

The Central Tyrrhenian Sea Port Authority A critical juncture for the Campania port system?

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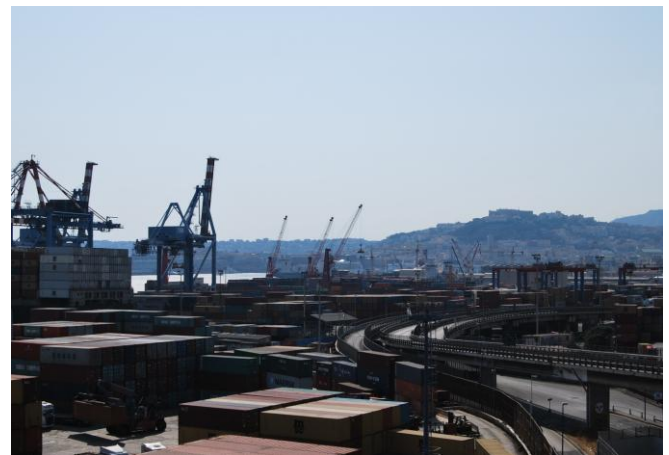
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ABSTRACT

Since 2016, the reorganization of the Italian port legislation through the decree n.169 has introduced port systems, as a new institutional umbrella helping improving ports efficiency. However, this new entity challenges the goals and interests of local stakeholders, which have their own tradition and have independently developed spatial patterns and governance arrangements. The current separate development paths—or to use a term from the political sciences: path dependence—have cemented in physical spaces, such as infrastructures and buildings. The Naples case stands exemplary. The new Central Tyrrhenian Sea Port Authority—as an entity overseeing the ports of Naples, Castellammare di Stabia and Salerno—exemplifies how institutional change can create both new opportunities for cities and the region and be restrained by existing spatial and governance interests. This is evident in the decisions that today see the municipality and the port authority, among others, unable to identify a solution that holds together economic development and enjoyment of the coastal landscape. Therefore, the recent port reorganization requires a new conceptualization of the role that space can play in institutional realignment, a rethinking of existing patterns of behavior as well as of the longer-term plans of all actors in the region. The article therefore presents a spatial-institutional analysis of the Naples port city region asking to what extent the ports merging represents a tool to overcome institutional and spatial inertia. In doing so, it combine policy document analysis with the results of interviews conducted with planning authorities at the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport in Rome, municipality and port authority of Naples.



The Central Tyrrhenian Sea Port Authority. A critical juncture for the Campania port system?

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KEYWORDS

Port city territory; Governance; Path dependence;
Coastal landscape; Institutions

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Introduction

The recent reorganization of the Italian ports endorsed by the 2016 legislative decree n.169 has promoted ports systems. Ports in proximities have been merged under a new institutional reorganization to provide them with more efficiency for logistics and bureaucratic simplifications. Nevertheless, this new institutional umbrella challenges the urban strategies of many municipalities that are part of the larger region to which these ports belong. In fact, the spatial claims of the port systems question the goals and interests of local stakeholders, which have historically developed separated cultural beliefs and therefore independently developed patterns of behavior. The port reorganization therefore asks for a rethinking of the existing institutional arrangements as well as a new conceptualization of the role that space can play in the new institutional setting.

In Naples, the new spatial organization has resulted in the creation of the Central Tyrrhenian Sea Port Authority as an entity overseeing the Campania ports of Naples, Castellammare di Stabia and Salerno. These recent developments exemplify how institutional change can create new opportunities that engage the future of the ports, cities and region in its realm and be restrained by existing spatial patterns and governance interests. The three cities have their own long-standing planning practices, but these are not aligned among each other or coordinated on a regional scale. In fact, port authority and municipality co-exist in the same space competing for space while lacking common goals, values, tools, and venues to achieve them, leading to a situation where large spaces are awaiting redevelopment. As a result, an eco-system approach that allow for a conceptualization of shared interest is much needed.

The current situation of separate development paths—or to use and extend on a term from the political sciences: path dependence—is cemented in physical spaces, such as infrastructures, and buildings, as well as land use dedication (Arthur, 1980; David, 2007; Hein & Schubert, 2020; Sorensen, 2015). A shared path of port-city development characterized the history of Naples for the longest time of its millenary history as a port city under the rule of different Kings. The Tavola Strozzi from 1472 illustrates the shared growth of port and city (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Tavola Strozzi, view of the city of Naples in Italy from the sea, 1470.
Alfonso V of Aragon naval victory on John of Anjou. Museo di San Martino, Naples, Italy.
(Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/dd/Tavola_Strozzi_-_Napoli.jpg).

But, since the Unification of Italy in 1861 each of these actors has independently developed separate institutions and spatial plans and has erected architectural and urban structures that serve to reinforce decisions and power relations of the past. Path dependence does not represent only a passive reliance of the actors on the past, but often a mechanism of conscious choices also related to structural aspects. Therefore, if it is true that path dependence creates inertia, the latter also represents the defense of a territory, its palimpsest and a way of doing things that has its roots in the history and culture of a place and life of people (Russo, 2017).

For example, the port of Naples has maintained its location close to the historic city center, while the city has continued to expand in multiple directions, effectively cutting off the extension space for the port. The inability of collaboration at the regional scale allows for a relocation of (some) port or urban activities or for shared spatial development of port and city has led to the creation of land-side road and rail infrastructure that separates the city from the port and the water (Bosso & De Martino, 2017).

The future of the port city of Naples has therefore been paralysed by the last 150 years of history and from a system of ideologies that today acts against change. In the city of Parthenope—name that the legendary history has entrusted to the city—a multitude of actors, mainly port, city government, regional and national government, compete for the spaces at the intersection of land and water. A concrete example of a site where competing interests block spatial development and a shared future is the eastern area of the port (Figure 2).

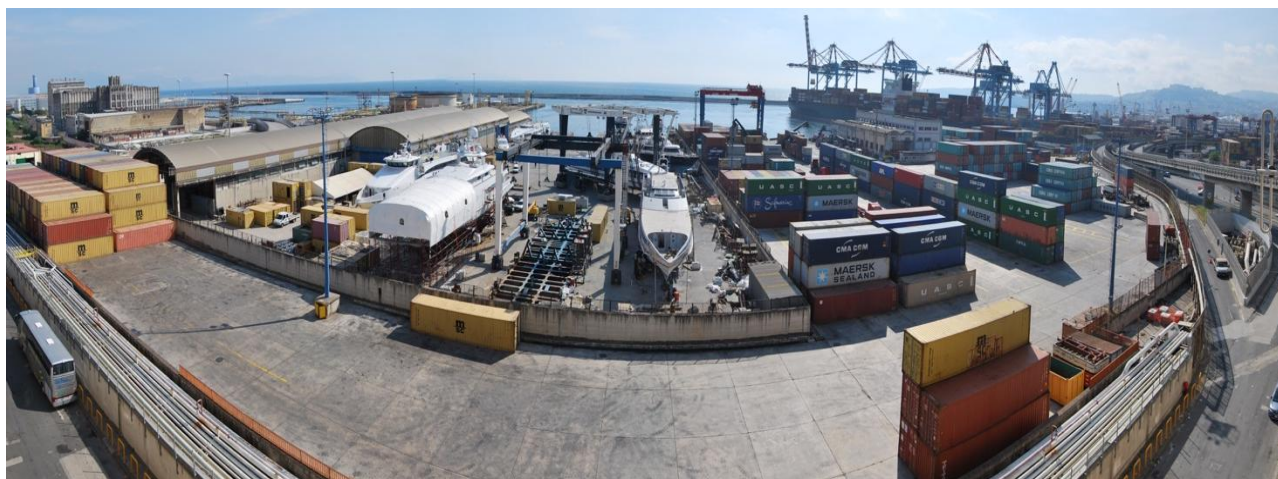


Figure 2. Naples, view on the container and oil port.

This strategic area is home to oil installations and containers terminal that serve the city of Naples and beyond. Several planning initiatives exist for this area. The port authority's plan proposes the expansion of the container terminal, doubling the current capacity of the port from about 400000 to 800000 TEU with a new platform of about 25 hectares into the sea (Figure 3). This proposal conflicts with the plan of the Naples city government for the same site, which proposes the preservation of the existing industrial architectural heritage and a redevelopment of the existing coastline as an urban waterfront.

To plan the future, it is important to understand the governance arrangements, spatial patterns and the needs of all stakeholders involved as they have evolved over time. The creation of the Central Tyrrhenian Sea Port Authority has created a unique opportunity—in the language of path dependence a “critical juncture”—to reconceptualize the relation between port, city and region in Naples (De Martino, 2016, 2020; De Marino & Hein, 2020). Finding and understanding where opportunities and challenges occur requires new approaches and interpretative tools (Hein & van Mil 2020).

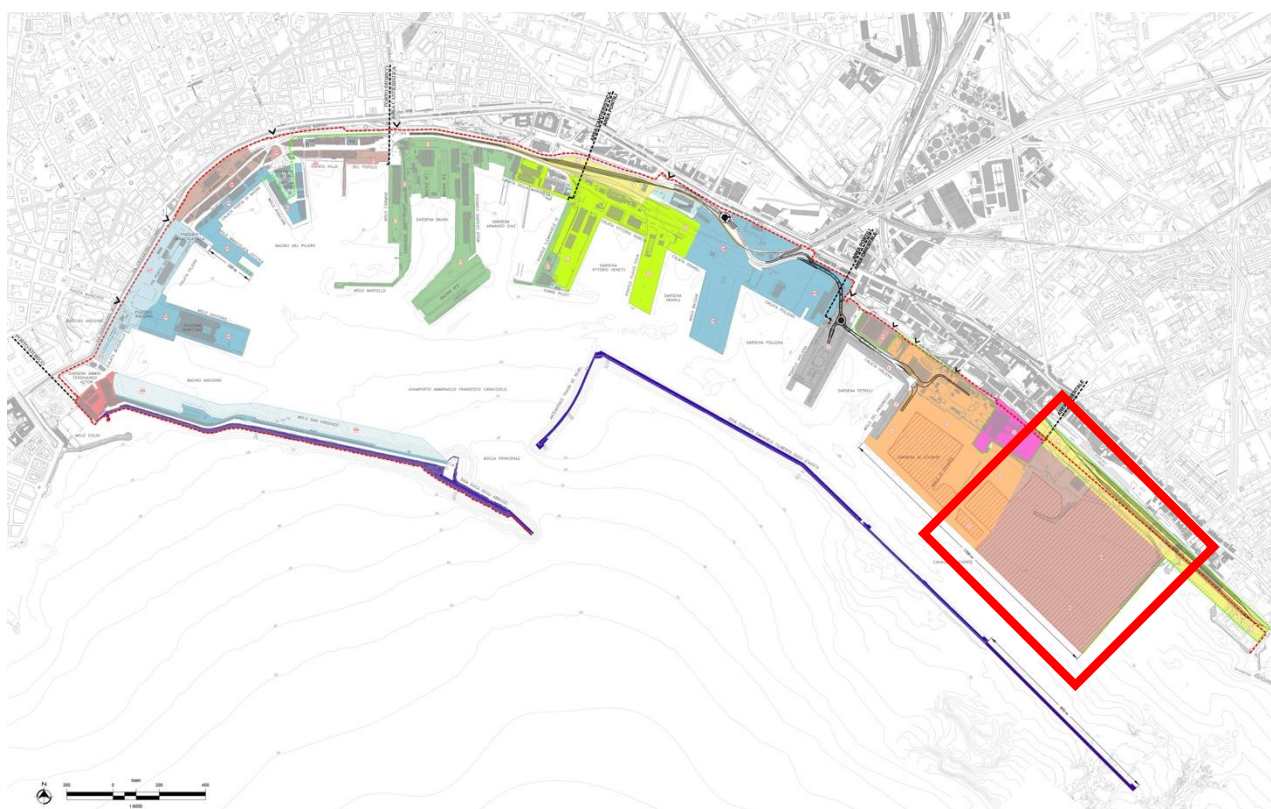


Figure 3. Port plan by the port authority. Vision by 2030 with the planned container terminal on the bottom right.

The article therefore presents a spatial-institutional analysis of the port of Naples and the regional territory in which it is inserted, asking to what extent the clustering of ports represents a tool to overcome historical conflicts towards a more integrated approach. In answering the research question, this article aims to firstly present the system of ongoing policies and plans and their spatial impacts. Secondly, the contribution triangulates these data with the results of interviews with selected key actors who play a significant role in port-city planning today. The combination of policy document analysis and semi-structured interviews will provide a comprehensive picture of the visions at stake and the related spatial impacts with the ambition to find spatial and institutional gaps helpful to trigger new interaction processes.

Methodology: path dependence as a theoretical lens

This article proposes to look at the port city region and its possible transformation as closely related to the history of its institutions. Path dependence theory and terms such as critical junctures represent the interpretative tool to understand the stratification of institutions, the formal and informal relations among planning authorities and how institutional changes in the current structure can represent a window of new opportunities (Arrow, 2004; Arthur, 1980; David, 2007; Hein & Schubert, 2020; Mahoney, 2000; Ramos, 2017).

Path dependence represent an interpretative tools to understand what André Corboz has defined as “urban palimpsest” (Corboz, 1998), to better understand the wide spectrum of events, traces, modifications that first have connected and later separated Naples from its coast line.

Path dependence allows to formulate hypotheses and research questions to better understand some structural aspects and investigate why the port of Naples was unable to adapt to the changes taking place. On the contrary key areas in the city have remained in what I call a waiting condition, as a state of uncertainty and spatial inertia linked to institutional inefficiency.

In Italy the establishment of port systems represents a critical juncture (moment of change in the current path) whose effects and challenges are yet to be understood. Path dependence becomes an innovative concept to read the inertia of spatial permanencies but above all the inertia of governance models, of the arrangements among authorities, the spatialisation of power relationships and the stratified and consolidated forms of management of the entire port planning, as well as the planning of the areas of interaction between port, city and the larger region. This concept allows to identify some inconsistencies that escape a conventional representation of history that looks only at the stratifications of the city. Due to path dependence every possible choice by the authorities lies within other choices made before by other people, who therefore remain imprisoned within a system of ideologies that resist change.

The proposed methodology aims to help better understand the past, the current problems to better reorient the processes of physical, spatial and governance transformation in the future.

Today in Naples the new container terminal planned by the port authority could change significantly the small strip of the coastline of the city of San Giovanni a Teduccio. This can have significant consequences from an environmental, ecological and cultural point of view.

However, the port authority explains the intervention as an infrastructure and economic necessity which could indirectly reduce port pressure on the urban system.

Evidently this incapacity of building a common vision is the result of a system of previous choices that have worked progressively by detaching the port from the city, and making the port a specialized and sectoral infrastructure.

In addition, to a policy document analysis, data have been collected through semi-structured interviews—the results of which discussed in this article—with Pietro Spirito, president of the Central Tyrrhenian Sea Port authority, Carmine Piscopo, professor and city planning councilor of the municipality of Naples and Ivano Russo, in 2017 manager of the cabinet office at the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport in Rome. The choice of actors is to be found in the desire to identify the specific levels of planning directly involved into the port city and region relationship. The questions were conceived as open questions, which had the aim of getting a grasp of the visions by the authorities and in particular to understand how each of the actors perceived the port-city relationship. The main focus of the interview was on path dependence. Specifically, the interview had the ambition to firstly test the research hypotheses understanding whether the actors were aware of path dependence and secondly to understand to what extent the inertia prevented today from planning the port-territory relationship in a different way. Some of the answers present highly controversial views.

Towards port systems: a critical juncture in port-city relationship

The actors which dominate the scene in Naples are very diverse. There are actors which are strategic that means that they have the power resources to take actions. In the case of Naples, the EU, the central government, the Superintendence, the Navy, the region, the port authority are the public bodies which belong to this category. Moreover, private actors such as shipping companies and logistics providers also represent quite strategic actors which have the resources and power to influence decisions and institutions. There are actors who are relevant that means they have the resources to be strategic and make things happen, but they do not use that power; rather they are dominated by other actors. The municipality, for example, belong to this category. Finally, there are secondary actors which do not have enough power to change the rules of the game but are committed to influence the debate bringing in new ideas (Hufty, 2011). Citizens and community associations belong to this last category. All these actors act upon the port in different ways. Each of these actors use specific plans to put ideas forwards resulting often in the conflict we experience at the intersection of land and water. The analysis presented in this article

concentrates on some of these actors, those who directly compete for this liminal space at different scales: central government, municipality and port authority. Due to the complexity of the contemporary interaction spaces, porous and liquid (Bauman, 2011; Manzini, 2019), these actors meet and collide for a space of particular spatial and economic importance, as well as social and cultural.

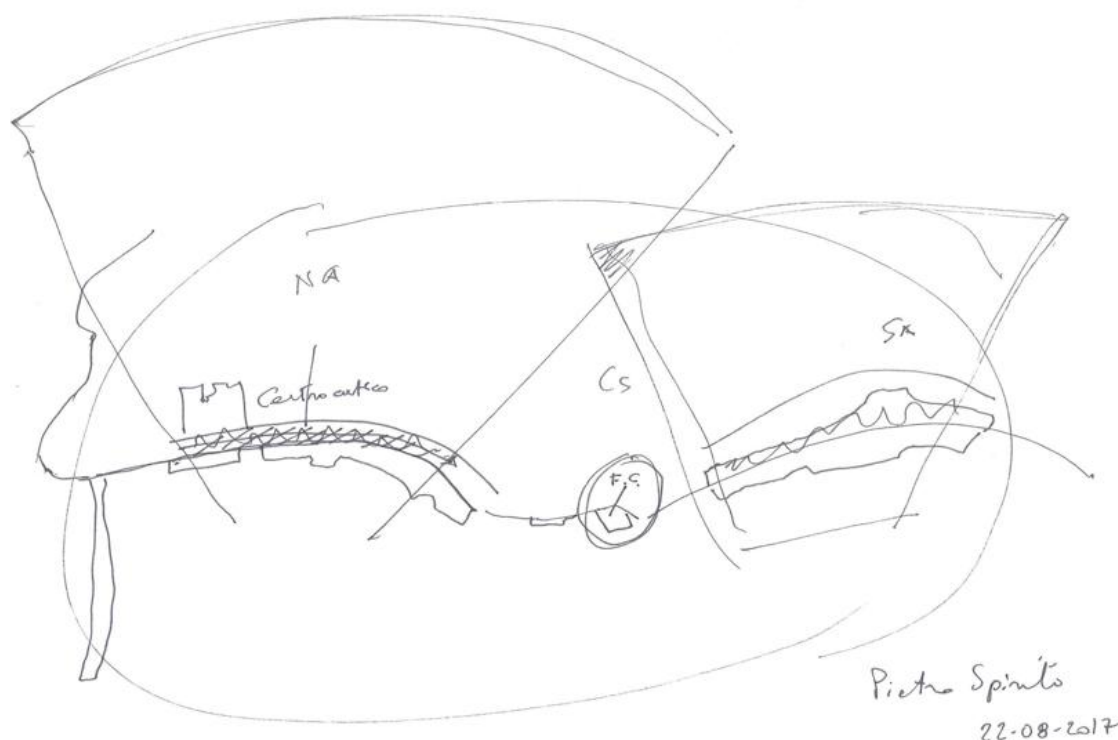


Figure 4. Sketch by Pietro Spirito, developed during the interview conducted by the author in August 2017. The sketch below (Figure 2) represents the response by Pietro Spirito, President of the Central Tyrrhenian Sea Port Authority, to the question posed during an interview in 2017 about how he envisioned the port-city relationship. The sketch clearly frames the dialogue at the regional scale, as enforced also by the new legislation.

Finding solutions within this space is not a simple task mostly because of the existence of path dependence processes. Due to path dependence actors remain imprisoned within a system of decisions made by others, some of which today create problems. This is evident in the system of choices that today see the municipality and the port authority, among others, unable to identify a solution that holds together economic and infrastructural development and enjoyment of the coastal landscape. Therefore, rethinking the spatial nature of the port asks for a rethinking of the governance structures and above all its inertial processes.

At a national scale the Ministry of Infrastructure and transport (MIT) is promoting an equal approach to port planning, facilitating integration between ports and European corridors through port systems (Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, 2014). The recent reorganization of port legislation through the legislative decree n. 169 of 2016 has in fact merged ports within the same regional territory¹. This decree and the consecutive law n. 232 of 2017 introduced significant changes in both space and governance of Italian ports, providing them with more logistic efficiency and recognizing the importance of the areas of interaction between land and water as strategic places to be transformed through new forms of integration. However, the Italian port legislation does not properly address the issues related to the improvement of the quality of the

¹ DECRETO LEGISLATIVO 4 agosto 2016, n. 169. Repubblica Italiana website. URL: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2016/08/31/16G00182/sg>. Last access 09/06/2020

port-city relationship spaces and when it does it is mainly to deal with technical and infrastructural aspects.

The relevance of the planning of the areas of interaction was introduced nationally only in 2004 through the guidelines for the formulation of the port regulatory plans; ten years later the first port reform (law n. 84 of 1994)². The national guidelines identified a sub-area "port-city interaction". According to the guidelines, competition between port and city authorities was played in these areas. Here, due to a lack of understanding, the procedural process often paralysed. In the definition of the sub-area of city-port interaction, an important role must also be reserved for urban axis which guarantee the physical and social connections between the city and the port areas that are more permeable and more compatible with the city's flows and activities. Unlike the operational port, usually continuous and not very permeable, the sub-area of port-city interaction can be fragmented in order to accommodate different urban situations. The redevelopment of the Naples waterfront started in 2004 responded to these guidelines. Unfortunately, the process has never been completed and the historic waterfront still experiences a waiting condition (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Historical area of the port with tracks stored in front of the Castle. Naples, 2016.

The recent legislation n. 169/2016 reorganized the port regulations introduced in 1994. The reform followed the port and logistics strategic plan introduced nationally in 2015 in response to the Italian decree "Sblocca Italia" in 2014. The port and logistics strategic plan was the prerequisite for the necessary interventions of reform of the port system, starting from the awareness of the difficult situation of the Italian ports, small, without connections and with an articulated governance. The port reform stems from the need to improve the competition of national ports both from an economic, infrastructural and logistic point of view. In addition, the reform streamlines the governance apparatus by reducing the number of port authorities that from 24 individual port authorities became 15 port systems in charge of the activities of addressing, programming, coordinating and controlling port operations and services as well as promoting forms of connection with port and interport logistics systems.

Although the legislation introduced a process of bureaucratic simplification and infrastructure improvements, it does not seem to describe how to approach the theme of the city-port interaction, if not for the exclusively logistics and infrastructural aspects. However, there are opportunities to look for in the improvement of the last mile. It is evident that an efficiency of the connections passes through a redesign and knowledge of the territory, its history and urban palimpsest.

² MIT. Linee guida per la formulazione dei piani regolatori portuali (art. 5 Legge n. 84/1994). URL: <http://www.mit.gov.it/mit/sites/lineeguidapr/lineeguidapr.pdf>. Last access 29/06/2020

National legislation addresses the issue of interaction a year later through the Legislative Decree n.232 of 2017. The main innovation introduced by this law was in fact the System Strategic Planning Document (DPSS). In fact, the law stated that the port system master plan must be made up of the DPSS and the port master plans of each individual port of the system. The DPSS identifies and perimeters the areas intended for strictly port and retro-port functions, the areas of port-city interaction and the last mile infrastructure connections of road and rail type with the individual ports of the system and the crossings of the urban center; the planning of these areas of interaction is left to the municipalities, after a consultation with the Port System Authority. This turns out to be an interesting innovation which involves municipalities as direct authorities in charge of planning. However, the efficiency of having separated the three port plans and how the collaboration among authority can work still remain to be understood.

The strategic document opens up significant opportunities that go in the direction of a multiscale and multisectoral planning. This article claims that this can find a real application only if the three ports are recomposed in a single plan.

This framework of European and national policies as well as the system of open questions overlap with a highly fragmented local plan. Here we will refer in particular to the visions contained in the municipal plan (2004) and in the port regulatory plan (three-year plan 2018-2020).

The city plan of 2004 pays particular attention to the area of San Giovanni a Teduccio in East Naples, as a fragmented area at the intersection of port flows (Figure 6), and a densely populated territory (Comune di Napoli, 2004).



Figure 6. View of Naples from San Giovanni a Teduccio and towards the regional hinterland.

In San Giovanni several projects have been put forwards in the last years. These projects have seen the collaboration of different public and private parties. Some of these projects have succeeded (such as the University Federico II and Apple academy in the building of the ex Cirio), others are in progress (such as the expansion of the port in East Naples), others have failed (such as the touristic in the area where is planned the port expansion). According to the city vision, the port while historically has constituted an essential entity of the city's economic, today represents a barrier that separates the city from the sea. The city of Naples has coastline of almost 20 km, but only for less than a third of this length there is a direct relationship with the sea (Comune di Napoli, 2004). Due to the spatial proximity with the active port the municipality has always intended to give suggestions to the port authority to better plan the port-city relationship. The guidelines contained in the city plan aimed to preserve the waterfront as an essential asset to the natural and historical identity of the city, suggesting the enhancement of a monumental public space between Piazza Municipio and the maritime station involving also the San Vincenzo pier as a long public promenade.

The regeneration of the oil field is also part of the city strategy. In 2004, the plan imposed the delocalization of oil facilities outside the city, specifically into the sea outside the gulf. The localisation concerned not only the storages, but also the oil from the port as well as the pipelines which connect the oil dock to the storage areas. The reason was that oil was incompatible with the urban settlements. From this perspective, the elimination of oil facilities could be seized as a

strategic opportunity for the future of the port and the city. This would have made space for the development of activities more profitable, as well as for the revival of shipbuilding activity (Comune di Napoli, 2004). The area of San Giovanni a Teduccio has been the focus also of a dedicated implementation plan (PUA, 2009). Within this plan the reconquest of the sea is a strategic theme that holds together environmental and economic necessities. This goal can be achieved, according to the plan, by eliminating the physical barriers between the city and the coastline as well as by reducing the impact of the port on the territory (Comune di Napoli, 2009).

Despite the common interests in the regeneration of the historic waterfront, the design orientations of the port authority clash with the city ones especially in East Naples. This is a place where history of the industrial past meets (and clashes) with flows of logistics and global economy.

The port plan identifies three fundamental directions around which to concentrate the planning focus: 1. the implementation of special economic zones; 2. the recovery of the historic waterfront and use of the San Vincenzo pier as a public promenade; 3. the infrastructure expansion of the port in the eastern area. The port of Naples has historically suffered the lack of connection with its hinterland and this has paralysed different developments. The history of the port is therefore strongly linked to the potential development of its hinterland and industrial and logistic apparatus.

Since 2016 and to better link the port to the economies of the territory, the regional authority has introduced the ZES in Campania (special economic zones) which are *“geographically delimited and clearly identified areas, located within the borders of the State, also consisting of areas that are not territorially adjacent as long as they have a functional economic link, and that includes at least one port area”* (Regione Campania, 2016). The economic strategy aims to re-industrialise the territory, promoting the development of activities already present in the area and to attract new investments and businesses from abroad (Figure 7).

As for the historical and cultural dimension, there have been different attempts to collaborate between the port, the municipality and the provincial and regional bodies that only in 2004 decided to join forces in a concrete action and through an architectural design competition to redesign a piece of the historic port which was in a waiting condition for decades. The Architect Michel Euvé and his design team won the competition which was managed by the Public Company “Nausicaa” between Port Authority, Municipality, Region and Province. The company was established with the aim of managing complex transformations. However, after fifteen years this area is still waiting for a regeneration. The waiting condition and the consequent failure of the process, as pointed out by Matteo di Venosa, professor of urban planning at the Department of Architecture of the University of Chieti-Pescara, during an interview in 2017 is to be found in the fact that the process was not adequately constructed (Di Venosa, 2017). At the time of implementing the project the design team realised that the draft of the project was not in line with what the Superintendency and the municipality aimed for. The waterfront regeneration in Naples failed for lack of sharing vision. Over the years, the project has been changed by the different authorities, adapting every time to the different interests involved. According to Di Venosa, this points out another problem which relates to temporality, a concept which has not been taken into account during the process. Important projects such as a waterfront regeneration needs time to be implemented. Over the years the needs and interests of the actors involved can change as well the actors in charge. Therefore, uncertainty and the different temporalities needed to become essential elements of the project (Di Venosa, 2017).

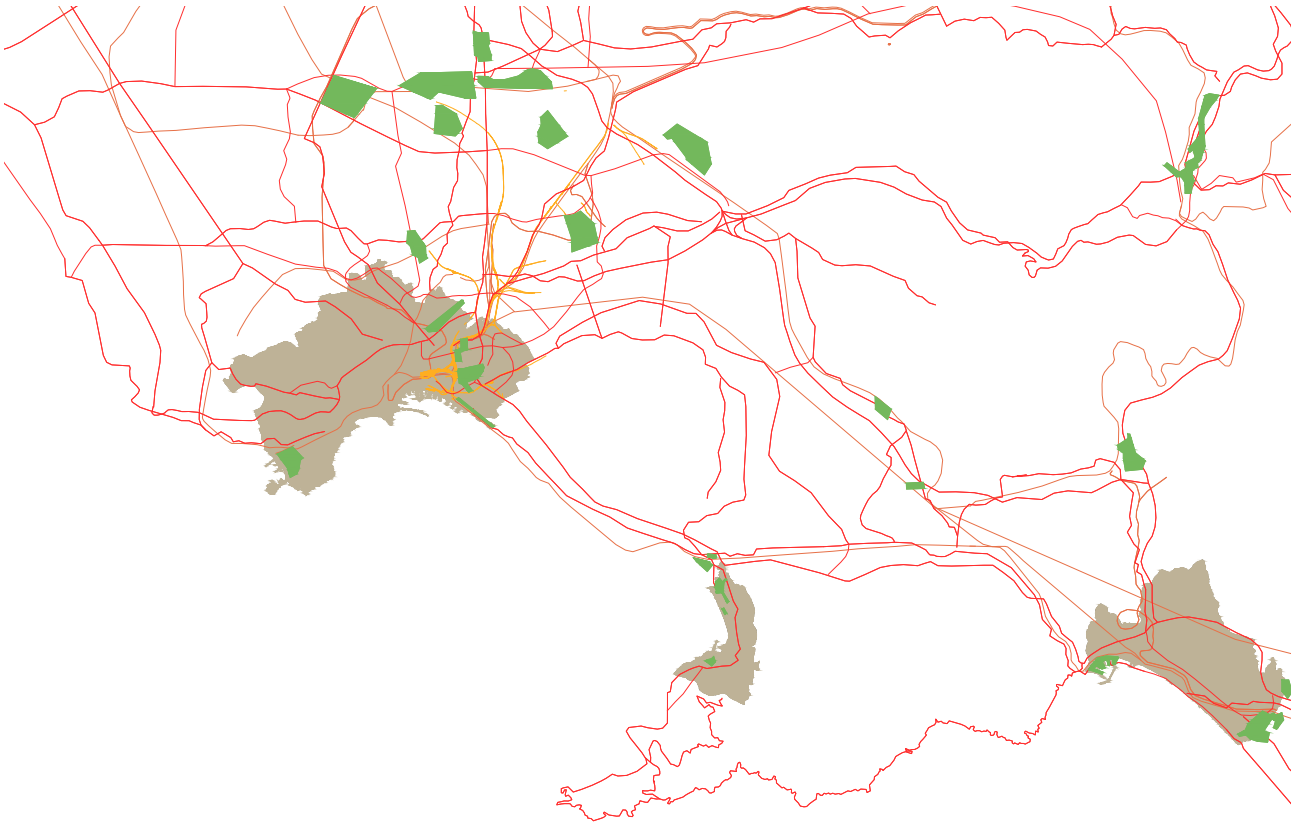


Figure 7. Regional scale of the port from Naples to Salerno.
In green the productive and logistic centers of ZES.

Today the Port System Authority is in charge of implementing the project in phases. By the 2020 the goal will be to carry out the first phase related to the new Beverello wharf and to restore the former Magazzini Generali building (Figure 8). The latter will host both the academic activities of the University Parthenope and a maritime museum (Autorità di Sistema Portuale del Mar Tirreno-Centrale, 2017).



Figure 8. Magazzini Generali building.

As regard the port expansion, the objective of the port authority is to locate the logistics activities to the east and reduce, in this way, the port pressure on the city. The Campania port system is a large multipurpose port system, supported by a demographic basin with a high population density and connected to important productive centers in Campania, Basilicata, Puglia and Lazio. The new

container terminal of the Eastern Darsena will double the currently moved TEU, passing from about 400 thousand TEU to the 800 thousand planned, with 25 hectares of concrete platform into the sea (Autorità di Sistema Portuale del Mar Tirreno Centrale, 2017).

From city to region: spatial fragmentation of the regional port system

According to the French historian Fernand Braudel, the whole history and culture of contemporary civilization has its roots in understanding the complex dynamics that have characterized the delicate relationship between land and water (F. Braudel, 1997; F. Braudel, 2017). In Naples port functions have grown and retreated over many centuries generating a fascinating urban palimpsest with the city always maintaining a trace of the relationships with its port. In fact, for a long time the port has represented the natural extension of the city towards the sea. Historical maps clearly highlight the morphological continuity with the design of the piers and quays aligned with the urban layouts.

As an entity strongly connected to the urban palimpsest, the port of Naples has gradually lost its dual nature of landscape and urban space to become a place of logistics and infrastructure on a large scale, a sectoral machine that has progressively moved away from the city and from the collective imagination of the Neapolitans (M. Russo, 2016; M. Russo & Formato, 2014; M. Russo & Miano, 2014).

The institutional analysis discussed in the previous paragraph has highlighted that spatial separation is the result of a separation of actors. It is therefore necessary to look at the port territory as a system. Looking at the port landscape as a whole can help to identify new relationships that escape on a close scale.

The port today experiences different relationships with the city behind it. In the west-central area of the port, adjacent to the lively city center, the contact space between port and city has currently become a cluttered port landscape characterized by abandoned or underused buildings and marginal spaces. Nevertheless, relevant buildings and areas such as the Mercato square, the warehouses, the Immacolatella building keep alive the port identity. Moreover, on the west side, the military port, traditionally closed to the public, is at the core of a long public debate about its return to the city as a public space. Promoters of this debate are the “Friends of Molo San Vincenzo”, an association that has been striving for the pier to become a place for social and cultural experiments between port and the city (Clemente, 2017).

In the eastern area, on the other hand, the logistics flows meet and collide with a highly urbanized and fragile territory, defining a collage of problematic landscapes, at the edge of the infrastructure, an archipelago of heterogeneous fragments waiting for new configurations. They represent pieces of cities, infrastructures, unused or abandoned areas, polluted soils, abandoned or abandoned buildings that are the result of a heterogeneous and frenetic development between port and city. The old industrial buildings of San Giovanni a Teduccio such as the Cirio or the Historical sites or the Corradini building, or even the oil storage field on the edge of the city are significant examples. It is precisely on the eastern area of the port that today the conflicting visions of the municipality and the port authority are competing, with evident spatial impacts. Here the elements of the urban palimpsest constitute a restriction to the port authority's development goal which has planned a new port expansion in the Darsena di Levante area. However, the project of rethinking the port infrastructure, also the result of several collaborations with the Department of Architecture of Naples, is far from being a reality, re-proposing a waiting condition that has lasted for many years (Cerreta et al., 2020).

If analysed from a larger scale, the area of competence of the port authority is much broader than the only city of Naples and it concerns an enlarged coastline that goes from the gulf of Pozzuoli to the port of Salerno (Figure 9).

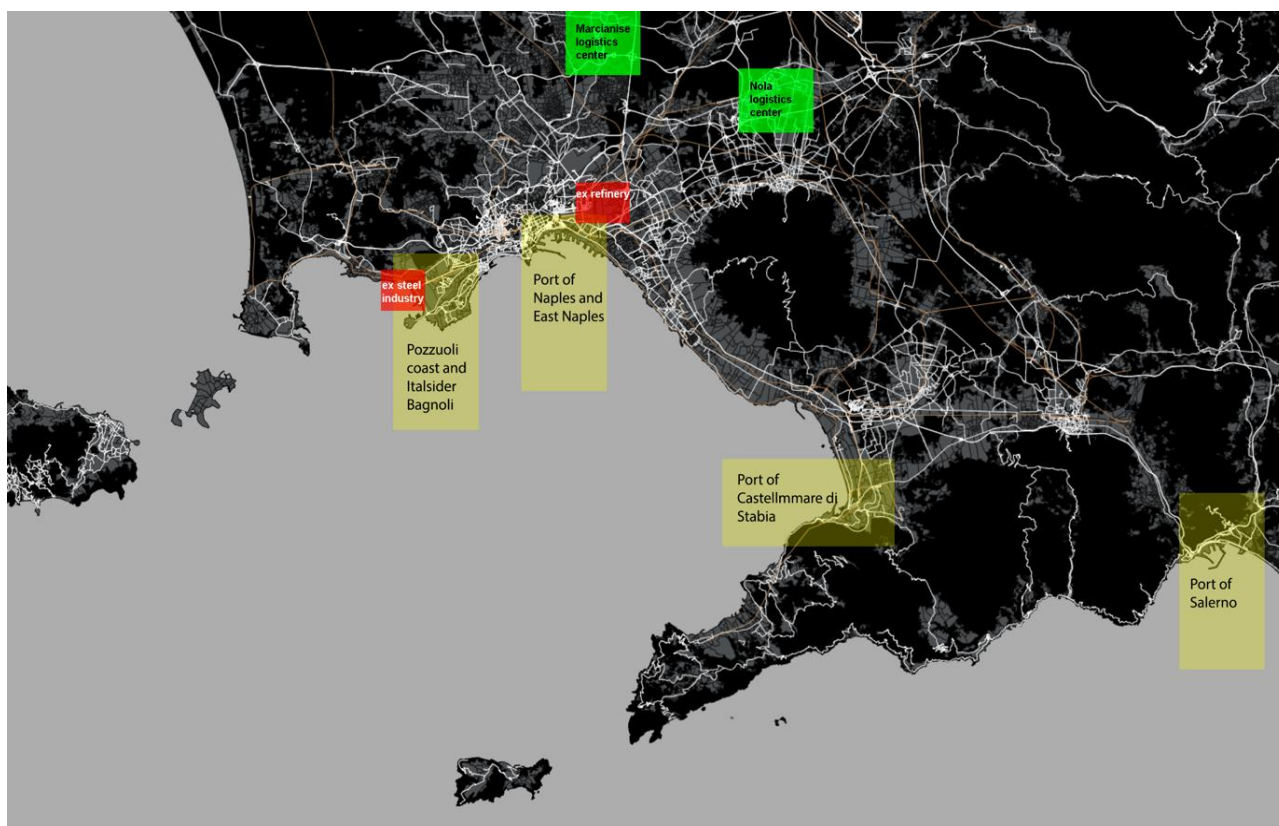


Figure 9. Regional coastline of Naples from Pozzuoli to Salerno.

In between there is the tourist and shipbuilding port of Castellammare di Stabia. It is therefore a complex system that involves regional ports all different in terms of morphology, flows and vocation. Naples and Salerno represent the main nodes of the regional system and they have both significant flows. Passenger and cruise traffic flows are the most significant data for the port of Naples which has registered more than one million cruise passengers since 2017³. Moreover, Naples still plays an important role in the energy sector (with around 5.3 million tons of liquid bulk and 6 million solid bulk). Salerno, plays a more significant role in the general cargo, such as the car and raw materials with around 1 million tons (Regione Campania, 2016). As regards the logistics, there are two interports, one in Nola (province of Naples) and another one in Marcianise (province of Caserta). The interport in Nola is managed by two different companies: Interporto Servizi Cargo and Intermodal Terminal Nola. While the interport of Marcianise is managed by a third company, Interporto Sud Europa S.p.A. (Regione Campania, 2016). These interports are connected to each other and to the port through different railway lines. On the contrary, the port of Salerno does not have a railway connection with the interports. Therefore, the regional port landscape operates today in a condition of spatial fragmentation. The fact that the port is constrained in east-west direction between two former industrial sites (ex-steel industry Italsider of Bagnoli and the area of the ex-refineries of East Naples) contributes to this fragmentation.

It is therefore clear that the rethinking of the port-city relationship cannot concern only the scale of the city itself. There are spatial and governance dynamics that go far beyond the border of the port and the city. Rethinking strategically the port requires to rethink the nature and role of the

³ Central Tyrrhenian port system. Statistics of the port. URL: <https://porto.napoli.it/bollettino-dati-statistici/>. Last access 26/06/2020

port, present and future, at different scales. It means questioning its nature, position and economic activities in light of a wider territorial vision. The necessity of having a vision emerges from the study of some European cases (e.g. Le Havre) where planning strategies demonstrate that the theme of the interaction between port and city cannot be solved only on a local scale. On the contrary, the topic is framed by the different authorities in a regional perspective and as a catalyst for territorial regeneration. The recent port governance "Haropa" in France for example, underlines the need to reunite the three regional ports (Paris, le Havre, Rouen) towards a unified plan⁴. This can only happen if the different actors start (again) to conceive the port as an urban, social and territorial infrastructure, thus reactivating a virtuous process of collaboration with the city and its inhabitants.

A conversation with the authorities

History matters in port cities and this emerged as a recurring theme during the interviews. The evolutionary history of a place gives shape to a specific port-city relationship. According to Ivano Russo, who in 2017 was manager of the cabinet office at the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MIT), this story distinguishes, for example, ports of the Mediterranean, and the Italian ports in particular, from the ports of Northern Europe. The first ones are a commercial-mercantile type of ports with little inclination to relate to the industry. This type of ports differs from other realities, such as the Netherlands for example where competitiveness has always been referred to the cost of transportation. In mercantile ports everything is based on buying, selling, customs, defining an image of "showcase" port, closed towards the city and open mostly towards the sea. In addition, he explained, there are also other differences to take into account. While most of the Northern European ports have been unified for centuries (e.g. Germany, Netherlands, Belgium), in Italy the Unification of the contrary was achieved only one hundred and fifty years ago. This has played an important role in terms of competition, resulting in a significant delay. Therefore, nation-ports like Hamburg, Rotterdam, Antwerp can be an example for Italian port authorities who must put into practice the "concept of Nation-port" through new policies able to promote the use of the 8400 km of coastline as a single large national port system (I. Russo, 2017). The creation of a unique and interconnected network of infrastructures is the only possible way to compete with other European port clusters, such as the ones in Northern Europe.

If history matters governance matters as well. Russo recognizes the existence of path dependence in governance processes. Italy, he explained, suffers the historical conflicts between the state, regions and municipalities that have given rise to phenomena that he has defined as "port municipalism". It exists in Italy, he continued, a sense of defense of the territory by local authorities as an attachment to their ways of doing and planning the space. *"This attachment of the authorities is not a completely negative aspect"*. From this perspective, path dependence represents a cultural principle to be safeguarded.

However, the minister underlined the centrality of the state as a coordinator of the local authorities.

He clarified that *"ports belong to the state"* and therefore to a higher institutional level. There is a total of fifty-seven ports of national interests. Their planning is placed under the control of the central government (Russo, 2017). Russo claimed therefore his own area of competence, arguing that as regard port planning on the sea-side the presence and role of municipalities or other local authorities in the management of ports should be re-organised. Their presence in the decision-making process worked in the past in an old logic when the port was part of the city. Today it is no longer the case. *"The maritime domain belongs to the state"*. Therefore, the port shape will be the

⁴ Calameo website. 500 ans port du Havre - Naissance d'un port. URL: <https://en.calameo.com/books/001344165ffa6e957a797>. Last access 31/08/2020.

result of specific reflections made within a logic that goes far beyond the local and regional dimension of the city and the port (Russo, 2017).

Managing therefore the coordination with local authorities is a complex task, although the central government seems to be open to a dialogue with the different stakeholders, but mostly where there is a real overlapping of interests. Logistics, for example, is one of those. Especially in port cities like Naples with lack of space issues related to the logistics need an active collaboration among different authorities. Building synergies is a necessity since the port infrastructures move across multiple municipalities. Naval gigantism is another topic that requires active collaborations. The times for a ship into the port for loading and unloading operations have changed compared to the past as well as the size and quantity of goods. This has enormous impacts on infrastructure, logistics and port facilities which will be very difficult to manage in the years to come.

The conversation with Pietro Spirito, president of the Central Tyrrhenian Sea Port Authority revealed that the waiting condition is part of the DNA of the port of Naples. According to Spirito, *"Naples is in a state of extreme delay"*. In the last decades other ports in the world have moved and changed. *"Naples, on the contrary, did not move, becoming become a marginal node of a much wider network"*. According to the port vision, the expansion strategy represents an opportunity to reduce the disparity with the rest of Europe. But it is more than that. He explained that there is a need today for wider reconnection because the current situation requires to look at ports not as isolated dots, but as systems. *"It would be much more appropriate not to talk about cities anymore, rather about metropolitan regions"*. In this respect, the goal of the new port system is to guide the Campania port region towards unity by clustering the three ports of the Region: Naples, Salerno and Castellammare di Stabia. The goal is to make this system more cohesive, enhancing diversity in order to avoid internal competition. However, this clashes with the history of the institutions in Naples which are characterized by inter-regional conflicts. This has caused the wider competition in the Mediterranean to be lost sight of. For a long time, he explained, *"feudalism has imposed the development of the port"*. The companies felt to be the owners of the port, while the real owner is the State, which entrusts the management of piers and docks to private companies with very specific regulations. This port feudalism has prevented the construction of dialogue among stakeholders and those phenomena of dependence that prevent today from planning things differently.

Therefore, according to Spirito, in order to move beyond path dependence and improve cooperation at a more regional scale it is necessary to overcome that degree of provincialism that has marked the history of ports in Naples and in Italy in general for too long. In fact, what the recent port reform is promoting, mostly to move from 24 port authorities to 15 systems of ports, means to compact the territories making them more homogeneous. The city, according to Spirito, is a very narrow concept with respect to the port reality. The territory of the port, in fact, has a sphere of influence that embraces 14 million inhabitants, so it is much wider than the city of Naples itself (Spirito, 2017) (Figure 10). This has a significant spatial claim and reframes the concept of port-city relationship at a higher scale.

This changing in scale of the port and the new spatial claims generated by the new institutional umbrella of the port system are challenging the traditional port-city relationship, pushing the different authorities to look for new equilibrium and forms of integration. In this respect, there is no magic formula to be applied everywhere. On the contrary, flexibility is required through solutions that should be respectful of the port identity that cannot be altered. It would be possible to insert some functions within the port enclosure that recall the metropolitan reality. This should be done in order to generate the minimum degree of contamination that is required to establish a relationship. There can be no invasion of the city into the port or the port into the city. It is, therefore, necessary to be respectful of the different functions and identities (Spirito, 2017).



Figure 10. Napoli e Mt. Vesuvio, April 2018. (Source: Foto 125457597 © Jesse Kraft - Dreamstime.com)

Carmino Piscopo, Professor in Architectural Composition and Naples City Councilor for Urban Planning returns to the inseparable relationship between port and city. Port and city have always had an intimate connection. This has led to a relation of continuity between the historic city and the port. Over time, things have changed, and city and port have often been separated. According to Piscopo, two main issues may have generated path dependence. The first one is related to the changes in the institutional framework; in the case of Naples, but also in other Italian ports, the European regulatory system—which is often imposed through top-down decisions—has introduced the “rationalization of ports” pushing authorities to frame ports independently of their historical origins and, therefore, kipping out the historical relations with cities (Piscopo, 2017).

The second aspect that has influenced the relationship between city and port generating *modus operandi* still visible today concerns the conflict of competences among Port Captaincies, Port Authorities, Navy and Municipality, and the overlap between the different planning instruments (port and municipal plans). The lack of common vision has generated separation both in terms of space and governance. According to Piscopo, today this separation could also represent an opportunity for change, moving beyond the nostalgic idea of a port and city physically attached to each other. On the contrary port and city should start to leave a relation based on distance. There are, in fact, a set of new possible relationships, which are difficult to be grasped if we stick to the traditional urban reading of the city (mostly still based on the understanding of the *cardo-decumanic* spatial patterns of the city). On the contrary, if we move the focus interest towards the east side new intangible relations between the city and the port can be identified (Piscopo, 2017).

Discussion

The article dealt with the theme of the port-city interaction, both space and governance, in the regional port landscape of Naples. The main argument discussed was that the future of the port of Naples is conditioned by phenomena of path dependence to the extent that today any possible change lies within an articulated system of choices and ideologies previously undertaken which is

strongly conditioned on spatial and governance interests. In verifying this statement, the article used the creation of the recent regional port system, defined as a critical juncture, as a starting point for evaluating to what extent this actually represents an opportunity for a real change of perspective.

In answering the research question, the article used an analysis of policy documents. Specifically it compares urban and port plans as well as discusses the recent national legislation. The latter, through the law no. 169 of 2016 and no. 232 of 2017 recognize the importance of the areas of interaction as strategic places from a spatial and economic point of view. Law 232 does something more in terms of design by introducing the DPSS as a strategic planning tool for designing the areas of interaction. Nevertheless the law delegates this task to the two main actors, port authority and municipality, without really providing a regional coordination. As a result, today the port and city plans are not yet aligned with each other, especially in the eastern area. Two contrasting visions co-exist. On the one hand, the municipal plan that looks at the eastern territory of Naples as an opportunity for a reappropriation of the coast line by the citizens. On the other hand, the port authority is planning a new container platform. This strategy if on the one hand would allow to reorganize the central areas of the port more in connection with the city, on the other will shift the center of gravity of the port's hard activities on San Giovanni a Teduccio.

The article has triangulated the policy document analysis with three interviews to the most relevant authorities called to play an active role in planning port-city relationships at different scales: the port authority (in the person of Pietro Spirito), the municipality (in the person of Carmine Piscopo), the Ministry of Infrastructure and transport (in the person of Ivano Russo).

All the interviewees recognized the existence of path dependence in the form of inertial and consolidated mechanisms that have meant for port and city been planned in a separate and sectoral ways. There are those, like Ivano Russo, who recognized path dependence in the way the history of the territory has given shape to a specific vocation of the port, giving it an identity that in some way should be preserved. Path dependence, however, is to be found in the way in which this principle prevents a healthy relationship between local and national authorities. And therefore according to this vision and in a contemporary logic in which the port is no longer just part of a city, but of the region, the contribution of local authorities should be reviewed in favor of national coordination.

According to Pietro Spirito, this defense of the territory, which he has defined as "port feudalism" has created over the years an anarchy of planning with private companies that have operated as if they were the owners of the port. Consequently, a regional coordination would help to see the relationship between port and city in a different way. Piscopo, on the contrary, aimed to restore value to the city. He identified path dependence in the way recent European and national policies are pushing local authorities to plan exclusively following parameters of rationality and efficiency. This ignores the history and culture of a territory to which every single port belong.

It is evident that every actor still claims its own area of expertise at the expense of a unitary design and vision. A careful assessment of each actor and related path in light of their morphological, social and political structure is needed to overcome historical inertia. This would require a break in the port-city path dependence among the Port Authority and the municipalities (including Castellammare and Salerno) and the regional authority to develop a comprehensive plan for the three ports and cities of the regions as a unique and resilient ecosystem. Such a shared plan asks for a change of perspective, a conceptualization of port, city and region not through conventional lenses which have focused separately on economics, technology and infrastructure, but a truly integrated approach combining spatial, social and cultural aspects.

Notes on interviews

The interviews were conducted by the author between June and August 2017. The conversations were recorded and the contents presented in this article are based on a reinterpretation of the discussions with the interviewees. All the interviewees, read the draft of the article and have authorized to proceed with the publication of the contents and their names.

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