



IMAGINE

Developing a metropolitan-regional
imaginary in
Milano-Bologna urban region

Targeted Analysis

Inception Report

Inception Report

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Abbreviations

AIM	Associazione Interessi Metropolitan
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CENSIS	Centro Studi Investimenti Sociali
CRPE	Comitato Regionale per la Programmazione Economica
DASTU	Department of Architecture and Urban Studies, Politecnico di Milano
DEGURBA	Eurostat Degree of Urbanisation
DG REGIO	Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy
EC	European Commission
EC	European Commission
ESPON	ESPON European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
EU 15	European Union countries that were member states prior to 2004 (incl. UK)
EU 13	European Union countries that joined after 2004
Eurostat	European Statistic Office
FUA	Functional Urban Area
G&L	Globus & Locus
HSP	High speed rail
ISTAT	Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (Italian National Institute of Statistics)
JRC/EC	Joint Research Centre of the European Commission
LAU	Local administrative units
LMA	Labour Market Areas
KIBS	Knowledge intensive business services
IMAGINE	Developing a metropolitan-regional imaginary in Milano-Bologna urban region
ISTAT	Italian National Statistic institute
ISUD	Integrated Sustainable development
ITI	Integrated territorial initiative
METREX	Network of European metropolitan regions and areas
MIT	Italian National Minister for Infrastructures
MR	Metropolitan Regions
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIC	Piano intercomunale Bolognese
PIM	Piano intercomunale Milanese
POLIMI	Politecnico di Milano
PON METRO	National Operational Program Metro
POPSU	Observatory platform for urban projects and strategies
	Research and Development
PTR	Piano, Territoriale Regionale
SNAI	Strategia Nazionale Aree Interne
VP	Visual Platform
WP	Working Package

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Disclaimer:

This document is an inception report.

The information contained herein is subject to change and does not commit the ESPON EGTC and the countries participating in the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme.

The final version of the report will be published as soon as approved.

1 Conceptual framework

1.1 The policy problem

Cities and metropolitan areas are experiencing relevant processes of economic restructuring, generated by both an uneven renewal of the nexus between the city and economic development and by a more general process of redefinition of the urban itself, which today by large exceeds the traditional definitions of the city inherited by the XX century.

The **scale and nature of such restructuring processes** are so consistent and new, that cities and metropolitan areas are **hardly able to deal with both the premises and consequences of such a change**. Despite the innumerable efforts produced during the last decades trying to yield new governance frameworks dealing with the wider and transcalar nature of such transformations, **the capacity to produce new spatial imaginaries able to deal with such new challenges and expectations remain quite limited, if not an exception**.

Because of this, the growing gap between **consolidated forms of governance and the nature, rhythm and dimension of socio-spatial economic change**, often generates a **lack of both strategic visions and governance framework for policy makers**, who are, therefore, unable to react to and deal with the growing economic differentiation between places and the emergence of, along with new competitiveness patterns, new forms of marginalization and peripheralization. As a result, **territorial cohesion can be seriously at threat** and the stakeholders promoting the IMAGINE project have **declared their concerns about the need to govern the effects of these trends and the need to build on a new regional narrative as the basis for new vision, strategies, policies**.

In particular, they are interested:

- in understanding what are the **main drivers** and actors that are likely to shape spatial development and integration of the Milano-Bologna region in the near future. But also what are the **potential blocking factors** for developing an interrelated spatial imaginary in policy design and strategies (in terms of bureaucratic barriers, governance, financial and administrative capacities)?
- Exploring what have been the impacts in terms of territorial integration of the development of Milano high-speed rail. Broadly, to what extent mobility and connectivity could constitute a key factor in a successful integration of the functional area and in particular how this can reconfigure the spatial equilibrium between metropolitan cities and their in-between provincial territories.
- Discussing whether it is possible to tackle territorial inequalities when agglomeration effects are consolidating cumulative economic growth reinforcing the central-periphery patterns? Which territorial sustainable and inclusive development scenarios within the Milano-Bologna functional area develop, taking into account the shift in the economic activity and the changing role of territorial authorities?
- Experiment policy tools and governance approaches that can be useful and sensible to plan and manage spatial development at Milano-Bologna functional scale? In particular: how relevant would be the ITI tool as a new form of coordination in that territorial framework? To what extent the different stakeholders involved in this process are willing (desire) and are able (capacity) to contribute to a potential ITI (or other more relevant tool identified) preparation and implementation?

1.2 Background hypotheses

1.2.1 Towards the regional dimension of the urban

Any investigation of the contemporary urban suffers dramatically when trying to explore the cities based on traditional static-administrative units, often inherited from the XX century organization of the state territoriality. Despite the innumerable efforts to produce a methodology able to grasp the nature of contemporary urban dimension (see among others the recent studies conducted by OECD, Eurostat and JRC¹), it remains difficult to dismiss the traditional definition of the city and **adopt a wider regional perspective**, able to intercept the **multiplicity of intertwined networked processes**, which produce what we once could define *the city*.

In this respect, several authors propose that today's era might be rather **defined as one of regional urbanization**, one in which **urban regions are substituting cities on the international economic scene and in their roles in the world economy** (Soja, 2001; 2011), sometimes supported by explicit policies (see the role of EU in promoting Regions and Macroregions, McCann, 2017). While **the traditional** distinction between the urban and the non-urban is useless to study the city (Brenner, 2015), new hierarchies are generated calling in to play apparently distant territories, facing unprecedented and unexpected roles in the spatial reorganisation of capitalism. This concurs with the transcalar production of the urban, as well as with the emergence of new power relations between places (Brenner, 2015).

These processes are not neutral: they produce uneven and unprecedented geographies of differentiation that contribute **to new space of conflicts and unbalances**, but also to *new territorial protagonism and political dynamics*. On the one hand, some apparently marginal territories become strategic nodes-platforms ("operational landscapes", Brenner, 2015) supporting the functioning of traditional urban places. On the other we see the emergence of in-between regions (Nussli and Schmid, 2016; Sieverts, 2013) or societies (Bonomi, De Rita, 2014): once referred to as "peripheral" or "suburban": many of **"those" places are home to some important socio-economic-spatial innovations**. In the absence of specific recognition, both by the research world and the policy-making ones (Keil, 2017), considerable political consequences can be envisaged, or are already visible (see in particular the discussion on the "revenge of places that do not matter", Rodriguez-Pose, 2018).

Recently, literature has turned to focus on the role that cities have been assuming, as a reaction to the progressive hollowing out of the state; this is based on a valuable consideration of the municipalist model in relation to **leadership, proximity, legitimation and efficacy-autonomy of action**. **Nevertheless, it is evident that today, more than ever, cities cannot be**

¹ See in particular "The EU-OECD definition of a functional urban area" Lewis Dijkstra, Hugo Poelman and Paolo Veneri https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/urban-rural-and-regional-development/the-eu-oecd-definition-of-a-functional-urban-area_d58cb34d-en#page4

successful if they do not take part in those complicated networks and unexpected assemblages, which go across scales and imply multiple sets of actors and forms of agency (Fedeli, V., et al. 2020).

1.2.2 Corridors as the results of the changing economic base of contemporary cities

According to a large stream of literature, the economic base is still by **large within cities; nevertheless, research shows how the production of wealth has become more and more diffused across uneven territories and distributed in long value-chains**. On the one hand, there is the city's territory, on the other, the flows (of activities made in the world, and hence perennially on the move, of non-resident migrant population) that seem to be growing in all directions within and between territories. **In this perspective, "Corridors" are at the centre of new attention in so far, they can be seen as the result of the changing economic base of contemporary cities in the direction of the "economy of speed"** (Perulli, Garavaglia 2017; Garavaglia 2017). In fact, they answer to the growing need to speed up any aspect of the economic life, from production to distribution, as the new information technologies have made the time compression possible in an "instant" exchange of information. **Cities are opening to new geographies both of "industrialization of knowledge" and of "territorial development"**: the crossover between these two dimensions, which used to occur in the urban environment, **today extends, on the one hand, over new and broadened city-regional scales, on the other, along corridors**.

The corridors of Northern Italy, like the Milano-Bologna one, are a clear example: Milano is a platform for people and goods on the move across regions and firms; Bologna is a regional capital with growing importance for the whole regional economy. Their dynamic relations have been fostered by the recent introduction of high-speed trains. However, Milano and Bologna involve a larger agglomeration of "hubs" that attract and distribute resources and people in a dense economic and social bundle of structures and infrastructures (from airports to universities and fairs, from industrial districts to logistics centres and platforms)².

1.2.3 Rethinking marginality/centrality

What happens to people and places under such conditions? Who loses and who wins, along such processes of restructuring of capitalism? And how are institutional actors trying to read and deal with such consequences? The simple act of mapping **peripherality and**

² The Via Emilia Corridor: Density of advanced tertiary activities in the cities along the Corridor (source: A. Balducci, V. Fedeli, F. Curci, eds., Post-Metropolitan Territories, Routledge 2017)

marginality, centrality and attractiveness, become harder than in the past, under the conditions above described.

As a result of this, institutions, looking for simple criteria in order to address complex societal challenges, seem to be striving to catch the very nature of processes and to adopt simplified strategies to distribute resources and tools in order to deal with the desired and undesired effects of economic restructuring processes. Many of current developmental policies in fact tend to **construct a narration/representation of problems in which the identification/stigmatizing of marginality is still largely anchored to XX century urban and spatial imagery**, indicating something on an edge with respect to a centre in geographic, social, economic and symbolic space, the identification of which triggers the social construction of stigma. **On the contrary, marginality is a process that unfolds in space in new and different ways** (at the same time and within the same geographic space, different forms of “contingent, systemic, collateral and leveraged marginality” can exist, see Mehretu et al, 2000). In this respect, couples like peripheral/central, exclusion/inclusion, global/local, city/country or proximity/distance are to be re-conceptualized not as dichotomies, rather than **cohabiting conditions producing a fractal geography rather than simple geographies of fractures and cleavages** (Behar, 2015), that is to say the coexistence of marginality and centrality as systemic condition (Fedeli, Balducci, 2019).

1.2.4 New regional imaginaries as social constructions

Despite a significant scientific debate about new spatial imaginaries, the traditional core-periphery dialectic remains the most influential at the policy maker level.

Few are, if any, the cases in which metropolitan or regional imaginaries have emerged from beyond a narrow cadre of experts operating in formal institutional spaces. indeed, there is a strong case for **supporting processes of socio-political construction of new regional imaginaries** (Fedeli, Harrison, Feiertag, 2019).

This also implies the capacity to **go beyond the consolidated tools of a field of expertise – spatial planning – which is traditionally based on a pre-defined understanding of territoriality.** In this respect, we may argue that being the production of spatial imaginaries mainly grounded on such kind of context, traditional understanding of spatial planning and the legal and normative framework under which spatial planning works could hinder, rather than enhance, a post-metropolitan vision.

1.2.5 ITI as an opportunity to develop new strategic spatial visions

The European community’s first interest in conceptualizing the emergence of a metropolitan-regional dimension dates back already since the late 1960s (Grazi, 2016). Nevertheless, EU has not definitely found a way to invest on supporting the consolidation of metropolitan

governance. More recently, the Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) have opened highly experimental a space in this respect. **ITI, as part of the current Cohesion policy and of the future one, allows, in fact, the construction of a geography of action able to go beyond administrative boundaries**, being based on policy problems. As suggested by the Stakeholders promoting this project, ITI, could result in a promising opportunity for the Milano-Bologna urban region to generate a new strategic governance framework. **“Integrated territorial initiatives” have offered in other contexts Europewide**, a new policy framework designed to reduce the gap between consolidated administrative geographies and the need of new geographies of action and forms of agency.

1.3 Outline of the research project

Moving from these hypotheses, the IMAGINE research project will build on four main activities.

The first task (WP2 and WP3), **analytically oriented**, has to do with **identifying and visualizing the consequences of a lack of integrated economic development policies** in the wider urban **Milano-Bologna region**, with a specific focus on the high speed railway connection linking this large urban area to the national context. **The objective is to understand and give a clear representation of how changes in socio-economic patterns are occurring, and threatening territorial cohesion in the urban region.** In particular the creative and innovative economy and the transport and logistics industry on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the integration process of the functional area based on the new mobility supply supported by high speed trains will be observed, in order to fill the existing knowledge gap related to socio-economic and spatial impacts.

The Milano-Bologna region will be investigated as the **outcome of regional urbanisation processes**, being one of the most economically and socially dynamic urban regions in Italy, supported by a strategic infrastructural corridor. This will be done, both **exploring the urban region at large and investigating more in depth, the role of the HSR corridor**, especially in relation to the dynamics of logistics and creative economies. In particular, the project will try to highlight how processes of differentiation are contributing to the creation of new marginalities and centralities, producing **potential threats to territorial cohesion. Elaborating a regional Portrait and designing a Visual Platform for giving geo-spatialised representations to the ongoing processes are crucial activities in this respect (WP1 and WP2).**

Despite the highly interrelated nature of these processes, these dynamics are happening in the absence of both a strategic vision and governance framework, exposing it to high risks of social inequalities and imbalances, but also to environmental threats and developmental risks. The second, **more action oriented task (WP1 and WP2)**, has to do with developing and testing **new territorial narratives and governance frameworks, new visions and imaginaries** for the urban region Milano-Bologna. These are expected to generate new territorial alliances

between places, being based upon new integrated approaches able to include, in a wider territorial strategy, metropolitan cities, together with in-between provincial authorities, exploring the potentialities of informal coordination and moving to more formalized, strategic cooperation³.

The third task (**WP 4 and WP5**), **more policy design oriented**, has to do with the **design of policy recommendations** specifically related to the **challenges generated by both the new creative and innovative economy and the new mobility system** in terms of enhancing, or not, the functional area's integration process. This activity can be crucial to feed the vision with actions, able to counterbalance and reorient the uneven patterns of economic development and generate a new approach to territorial cohesion.

The fourth (**WP5**), **focusing on policy tools**, aims at **supporting local, regional, national authorities to understand the potentials offered by an ITI tool**, through promoting exchanges with policy makers or umbrella organizations implementing ITIs in other EU contexts. This should also result in an effort of fostering strategic thinking at national level about their implementation in Italy of new forms of coordination in large urban regions, as already happened in other Member States (i.e. France and Poland).

This research project aims **at critically and innovatively supporting the stakeholders in helping the Milano-Bologna urban region to play a pivotal role at national level** in this direction, it will take critical inspirations from the the experiences of the French and Polish metropolitan areas, which are supporting this research project as stakeholders, and that have been working in a similar perspective within the current Cohesion Policy cycle. The research team **will provide support in structuring a collaborative dialogue with such experiences and helping a process of “policy mobility”, able to feed new policy design and new governance frameworks experimentations** (See Annex 1)

³ See in particular, the results of the ESPON ACTAREA targeted analysis.

2 Mapping existing spatial imaginaries

2.1 A persistent gap between expert debates and institutional solutions

Spatial imaginaries are a special kind of social construction: as such, they fulfil both a **representational and performative/normative role (Davoudi, 2018)**. **On the one hand they contribute** to sense-making and identity building; on the other **they provide collective representations** of how the world should be, specifically from the point of view of the relationship between places and people. In that respect, they are a special kind of social constructions, in which a consistent role has always been played by experts, mainly spatial planners, but also designers, architects, economists and researchers and scholars, which have during times tried to suggest and contribute to the construction of socio-spatial imaginaries. Of course, more than that, social constructions need society, which makes the construction of such things even more complex an issue. This second chapter builds upon a preliminary reconstruction of the state of the art, trying to provide on the one hand a first synthetic representation, mainly based on a critical review of existing policy documents and literature review (§.2.1 and Annex 6). On the other, it presents the results of a first round of interviews to Imagine Stakeholders' representatives (§.2.2 and Annex 5- which also provides the preliminary database of stakeholders). The objective is to move from this preliminary work, with the validation of these main preliminary findings and interactive knowledge co-creation phase (WP 4), as described by Chapter 4.

2.1.1 Lagging behind: the fragility of a metropolitan/regional imaginary at national level

From a general point of view, **urban imaginaries have been central to the construction of a European identity**, within a shared understanding of the tight and mutual interrelationship between the city and the countryside, the urban and the rural (Braudel 1979, Le Gales, 2005). This explains how difficult it is and it has been to move from a city-related spatial imaginary, to one able to grasp the new **metropolitan/regional dimension** of the urban, especially in a country like Italy, in which cities have always been central in the construction of socio-spatial, as well as political and economic identities.

Actually, as De Matteis recalls us, the urban and the rural, the city and the “contado”, have **always been strictly considered as a continuum in the Italian context** (De Matteis, 2015). This historical and fruitful nexus, according to the same author, has been strongly attacked when, in the 60's and the 70's a very interesting debate about regionalism involving planners and urban scholars, as well as policy makers and politicians, succeeded in introducing the regional institutional level. If the early seventies were in fact a founding phase for a process of decentralisation based on a regionalist model, they also brought in a necessary but tricky simplification, which has been the object of reflective criticism in the following decades (see

among others the work done by Fondazione Agnelli in the nineties). The institution of the Region, in the early seventies, on the base of a geography assumed from existing statistical division of the national territory, rather than the outcome of a long process of experimentation based on the so called “Comprensori”, **has de facto reduced the potentials of an advanced debate** on regionalism and the regionalisation of the urban. This has also set **the basis for a controversial role for the metropolitan-cities-to-be**, their future existence being confined to the remaining little space between the new emerging regional authorities and the historical suspicion and diffidence versus metropolitan coordination on the part of large cities and small-medium cities and towns (De Matteis, 2015).

Despite that, even in Italy, during the last two decades, **a metropolitan perspective has slowly emerged in the institutional asset, trying to move beyond a city-centric approach and to deal with the emergence of new socio-spatial formations and urban questions** (Fedeli et al. 2020). Several have been the attempts during the second half of the twentieth century to develop a metropolitan perspective in the light of growing governance/planning problems. Actually, the idea of introducing a metropolitan form of **government dates back to the sixties**, when it developed slowly and in a contested way in some of the largest urban areas in Italy, in particular in the Milano context, where the Piano Intercomunale Milanoese produced a new spatial interpretation of the urban growth of the city of Milano, aiming at feeding a new planning process. Despite the interesting political effort and scientific contribution to the debate (see De Carlo et al., 1963, but also Quaroni, 1967), it failed to reach the results, mostly due to the excessive linearity expected by a new framework for action and the need of a planning tool to govern it (Balducci, 2004).

In the same years, the so called, **Progetto 80**, launched by the Ministry of Economic Development tried to link developmental strategies and a new reading of the process of urban change in Italy, mapping 30 metropolitan systems, formed by 9 metropolitan areas, 6 systems for re-equilibrium in intermediate area and 15 alternative zones to develop ‘far from’ metropolitan areas in order to act as a counterbalance (Fedeli, et al. 2020).

Despite these interesting premises, metropolitan cities were to be instituted only in **the early 90’s** and based on a quite traditional spatial interpretation of the emerging processes of urban change and idea of metropolitan government. The Law 142/1990 instituted first **a second level territorial body**, the Provinces, based on the Roman provinces and a Napoleonic geography, which were given the task of territorial coordination. More interestingly, the same law established the possibility to institute ‘metropolitan areas’, but introducing a complicated and controversial institutionalisation process, de facto delaying their institution until 2015. In fact, only in response to the need to reduce the effects of the 2007-2010 economic crisis by cutting public expenditure and the national deficit, the national government decided to invest more effectively on the institution of metropolitan cities. The outcome of this has been, so far, the still unfilled gap between the *de facto* city and the *de iure* city (Calafati, 2014).

Starting from 2015, thanks to an uneven (despite voluntary) convergence between the 2014 Law and the National Operational Programme dedicated to Metropolitan Cities concentrating the ISUD (Integrated Sustainable Urban Development) resources (PON METRO), metropolitan cities have not only been instituted but have become operative. In particular they were supposed to become a relevant vehicle to territorial cohesion, as suggested by one of the most strategic policy document issued at the beginning of the current cohesion policy implementation period by the then Minister of Territorial Development (MIT, 2012). For the first time after decades, in fact, the national government was to conceptualise the emergence of a metropolitan dimension in Italy and to focus on the related policy and governance challenges (MIT, 2012). The document provided an interpretation of the country as made of three different, but highly interrelated conditions, in need of specific developmental policies: metropolitan areas, inner areas and the southern regions. Actually moving from that innovative ideas, a national strategy for inner areas has been designed (SNAI- Strategia Nazionale Aree Interne), as well as an experimentation based on multilevel “city deals” in southern areas has been developed (called “Patti per il sud”, in particular addressing urban areas in the southern regions, developing strategic visions). On the contrary, the country has not really been able to develop so far a clear strategy for metropolitan areas (Urban@it, 2017)

Even more problematically, a national referendum due to cancel the Provinces and develop new regionally inspired governance and policy frameworks, failed to provide a more systematic and efficient approach to the problem. At the same time, in the last ten years, a challenging debate has involved also the regional level. On the one hand, scientific societies like the Società dei Geografi, have tried to put forward the idea that the current regional geography should be revised under the light of a more reflexive approach to the historical as well as developing geographies of the country. On the other, at political level there are contradictory perspectives on the necessity to go towards a more clear cut regional federalism, also differentiated, if necessary. Finally, the Covid-19 crisis has relaunched the critiques towards a differentiation of powers between the existing regions, causing serious threats to territorial cohesion and to the equal access to resources and rights.

The Italian situation, as in many other EU countries⁴, **is characterised by a traditional model, under which metropolitan areas are still seen and treated as defined objects, rather than the agglomerational/concentrated part of larger urban regions**). This can be read also through the nevertheless interesting contribution of reports produced by think tank and research institutions during the last decade. While international studies paradoxically propose to think the Milano-Rome conurbation as an overall urban region⁵, CENSIS, in its 47th report (CENSIS, 2013) still differentiated the Milano urban region (Milano, Bergamo Varese), within the typology

⁴ See in particular the results of the ESPON SPIMA project

⁵ http://www.creativeclass.com/_v3/whos_your_city/maps/#Mega-Regions_of_Europe

large urban regions, from the Bologna urban region (Bologna, Parma, Reggio, Modena)⁶ part of the medium size urban regions. Metropolitan boundaries still remain the reference also for institutional reports (see for example the very interesting reports edited by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, in 2015⁷), while the expert debate even at national level has definitely introduced the idea that the country is characterised by the emergence of large and complex urban regional formations, whose complexity cannot be grasped by the traditional metropolitan solutions (see among others, the concept of “città infinita”, by Bonomi and A Bruzzese in 2005, until the idea of post-metropolitan territories by Balducci, Fedel and Curci, in 2017, a, b, c, d).

Moreover, a recent research work produced by OECD, in 2019 ⁸ has highlighted in this perspective how metropolitan cities in Italy are far from displaying their potentials, both in terms of competences and powers, agency and resources due to a number of factors, among which their weak powers and the difficult relationship with the regions and the most important municipalities and the lack of resources, contributing to less than 1% to the public expenditures.

More recently, even the **National Statistic institute (ISTAT)**, working on the redefinition of Local Labour systems, highlighted the distance between the real city and its institutional framework; the Milano urban region is taken as an example of how the functional urban region goes well beyond the metropolitan city boundaries, including a large part of the Provincia di Pavia ⁹. The same report proposes to read the interrelations between the “città del centro nord”, a large urban region composed by major cities (Milano, Torino, Venezia, Bologna, but also Roma) and the “città diffusa” and the “città verde”, composed by a number of local labour system that link together the largest dense conurbations with an extended form of urbanity or a more a rural vocation, among which we can find both Pavia and Piacenza labour systems.

In the background, this preliminary exploration should also include a reference to the role that programs supported by EU cohesion policy or other regional policies have played: ITI are a few in Italy, and mainly “used to support development in Inner areas, to develop urban rural linkages; while Italy is, together with Slovenia, the only member states to use the ITI mechanisms for cross-border areas (the Gorizia – Nova Gorica territory)”¹⁰. In the past, Italy has experimented a very interesting season, through the so called “patti territoriali”, which have probably been one of the most interesting operative frameworks trying to reconstruct action-oriented geographies, beyond traditional boundaries. Within the Interreg program, finally, the

⁶ https://www.censis.it/sites/default/files/downloads/6_-_Territorio_e_reti_2015.pdf

⁷ <http://www.affariregionali.it/media/170177/dossier-citt%C3%A0-metropolitana-di-milano.pdf> for the Milano case and <http://www.affariregionali.it/media/170175/dossier-citt%C3%A0-metropolitana-di-bologna.pdf> for the Bologna case

⁸ OECD, 2019, Studi economici dell'OCSE, Italia, Aprile 2019

⁹ <https://www.istat.it/it/files//2015/10/La-nuova-geografia-dei-sistemi-locali.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/611251580281503298/romania-catching-up-regions-organizational-models-for-interjurisdictional-agreements>

urban region under scrutiny results mainly included in the Interreg Alpine Space and Adrion, which have provided some interesting elements for reflection, as well the Macro-region EusAlp and EusAir strategies, which intersect along the Milano Bologna urban region¹¹.

The final outcome of this complex jigsaw is the **coexistence of weak metropolitan cities**, whose role is still to clarify, though officially due to develop strategic planning and translocal visions, **the persistence of provincial institutions**, mostly emptied by the reform and only partially redefined at regional level, **the growing role of regional institutions**, within the framework of what is defined an incomplete federalism, still under question. As suggested by Piero Bassetti in a recent research project, Italy is probably experiencing a period under which there is much scope for a thorough revision of its territorial institutions, in particular moving ahead a new regionalism¹².

This need is particularly made evident by a large literature available on the topic produced since 2000s (see Annex 6) at least and a series of articles, also on newspapers, which are since then following the debate (see among the latest, in particular the newspaper articles by Dario Di Vico¹³).

2.1.2 Sectoral policies towards new spatial imaginaries: the infrastructural corridors

In the last decades, several sectoral policies have implicitly or explicitly fed new spatial imaginaries, in particular in relation to the spatial figure of “corridors”, mainly regarding infrastructural policies.

In this respect a few but strategic corridors pass through the Milano-Bologna urban region and during the last decades, the historical role of the via Emilia (SS9 National road), linking together since the Roman times, a polycentric urban system from Milano to Rome, has kept its national importance, but has been reclassified in relation to EU strategies. It has been identified in fact as part of the **core network at national level**, in front of the identification of a **series of strategic corridors at EU level**, within the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) policy, based on EU Regulation No 1315/2013 (that aims at addressing the development of a European network of railway lines, roads, inland waterways, maritime shipping routes, to strengthen social, economic and territorial cohesion in the EU). These corridors cross by the area under study: in particular the Baltic Adriatic corridor (which reaches Ravenna, from Venice to the Baltic Countries), the Mediterranean corridor (which links Portugal to Slovenia, passing

¹¹ <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/eu-macro-regional-strategies>

¹² <http://www.globusetlocus.org/Attivita/Progetto/Formazione/Macroregioni.kl>

¹³ https://www.corriere.it/cronache/17_settembre_17/alta-velocita-export-festival-89dd1130-9b23-11e7-80fc-22410b7aefc1.shtml

through the Turin-Milano-Venice axis), the Rhine Alpine corridor, passing through Milano and connecting Genoa with Antwerp and Rotterdam, with the Brennero axis)¹⁴.

Nevertheless, during the last 15 years, Italy has invested consistently on this corridor, promoting a High Speed Railway System that links Milano with Bologna in one hour, heading to Rome and Naples, with an intermediate station in Reggio Emilia, called Medio-Padana and destined to serve one of the wealthiest and most productive territories of Italy. The station, opened in 2014, is a clear example of how the infrastructural policy has been inspired by a powerful socio-economic and spatial imaginary, implicitly based on the research that during the '80es has identified the so called "Third Italy" (see among others Bagnasco, 1977), a Marshallian districtual model based on advanced clusters of small and medium enterprises, highly specialised, competitive and localised, whose presence is particularly relevant in the urban region under study.

A similar role has been played by the investment, public and private, in the **logistic sector**, developed along the last decades **along the corridor**. A study conducted in the late 2000s by the Chamber of Commerce of Milano (CCIA Milano, 2009¹⁵), showed already the emerging importance of a logistic region around Milano, based on platforms serving Milano urban areas along its borders and of a 'mediterranean logistic platform' linking Milano vs Rome, Inside this perspective, the project launched in 2004 by the Italian Ministry for infrastructures had already identified, within the so-called "strategic territorial platforms", at transnational, national and regional level, 12 "territori snodo", where pilot projects had to be developed able to link infrastructural accessibility to economic development. The elaboration of the project "Piacenza territorio snodo"¹⁶, in those years, paved the way to the new logistic role of the city and the province, situated at the intersection between two important infrastructural corridors. It is possible to place within this framework also the Italian "Piano Nazionale della Logistica 2011/2020" (National Plan for Logistics 2011/2020) promoted in 2010 by the Italian Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport that identified 7 different "territorial platforms" in Italy. The Pianura Padana (Po Valley) area is divided in 3 platforms: North-West (Valle D'Aosta, Piedmont, Lombardy, Liguria); North-East (Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Trentino Alto Adige), Central and Northern (Emilia Romagna and Tuscany). The hinge between the North-West and the Central and Northern Platforms can be easily identified in the infrastructure beam developed parallel to the ancient Via Emilia (today the SS9 National road).

From the people mobility point of view, **data clearly show that the patterns of mobility are highly interrelated over the urban region** (Pucci et al. 2017). The last decades have seen a

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/ten-t_en

¹⁵ <https://www.milomb.camcom.it/archivio-ricerche-2009-i-flussi-logistici>

¹⁶ <https://www.comune.piacenza.it/temi/territorio/psc/psc-documento-preliminare/allegato-1-territori-snodo>

major investment on the regional railway systems serving the two regions Emilia Romagna and Lombardia, under the new competence of the regional governments. If Pavia, in this respect is still largely dependent on Milano for its main regional mobility, Piacenza clearly shows the need to deal with an intermediate position between the Milano and Bologna, gravitating by large on the Milano attraction area, rather than on the Bologna one. The lack of a interregional vision is lamented since a long time in this respect, and in the last decades, the regionalisation of the competence has de facto augmented the existing contradictions, producing a sort of regional metro systems rather than a real interconnection along the corridor and between the urban region.

The **urban renewal project of the Via Emilia**, launched by the Region Emilia Romagna in 2009¹⁷, with the aim of regenerating the image of the national road supporting the polycentric urbanisation of the Regione Emilia-Romagna, investing on the construction of a new landscape and identity for the historical road, can be seen as one of the latest attempts to read it as complex and interrelated urban system, while during the late 90's this system has been fragmented by a series of infrastructural projects and bypasses, functional to avoiding the urban areas to be loaded by traffic, but quite irrespective of the identity of the historical road. Nevertheless, from a spatial imaginaries construction point of view, the via Emilia is one of the oldest elements in supporting the collective imaginary of urbanisation processes in Emilia Romagna.

An additional and crucial effort of working at macroregional scale, supported by a series of act and policies is related to the field of **air pollution**: the scientific evidences of the emergence of a large macroregion being affected by common environmental pollution factors, slowly emerged during the 90's, and finally succeeded in generating shared actions among the regions, included Lombardia and Emilia Romagna in order to tackle with the problem. In this respect, in the last decades, there is a growing awareness of the Pianura Padana as a socio-spatial-economical continuum generating problematic consequences of quality of health, due to the interactions between processes of urbanisation, organisation of the manufacturing activities, as well as the agricultural vocations of this complex region. In this respect, it is important to remind, that the need for regional cooperation has consistently appeared during the process of regionalisation of the country: the most interesting tools in that respect are deals/pacts which regions are able to use in order to go beyond regional boundaries and deal with shared problems, among which that of air pollution that affects the wider area of northern of Italy.

¹⁷ <https://territorio.regione.emilia-romagna.it/paesaggio/studi-analisi-e-approfondimenti-tematici/via-emilia>

2.1.3 Experimentations from below and from above: the tension towards a regional/metropolitan imaginary

A third dimension, under which one can observe interesting elements for the construction of spatial imaginaries is the one generated by **local initiatives**, in particular those elaborated and promoted by the core metropolitan cities along the corridor on the one hand, and by the medium-size cities, like Piacenza and Pavia, from their respective point of view. The absence of a national framework to produce spatial imaginaries and vision is counterbalanced by a rich and interesting story of local working sites.

Both metropolitan cities of Milano and Bologna, on the one hand, share an interesting role (also impacting at national level) in the construction of wider regional imaginaries: they both have been in fact, pivot of a regional urban scale reflection since the sixties (and even before).

Milano, with the promotion of the so called Piano Intercomunale Milanese (PIM) at the beginning of the '60es, started reflecting at its development from a regional perspective. PIM was a voluntary association of 35 municipalities that became 94 in 1968. The preliminary studies for the Plan led to the construction of two different territorial development hypotheses. The first one was the "Turbine" model proposed by Giancarlo De Carlo (with S. Tintori and A. Tutino) that prefigured an urban structure shaped like a turbine in which wide green areas were preserved between the urbanized blades. The second proposal (by M. Bacigalupo G. Corna Pellegrini e G. Mazzocch) referred to the "Linear development" of the city following the main transport inter-regional infrastructures along the Alpine and Apennine foothills. The two alternatives were irreconcilable and never resulted in the construction of a real Inter-municipal Plan. In the next decade the PIM assumed the role of a research centre, but the two proposals, especially the "Turbine" model by De Carlo became a cultural reference for the sovra-local planning activities in the area of Milano.

Despite a consistent cultural effort, along the eighties and nineties, the city remained stuck in its municipal borders and only **in the middle 2000s became again interested in the construction of new spatial imaginaries**. The public debate launched by the book Milano Nodo della Rete Globale in 2005, by the Chamber of Commerce, set the scene for the launch of a Strategic project for the Milano urban region, promoted and supported by the then Province of Milano, under the initiative of the Assessore al Piano Strategico Daniela Gasparini and with the collaboration of a team of expert of Politecnico di Milano. This was probably the highest point in the creation of a urban regional imaginary in the most recent history of Milano institutions, and part of a wider debate in which a series of local actors started collaborating in the light of a new spatial imaginary. AIM (Associazione Interessi metropolitani) for example, among others, already before those years and Globus et Locus, in the late 2000s, were key to investigate the new interrelated nature of the urban fabric; the same for Fondazione Irso, which, with the Progetto Nord, launched in those years a space for a wider reflection at regional level. A strategic patrimony of ideas and contributions, which, despite being still far from the institution of the metropolitan city, settled down the idea that Milano could no more be considered as a

traditional city, being de facto a region home to 9 million people, going beyond provincial and regional boundaries, if not national ones. A urban region as defined by the Strategic Project “Città di città” (Balducci, Fedeli, Pasqui, 2011) part of a wider urban region, as well as articulated in specific territorial and urban formation.

Despite the intensity of that season, the Strategic plan failed to become enforcing and definitely feeding a renewed policy agenda and program, notwithstanding the investment that the city of Milano, under the mayor Pisapia, made in the preparatory works for the parliamentary discussion of the 2014 law instituting metropolitan cities. After the constitution of the metropolitan city, the most recent years, have seen Milano metropolitan city active in promoting the new institution but quite weak in developing on metropolitan/regional imaginaries perspectives, especially through its first and second Strategic plan¹⁸, the tool through which metropolitan cities should structure their policy agenda and project every three years. Indeed, the metropolitan city is still highly compressed between a municipal government which has much invested on the new centrality of the “city” at national and international level and that nevertheless today remains constitutively its main engine (the Mayor of the metropolitan city, is by law, the mayor of the city, until when a local referendum will allow to go for direct elections) and a regional one that still plays a limited role in devolving to metropolitan cities strategic competences. **The result is the lack of a clear investment on new spatial alliances**, despite the work done since the 2000s had seen a convergence between the scholarly debate, which had clearly identified the necessity to look at the city as a part of a wider urban region (Balducci et Al. 2017)¹⁹ and that of the stakeholders’ contribution, focussing on the emergence of a new metropolitan/regional dimension (see among others, the book *Milano Metropoli Possibile*, by Assolombarda, 2016). The final result is a paradox: despite the city is clearly aware of its wider regional dimension, there is little scope at the moment for a clear engagement in this perspective, as shown by the recent failure of a research proposal, developed by Globus & Locus to promote a research on the topic²⁰.

In the background powerful spatial imaginaries as those promoted by EU projects, like *the Interreg Alpine Space*, have forced the urban region to reflect upon its strong relationship with the Alpine arch, being the recent candidature to winter Olympics an inedited fact, that can be read in this perspective.

From the Regional perspective, the most interesting contributions can be detected in the preparatory work for the **Piano Territoriale Regionale and the Programma Regionale di**

¹⁸ https://www.cittametropolitana.mi.it/PSM_2016_2018/piano_strategico_metropolitano/

¹⁹ see Balducci et Al. 2017, where the emergence of an urbanoid galaxy along the north of Italy has been identified and since the early nineties the works of Secchi, Macchi Cassia, Boeri, Marini and Lanzani among others),

²⁰ <https://www.regione.lombardia.it/wps/wcm/connect/6c3d50bb-ed45-4f93-8474-2bbda07d8d58/PTR++2+Documento+di++Piano+%28aggiornamento+2019%29.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-6c3d50bb-ed45-4f93-8474-2bbda07d8d58-m.8wtKF>

Sviluppo, and in particular in the work developed by the regional research institute Polis, in the early 2010, where the emergence of the environmental and economic interdependences between the northern regions of the countries has been strongly discussed²¹ (“La macroregione del Nord”) and studied. In the most recent revision of PTR (Piano, Territoriale Regionale, 2019)²², the idea of a polycentric region, able to counterbalance the metropolitan agglomeration of Milano is central, while the identification of emerging and historical polarities, completely bypass the relationship with Emilia Romagna, mainly including it in the Sistema metropolitano Lombardo description, while including the EU corridors and some emergent polarities just aside and a new polarity emerging between Lodi, Cremona and Crema. The main integrating factor between the two regions remains the Po River basin.

Bologna, on the contrary, can count on a history of clear symbolic and pragmatic investment on the metropolitan dimension. More cooperative and effective. The concept of **Bologna as a Metropolitan city** is rooted in the research activities that in 1964 led to the “Schema di sviluppo della regione Emilia-Romagna” by Comitato Regionale per la Programmazione Economica (CRPE) and in the contents of the Piano Intercomunale di Bologna (PIC), created between 1960 and 1967, that involved the first 17 municipalities that surround the core city, grouped in an administrative union called “Comprensorio”. It is a story of ‘tension’ between the polycentric structure of the regional territory, mainly organized along the Via Emilia as the historical development axis, and the will to establish new ‘perpendicular’ lines of development within the Pianura Padana (Po Valley area). Although never officially approved, the “Schema direttore” of the PIC continued to work in the next decades as a powerful reference for the planning activities in the area of Bologna.

During the 80es, the territorial regional plan “**Piano Territoriale Regionale**” (PTR) was developed and it was finally approved in 1990. The role of Bologna as the possible metropolitan city of Emilia-Romagna seemed to decline again in favor of the regional polycentric territorial structure. It resurfaced in 1994 when an agreement between Municipalities belonging to the Province of Bologna was signed and led to the voluntary creation of a metropolitan conference of Mayors. The status of “metropolitan city” was assigned to Bologna by the PTR approved by the Emilia-Romagna Region in 2010 (and then finally confirmed by the national law in 2014). Among the strategies of the regional Plan there was the intention to overcome the polycentric conception of the regional territory favoring a vision of Bologna as a complex monocentric urban system. Today the Metropolitan City of Bologna is made of 55 Municipalities grouped in 7 “unions”, and its boundaries coincide with those of the former Province. The overall image and

21 see in particular <https://www.polis.lombardia.it/wps/wcm/connect/b12bfb1d-d292-4d9b-b7aa-64181b55439c/La+Macro+regione+del+Nord+Italia+-+una+realt%C3%A0+concreta.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-b12bfb1d-d292-4d9b-b7aa-64181b55439c-mmJJDUj>

22 <https://www.regione.lombardia.it/wps/wcm/connect/6c3d50bb-ed45-4f93-8474-2bbda07d8d58/PTR+-+2+Documento+di++Piano+%28aggiornamento+2019%29.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-6c3d50bb-ed45-4f93-8474-2bbda07d8d58-m.8wtKF>

perspective of the new metropolitan city is currently driven by the “Piano Strategico Metropolitan di Bologna 2.0” (Bologna Metropolitan Strategic Plan 2.0²³).

In the context of **Pavia**, there has been new impulse to the formulation of a new spatial imaginary, based on the support of both the university and Aim, Associazione Interessi Metropolitan, a seminar held in 2018 at the premises of Triennale di Milano highlighted the need of critical reflection on a province and a city which present some criticalities. The city and the province can count on a historical characterisation linked with the strong presence of university and highly qualified health and research function. The image of a knowledge-based city is still central, but has started to be attacked by a highly dependency with Milano urban region, which offers opportunities but also risks. The seminar clearly highlighted the need to develop new strategic vision, in order to deal with some current trends: the role of Pavia as an alternative to Milanoese metropolis residential and commercial choices, without being part of the metropolitan city; the emergence of a cluster of logistic activities between Piacenza, Pavia and Milano; the lack of a shared vision among the local stakeholders and the relevance of the university actor as mediator between public and private interests. Finally, the seminar was a milestone in trying to redefine the potentials of an in-between territory, which wants to reflect on a wider regional scale²⁴. As a matter of fact, Pavia, during the approval of the law 142/90 considered the opportunity to become part of the Metropolitan city of Milano.

In the context of Piacenza, a more consistent dynamic role of local policy makers and stakeholders in promoting strategic visions towards the future since the nineties, often within forms of collaboration of the universities can be detected. It must be reminded that Piacenza was one of the first cities in Italy promoting a process of strategic planning, the “Patto per Piacenza” in 2002, the “Provincia di Piacenza Vision 2020” (2006, in collaboration with the experts of Università Cattolica di Milano, among others), followed by the document “Piacenza Territorio Snodo” and the “Documento Strategico per lo sviluppo Locale” in 2014/16, also accompanied by other efforts of territorial strategic visioning (ie. the one enhanced by Confindustria Piacenza with the document “Piacenza al future” in collaboration with Politecnico di Milano²⁵). A clear awareness of being a joint territory between several territorial formations is evident since a long time and has generated wide debate at local level, with a relevant impact also in the regional and national policies.

From a different perspective, the Milano-Bologna urban region is also characterised by **a series of functional actors** which have played a crucial role in generating **de facto spatial imaginaries**: among the most interesting ones, the role played by the Airports for example in the wider Milano urban region is crucial, so much so that Piacenza is sometimes mentioned as one of the Milano airports, while Bologna remains less an integrative element and more oriented

²³ https://psm.bologna.it/Engine/RAServeFile.php/f/documenti/Relazione_PSM_2.0.pdf

²⁴ file:///C:/Users/fedeli/Downloads/PER_LO_SVILUPPO_DI_UN_SISTEMA_MILANO_-PA.pdf

²⁵ <http://www.confindustria.pc.it/notizie-open.asp?id=82756>

to serve the centre of Italy. Under the same perspective, the **role of Universities has emerged more and more strategic**: a recent research promoted in 2010²⁶ by AIM has mapped the polycentric strategies of territorial re-organisation of some of the most important universities in Milano (Cattolica and Politecnico in particular have a seat in Piacenza); in Bologna, where the Alma Mater has built several seats in many other regional cities²⁷, but also in Pavia, where the University has settled in several in-between small and medium cities. Finally, a **third relevant example is the one provided by the public companies** producing utilities, like energy production, water and waste management: the Milano-Bologna urban region, in this respect is characterised by the presence of 2 main actors, ones of the most powerful multiutilities in Italy, with a regional integration role, A2A covering Milano, Brescia and Bergamo, and Hera, covering almost the region in Emilia Romagna, while the intermediate territories are served by LGH, Linea Group Holding, covering Pavia, Lodi and Cremona.

2.2 Mapping existing spatial imaginaries, interviewing Project Stakeholders

During Task 1.1 a first round of interviews to project stakeholders' representatives has been implemented. In the month of June, 2020, 15 interviews have been realized (see Annex 5)²⁸. The interviews have been dedicated to the following themes (for a detailed list of the questions asked to local and non-local stakeholders, see Annex 5):

- **Spatial imaginaries** (local stakeholders only): stakeholder's perception and spatial imaginaries of the Milano-Bologna corridor, and their opinion about possible obstacles and threats to its integration and governance (§2.2.1)
- **Projects and tools**: information on ongoing cooperative projects at metropolitan, regional and corridor level in the Milano-Bologna area and information on the tools (databases, knowledge providers, etc.) utilized by local stakeholders to collect knowledge about territorial, social and economic processes; information on documents, researches and projects developed in other Italian and European territories which could provide useful hints towards a better comprehension of the urban processes in the Milano-Bologna area and/or towards their more efficient regulation (see Annex 5).
- **Relevant issues and actors**: information on stakeholders possessing information and/or resources which could be useful in the study and/or in the governance of the Milano-Bologna corridor. The

²⁶ A. Balducci, F.Cognetti, V.Fedeli, Milano la città degli studi. Storia Geografie e politiche delle Università Milanesi, Milano: Abitare Segesta 2010

²⁷ In 2018, a €130 million loan was granted to the University of Bologna — the largest to an Italian university to date — to support the University's five-year investment plan, including the modernisation and expansion of the university campuses in Bologna, Forli, Cesena, Ravenna and Rimini. Works include some 130,000 m2 of floor space and particular attention is to be paid to earthquake resilience and the energy efficiency of buildings https://www.eib.org/attachments/country/city_transformed_bologna_en.pdf

²⁸ Due to the Covid-19 pandemic emergencies, and to the subsequent lockdown in Italy, all the interviews have been organized online (via Teams, Skype or other platforms).

new stakeholder thus identified (see Annex 5), after an evaluation from the research team, will be asked to join project “IMAGINE”’s seminars and meetings.

- **Covid-19 impact:** new issues generated by the coronavirus pandemic on urban and territorial processes (in particular, about issues requiring the coordination of local stakeholders to be properly addressed; §2.2.2)
- **Expectations from IMAGINE project findings:** (non-local stakeholders only) stakeholders which are not directly involved in the governance of the Milano-Bologna region have been asked to illustrate their expectations from the IMAGINE project, in terms of production of knowledge and best practices (§2.2.3).

2.2.1 Spatial imaginaries for the Milano-Bologna corridor: a synthetic overview

Interviews to local stakeholders from the Milano-Bologna area explored:

- the spatial imaginaries and visions for the corridor (a),
- collected information about issues which could find efficient regulation at trans-territorial scale (b)
- and identified possible obstacles and threats to their governance (c).

a) *Stakeholder’s perception of the role of provinces and Città Metropolitana in the Milano-Bologna corridor*

Città Metropolitana (metropolitan-level governments) have been introduced in the Italian institutional framework only recently, in 2015. In the same years, Provincial administrations underwent many changes in their powers and functions. Due to these factors, coordination between provinces and metropolitan cities is scarce or non-existent, and there are no previous experiences of networks between local administrations dedicated to the regulation of the Milano-Bologna corridor. However, all local stakeholders involved in the IMAGINE partnership are interested in the regulation of trans-territorial processes, though under different perspectives:

- **The statute of Città Metropolitana di Milano** recognizes the need to cooperate with neighboring administrations, in order to regulate metropolitan processes which are more extended than its boundaries. At the Functional Urban Area (FUA), Città Metropolitana has no power to enforce its decision, and acts as a “soft agency” for the coordination of urban policies between cities and municipalities. Horizontal coordination between Città Metropolitana and other provinces and cities in the FUA is considered particularly important for issues related to land use and environmental policies, in which there is no clear distinction between local and regional competences: this is often cause for conflicts between administrative levels. Information exchanges and partnerships with other local administrations of the Milano-Bologna corridor are considered crucial to identify common problems (mobility, welfare, sustainability, social inclusion, etc.) and to organize forms of collective action towards their solution. Also, Città Metropolitana di Milano is interested in the development of ITI for the metropolitan area and is looking for ways to give more voice to the regulation needs of metropolitan regions in the national and European debate: exchange of information and practices with the other stakeholders of the Milano-Bologna corridor will be useful towards those goals.
- **Città Metropolitana di Bologna** developed strong governance models for the regulation of territorial, social and economic processes at the metropolitan level, but has no experience of horizontal coordination at corridor level. However, strong exchanges and interdependences with the metropolis of Milano require common strategies to regulate issues regarding mobility, economic development, cultural development and tourism. A new vision of urbanization processes, defined at corridor scale, could also be the occasion to innovate the strategies for social and economic development of Bologna.

- Being a threshold area and a major logistic hub between Lombardia and Emilia-Romagna, **the Province of Piacenza** is very interested in experiments of coordination of urban and economic processes along the Milano-Bologna corridor. The proximity to Milano generates dense commuting and tourist flows, and also influences residential and economic policies: building and sharing a spatial imaginary for the Milano-Bologna corridor is therefore considered crucial for the future development of Piacenza, and for the definition of its role in the FUA of Milano.
- **The Province of Pavia** is deeply embedded in the FUA of Milano: its infrastructural, industrial and demographic dynamics are strongly influenced by what happens in Milano. A strategic vision for the development of the Milano-Bologna corridor could help this territory to find a role in metropolitan processes, seeking integration instead of competition with Milano and with other cities. A shared imaginary for the corridor is seen as a necessity to rebalance territorial differences and to foster local excellences.

b) Issues to be discussed and governed at trans-territorial scale

Interviews to local stakeholders highlighted emerging policy issues requiring the coordination of local administrations of the Milano-Bologna corridor. Among them are:

- **Mobility of people:** all the Provinces and Città Metropolitane agree on the necessity to cooperate for the efficiency and sustainability of mobility and logistics flows along the Milano-Bologna corridor. In the recent years, the high-speed railway between Milano and Bologna increased the exchanges between the two cities' professional and cultural networks, while huge commuting flows crowd the A-4 highway and the local railways; yet, urban peripheries and rural areas are not well connected to the main infrastructural axis. Apart from proposals of new infrastructures (i.e. the inclusion of Piacenza in the Milano metropolitan railway system), the first issue to be addressed is intermodality, which is affected by the differences between regional and urban models, impacting the fluidity of flows between cities. Also, each city has its own providers of car sharing and bike sharing. Integrated solutions for public mobility in the corridor could improve the attractiveness of medium-sized cities and rural areas, influencing the residential choices of students and workers and also allowing the localization of urban functions outside core metropolitan areas.
- **Logistics:** The Milano-Bologna logistic corridor is also a crucial axis, with many intermodal platforms and warehouses: a more intense use of rail transport, which could reduce traffic along the A-4 highway, could be achieved only with a common strategy developed by the two regions of Lombardia and Emilia-Romagna, involving rail and logistics operators.
- **Urban hierarchies and territorial economies:** while the metropolis of Milano and Bologna show positive social and economic dynamics, the urban economies of many medium-sized cities are less lively and innovative. Competition between cities for the attraction of knowledge workers and economic activities should be mitigated by a common vision of development based on a polycentric model, exploiting the role of all cities and industrial areas of the corridor towards the assemblage of a more integrated and efficient economic system. The spreading of knowledge from metropolitan areas to industrial and rural areas should be encouraged, in order to sustain innovation, internalization and growth of local firms. Also, accessibility to transport and digital infrastructures should be granted to peripheral areas of the corridor.
- **Land use and environmental policies:** administrative fragmentation along the corridor and within the urban region has a negative impact on programs for the reduction of land use, for the reduction of hydrogeologic risks and for the protection of the natural environment. Provincial and metropolitan boundaries are too small to allow the efficient planning of urban processes at FUA scale: exchange of information and coordination between local and regional planning strategies are required to reduce externalities and to achieve common goals (i.e. reduction of emissions, water management, environmental quality).
- **Tourism:** before the Covid-19 pandemic, Milano and Bologna were experiencing a steady increase of tourism. Yet, metropolitan tourism systems are not integrated with nearby cities, in spite of their potential attractiveness. Experiments towards integration of local offers have been developed by Città Metropolitana di Bologna in collaboration with the cities of Parma and Modena and with the

rural and mountain areas of the Appennini: such programs could be extended at corridor scale, with mutual benefits for all territories involved.

- **Welfare systems:** demand for welfare is increasing in all territories of the corridor, due to population ageing and social changes. Diffusion of best practices and coordination of local welfare policies could help to reduce spatial inequalities.

c) *Obstacles and threats to the integration of the Milano-Bologna corridor*

The interviews highlighted possible risks and obstacles to the organization of common strategies and actions by local, provincial and metropolitan stakeholders in the Milano-Bologna system:

- **Absence of a common language:** in order to solve common problems, actors from different territories should develop a common glossary and vision. Diffusion of knowledge and public debate are needed in order to enhance stakeholder's (and citizen's) awareness of the interconnections of territorial, social and economic issues in the Milano-Bologna system.
- **Complexity of the issues:** stakeholders of the Milano-Bologna system should be able to examine common problems and opportunities for development from a multi-disciplinary and multi-scalar perspective, given the complexity of the processes taking place in the corridor and the high number of actors involved.
- **Coordination problems:** to be effective, strategies need to be translated into projects. Local administrations often lack the experience and skills needed to work together: each body and each office has its own procedures and logics. The coordination of public-public and public-private networks may be very difficult, and require good organization. Experiments for multi-level coordination of both public and private actors have been developed by Provinces and Città Metropolitane (i.e. the "RE.MIX" project for urban regeneration organized by Città Metropolitana di Milano), but have not yet been tested at corridor scale. Trans-territorial issues require "soft" governance models, legitimized by strong political leadership and supported by "moral suasion" at the local scale. All territorial actors should be granted voice in decision-making, and wide consensus should be achieved in order to produce good strategies.
- **The institutional framework:** the capacity of Provinces and Città Metropolitane to produce radical innovation and to govern issues organized at the FUA scale is limited by institutional conflicts with municipal and regional authorities, fueled by the uncertain distributions of competencies between different government levels. The commitment of Regione Lombardia and Regione Emilia-Romagna is required in order to organize an effective governance of corridor dynamics in the Milano-Bologna area.

2.2.2 The impact of Covid-19 on the sphere of spatial imaginaries construction

During the interviews, stakeholders have been asked to discuss new issues generated by the coronavirus pandemic on urban and territorial processes. In particular, those which cannot be efficiently solved at the local level because they require a coordination between local governments and stakeholders. The consequences of the pandemic, and the actions required to deal with them, will be further discussed in the stakeholders meetings that will be organized during the "IMAGINE" project: the emergency is still ongoing in the Lombardia and Emilia-Romagna Regions, and many aspects of this crisis are not foreseeable at the present time. Yet, the interviews of Task 1.1 highlighted some issues which have already been noticed by provincial and metropolitan administrations of the Milano-Bologna corridor and which could constitute the basis for the future debate:

- **Green mobility:** in the metropolitan areas, the lockdown modified the citizen's choices about mobility: public transport are seen as dangerous spaces, to be avoided if possible. This change of perception may result in an increase of urban car traffic (which in the last years has been strongly reduced by the improvement of public transports both in Milano and Bologna), but may also generate a bigger demand for green mobility (by foot or by bike) in metropolitan areas. Mobility models need to be revised. Moreover, the new situation also requires to think again the organization of metropolitan life (working hours, schools, public events, etc.) in order to avoid crowds in rush hours.
- **Commuting:** the Milano-Bologna corridor is a space of dense flows of commuters, workers and students are moving daily on great distances by train or by bus, not only to the metropolitan core areas but also to medium-sized cities and industrial areas. After the lockdown, the reduction of the capacity of public transports created problems to many commuters: solutions, requiring coordination between local governments and mobility agencies, must be designed to avoid similar problems in the future.
- **Public spaces:** during and after the lockdown, new issues regarding the use of public space in urban areas emerged. Sidewalks, places and parks became spaces of new conflicts, with different uses and users competing for them (i.e. the rules for social distancing required many bars and restaurants to occupy the sidewalks with their tables). Given the pre-pandemic tendencies to allocate urban spaces to specific activities only, this is an opportunity to re-project urban spaces, towards a better civil cohabitation and towards the coexistence of different activities: experiences of "tactical urbanism" which have been tested in the last years by Italian and European cities may provide useful hints and practices to solve such conflicts. The Covid-19 crisis may also be an opportunity to organize new projects for the retrain of degraded or under-used urban spaces and public buildings: Città Metropolitana di Milano is already discussing ideas to involve private investors in similar activities.
- **Residential choices:** the lockdown caused a change in the residential choices of many citizens, increasing the exodus of citizens in search of bigger houses and green spaces from metropolitan core areas to suburban and rural areas. This tendency, described by the sociologist Éric Charmes as the "revenge of the villages" was already evident before the pandemic, but is now increasing dramatically due to the fear of contagion and the new opportunities for teleworking and agile working. Rural areas, small cities and medium-sized cities in the Milano-Bologna corridor are already competing for the attraction of new residents from the metropolitan areas, improving their offers of mobility services, digital infrastructures, public services: still, actions need to be taken in order to ensure digital accessibility to all territories in the Milano-Bologna system.
- **Tourism:** The Covid-19 pandemic had a strong impact on the tourism sector, changing many factors influencing the demand: a reduction of international tourism is to be expected, as well as an increase in short-range tourism. Those changes may be the opportunity to re-design the offer of tourist routes and activities in the Milano-Bologna corridor, building connections between cities and non-urban areas towards more intense exchanges of flows and longer periods of stay.
- **Food supply chains:** fresh food shortages during the lockdown have been experienced only for some products and only for short periods of time, yet the pandemic highlighted the importance of local networks for the production and distributions of food. Cities in the Milano-Bologna corridor are interested in models for the diffusion of auto-production and urban farms, and for the organization of local food supply chains.
- **Teleworking and online services:** urban administration and private firms reacted to the lockdown with an increase of teleworking and agile working. Urban administration developed procedures for the digitalization of public services. Those experiences may be the start of new organization approaches and work models based on digital technologies, but require a capillary diffusion of digital infrastructures (i.e. broadband).
- **Health care and welfare systems:** the tragic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on hospitals and nursing homes in Lombardia and Emilia-Romagna started a debate on the need for the innovation of local health care and welfare models, which need to be organized both at the regional and local level (also appreciating and valorizing the experiences of community solidarity emerged during the crisis).
- **Local economies:** urban and metropolitan administrations highlighted the need to exchange information and to diffuse best practices about policies to support local economies (and SMEs in

particular), envisaging measures to encourage the development of local value chains and circular economies.

- **Environmental quality:** high levels of pollution in northern Italy may have dramatically affected mortality rates of Covid-19: emissions reduction, green mobility, sustainability of urban ecosystems and economic models should be prioritized in local and regional agendas.

2.2.3 Looking at the IMAGINE project from outside the urban region: the European IMAGINE stakeholders perspective and contribution

IMAGINE Stakeholders which are not actors of the governance of the Milano-Bologna region have been asked to illustrate their expectations from the IMAGINE project:

- **The City of Warsaw, POPSU and Metrex** are looking for good governance practices at metropolitan and corridor scale.
- **Associazione Interessi Metropolitan (AIM) and Metrex** expressed their interest in the construction of a shared language and vision to foster public dialogue and to raise consciousness on the importance of specific regional approaches to successfully organize social and economic development programs.
- **Metrex and POPSU** are also interested in urban-rural relationships, looking for approaches and measures to reduce territorial gaps and inequalities, and to foster an integrated approach to the development of complex metropolitan regions.
- Specific issues of interest are also sustainability, green mobility, economic development, ITI tools, formal and informal governance models.

3 A visual platform for generating spatial imaginaries

3.1 Organising different types of geographical informations

Under WP1, the IMAGINE Project will design and develop a Visual Platform (VP) for generating spatial imaginaries. The goal is to create a web platform that acts as a support for the Target Analysis and that, during and after the research project, can become a tool shared by the stakeholders in order to generate new spatial imaginaries. The VP will be created and managed through the Esri ArcGIS Online platform using the Politecnico di Milano and ESPON Licence, and it will be implemented and edited using the ArcGIS Dashboard, in order than to be integrated in the ESPON website and collect different typologies of geographical information:

- geo-statistical data principally referred to municipal and sub-provincial levels (polygons);
- cartographic data of the main roads, railways, linear infrastructures and hydrographic network (lines);
- cartographic data of relevant sites, areas, parks and lakes (polygons)
- geo-spatial data of relevant structures, poles, centres, stations, airports (points)
- geo-relational data about relevant institutional cooperation (arcs-nodes / polygons)
- geo-relational data about mobility and commuting (arcs-nodes / polygons)

The platform will be organized in five main analytical dimensions:

- socio-spatial patterns and dynamics
- energy, environmental and agricultural patterns and dynamics
- economic patterns and dynamics
- functional and mobility patterns and dynamics
- forms of cooperation and coordination

The VP will allow also the visualization of interactive charts and graphs based on NUTS-3 level as well as on other aggregations of LAUs data (taxonomies, clusters, official classifications) referred to urban typologies, peripherality levels, administrative hierarchies, demographic size, functional areas.

The main sources of these analytical classifications will include:

- research dataset based on *research original elaboration and outputs*, and in particular on transport and mobility data (owned by the DASTU Traspol Lab. coordinated by Prof. Paolo Beria and by the DASTU Maud Lab coordinated by Dr. Fabio Manfredini), data about economic innovators and firms (owned by the research group coordinated by Prof. Ilaria Mariotti, DASTU, PoliMi), morpho-functional classification of the Italian municipalities (owned by the research group co-coordinated by Dr. Francesco Curci et al. at DASTU, PoliMi), classification of the Italian urban typologies (developed within the PRIN Postmetropoli Research by Dr. Francesco Curci in collaboration with the research unit coordinated by Prof. Luciano Vettoreto, IUAV);
- *institutional classifications*, and in particular EU-OECD functional urban area definition (Cities + Commuting Zones); Eurostat Degree of Urbanisation (DEGURBA); Inner Areas classification by the Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI); Labour market areas (LMAs) elaborated by ISTAT.

The VP will be organized into two geographical scales with related statistical data. Each scale is devoted to specific objectives and meanings:

- The *macro-regional scale* (fig. 3.3) allows to grasp of the specificity of Milano-Bologna corridor within the Padania macro-region and Central-Northern Italy. These areas will be investigated especially through NUTS-3 level data referred to 34 Provinces and Metropolitan Cities belonging to 11 administrative regions (NUTS-2): Lombardia, Emilia-Romagna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Liguria, Piemonte, Trentino-Alto Adige, Valle d'Aosta, Veneto, Toscana, Marche, Umbria.
- The *corridor scale* or *regional scale* allows a more detailed and technical analysis of the Milano-Bologna corridor, included the counterfactual analysis described in ANNEX 3. The corridor area will be investigated in two ways:
 - b1. through NUTS-3 level data referred to 24 Provinces and Metropolitan Cities (fig. 3.4) belonging to 5 administrative regions (NUTS-2): 11 in Lombardia (Milano, Monza-Brianza, Como, Varese, Lecco, Bergamo, Brescia, Pavia, Lodi, Cremona, Mantova), 7 in Emilia-Romagna (Bologna, Modena, Piacenza, Parma, Reggio Emilia, Ferrara, Ravenna), 2 in Veneto (Verona, Rovigo), 1 in Piemonte (Novara); 3 in Toscana (Firenze, Prato, Pistoia).
 - b2. through sub-provincial and LAU level data referred to 1452 Municipalities identified by a 100 x 300 km rectangle (figg. 3.1-3.2) outlined according to the following methodology operated with GIS tools: step 1) generation of the centroids of the Milano and Bologna municipalities; step 2) generation of the line connecting the two centroids; step 3) generation of a 50 km "square" buffer around the line connecting the centroids.

With regards to platform implementation and data import, the team will take advantage of the results of four recent research projects, which constitute a precious base for advanced research on the specific case of the Milano-Bologna corridor (see ANNEX 2). Moving from these four projects, the VP will allow the integration of the already available statistical data with:

- geospatial information layers referred to physical morphologies, infrastructures and land covers;
- data about cooperation and coordination activities available on national and regional geoportals;
- provincial input and output data for the counterfactual analysis (ANNEX 2);
- data provided by the model of simulation of the mobility offer in order to produce analysis of correlation among economic-social development trends and the role played by the new mobility offer, within the Milano-Bologna corridor (ANNEX 4). This will also allow to develop a comparative analysis of the corridor in relation to the wider urban region and national context;

Other data integration will derive from new or updated census and standard data from official statistics and co-produced atlases and in particular from:

- Istat data warehouse (I.Stat)
- Istat 8milaCensus
- Istat "Statistiche sperimentali" > "A misura di comune"
- GeoDemo.Istat
- Statistical Register of Active Firms (ASIA)
- European Data Portal
- Espon Database
- EC Urban Data Platform Plus

A preliminary list of indicators is reported in the ANNEX 2.

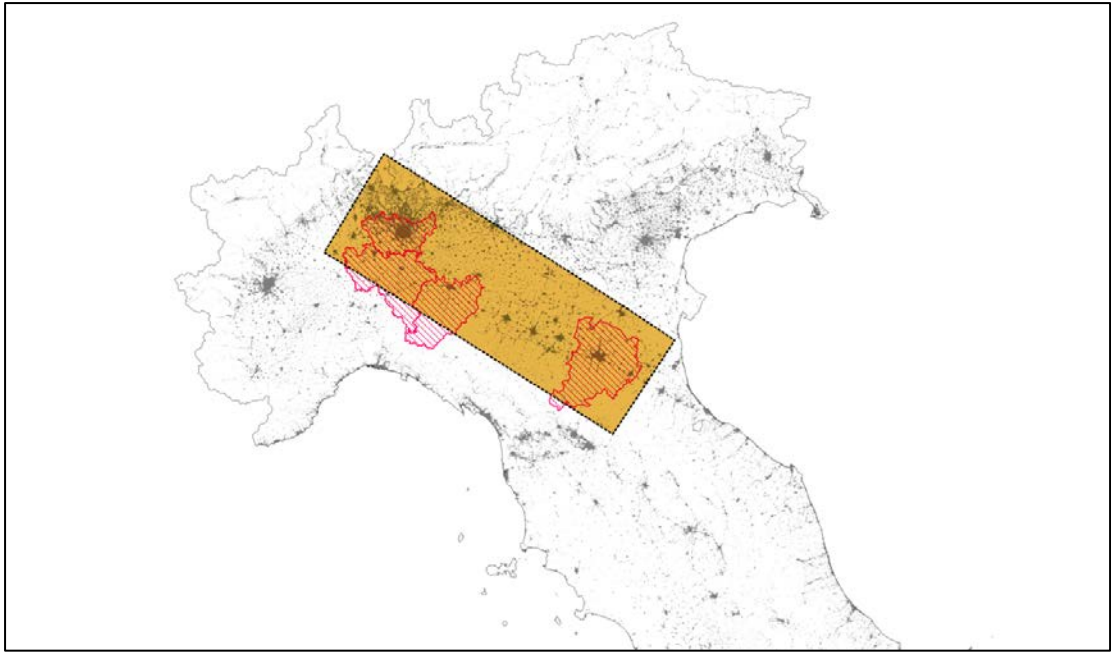


Fig 3.1. Rectangular analytical buffer (100 x 300 km) between Milano and Bologna (stakeholders' territories in red: Milano and Bologna Metropolitan Cities; Pavia and Piacenza Provinces)

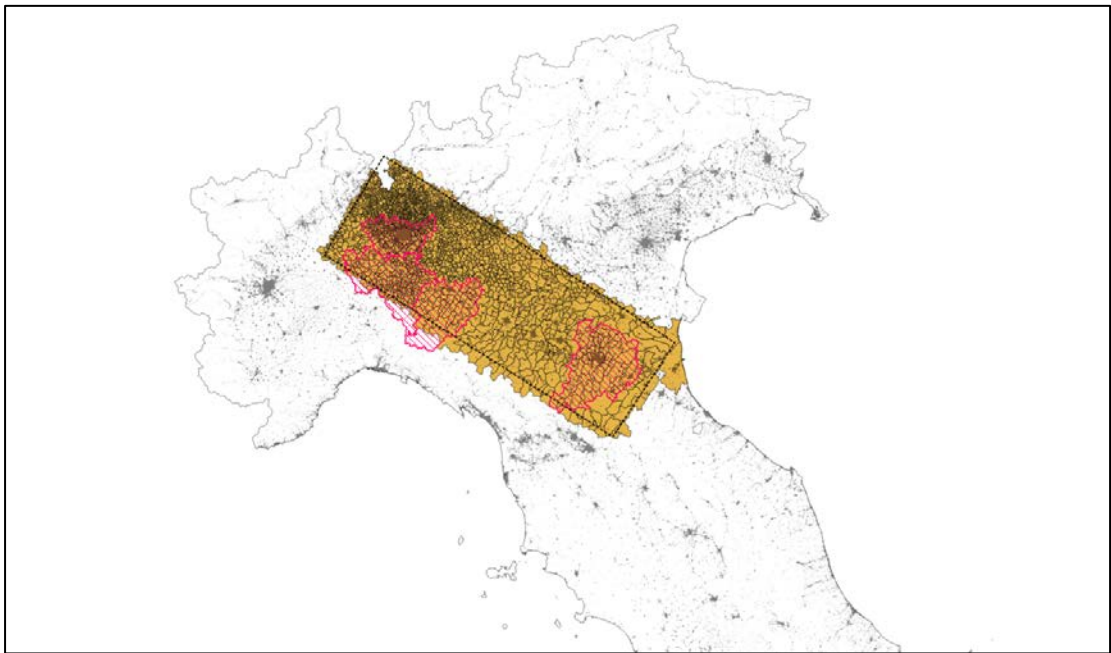


Fig 3.2. LAU selection for regional and subregional data visualization and analysis (stakeholders' territories are marked with red hatch pattern: Milano and Bologna Metropolitan Cities; Pavia and Piacenza Provinces)

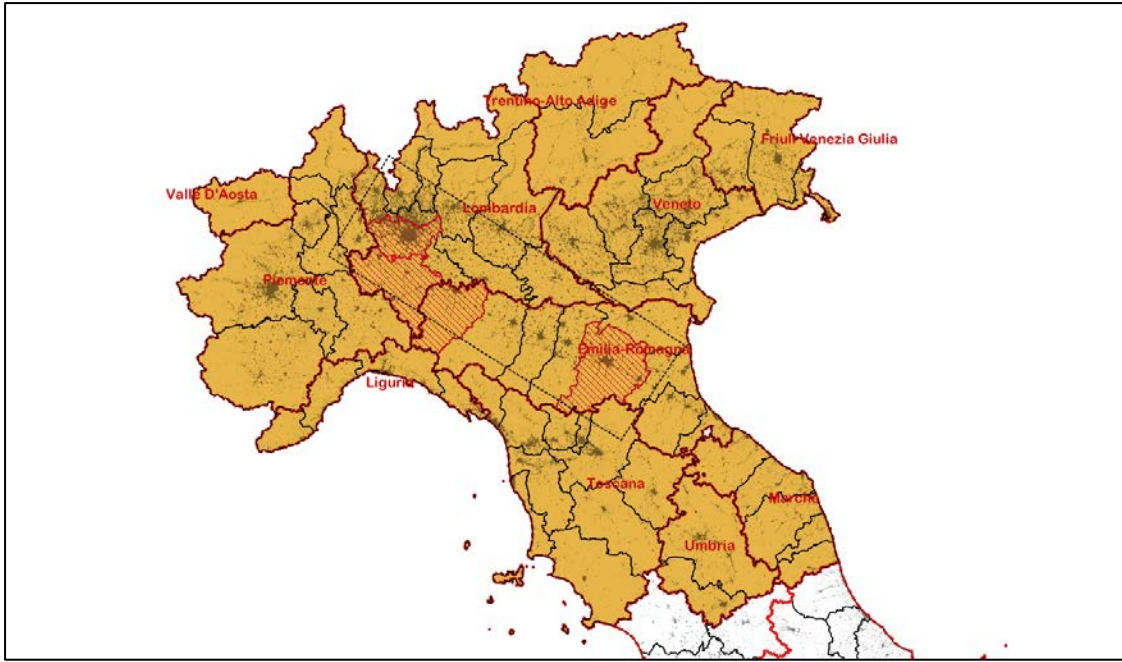


Fig 3.3. NUTS-2 selection for macroregional data visualization based on NUTS-3 data (stakeholders' territories are marked with red hatched pattern: Milano and Bologna Metropolitan Cities; Pavia and Piacenza Provinces).

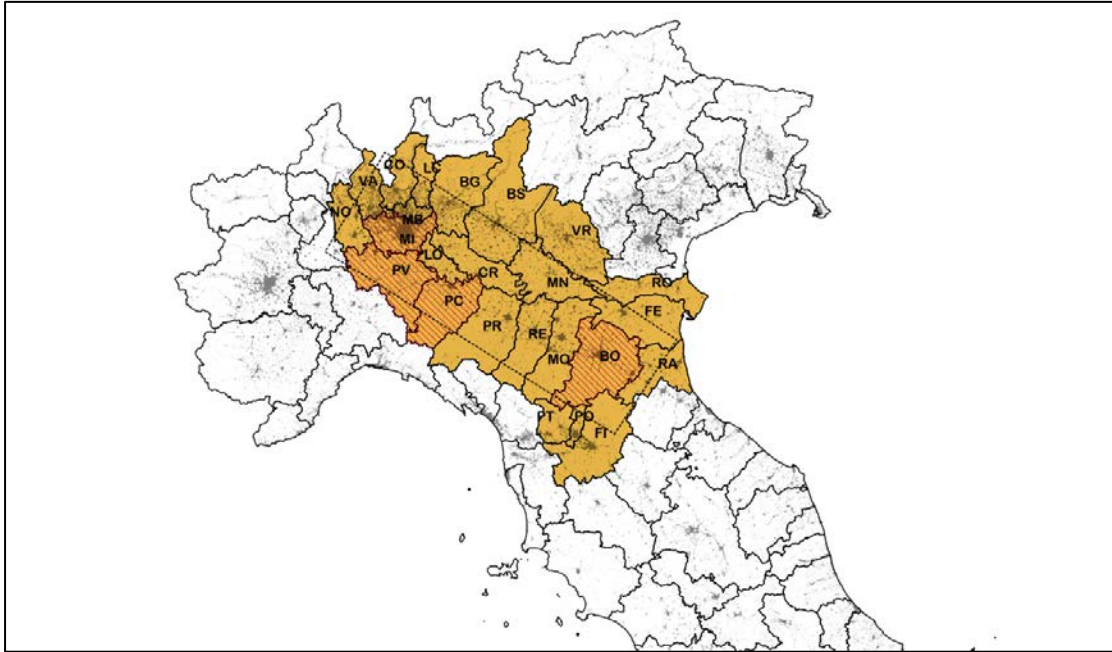


Fig 3.4. NUTS-3 selection for counterfactual analysis and outcome data (stakeholders' territories are marked with red hatched pattern: Milano and Bologna Metropolitan Cities; Pavia and Piacenza Provinces).

3.2 Visualizing data: a dashboard

With multiple elements available to visualize data, dashboards are designed as informative tools, but they can also act as explorative tools through the use of interactive and immersive functions. Dashboard elements are linked, providing dynamic results as users explore the data. It is therefore possible to configure specific actions on the different elements. The following actions are supported:

- Filter—Reduces the number of features available to the target element or operational layer when it's rendering;
- Set Extent—Sets the extent of a target map element;
- Flash Location—Flashes a geographic location on a target map element;
- Zoom—Causes a target map element to zoom to a specified location;
- Pan—Causes a target map element to pan so a specified location is centered;
- Show Pop-up—Displays an information window on a target map element;
- Follow Feature—Pans target map elements to stay centered on a particular feature.

For example, after the setting of an interaction, with a simple click on a chart, it is possible to apply a filter to the map, allowing you to display only the spatial elements consistent with the selection. On the contrary, it is possible to select items on the map to display filtered indicators and charts. The dashboard is fully integrated with GIS technology and format for raster, vector and tabular data and can be further enriched with external content, graphical and textual elements. For this reason, the integration of the data collected and elaborated through the research and in the recent research projects which constitute the analytical base for current analysis of the Milano – Bologna corridor is ensured.

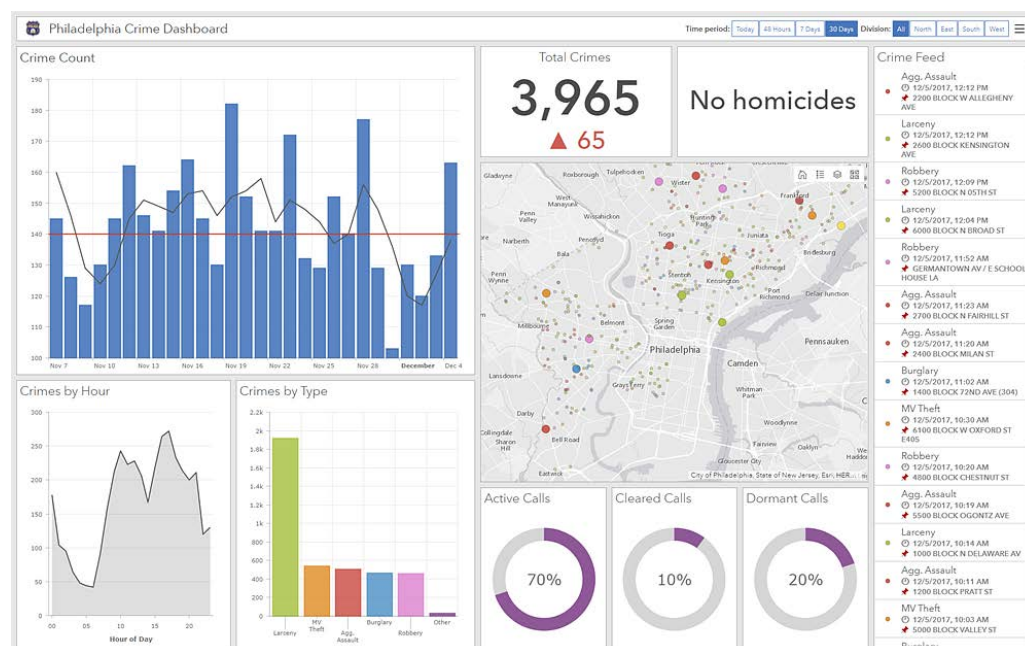


Fig 3.5. Example of an operational dashboard composed by different elements (map, graphs, text)

4 Designing a participatory process

The project will be developed through a participatory process, that will run throughout its development. The aim is to support the project with a **process of co-design**, produced mainly by a series of **co-design workshops**, intended to use expert knowledge to generate open and design-oriented dialogue among local stakeholders.

Such a co-design process will be managed under WP4, under the general Task 4 and lead by Globus et Locus, together with the contribution of the other partners; it is seen as a crucial opportunity to display a process of strategic planning, based mainly on two steps (and consequent sub tasks):

- the **elaboration of scenarios (T4.1)** based on priorities identified by the stakeholders and considered of strategic relevance for metropolitan development, accompanied by recommendations on how to implement this scenario in a step-by-step approach
- **the identification of policy tools/governance (T4.2)** approaches politically relevant, feasible and efficient to plan and manage spatial development at Milano-Bologna functional scale. The objective being promoting the development of strategic planning processes for a wider territorial strategy between the 2 metropolitan authorities and the n-between provincial authorities.

The assumption on which this part of IMAGINE project will be organised is that **spatial imaginaries are social constructions** and as such they shall be constructed by actors in a certain time and space context. "The political nature of spatial relationships has emerged in all its dramatic force, due to the physical contraction of the spaces of life and the intensification of human relations." (Bassetti, 2014²⁹). For this reason, it will be crucial to analyze the political and social practices which find their expression in cities and in the functional relations between them in an integrated regional perspective.

Through the dialogue between experts and stakeholders, we intend to develop a process of cross-fertilisation between different sources of knowledge that should provide more comprehensive information and ideas to feed the production of a new regional narrative. The interactive co-design process will use the materials and results of T1, T2 and T3 to feed a strategic planning process which should put the basis for the development of an integrated territorial strategy for the Milano-Bologna urban region. To do that, the service provider will be in charge of discussing and validating expert knowledge at different stages with local stakeholders, with the aim to co-produce a regional imaginary able to support the strategy.

²⁹ P. Bassetti, "Editorial", *Glocalism, Journal of Culture, Politics and Innovation*, n.3, 2014. <https://glocalismjournal.org/issue-2014-3-global-cities/>

4.1 The (revised) co-design process proposal

Considering the emergency circumstances generated by the coronavirus outbreak at a global level, the research team discussed with project stakeholders the opportunity of redefining the structure of the co-design process as originally presented. Under the post-coronavirus scenario, the co-design project will in fact face the need to reduce and rethink the interactions between the stakeholders of the project, as well with the local stakeholders at large.

The **revised** proposal of the **co-design process** will follow three main steps:

a) Three Regional thinking workshops will be destined to discuss and validate with **project stakeholders** the contents of Task 1 (as presented in this Inception Report) and of the Regional Portrait and Regional Scenarios (Task 2).

- A **Pilot Regional Thinking workshop E1** (to be held at **month 2**) presenting results of Task 1 "Mapping existing spatial imaginaries", where service providers will illustrate the results of the interviews and desk work and discuss them with the project stakeholders for validation.
- A **Regional Portrait workshop, E2.1** (to be held at **month 6**) presenting the contents of the Regional portrait and involving project stakeholders in the discussion of the produced knowledge. The workshop will focus, in particular, on the following questions: what are the major socio-economic dynamics in the urban region and what are their territorial consequences? Which new geographies are emerging? What are the dynamics in terms of innovative economy and new high-speed railway system?
- **The Regional Scenarios workshop E2.2** (to be held at **month 8**), will present and discuss the contents of the Scenario making exploration activity, with particular reference to the impacts and threats to territorial cohesion. Scenario-making tools will be used to discuss with the projects stakeholders the elaboration of policy scenarios and the challenges related to creative and innovative economy from a regional perspective.

Workshops E1 and E2.1 will be online meetings due to Covid-19 restrictions and will be structured in three main moments: illustration of the most relevant results; discussion with stakeholders validating contents; proposals and final conclusions in order to move forward in the elaborations of scenarios.

b) One Regional Imaginaries Forum (month 8). In the original project proposal, **four Regional Imaginaries workshops** were destined to discuss and validate with **stakeholders** and **local actors** the conditions of feasibility of a new governance approach and regional imaginary, with the aim of developing a new regional imaginary and integrated territorial strategy. During the IMAGINE kick off meeting, the service provider together with the project stakeholders agreed on the proposal to gather the four regional imaginaries workshops into one Regional Imaginaries Forum, in which the crucial issues of each workshop will be assessed and discussed.

In particular, the Forum will focus on the following main issues:

- **Spatial imaginaries**
- **Emerging actors**, new forms of regional agency and their geographies of action

- **Blocks and opportunities** to developing a regional spatial imaginary and a new governance framework. Which tools could be helpful to develop it.
- **Policy issues emerging at regional level.** The role of an integrated offer of railway mobility in supporting a highly integrated urban region

The **Forum** will be organized in four thematic sessions. The results of the research conducted by the Service provider will be illustrated as the basis for developing an interactive space for debate with stakeholders and local actors on the four main issues identified. The aim is to foster the **participation of new factors and forms of agency**, which concur consistently to the functioning of the urban region, and to focus on how these forms of agencies unveil new policy issues and can contribute to renew the spatial imaginaries, on the base of their interests, ideas, problems and resources.

One final Regional design workshop (to be held at **month 10**) will be destined to *producing a regional design scenario in the form of an integrated territorial strategy*. The results of the previous workshops will be collected and organised by the Service provider and a co-design workshop will be conducted with the aim of producing a *Regional design scenario* as to prepare a draft of contents for the integrated territorial strategy.

The workshop will be organised in two steps:

- illustration of the most relevant results of co-design workshop
- design workshop for developing the draft of an integrated territorial strategy

d) The final event will consist in an **ITI Showcase and Regional governance workshop** (to be held at **month 12**) will offer the local stakeholders, international stakeholders and national actors the opportunity to learn about ITI state of the art and participate in a co-design event for developing the draft contents of an integrated territorial initiative, based on a regional governance framework.

It has been assumed that the events that will take place in **2021** could be “**in person**” meetings, depending on the evolution of Covid 19 diffusion at national and international level. Under this assumption, service provider, in collaboration of the project stakeholders will put particular attention to **identify places** for the Forum and the final Regional workshops which could be representative of the emerging Milano-Bologna regional spatial imaginary.

4.2 Mapping regional actors and actors’ networks

An important element for the construction of the participatory process will consist in a specific exploration activity in collaboration with project stakeholders, focused on **mapping actors and actors’ network in the urban region and corridor**.

Metropolitan cities and territorial governments, and interest associations or ‘secondary citizens’ (chambers of commerce, interest organizations and citizens’ associations) have already started

working on participative and inclusive forms of coordination in order to create a common understanding and common rules of conduct. One central assumption of the project is that: Medium and small cities' relationship and integration in an urban region can also be interpreted in a relational-contractual approach as well as **the transcalar relations between the global, the state and the local dimension**. On this basis, the participatory process **aims at generating involvement and commitment towards a regional imaginary** by a large set of **consolidated** as well as **emerging regional actors**: institutional actors, business communities and other representation of actors with a traditional territorial identity will be asked to interact with **emerging regional and transcalar actors**:

- **public companies acting on a wider regional scale** for the production of services and infrastructure (i.e. utilities providers, transports and mobility, ITC and communication).
- **chambers of commerce, regional, associations representing the entrepreneurial system.**
- **cluster of private companies**, partners of large commercial and business agreements.
- **universities and hospitals, banking and local foundations, fairs, environmental agencies**, as generators of new regional strategies.
- **association of citizens active at regional scales** to obtain political representation to their problems (commuters at regional level, housing cooperatives, etc.).

In order to develop a critical database of both consolidated and emerging actors to be involved in the co-design process, the exploration activity will mainly consist in two steps:

- A round of **interviews with the project stakeholders representatives** in order to collect: a first overview on existing spatial imaginaries; a list of stakeholders that could be included in the map of regional actors database; specific information about best practices implemented by stakeholders in promoting inclusive and cooperative projects and experiences in a metropolitan and transcalar perspective (as presented in Annex 5).
- The **second step** will consist in the **submission of a Post-Covid 19 Survey** to the map of actors emerging from the interviews on the main changes and the impacts caused by Covid-19 pandemic on the urban life and the territorial organization of the cities of the "corridor" Milano-Bologna. The main assumption being that Corona Virus may reinforce the need for cooperation over the urban region, as well as that it made more clear than ever the strong functional relationship over the corridor.

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6 List of Annexes

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Annex 2: Data issues for the Visual Platform and Regional Portrait construction

Annex 3: Counterfactual analysis

Annex 4: Milano-Bologna High Speed Corridor – methodology for reconstructing the state of the art of the mobility practices

Annex 5: Interviews and stakeholders database

Annex 6: Spatial Imaginaries: selection of relevant policy documents, reports, literature