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Martina Carra, Nicoletta Levi, Giulia Sgarbi, Chiara Testoni,

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From community participation to co-design: "*Quartiere bene comune*" case study

Martina Carra

Department of Engineering and Architecture, University of Parma, Parma, Italy, and

Nicoletta Levi, Giulia Sgarbi and Chiara Testoni

Active Citizenship and Smart City Department, Comune di Reggio Emilia, Reggio Emilia, Italy

Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to contribute to research in the field of social innovation and participatory policies through the analysis of the experimental "Quartiere bene comune" project implemented by Reggio Emilia municipality. The paper focuses on the planning strategies, the operational co-design methodologies and the programming of the used processes.

Design/methodology/approach – Firstly, the paper reviews the regulatory instruments and previous participatory policies implemented in Italy. Secondly, it describes the approaches and methodologies used in the context of participatory policies, through strategic planning and according to bottom-up governance models.

Findings – The study assesses the quality of the non-standardized solutions which were adopted, both in terms of community daily needs and of management of public space. Such assessment relies on a system of measurable numerical indicators, to the goals established within the pre-agreements between public administration and community and to the ensuing consistency with the indicators provided for in the planning and executive management plan of the public body.

Research limitations/implications – This paper proposes a new model for the evaluation of public action, capable of highlighting the relation between assumptions, operative processes, results and impacts achieved. The study is limited to the case of seven sample neighbourhoods of a single city, in which the Citizen Agreement cycle has been completed.

Originality/value – The study contributes to defining the framework of participatory practices in terms of active citizenship and organizational/social innovation and proposes a new methodology of impact assessment.

Keywords Participation, Co-design, Policy making, Active citizenship

Paper type Case study

1. Introduction: the Italian pilot project "Quartiere bene comune" in Reggio Emilia

This practitioner case study analyses an experimental "collaborative city" project carried out by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia starting in 2015. The project originates from a number of determinants, both generic and rooted in the socio-historical characteristics of the area. While it does draw on the overarching debate and the participatory democracy practices that have emerged over the past decades, *Quartiere bene commune* is a "collaborative city" co-design project with its own, very specific characteristics.

The project was born within a favourable legislative context. The reform of Title V of the Italian Constitution (Law no. 3/2001) promoted the introduction of various forms of active

citizen participation in public life, based on the principle of horizontal subsidiarity, by which private citizens (either individually or through associations) are directly responsible for managing collective needs and activities of general interest, and public authorities assume a "subsidiary" function that involves planning, coordination and possibly management duties. In fact, the introduction of this principle was but the final step of a legislative process that, starting with the reforms of the 1990s, progressively emphasised the ability of policy-makers to interpret the interests and needs of the community, thus defining the public-private relationship as a fundamental factor in making effective public decisions.

Within this favourable legislative context and backed by a vibrant debate on deliberative democracy and on the principles of subsidiarity on which it is founded, a period of participatory practices began that aimed to include citizens in public decisions, especially within local administrations. Centred around the principle of direct citizen participation, these processes are based on creating opportunities for dialogue and exchange among differing viewpoints and approaches, to reach shared decisions independently from political affiliation or party representation. Within Italian administrations, the practices of deliberative democracy have often taken the form of participatory budgeting, town meeting, deliberative opinion polls and co-planning initiatives.

Another crucial factor that prompted an innovation in the relationship between administrators and citizens was the abrogation of the *circoscrizioni* (districts). Since 1976, the *circoscrizioni* had been the main organs of participation, consultation and service management on a local level. Within these subdivisions, the elective and administrative bodies carried out fundamental tasks related to urban-suburban relations, to citizen participation in public life and to service management, all in close contact with the communities. When Legislative Decree 02/2010 was converted into Law 42/2010, it spelled the end of administrative decentralisation based on the model of *circoscrizioni* for all municipalities with a population under 250,000, meaning virtually all of Italy with the exception of the country's largest cities (ISTAT, 2015). For Italian municipal administrations and especially for small to medium-sized cities like Reggio Emilia, the suppression of these district councils became a creative opportunity to reformulate their strategies and identify innovative ways to foster active citizen participation and manage the local territory. The various experimentations carried out to this end by Italian municipalities have highlighted two main types of approach:

- the first based on identifying alternative and appropriate instruments (councils and commissions) and procedures (rules and regulations), to be updated throughout the process; and
- the second based on implementing participatory processes to devise and propose new solutions to be tested.

This paper illustrates the results of a research project carried out by a multi-disciplinary work group consisting of members of Reggio Emilia's municipal administration and members of the academic community. The project's goal was to come up with a methodology for the assessment of the early results and impacts produced by the "Quartiere bene commune" initiative, in hopes of identifying the programme's margins for improvement both within the administration and outside of it.

2 Project methodology

2.1 Theoretical basis

As a public policy, "Quartiere bene commune" originated from the factors described above and has evolved to surpass its limits and partialities:

- participation as a policy-making methodology that is limited to individual projects or to specific phases in a policy's life cycle;

- participation as an enabling factor in the public-private relationship but not as a factor in balancing the roles of the various players involved in the design phase;

- overcoming the traditional representative logics, in favour of forms of participation based on commitment and concrete responsibility directed to the common good and the general interest; and

- overcoming the formal and legal-administrative nature of decentralisation and of the relations between territories, communities and local government, reinventing the notion of neighbourhood as something capable of promoting identity and a sense of belonging and therefore civic engagement.

Furthermore, the project was born to address one of the goals of the administration that took office following the 2014 elections: to not only replace the traditional model of urban-suburban relations with new actions and tools for dialogue in community relations but also to introduce non-standardised policy solutions, based on new ideas, service models and production processes. The object was to favour approaches based on skill-matching and *open innovation* and to adopt the needs of citizens as a criterion for planning and designing operations to encourage change. Consistent with this objective, the Municipality instituted within its organisational structure a *Department of Competitiveness and Social Innovation*, which includes the "Office of Policies for responsible protagonism and the smart city" and which was tasked with carrying out the aforementioned project.

The policy known as "Quartiere bene commune" was therefore born to address a complex set of challenges: to transform participation in civic protagonism, to establish a new paradigm of administration and a new model for the production of services, to strengthen social cohesion through a sense of belonging to the community. In sum, the challenge is to create the conditions for realizing a model of *collaborative city* (or *co-city*) based on the shared administration of common goods. The project is founded on a series of underlying theoretical assumptions that determine its distinctive features.

2.1.1 The strategic planning approach

2.1.1.1 *From urban planning to strategic planning.* Strategic planning is a planning process that defines the goals of a system and then, according to the available resources, identifies the means, instruments and actions required to reach these goals in the medium-to-long term. The distinguishing aspect of strategic planning, which has been tested by several European administrations as well as in Italy for just over a decade (Florio, 2010), is an innovative approach to traditional planning, characterized by a sector-based view of urban development dynamics and usually founded on logics of top-down imposition. Strategic planning aims to tackle local issues of social, environmental and economic nature contextually, through a more holistic type of approach than what was previously common; to tangibly pursue its objectives, it aims to adopt a more pragmatic line of governance that involves greater dialogue with the stakeholders, where authoritative attitudes give way to an increased openness to negotiation (Di Filippo *et al.*, 2006). Strategic planning therefore implies a fundamental revision of the traditional role of the governing body, which goes from being an institutional "decider" in a top-down dynamic to a "facilitator" of territorial transformation policies in a bottom-up dynamic, with an integrated and multi-sector plan of action.

2.1.1.2 *Switching from a "government" to a "governance" process.* Within a traditional administrative approach, the *government* model is based on the exercise of representative democracy: a legitimately-elected decision-making body defines policies and only

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afterwards does it (perhaps) discuss them with the citizens. The notion of *governance*, instead, implies a greater synergy with social and economic players, with the goal of reaching a collective and shared resolution, according to a bottom-up approach. The concept of *governance* is based on the principle of "subsidiarity", which implies a network-like rather than pyramid-like government structure, as well as a mutual trust between the institutions and the community: on the one hand, government entities are asked to view the community as a competent operator capable of directly handling a number of tasks and the relative financial resources; on the other hand, citizens are asked to set aside the attitude of indifference associated with the NIMBY (*not in my backyard*) mentality and are instead called to actively work together with the municipality.

2.1.1.3 The critical/phenomenological interpretation of the territorial context. In an effort to surpass the traditional *circoscrizione* model and to promote a stronger presence of the public body within its territory, as well as to ensure greater efficiency in delivering its services, the administration adopted a "critical" reading of the territory which is free of geometrical and administrative subdivisions, through a "phenomenological" interpretation of the context that aims to shape the range of provided services around actual needs and specific urban dynamics. The administration ultimately came to identify 19 neighbourhoods (Figure 1) within its territory, each of which connoted by a sense of identity strongly perceived by the community and featuring vibrant social dynamics thanks to deeply-rooted networks of inter-personal relations and to lively ties with the business system. These neighbourhoods, which do not coincide with the previous *circoscrizioni*, constitute the new "epicentres" of administration-community interfacing. Ideally, they will take on the role of modern-day *piazze* or "forums" where the administration can rebuild a capillary presence,
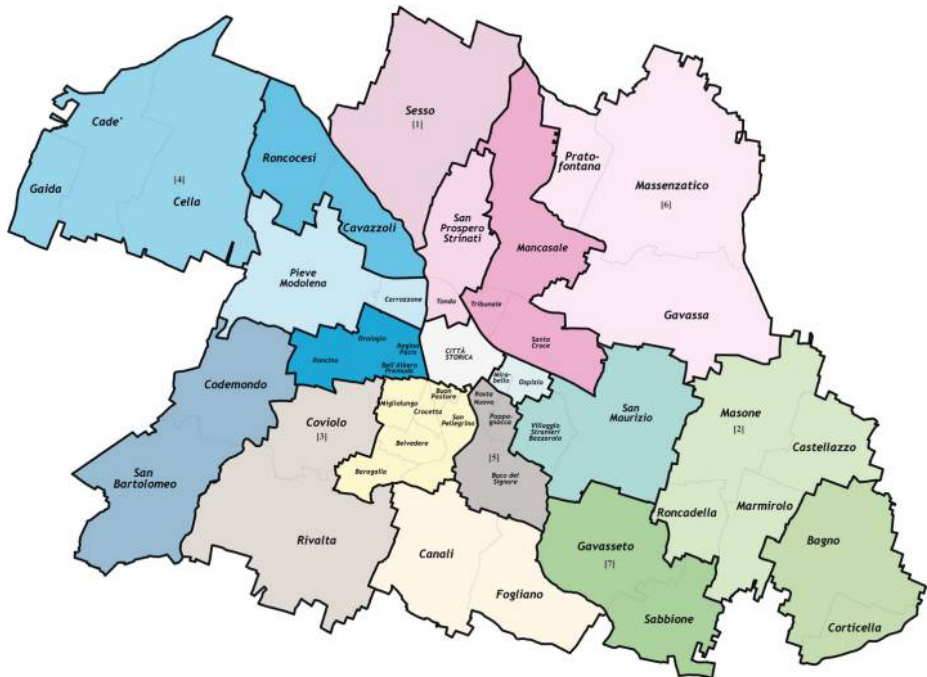
Figure 1.
Current administrative partitions of the municipal territory of Reggio Emilia

activating participatory avenues and developing co-designed projects. Thus, they represent the common good in which private and public interests converge.

2.1.1.4 The territory as a living environment: physical identity and connections among people. In constructing the process of *proximity governance*, a key role is played by the physical space, not merely in its infrastructural dimension but above all in its identity, as a milieu understood as a "localised and specific set of natural and socio-cultural conditions which, over time, define the specific properties of the place itself" (Governa, 2001). With its strong individual and collective sense of identity, the territory becomes the meeting point and the instrument by which to rebuild the relationship between citizen, community and administration. According to this approach, the project aims to usher in a new vision of urban planning, which sees the territory as a spatial transposition of the public policies created and enacted in cooperation with citizens (Table I).

2.1.1.5 The neighbourhood architect. The neighbourhood architect is the key player within this new paradigm of urban-suburban and citizenry-administration relations: this professional figure is tasked with strengthening active protagonism and "fertilising" the local ecosystem. He/she is mediator of conflicts between the inside and outside, as well as a proponent of innovative solutions and project drafts. His/her skill-set includes the ability to manage social relations, to foster social innovation and to come up with creative solutions, as well as a knack for communication and construction of community networks. As a facilitator of dialogue processes, he/she is able to make citizens' proposals tangibly implementable.

2.2 Operational approach

The work process that takes place in the city's neighbourhoods has been outlined in a specific document approved by the City Council in December 2015. It comprises several different phases (Figure 2):

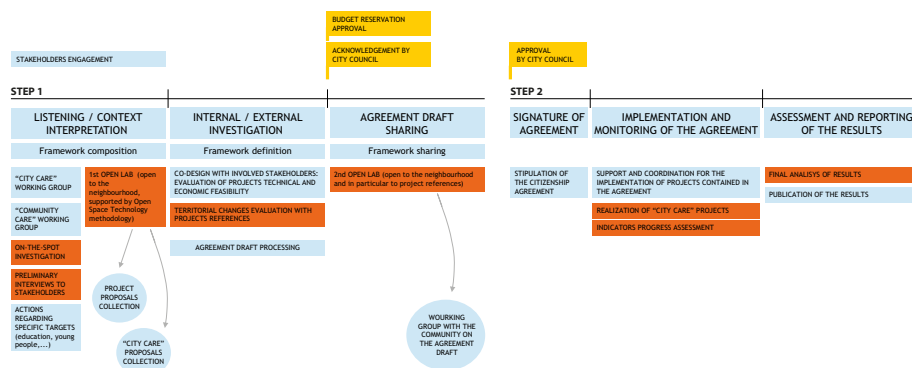*2.2.1 Territorial interpretation and community listening.*

- The interpretation of the urban context relies on an analysis of the neighbourhood's *status quo*, in collaboration with all of the administration's internal services, to identify the main policy programmes and their relative ramifications in terms of services, projects and existing activities. In this phase, the internal services also collaborate with the neighbourhood architect to identify emergencies and critical situations, as well as to produce a mapping of the stakeholders which are considered instrumental for triggering community participation.

- The listening phase, instead, takes place through direct community participation tools such as on-site surveying, round tables, debates, interviews and targeted focus groups.

2.2.2 Co-planning. In this phase the neighbourhood architects submit the ideas and proposals to the appropriate municipal authorities to run technical and financial feasibility studies. Municipal analysts highlight the criteria of feasibility, opportunity and relevancy established by the project to approve the proposals. Based on the findings of this internal examination, the neighbourhood architect will then prepare a Citizenship Agreement proposal which includes:

- the proposals and requests for action which have been deemed technically feasible and financially compatible with the budget plan; and

- the municipal administration's projects and intervention programmes relevant to the territory which is exclusive competence of the citizens' workshop.

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| Area | Population (2016) | | | | | | | |
	Inhabitants [N.]	Population increase 2000-2006 [%]	Area surface [km2]	Density [ppl/km²]	Ageing index	Birth rate	Migration rate (2014)	Foreign population [%]
Reggio Emilia	1,71,491	17.40	231.56	741	137.23	8.9	-3.31	16.47
Neighbourhoods data								
1 Sesso	4,555	43	14.35	320	85	9.4	-5.44	11.2
2 Masone, Roncadella, Marmirolo, Castellazzo	3,250	42	19.88	163.48	102.4	11.12	-3.20	12.35
3 Coviolo, Rivalta	8,628	19	19.00	454.11	153.9	9.1	-2.58	5.76
4 Cella, Cadè, Gaida	5,838	61	24.50	238.29	85.8	12.1	-16.90	19.62
5 Rostanova, Pappagnocca, Buco del Signore	17,596	5	5.04	3,491.27	206.9	6.5	4.51	14.56
6 Pratofontana, Massenzatico, Gavassa	7,254	46	31.51	230.21	91.4	8.9	0.34	10.09
7 Gavasseto, Sabbione	1,855	19	12.47	148.76	138.5	8.75	-5.56	4.87
8 Tondo, S. Prospero Strinati	9209	16	5.69	1,618.45	138.8	9.2	-1.77	19.29
9 Mancasale, Porta S. Croce, Tribunale, Santa Croce	9,305	28	13.37	695.96	98.5	12.7	3.55	34.39
10 Mirabello, Ospizio	11,178	8	1.42	7,871.83	160.1	10.2	-29.03	30.01
11 Villaggio Stranieri-Bazzarola, San Maurizio	9,867	22	11.92	827.77	134.7	8.7	0.22	12.35
12 Pieve Modolena, Carrozzone	12,693	23	9.83	1,291.25	130.1	9.0	0.93	17.00
13 Regina Pacis, Nell'Albero-Premuda, Orologio, Roncina	16,046	8	4.95	3,241.62	164.4	7.4	-2.74	18.50
14 Roncocesi, Cavazzoni	3,318	54	8.8	377.04	80.2	12.1	-0.70	11.23
15 Codemondo, San Bartolomeo	3,889	61	15.77	246.61	100.6	10.0	-3.63	6.01
16 Buon Pastore, San Pellegrino, Crocetta, Migliolungo, Belvedere, Baragalla	25,786	20	6.82	3,780.94	190.7	7.8	4.07	15.23
17 Fogliano, Canali	6,023	29	13.02	462.60	125.3	6.6	1.6	6.02
18 Bagno, Corticella	3,673	53	11.71	313.66	84.9	9.35	-2.02	9.37
19 Città storica	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Table I.
Reggio Emilia
neighbourhood data

Figure 2.
Scheme of the project
processing

2.2.3 The agreement proposal. The initial project hypotheses, gathered during the territorial interpretation and community listening phase, approved and perfected during the internal co-planning phase, are now re-submitted to the citizens and stakeholders through participative and deliberative discussion processes, to reach the broadest possible consensus. This phase concludes with the stipulation of the Citizenship Agreement, the document outlining all the projects to be carried out in the neighbourhood with their respective goals and actions, the financial and material resources and the "division of labour" among the Municipality and all the private entities involved.

2.2.4 Execution of agreement. The Agreement becomes formally effective once it is approved by the City Council, while it becomes factually effective once its projects are included in the service plans and schedules of the respective municipal offices; during an official public ceremony, the Agreement is also signed by all citizens and groups involved, thus formalizing their respective commitments to the projects and activities outlined within it.

2.2.5 Implementation, management and monitoring of the agreement. The next phase involves the implementation, management and monitoring of the projects outlined in the Agreement, under the supervision of the neighbourhood architect, who works to keep everyone active and involved, while facilitating the relationships both amongst the various parties and between them and the municipal services involved in the projects at hand.

2.2.6 Assessment and reporting of the results achieved and the impacts produced. The assessment phase is based on a system of numerical indicators for each project, established within the Agreement itself and consistent with the indicators already included in the City's General Planning Document and in its Executive Management Plan. The final reports are published on the City's official website every six months. Besides measuring the results achieved, *Quartiere bene comune* has set up a dashboard of indicators to measure its own overall performance in terms of participation levels, efficiency, effectiveness and social impact, within a framework of assessment and accountability of public work.

The Citizenship Agreement shapes up as both a self-contained process, which begins with an exchange of ideas with the community and ends with the assessment of what has been achieved together and as a continuum of sequential processes, since every time one Agreement is concluded, the cycle of discussion and co-planning starts over, generates new dynamics of relationships among the players, new players interested in public action and new projects. In light of this intrinsic characteristic, it can be termed a "continuous improvement process", a permanent cycle of exchange and co-design which generates a new

model of administering the common good, one which is decentralized and based on public-private cooperation. The underlying object of the initiative - the common good - is no longer understood as a specific object as is the case in traditional participative processes but rather as the construction, over time, of a sense of belonging to a certain community, while fostering the civic responsibility to preserve and improve it.

3. Project findings

To date, halfway through the new administration's term, the policy's implementation processes have reached approximately 50 per cent of Reggio Emilia's municipal territory, which translates to just over 90,000 people out of 172,000 total residents (Figure 3). The operational processes have produced effects both within the community and on the internal organisation.

3.1 The evaluation model

To highlight the added value generated in these areas as well as the consistency and correlation between the planned objectives of change and the innovations actually ushered in by the project, a new model for the evaluation of public action has been tested and validated. This theoretical model was developed *ex novo* and used within the project by a working group of the administration that coincides, in part, with the authors of this contribution. Specifically, a theory-based evaluation (TBE) approach was adopted, capable of explaining the programme's underlying assumptions (the policy makers' goals and intentions) and of highlighting the relation between assumptions, operative processes activated, results and impacts achieved. This experimental model evaluates and identifies a series of instruments and indicators (a so-called "performance dashboard") conceived to
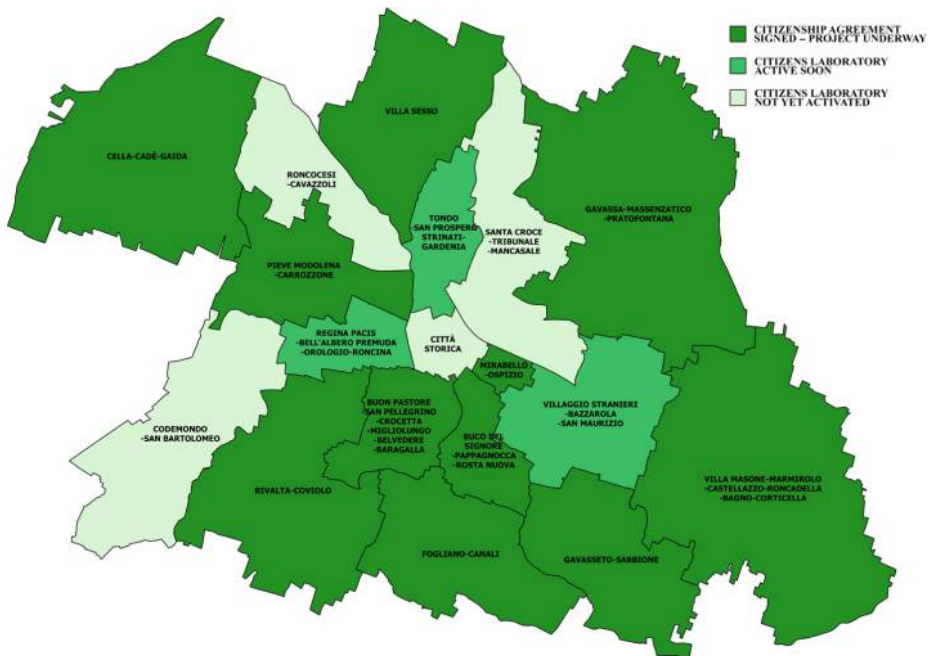

Figure 3.
Neighbourhoods/districts: level of progress

highlight what results and impacts have been produced in terms both of external innovation (*social innovation*), such as quality of the solutions implemented, of participation and of relational capital generated and of innovations inside the community (*organisational innovation*), such as changes in decision-making processes, of modes of creation of services and solutions, of the organisation's ability to address and adapt to challenges.

The policy's performance dashboard is both numerical data-based (quantitative analysis) and quality data-based (qualitative and participative analysis) and it investigates both external and internal results. The former look at changes and innovations produced within the target communities and show whether the policy's action has "rectified" the urban-suburban crisis (the root problem) and whether it produced context-adequate solutions (product innovation) and generated relationships, satisfaction and confidence in the institutions (process innovations). The quantitative indicators chosen to measure changes in the community evaluate: *participation*, *effectiveness* of the project and policy solutions adopted in the neighbourhoods and the community's *increase in social capital*, represented by variations in *relational characteristics*, namely changes generated in the relationships among the players who interact as part of the Citizenship Agreement experience (both among each other and their relationship with the Municipality). The relational variables measured are: the *importance of the relationship*, the *willingness to commit* and the *satisfaction* of each of the Agreement's signatories. The measurement is further integrated with the results of a participatory evaluation process based on *focus groups*.

The evaluation and measurement of the impacts of organisational innovation, especially as far as its *outputs*, its *efficiency* and the quality of innovations in working methods as well as in *decision-making* and *policy-making* processes, is built upon a selection of indicators and a series of semi-structured interviews with colleagues from the Municipality, who have had significant experiences working together with the Neighbourhood Architects.

The cross-section used for this evaluation, carried out as part of the research project illustrated in this case study, comprises the seven sample neighbourhoods (out of 19 total) in which the Citizen Agreement cycle had been completed and for which therefore the full data was available.

3.2 Results and impacts of social innovation

In the cross-section examined, there were 678 workshop participants (Table II), including 349 unique participants (257 private citizen volunteers, representing 3.53 per cent of household heads and 0.76 per cent of the total resident population, and 92 members of associations, representing 50 per cent of the associations contacted). The figure relative to associations is particularly significant, especially because the 92 associations present at the meetings with the administration – when we consider their combined membership and therefore their overall reach – represent almost 26 per cent of the total population. The figure relative to *active citizenship* also confirms a prevalence of associations: on average, 45.75 per cent of an area's existing associations both participated in the Workshop and signed the Citizenship Agreement, thus becoming responsible for services, activities or projects benefiting the neighbourhood. Again, when we consider the overall membership and reach of the associations, we can conclude that the Citizenship Agreements, either directly or indirectly, touched about 20 per cent of the total population.

Interest in participating and *satisfaction* were also confirmed by the results of several *focus groups* involving both private citizens and associations. What emerged is that citizens seem to have reached a clear awareness of the mutual pact between the public body and private individuals.

Serial no.		Sample neighbourhoods							Total/ average
		[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	
Data on participation and protagonism [N.]									
1	Plenary meetings conducted	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	21
2	Citizens identified and contacted as part of the Workshop	1600	1270	4400	2200	5250	2300	420	17440
3	Stakeholders identified and contacted as part of the Workshop	18	16	50	31	64	37	17	233
4	Population of the target area	4592	3193	8670	6021	16981	7351	1807	48615
5	Participants in each Workshop	84	74	119	79	119	96	107	678
6	Participants in each Workshop (unique)	30	46	53	44	72	52	52	349
6.1	Citizens present	20	36	41	31	58	36	35	257
6.2	Associations present	10	10	12	13	14	16	17	92
6.3	Associative reach for each agreement	541	851	1080	1198	3659	1435	1232	9996
7	Signatories of each agreement	18	19	27	13	26	41	29	173
7.1	Citizens present	11	7	16	3	7	24	9	77
7.2	Associations present	7	12	11	10	19	17	13	89
7.3	Businesses present	–	–	–	–	–	–	7	7
Indicators of participation and activation of the citizenry [%]									
14	Participants/heads-of-household identified	1.88	3.62	1.20	2.00	1.37	2.26	12.38	3.53
15	Stakeholder participants/stakeholders identified	55.56	62.50	24.00	41.94	21.88	43.24	100.00	49.87
16	Citizens present at meetings in catchment area/population of the target area	0.44	1.13	0.47	0.51	0.34	0.49	1.94	0.76
17	Members of participating associations/population of the target area	11.78	26.65	12.46	19.90	21.55	19.52	68.18	25.72
18	Signatory stakeholders/Stakeholders contacted	38.89	75.00	22.00	32.26	29.69	45.95	76.47	45.75

Table II.
Participation results

The data and the indicators relative to the policy's *effectiveness* (Table III) were collected by means of a structured survey that was administered to the heads of each project enacted as part of the Agreements. The indications that emerge paint a mostly positive picture, in terms of the effects the projects had on their respective territories. Over 77 per cent of respondents stated that the project on which they worked was carried out successfully, either in part or to completion, and that the Citizens' Workshop and the ensuing Agreement were key elements for the success of the project, either because they enabled the development of the project hypothesis or because they contributed to making it feasible. Analysing the average trend throughout the various territories, we notice a certain uniformity of results, as far as both the projects that were carried out and the perceived effectiveness of the public action. Respondents were asked to indicate the project's success factors, especially as they related to dynamics of collaboration and exchange that were activated during the workshops among the different subjects involved, including the role played by the neighbourhood architect. The main success factor identified by the survey was precisely the figure of the neighbourhood architect, with whom 98 per cent of respondents said they had a positive relationship. Other success factors were the relationship with the Municipality and with municipal services (59.64 per cent) and the

Serial no.		Sample neighbourhoods							
		[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	Average
1	Projects carried out successfully in the estimation of the project leader [%]	80.00	68.75	70.83	92.86	83.33	77.78	70.00	77.65
2	Positive evaluations by project leaders of the agreement's effectiveness [% of total projects]	80.00	50.00	66.67	92.86	83.33	88.89	80.00	77.39

Evaluation of success factors according to the agreement's signatories [%]

3	Working relationship with the neighbourhood architect during design and development phase	100.00	100.00	87.50	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	98.21
4	Presence of neighbourhood architect in workshops	20.00	80.00	25.00	40.00	20.00	100.00	75.00	51.43
5	Increased and improved level of collaboration with the municipality and its services	60.00	60.00	37.50	60.00	100.00	50.00	50.00	59.64
6	Economic resources provided by the municipality	60.00	40.00	12.50	60.00	60.00	37.50	100.00	52.86
7	Visibility of the project (advertising instruments)	0.00	40.00	25.00	0.00	40.00	50.00	50.00	29.29
8	Increased and improved level of collaboration between associations and citizens	0.00	20.00	50.00	42.86	20.00	50.00	50.00	33.27
9	Facilitation of relations with other bodies	0.00	60.00	25.00	0.00	20.00	0.00	0.00	15.00
10	Opportunity to develop the project jointly in the workshop	20.00	20.00	12.50	0.00	20.00	25.00	25.00	17.50
11	Opportunity for citizens to partake in decisions	0.00	0.00	25.00	40.00	0.00	37.50	25.00	18.21

Table III.
Effectiveness results

opportunity to have greater economic resources available (52.86 per cent). The overall data suggests that the factors which contributed most to the projects' success, and thus to the effectiveness of the policy's action, related precisely to the instruments which "Quartiere bene commune" made available: the *neighbourhood architect*, in his role as mediator and facilitator of urban-suburban relations and the resources (not limited to economic or material ones) which the project made available.

The qualitative-quantitative data gathered in the third part of the survey, pertaining to the increase in *social capital* particularly in reference to the community's *relational system*, confirms the policy's ability to affect the community's *social cohesion* and to generate or strengthen positive relationships both among citizens and with the administration. The data pertaining to social impact was recorded through a structured survey (items on a scale from 1 to 10) administered to the heads of each project at the start of the project (T0) and upon its completion (T1). The figure shows the average of the T0-T1 variation for the three indicators measuring importance, effort and satisfaction with the relationship between stakeholders, the Municipality and the other associations present in the area. Table IV reveals that in 82.8 per cent of cases, the project leaders thought that the projects carried out produced a positive impact on the target community. Throughout the 7 areas involved, willingness to commit, confidence and satisfaction (considered together as a sort of composite indicator) increased by an average of nearly 1 point compared to the start (to be

Serial no.		Sample neighbourhoods							
		[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	Average
1	Evaluations by project leaders on the projects' usefulness for the community [%] T0-T1 variation (scale 1-10)	100.00	75.00	66.67	85.71	83.33	88.89	80.00	82.80
2	Importance of relationship with the Municipality	−0.50	0.20	−0.19	0.36	0.53	0.53	0.83	0.25
3	Importance of relationship with the associations	0.50	0.60	−0.67	2.89	0.21	0.32	0.33	0.60
4	Effort put forth in the relationship with the Municipality	1.95	1.40	0.67	−0.78	0.63	1.53	1.58	1.00
5	Effort put forth in the relationship with the associations	2.25	1.40	0.00	2.67	0.63	0.63	1.08	1.24
6	Satisfaction with the relationship with the Municipality	1.70	2.60	2.38	−0.22	0.74	2.16	0.75	1.44
7	Satisfaction with the relationship with the associations	1.05	2.20	−1.00	2.86	0.47	0.42	0.50	0.93
8	Average of the previous three indicators of importance, effort and satisfaction	1.16	1.40	0.20	1.30	0.54	0.93	0.85	0.91

Table IV.
Social Capital results

exact, 0.91 on a scale from 0 to 10). The two relational dimensions which registered the best performance were: the willingness to put forth an effort for the Municipality (+1.00) and for the associations (+1.24); the satisfaction with the relationship with the Municipality (+1.44) and with other associations (+0.93 per cent).

The focus groups also confirmed these data: the shared set of goals, rules and resources in play was evaluated positively by the citizens interviewed, as were the method of community engagement, the opportunity to become protagonists and the transparency of the public action.

3.3 Measuring organisational innovation
Throughout all the areas considered by the survey, a total of 56 new projects were carried out (Table V): 12 were projects dedicated to the "care of the city", with resources allocated towards structural or infrastructural issues; 44 were instead dedicated to the "care of the community", in areas such as welfare, education, sports, culture, socialisation and leisure.

The economic resources directly provided by the Municipality for the implementation of the 56 projects totalled €417,600, of which €100,600 went to projects dealing with the care of the community, €56,000 towards transversal and support costs and €261,000 towards maintenance and infrastructural expenses. Citizens and associations added to this amount through the volunteer hours necessary to move the projects forward, which as a whole constituted 85 per cent of total resources (Table VI). The figure reaches as high as 90 per cent (Pratofontana, Sabbione) but even in those areas were the value was lowest, the ratio still shows a prevalence of citizen effort compared to that of the Municipality (3 to 7). In all, as hoped for, the Municipality contributed with economic resources while citizens contributed with their time.

The semi-structured interviews with colleagues inside the organisation revealed the policy's impact on internal processes and on the prevailing organisational culture: the colleagues recognise the innovative nature of the working methods used throughout the co-design process and especially in the process of production, because listening to citizens yields services that are timelier and better tailored to the specific contexts. What also emerges is that "Quartiere bene commune" enabled an exchange between different know-hows that generally have lower levels of inter-dependence, within a framework typical of *open innovation* which transformed traditional policy-making processes and allowed for the drafting of alternative, non-standard solutions. Furthermore, this method of work is regarded as an opportunity to transfer know-how onto the citizens who, by partaking in the co-design process together with the administration, become more aware and more open to dialogue. Finally, a number of aspects to be monitored were identified:

- the possibility of consolidating the innovation results in systemic terms not strictly based on the single project experiences;

Serial no.		Sample neighbourhoods							
		[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	Total
1	Agreements signed [n.]	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Projects included in the agreements [n.]									
2	Care of the city	1	2	1	1	2	3	2	12
3	Care of the community	4	6	11	6	6	7	4	44
4	Total projects	5	8	12	7	8	10	6	56

Table V.
Efficiency results

Direct economic resources [€]								
1 Projects for the care of the community				100,600.00				
2 Expenses for maintenance and infrastructure in the area				261,000.00				
3 Support and transversal costs				56,000.00				
Total				417,600.00				
Indirect economic resources								
		Sample neighbourhoods							Total/average
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	
1 Volunteers participating [n.]	11	37	101	42	81	99	43	414
2 Total volunteer hours [n.]	275	307	1645	1913	488	3120	1287	9035
3 Project users [n.]	270	113	2085	235	681	2302	688	6374
4 Total cost/number of project's beneficiaries	205.26	679.95	43.65	308.15	131.04	41.1	71.41	211.56
5 Total cost/number of project's beneficiaries	1.02	2.72	0.79	8.14	0.72	1.36	1.87	2.37
6 Municipal personnel hours/total hours municipality + volunteers [%]	29.49	31.32	8.05	8.99	19.74	4.29	7.87	15.68

Table VI.
Economic resources

- the search for a balance between policy-planning and neighbourhood-listening, between line efficiency and the effectiveness of standardised solutions;
- the possibility of combining the flexibility of solutions with the rigidity of apparatuses, including the administrative ones, which are better suited to traditional methods and rules; and
- making a habit of transversal decision-making and service-production criteria, thanks to the organisation's ability to evolve and adapt.

4. Conclusions

By analysing the data, it is possible to derive a few general considerations about the policy and its margins for improvement, with respect to both the external and internal contexts:

- *Results and impacts compared with stated goals and the policy-makers' intentions*. According to the data and information obtained from the participatory evaluation, "Quartiere bene commune" properly interpreted the policy-makers' goals and intentions and produced changes - some rather significant - in both the communities and within the organisation. Overall, citizens and associations took part in the workshop activities and tangibly committed their efforts to the enactment of the projects, they recognised the value of the public policy's action and gave it credit for the results achieved and the ensuing satisfaction, they built stronger relationships among each other and with the Municipality, and they regained confidence in the institution, which in turn acquired greater credibility. They brought to completion the projects to which they had committed and paid back the Municipality's investment through the time and work of volunteers, thus fulfilling the relation of co-responsibility provided for in the Agreements.
- *Differences in participation levels*. Even though the policy's action produced excellent results in terms of participation and engagement on the part of associations, it proved weaker in terms of its ability to attract single individuals. This challenge might be tackled in the future either by strengthening the project's advertisement efforts in the target areas or by enhancing the role of volunteers and private citizens who already collaborate with the Municipality.
- *The neighbourhood architect as a key figure*. The positive assessments of the neighbourhood architect, and of his/her role as a link between citizens and administration, demonstrate how this figure was able to generate a trust-inspiring and satisfactory relationship of collaboration, contributing to repair the fracture in urban-suburban relations that followed the suppression of the Circoscrizioni. This result highlights the necessity for dialogue within the target areas, to properly understand and address the community's potentially complex needs. Margins for improvement exist in all other aspects of the policy, starting from the ability to encourage protagonism in the neighbourhoods through more effective advertisement efforts.
- *A training ground for civic education*. Survey respondents recognised that the policy's action leads to increased levels of civic awareness: awareness of the roles, awareness of the complexity of democratic and service-production processes, awareness of the results and of the responsibility of reaching them. This characteristic may represent an interesting "cure" to anti-political attitudes, not as far as affiliating with specific factions or parties, but in terms of respect for the

institutions, the processes of direct and representative democracy, the participation in the management of common goods and the pursuit of shared interests.

- *Producing socialised social innovation*. The projects implemented in the various areas, born from processes of co-design of services and from a redefinition of the service model, are interesting experiments in public policy innovation, albeit on a neighbourhood scale. In many cases, the close listening to the stated needs, resources and capabilities yielded non-standardised project solutions which nevertheless have potential for replicability and scalability, as expressed by the citizens and colleagues who were interviewed.

- *Every neighbourhood is different*. Finally, some interesting considerations can be drawn by analysing the data of the single neighbourhoods. Indeed, despite common working methods and goals, significant differences emerge from one area to the next. This suggests that it is important to maintain focus on the specific characteristics of each context and to adapt the policy's action according to each area's peculiarities. Results, in fact, point to a polarisation between "advanced" neighbourhoods with strong relational networks and neighbourhoods where these social infrastructures need to be developed.

- Neighbourhoods that feature a clearly-defined and deep-rooted community identity, based on well-established networks between citizens and associations, benefit from a sort of "locational privilege" and the policy's action is "limited" to supporting existing resources, without needing to build new connections. Not coincidentally, the agreements in these areas produced a greater number of projects, while incurring lower costs and ultimately registered higher numbers of users. Conversely, the level of participation and impact on relational capital, while still positive, is lower compared to other neighbourhoods. In these areas, the Workshop and the Citizenship Agreement essentially served to reinforce an already-solid relationship between local area and administration, so the challenge for the future will be to create the conditions for the production of significant upgrades, generating greater participation or new project approaches within these "expert" communities.

- In the areas with a weaker sense of community identity (lacking active social networks or recognisable meeting/gathering places), the role of public action generated more significant results in terms of participation, protagonism and social impact. The construction of social infrastructures was an "investment" for the future: the efficiency indicators were therefore lower, owing to the greater costs incurred by the administration in face of a smaller user-base. In these areas, the challenge will be to extract value from the economic investments that were made and to reap the rewards of these new social networks.

- *A changing organisation*. The figure of the neighbourhood architect also proved to be crucial for the achievement of the policy's goals in terms of internal innovations. While citizens perceived the role as that of mediator between urban-suburban realities, the organisation was provided with a deeper and less sector-based knowledge of its territory. It will be essential to maintain these functional inter-dependencies constant and to monitor the internal relationships managed in the drafting rooms where city care and community care efforts are designed. It will then be necessary to find ways of consolidating the innovations to the system: how to adapt the set of rules to support change, how to insert the projects that emerge from the neighbourhoods within policy plans and regulations, how to disseminate the benefits of a flexible and adaptive organisation to better address the needs of the external context.

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Corresponding author

Martina Carra can be contacted at: hcmarty87@gmail.com

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