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The territorial dimension in EU policies: issues, opportunities and an application in the sphere of tourism

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Abstract In an enlarged Europe of the regions, the need for EU policies to possess an explicit territorial dimension is undeniable. This paper, by analysing the fundamentals of the EU policies in the previous 2000-2006 and the current 2007-2013 planning period looks at the implications of strengthening the role of space in the different policy programmes. It also looks at the specific role of tourism in EU policies and draws some conclusions regarding spatial planning at a EU level.

Keywords EU, regional policies, territory, tourism

JEL Codes R53, R58

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1.Introduction¹

In this paper we intend to discuss the reasons that have led the EU institutions and policymakers to put more attention to urban and territorial issues in the implementation of a cohesion policy.

These reasons, testified by the growing number of official publications on the item "territory", the inclusion of the latter among the Objectives of the latest Planning and finally by its "raising" to Priority, incorporating it into the binomial "Territory-Cohesion", can be classified into the following three categories:

- those related to the "identification of territorial problems in Europe";
- those pursuing to create the "necessary conditions to solve these problems" in operational terms;
- those related to the question "how to implement public policies" in Europe today.

In section 2 we will explain what interest in territorial questions emerges from an analysis of the de-facto policies in the 2000-2006 period for European planning. In section 3, the current interests in the territorial dimension will be addresses. In section 4, the consequent issues of governance will be discussed. Section 5 concentrates on a special family of EU policies: tourism policies. Section 6 contains some concluding remarks.

2. The interest in territory within the European Economic Space during the planning period 2000-2006

The interest of the EU public policies for the territorial dimension has been increasingly growing in recent decades until it reached its maximum expression just before the current planning period 2007-2013. This interest not only become more intense over the years, but it was also contextualized with more qualitative accuracy around basic economic concepts, which are consistent with historical periods of the European Union. This contextualization revolves around issues related to compensation of disadvantages linked to place, regeneration of urban areas, growth problems, regional imbalances and social

¹ Although both authors are responsible for the contents of the paper, in particular for the sections 1 and 6, Van der Borg has written section 5, while Camatti has written sections 2, 3 and 4.

marginalization, as well as a vision of proper and sustainable use of territory resources.

In fact, this issue in the 70s enters only marginally within the community debate as indirectly cited by other issues more shared and at that time essential also for maintaining the delicate political balance in post-unification and post-enlargement. Among them, the agriculture-environmental and industrial issue introducing new debates such as the geographical disadvantage of some farms or the need for tools currently expressed as “environmental impact assessment” or the conversion of productive activities.

Already in the 80s, because of the birth of Regional Policy, which brings the EU policymaker to local realities, the “land element” enters into the Planning not only, as will happen from then on, distinguishing between more or less developed areas, or regions, for the division and allocation of Structural Funds, but as precise object of urban policy and planning.

But it’s starting from the 90s that this dimension has strengthened by entering the various programs and has been “re-organized” by setting up dedicated bodies. Among them, the Committee of the Regions, and networks as ESPON, whose purposes are both scientific and of support to the Community policies, although it has never given a formal mandate on territorial matters to UE. This is a limit that had often prevented from turning good insights, which came out from various documents of that decade, into concrete policies.

Europe 2000 is among the first documents that seek to highlight the major forces acting on the European spatial development by addressing some key issues that will influence the current decade such as: the marginalization of poorest and peripheral areas and their migration, environmental emergencies linked to human and productive activities as waste disposal, the need for a European more efficient transport networking, the uncontrolled use of land.

Some interpretations about features and links between different areas are new and different from those of the past. In terms of location theory, they try to give an interpretation of the European context at regional level, noting how the spatial concentration of economic activities can strengthen the already regional imbalances and, at the same time, it can determine the congestion of the richest areas. As a solution, they suggest a more compelling dialogue and a role exchanging

with the weakest areas so as to obtain compensation and balance for both.

These imbalances are also resumed in the subsequent “*Europe 2000+*”. It focuses on the imbalances existing within the same richest areas, particularly the urban ones, which are demographically and economically dynamic, being decision-making places and locations of most of the relevant economic and financial activities. On the other hand, however, they are also places at the highest risk of social exclusion. About the already mentioned strategic capabilities between the strongest and the weakest centres, the proposed model focuses on local endogenous potential, enhancing environmental and capital resources, together with the local workforce.

The quantum leap compared to the past is therefore to be found in the undoubtedly more scientific setting, even if it is coherently and understandably linked to the hot topics of regional sciences in those days, or the resumption of the location theory with its reinterpretation in terms of unbalanced growth and social marginalization.

The most important step is clearly marked by the non-binding document *European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)*, adopted by the Minister for Spatial Planning at the Potsdam Council on 10 and 11 May 1999, that arises from the need to assess, also in terms of territory, those policies depending on the EU, therefore without conferring new political skills to it, but according to the principle of subsidiarity, in order to pursue the general objective of a balanced and sustainable development in Europe.

But the usefulness of this document about this work lies in making us immediately understand why the necessity of introducing a territorial dimension arises from a variety of issues and horizontal and vertical requests, which recall the territory in its spatial concept, as well as organizational, environmental and institutional.

Starting from this document, we can deduce the intentions and the aims of spatial development policies:

to work towards a balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the European Union;
to ensure that the three fundamental goals of European policy are achieved equally in all the regions of the EU: the economic and social cohesion; the conservation and management of

natural resources and the cultural heritage; a more balanced competitiveness of the European territory.

About the need to introduce a territorial issue in the ESDP, we should first recall the particular period when it was published, a period characterized by the enlargement to new states and the consolidation of the Single European Market.

ESPD therefore arises in first place from the consideration that the regional, national or Community projects in one country have a considerable impact on the spatial structure of other Member States because of the growing economic and social integration, and more intensive relationships and inter-dependencies emerging between cities and regions: for this reason we need an integrated and coordinated EU policy. But this need arises once more from objective problems, first of all the territorial imbalances, while keeping the following political directions:

development of a balanced and polycentric urban system and a new urban-rural relationship;
securing parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge;
sustainable development, prudent management and protection of nature and cultural heritage.

The necessity for territorial dimension passes thus through the need to introduce additional elements to the European development conditions, that now ESDP brings compared to previous documents:

- a strategic overview of the individual territories, which are not only the place for containing resources, but the place to implement land policies for a better and sustainable use of resources themselves, according to strategic vision of competition, but also of cooperation with other areas;
- a deeper understanding of the relationship between the exchange of functions between cities and rural areas also activating mechanism of local participation;
- a polycentric spatial planning, so as to give a role to new spatial aggregations that are forming around large cities, in a vision not only competitive, but also of network. This can be done by means of relations of synergy and of complementarity, allowing an economic role also to minor cities and the impulse to start a process of endogenous growth;
- an integration of transport policies and their environmental impact;

- a matter of equality in social and economic conditions of people, regardless of their localization;
- new schemes for policies' implementation, which should be integrated and coordinated horizontally and vertically;
- special attention is given to the cooperation on regional development among the Member States and among their regions and local authorities, as a necessary condition in the interests of closer European integration: the ESDP "is a suitable reference document for encouraging co-operation, while at the same time respecting the principle of subsidiarity".

The necessity ultimately derives from the realization that there is a matter of strategic interdependence among the territories, which is functional to the economic and social cohesion.

This interdependence is resumed as well in the following ESDP Program, which places the objectives of competitiveness, cohesion and regional balance in the centre.

UE interest in territorial issues in terms of planning has always been strong, changing over time from the simplest transverse insertion, to the prediction of increasingly "ad hoc" programs.

For this reason in the period 1994-1999 it should undoubtedly be remembered the initiative of *Interreg II*, that arises as a moment of cross-border co-operation also for regional planning, and *Urban*, that was thought for recovery actions of urban areas in crisis.

As for *Interreg*, the issues faced are those which have already been raised by *ESPD*: the disadvantageous geographical localization, the cities' strategic role, the relations between cities and rural areas, the access to infrastructure and services, sustainability.

Both cases are interesting as they underline how necessary it is to coordinate the regional policies, always because of the interdependence of the territories, and to address some specific issues such as urban renewal.

In the planning period 2000-2006, we saw a reduction in initiatives that were brought down to 4, in parallel with a considerable reduction of the goals from 6 to 3.

From our point of view, we note how the territory persists transversely and vertically, called by those needs previously identified: promoting a transnational co-operation, cross-

border and interregional, continuing to intensify social and economic interventions of regenerations in urban areas, facing already known issues of rural areas, problems of discrimination and inequality in the job market.

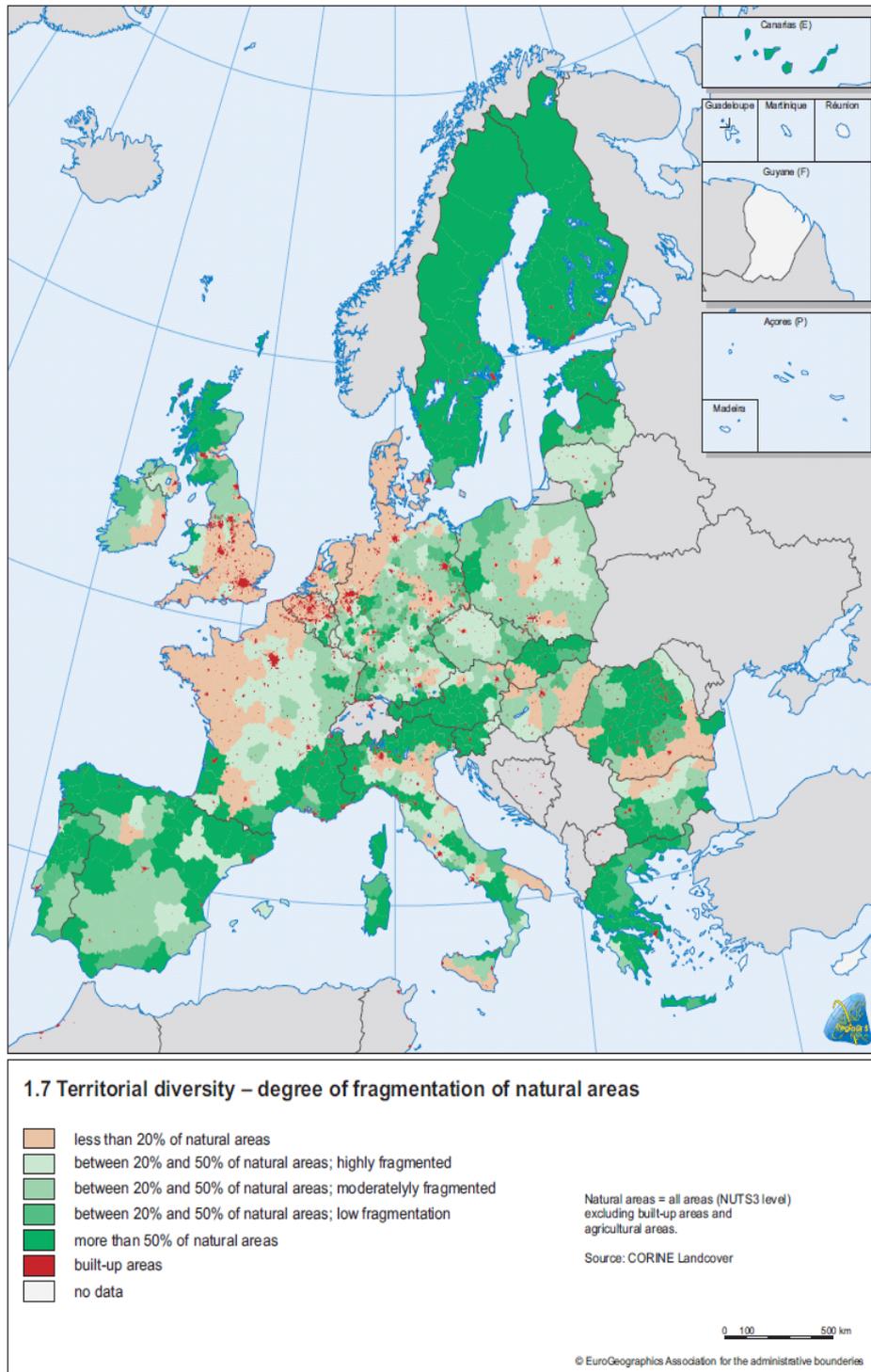


Figure 1: The territorial diversity. (Source: Commission of the European Communities (2005), Third progress report on cohesion)

2.1. New interests for the territorial dimension

2.1.1. Territorial Cohesion (TC)

It was during the previous planning that the EU formalizes its interest in the “European territorial issue”, with the final introduction of the concept of *Territorial Cohesion*. As it will be highlighted later, this concept actually extends and summarizes some of issues and themes raised in recent decades.

The TC concept has been first introduced during a meeting of the Assembly of European Regions held in Anversa in 1995, as a result of the already started debate around the issue, at European level, of territorial development, which was opened in the early 90s with the publication of the reports *Europe 2000* and *Europe 2000+*.

This notion was formalized and fully entered among the European issues only in 1997 with its inclusion in the Amsterdam Treaty, and in 1999 in ESDP.

As a result of the informal meetings among the Ministers responsible for Spatial Development, which were held in Rotterdam in November 2004 and in Luxembourg in 2005, the *EU Territorial Agenda* was adopted. This document was then presented at the ministerial meeting on territorial cohesion in Leipzig on 25 May 2007. According to it, three cohesion’s priorities are defined:

- to guide the policies of National and regional territorial development up to the maximum development of land resources;
- to enhance transport and territorial integration through the active promotion of co-operation and trade;
- to strengthen those EU policies integration, that have a regional impact.

The Territorial Cohesion become so far an inter-governmental matter, a problem that must be faced at EU level and included in their policies. The strategic importance of the issue, that has already been introduced in the “*Third progress report on economic and social cohesion*” (2005), has been recently confirmed by its inclusion in the *Lisbon Treaty* among the Union Objectives, next to the point regarding the social and

economic cohesion, becoming thus part of the Union primary law.

How to reach this goal by outlining the way is part of the considerations following the *Territorial Agenda* and parallel to the formation of *The New Treaty*. These considerations were summarized and published in October 2008 in “*Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion, Turning territorial diversity into strength*”, a document that arises as a response to the growing need to frame and define the way in which public policies should address the needs of territories by means of raising and definitely re-opening the debate on TC.

2.1.2 The Concept of Territorial Cohesion

The concept of Territorial Cohesion is only deductible from an overview reading of the above envisaged EU official documents, and in particular from the explanations given by the Cohesion Reports, from which one can deduce that, because Article 2 of the Amsterdam Treaty (according to which a central aim of the EU is ‘*to promote economic and social progress and a high level of employment and to achieve balanced and sustainable development, in particular through the creation of an area without internal frontiers, through the strengthening of economic and social cohesion and through the establishment of economic and monetary union...*’) and because Article 7d (according to which every Member State has *a role in promoting social and territorial cohesion*) thus, about the Territorial Cohesion we can say:

- it is a new element to complement the Union objectives on economic and social cohesion;
- its concept extends beyond the notion of economic and social cohesion by both adding to this and reinforcing it;
- there is a territorial issue that can be detected in these problems: people should not be disadvantaged by wherever they happen to live or work in the Union and citizens should have access to essential services, basic infrastructure and knowledge by highlighting the significance of services of general economic interest for promoting social and territorial cohesion.
- in policy terms, its objective is: to help achieve a more balanced development by reducing existing disparities, avoiding territorial imbalances; making both sectoral policies, which have a spatial impact, and regional policy more coherent; improving territorial integration and encourage cooperation between regions.

As for the “balanced development”, it should be noted first that the settlement pattern of the EU is unique, being characterized by about 5.000 towns (with a population between 5.000 and 50.000) and almost 1 000 cities (with a population above 50 000) spread across Europe, acting as focal points for economic, social and cultural activity. This same urban network contains few very large cities and only 7% of people live in cities of over 5 million as against 25% in the US, and only 5 EU cities appear among the 100 largest in the world.

But what is striking is that if on one side settlements’ distribution is uniform, we cannot say the same about the distribution of the economic activities, so that many urban areas remain congested whilst other areas shown an untapped potential.

From this point of view, the criticisms and threads to the harmonious development of the European economy seem to be:

- at EU level, a high concentration of economic activity and population in the central area or pentagon;
- at national level, a persistence of pronounced imbalances between the main metropolitan areas and the rest of the country in terms of economic development, which is a particular feature of the accession countries;
- at regional level, a widening or, at least, the persistence of a number of territorial disparities beyond those measured by GDP or unemployment, for examples: - growing congestion and pollution – the persistence of social exclusion - rural areas are suffering from inadequate economic links with neighbouring small and medium-sized towns – decline of the rural areas and the so-called urban areas
- within regions and cities, the development of pockets of poverty and social exclusion in areas with often only limited availability of essential services;
- in a number of specific areas constrained by their geographical features (islands, sparsely populated areas in the far north, and certain mountain areas)
- in outermost areas, with an accumulation of natural and geographical handicaps the continuation of severe social and economic problems which are difficult to tackle because of their remoteness, isolation, topological features, climate, small size of market and dependence on a small number of products.

When we want to seek the reasons for support interventions for an harmonious growth of the European economy, redefined

here from the point of view of territorial disparities, we can divide them into two types: one in terms of solidarity, as the EU basic principle; another in economic terms, observing that these territorial disparities affect the overall competitiveness of the EU economy: to face and correct continuously and indirectly the social consequences of the disparities, for example, means a sub-optimal allocation of resources and than a lower level of economic competitiveness.

Regarding the impact of sectoral and regional policies on territory, it is interesting to underline how this impact can be positive and negative. One must start from the consideration according which in the coordination between sectoral and territorial policies is important to maximise synergies and to avoid possible conflicts. On this point and in positive terms, we can point out as follow:

- the transport policy has effect on the location of economic activity and the pattern of settlements and plays a important role in improving connections to and within less developed regions,
- the Common Agriculture Policy, and the support it provides to farmers, has important territorial impacts maintaining the activities and incomes in rural areas and through the promotion of sound land management;
- the competition policy can affect the territorial distribution of economic activity by ensuring that regional aid is concentrated in the most disadvantaged areas and by adjusting the intensity of aid allowed to the nature and scale of problems.

Finally, it is easily comprehensible, as regards the last point, as any intervention on the issues herein, both in terms of balanced development and in terms of sectorial and regional policies on territory, cannot be performed by a single member state, but must be coordinated and integrated by the EU through a greater integration and cooperation in the policy implementation. Also in this case, an action in this direction is justified in terms of policy effectiveness.

The concept of TC (Territorial Cohesion), as pointed out in several occasions (Faludi 2004), is not easily described using a generally accepted definition. It constitutes therefore a rather vague objective of communitarian policy, which more than anything else describes the intention to address problems revolving around the territory: in this respect, it can be

confused, tending even to coincide, with the dimension of economic and social cohesion (EC and SC).

However, in the present state of discussion, aiming at analysing the context once again in mere terms of necessity, it is possible to state that the introduction, nowadays formalised, of the territorial dimension in the field of the cohesion policy has been generated from a clear exigency of policy-making. This was the need to deal with some critical aspects of the European space, which are still present at this moment in time, even if they date back of more than two decades.

A territorial dimension is therefore necessary also from this point of view, in order to account for other criticality and strength points, which the other two dimensions, namely EC and SC are not necessarily able to comprehend.

2.2 The need for a territorial dimension in order to solve some European criticality

Starting from an unbiased analysis of how territorial dimension entered and evolved in the domain of communitarian policies, it appears at least possible synthesising it as an “order of problems” which, not finding their own discussion space in the other European policies, have progressively started to diverge, creating a separate domain of reflection. In particular, the necessity for a territorial dimension becomes more obvious when facing some order of problems which are not necessarily dealt with by the Regional Policies. This necessity would refer to the not full coincidence of the three dimensions, which can all be solved nevertheless in terms of communitarian planning, and will be dealt with in the next section.

The aspect which needs underpinning is that, independently from the possible reconstruction and deeper investigation as regards the links between the three dimensions (TC, EC and SC), the territorial one can be singled out at least as an “order of problems” in the development of the European space, highlighting as the “territory” element underwent an evolution and a strengthening. This enabled its passage, in agreement with the development of economic thought, from a bare “space” hosting the economical activities, to a “condition” for fair competition and therefore to an “argument” aimed at recognise particular characteristics of the European economical development. Qualitatively, the territorial dimension has evolved arriving to be the third dimension necessary for achieving the Cohesion, which is one of the ultimate goals of

EU. These issues constitute “*the necessity*” for a territorial dimension.

In conclusion, from this point of view, this necessity comes from the willingness to cope with some issues which are encompassed by the “territory” element: the crucial point becomes not the possible constraint process which enabled them to enter this field, but the need for debate. The “Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion” has already been conceived to clarify what is lacking and the issues which are necessary to face in Europe: the still unclear determination of the “territory” element is possibly the most adapted object for these reflections.

In Michel Barnier's words, Commissioner for Regional Policy in 2000–04, “Territorial Cohesion is an invitation to a dance, it is not the dance itself”, the epistemological problem comes as a consequence, and may even appear advantageous, in that it allows, given the instability of the same concept of TC, facing multifaceted questions, which are otherwise not easily addressed.

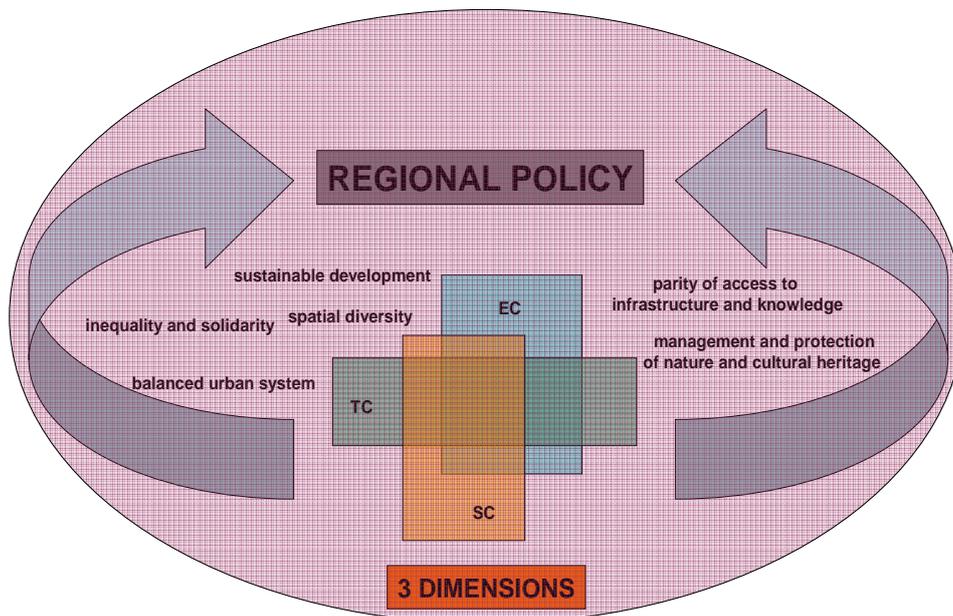


Figure 2: Third dimension and new elements for the Regional Policy. (Source: author)

3. The necessity of a territorial dimension in the development of European area from the programmatic point of view

The “territory” element is an instrument to tackle a definite order of problems and potentialities in the European area: the necessity to introduce the territorial dimension derives from the willingness to face it.

In other words, we could state that the need to introduce and formalise a territorial dimension, given that the goodwill is not sufficient to successfully face a problem, but also some conditions are needed, can also be singled out by analysing the question in terms of Communitarian Planning, striving to create the requirements for public intervention.

This point can be better grasped starting from criticisms which were raised on the real necessity of introducing the TC concept, more specifically on the degree of admixture between the three dimensions.

This criticism is fundamentally based on the observation that this concept is already implicit into EC and SC, being therefore *not new* and therefore *unnecessary*: as a matter of fact, TC, in its minimal definition or in its possible expansions, does not appear to be very different from EC or SC “brothers”, so that there was no scope for introduction in the New Treaty.

Without any doubt, the question is not among the simplest to be solved, in that it is well recognised as the three dimensions appear to be inseparable, from state-of-the-art Regional Economic Sciences.

It is the authors' opinion nevertheless that the question needs further investigation from an appropriate problematic point of view i.e., in terms of Planning, evaluating not only and not particularly the complete coincidence of the three dimensions, but the effective “possibility” for Regional Policy to solve some criticality of the European space, not losing new instruments and schemes for actuating public intervention.

To clarify this point, we can start reminding how territorial dimension has already been elicited in past planning, which proves plausible the hypothesis to include it in the other dimensions or in any case to recall it through those.

The EU has in effect, inside the frames of a political competence in the territorial domain which it never got

assigned, always paid attention to this inseparability, placing the territorial dimension as a direct object of economical policy by activating specific programmes which were aimed also to the resolution of typical TC issues or as an indirect object of the European economical policy observing as a bi-univocal relation exist between the sectoral policies and the urban and territorial context with a reciprocal exchange of advantages and drawbacks. This exchange can most times be translated in the request to the territory for undergoing such interventions, therefore opening the further question of evaluating the territorial effects of some policies activated as a result of aiming to the economical and social cohesion.

Technically this strategy would appear as having been possible because of the superposition of this term with the other two dimensions which allowed the *policymaker* to address the *Structural Funds* exactly towards these territorial order of problems which are today included in the TC concept.

This would therefore appear to confirm the hypothesis of the redundancy of this concept with EC and SC.

It is interesting noting nonetheless as this discrepancy can be resolved from a point of view of Regional Policy which allows also singling out the boundaries inside which the non-necessity for the introduction of this term should be supported.

Coming back to the question of novelty, this would make then reference, as illustrated by the aforementioned observations, to the degree of admixture of the TC concept with EC and SC ones, and to the fact that this would be included already in the others. In other words, this would imply that in order to obtain EC and SC it is also implicit considering TC, which would become a condition necessary for pursuing the other dimensions.

According to this hypothesis, the insertion and formalisation of TC would result an unnecessary concept.

This question should be investigated in more depth by observing that it is also true that TC is only one amongst the possible solutions to obtain EC and SC, leaving room for other solutions which are strictly only connected with the latter two dimensions, so to obtain the general priority of Cohesion, and how TC would also extend beyond the economical and social dimension, obtaining therefore the not full coincidence between the terms: this is quite clear when referring to the “*GDP per capita*” variable, observing as, even if some degree

of cohesion still takes place in terms of “*product per capita*”, some problems would still exist in terms of distributive equity, or else in terms of sustainability, since EC and SC objectives can even be attained by neglecting these aspects.

From this follows that the passage between “*non-novelty*” and “*non-necessity*” it is not so immediate and this question can be dealt with from a Regional Planning perspective, which reminds us as the “necessity”, referred in our case to the TC concept, is fundamentally determined by the “possibility” to effectively pursue in terms of “planning” the kinds of problems raised and delimited inside the CT. As a consequence, its introduction would become necessary not only to cover and guarantee the actuation of everything is needed with respect to EC and SC, but also of what is coincident, for the subsisting possibility that planning addresses, even if aimed to the Cohesion between Member States, would be directed towards other possible solution closer to the contents of EC and SC and independent from TC.

Coming back to the question of “GDP per capita” distribution, for example, it can be deduced that Cohesion has been pursued looking at the economical dimension, but not at the spatial one. This proves that, although strictly connected, the three dimensions not necessarily are mutually satisfied, and as it was in the past, only the introduction and formalising of the TC concept can nowadays allow investing with higher security the Structural Funds also in this complementary direction, solving the already mentioned problem of “balanced development”.

In summary, it is reasonable to say that, even if the hypothesis that the TC concept is redundant with the EC and SC ones is accepted, starting from the assumption of the inseparability of the link between them, because one recalls the other two, it is also true that, even if the point of view of Regional Planning is assumed, these links must find the guarantee for being transformed in Objectives and then in Programmes, a guarantee that can only derive from the elevation of TC, and in general of the territorial dimension, to Priorities.

The above is true because the problem is not so much that of the degree of admixture between the three dimensions, but the effective possibility for the policymaker to intervene and this possibility is determined from a clear insertion of the “territory” element in the cardinal objectives of the Union.

This clear and explicit insertion of the CT concept in Treaties poses a restriction to communitarian planning, in that specific

territorial problems would need to be faced in the future, communicating to every Union Member the direction of policies in the coming period, as will be restated in the Conclusions. In this sense, this represents a clear signal that communitarian policymaker would send to the policymakers of every Member State.

I Expenditure on cohesion policy, 2000-2013

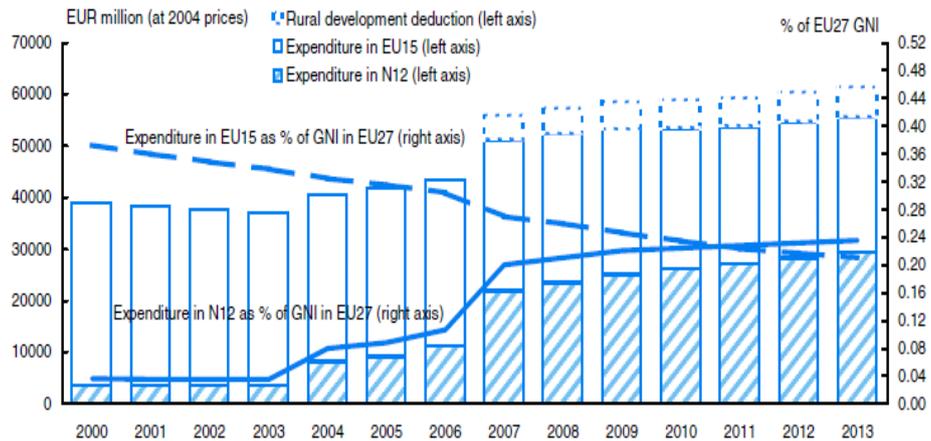


Figure 3: Expenditure on cohesion policy, 2000-2013 (Source: Commission of the European Communities (2005), Third progress report on cohesion)

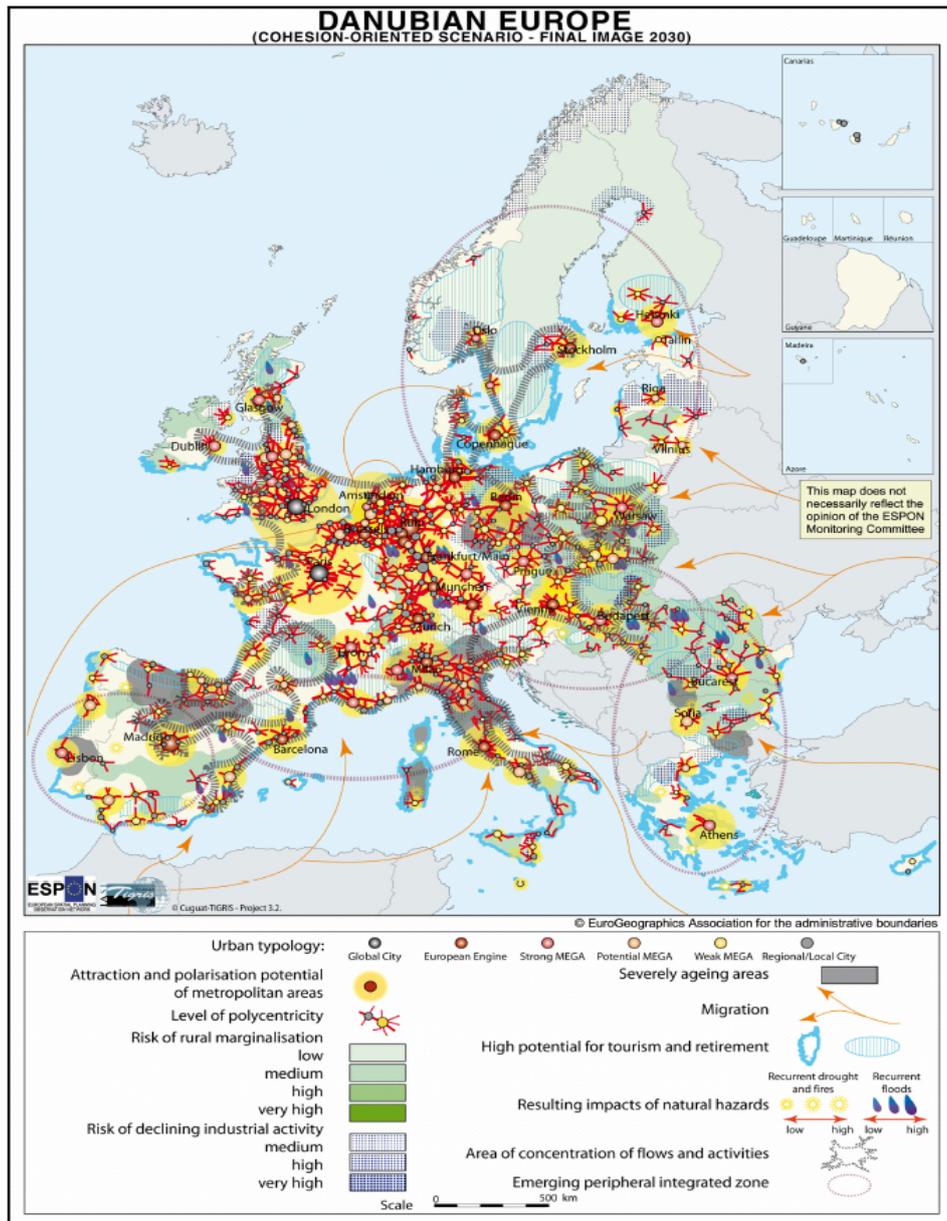


Figure 4: Cohesion oriented scenario Final Image 2030 (Source: ESPON 3.2 The final image 2030 of the cohesion-oriented scenario)

4. The territorial dimension and innovative schemes for the improvement of Governance

Coming back to the order of problems and potentials which can be introduced and formalised, it has been given evidence to the necessity for a territorial dimension also as a function of the adoption of new schemes and modes for the actuation of the Regional Policy itself.

The most significant point is that the implementation of the policies needs to be formulated through the awareness that every public intervention is designed to act on a specific

territory, or at the same time on more territories, and therefore, to be effective and efficient, it is necessary that they account for the particular mechanisms and codes through which the measures are channeled.

The introduction of territorial dimension is deemed necessary in order to cover those aspects of Regional Policy which otherwise would be, once again, possibly neglected from the other two dimensions.

The territorial policy of the Union would not be aimed therefore exclusively to the solution of specific issues, as the spatial ones or those concerning equity and effectiveness of structural policies (intending the territory as the object of politics). Another objective would also subsequently be the introduction of those specific methodologies for the actuation of public policies, conceived through their implementation through the territory, and capable of accounting for the specific peculiarities of places and codes through which “all” is channelled and consequently also the public intervention (intending now the territory as the means through which the policy is implemented).

There appears therefore to be a distinguishable boundary line between the necessity of a territorial dimension linked to the willingness to solve a specific order of problems (spatial, concerning disparity, planning, etc.) and the same necessity linked instead to the need to introduce schemes and modes for actuation of public policies conceived and experimented around the “territory“ subject.

As a matter of fact, these policies have been significant in confirming, through a complete revision of actuation models of territorial policies passing from a vision based on a “plan for territory” to another one based on the “agreement or pact for the territory”, the passage from the “*government*” to the “*governance*”, being centred on their dependence on the system of codes and intrinsic spatial relations.

From this point of view, the territory is no longer the object of politics, but it is the way through which policies are implemented by dictating new schemes and modalities for their actuation.

The subsequent necessity for a territorial dimension is now also revealed by its function of promotion and implementation of adequate models of governance.

As can be elicited from *“European governance. A white paper”*, the Union has for a number of years based its policies on the concept of governance, at the same time denounces also the need for its improvement, in particular aiming at a *“better involvement and more openness establishing a more systematic dialogue with representatives of regional and local governments through national and European associations at an early stage in shaping policy.”*

TC appears to be the response to these points since, as highlighted in *“Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion, Turning territorial diversity into strength”* it *“aims to improve the governance of cohesion policy, making it more flexible, more capable of adapting to the most appropriate territorial scale, more responsive to local preferences and needs and better coordinated with other policies, at all levels in conformity with the principle of subsidiarity”*.

In this sense, the following minimal considerations can be singled out, which have come from the experience of programs and projects (in particular Urban and Interreg), about the definition of schemes and modes for implementing the public policies which highlight the inference of territorial dimension, intended as a relational space, with the implementation of public policies:

- The need for a model that not only would establish some objectives, but that is also capable of encouraging the whole of the stakeholders towards them: to set an economical and social development plan, to pursue objectives of cohesion, equity and efficiency, would mean establishing a dialogue with different public and private actors. The efficiency of public action is determined from the degree at which the policy-maker is capable of allowing the different parts i.e., the single territory and the territories among them, to co-participate;
- The governance differently from the government not only enables an immediate reversal of decision order, from a top-down to a bottom-up approach, but also gives evidence to the importance of relations and specifically to the territorial relations, both explicit and codified ones.

In this sense, the EU during last years has started a process for the recognition of the regional and local authorities as essential actors for the actuation of Regional Policy: the

principle of subsidiarity and the institution of representative bodies of local communities move in this direction:

- planning in order to reach the widest participation both in a horizontal and in a transverse sense, responding to the necessities of the communitarian policymaker to operate simultaneously with social and economical groups and the relevant local communities.
- the partnership principle is very much linked to the principle of subsidiarity, which implies that decisions should be taken at the level most competent to carry them out within the context of a broader cooperative network, capable of pooling resources and experiences.

The participation of regional and local authorities helps to legitimize the decision-making process by counterbalancing any specific political or other influence. Regional and local authorities, socio-economic partners and civil society (the territory) can contribute also to the transparency in decisions and decision-making processes through their involvement and through their channelling of information.

This schemes and modalities, as parallel to the other elements of the third dimension, have been already the object of former planning, but with the same parallelism, because of the two categories of necessity exposed so far, require now being explicit and formalised for their more secure use: the vagueness of the third dimension, in particular of territorial cohesion, enables also this “passage” and the formalising of territorial dimension is the guarantee that this process really takes place.

5. A special case: the territorial dimension in EU tourism policies

In a society that develops increasingly fast, cultural and natural heritage as the principal foundations of tourism development may constitute an important stabilising factor for Europe. It is necessary to ensure that future generations may continue to benefit from the stabilising effect. However, the emphasis on “being there” instead of on “being used” has sometimes led to a conservative, passive attitude towards tourism assets. Progress and an active use of these assets, on

the one hand, and heritage nature conservation on the other, are often regarded as incompatible.

Gradual changes in this attitude have been observed. Lately, a new vision regarding conservation has emerged, in which the presence of cultural and natural heritage alone is not sufficient, but nature and cultural heritage themselves become impulses for social and economic progress, progress from which the assets themselves benefit.

Several new international conventions regarding natural landscapes and heritage respond to these juxtapositions by stating that the "wise" use of heritage ought to be promoted. By wise use they understand: use the many opportunities cultural heritage offers, while respecting the ethical aspects of heritage.

Another discussion that is ongoing is about the value of the landscapes and the heritage. In times where (public) budgets are limited there are doubts whether only outstanding or also ordinary landscapes or landmarks of cultural heritage deserve to be taken care of.

A last consideration regarding tourism policy has a more general character. Not only is the tourism product a place product, it is also extremely complex or transversal. It touches an infinite number of economic sectors, social issues and actors. This transversality has its pros and its cons. One of the most important pros regards the impact of tourism on (local) economies. Both the Leontevian and the Keynesian multipliers are significantly large when compared to other industries. The transversality also has its negative side. One is that the impact of tourism is particularly difficult to measure.

From a tourism policy point of view, the complexity has fuelled a continuous and neverending, notwithstanding the numerous position papers produced by the tourism unit of DG XXI, discussion whether it makes sense to have an explicit tourism policy or if it is better to add tourism as one of the many aspects of sectoral policy: enhancing cultural tourism as part of a European cultural policy; striving for sustainable tourism as part of a European environmental strategy, and so on.

This makes the role of tourism in the package of European policies similar to the role of territory in European policies. A lot has still to be done to give the territory, in general, and tourist place products, in particular, the place they deserve in European regional policies.

6. Final considerations

Starting from an analysis of the needs which have led to the introduction of a territorial dimension in European policies, one can deduct that there has been a general increase of sensitivity towards some questions which can be hardly faced, as the one of spatial configuration of economical development or that of effectiveness of structural policies.

Territorial dimension brings together with it further kinds of problems, in particular in terms of planning, new schemes and actuating modes for public policies. From the considerations reported in this work, the following priorities can be singled out:

a first which can be traced back to the willingness of the communitarian organisms to look at the European economical development following a new perspective, namely the territorial one, with the basic goal of grasping problems and reasons for criticality which affect nowadays the European space, also through the new TC concept (the necessity comes from the “individuation of territorial problems in Europe”);

a second which is linked to a question of communitarian planning, easily understandable from some perplexities which can be raised about the previous category and specifically to the admixture of the territorial dimension with the economic and social ones, which obliges the communitarian policymaker to “elevate” the territory to Priority leaving a clear “signal” to address the communitarian policy; (the “necessity” comes from exigencies to create “the conditions to solve the problems” in operative terms);

a third which can be assimilated to the need to face some questions not directly linked to the intrinsic territorial issues, but rather to the implementation of the Regional Policy itself, or else to the need to adopt new schemes and actuation modes of communitarian policies (the “necessity” comes from “how policies can be actuated”)

Coming back to the question raised for the second category, one can note as all these exigencies are in any case functional to the objective of the communitarian policymaker to send a clear and reliable signal to the policymakers of every member State, informing them that the communitarian policies and therefore the allocation of Structural Funds, will be also directed towards the territorial dimension, communicating to

them that, on the basis of the Unitary Regional Policy, any internal planning is to be uniformed to that address.

In general, the successful introduction of territorial dimension is therefore determined by the degree at which the communitarian policymaker would make clear (i.e., readable in an univocal way) and believable (i.e., feasible) this signal. This would mean in practice that making use of the “necessity categories” revealed so far, depending on the extent at which today the objective of territorial cohesion is defined and fixed, any policy will in the future at least have to:

address the communitarian policies, as well as those of the single member States, towards a gradually more specific order of problems in the space of European development (readability of policy address)

introduce and improve the use of new schemes and actuating methods for given public policies (feasibility of policy address)

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