

## **The Nature and Role of Civic-community Leaders within and for City Leadership. An Anglo-Italian Comparison.**

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### **Abstract**

There is now a general agreement on the need for a collective form of leadership (e.g. Ospina, 2016; Yammarino et al., 2012) to address contemporary societal challenges and wicked problems. At the same time, there is also an increasing recognition of the important role of places and of place-based approaches for the implementation of an effective leadership, able to create and/or develop territories and communities that can successfully adapt and survive in this complex and uncertain world scenario. In this respect, recent studies have acknowledged and started to investigate place-based leadership, a form of leadership that shapes and is shaped by places and which is embedded in the relationships and interactions created among formal and informal leaders, who belong to different public and private sectors (Collinge, Gibney, & Mabey, 2010; Hambleton & Howard, 2013; Sotarauta & Beer, 2017). In particular, four sub-categories or realms of place leadership can be identified in each territory (Budd et al., 2017; Hambleton & Howard, 2013): political, managerial, business and civic-community leadership.

Still, to concretely identify the leaders of a place, even considering the four realms cited above, and accordingly, to explore the relationships that these leaders create among each other (and the related impact of these relationships) is not straightforward. Leaders and leadership change over time and across places, and different people may have different perceptions on “who” the leaders of their place are and on “how” leadership should be exercised.

The aim of this paper is to analyse and compare the civic-community leadership of two mid-sized European cities, one in UK and one in Italy. More specifically, it attempts to identify who are the civic-community leaders in the two cities under study and then analyse the type of relationships that these leaders have with other city leaders.

The originality of this study lies in the approach used to collected data. Indeed, a Social Network Analysis has been carried out involving several city leaders belonging to all sub-categories of place leadership (cited above). First, I’ve asked city leaders to name who they consider the leaders of the city, in each sub-category of place leadership; second, I asked them to describe the relationships that they have with the identified leaders (including formal vs informal relationships, trust, collaboration, shared decision-making...).

As a result of the analysis, a city leadership network can be recognized and represented in each city, a network of city leaders that is not formally established but that exists and influences the city and its community. Also, and particularly for the purpose and focus of this paper, the nature and role of civic-community leaders, as one of the sources of city leadership, may be better understood as data is informed by the perspectives of city leaders that exercise different functions in the city and interact in diverse ways with civic-community leaders.

Data collection should be concluded at the end of September 2018, as part of a wider PhD project, but an early analysis of the data collected so far can already be presented and discussed.