the contextual situation. Using this equation it is possible to calculate the corresponding distribution of financial shares among municipalities, the following graph allows to understand which is the weight of the different municipalities and the consequent relations among them.

**Table 18 - Financial Distribution of the cadastral pole (Rizzo, 2007)**

Municipality	Percentage	Municipality	Percentage
Albate	2,35%	Lentate sul Seveso	6,23%
Barlassina	2,58%	Limbrate	12,09%
Bovisio Masciago	6,44%	Macherio	2,73%
Ceriano Laghetto	2,36%	Meda	9,30%
Cesano Maderno	14,14%	Misinto	1,86%
Cogiate	3,17%	Seregno	16,67%
Giussano	9,14%	Sovico	2,99%
Lazzate	2,91%	Varedo	5,04%

Thanks to this graph it is understandable the centrality of the biggest municipalities for the economic sustainability of the entire service: only thanks to Seregno, Cesano Maderno, Limbrate and Meda more than half of the total costs (about 58%) are covered, nevertheless the presence of the other little municipalities is fundamental in order to offer a high level services. This issue underlines that dimensionally are relevant both the number of municipalities involved, because it guarantee a well distribution of costs and a service calibrate for a correct area, and the total amount of population, because it allows a proportionate distribution of costs among municipalities and a good quantity

of potential users. The use of this proportion is not limited to the distribution of the managerial costs, but also for a correct redistribution of the starting costs, i.e. the initial investments made by the first four municipalities that created the cooperative cadastral service, these costs are mainly referable to the expenditure for the building of the cadastral pole and the technological equipment: this solution allows to equalize the contributions of the single municipalities independently to the year of their entrance and gives the economical responsibility of the investments to the all municipalities. Taking into account the sum of the investments and managerial costs, and also the governmental transfers given due to the decision of creating a cooperative management of cadastral services, the average costs of this function per inhabitant is equal to 0,50 €. A study made by Roberto Mostacci (2003) about the possible economical advantages driven by an inter-municipal management of cadastral function identifies as the possible average costs at operating speed of this service in a context of 200.000 inhabitant at 2,45 €. The huge differences, equal to about 2 €, is related to two main aspects: the presence of important national transfer for the starting phase and the decisions of giving some costs to the municipalities, mainly related to the personnel.

### *Managerial issues*

A chapter of the operative plan is dedicated to the description of the managerial aspects connected to the working modalities of this cadastral function, it is important to dedicate a part of the analysis to this issue because it represents another element in which the cooperative approach introduces some innovative aspects. In order to offer an efficacious and efficient cadastral service for a wide "audience" - it is about 250.000 inhabitants -

the problems related to the personnel is relevant, also because it is not in charge of a unique municipality, but this office is shared among 16 municipalities. The cadastral pole is under the authority of the administrative municipality of Seregno - that is the leader of the project - that consequently has the personnel of this service, inserted in its organisation chart directly connected with the director general. According to the personnel distribution, established by the delegated national department and by the national cadastral authority<sup>6</sup>, the cadastral pole defines the next amount.

**Table 19 - Territorial dimensions and cadastral employees (Rizzo, 2007)**

Geographical area	Population	Properties	Personnel	Employees p/p
Italy	57.652.544	55.999.225	4.000	14.413
Lombardy	9.291.493	9.820.626	357	26.026
Milan province	3.484.679	3.766.304	103	33.831
Brianza Ovest	229.847	251.066	7	32.835

This table allows to emerge the amount of personnel that the cadastral service need in order to manage positively the different level . It is important to underline that the number of 7 people is not sufficient for the cadastral pole of Brianza Ovest due to the high relation among the employees and population/properties, the threshold fixed by the technical board is equal to 12 employees in order to have a relation equal to 19.153 inhabitants per capita. For obtaining this result is fundamental the cooperation among the municipalities that should be able to make an agreement about the "outsourcing" of a limited and professional employees from the municipality to the cadastral pole, at the same time it is important to teach the technical skills to some other workers in order to have

<sup>6</sup> Mainly thanks to the ex-DPCM of 19/12/2000, the ex-DPCM of 21/03/2001 and the new DPCM of 14/07/2007

a diffuse capability. From these issues the construction of an inter-municipal service emerges in all its power and importance: as it emerged from the managerial aspects described over, the creation of a service through the presence of different municipalities allows to obtain a sufficient amount of personnel that is able to work on the all territory with a manageable amount of inhabitants/possible users. This positive effect is obtained due to the creation of a critical mass that allows to have a strong contractual power with the national authorities, even for obtaining financial or technological capitals, as it happened in the case of this cadastral pole. It is important to underline also that the cadastral pole is managed by a board a board, made by a delegate from each municipalities, that has the role of taking the most important decisions about the financial and technological supply for the correct management of the services. This tool underlines the attention given to the policy making process and the consequent centrality of each municipalities as a primary actor of the entire managerial system: even if this decision is quite obliged for the public dimension that characterized the cadastral pole, consequently connected to the need of establishing a public structure able to oversee the entire process.



## 6.4 | Conclusion

As it is emerged in the previous paragraphs, this first case study represents a very simple way of a service managed in a sharing way among different municipalities: this ease should not be seen as a negative judgement about the results or effects obtained, but it is only an interpretation of the institutional and cooperative mechanisms that appears - in comparison with the following case studies - simpler. The sharing element - i.e. the cadastral function - does not allow to focus the attention to the construction of vision or strategy, it is more oriented to an easier approach that works through the political, juridical, economical and managerial tools in order to intercept efficiency and effectiveness issues. It emerges clearly that the cooperative tendency, about an operative and practical function as the cadastral one is, is completely concentrated to the aspects that are able to gain positive aspects, from a political and an economic points of view.

The research of efficiency and effectiveness issues produces also some reflections on the adopted mechanisms for reaching these results: the municipalities could not concentrated their works on the construction of a strategy or vision, they should organize the cadastral service in a functional and rapid way. Near to this there are the need of defining precisely the juridical typology of the inter-municipal cooperation, the promotion of a clear distribution of decisional roles and the definition of the main aims of cooperation. It should not seen as a compulsory passage for each kind of cooperation, but - caused by the research of efficiency and effectiveness - these steps became the crucial one: the municipalities dedicate a long period for the construction of the institutional architecture that support the sharing of cadastral service. In the shared cadastral services of Brianza Occidentale, this process is built starting from the individuation of the agreement,

as the useful juridical tool for supporting a positive evolution of the service, but also through the distribution of roles among the municipalities that allows to promote a clear functioning of decisional chains and to have a good share also of costs and benefits. It is clearly visible that the different steps, made for the construction of this cooperative approach, are able to bring to some positive results, already underlined in the description of the cases study. As it is said in the starting part, this experience is one of the first example of cooperation among municipalities in the Brianza Occidentale, consequently it is important to underline the success obtained, not only taking into account the practical aspects, but also the immaterial results, more related to the political or juridical aspects. The municipalities are able to produce a positive coordination among them, that is related to a more political proximity that could bring to extend this demonstrated ability to other fields: the cadastral function could be seen as a prodromic step that allow to reinforce the positive idea about the sharing of decision making. Having a successful example as this one, it is able to increase the possibility of repeat a similar approach to other issues, through the cadastral function the municipalities are able to strengthen the internal coordination, a positive starting point for the future. The technical tool should be filled of contents, able to avoid an aseptic and impersonal perception of the decisions making, consequently it is important to take into account that in this case there is - starting from the beginning - a clear aim and content: i.e. the municipalities have clear in mind that the fundamental aim is to reduce the transaction costs related to a single management of the cadastral service through the construction of a common office able to work for all of them. It is possible to recognize some weak points in the development of this cadastral service: it is appreciable the presence of a deep work related to the economical and political

issues, that are managed in a very positive way able to also to bring positive results, but it is completely absent any kind of evaluation concerning the territorial dimensions. The typology of function does not allow to range also aspects not directly related to the cadastral one, nevertheless the approach is completely related to the managerial issues, without any kind of reflections that could be connected to a possible vision or strategy of the territory. The coalescence phenomena, that is really diffused and presented inside the Brianza Occidentale, is not taken into account, if not in a mediate way through the considerations that it is possible to manage, thanks to a unique office, the building patrimony of a wide area: this aspects oblige to a rapid overview that describes an homogenous condition. This absence represents, inevitably, a lack, but - thanks to the skills learnt thanks to this shared service - it is possible to imagine a common work, among the municipalities, that could be oriented to the production of a common view of this territory.



# Chapter 7

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Second case study.  
The building regulations of  
Alta Valdera



The second case studies<sup>1</sup> is about the building of a shared building regulations among the municipalities of Alta Valdera, it represents an interesting attempt of making a fundamental urban planning tool for a wide area as the one taking into account. The first passage is dedicated to a brief description of the Alta Valdera, mainly focusing the attention on the qualities of the historical centres and the residential areas, because they are the main topic of the building regulations. Next to this there is a part dedicated to the explanation of the political structure of Alta Valdera, mainly underlining its peculiarity as a consortium inside a union of municipalities. Finally there is an analysis of the content of the building regulations in order to search the reasons that sustained the decisions of sharing this kind of tools.

### **7.1 | The territorial features of Alta Valdera**

The Alta Valdera is a portion of the union of municipalities Valdera and it is made by six municipalities: Capannoli, Chianni, Lajatico, Palaia, Peccioli and Terricciola. It is a set of little municipalities diffuse on the hills and the foothills of the initial part of the valley made by the Era river, through the following map is possible to see that it is located in the south part of the union. The main aims of this part is to underline the strong homogeneity among these six municipalities in order to demonstrate that it is really useful the presence of a specific level of coordination, as the consortium inside the union of municipalities, and - contemporary - that it is useful the redaction of a specific building regulations.

Taking into account the surface and the population, the homogeneity of these six municipalities starts to emerge, as it is visible in the

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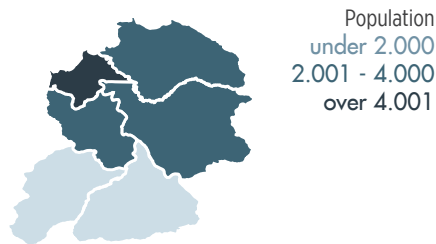
<sup>1</sup> This case study was built mainly through a deep reading of the book of Paolo Rossi (2006) and the documents about the unions of municipality of Valdera, as the statute or the agreement about the shared building regulations that represents an important document itself.

following table they have a huge surface, with a very low quantity of inhabitants: four of them as a surface more than 60 km<sup>2</sup> (Chianni, Lajatico, Palaia, Peccioli) with the exception of Capannoli and Terriciola, speaking about the inhabitants five of them have a population less than 5.000 inhabitants (Chianni and Lajatico with less than 2.000, while Palaia, Peccioli and Terriciola around 4.000) with the exception of Capannoli (6.213) inhabitants.

**Table 20 - Population and surface of Alta Valdera municipalities (ISTAT,2011)**

Municipalities	Population	Surface	Municipalities	Population	Surface
Capannoli	6.213	22,7	Peccioli	4.939	92,6
Chianni	1.457	62,1	Terriciola	4.511	43,5
Lajatico	1.376	72,5	Alta Valdera	23.068	367,2
Palaia	4.572	73,8	Valdera	116.802	614,3

**Image 5. Representation of population**



Overall, they cover an amount of 380,9 km<sup>2</sup> for a number of inhabitants equal to 20.483, i.e. they are about 60% of the total Valdera in terms of surface, but less than 25% of the inhabitants. It emerges clearly that this territory is characterized by a very low level of density, it is equal to 62 inhabitants for km<sup>2</sup> in the whole territory: as it is visible from a satellite image, the urbanization is concentrated in some points (represented by the historical centres, with some new adding parts in the proximity), while the other part of the territory is completely dominated by landscape and

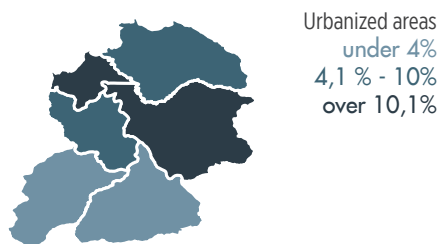


environmental quality. The emerged homogeneity needs to be confirmed through a brief analysis of other elements that could demonstrate the real consistency, as a starting point could be useful to consider the use of the soil: it is able to underline which is the amount of urbanized area that could help other considerations. Considering the density of the municipalities it is possible to imagine a less presence of diffuse urbanization inside this territory, this suggestion could be confirmed looking at the following table that expresses, which are the use of the soils of the municipalities. The results are quite similar among the different cities: it emerges clearly the great presence of area without any kind of constructions and this allows to confirm the possible perception of a territory dominated by a good environmental and landscape quality.

Table 21 - Total, building and green areas of Valdera municipalities (PTR, 2015)

Municipalities	Surface	Building areas	Green areas
Capannoli	22,7	2,85	19,85
Chianni	62,1	2,17	59,93
Lajatico	72,5	2,22	70,28
Palaia	92,6	3,90	69,90
Peccioli	43,5	5,40	87,20
Terriciola	73,8	3,54	39,96
Alta Valdera	367,2	20,08	347,12

Image 6. Representation of urbanized area



The building areas are very low: it is equal to 20,8 km<sup>2</sup> (5,5 % of the total surface), the most urbanized municipalities is Peccioli, with a surface of 5,40 km<sup>2</sup> (the 5,8% of the municipal surface).

The given image is describable as a rural territory, strongly dominated by the presence of open spaces generally used for agricultural purposes, inside which there are some urban centres of a little dimensions among which Peccioli and Capannoli play a pivotal role, even it is marginal in comparison to the other centres of Bassa Valdera. An useful urban tool, that could be used for underlining the homogeneity and the similarities among these municipalities, is the regional landscape plan that tries to give a critical reading to the different contexts, grouped taking into account the shared features of the territories. Inside this plan the area of Valdera is recognized as a reticular system made by little and medium urban centres, that generally are located along the main road network or the hill ridges. Specifically the regional road 439 and the river Era work as sorter tools for their territory along the north - south directions, they start in Pontedera, pass through Ponsacco and make their entrance in Alta Valdera passing through the city of Capannoli. From here this street becomes a sort of log on which starts a series of road branches that go towards the other urban centres located more internally: all of this network is surrounded by a landscape that is dominated by the agricultural uses or by the woodlands. The network, built in this way, works as a system of lines that connects the historical centres: they are recognizable for the presence of typical and recurrent elements (the church, the city hall and a square) and for more density of buildings and streets (generally indicator of ancient typology of settlements). Thanks the connections, this system of lines plays also as backbone for the new urbanized areas, they generally are along the road networks and follow their evolution, also according

to the declivity of the hills: the created image is quite similar to a sequence of thin filaments of urbanized area that are unraveled inside an hilly territory. The low level of density does not allow to describe this territory as a diffuse one from a physical points of view: it is not characterized by a strong urbanization that generated points of contact among the different urban centres, everything is separated and distant and the void is completely fill by the landscape in which remains visible the anthropization process. Nevertheless it is visible - only taking into account this data - the prodromic presence of a coalescent phenomena, some clues could be represented by: the all network systems that rotates around a unique road, the regional road 439, that works as log for the all infrastructural networks; the centrality plays inside Alta Valdera in terms of population by Capannoli and Peccioli and the inevitable relations with Pontedera, the real seat of the area and finally the real homogeneity in terms of urban and agricultural landscape, recognized by the landscape regional plan, and emphasized by the institution here.

## 7.2 | The political background

This territory is characterized almost naturally by an inclination to the creation of collaborative forms for the decision making: giving a look to the historical background of the last twenty years it is dominated by a continuous upgrading of the typology of cooperation. Inside this following paragraph the attention is firstly dedicated to a brief reconstruction of the different phases, after that the attention is focused on a lecture of the statute of Unione delle Valdera and finally to the agreement among the municipalities of Alta Valdera for the redaction of the building regulations.

### *A chronological lecture*

This part is mainly dedicated to the reconstruction of the progressive steps, made by the municipalities of Valdera, for the creation of a cooperative institution inside their territory and it is gleaned from an interesting working paper "Pioneri e Epigoni", written by Paolo Rossi in 2006 for the tenth anniversary of the first cooperative act. In the following table are listed the different phases of the cooperative history of Valdera.

From 1996 to 2004. It was the first phase of cooperation among the municipalities of Capannoli, Chianni, Lajatico, Palaia, Peccioli and Terricciola and it is based on the starting of the project S.Coo. Ter (Servizi di Coordinamento Territoriale - Services of Territorial Cooperation). They begin their cooperation considering the functions that are difficulty controlled by little municipalities as the IT services, tributes services and the waste management: these services are recognized as the most useful and - contemporary - the most simple for a sharing management mainly because they are able to produce an immediate economic efficiency. In the same period they decide to manage together also the local police and the economic activities services, these two functions

open the fields of the gathered opportunities: the sharing of them is not only related to the creation of economical benefits for the municipalities, but also it is able to produce a more effective control of the territory (with an increase of security perception by the inhabitants), a simpler relations of firms with the public body and the possible construction of new networks, born outside the municipalities and among the private actors.

From 2004 to 2008. It is the phase characterized by the institution of the consortium of Alta Valdera, the municipalities decide to make this upgrading for many reasons that are well summed up in Rossi (2006): the need of a more equal and integrated policies about the personnel, the impossibility of working on some functions/services (as the urban planning ones) through a simple agreement and the need of reinforcing the political weight of the cooperative experiences. The first one could be classified as a simple answer to a managerial problem, that is crucial for catching positive results, the second one is content-related of the cooperation and the need of extending the area of influence, while the third one is a process-related and it is devoted not only to an internal reinforcing of the cooperation, but also to the need of giving more external weight to it. It was also the period on which starts a first passage related to the all territory of Valdera: the municipalities of Alta Valdera, together with other eight municipalities (Buti, Calcinaia, Casciana Terme, Crespina, Lari, Ponsacco, Pontedera and Santa Maria a Monte) recognized that this territory is an optimal area for the management of some services. Starting from this consideration they create the Ufficio Comune della Valdera with the aim of elaborating and coordinating common policies for the whole territory, realizing equal opportunities for the all inhabitants and reaching more efficiency on the management of services through some economies of scale. This last point was the most followed

by the municipalities of the optimal areas due to the successful results obtained by the Consorzio Alta Valdera and the consequent ease of transferring the experiences to the all territory of Valdera. Inside this process, the municipalities decide to manage a wide set of functions related to: trade associations, social security services (INPS), income revenues authority (Agenzia delle Entrate), European affairs services (Sportello Europa) and the cadastral services.

From 2008 until now. The natural passage from this cooperative, but not perfectly formalized, situation to a more solid one was made in 2008 with the institution of Unione della Valdera: it was made by the municipalities that was already involved in the Consorzio della Alta Valdera and Ufficio Comune, it could seen as an upgrading in terms of political and democratic quality, but also for the possible obtainable results. It is important to underline that the Alta Valdera maintains a form of autonomy inside the union of municipalities through the definition of a specific separate office located in Peccioli.

#### *The statute of Unione della Valdera*

After this reconstruction of the different phases that occur in a progressive upgrading of the cooperative decision making, it is useful to propose a brief analysis of the statute that governs the mechanism inside the Unione della Valdera. The starting point is the individuation of the final aims that describe the aspirations of this inter-municipal cooperation: this part of the statute should not be perceived as a compulsory "knick-knack", but it is considerable as a real intent of finding and giving a solid sense to the cooperative institution regulated by this statute. The first element underlines that the fundamental aim is the handling of a plurality of municipal functions and services, that could obtain more efficiency and

effectiveness from a shared management compared with the work of single municipalities. It represents a sort of preamble to which are connected a set of particular aims, that allow to reinforce the idea of sharing decisions and community, among them it is important to point out: the equal opportunities for the inhabitants of Valdera without any limits imposed by the place of residence, the efficiency and the containment of costs, the effectiveness of the services, the development of integrated and unitarian policies in order to use in a better way the vocations and the potentialities of each municipalities and finally the political weight of the area. These aims focus their attention in different directions, nevertheless it is possible to recognized that some of them are about the process (as the ones about the efficiency and effectiveness), while other try to reinforce the sense of cooperation: the underlining of the equal opportunities, the unitarian and integrated policies and the political weight try to give a strategic perspective to this inter-municipal cooperation. From the list of the functions and services that are managed in a cooperative way, the importance and the strength of this institution emerge clearly, the municipalities carry out in a shared way, they shared about 20 functions generally managed by the municipalities: they go to the all field of education and culture, passing through the welfare policies, the local policies, the environmental ones and the urban planning and concluding with the whole quantity of functions typically described as general services. This huge quantity could be seen as a demonstration of the real intent of working hard together and the real will of making an inter-municipal cooperation able to have a bearing to the functioning of public body and to the daily life of the inhabitants. As it is underline in the previous paragraph, this union of municipalities was born after an intensive period of cooperation, mainly among the cities of Alta Valdera, in the

direction of appreciation of that experience and of recognizing of peculiarity of this specific territory, the statute gives the possibilities of individuating specific territorial area in which it is possible to organize internal and functional structure for the management of specific services (art. 10). Thanks to this article, it is possible the presence of a structure, called Polo Alta Valdera, that focuses its attention on the municipalities of that portion of the valley and on the management of the shared services: it is also the office that works for the making of the building regulations of this area. The other passages of the statute recall the typical typology of inter-municipal cooperation, mainly about the institutional structure that is built on the presence of an assembly, made by municipal council members, and of a council, made by the majors of the municipalities. Nevertheless, the quoted passage of the statute are the more interesting and underline the features of the Unione della Valdera, mainly concentrated in the will of making policies able to reinforcing both the integration among municipalities but also the peculiarities of each city: this aim is also the responsible of the co-existence of a macro-cooperation, that interests the all Valdera, and a micro-cooperation among the municipalities of Alta Valdera.

#### *The agreement for building regulations*

The existence of this micro-cooperation and the possibility of individuate optimal sub-area, i.e. area in which the effectiveness and the efficiency could be obtained through the presence of less municipalities, allows the cities of Alta Valdera (Capannoli, Chianni, Lajatico, Palaia, Peccioli and Terricciola) to sign the agreement for the sharing making of the building regulations, despite the creation of the Unione della Valdera and the elimination of Consorzio Alta Valdera. This agreement allows the making in a shared way of the building regulations through the common office



of Alta Valdera: this office should work for the first preparation and elaboration of this document and for the successive changes and integrations, but also it should manage the possible requests of applications and interpretations of the rules. The agreement tries also to propose some possible principles that could guide the making of this regulations, this attempt should be seen in order to reinforce the cooperative spirit among the municipalities and also give a strong and strategic perspective starting from this set of rules. The first principle is about the stimulation of a process directed to the political and administrative integration among the municipalities and their orderly building and urban development. This passage is able to explicit a strategy directed to increase the integration among the cities and based on their urban and landscape homogeneity, it is obtainable through the construction of shared urban tools, as this building regulations. A second set of principles is related to the content of these rules, the focus is oriented to: the need of promoting the sustainability of permanent transformations, the need of maintaining stable the indicators sensible to environment, human values, the collective wealth and the accomplishment of urban settlements and architectural elements quality oriented to protect landscape, environment and natural beauty. The decision of speaking about this them, inside the agreement, underlines the will of giving centrality to the themes, that could be contained inside the building regulations. The shared making of this building regulations establish common rules for a wide area that, as it is underlined in the previous paragraphs, it is characterized by similar urban and landscape features and, consequently, it is better to consider them as a unique territory in order to have a better strategy and protection. The agreement works only in order to create a background of general rules, aims and principles that could be a base for the content of the tool itself.

### 7.3 | The content of the building regulations

This paragraph is dedicated to the description of the content presented inside the building regulations; the intent is not to focus the attention on the single rules, but to express which is the general directions taken thanks to this new document and also which are the mechanisms that control the effective implementation and respect of the rules.

This building regulations, as it is prescribed by the regional law 1/2005, disciplines each activities oriented to the urban or building transformations and contains the dispositions for the protection of historical, environmental and architectonic values, for the urban decorum and quality, for the hygienic and security conditions: i.e. the whole range of aspects that could involved the building and urban patrimony that characterized a city. For controlling this complex set of themes, the regulations established the institution of technical-consultative organism, made in a collegial and shared way by the different municipalities: this decision is accompanied by the elimination of the building commission that generally is installed in each municipality. This shared and collegial organism is made by the managers of the urban planning or private buildings sector of each municipality, a geologist, an engineer and an agronomist, their consultative advices are compulsory, but not binding, for the all practices with the exception of the ones related to minimal changes. After this first part that focused its attention on the mechanism for the control of the rules, the regulations is completely oriented to sketch the dispositions around the different themes that it should oversee. The first theme is related to the urban planning aspects, in particular the attention is focused on the management of the operative tools, i.e. this wide set of tools that are used for giving concreteness to the decisions contained inside

the urban regulations<sup>2</sup>, this document individuates two typical way of interventions: a direct one, that is made for intervention on the already existing patrimony, i.e. ordinary maintenance, extraordinary maintenance, refurbishment, building renovation and a set of other little typology of interventions, while the other one is the wide set of actuative plan, i.e. parcelling plan, productive settlements plan, social housing plan, architectural recovery plan, and settlements requalification program and the urban agreement. For each of them, the building regulations disciplines the duration of the plan and some peculiarities that are useful for a better management of the entire procedures. The urban indicator, surface and measures are established and defined inside this part of the regulations and they becomes the practical tools used in the whole presented plan, i.e. this part could be considered as a sort of dictionary in which - for each single voice - is given a specific definition. The sharing of all of this decisions among different municipalities is useful because it introduces an important simplification for the firms, that work in this sector, and for the inhabitants, that have to use this set of rules. Beyond this practical aspect, it is important to taking into account the certainty of maintaining equal conditions related to the tools and the management of them, that could be considered as a first step for preserving also the building and urban homogeneity. Similar effects could be obtained thanks to the second theme that is oriented to the explanation of the administrative procedures for the building activities, this regulations gives the juridical background in order to promote a correct use of the different typology of abilitative titles. After this part dedicated to the administrative procedures and the construction of a common background, the attention is completely oriented to the urban

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<sup>2</sup> It is one of the component of the town plan according to the regional law 1/2005: the other elements are the structural plan and the building regulation itself.

design and architectural content of this building regulations. The first considered theme is the urban quality and decor of accessory works, through this part it tries to establish which kinds of rules should be followed for managing the complex set of architectural and urban accessory works: for each of them they identify which kind of architectural and executive rules should be followed for preserving the existing quality of urban landscape. The second theme is related to the environmental dispositions, inside these it is possible to recognize to different sets of aspects: on one side there is the set of rules that supervise to the management of the construction sites, on the other one there is some rules connected to the relations among the new construction and the environmental conditions, as the healthiness of the soil, the hydraulic security, the management of waste water and the green spaces protection. This set of content-rules goes in the direction of promoting a procedural coherence among the different municipalities (considering the part about the management of construction sites), contemporary the attention to the environmental protection allows to maintain the good condition through a common background, shared with the municipalities that occupied this territory. Similar aspects are considered about the security and the hygienic conditions, this part is concentrated to the definition of rules able to allow a crossing of architectonic barrier and an improvement of urban accessibility and to the set of tools that could be able to increase the quality of the daily life environment, such as aspects about lighting, ventilation and shaping of lodgings and rooms.

## 7.4 | Conclusion

In the development of the previous paragraphs, it is already presented a set of partial analysis of the obtained results and of the pursued aim, nevertheless this part is dedicated to the summarized the positive and negative issues in order to understand which kind of teaching is possible to draw for the Alta Valdera and for other territory. As starting point of any discussion about this case studies, it is important to underline that the reasoning should be set up on two different level: one is relative to the general cooperative intent and the results obtained, while the other one is about the building regulations, as an effect of this cooperative context.

Taking into account the first issue, that probably represents the most interesting in terms of possibilities of learning, it is fundamental to underline the abilities of municipalities to adapt and provoke the useful and prompt change of institutional mechanisms. The public bodies are so oriented to cooperation, as central tool of their decisional process, that propose a progressive implementation in order to reinforce itself and the obtainable results, just only as a brief recognition the practical aspect is the passage from the consortium of Alta Valdera to the Unione Valdera, passing through a common office and the prodromic shared steps. Inside this passage it is important to underline also the deep knowledge of the territory that is visible in the decision of maintaining a presidium also in the Alta Valdera. The municipalities are able to define which kind of juridical tool should be used for the territory, this is the logic passage, not the contrary: the institutional mechanism has to be built on the territory image, only in this way the full realization of città in nuce could be realized. This passage has a possibility of realization only thanks to the presence of a real and completely shared aim: the construction of this starting from the assumption that a parochialism approach is by now

anachronistic, it is possible to propose a good development of this territory only thanks to guarantee equal opportunities for each inhabitant and municipalities. The concretization of this situation is recognizable the shared of a plenty set of services among the different municipalities, that in this way could be managed through a real reduction of transaction costs and a real consideration of economies of scale. It is here visible the creation of a real inter-municipal community able to produce visible effects for the public body, thanks to the sharing of decisions and responsibility and the increasing of internal coordination, but mainly for the inhabitants that could not see a lack of democracy and representativity, but they could also obtain advantages and the presence of more interdependency and links.

The second element, from which it is possible to glean some useful learning issues, is the buildings regulation, that is one of the shared services among the municipalities. It is considered as a sort of pioneering experiences because its hybrid condition: it is not a service, but a set of rules that supervise the construction modalities. Nevertheless it represents - probably - the turning point, in terms of quality, of this inter-municipal cooperation, through the making of this common set of rules the municipalities give a strong centrality to their territory and recognize the presence of common features and of a common destiny. The public body understand that this territory, dominated by a very homogenous territory, could be preserved and developed only thanks a shared set of rules about the management of its buildings and landscape patrimonium. The latent coalescence phenomena, that - although there is the absence of a diffused urbanization - is quite recognizable, finds a first simple tool able to propose a possible strategy for this territory: it could be summarize through a great attention to the preservation of the homogenous features, that should be seen also as a reflection

of the idea of guaranteeing equal opportunities. The decision of making together this urban tool does not produce positive effects only for the territorial perspective, but it has a fundamental ability of give a framework of coherences to the all procedures about the buildings and the landscape: the presence of similar rules, inside a not so wide context, facilitates the daily life of the firms - that work in this sector - and to the inhabitants in general. The presence of these positive effects should not be only related to the economical advantages for the public body, but it has a crucial role for reinforcing the evaluation of the inhabitants about the inter-municipal cooperation, that is a fundamental aspect.





# Chapter 8

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Third case study.

The structural plan of  
Nuovo Circondario Imolese



This third case<sup>1</sup> is the most complex and advanced one because it is about the shared construction of a structural plan, that implies a wide ability of working together and taking - consequently - effective decision: this is the most relevant skill, but it is enough for underlining that the aim is not achievable without a long and previous story of cooperation among the municipalities. The starting point is the description of the territory in order to explaining the complexity and the territorial reasons that support the need of working together. The second passage is about the analysis of the story and of the political background of Nuovo Circondario Imolese, in order to understand the strength of this context as a successful inter-municipal cooperative system. The last descriptive passage is about the content of the structural plan in order to underline the aims that this territory wants to achieve through this document.

### **8.1 | The territorial description**

The Nuovo Circondario Imolese is an unione dei comuni made by 10 municipalities: Borgo Tossignano, Casalfiumanese, Castel del Rio, Castel Guelfo, Castel San Pietro Terme, Dozza, Fontanelice, Imola, Medicina and Mordano. It is a system of cities that works together from long time ago, mainly thanks to the pivot role played by Imola, that is the most important and most populated city of this area. This ability is not born without the presence of specific needs, but it is directly linked to the attempt of solving together the problem of this territory that is strongly interconnected, dominated by a wide homogeneity and shared similar problems. The starting point for emerging this similarities and the territorial complexity is the

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<sup>1</sup> This case study was built through the documents available of Nuovo Circondario Imolese, as the statute or the agreements, another useful starting point is represented by the rich website of this union of municipalities. About the part dedicated to the structural plan it is useful the documents of the plan itself, but also the in-depth analysis presented in *Urbanistica Informazioni*.

descriptive part of the structural plan because it is already oriented to the underlining of the most problematic part, for this reasons the following parts focus their attention on the population structure and distribution, the infrastructural system and the settlement fabric. These different passages allows to individuate the possible clues of this territory usable for understanding the presence of a territorial coalescence phenomena.

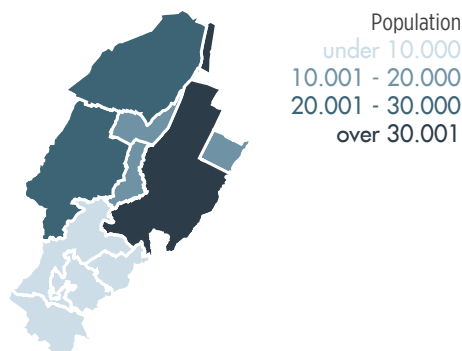
### *The social features of Nuovo Circondario Imolese*

The starting point for the analysis in this field is the distribution of population inside the different municipalities, in this way it is possible to understand the different weight of the cities inside the territory and making some considerations about the relations.

**Table 22- Population of Nuovo Circondario Imolese (ISTAT, 2011)**

Municipalities	Population	Municipalities	Population
Borgo Tossignano	3.302	Dozza	6.440
Casalfiumanese	3.461	Fontanelice	1.927
Castel del Rio	1.230	Imola	67.892
Castel Guelfo	4.277	Medicina	16.526
Castel San Pietro	20.468	Mordano	4.644
Nuovo Circondario Imolese		12.523	

**Image 7. Representation of population**

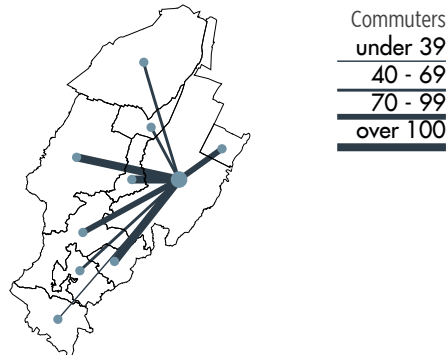


From this data, the centrality of Imola inside this context is self-evident: it is more than half of the total population and it is quite easy to suppose that it plays a pivot role inside this territory. Castel San Pietro Terme and Medicina are the other two main cities, even if they are far from the population amount of Imola, for this reasons it is possible to presume that they have a secondary role inside the territory in terms of facilities suppliers. Finally there is a wide segment made by seven municipalities that are very little - between 1.000 to 7.000 inhabitants - that is easy to think that are marginal inside the territory and are characterized by the presence of poor facilities. In order to go in deep inside this analysis about centrality is important to take into account a commuter map that is useful for understanding deeper the role played by the different cities inside this territory, even the data are from 2009. Considering the given results, presented in the following table, it is possible to make some considerations about the movements inside the territory and among its municipalities.

**Table 23 - Movements of commuters in Nuovo Circondario Imolese (PSC, 2009)**

Municipalities	Imola	Other cities in NCI	Outside the NCI	Total
Borgo Tossignano	570	292	118	950
Casalfiumanese	421	361	204	986
Castel del Rio	146	114	58	318
Castel Guelfo	320	426	553	1299
Castel San Pietro	919	550	3693	5432
Dozza	776	416	696	1888
Fontanelice	277	198	63	538
Imola	-	2836	5474	5474
Medicina	259	467	3174	3900
Mordano	907	93	381	1381
Total	4595	5723	14684	25002

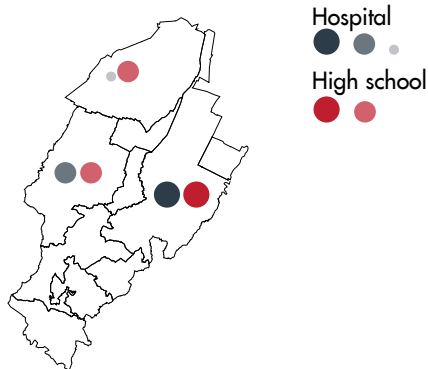
Image 8. Movements of commuters



The starting point of this analysis should be a brief consideration about the total movements inside this territory: they are equal to 64.362 of which 61,1% is internally to the cities, 16% is towards the other cities of the Nuovo Circondario Imolese and the other part 22,8% is towards other cities. Taking this data it is possible to say that there is a positive distribution inside each cities of firms, shopping centres and services able to supply the demand of the inhabitants, with the exceptions - probably - of some high level services. Considering only the movements outside the city the city of Imola is the destination of 4595 movements that is equal to the 18,4% of the total outside movements and the 44,5% of the total destination inside the Nuovo Circondario Imolese and the more than 10% of the overall destination, i.e. that it is a real centrality for this territory. It has a strong attractive role for many cities in this territory: for Borgo Tossignano, Castel San Pietro, Dozza and Mordano is more than 60% of the destinations movements, with a peak for Mordano for which Imola is the destination of more than 90% of the movements. The movements are related to the presence of some attractive points inside the municipalities, according to this it is useful to take into account which is the distribution of the possible attraction inside the considered territory: in this way it is possible to justify the movements and understand better the relations

among municipalities, that could be connected to the perception of a *città* 'in nuce'. The first map is about the presence of high level services, that - compared with the territory - could be high schools and hospitals: as it is visible, both of them are located into the three main cities (Castel San Pietro Terme, Imola and Medicina) and about the dimensions Imola has the biggest hospital (310 hospital beds) and the maximum amount of high schools (5). From this is justifiable the incredible amount of movements toward Imola and the assumption of its centrality inside the territory is further solid: the important presence of this two services underlines that the inhabitants of the near cities used them on their daily life.

Image 9. Distribution of high level services



The second element that should be taken into account in order to justify the centrality of Imola is the distribution of firms inside the city and the balance of labor force and workers inside the city. As it is visible from this data Castel San Pietro, Imola and Medicina are the main city also in terms of firms and workers: this is another incentive to consider these three cities as the most important ones inside the considered territory and among them Imola plays the central role. Only as a brief consideration, it is interesting to underline the number of Castel Guelfo and Mordano that have a huge number of workers in comparison with the populations (the first one is equal to about 65 %, while the second one is about 42%): these data

could be read as a clue of the economic role played by these two cities inside the territory. The relation among occupied people and workers seems to be another justification of the attraction and the strong relations among the cities in this territory. Considering the data presented in the table, it is possible to affirm that the quantity of occupied people of each cities is more than the workers, with the only exceptions of Castel Guelfo, this data allows to consider that there is a huge movements of commuters among the different cities and in particular they are towards the little cities (Castel del Rio and Fontanelice), but also towards Medicina. About the role of Imola, it is important to underline that it is potentially able to cover about the 71 % of the working place with its occupied inhabitant and it is passed only by Mordano (with 72% of range among workers and occupied people). Taking into account the whole territory, the workers cover only the 65% of the whole occupied people, i.e. the inhabitants are potentially obliged to commuting towards other part of the province for working.

**Table 23 - Firms, workers and occupied in Nuovo Circondario Imolese (ISTAT, 2011)**

Municipalities	Firms	Workers	Occupied	% Occupied Workers
Borgo Tossignano	250	1.013	1.865	54,3%
Casalfiumanese	326	1.313	1.992	65,9%
Castel del Rio	113	278	855	32,5%
Castel Guelfo	513	2.832	1.945	145,6%
Castel San Pietro	1.969	7.029	11.586	60,7%
Dozza	582	2.226	3.672	60,6%
Fontanelice	183	410	1.087	37,7%
Imola	5.553	26.272	36.924	71,1%
Medicina	1.425	3.982	9.075	43,9%
Mordano	408	1.958	2.707	72,3%
Total	11.312	47.313	71.708	66,0%



Image 10. Distribution of workers/labour force

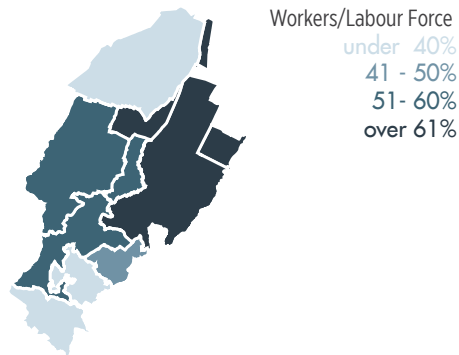
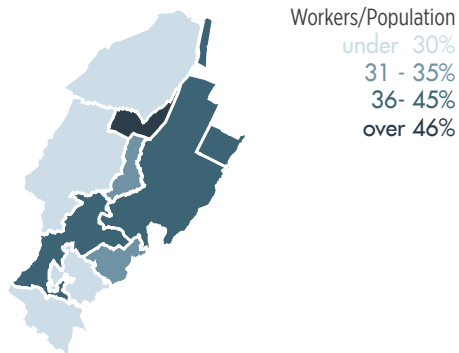


Image 11. Distribution of workers/population



About population, it is not possible to add other informations and also these are sufficient for saying that it is appreciable the centrality of Imola inside the territory due to the amount of inhabitants, the quantity of commuting movements and the number of firms located. It is also visible the strong relations among the different municipalities, it is underlined by the commuting movements and - mainly - by the distribution of the high level services (as hospitals or high schools): there are solid links among the cities inside this territory and consequently the decisions of working together seems a good decision.

### *The infrastructure as a backbone for a connected territory*

As it is emerged from the previous paragraph, one of the main

element that generate a perception of complexity inside this territory is the high number of commuters and - generally - movements made among the different cities. For this reason it is important to dedicate some space to the description of the infrastructural situation in order to understand if it is really an element that increase complexity and able to support a process of territorial coalescence.

The development of this territory is mainly based on the presence of the North - South connections made by the Via Emilia, that is the fundamental infrastructural axis for the whole region, it passes through Castel San Pietro and then to Imola: it works as the backbone for the distribution of the main local movements inside the Nuovo Circondario Imolese. Parallel to the Via Emilia, there is the A14 highway that goes from Bologna to Taranto along the Adriatic Sea: it has a fundamental role in the long-distance movements and it provides a connection of this territory to the other infrastructure pole (as Bologna's airport or Ravenna's harbour). These two roads has not only a transportation meaning, but they also divide the territory in two parts. On the east part there is the plain in which the infrastructural services is provided by a thin network of roads that connect the different city centres and along them there is a development of urban filament; here it is possible to recognize the presence of two main axis: one is the so-called Via San Carlo (from Castel San Pietro to Medicina) and the road along the Selice river (from Imola to Mordano, and then Massa Lombarda and Lugo). While the west part is in the foothills and it is dominated by the presence of two roads that go inside the valleys the SP21 - Via Viara (from Castel San Pietro to Fontanelice) and the SP610 - Via Montanara (from Imola to the Tuscany's boundaries, passing through Fontanelice and Castel del Rio). [map road] It emerges a fragile system that is excessively based on historical connections that are not so able to support the contemporary

quantity of movements inside the territory, it has a typical structure of the heavy urbanized area: poor primary connections (generally one or two, as in this situation) and a strong presence of secondary connections that supply the all needs of movements but are not built for this reason.

The presence of railroads is completely not-sufficient for an extensive use of this infrastructure, inside the Nuovo Circondario Imolese there are only three stations (Varignana, Castel San Pietro and Imola) that are along the same two lines (Bologna-Otranto and Bologna-Ravenna): it is clear that this kind of offer is not able to supply in an effective way the effective use of a public transportation modalities and consequently there is a wide use of the private cars. The scarce solidity of the railway system is replace by a good condition of the buses network inside the Nuovo Circondario Imolese: it is diffuse service able to reach the different cities and also their hamlets, it is not able to cover in a perfect way the all territory nevertheless it could be a valid substitute for the private mobility.

## 8.2 | The political context of Nuovo Circondario Imolese

After the description of the territorial context, it is important to dedicate some space for analyzing deeply the history and the structure of Nuovo Circondario Imolese, that is the main administrative and public body that ruled this area, in order to understand its general mechanism and mainly how it works the construction of the shared structured plan. In order to this, the following part is structured in this way: first of all there is a brief description of the progressive construction of inter-municipal cooperation, then a critical reading of the statute and finally an analysis of the agreement about the unique urban planning office. Only as methodological note, here the attention is dedicated to the official document because they are the main source for an effective description about the mechanism and the history of decisional making process.

### *The progressive phases of this inter-municipal cooperation*

The surrounding area of Imola has a traditional and historical autonomy to the province of Bologna, inside which it is located, and in general to the Emilia-Romagna region. It is related mainly to the economical and social issues, that determines an homogeneous context, but also to the political structure through the presence of a consolidate union of municipalities. The sequence of changes during a century is a symptom of two divergent things, that shows two possible perceptions of this continuous modification of rules during the years. On one side there is the autonomy of this territory that is recognized by the different legislators during the decades, as it is demonstrated by the constant presence of a law that permits the creation of an intermediate authority: this underlines an awareness, mainly of the regional government, to the need of a political and administrative coordination between the municipalities and the provinces. On the other side there is

the continuous change of laws and definitions, that provokes an instability that is not afoot of effectiveness and efficacy of this intermediate level: the absence of certainty and the continuous fragmentation of experiences are not able to stabilize the positive effects and the citizens perception of an authority.

**Table 24 - Administrative phases of Imola territory**

Years	Description
1859 1926	Since the annexation of Emilia-Romagna in the Italian kingdom in 1859, a circondario <sup>1</sup> existed: it was made by the municipalities of Imola, Casal Fiuminese, Castel Guelfo, Castel San Pietro dell'Emilia, Dozza, Medicina and Mordano and it was inside the province of Bologna.
1926 1975	There was an administrative absence of a form of inter-municipal cooperation: it is justifiable to the presence of a centralizing government during both the Fascist regime and the first period of the Italian republic.
1976 1983	The Emilia-Romagna region reinstated a form of cooperation, called comprensorio <sup>2</sup> , in 1976 that worked until 1983, it was made by the following municipalities: Imola, Borgo Tossignano, Casalfiumanese, Castel Guelfo, Castel del Rio, Castel San Pietro Terme, Dozza, Fontanelice and Mordano. The Emilia-Romagna region reinstated a form of cooperation, called comprensorio <sup>2</sup> , in 1976 that worked until 1984. The Emilia-Romagna region reinstated a form of cooperation, called comprensorio <sup>2</sup> , in 1976 that worked until 1984.
1984 1995	In 1984 the comprensori was abrogated and substituted by the assemblea dei comuni dell'Imolese, that is made by the same municipalities and it is a simple conference of the majors of the different municipalities of the area.
1995 2003	In 1995 it was approved the regional law n.6 of 30 January 1995 that abrogated the previous structure and introduced the circondario di Imola, that was delimited by another regional law n.33 of 12 April 1995 about the Bologna metropolitan area inside which this territory is comprised; this passage established also the entrance of Medicina inside the circondario.
2003 2004	This two years are a passage point for the administration of this territory: it was signed an agreement among the municipalities, the Emilia-Romagna region and the province of Bologna, in order to increase the quality of this public authority. The province decides to delegate the some topics of its competence and it was established a period of administrative assessment in which the management is made by consorzio del circondario Imolese.

2004 is recognized as an year of turn for the territory of Imola from an administrative point of views because the political and juridical basis - of the contemporary situation - were been thrown by the Regional and Provincial legislator. It is possible to recognize this moment as able to mark the point of a transition from a fragmented situation to a consolidate perspective of growth and development. The approval of the regional law n.6 24 March 2004 in which the article 23-24-25-26 are about the institution of the Nuovo Circondario Imolese. In particular the article 23 establishes the territorial borders and the juridical forms of this new authority: the first passage is a simple ratification of the existing situation, while the second one identifies the form in a «a special cooperative form, finalized to the associative management of the municipal functions and the decentralized provincial functions» (comma 1, article 23, regional law n.6 24 March 2004). The following article (24) specifies the set of possible processes of decentralization - from municipalities, province and region - about the function that could be managed by the circondario, it is important to underline that the province of Bologna decide to decentralize the following issues: vocational education, labour and welfare policies, provincial roads, educational policies, tourism and cultural heritage, environmental policies, territorial planning, industrial policies. All of this functions are managed together and in a constant synergy with the province, the circondario becomes an intermediate level of coordination and planning of policies and plans dedicating a specific attention to this territorial context. For the following parts of the case study description, it is important to underline the presence of two clauses (8-9) inside the article (25) because it establishes that the circondario gives a consultative advisor about the urban tools (structural plan, urban and building rules, operative plan and executive urban plan), but also it could play as coordinator for

a direct elaboration of this tool. The last article (26) is about the need of a statute that regulates the government bodies, the own functions, the relations with the other authorities of the territory and the modalities for guaranteeing the maximum transparency of decisions and the possible participation of citizens.

### *The statute as the fundamental charter*

A deep understanding of the logic subtended to the inter-municipal cooperation in Imola territory and a comprehension of the political and administrative mechanism should be given through the lecture of the statute: it represents the fundamental tool that regulates the relations among the municipalities, thanks to the attention dedicated to the political representative mechanism and the management of the functions.

The statute opens with a first part dedicated to the fundamental principles that gives the general sense of this inter-municipal cooperation, in this passage it is important to stop on the article 2 and 3: inside them it is ratified the indeterminate temporal duration of the Nuovo Circondario Imolese, the impossibility of a singular termination and the need of unanimous will for the dissolution. The content of these two articles tries to reinforce the stability of this cooperation limiting the degree of flexibility and freedom: it is set forth the will of the municipalities of working together for the development of their territory, a will that could not be destroyed by a change of political majority, but instead it should preserve from possible destroying intents. The attention of this first part is dedicated also to the marking of the purpose of this inter-municipal cooperation, the article 4 underlines that the circondario is an optimum area for the handling of some specific administrative functions in relation with the organization, the coordination, the planning and the management: this passage

compares the *circondario* to the traditional administrative authority conferring to it the typical skills and the prerogatives of a public bodies. This article focuses also the attention on cooperation as the fundamental principles that drives the *circondario* in order to take care about the interests of the inhabitant with the aim of supporting the integration and facilitating the balancing of local actions, considering the territorial differences among the municipalities. This passage is quite obvious, nevertheless it allows to underline the centrality of cooperation as a fundamental tool for managing and governing this territory. Starting from the individuation of cooperation, as a decision making process, the article 4 focuses its attention on some technical aims for the *circondario*: the shared organization and management of specific municipal functions, the promotion of organizational and technical-managerial modalities able to guarantee a good qualitative and quantitative services homogenous for each municipality and the participation to the general and specific planning of Region and Province. This set of aims is not so revolutionary, but they are reasonable and inherent to the itself nature of this kind of cooperation: it allows to understand that the issues about the technical coordination and the diffuse of high quality standard of life are the achievable aims for the *circondario* through the constant cooperation among the municipalities. Until now the attention is concentrated inside the functional mechanism of the *circondario*, but the statute tries also to answer to the possible sense of political representative lack perceived by inhabitants: the article 9 establishes the presence of participative mechanisms that could be activated during the decision making processes for allowing - to the stakeholders, the users, the associations and the other possible kinds of demonstrations of interests - to contribute to the determination, the realization and the control of the decisions. Accompanied to this



passage of participation in a wide sense, there is the description - in the second part of the statute - of the governmental bodies of the circondario that are the real place where decisions are taken. A central role is played by the assembly that is made by the president of the circondario and 24 members of which 11 are taken from the political opposition of the municipalities: it determines the political and administrative orientation and it controls the realization of it, inside the assembly it is elected a commission that has a role of control and guarantee about the institutional and financial decisions taken by the circondario. The second main body is the Giunta, is made by the president of the circondario and other two members taken from the majors of the municipalities, they adopt collectively the decisions mainly related to the address and the management of the bureaucracy. A third body is the Conferenza dei Sindaci that is made by the all majors of the municipalities: it has consultative and constructive functions in relation with the policies of the circondario in order to achieve a coordination with the municipal, provincial and regional ones. It could express compulsory and binding opinions about the planning, promotion and development act for the shared management of municipal functions and services, the approval of agreement for associative management, the definition of human and financial resources for the existing associative management and the provisional balance sheets. From this set of political bodies it emerges the centrality of the municipalities, as political actor, because they maintain stable their fundamental governmental role: the circondario is perceived a second level authority that is continuously subject to the control made by the municipalities, this managerial way strengthen the centrality of cooperation and collaboration as the fundamental tools for put together the different decisions and making an effective synthesis.

*An analysis of the agreement about the unique planning office*

The analysis of the administrative document for this case study could not be limited to the description of the statute's content, the main attention is dedicated to the urban planning functions and the attempt of managing it in a collaborative and cooperative way, consequently it is important to describe the content of the agreement among the municipalities for the creation of a unique planning office. The first passages of this document tries immediately to individuate the principal aims of this decisions, among the others it is important to underline: the ability of facing the complex management of services and functions related to urban planning through a well built managerial structure, the possibility of reaching scale economies through a unique office, the possibility of create new services that could not be supplied by a single municipalities and the valorization of the personnel competences inside the single municipalities. This aims could be perceived as too general and wide, nevertheless they are able to characterize and individuate the specificities of this operation, it is possible to extract some positive effect that could be reached thanks to this cooperation: in general it is recognizable an attention to the creation of an effective decision making process able to give solutions for the territorial complexity, near to this general effect there is a positive attention to the economic benefits that could be obtained, but also the centrality of some technical or managerial aspects as the level of the offered services (in terms of quantity, but mainly of quality) or the personnel regard. This foreword is a premise for the technical content of the agreement among municipalities for the management of this unique planning office, it works as a value's manifesto that guides the work of the municipalities. Moving to the technical aspects, the article 3 focuses its attention on the political approval path of the policies and plans made by the unique planning office,

this responsibility stands at the head of each municipalities that has to adopt and approve the different planning instruments. As the article 4 describes, the unique planning office carries out only the making process and management of urban tools, specifically it is focus on: the drafting of the tools for the general and specific part of the structural plan, the drafting of the building and urban rules, the supporting activities for the adoption and the approval of the municipalities, the drafting of the operative plan, the management of the GIS and cartography and the elaboration of specific project. From this list it is clearly understandable that the tasks of this office are mainly technical and relative to a continuous support for the work of the municipalities, it is not characterized by a political or decisional autonomy, but it is more similar to a simple executor.

### 8.3 | The inter-municipal content of the structural plan

The aim of this part is to make a recognition of the inter-municipal content contained inside the structure plan presented by the Nuovo Circondario Imolese, in this way it is possible to appreciate which are the focus points of the urban planning ideas promoted by this inter-municipal cooperation. It is important to underline also, as emerged from *Urbanistica Informazioni* 249 - 250<sup>2</sup>, that this plan follows what is established inside the regional plan about the identification and the consequent planning of città effettive: they are considered as the constitutive part of the regional systems and characterized internally by historical relations, complementary and synergic relations among the municipalities and homogenous productive features<sup>3</sup>. The following sub-paragraphs are dedicated to understand the different aspects contained inside this plan: the first step is about the main aims contained inside the plan, secondly the relations among Nuovo Circondario Imolese and the surrounding areas.

#### *The main aims of the structural plan*

The structure plan is driven by a shared scenario that is the starting point of the other reflections about the content of plan. As it is quite clear the fundamental aim is to make an integrate structural plan that has - as main will - the creation of a unique territorial system in which each municipality, through the maintenance of its social and cultural identity, contributes to the development of the entire territory. It could be perceived as quite generic, but it introduces the awareness of working together for an effective and efficacious development of the entire area. It establishes the need of making

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2 It is a number of this specialistic magazine with a long part dedicated to the inter-municipal plan made by Nuovo Circondario Imolese

3 It could be perceived as another definition of the coalescence phenomenon and città in nuce

a shared territorial layout that could be able to consolidate the positive features already presented inside the area and to reinforce the homogeneity, no more as simple coalescence process, but has related to shared territorial policies. As it is emerged there are some starting aims, that could obvious, but nevertheless they give back the entire sense of the common structure plan: the unitarian construction of the plan, the valorization of the municipal identity, the consideration of the different sides of each municipalities in their attractive and compensative relations with the other cities. From this list, it appears the crucial attempt of maintaining both the comprehensive idea of this plan, able to embrace of the municipalities, and the singularity of each city in order to preserve the specific identity: it could be seen as an attempt of avoiding possible contrasts with the different inhabitants, nevertheless it is also a way for give the correct valorization of the different represented features. Until now the aim emerged are mainly related to the successful result of the final process, this is not obviously enough and it is important to underline that the Nuovo Circondario Imolese focuses its attention - starting from the begin - to the content of this plan. The main idea is to make a structure plan able to accompany the effervescent territory, based on a continuous relation among the territorial and the social systems: i.e. a plan able to use the positive works made daily by the inhabitants of this territory for preserving and improving the cultural, economic, social and territorial tissues. This content-related passage gives the sense of the entire plan: the aim of giving an instrument that could help the already existing trajectories - given by the inhabitants and the institutions - for the preservation and the improvement of the territory.

#### *Nuovo Circondario Imolese and the surrounding areas*

The political situation in which this plan has been approved, obliged

the Nuovo Circondario Imolese to take into account also how to manage the relations with the città metropolitana of Bologna, it represents a fundamental passage of the whole plan due to the presence of Nuovo Circondario Imolese inside the boundaries of this new institution. It emerges clearly the intention of reinforcing the infrastructural relations with the Bologna's area, mainly thanks to a particular attention to the railway systems, in order to facilitate the use of the high level services (university, airport, exhibition and the leisure facilities) that are placed only inside a "metropolitan" area. Near to this, it is important to underline the will of maintaining a balance role between the Bologna's area and the Romagna's area, in particular with Ravenna and its harbour: the Nuovo Circondario Imolese wants to continue to be a hinge between these two areas in order to develop itself and the relations among them.

*The territory composition: the recognition of the territorial parts.*

From the territorial description it is already emerged a possible individuation of priority territorial areas inside this territory, taking into account the infrastructural system it is quite obvious the presence of two main axis: from East to West along the Via Emilia, the A14 highway and the railway system, from North to South along the two valleys road (Via Selice and Via Montanara). Through this two axis the cities are localized: Imola and Castel San Pietro plays as the main polarities inside this territory able to attract the other municipalities according to the proximity. The plan tries to make an additional steps and individuates three main systems:

the Sistema della Montagna: made by the municipalities of Borgo Tossignano, Casalfiumanese, Fontanelice and Castel del Rio. This area is characterized by an important environmental and landscape value, but also for the geological and archeological presences

the Sistema dell'Asse della Via Emilia: made by Castel San Pietro and Imola, with the addition of the hamlets of Osteria Grande and Toscanella and the municipalities of Dozza. It is highly dominated by the Via Emilia that works as the real backbone for the all functions, residential and productive ones in particular.

the Sistema della Pianura: made by Medicina, Castel Guelfo, Mordano and the north area of Imola. It is characterized by a good integrity and a good quality of the agricultural landscape. This three systems are able to overtake the municipal boundaries, that could be perceived as a real limit for the development of an inter-municipal plan, and individuate new territorial areas based on homogenous features in order to propose a coherent development: this decision should not be seen as a crossing of the new unitarian dimensions, at the inter-municipal level, but as a better interpretation of the whole territory and as an attempt of finding possible planning area that could sustain the general development of the area.

### *The themes of the structural plan*

The structural plan is based on the identification of some main planning themes that are the focus point on which the entire work is built, they are content-specific but not municipal-specific: i.e. inside the plan are individuated the fundamental content, that could pass through the territory of the different municipalities and try to be based inside or in-between the three systems described before. This approach is quite traditionally, this structural plan on one side tries to translate, inside an inter-municipal plan, the technique typical of the more traditional urban plan, while on the

other tries to make some innovations. Between these two side it is placed the decision taken about the main themes, that are: the infrastructure, the functional poles, the productive spaces and the residential ones.

About the infrastructures, some general aims are individuated as the crucial aspects that, thanks to the plan, should be solved in order to give a real improvement. A first set is mainly related to the road networks that they are focused on the need of proposing a hierarchization and functional differentiation of the roads network, secondly the enhancement of the accessibility to the main services, then an attention dedicated to the possible mitigation measures for preserving the landscape and environmental quality. Next to this first set, the attention is directed also to the promotion of mobility model characterized by a low impact, mainly referable to the implementation of bicycle paths, and contemporary to the need of strengthening the collective transportation modalities. This general aims are substantiated by a set of actions that are referable to general interventions about problems recognizable at the territorial level, leaving the punctual and municipal aspects to the specific and operative solutions. About the road networks, the structural plan works on three main projects that could solve structural difficulties of this territory: the realization of the Nuova San Vitale in order to improve the connection with the province of Ravenna, the rearrangement of the Via Emilia in order to facilitate and improve its backbone role, the qualification of Via Montanara focusing on its different roles (connection with Firenzuola, interconnection among the municipalities, main road of the urban centres, support for the use of environmental and landscape presence), an new axis at the north of Via Emilia in order to improve the connection with the collective transportation modalities, an improvement of the highway A4 in terms two new toll booths and the four lanes.



Near to this there are the actions about the other mobility systems, mainly the railway ones, in this directions it is useful to signal: the construction of the new station of Toscanella, the requalification and strengthening of stations for an improvement of the time schedule, the reactivation of the railway Budrio-Massa Lombarda (that passes through the Circondario) or the realization of a bus-via, the creation of a connection systems between Medicina and Castel San Pietro station. The set of actions described before has a real inter-municipal scale because the problems are managed from a territorial scale and not from a specific point of view: the infrastructural problem is considered in its complexity, in a qualitative and quantitative points of view, and the individuated solutions try to propose a positive development able to be spread in the whole territory.

A second important aspect contained inside the structural plan is the individuation of functional poles, i.e. main areas inside which are located the big metropolitana functions, characterized by an high attractivity and high specialization related to the productive, cultural, commercial and logistic role. They are nine in the whole territory: seven of these are in the city of Imola, specifically the racetrack, the hospital, the goods yard, the innovation park, the railway station, the integrated commercial area and two in Castel San Pietro, i.e. the hippodrome and the thermal area. The individuation of functional poles inside the territory, starting from an inter-municipal point of view and not from a local one, allows to think about their functions and values from an upper level that is able to demonstrate better their real centrality inside this territory. Each of the individuate functional poles has a great attractivity in terms of users that could not be confined to the ones presented inside the circondario, but - for some of them - it is relative to other scales, as provincial, regional and even national.

This recognition is not a simple attempt of defining a status and giving a possible planning solutions, but it is more near to the collection of possible cornerstones on which a set of development policies could be implemented taking into account the whole possibilities expressed by these areas. Consequently the usable instruments could not be limited to the ones typical of urban planning, but they should be more flexible and oriented to strategies of territorial marketing, nevertheless it is fundamental that all of the processes related to these functional poles must be managed at an inter-municipal level in order to have a wider point of view. The productive and commercial tissue should be considered as one of the fundamental element inside the structural plan that need really an important control made by the inter-municipal authorities: only in this way it is possible to avoid a decisional fragmentation in favour of a coordinate management able to answer effectively to the problems of productive and commercial areas. The wideness of the theme does not allow to focus the attention only to a little set of actions, but inevitably they are many due to the need of covering the different levels of problems presented. A central attention should be given to the already existing sites of production and commerce that should be potentiated - through an expansions in terms of area - but also should be re-converted in more ecological and sustainable way through the wide set of measures that could be implemented. Near to this there is the need of individuate a little number of new possible productive areas, it is crucial that the quantity is limited and only if they are able to rationalize the existing firms and to transfer firms that are located in improper areas. A third strategies oriented to the coexistence, where it is possible, of different functions, as productive, commercial and residential, in this way the structural plan tries to promote a mixed use of urban areas by inhabitants: it could be oriented to the

co-presence of commercial and productive, that it is quite diffused and could create also new attractive poles in the periphery, while it is possible to promote - mainly in the urban centres, but also in the newest residential areas - the presence of commercial spaces and also the sharing of spaces by production and residential tissue, even if it is less diffused and limited to the less polluting firms. The presence of similar strategies about commercial and productive spaces inside a wide areas, as the circondario, can promote an equal and efficient distributions, that could avoid unbalance development inside the territory but an homogenous distribution of them and it is also able to have positive effects not only for the municipalities, but also for the firms and for the inhabitants. The presence of common strategies for an inter-municipal areas about the residential areas is, as for the productive and commercial ones, a useful solution able to guarantee an homogenous development inside the territory. The work about residential areas is built on the definition of different strategies about the diverse typologies that could be recognized inside this wide area. A central element is represented by the historical centres inside which are concentrated actions oriented to requalification and recovery of the existing situations in order to maintain the urban landscape, next to this there are a punctual recognition of the previsions inside the new building areas in order to promote an homogenous and quiet urbanization and finally a peculiar attention to the urban borders that should be preserved in the contemporary situations. These punctual actions, that represent the fulcrum of this part of the structural plan, try to answer to the reduction of urban sprawl and soil consumption that are two main important question of the contemporary urban planning, but also they also two general aims of this structural plan able to give a perspective to the entire process.

*The practical development of structural plan*

In order to conclude the analysis of the inter-municipal structural plan it is important to present the implementation modalities of the content presented inside it, in this way it is simple to understand what is the process that follows the decision making process. All of this part is transferred to the municipalities according to the content of the regional law about urban planning. The single municipalities approved an operative plan that gives a practical dimension to the decisions taken, nevertheless the different plans are made by the same common office that produces the structural plan: this modalities allow to have a stability and homogeneity of the decisions taken, that are not altered or modified, there is a certain continuity that does not limited the emerging of the different peculiarities. Near to the already quoted urban tools there is the urban and construction regulations, that is built in a sharing way among the different municipalities, even if each of them could implemented a part. It is made in a contemporary way in comparison with the structural plan in order to give a cogent continuity to the taken decisions, it is mainly composed by rules that are simple, flexible, comprehensible, essential and not interpretable: this is a set of features that work in the direction of promoting an immediate use of the rules with the possible complete absence of doubts.

#### 8.4 | Conclusion

A starting point of a summarizing about this cooperative experience could not start without underlining that the positive results obtained are derived from an historical sedimentation of cooperative modalities. The presence of a long history of cooperation has inevitably a crucial role in determining the destiny of this territory: it allows to create a set of previous experiences that is able to produce effects related not only to the history, but also to the skills and the mechanisms that are required for cooperation and through which a long process could be learnt and modified. The presence of an inter-municipal cooperation is - for this territory - a real political consistency that is recognized and supported by the other regional institutions. This is not enough, in fact it is important to underline that the importance of cooperation is inside the political thinking of the inhabitants that individuates a public actor and interlocutor also in the Nuovo Circondario Imolese. Among the case studies presented in this thesis, it represents the most advance example of a practical and political interpretation of the coalescence phenomenon: the municipalities recognize the existence of strong relations among them, mainly certified by the daily life of their inhabitants that "rotate" around each of the municipalities of this area, and consequently the public bodies try to give an administrative/political answer. It appears as a real simple passage, a logic relation of action and re-action, nevertheless it has a plenty sequence of discussion that allows to obtain the contemporary results. The municipalities demonstrate a real ability of working together in a way that is both synergic and complementary, that could coexist due to the possibility of being implemented in different fields, guided by strong and shared aims. This represents an important element that should take into account for other kind of cooperations: the coexistence of synergic and

complementary aims or ways of working represent an adding value for the entire operation. The decision of cooperating should not be seen as limited to the simple value that it is expressed and, in this case, this approach is passed in favour of a great attention dedicated to other aspects that give a complete sense to this approach of decisions making and management of a territory. The precise definition of rules that supervise the cooperation, the attention to the integration of policies and the attempt of avoiding a representative lack are only few practical example of tools that find a complete implementation inside the Nuovo Circondario Imolese. Inside this positive context it is inserted the shared structure plan that is the main object of this case study: it represents the best expression of the results obtained by this inter-municipal cooperation. This shared plan epitomizes the ability of the municipalities of building a shared decision making process so solid and important that is able to built the fundamental urban planning tool for a territory. The municipalities intercept the necessity of defining a unique strategy for the development of this territory, able to guarantee efficacious results for each municipality and for the whole area: the common structure plan represent the basis on which this kind of reasoning could be set up and developed. This kind of decisions have not only reflections on the peculiar elements near to urban planning, but they could obtain positive results also taking into account the economic and managerial aspects: this element should work on the direction of reinforcing the appreciation and the centrality that cooperation could give for the public body ever in search of possible savings. It represents also an advantages for the inhabitants because this structure plan goes towards a better integration of the territory of their daily life and probably this could be recognized as the most important results obtained. This plan could also represent the correct

reaction to the interpretation of a coalescent territory: in the Nuovo Circondario Imolese there is not only the analysis of a complex territorial condition, but there is also the ability of giving a possible solution to this situation, mainly through a shared vision and a set of strategies and actions among the cities of this area.





# Chapter 9

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## Conclusions



The content proposed inside this thesis allows to demonstrate that cooperation could really represent the main set of tools usable for promoting a positive and successful government of the territory. The progressive development of the thesis is able to propose a set of reasons that could support the previous assertion. The whole first part proposes a solid theoretical background able to demonstrate its truthfulness through the explanation of what could be considered useful reasons for supporting cooperation, starting from the political and juridical fields, passing through the economical and managerial ones and concluding in the territorial ones. The set of presented case studies is able to reinforce this perception of cooperation, in particular they are able to demonstrate how cooperation is a successful decision making tool about the urban planning. Among the wide range of reasons that emerge from the thesis, there are some of them that stand out for their fundamental role and centrality.

A prodromic aspect to the whole reasoning is the fundamental aspects of fitting the public bodies to the territorial features: this passage is linked to the ability of understanding which is the contemporary conditions of the territorial contexts, generally it could be based on the recognition of the territorial coalescence phenomena and the comprehension of which are the possible stage on which apply the plans and policies. After this starting point, the attention could be moved to the possibility of reducing and simplifying the decisional mechanism represent a fundamental aspect that its searching by the municipalities: generally there is a bureaucratic complexity that generates some traps that does not clarify the management of the public affairs, through cooperation the municipalities try to make a simplification of the processes, mainly for the issues that could be managed among different public actors. There is not only a simplification of the process,

but also the presence of political coordination allows to obtain a better integration of the decisional contents; considering urban planning, this passage should be seen as the starting point for making a common strategy for the territory, but also as a passage able to allow a better integration for the services or rules. Next to the political coordination, there are the economical benefits and advantages that the municipalities could obtained through the cooperation among them: particularly the attention is focused on the reduction of transaction costs and the fundamental increasing of economy of scale and networks that allow to create a solid integration among the municipalities.

The three case studies allow to have a better understanding of how it is managed the urban and territorial planning through a cooperative approach and it also demonstrated the potentialities of cooperation in a wide sense. The case studies represent a practical expression of tools, rules and strategies of urban and territorial planning, for each of them the analysis lets to bring out the role of cooperation as a specific approach.

About the tools, here represented by the case of cadastral function in Brianza Occidentale, the cooperative behaviour show by the municipalities emerges for their attention focused on the practical dimensions: the needs of obtaining quantifiable results obliged to work hardly on the managerial and economical aspects and not to the construction of fitting political authorities or to the critical interpretation of the territory. Here cooperation emerges for the possibility of obtaining better economical results as the reduction of transaction costs and the consequent increasing of economies of scale.

About the rules, that is here described by the building regulations of Alta Valdera, the cooperative approach emerges both in the construction of a fitting political subject and in the reading of

the territorial features. The political actors of this area are able to interpret in an efficacious way the progressive evolution of their territory, they also build a political coordination that could be flexible and resilient to the continuous mutation of the territory. The passage from a consortium to an union of municipalities, and the contemporary maintenance of a specific attention to the Alta Valdera, demonstrate an high adaptability to the legislative and territorial requests, but also an high comprehension of cooperation as a fundamental approach for managing the contemporary territory. The deep understanding of their context brings to the shared construction of the building regulations that express the will of create a common set of rules in order to be more clear, more coherent and more focus on a real preservation of the landscape that is over the boundaries and pervades the all territory.

About the strategies, here described through the structural plan of Nuovo Circondario Imolese, it demonstrates the fan of opportunities that cooperation could give to municipalities and it also represents a complex example of how could be manage a territory dominated by a strong integration and a coalescent phenomena through the coordination of the different municipalities. The brief description of the political framework allows to understand that there is a strong will of shared decisions among these municipalities and this is rooted in the history of this territory: there is only a progressive implementation of the structure through a process of adaptation to the complexity. The shared structural plan is the best example of the results obtainable through cooperation: it represents an in-depth reading of the territorial situation, that is not limited to a sum of the local interpretations but it is based on a critical lecture of the wide area, but mainly by a common set of strategies and action oriented to improve the integrated situation of this area and give a real common vision.

*Three issues for a deepening research.*

This thesis is not able to describe the whole complex and wide world of cooperation among the municipalities, there are some aspects that here are only touched lightly, other issues need more space for an in-depth analysis and while still others are not taken into account. All of these issues should be considered as an unexplored spaces that could be a starting point for another set of reflections. The focus of the thesis should not allow to give attention to the political procedures, that should be followed for the construction of an inter-municipal cooperation. The actor's framework and the progressive development of a decision making process is not explained and described, the desired focus is more content-oriented than process-oriented: the cooperation is presented as a "pack" with weak reflections on the decision making process dynamics, the attention is directed only to the reasons that could support cooperation, to the usable tools and to the obtainable effects. A deep reading of the literature about the political relations among actors and the decisional making process could be useful because it could present more effective suggestions about the process for the construction of a cooperative system. The importance of political relations should not be seen only in relation with the starting phase of an inter-municipal cooperations, but it plays an important role also for the progressive steps of the development of this cooperative approach. Near to the need of more attention to the political procedures and the decisional making process, it is fundamental to focus the attention on the technical and managerial modalities that could supervise the cooperative systems. As it is already said, this thesis is built mainly around the content and the reasons that could support cooperation, there is not a deep consideration for the any kind modalities. Nevertheless they are crucial, in particular if it is taken into account the technical and managerial ones: an

explanation of which kinds of tools or authorities build in order to manage the different shared functions or services is fundamental in relations with the aims to achieve. A last issue that should need a deepening is a process of quantification of the economical benefits that could derive from the cooperation. This thesis underline only their existence and propose a qualitative analysis of the aims and the effects achievable through the introduction of cooperative and shared mechanism inside a territory, there is not any kind of reflections about the quantitative dimensions of the benefits. The reduction of transaction costs, the implementation of economies of scale and networks are only considered as reasons able to support and justify the need of creating a cooperative system inside a territory and not for their quantitative features.

### *One open issue*

It is possible to recognize one main open issue inside this thesis, that plays an important role representing a transom of the whole work: the role of territorial coalescence and integration, here, is predominant, it is considered correctly as one of the better interpretation of the contemporary condition of territory and also as one of main supporting issues for the promotion of intermunicipal cooperation. This approach has an experimental approach: it has the potentiality of becoming the dominant and effective lecture of the contemporary condition of our territory and the prodromic clue of the need of cooperation among municipalities, nevertheless it should be reinforced from a theoretical and practical point of view. There is need of finding a "checklist" of features that could be used for understanding rapidly if you are in the presence of a coalescent and integrated territory: it has not to be interpret as a rigid codifications, but as a flexible and modifiable set of features that could be use for the interpretation of the contemporary

territorial conditions. Near to this it is important to understand better and possibly strengthen the relations between the coalescence phenomena and the inter-municipal cooperation: through this thesis this relations is given as natural, nevertheless it is important to demonstrate better which kinds of real theoretical and practical relations should be create. As it is emerged, this represents an issue that need an in-depth analysis, for which this thesis could represent an interesting and useful starting point that demonstrates how cooperation is an effective response able to govern better the territory.







## **Ringraziamenti**

Questa tesi è frutto di un lungo percorso, costellato di tante riflessioni, discussioni e ragionamenti, ma soprattutto dominato da una grande consapevolezza, diventata certezza sia per la tesi che per la vita: da soli non si va da nessuna parte. E fortunatamente nel mio cammino non sono mai stato solo. Quindi, a tutti coloro che mi hanno accompagnato per lunghi o brevi tratti, in silenzio o prodighi di tanti consigli, aiuti e suggerimenti, va il mio più sentito ringraziamento.

In particolare, credo sia giusto ringraziare: il professor Gabriele Pasqui che mi ha seguito nella scrittura di questa tesi con grande attenzione e cura; i tanti amici urbanisti, e non solo, che hanno riempito di straordinaria leggerezza questi anni passati al Politecnico; mia madre e mio padre che sono stati (e saranno sempre) il porto sicuro in ogni momento ed infine Elena perché, senza di lei e il destino insieme, questo cammino sarebbe stato molto più duro.



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