

THE TERRITORIAL DIMENSION OF A COMPETITIVE GOVERNANCE IN SUSTAINABILITY

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This paper aims to deal with the *governance as planning rules*. Particularly, it discusses as a territory or city is able to apply the Lisbon/Gothenburg Strategy at its own endogenous territorial dimension by new methodological approaches.

In the field of territorial planning – regional, sub-regional and municipal – several European public experiences of plans have applied this new concept of governance, in order to make “consistent” and “subsidiary” all stances, practices and procedures by managing different public/private parties and citizens’ interests (stakeholders).

In fact, acting according to the urban and territorial planning choices, governance began the *set of rules* to realise strategic aims creating a competences/resources network among all concerned subjects onto planning action.

Regarding this vision, the paper discusses as governance can also be observed in connection with the structure (method and process) by which planning goals are established (in a territorial or a master plan). This means governance can orientate and determine appropriate cohesive, competitive, sustainable strategies, monitoring their performance in the time. It is particularly remarkable investigating trans-national co-operative projects.

Beginning from the research of a territorial good governance conceptualisation since 2000, the article analyses as the decisional processes change when new political strategies (e.g. Lisbon, Gothenburg, Laeken, Cohesion) must be included onto the public policy makers decisions.

A first ex-post assessment of EU national behaviours (2001) is at the base of these suggestions, which has highlighted the not perfect correspondence between geographical scales of decisions (from regional to municipal scale or, better, from policy to project scale) and, therefore, the lack of subsidiary vision/action by several EU regions. In short terms: a multi-level governance perspective is generally absent or neglect, despite, by the “White Book on Governance” (2001), the EU started the reflection on the need to modify both the base of the policy choice, and the top-down, centralist approach.

The item illustrates because this governance approach modified the organization of relations; how much it is consistent with a bottom-up approach; how much it agrees with the

concept of *empowerment* and implies a high level of management autonomy in the interaction with the clients/citizens. Some critical reflections regard the governance positive impact on the top-bottom interaction level, enhancing information exchange, availability and access, as well as the elaboration of new strategies looking to specificities of the territory.

From this point of view, concepts of governance and public management have begun a corollary to development ‘territorial competitiveness in sustainability’ (Prezioso, 2006). Today, they imply the outgrowing of the conventional coordination issues and refer to cross-thematic policies asking for participation and activeness of agency, either institutional and not, in order to achieve an integrated management that goes beyond the usual administrative responsibilities.

Recently, the ‘good governance’ logic has begun a regional *government* perspective, enhances flexible guidance and new ways of sharing and impulse territory administration, towards the better integration between local demand and supply policies.

The paper analyses main goals of new governance in this vision, in the light of new experiences that lie in detection of the interaction among governments and the social and productive goals. The *benchmarking* of some cases confirms governance as the better term to explain the process through which the citizens and citizenships address their needs (territorial demand) if the government is able to use new and appropriate decisional instruments (territorial supply).

Metropolitan Areas in Europe have emerged as the “optimal environment” for the achievement of such change, because MEGAs, capital cities and urban regions are key factors for cohesion competitiveness in respect to the new European Territorial Agenda aims (2007). This asks the structures of territorial governance must be able to manage both the environmental variable as ‘generator’ of life quality, and the chance for development and management of the economy, sectoral themes included (Prezioso, 2006).

Nevertheless, the issue concerning what territorial level is more apt to implement and what specific policies are useful for the territory, as well as what functions should be involved in a matter of governance, is a complex question. The answer varies depending on countries, areas and cities involved. For instance, the financing and delivery of primary infrastructures, health, education and environmental services bring economic profit when dealt at intra-metropolitan level. In this case governance must set rules for the behaviour of both private and public sectors (as in the case of the Rome Metropolitan Plan 2003).

In a metropolitan scenario, governance is asked to draw, in a practical and operational way, how European regions and large areas may achieve EU strategies and recommendations, coordinating and politically administrating a polycentric system and the infrastructures that are key-factors for development. This way was used to address both the geographical concentration of innovative activities inside the Pentagon area, and the diversity of the European territories, as summarized in several regional typologies (urban, rural-urban, rural, etc.) and considerable regional disparities.

Among other things, the paper discusses as, during the period 2000-2006, the stages of a territorial good governance process, in support of choices of competitive development in sustainability, have been identified as co-ordination, accords/rules in the decisional processes, assessment, model of economic-social “milieu”.

Some theoretical and empirical reflections on governance needed “territorial dimensions” are included onto this paper. From these, those ones about *territorial potentials* (territorial capital) and *economic advantages/disadvantages* for development result of particular interest in order to get a better territorial and economic cohesion overcoming information asymmetry.

Urban and metropolitan economic governance is a central issue of this paper, because in new processes and policies involving European territories, governance is often discussed (from a neo-weberian point of view) as a “plastic concept”, allowing a number of the players to maximize their goals (“hetero-hierarchical” governance, quite different from “multilevel governance”). *Territorial governance* found a broad implementation in France and Belgium (particularly in federalist regions) in the field of the so-called “ecological connectivity” associated with territorial planning. Local and regional authorities jointly operate through plans of conservation and upgrading of natural areas, integrating bonds, investments, rules, management and powers into a single act.

This evidence demonstrates as territorial governance has become a fundamental instrument for European policy at regional and sub-regional scale; but, at the same time, as it does not exist a direct link with the corporate governance experience. Reason that it should a mistake to transfer results from enterprises business management to the urban/territorial government (see some case of decentralisation).

Other topics linked at the territorial governance are discussed, as: i) the “territorial compensation”, which is quite common in France and Italy as a support for a “lasting” (more than “sustainable”) development; ii) relations with the development and management of rural and agricultural system, conceived as a complex socio-economic process that has to be studied considering the different players whom the plan rules have to be “connected to”; iii) forms of public-private “co-production” through the “apprentissage”, that is the process of “in progress” acquisition of new knowledge and operational ways (technical-economic, etc.) explaining the governance players’ behaviours concerning the realization of plans and projects.

In these visions, governance is considered an excellent way to be *social relations management*. The *animation table* is one of the many forms of the governance performance of territorialisation of the public policies (France, Spain, Italy, Slovenia).

A part of this work is dedicated to how to fix rules of territorial governance. The paper follows the thesis that governance allows the simultaneous implementation of complex objectives. They become still more complex when treated and defined in global and local terms.

The Author proposes of “working” in a systemic regional perspective and investigating its application in the economic-territorial analysis (Prezioso, 2003), accepting market competition in deference to the rules (governance) that assure environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability. This method (called STeMA) encourages and reinforces the governance role in the territorial strategic plan. It was applied at several cases for measuring ex ante the territory diversity in the territorial implementation of policies, plans, programmes, projects. STeMA helps to fix different governance rules for each different context.

Circumstances where governance assumed a primary role have been defined as a result of important experiences in urban and territorial Strategic Plans: 3rd generation plans (Metropolitan City of Barcelona and Metropolitan Region of Madrid, Lyon 2010, Metropolitan City of Bologna, Provincial Coordination Plan of Milan 2003) and 4th generation plans (Territorial

Plan of the Rome Province 2003, Territorial Plan of the Veneto Region 2005, POLY.DEV Project 2007).

In the 4th generation plans, STeMA integrates governance in the economy of the urban or territorial restructuring (value retrieval through derelict industrial areas renovation, financing infrastructure projects, partnerships in projects to reorganise public utility networks, etc.); and realises much more participation of (public and private) “players” contributing to intervention choices and urban policies definition.

For instance, territorial governance transfers at city level the relations among the public institution, the administrative-management system, citizens, employees – business and interest holders. The public body can carry out the role of control authority for the general rules observance towards a definitive implementation of governance: i) sustainability and ex ante impact assessment of interventions; ii) clearness in the project choices (time, goals, solutions).

The final part of the article is dedicated to the most important expected impact of governance development in EU regions: a major restructuring of EU cohesion policy through four priorities, namely *sustainability*, *convergence*, *competitiveness* and *territorial co-operation*. As a result, governance is understood as an instrument geared to the needs of a development model in which solidarity and co-operation play an active role. Moreover, governance would define a more intense relationship with citizens, by designing a suitable scheme of institutional, territorial and metropolitan governance, as declared already in the EU White Paper 2001. For this, after the EU 2000-2006 experience, governance is really became a “bottom-up” process.

Experiences and theory position it at the final step of a strategic action plan, after the ex ante assessment of policies or programmes or projects. And it sustains, accompanies, making possible the executive realisation of a territorial dimension strategy (governance oriented). In this perspective, governance indicators will allow to assess effects of the EU cohesion policies in the form of ‘policy combinations’ (multi-level and inter-sectorial). ‘Cohesive capacity-based’ policy combinations are ‘governance orientated’ and ‘bottom-up’, while ‘principle-based’ policy combinations are ‘top-down’ in perspective, geared at what interventions the Europe might make to enhance the long term competitive potential of regions. These latter include groups of policies targeted at co-operation, transport and cultural interventions and energy investments in new member states and, particularly, between new and old member states.