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Marcos Almeida Cerredá

Essays and Articles

Municipal Fragmentation and Contrast to Depopulation: the Italian Perspective (p. 297)

Marzia De Donno, Claudia Tubertini

Starting from a general reflection on the impact that the territorial reforms followed in Italy since the 1990s - mainly through the mergers of municipalities and inter-municipal cooperation - have produced on the fragmentation of Italian municipalities, the article focuses on an analysis of the recent National Strategy for Internal Areas, with which, for the first time, the problem of depopulation and fragility of the country's peripheral territories is directly addressed.

Rethinking Institutions on the Margins. The Limits of Territorial Governance, between "Special Status" of Cities and Internal Areas (p. 323)

Enrico Carloni

The essay reflects from an institutional point of view on the problem of local government in Italy, focusing on "non-metropolitan" areas. The reforms of the Italian local government system have shown a lack of attention to the issue of the less densely populated territories, but the attention paid to it is on the rise and it is going at the top of the public agenda. This problem cannot be solved only by the means of inter-municipal cooperation but it requires a new investment on territorial policies and appropriate institutional actors. Within this context, in particular, the work dwells on the following issues: on the limit of the approach centred mainly on metropolitan areas and on "marginal" interventions related to "internal areas"; on the effectiveness and limits of policies of municipal restructuring and inter-municipal cooperation; on the new role that could

be recognized to the provinces to promote the development of asymmetric and modular governance arrangements in depopulated areas.

Urban Planning and Depopulation in Italy (p. 347)

Giovanni Maria Caruso, Guido Befani

With the evolution of the legal importance of depopulation, the tools to combat it have also undergone profound revisions and, today, tend to develop along two basic lines: the operational financing of social cohesion interventions and the progressive tendency to favor aggregative processes in management of functions and services. The limits of these approaches result, firstly, from the lack of coordination between the levels of government closest to the population and, secondly, from the risk of dispersion of the already limited economic resources allocated to deal with them. What remains, however, unchanged is the interconnection with urban planning which constitutes the necessary terminal of the various measures adopted.

Multifunctional Agriculture for the Regeneration of Rural Areas at Risk of Demographic, Economic and Socio-Cultural Desertification (p. 365)

Alice de Nuccio, Massimo Monteduro

The marginal rural areas, composed by small settlements and agglomerations that historically founded their economy on traditional agriculture, have been dramatically exposed for decades to desertification processes, not only from a demographic and economic perspective but also from a social and cultural one. For this reason, the immense centuries-old, tangible and intangible heritage, generated by rural civilization, is likely to disappear. The work retraces the causal factors of these fragile areas' depopulation; highlights the importance of the resources remaining available in the basins of the rural communities where small-scale farming practices survive; focuses a current model of agriculture, characterized by multifunctionality, capable of dynamizing the main local forces; provides a concise overview of the national and regional legislation on multifunctionality; ultimately, suggests that the effective promotion of a multifunctional agriculture at the legal level could restore vitality and centrality to the marginal rural areas, regenerating its socio-ecological fabric.

The Role of the Province in Spain in Guaranteeing Access to Services and Infrastructure in Depopulated Rural Areas (p. 395)

Diana Santiago Iglesias

Isolation and difficulties in accessibility, together with the lack of services, have been shown to have a directly proportional effect to the dropout rate in rural areas in Spain. In this context, the purpose of this work is to analyze the role of the province in guaranteeing access to services and infrastructure for the inhabitants of depopulated rural areas and the usefulness, for this purpose, of the provincial plans for services and works.

Spatial and Urban Planning Measures to Confront Depopulation in Spain (p. 419)

Luis Míguez Macho

This paper discusses how spatial and urban planning instruments can contribute to confronting the problem of rural depopulation in Spain. To this end, it argues that the objective of territorial demographic balance should be fully integrated into spatial planning policy and that urban planning should also be oriented in the same direction by adapting its legal regime to the particularities of the rural areas.

Municipal Services for the Elderly and the Urban-Rural Divide (p. 441)

Silvia Díez Sastre

Public authorities face many challenges related to aging population and the enduring urban-rural divide. Fulfilling the needs of the elderly, who are more prone to dependency situations, requires the provision of specific services. In practice, this task is largely attributed to local governments, which must overcome technical and financial difficulties arising from the large share of senior citizens living in rural areas. This paper analyses aging population data in Spain from an empirical perspective and takes into account the cleavage between rural and urban areas regarding aging population and elderly services provision. Afterwards, it outlines the legal provisions regarding the different management forms of municipal services for the elderly.

Social Services and the Elderly in the most Unpopulated Areas (p. 461)

Andrea Garrido Juncal

This work analyzes the provision of social services, with special consideration to those services offered to elderly citizens and in the most unpopulated areas. Due to the National Strategy to Fight the Demographic Challenge or the dramatic events occurred during the pandemic time, it is necessary to rethink the application of certain regulations in our legal system. Hereafter is also a series of recommendations which aimed to meet the needs of the elderly, an outstanding issue and a must in the post-coronavirus era.

Housing Policies. Notes from the Perspective of Rural Depopulation (p. 475)

María Antonia Arias Martínez

This study, after briefly highlighting the relevance of the implementation of housing policies directed towards the reversal of rural depopulation, addresses the examination of the legal measures adopted specifically by the central government and the regional autonomous communities in the areas of promotion and urbanism, with the purpose of retaining the decreased population in rural environments, of improving their life conditions and, above all, of attracting new young inhabitants. From this perspective, this study deals with the regulation of official aids for the acquisition of homes in these areas, the rehabilitation, the regeneration and the renewal of housing conditions in rural areas in an attempt to recover and restore abandoned or degraded residential spots.

Depopulation, State Aid and Direct Taxes on Business Activity (p. 495)

Ignacio Calatayud Prats

Depopulation creates inequality of opportunity among citizens and an increase in costs and accessibility to basic services. In order to alleviate depopulation, some sectors propose differentiated and more favourable taxation for economic activities in depopulated areas. It should be noted, however, that differentiated and more favourable taxation for economic activities in depopulated areas may violate freedom of enterpri-

se and free competition. The possibility for the Spanish legislator (State and regions) to introduce a differentiated regime, lower taxation of economic activities in depopulated areas, depends and is closely linked to EU State aid rules.

The depopulation of the Interior of Portugal and the Use of Public Procurement as a Strategy to Fight the Asymmetries between Interior and Coastline (p. 517)

Pedro Costa Gonçalves, Mariana Tralhão

Depopulation is one of the challenges that Portugal is being confronted with, having most of its territory affected with low population density. In this paper, we present some measures, regarding to investment, employment, and taxation, that have been adopted to reverse this phenomenon. Public procurement can be strategically used as a complementary method to achieve the same purpose, promoting, in the interior of the country, attractive social conditions for workers and companies.

Smart Rural Territories and Depopulation (p. 537)

Jean-Bernard Auby

The objective of this work is to understand what the evolution towards smart territories – a concept derived from that of smart cities – can provide in the framework of eventually designed strategies to combat depopulation. Although sometimes there is the tendency to exaggerate the benefits, it is now well known that digital progress can contribute to make public action more effective or even to deal with problems that the public authorities have not been able to solve by traditional means. As a result, this raises the question if digital tools can contribute to reduce difficulties of some rural territories, in particular those which are undergoing depopulation. We have certainly the immediate impression that smart projects are specifically aimed at cities. Probably it is true in general but this does not imply that rural territories in difficulty cannot benefit from the “smart”. How? We will try to understand it by making some considerations on the difficulties encountered by rural territories which are undergoing depopulation (1), briefly defining what smart means (2), before to think if rural territories can become smart (3), what

the concept of “smart” can provide in terms of local dynamism (4) and equalisation and interrelations with the most favoured territories (5).