

## **Families' Needs and Social Partnerships: Networking Processes and Outcomes**

*Lucia Boccacin*<sup>1</sup>

---

*Abstract.* The paper analyses social services resulting from social partnerships among public, private, third sector that meet the families' needs, combining care and work and promoting welfare.

Qualitative sociological investigations carried out in Italy between 2006 and 2010, offer findings concerning the connection between the implementation of family services and the activation of social partnerships.

From a methodological point of view, twelve case studies, consisting of six-seven in-depth interviews, were developed.

The studies reveal the existence of some practices that are innovative with reference to the fixation of networking processes and the modality different stakeholders use to satisfy families' needs.

*Keywords:* Social partnerships, Social Relations, Care, Family Services, Welfare Innovations.

---

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of Sociology, Catholic University of Milan, Italy. E-mail: lucia.boccacin@unicatt.it

## **Introduction**

The present contribution focuses on the networking processes enacted by public, private, and third sector subjects, aimed at realizing services for the individual and families. These processes are based on social relations and possibly enhance their value by contributing to the generation of social capital, which benefits both users of services as well as the societal referential context (Donati, 2007; Rossi and Boccacin, 2006). Their societal outcome is observable in practices that sometimes can be paradigmatic for others and reproducible in different situations (Bramanti, 2007; Boccacin *et al.*, 2011).

## **What social partnerships are**

From a sociological standpoint, the term social partnership (Newman, 2001; Powell and Geoghegan, 2004; Glendinning *et al.*, 2002) makes reference to a structural configuration characterized by formalized relations enacted by different social subjects. It is based on collaborations between organizations of the third sector, local entities, and/or businesses founded on parity and reciprocal and voluntarily established relations in which resources, capacities, and risks are pooled in order to pursue a shared, multidimensional project that confers benefits on each of the involved social actors and on the social referential context (Osborne, 2000).

The perspective of social partnerships is thus based on the activation of social relations in which actors are reciprocally subsidiary with the aim of working together to achieve a shared and intersubjective well-being.

The advantages that can result from the realization of social partnerships in services for individuals and families have to do with a greater availability of resources (Besse *et al.*, 2010), a higher level of efficacy and efficiency in interventions, and a stronger legitimization of action (Dowling *et al.*, 2004).

In contrast, the critical aspects that could weaken social partnerships have to do with the position of financial dependency that often conditions less formalized organizations, usually third sector entities (Craig *et al.*, 2004), status and power asymmetries among partners (Glendinning *et al.*, 2002), and indeterminacy in the identification of specific goals (Hastings, 1996).

Moreover, organizational and intervention flexibility, which allows the less structured entities to adapt to differing situations, can simultaneously induce a weakening of single organizations' distinctive characteristics and bring about the consequent risk of organizational isomorphism (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983).

In Italy undertakings involving social partnerships are in the minority in quantitative terms (Boccacin, 2010), even if they are emerging phenomena in terms of the societal meaning that they convey. Elsewhere, (House and McGrath, 2004; Childs, 2004, Corcoran, 2006; Damon, 2009), such social organizations that involve third sector subjects have enjoyed broader dissemination (Kendall, 2009)<sup>2</sup>. Social partnerships involve very diverse organizations as regards their culture, motivations, and referential values (Dekker, 2010). In them the specificity of third sector organizations is particularly characterized by proximity with local communities (Boccacin *et al.*, 2011), the needs of which such actors often have a greater capacity to understand as compared to state agencies due to the dense network of relationships with stakeholders available to these organisms (Seitanidi, 2008).

### **Conceptual-methodological framework and empirical indications that emerged from the investigations**

Reference will now be made to findings, which emerged from three recent investigations, regarding partnership forms and the type of relationality that connotes them. These studies used a methodological-conceptual apparatus that is divided into three key categories: the structured networking defined as partnerships (Boccacin, 2009), the social capital (Castiglione *et al.*, 2006) that is produced and circulates in such relations (Rossi, 2007), and the practices that are seen to derive from the services carried out (Carrà Mittini, 2009).

---

<sup>2</sup> In Great Britain, many partnerships realized in the socio-sanitary sphere (Health Action Zones) and in the educational sphere (Education Action Zones) hinge on volunteer organizations together with local public organizations.

In the United States partnerships between public subjects and subjects belonging to the private and third sectors are very widespread strategies for managing services for individuals and families, as well as the social and economic development of local communities (Anheier and Moulton, 2000; Anheier, Rossi and Boccacin, 2008).

Such a framework arises directly from the logic of relational sociology (Donati, 1991; 2011), both in its single referential categories as well as in its observation of the interconnections that exist among them: indeed, if, on the one hand, fiduciary, collaborative, and reciprocal relations are needed in order to generate social capital, on the other hand, the practices that are realized in the sphere of complex services for the individual augment their efficacy if they can rely on a “safety net” constituted by structured networking configurations.

In this essay attention will be focused specifically on the networking processes that lead to the realization of social partnerships<sup>3</sup>: therefore, the analytical unit will be constituted by the outcome of the networking of social relations with reference to three distinct investigations (Rossi and Boccacin, 2011). These examined: three partnerships that offer services to the family in the province of Milan; three partnerships that deal with services to foreigners and the elderly, and with interventions promoting social cohesion in a district of Milan; six partnerships in the form of associated management for services for the individual in Lombardy<sup>4</sup>.

#### 1. *Relational complexity and services for the family*

This investigation makes reference to three complex services for the family realized in partnerships in Milan and its province<sup>5</sup>. The partnerships under consideration are connoted by a variable number and type of involved subjects and can be differentiated in terms of the role played in the three

---

<sup>3</sup> Due to the need for brevity, it is not possible to provide herein results obtained empirically, even though they concern the other guiding categories used with respect to social capital and the identification of good practices. For an analytical treatment of these aspects, see Rossi, Boccacin, 2007, 2009; Boccacin, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> The three investigations, two of a qualitative nature and one of a quanto-qualitative type, were realized through the reconstruction of several case studies carried out by means of a plural content analysis conducted on the unabridged transcription of interviews on an annotated data report, which synthesized them based on a systematic rereading of the documented material. In the context of the three investigations, 62 in-depth interviews and 2 focus groups were conducted in total. Moreover, using the SPSS statistical package, quantitative information relative to the 98 Planning Offices, collected with an *ad hoc* investigation was processed.

<sup>5</sup> These are the Mazzini Archipelago of Milan, the Professional Foster Care Service of the Province of Milan, and Magenta's (Milan) Listening and Guidance Booth for the family members of elderly Alzheimer's patients. For an analytical account of the research, see Rossi and Boccacin, 2007.

projects by the different participating subjects. In the first situation analyzed, the Mazzini Archipelago, the group of entities in partnership is composed of fifteen subjects, twelve of which are directly involved in planning and managing activities, six as founding partners and six as effective partners. The other three, while sharing in the partnership's goals overall, carry out a mainly operative and more circumscribed function with respect to the mission of the project as a whole.

As regards the extent of the partners' involvement, two clusters of subjects are thus revealed, one that is central to the partnership and one that is located in a position at a distance from this center.

In the second case (the Professional Foster Care Service of the Province of Milan), the partnership is based on relations characterized by an explicit formalization and connecting different subjects, such as the Province of Milan, several social cooperatives, experts and consultants agencies and families.

The third case examined here (the city of Magenta's Listening and Guidance Booth for the family members of elderly Alzheimer's patients) is instead a type of partnership founded on mainly horizontal relations among contact persons from third sector associations, although it still involves highly structured institutional entities, among which there are two hospitals, a socio-sanitary district, and an institution that cares for elderly patients. In this service, however, relations between people -- involving charismatic individuals who played a decisive role both in launching the initiative as well as in its present configuration -- are the linchpin of the partnership.

Furthermore, the investigation brought into focus the factors that allow a partnership to persist over time. These are the conviction that the societal result, achievable in terms of social performance, could not be reached otherwise, the presence of a fiduciary orientation among the partners, the principle of parity and reciprocity in relations and social exchanges, precise organizational boundaries between the subjects involved in the partnership, the presence of forms of coordination and governance -- preferably of a bottom-up type -- and the formalization of agreements. Overall, the research reveals that the testing ground for partnerships and their resilience is represented by the modalities with which the transition takes place between the phase of elaboration and formalization of agreements and that of their operative realization, which entails delivery of services and interventions: indeed, these passages are often not without impasses or risks for partnerships.

Additional difficulties have to do both with the ability to identify shared operative modalities in which each subject participating in the partnership brings its own specific contribution as well as with excessive discretionary power in interpersonal relationships which, in the event of a conflict between individuals, can call into question comprehensive agreements. Within social partnerships different subjects (public and/or private and and/or of the third sector) can put into practice a manifold capacity for observing needs and attending to those in need: in this connection, considering families from the standpoint of personal empowerment and social networks has made it possible to activate practices that can be described as “good,” in that they deliver services that are efficacious for the social referential context, and liberating for the recipients of services. Good practices are also able to introduce a spirit of innovation into helping processes and to strengthen relationality and put it into circulation, on a meso as well as macro level. The investigation revealed that, while in two cases the sphere of action is unmistakably of a meso type, in the third case the scope of action can be identified as belonging to the macro level as regards the variety of activities undertaken and of social subjects involved. Partnerships that can truly comply with their societal mission -- delivering quality services -- are morphogenetic (Donati and Archer, 2010): that is, they are able to absorb change and to include it in their arrangements, detecting transformations of social needs in more or less real time. The tendency toward the morphogenesis inherent in partnerships has also been found in recent studies conducted on an international level, in which organizations that initiate partnerships are seen to move toward reorienting these relations on the basis of what they have learned, realistically evaluating the costs and benefits of the collaborations undertaken (Newman, 2005).

## *2. Networking interventions addressing traditional and emerging marginalization*

This investigation examined networking action promoted and carried out by several volunteer organizations operating in Milan's 4th district in response to social cohesion needs, calls for the integration of foreigners, and elderly persons' need for care. Together with other social subjects, the pro-solidarity organisms examined promoted a service offer marked by personalization, able, that is, to meet the user's need in its particular

manifestation, implementing services that are at once organized and structured<sup>6</sup>. Organization and flexibility appear to be elements aimed at guaranteeing efficacious and stable responses.

The propensity to create networks of social relations developed within a praxis that unites resources and expertise: the orientation toward generating bonds and not addressing as isolated cases situations which are complex from the perspective of social distress can be traced both to the particular social morphology of the district, constituted by neighborhoods often afflicted by full-fledged problems and relational deprivations, as well as to the consolidated history of the third sector actors. It emerges that social relations are formulated on differing levels: there are formal networks, informal networks, and groups of networks. These modalities seem to be correlated with the organizations' dimensions, the funds available for carrying out activities, the areas of intervention, and the relationships that each organization has developed with the external environment over the years. The contact persons from those organizations that from the beginning promoted network building emphasize the importance of the leadership function within networks. Reciprocal collaboration was found to be characterized by several difficulties which can be situated on two levels: on the one hand, the hardships connected to investments of time and energy are emphasized; on the other hand, it emerges that projects which aggregate according to top-down rationales can actually become sources of risk for social action in that they are not always sufficiently internalized by the different partners.

In this investigation it appears that the tendency to give rise to stable and formalized social partnerships able to effectively involve the different social subjects present in the territory, offering them reciprocal support and opportunities for mutual learning, is still a work in progress for the most part. These are processes that, although considered to be crucial by the different stakeholders, require a sort of cultural sedimentation before being able to be stably implemented within structured and shared networking configurations. Nevertheless, a consolidated habit of maintaining stable

---

<sup>6</sup> The investigation, conducted with a qualitative methodology, considered the relational networks of ten volunteer organizations and deepened the analysis of three of these through the realization of just as many case studies. The latter have to do with services in partnerships promoted in the 4th District of the city of Milan by three associations: La Strada, Nocetum, and Seneca. For an analytical account of the investigation's results, see Boccacin, 2009.

social bonds among public and third sector organizations emerges, which, over time, could lead to formalized partnerships.

*3 A quanto-qualitative analysis of forms of associated management of services for the individual in Lombardy*

The research set for itself the objective of analyzing forms of associated management realized in Lombardy from a quantitative perspective, focusing on their structural and organizational elements, as well as from a qualitative standpoint, probing the meaning of such configurations for the different partners and their referential context<sup>7</sup>. It should be clarified that these forms of associated management are characterized by collaboration between institutional entities (municipal, super-municipal, ASL entities) and those of the third sector (volunteer organizations, prosocial associations, social cooperatives), allowing for a pluralization of service offer based on the synergy of interventions. These forms can be realized both by creating a third subject, which is new with respect to the individual partners and “mixed” from the standpoint of the juridical configuration, as well as by means of a contract stipulated among the different subjects, which, however, does not cause them to alter their organizational-juridical nature, even though they pool some resources<sup>8</sup>.

---

<sup>7</sup> On a qualitative level, case studies were carried out involving the following forms of associated management in Lombardy: Social agency of Central Lario and Valli, Menaggio, (Asl Milan 3); Social agency-Special consortium agency for services for the individual of Castano Primo (Asl Milan 1); Society for socio-sanitary services of Valle Seriana (srl) (Asl Bergamo); Planning agreement of the district of Morbegno (Asl Sondrio); Planning agreement of the district of Mortara (Asl Pavia); Planning agreement of the district of the Eastern Lower Bresciana Montichiari (Asl Brescia).

Quantitative data collection, carried out at the conclusion of the qualitative investigation, had as its object the network of relations enacted in the domain of the 98 regional Planning Offices and was carried out through the administration of a structured questionnaire to the directors of these entities. For a detailed treatment of the results of the investigation, see Rossi, Boccacin, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> In the investigation, the subjects that created a form of associated management through the institution of a new subject made up 26.5% of cases while 73.5% of them did not consider it to be advantageous to constitute a new juridical subject. As regards the forms of associated management that gave rise to a new juridical entity, the most widely used modality was the special consortium agency (50%). In cases in which a contractual type of solution was used, which did not lead to the definition of a new subject, the preferred instrument was the planning agreement (63.9%), the convention (29.5%), and, finally, the protocol of understanding (4.9%).

These are entities that can sometimes contribute to introducing into the social realm modalities of efficacious interventions in which actors having different identities, missions, and cultures work together in order to address complex social needs, such as those involving minors and their families, for example. In the forms of associated management present in Lombardy, the third sector organizations confirm their unique vocation for identifying and addressing emergent social need which is not codified or not yet codified by public entities: in this connection, family associations (31.1%), volunteer organizations (31.2%), and associations for social promotion (36.8%) are frequently consulted.

In a scenario in which the involved actors become more numerous, it is necessary to reflect on each one's role and on the specific functions of the public entity, in this case, the regional entity. Relational welfare (Donati, 1991), which attributes an active role to the institutional level in governing societal action as a whole, requires that the involved subjects and the relations that connote them be clearly identified. In fact, public action, from the perspective of the principle of subsidiarity, is called upon to coordinate and support the different associative forms that enliven society by means of shared policy and strategy trend lines of governance of complex networks. This governance style (Tronca, 2007) is connoted by cooperation and mutual coordination among autonomous and interdependent actors, in relationship with each other through reiterated and intentional interactions based on reciprocal trust and regulated by agreed upon norms (Rhodes, 1997; Mayntz, 1999). Societal governance, therefore, singles out the role of relational guide for the public entity<sup>9</sup>, which allows for the development of concerted, deliberative processes among different social actors.

The investigation reveals that the forms of associated management that gave rise to juridically autonomous third subjects formulate in a specific way the tension between government trends and governance orientations, without finding a solution to this dilemma. In fact, in some situations the public subject is both the planner and manager of the services in the same organization (as in the case of the Special Agencies). In such situations, the institutional entity indicates the trend lines, establishes the criteria for action, and manifests these in the direct management of services; the involvement of third sector entities, and especially of the less organized

---

<sup>9</sup> We are indebted to Pierpaolo Donati for the terms used here. In this connection, see Donati, 1991.

ones, turns out to be arduous given the asymmetry in the managerial dynamics.

Among the instruments that make governance of social policies and services possible, there has been widespread use of so-called tables in the past, regarding which ambivalent judgments emerged. Prior experience documents that occasionally tables were not found to be places for encounter and dialogue with respect to social needs, responses implemented, and the efficacy of the strategies employed, thus nullifying the possibility of co-constructing shared work praxes on a local basis. Moreover, a deficit in governance of the third sector itself was found among the organizations that constitute it. A weak faculty for self-governance in the third sector often goes hand in hand with a concomitant reduced capacity for negotiation with the public level.

As regards services managed in an associated manner, these are clustered around three intervention areas: family-minors, the elderly, and the disabled. To these specific interventions is added a service action carried out by the Planning Offices for participating municipalities, which mainly concerns accreditation processes.

Services delivered in an associated manner have to do with: a) first access social service; b) the service aimed at safeguarding minors; c) services promoting in-home care. For small municipalities participating in the Zone Plans, the form of associated management allows for a developed and timely presence of the first access service through a capillary distribution throughout the territory. The service for safeguarding minors is an intervention often managed in an associated manner due to the complexity that characterizes it, requiring the cooperation of a multiplicity of professions (social, psychological, psycho-diagnostic, educational, pedagogical, legal), which become costly for a single municipality but are indispensable for seeking the well-being of minors and their families. Finally, services supporting in-home care aimed at the elderly and minors are realized through vouchers or by means of direct delivery of services: reliance on the form of associated management allows for a sort of economy of scale and an increase of available services in this context.

All in all, strong points and weak points emerged from the investigation. The strong points consist in the distribution of first access services that were previously not available and in the greater proximity of practitioners and interventions offered to the life-worlds of individuals and families. In

situations which gave rise to a third subject, the stability of staff, which allowed for a greater professionalism on the part of practitioners, is also important. Critical elements include an orientation toward delegating, which forms of associated management risk generating in a given geographical area, independently of the juridical guise that they adopt. Moreover, there was evidence of very intense work on the part of third subjects in initiating activities and identifying their own organizational boundaries, with respect to which, in some cases, a corresponding, analogous commitment to include in the realized partnerships additional social subjects is lacking. Finally, faced with an increase in the social offer, a very high comprehensive cost emerges for third subjects in meeting structural-organizational needs, while in situations characterized by the presence of program agreements, a reduction in available resources is found.

### **Concluding observations**

In synthesis, several strategic elements for the creation and maintenance of partnerships emerged from the investigations under consideration. A first element concerns the quality of relations and their generative capacity: the presence of fiduciary and reciprocal orientations among partners is a fundamental prerequisite for launching collaborations and represents, *in itinere*, the *humus* -- the soil -- in which partnerships take root. A second element, correlated with the first one, has to do with the constitutive modalities of partnerships: projects that arise from below turn out to be characterized by a greater symmetry on the relational front, which facilitates the structuring of the collaboration. A third element has to do with finding human, material, and financial resources: in particular, human capital represents a crucial component, whether in structural-organizational terms or with respect to values and symbols. A fourth factor concerns the partnerships' governance style: the governance solutions are found to be more suitable to the complexity of networking configurations in that they make it possible to clarify the functions and specific responsibilities of the social actors involved.

All in all, the empirical pathway taken in the investigations illustrated here made it possible to uncover practices that cannot be immediately observed as regards the forms assumed by networking processes, the services offered, and the complex relational mechanisms relative to the governance

of decisional processes<sup>10</sup>. In particular, the differentiation of partnerships' structural forms, the missions pursued, and the action modalities implemented indicate that the crucial element of such arrangements is represented by relations. In other words, it is relations that dictate the rules of the structural configurations adopted by partnerships, and not vice versa: indeed, the organizational form is the outcome of ongoing and reciprocal processes of dialogue and of mutual learning that lead to the realization of non-prescriptive and, at times, original solutions.

#### References

- Anheier, H.K. & Moulton, L. (2000). *Public-Private Partnership in the United States*. In S.P. Osborne (ed.), *Public-Private Partnerships. Theory and Practice in International Perspective* (pp. 105-119). London: Routledge.
- Anheier, H.K., Rossi, G. & Boccacin L. (eds.) (2008). *The Social Generative Action of the Third Sector: Comparing International Experiences*. Milano: Vita e Pensiero.
- Besse B., Henrich A.M., Lab A., Lemoine M. & Pozzebon N. (2010). *Le partenariat dans le travail social*, Réseau National de Ressources en Sciences Médico-Sociales (RNRSMS). Retrieved from <http://nrms.ac-creteil.fr/>.
- Boccacin, L. (2009). *Terzo settore e partnership sociali: buone pratiche di welfare sussidiario*. Milano: Vita e Pensiero.
- Boccacin, L. (ed.) (2010). *Le partnership sociali: concettualizzazione ed evidenze empiriche*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Boccacin, L., Rossi, G. & Bramanti, D. (2011). Partnership, Social Capital and Good Practices Among Public, Private and the Third Sector, *Journal of US-China Public Administration*, 8 (3), 241-260.
- Bramanti, D. (2007). *Buone pratiche relazionali per la famiglia e per la comunità: tre casi a confronto*. In G. Rossi and L. Boccacin (eds.), *Capitale sociale e partnership tra pubblico, privato e terzo settore* (pp. 205-224). Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Carrà Mittini, E. (2009). *Buone pratiche e capitale sociale. Servizi alla persona pubblici e di privato sociale a confronto*. Milano: Led.

---

<sup>10</sup>An element for further reflection, which emerges from the investigations, has to do with the circularity between the relations that link together the different stakeholders and the participatory praxes aimed at realizing projects and, subsequently, interventions: this circularity connotes the specific space of social capital which, while not a focus of this essay due to limits on length, represents a relational resource characterizing the processes observed. See, in this connection: Rossi and Boccacin, 2007.

- Childs, S. (2004). How to Create Successful Partnerships – A Review of the Literature, *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, 21, 3-19.
- Clarke, J. & Rummery, K. (2002). *Partnership and the Remaking of Welfare Governance*. In C. Glendinning, M. Powell & K. Rummery (eds.), *Partnerships, New Labour and the Governance of Welfare* (pp. 33-50). Bristol, Policy Press.
- Castiglione D., van Deth J.W. & Wolleb G. (2006). *Handbook of social capital*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Corcoran M. P. (2006). The Challenge of Urban Regeneration in Deprived European Neighbourhoods: A Partnership Approach, *The Economic and Social Review*, 37 (3), 399-422.
- Damon J. (2009). Le partenariat, Retour sur une notion d'un quart de siècle, *Partenariat et politiques sociales*, 45 (1), 149-162.
- Dekker P. (2010). *The Third Sector in Netherlands: an Example of a Public-Private Partnership?*. In L. Boccacin (ed.), *Le partnership sociali: concettualizzazione ed evidenze empiriche* (pp. 29-43). Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Craig, G., Taylor, M. & Parkes, T. (2004). Protest or Partnership? The Voluntary and Community Sectors in the Policy Process, *Social Policy & Administration*, XXXVIII (3), 221-239.
- Di Maggio, P. & Powell, W. (1983). The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields, *American Sociological Review*, XXXVIII (2), 147-160.
- Donati, P. (1991). *Teoria relazionale della società*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Donati, P. (2011). *Relational Sociology. A New Paradigm for the Social Sciences*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Donati, P. (2007) *L'approccio relazionale al capitale sociale*. In P. Donati (ed.), *Il capitale sociale. L'approccio relazionale* (pp. 9-39). Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Donati, P. & Archer, M. (2010). *Riflessività, modernizzazione e società civile*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Dowling, B., Powell, M. & Glendinning, C. (2004). Conceptualising Successful Partnerships, *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 12, 309-317.
- Glendinning, C., Powell, M. & Rummery, K. (eds.) (2002). *Partnerships, New Labour and the Governance of Welfare*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- House, J.D., McGrath, K. (2004). Innovative Governance and Development in the New Ireland: Social Partnership and the Integrated Approach, *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, XVII (1), 29-58.
- Kendall J. (ed.) (2009). *Handbook on Third Sector Policy in Europe. Multilevel processes and Organized Civil Society*. Cheltenham UK-Northampton, MA, Usa: Edward Elgar.
- Mayntz, R. (1999). La teoria della governance: sfide e prospettive, *Rivista italiana di scienza politica*, XXIX (1), 3-21.
- Newman, J. (2001), *Modernising Governance: New Labour, policy and society*. London: Sage.
- Newman, J. (ed.) (2005). *Remaking Governance: People, Politics and the Public Sphere*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Osborne, S.P. (ed.) (2000). *Public-Private Partnerships. Theory and Practice in International Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Powell, F. & Geoghegan, M. (2004). *The Politics of Community Development*. Dublin: A&A Farmar.

- Rhodes, R.A.W. (1997). *Understanding Governance. Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Rossi, G. (2007). *Capitale sociale relazionale nei servizi alla famiglia: un'analisi comparata dei tre studi di caso*. In G. Rossi & L. Boccacin (eds.), *Capitale sociale e partnership tra pubblico, privato e terzo settore* (pp. 174-204). Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Rossi, G & Boccacin, L. (2006). *Il capitale sociale in un'organizzazione multilivello di terzo settore*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Rossi, G. & Boccacin, L. (eds.) (2007). *Capitale sociale e partnership tra pubblico, privato e terzo settore*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Rossi, G. & Boccacin, L. (eds.) (2009). *Forme di gestione associata nei servizi alla persona. Stili e pratiche di governance sussidiaria in Lombardia*. Milano: Guerini e Associati.
- Rossi G. & Boccacin, L. (eds.) (2011). *Riflettere e agire relazionalmente. Terzo settore, partnership e buone pratiche nell'Italia che cambia*. Maggioli Editore: Santarcangelo di Romagna.
- Seitanidi, M.M. (2008). Adaptive Responsibilities: Nonlinear Interactions in Cross Sector Social Partnerships, *Adaptive Responsibilities*, X(3), 51-64.
- Tronca, L. (2007). Verso un'analisi strutturale delle forme di governance, *Studi di sociologia*, 3 luglio-settembre, 307-329.