

## 1. Introduction

This article reflects on the degree of awareness of two Italian cities that are considered “smart”, based on Italian research studies on the added value of human capital for the maturation of a smart city.

There are two reasons this kind of reflection is useful: the first regards the scientific debate on the smart city that recently has had a strong repositioning on people-centered issues. In other words, more or less everyone believes that a city is smart when it allows people to do things and to improve their quality of life sustainably, while using the new technologies; the second regards the wide dissemination of the term “smart city” in Italy in national planning with the promotion of calls for funding projects aimed at the Italian Smart City<sup>1</sup> and also in the construction of urban policies at the local level that are often classified as smart.<sup>2</sup>

The hypothesis that is argued in this paper concerns whether and how the human dimension has been enhanced in the Italian cities that have been defined as smart.

In order to discuss this, the dimensions related to human capital are identified. The presence of the dimensions of the phenomenon have been verified through a field survey conducted in the cities of Milan and Trento, both defined as smart (see paragraph 5).

As illustrated in section three, the dimensions referred to are capacity building and governance capacity. The interest in these issues is closely interconnected to insight, supported by empirical evidence that allows us to clearly highlight that the governance capacity understood as the ability to organize local systems is far from being established even in contexts that have been defined as smart. It still looks abstract to them, and this occurs regarding typical urban policies and also urban policies focused on technological infrastructure.

The objective of the work described above is analyzed in the following five paragraphs.

<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, in Italian: Ministero dell’Istruzione, dell’Università e della Ricerca, or MIUR is financing many projects oriented to make Italian cities smarter <http://www.istruzione.it/>. Respectively PON Research and Competitiveness 2007-2013 MIUR and Directorial Decree, 5 July 2012, n. 391/Ric. The Italian Digital Agenda initiative – DL 18 October 2012, n. 179 – should also be mentioned: it mainly supports the diffusion of ICT in public administrations, without specific reference to the urban scale (Look also Vanolo, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Smart City Observatory is making a list of all smart city projects already realized or only projected in Italy: <http://osservatoriosmartcity.it/>

The first paragraph is a sort of state of the art of scientific debate regarding the smart city. The second section describes the way we intend to analyze the development of human capital in the smart city. The third introduces the analysis method used for the field survey. The fourth concerns the two experiences we observed, the cities of Milan and Trento. Finally, the conclusions highlight what is present and what is missing in the Italian debate in order to really focus on the human dimension.