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Structure, tools, discourse and practices: a multidimensional comparative approach to EU territorial governance

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A Multidimensional Comparative Approach to EU Territorial Governance

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Structure, Tools, Discourse and Practices:
A Multidimensional Comparative Approach to EU Territorial Governance

ABSTRACT: *The concept of 'EU territorial governance' has been recently adopted by planners and decision-makers to indicate the occurrence of a complex, multifaceted and largely undefined process of spatial planning and development activities guided, at various levels, in the European Union's institutional context. Building on a EU territorial governance conceptual framework elaborated by the authors in previous work, which individuates the specific 'channels' of interaction that convey change in European countries, on the one hand, and institutional progress at the EU level, on the other hand, the contribution aims to shed some light on the differential impact exerted by such channels as they manifests in relation to different Member States domestic contexts. It does so by adopting three different national contexts as case studies, representative of as many 'ideal types' of planning system traditions existing in Europe – namely , 'comprehensive integrated' (Germany), 'urbanism' (Italy), plus a supposed 'Central and Eastern European socialist transition' type (Poland) – and providing a comparative analysis of the elements that, in relation to each of them, influence the evolution of European spatial planning and spatial planning domestic contexts within the complex framework of EU territorial governance.*

Keywords: *EU Territorial Governance, European Spatial Planning, Spatial Planning Systems, Europeanization, Domestic Change*

Introduction

After progressive emergence in the discussion on European spatial planning, the concept of 'EU territorial governance' is nowadays adopted by planners and decision-makers to indicate the occurrence of a multifaceted and largely undefined process of interactions among spatial planning and development activities at various levels, guided in the EU institutional framework. This concept is one pivotal topic supporting the Territorial State and Perspective of the European Union (MUDTCEU, 2007b), the 'evidence-based' background reference of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union (MUDTCEU, 2007a; see Faludi, 2009). There the Ministers define EU territorial governance as "a special and growing challenge […] especially with a view to strengthening EU territorial cohesion" (MUDTCEU, 2007b: 8). In this light, the recognition of territorial cohesion in the European Treaties as a shared competence between the Union and the Member States seems to "create a stronger mandate and responsibility for both EU Member States and EU to promote a coherent approach to territorial development within EU (and National) Policies" (ibid: 9).

However, EU territorial governance "is not an easy challenge", as it faces "serious obstacles like differences in policy cycles, objectives, priorities, distribution of responsibilities, processes of negotiation and consensus building of relevant EU policies and national and regional territorial development policies" (MUDTCEU, 2007b: 58). Several comparative studies on spatial planning systems produced during the 1980s and 1990s (Williams, 1984; Davies *et al*, 1989; Newman & Thornley, 1996; CEC, 1997; Balchin *et al*, 1999) have indeed highlighted a significant degree of heterogeneity in the territorial governance and spatial planning contexts characterising the different

Member States. Therefore, whereas since some twenty years the EU plays a key role in the promotion of a European spatial planning agenda (Colomb, 2007), progressively contributing to shape policy concepts and spatial planning ideas (Jensen & Richardson, 2004), this is not necessarily leading to some sort of convergence of spatial planning domestic contexts. In fact, as shown by various studies focussing on the 'Europeanization' of spatial planning, impacts are felt in different ways and at different times (Böhme, 2002; Giannakourou, 2005; Janin Rivolin & Faludi, 2005; Cotella, 2007; Sykes, 2007; Tewdwr-Jones & Williams, 2001; Waterhout, 2007; Hamedinger *et al*, 2008), partly as a consequence of deeply embedded differences between European nations in terms of political, professional and administrative cultures and structures.

Aiming at providing a contribution to the above discussion, this paper briefly introduce the heterogeneous landscape for spatial planning in the EU, as well as complex processes of Europeanization that links domestic contexts and the supranational sphere in the field of EU territorial governance. Building on previous studies (in particular: Cotella & Janin Rivolin, 2010), it then positions and combines current acknowledgements and theoretical approaches of European spatial planning through a comprehensive relational framework pivoted on supposed 'dimensions' and respective interactions characterising territorial governance in the EU. In order to shed some light on the differential impact fostered by these interactions, the authors apply the developed framework to different domestic contexts – Germany Italy and Poland – for each of them exploring the peculiar nature and characteristics of the specific 'channels' fostering domestic change and EU progress in territorial governance activities. Focussing on three different national contexts, representative of as many 'ideal types' of planning system traditions existing in Europe – namely , 'comprehensive integrated' (Germany), 'urbanism' (Italy)[1] (CEC, 1997: 36-37), plus a supposed 'Central and Eastern European socialist transition' type (Poland) – the paper aims at providing a comparative analysis of the elements influencing the evolution of European spatial planning and spatial planning domestic contexts within the complex framework of EU territorial governance, in so doing contributing to an overall understanding of the latter.

Spatial planning systems within the broader EU framework for territorial governance

Spatial planning activities and processes occur within frameworks of legally established objectives, tools, and procedures. However, this doesn't happen in the same way in all places, as spatial planning systems (Newman & Thornley, 1996; CEC, 1997; Larsson, 2006; Janin Rivolin, 2008;

[1] The EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies identifies two additional spatial planning traditions: the 'regional economic approach' and the 'land use management approach', their most representative countries being France and England respectively. While this draft version of the paper does not elaborate on them, the authors plan to include them in the analysis before submitting the paper for publication.

Nadin & Stead, 2008a, 2008b) developed and consolidated at different times in different countries, depending on a range of related issues such as "specific histories and geographies of particular places, and the way these interlock with institutional structures, cultures and economic opportunities" (Healey and Williams, 1993: 716). The fascination of taking an international view on planning lies exactly in the great diversity to be found within spatial planning systems; that is, in the diversity of the associated legal and administrative structures, in the policies and priorities that are pursued as well as in the practices that they generate (Williams, 1984).

However, comparative research on spatial planning systems began rather recently, especially in the European context of Community integration (Davies *et al.*, 1989; Healey & Williams, 1993; Newman & Thornley, 1996; Balchin *et al.*, 1999). In particular, the *EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies* (CEC, 1997) positions EU spatial planning systems according to a complex and sophisticated system of variables: the legal family context, the scope of topics addressed, the extent and topic addressed at the national and regional level, the locus of power, the relative roles of public and private sectors, the extent to which the system was established and enforced in society, and effectiveness of application of the system in shaping outcomes. Through this range of indicators, the document identifies four 'ideal types' of planning system traditions existing in the then EU15, providing benchmarks against which real systems can be compared (CEC, 1997: 36-37):

- *Regional economic approach* – Regional planning deals with infrastructure location and zoning of economic activities, while local plans aims at executing regional plans through hierarchic relations among levels.
- *Comprehensive integrated approach* – Hierarchical system of plans on several levels that take into account all relevant sectors with a spatial impact and is characterised by strong vertical and horizontal integration.
- *Land use planning* – Local plans pivoted on zoning and land-use regulation, while plans on a higher scale are not a common practice.
- *Urbanism* – Focussed on the management of the physical structure of urban areas through building regulations, while in practice higher scale plans are limited, conflictive or hard to realize.

Furthermore, as Cotella (2009) and Stead and Nadin (2011) recently pointed out, despite constituting an heterogeneous group, an ulterior spatial planning tradition – characterised by a high transitional flavour and by various attempts to (re-)establish institutional frameworks allowing for territorial governance activities coherent with the new market scenario – could be drawn from the spatial planning systems of those post-socialist countries that recently joined the EU.

Despite its final outcomes and possible misunderstandings (as occurred in: ESPON, 2007; see: Nadin & Stead, 2008b: 14), the *EU Compendium* had the merit to stress the need for a further investigation of the emerging trends characterising the evolution of the various spatial planning systems. In this concern, the growing consolidation of EU territorial governance surely constitutes a pivotal element contributing to shape the evolutionary patterns of spatial planning systems in the Member States, constituting "a special and growing challenge […] especially with a view to strengthening EU territorial cohesion" (MUDTCEU, 2007b: 8). Whereas the EU Ministers of urban development and territorial cohesion admit that "at this moment, effective and structured EU territorial governance does not exist" (*ibid.*: 51), it is undeniable that since some 20 years the EU has played a key role in the promotion of a 'European spatial planning agenda' (Colomb, 2007), in the meantime incrementally involving planners across Europe in transnational networks and initiatives (Dühr *et al*, 2007).

In order to analyse the impact of these phenomena, ,.

Whereas these phenomena contributed to trigger complex adaptation paths and logics of co-evolution linking national contexts and the supranational sphere, usually referred at under the label 'Europeanization' (Olsen, 2002; Wishlade *et al*, 2003; Radaelli, 2004; Lenschow, 2006), this didn't seem to be leading to an 'homogeneisation' of spatial planning. Rather, their impacts are felt in different ways and at different times (Böhme, 2002; Giannakourou, 2005; Hamedinger et al., 2008; Cotella, 2007; Sykes, 2007; Tewdwr-Jones & Williams, 2001; Waterhout, 2007), partly as a consequence of deeply embedded differences between European nations in terms of "policy cycles, objectives, priorities, distribution of responsibilities, processes of negotiation and consensus building of relevant EU policies and national and regional territorial development policies" (MUDTCEU, 2007b: 58).

In this light, instead of trying to understand whether a nation is 'Europeanizing' or not, any investigation into Europeanization should rather seeks to explore the complex dynamics – either vertical, horizontal or circular in nature – that exert an influence upon the supranational and domestic spheres. In particular, it may be interesting to explore and compare the impacts that the territorial governance relations embedding the supranational and the domestic contexts produce in relation to Member States identifiable with the different spatial planning traditions mentioned above, this being the aim of the present contribution.

Dimensions and channels of EU territorial governance. A framework for comparison

Critical progress notwithstanding, the notion of planning system remains "a generic term to describe the ensemble of territorial governance arrangements that seek to shape patterns of spatial development in particular places" (Nadin & Stead, 2008a: 35). Additional efforts are therefore

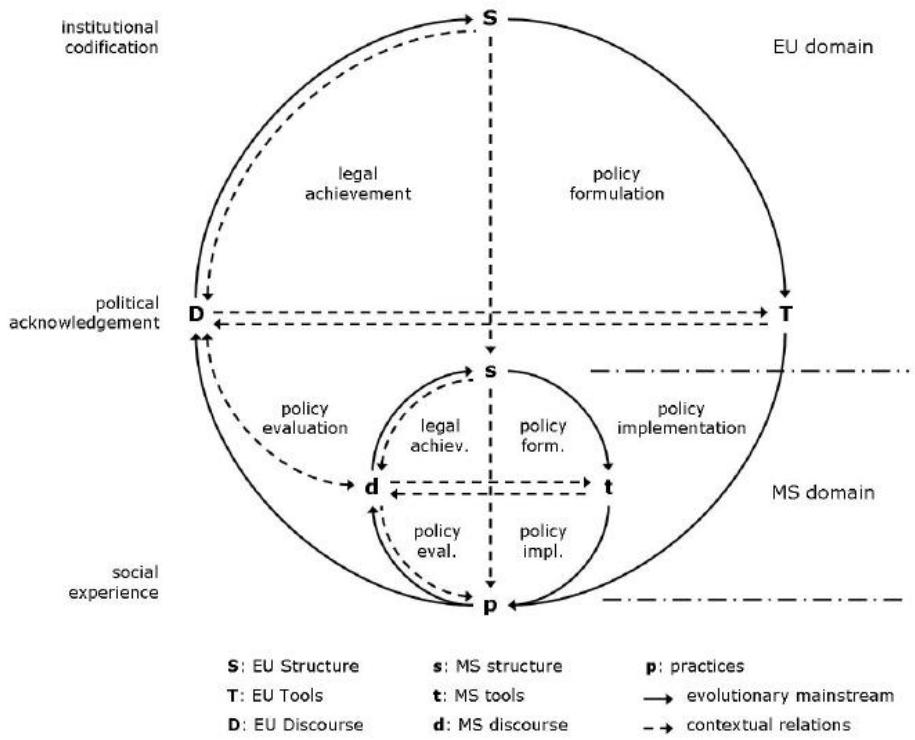
needed in order to achieve further progress in understanding and comparing the systems themselves and the complex patterns of change deriving from their embeddedness within the EU scenario.

Aiming at this direction, in a previous contribution two of the present paper's authors explored the channels of influence that embed and entwine spatial planning systems in the framework of EU territorial governance (Cotella & Janin Rivolin, 2010). They did so by introducing a conceptual model (figure 1a) that assimilates spatial planning systems to "institutional technologies of government" (Mazza, 2003: 54, authors' translation), therefore subject to evolutionary processes of innovation (Fageberg, 2004; Hodgson, 2004; Schubert & von Wangenheim, 2006; Gardner *et al.*, 2007; Sarkar, 2007) and understandable as end-products of a creative selection process of trial and error based on (i) the *generation* of variety of practices, (ii) the *competition* and reduction of this variety via selection and (iii) the *propagation* and some persistence of the selected solution (Moroni, 2010: 279; see also: Rogers, 2003). More in detail, the unpredictable sets of joint rationalities produced through the interaction of various public and private actors (March & Olsen, 1979) that lies at the basis of the variety of *practices* (P) generated from the *social experience* of planning activities constitutes the continuous source of such an evolutionary process. Here the competitive and iterative *discourse* (D) concerning the overall assessment of territorial governance outcomes determines the *political acknowledgement* of certain ideas, concepts and approaches in the concerned institutional context (Adams *et al*, 2011). This may eventually lead to possible agreement on substantial and/or procedural changes in the planning system *structure* (S), the latter representing the overall set of constitutional and legal provisions allowing and ruling the operation of the planning system. A sort of 'descending phase' in the cycle continues from here, as the described *institutional codification* allows for the propagation of the selected changes through a systematic application of newly established spatial planning *tools* (T) this contributing to the evolution and further diversification of the operational framework for practices.

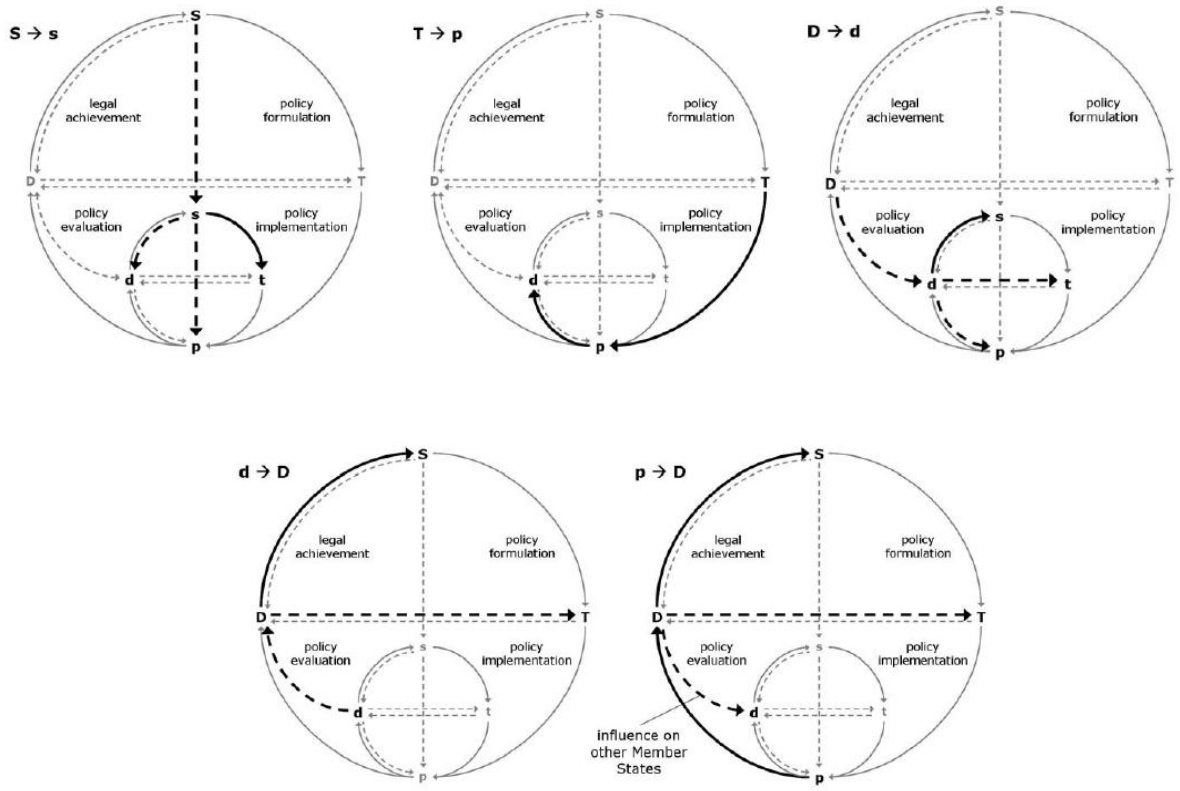
Furthermore, as spatial planning systems are subject to the potential influence of multiple external factors, among which the consolidation of EU territorial governance constitute a pivotal element, the described model is complement by the introduction of a supranational dimension, in so doing aiming at representing the greater complexity of the EU territorial governance institutional cycle. While the broad dimensions identified above and their general relations still apply, the new model results further complicated by additional conceptual aspects, as it has to take into account both the relations occurring at the EU level and those regarding the Member State domain, as well as of possible links of mutual influence between the two. Furthermore, it has to be kept in mind that the institutionalisation process described by the model occurs within a framework including a supranational and several national dynamics, since the EU member countries constitutes as many institutional contexts simultaneously taking an active part in the process.

Figure 1: Channels conveying domestic change and EU progress in the EU territorial governance institutional cycle (Authors own elaboration on the basis of: Cotella & Janin Rivolin, 2010)

a) The Institutional cycle of EU territorial governance



b) Channels conveying domestic change and EU progress



Despite the mentioned complication, the introduced model proved to be useful to systematise the various reflections and findings emerged in recent studies devoted to the Europeanization of spatial planning (see Cotella & Janin Rivolin, 2010). Furthermore, following Wishlade *et al.* (2003) in distinguishing for analytical purposes top-down influences and bottom-up processes of Europeanization, it helped to identify five possible 'channels' of influence linking the various EU and domestic dimension of territorial governance three inducing domestic change and two fostering progress at the EU level (figure 1b).

Modes and directions of domestic change: from EU structure to domestic structure (S→s)

A first channel guiding domestic change concerns the direct influence of the EU structure on the Member State structure (S→s), in turn triggering potential indirect influences on domestic tools (s→t), discourse (s→d) and practices (s→p). This channel obeys to the logics of the so-called 'Community method' (Nugent, 2006), with the EU promulgating legislations in those policy fields for which it detains legitimate competence and the member countries adjusting their respective structures accordingly (Dühr *et al.*, 2010: 149-157). Despite potentially representing the most coercive mechanism of top-down Europeanization, the overall effectiveness of this channel in relation to territorial governance proves to be largely limited by the persisting lack of specific EU competences. However, the channel is active through those EU sectoral policies that may have an impact on domestic spatial planning practices, such as decisions in the field of Environmental and Transport policy.

Modes and directions of domestic change: from EU tools to domestic practices (T→p)

A second channel fostering domestic change concerns the direct influence of the EU tools on local practices (T→p), in turn exerting a systematic influence on the domestic discourse (p → d). The main driver behind this channel is the complex of EU spatial development policies, as for instance the Structural Funds cohesion policy and the Community Initiatives (INTERREG and URBAN above all) (for an updated overview see: Dühr *et al*, 2010). This channel induces domestic changes through a twofold process of top-down and bottom-up dynamics. Firstly, EU tools shape local practices by triggering mechanisms of economic conditionality through the adoption of specific logics as a necessary condition to obtain certain benefits (Schimmelfenning & Sedelmeier, 2005). The evolution of domestic practices then influence the domestic discourse in the form of more or less explicit policy evaluation. Domestic change occurs here through the engagement of local actors into multiple and interactive "social learning processes" triggered by means and goals established at the EU level (Schimmelfenning & Sedelmeier 2005: 18-20).

Modes and directions of domestic change: from EU discourse to domestic discourse (D→d)

The third channel inducing domestic change describes the direct influence of the EU discourse on domestic discourse (D→d), then exerting an indirect influences on the other domestic planning dimensions (d→s; d→t; d→p). This is based on the links and interactions through which the EU territorial governance discourse potentially triggers domestic change whereby certain concepts, ideas and approaches emerging within the multiple 'knowledge arenas' of the EU spatial planning discourse – i.e. the Community debate, the intergovernmental debate, but also the ESPON programme and the European territorial cooperation activities (Waterhout, 2011) – prove themselves able to influence the domestic discourse (Böhme *et al*, 2004; Adams *et al*, 2011). Rather than a one-directional linear process, domestic change appears therefore as the result of discursive circular processes based on the sharing of 'planning ideas and images' that are validated at the European level, then acting as 'catalysts of change' when (re-)interpreted within the different Member States. A crucial role is here played by different 'territorial knowledge communities' that, through their simultaneous action, contribute to determine the prevalence of certain ideas, concepts and approaches over others (Adams *et al*, 2011).

Forms and degree of influence on the EU progress: From domestic discourse to EU discourse (d→D)

A first channel fostering EU level progress in territorial governance concerns the direct influence of domestic discourses on the EU discourse (d→D), in turn potentially producing an indirect influences on the EU tools and structure (D→T; D→S). Whereas this channel acts through the abovementioned discursive circular processes, a major difference concerns the variegated nature of domestic actors bearing an influence on the EU discourse, as well as their capacity to compete in a 'contested field' such as European spatial planning (Faludi, 2001). As the ESDP drafting process masterfully highlights (Faludi & Waterhout, 2002), the lack of legal provisions makes the European spatial planning discourse largely open to competitive dynamics, a non-coercive process framed by the will of the various participants to agree on procedural forms, modes of regulation and common policy objectives, preserving at the same time the diversity of respective beliefs as well as the right to pursue their own selected interests (Bruno *et al*, 2006).

Forms and degree of influence on the EU progress: from domestic practices to EU discourse (p→D)

The other channel fostering EU level progress concerns the direct influence of local practices on the EU discourse (p→D), that in turn may trigger indirect influences on the EU tools and structure (D→T; D→S). Programmes and initiatives promoted by the EU are indeed provided with

systematic monitoring and evaluation procedures, aiming at assessing the quality of implementation and results achieved, as well as to promote learning from mistakes and good practices. The consistent amount of information produced this way informs systematically the decisions of Community players and may fuel the debate of other knowledge arenas concerning EU territorial governance[2]. Furthermore, the joint evaluation of local practices occurring in some contexts proved also the capacity to influence, as a feedback effect, the domestic discourse in other Member States (D→d), through processes of 'horizontal Europeanization' in which the EU plays the role of "mediator or facilitator of cross national policy transfer" that support broader European reform objectives (Knill and Lehmkuhl, 1999, cit. in: Dühr *et al*, 2010: 106).

Domestic change and EU progress: a comparative analysis

Having introduced the different channels fostering domestic change and EU progress within the complex field of EU territorial governance, the remaining of the paper applies the presented conceptual framework to three different domestic contexts, two of them representative of as many spatial planning traditions within the EU – Germany ('comprehensive integrated approach') and Italy ('urbanism approach') – and the third of that Central and Eastern European family of nations that joined the EU during the recent enlargement rounds – Poland.

For each nation, after a brief introduction of the general flavour and main characteristics of traditional spatial planning and territorial governance arrangements, the different channels promoting domestic change as well as EU progress are explored, in order to shed some light on the differential impact fostered by the interaction of countries belonging to different spatial planning traditions within EU territorial governance. For the benefit of the comparative analysis, each channel is assessed through a twofold system of indicators. On the one hand, they are evaluated according to the relevance of their impact (high, medium-high, medium-low and low). On the other hand, a second indicator evaluates the trend of the mentioned impact (increasing, stable, decreasing, discontinuous). The results of the comparative analysis are reported in table 1, that also constitute the main source of information underpinning the consideration presented in the conclusive chapter.

Spatial planning and territorial governance in Germany

The German planning system is a decentralised multilevel system characterised by a high degree of complexity, deriving from a federal structure in which each of the 16 federal states (Bundesländer)

[2] Whereas this channel potentially constitute the most systematic opportunity of EU level progress in territorial governance, mainly operating through the policy evaluation of those local practices constituting the veritable 'hinge' between the EU and domestic dimensions, a particular warning concerns the real capacity of such activities to learn effectively from the extremely diversified complexity of local practices, as the latter remain "less visible at the continental scale" for their intrinsic nature (Janin Rivolin and Faludi, 2005: 211).

has its own constitution, an elected parliament and a regional government. The system comprises four levels: the federal level, the federal state level, the regional level and the local municipal level. The Federal Government stipulates the guidelines for planning in Germany via the Federal Act on Spatial Planning, with such guidelines influencing – and being in turn influenced – by lower planning levels. In practice, the Federal Government does not perform any active spatial planning, merely stipulating organisational regulations and principles (Fürst 2010: 41). One relevant exception has recently been provided by an amendment to the Article 17 of the Federal Act of Spatial Planning of 2008, allowing the Federal Government to draw up federal spatial development plans, taking account of the spatial documents and guidelines developed at the EU level.

Federal state planning laws are enacted by each federal state and contain legal stipulations for spatial planning at both the federal state and the regional level. The federal state development plans serve to coordinate important spatial development activities across the federal state, while also stipulating guidelines for spatial development at the subordinate levels. The main task of regional level planning is to coordinate spatial development[3]. Regional plans specifically define the stipulations of the federal state development plans according to the principle of countervailing influence, while also setting out frameworks for local spatial development (Scholl *et al*, 2007: 26). Planning and land use in the individual cities, towns and local authority areas in Germany is performed according to the municipal planning autonomy. Urban land use planning is regulated through the Federal Building Act and is subject to the framework conditions stipulated by the higher planning levels. The described structural organisation gives rise to a fundamental problem: while in principle spatial planning is set up in a cross-section-oriented manner, the relevant specialist policies are organised in a sectoral way. Against this background, spatial planning has to play a coordinating role, being responsible for bringing its own requirements in line with the objectives of the individual sector policies.

Beside the tools defined by the law, informal plans and instruments are becoming increasingly important. Informal planning is not bound to particular instruments and procedures, rather it is structured according to specific situations. Obligation and implementation are not achieved through regulation but through the self-commitment of the players involved. Consequently, informal planning represents an important addition to ‘rigid’ formal planning that allows only exceptional modifications usually associated with substantial transaction costs. Being adopted mainly in those situations where formal procedures and instruments reach their limits (Hillier 2002: 126ff.), informal procedures also contribute to the functional integrity of formal planning by somehow

[3] Regional planning is, like federal state planning, legally regulated in the federal state planning laws, leading to a large degree of heterogeneity in terms of different organisational forms within Germany.

preserving the firmly institutionalised planning system – although successfully tested informal methods can also lead to changes in the formal structures in the long term.

Modes and directions of domestic change: From EU Structure to domestic structure (S→s)

The direct impact of the EU Structure of territorial governance on the institutional structure of the German planning system can be described as *stable* and relatively negligible (*medium-low*). This is at least true when looking at the informal models of European spatial development – especially the ESDP (CEC, 1999) and the Territorial Agenda of the EU (MUDTCEU, 2007a) – mostly due to the lack of EU spatial planning competences and therefore the impossibility to issue binding provisions. On the other hand, other EU sectoral policies play a far greater role in influencing the structural dimension of German spatial planning. This has proven possible in the past via binding directives initiating structural transformation processes, as the 'Habitats Directive' and the 'Water Framework Directive'. A partial exception is the fundamental role played by European spatial development in the context of the abovementioned amendment to the Federal Act on Spatial Planning.

In any case, the core institutional structure of German planning system appears to be relatively durable vis-à-vis the impact of the EU supranational dimension. This is also imputable to the strong position of the individual federal states (Faludi 2003: 121), which benefit from far-reaching planning competences according to the principle of subsidiarity. For this reason, they bear a critical position towards any centralisation of planning jurisdiction at the EU level (Ritter 2009: 96). As shown by Börzel (1999: 592) the 'domestic institutional culture' responsible for the process of Europeanization in Germany, while exerting fundamental pressure towards the adaptation of the institutional system, in the ultimate analysis leads to the strengthening of 'cooperative federalism' rather than bringing about institutional restructuring processes.

Modes and directions of domestic change: From EU Tools to domestic practices (T→p)

The financial incentives system implemented by the EU plays an essential part in enforcing European spatial development principles in Germany, its impact domestic practices being overall appraisable as *medium-high* and still *increasing* also thanks to the growing resources specifically dedicated[4]. More in detail, several authors underline how Germany has made intensive efforts over the past years to be increasingly involved in the subsequent INTERREG programming periods (Ahlke 2000, Faludi 2004a, Ritter 2009). Furthermore, it is evident that the reins of financial control via the structural policy instruments of the EU has contributed to the establishment of European

[4] While until the 1980s the EU supported isolated studies for transnational action programmes with a relatively modest sum of € 1 million (Ritter 2009: 143), more than € 300 billion is being spent in the context of EU cohesion policy in the funding period 2007-13, of which some € 26 billion allotted to Germany.

planning objectives at the federal level. National Strategic Framework Plans have to be prepared, which bring the use of the Structural Funds in line with EU strategic cohesion guidelines and constitute the basis for the drafting of the operational programmes for the utilisation of these resources at federal state level.

In particular, the National Strategic Framework Plan for the 2007–13 programming period takes up the objectives of the EU Territorial Agenda, emphasising the strategic goals of "innovation and enlargement of the knowledge society and strengthening competitiveness", "enhancing the attractiveness of regions through sustainable regional development", "gearing the labour market to new challenges" and "further developing regions in an opportunity and equalisation-oriented way". Furthermore, the economic conditionality mechanism described above has also led to increased importance of the regional level. The increasing regionalisation of European funding (Hohn & Reimer 2010) and the greater significance of performance-oriented resource allocations going hand in hand with this are giving rise to an intensification of regional competition. In order to be able to benefit from European funding, 'experimental regionalisation' strategies are being initiated (Gualini 2004, Fürst 2006) for the purpose of positioning oneself at the EU level as part of the new support mentalities. The EU appears in this context as the initiator of new regional alliances.

Modes and directions of domestic change: From EU Discourse to domestic discourse (D→d)

The impact the EU Discourse on territorial governance on the German domestic discourse can be indicated as *medium-low* and *stable* as, while the main European spatial planning document possibly had an influence in structuring domestic spatial planning discourses, due to their non-binding nature it is hard to establish causal links between them and the aims and priorities adopted at the domestic level. Principles of European spatial development can already be found in strategic German planning documents prior to the publication of the ESDP, and the development concepts promoted by the latter already figured in the German discourse with the regional planning policy orientation framework from 1993 and the subsequent regional planning policy action framework from 1995. For example, the principle of the decentralised spatial and settlement structure is already set out and strengthened on a sustainable basis in the regional planning policy orientation framework, with a separate section also devoted to the 'model of Europe'.

Another example of the establishment of European spatial development principles is represented by the debate surrounding the significance of metropolitan regions in Germany with the decision on the regional development policy action framework, a debate initiated by the Standing Conference of Federal and State Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning (MKRO) and continuing up to the present time. This underlines the importance of the metropolitan regions in Germany as driving forces for social, economic and cultural development which are intended to preserve the efficiency

and competitiveness of Germany and Europe and help speed up the process of European integration. Furthermore, the Regional Planning Act in Germany stipulates the drawing up of regional planning reports at regular intervals, with the last of these reports in 2005 taking up the topic of European spatial development in a logically consistent manner. Finally, the three *Leitbilder*[5] of spatial development adopted in 2006 'growth and innovation', 'safeguarding services of general interest' and 'protect resources, form cultural landscapes', take up important objectives of the ESDP.

Forms and degree of influence on the EU progress: From domestic discourse to EU Discourse (d→D)

The impact of the German domestic discourse on the EU territorial governance Discourse can be indicated as *medium-high*, although somehow *decreasing* in recent years. In principle, numerous German planning principles have been incorporated into the European spatial planning discourse. In 1994, at the Leipzig informal Council of Member States' Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning, the foundations of a European spatial development policy were laid which were provisionally concluded on 1999 with the presentation of the ESDP in Potsdam. The Territorial Agenda of the European Union was then adopted in 2007 during the Leipzig informal ministerial meeting on urban development and territorial cohesion. The fact alone that important steps towards a European spatial development policy were initiated and projected under the German EU Council Presidency (1994, 1999, 2007) indicates Germany's central role in the overall process and, retrospectively, it can be said that "German spatial planning and the ESDP co-developed in the 1990s" (Ache *et al* 2006: 40).

However, critical voices refer to a more restrained role of Germany (Faludi 2004b: 163). In particular, the strong role of the federal states, which have far-reaching planning and legislative competence and hold a critical stance *vis-à-vis* the possible shifting of competence to the EU level. The federal states seek coordination with the federal government in spatially-related matters at the European level, this being regulated through the cooperation of the federal government ministers and the 16 federal states within the above mentioned MKRO. However, although this body has been instituted in 2008 as a platform for the exchange of views and information aiming at a sustainable improvement of the involvement of the individual federal states in preparing European spatial development processes, it only convenes regularly twice a year and creative and substantial cooperation between the federal government and the federal states that goes beyond information and suggestion exchange remains rather rare (Ritter 2009: 72f.).

[5] a further development and renewal of the regional planning policy orientation framework from 1993 (Aring 2006, Sinz 2006, Einig et al. 2006).

Forms and degree of influence on the EU progress: From domestic practices to EU Discourse (p→D)

Finally, the impact of domestic territorial governance practices on the EU Discourse may be appraised as generally *low*, but potentially *increasing*. Current examples show that the European discourse on certain thematic areas not only finds its way into the fundamental models of German spatial planning; it also stimulates locally related and experimental practices which reveal the structural incongruences in the existing institutional system and may give rise to indirect feedback repercussions at the European discourse level.

The European Landscape Convention entered into force in 2004 may constitute a good example of this process. While Germany has so far not signed or ratified the ELC (Marschall & Werk 2007), the protection and active development of cultural landscapes are assigned an outstanding role in the third *Leitbild* of spatial development in Germany from 2006 ("protect resources, form cultural landscapes"). At the urban-regional level, this requirement is presently being taken into account in a variety of ways. The development of a cultural landscape is becoming the focus of development strategies in a large number of regions, serving as a branding strategy in order to strengthen regional location profiles in a sustainable manner. This happens through both classic instruments that follow the protection concept (nature parks, etc.) as well as innovative and more informal instruments (regional parks, etc.). German domestic practices at the urban-regional level evidently show how the concept established at the European level with regard to shaping cultural landscapes can encounter implementations difficulties locally. In particular, the ascertainable incongruences of sectoral policies, on the one hand, and the integrated demand for the shaping of a cross-section-oriented cultural landscape, on the other hand, confront local players with major challenges. Whereas the development of a cultural landscape in German practices takes on an experimental nature in many places and refers to structural incongruences in the existing institutional system, it remains to be seen to what extent this experience will be reflected at the European level. It is at least conceivable that, seen against this background, European support instruments will have to be adjusted.

Spatial planning and territorial governance in Italy

Embedded within an administrative and legal structure belonging to the 'Napoleonic family' (Newman & Thornley, 1996), with strongly hierarchical power relations between the state and municipalities, a 'modern' planning culture has emerged in Italy between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as the result of a cultural 'dispute' between various professional figures, in which architects have finally prevailed also thanks to the favour of the fascist regime (Zucconi, 1989; Vettoretto, 2009). This may help explain the origins of the Italian 'urbanism' tradition, which

is still today seen as characterised by "a strong architectural flavour and concern with urban design, townscape and building control", and by regulations "undertaken through rigid zoning and codes" (CEC, 1997: 37). Apart from previous experiences of partial and specific legislation, an Italian planning system was indeed codified in 1942 by the national 'urbanism' Law No. 1150 (*Legge urbanistica nazionale*), which is still in force despite various successive amendments (CEC, 2000). This established, first and foremost, that the planning system operation must be pivoted on a local plan for prescriptive zoning of future developments (*Piano regolatore generale*).

One main change concerning the planning system's structure was the extension of some legislative powers (including planning) to regions in the 1970s, as late application of 1948 Italian Constitution. Progressive regionalisation (Putnam, 1993) accentuated the differentiation of regional planning systems under a common national framework: since then, "'ordinary' planning practices and their working cultures vary significantly, in a way, among regions (the institutional setting of spatial planning) and among communities of practice" (Vettoretto, 2009: 190). Apart from few best exceptions, however, the widespread prescriptive approach has induced ordinary planning practices to become bureaucratic, as "a formal obligation, where social interactions have been reduced to formal ones defined by laws and regulations and/or […] affected by patronage negotiations" (Vettoretto, 2009: 196).[6] In such cultural conditions, land use planning has often become a powerful instrument for political and electoral consensus building, contributing to the realisation of massive low-density urban regions and sprawl in the long run (Clementi *et al.*, 1996).

Such was the scenario that, since the 1980s, has stimulated new reflections concerning both the effectiveness of ordinary planning practices and the appropriateness of professional ideologies. Some early experiences of European spatial planning, such as the pioneer initiatives of Integrated Mediterranean Programmes and of Urban Pilot Projects, and the starting of cohesion policy cycles after 1988 reform, have encouraged this renovating process in various ways (Gualini, 2001; Janin Rivolin, 2003; Janin Rivolin & Faludi, 2005). Regional reforms occurring since the late 1990s (while the claim for a national reform of the planning system is still a recurring *leitmotiv*) have then capitalised it somehow, introducing the distinction between 'structural-indicative' and 'operative-regulative' plans, the establishment of collaborative planning processes, and procedures for the transfer of development rights (so called '*perequazione*' or 'equalisation'). More recent 'fashion' of strategic spatial planning, experienced by various cities and local communities in the last decade

[6] "Patronage and familism are often associated with the establishment of urban coalitions including politicians, developers, landowners, professionals, etc. seeking to maximize urban rent through benevolent land-use planning […]. This is often technically legitimated by overestimated population growth and legally supported by discretionary interpretations of laws, frequent and ad hoc changes in land-use regulation and zoning, along with practices of corruption aimed at supporting the costly local political system, and a widespread tolerance toward massive illegal building activity particularly in Southern Italy" (Vettoretto, 2009: 196).

despite the absence of specific legislation is further witness of the experimental 'innovation' process in course (Palermo, 2006). This cohabits, however, with ordinary practices that are "still uncertain because of the persistence of traditional administrative and professional cultures" and of path dependence; therefore, "a sort of hybridisation of mere old regulative styles and new perspectives" characterises the operation of territorial governance at present, in which "a traditional culture of planning, as essentially a command and control activity, is still vital and influential" (Vettoretto, 2009: 201-202).

Modes and directions of domestic change: From EU Structure to domestic structure (S→s)

According to definitions and criteria established for present analysis, the impact of the EU Structure of territorial governance on the Italian domestic structure can be described as potentially very *high* but in fact extremely *discontinuous*, if not occasional at all. A high degree of potential impact is due basically to the appearing distance between domestic and the EU average standards of legality and government capacity (UoG, 2010), affecting of course also territorial governance. Occasional discontinuity depends rather on the lack of a systematic and formal 'transmission chain' between the EU territorial governance objectives and domestic spatial planning activities, which seem however ready to metabolise new procedures and aims once these are institutionally codified.

A meaningful example to this respect may come from the case of Council Directive 14 June 1993 93/37/EEC, concerning the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts. This contrasted national legislation, under which the holder of a building permit or approved development plan may execute infrastructure works directly, by way of set-off against a contribution, and on the other hand permitting the public authorities to negotiate directly with an individual the terms of administrative measures concerning him. The Regional Administrative Court of Lombardy (*Tribunale amministrativo regionale per la Lombardia*) had therefore to refer to the European Court of Justice in order to solve two similar disputes raised within as many important development operations in Milan.[7] The judgment of the Court of 12 July 2001 (Case C-399/98) established finally that Council Directive 93/37/EEC "precludes national urban development legislation […] in cases where the value of that work is the same as or exceeds the ceiling fixed by the Directive" (i.e. 5 millions Euros net of VAT). Of course this decision applies now extensively in Italy, with considerable impact on spatial development processes and products.

[7] Questions were raised in the course of two actions brought against the City of Milan. The plaintiffs in the first action were the Order of Architects of the Provinces of Milan and Lodi (*Ordine degli Architetti delle Province di Milano e Lodi*) and Piero de Amicis, an architect; the second action was brought by the National Council of Architects (*Consiglio Nazionale degli Architetti*) and Leopoldo Freyrie, an architect. Pirelli SpA, Milano Centrale Servizi SpA and the Fondazione Teatro alla Scala were joined as defendants.

Other examples of progressive transformation of national customs might concern the application of directives and decisions specially in the fields of environment (e.g. 'Seveso', 'Natura 2000', EIA and SEA directives) and transport (e.g. TEN-T corridors). Like the former case, they seem however to affect rather specific aspects of the overall territorial governance process in variable moments, so that it is difficult to indicate a comprehensive direction of change produced this way.

Modes and directions of domestic change: From EU Tools to domestic practices (T→p)

The impact of the EU Tools of territorial governance on domestic practices can be overall indicated as *medium-high* and currently *decreasing*, if compared to what was observed during the 1990s (Janin Rivolin, 2003). The reform of Structural Funds (SF) in 1988 has initially "favoured a progressive alignment between national and European regional policy" towards intervention that "also largely involves territorial criteria" (CEC, 2000: 98-99). A decisive institutional measure in this direction was Law no. 488/1992, by which Italian regional policy was transformed from 'extraordinary' state intervention in favour of the *Mezzogiorno* (Southern Italy) to a proper planning policy dealing with territorial imbalances throughout the whole nation. A ministerial Department for Development and Cohesion Policy was then specifically created in 1996 in order to plan and manage Structural Funds, regional policies and new development tools (Gualini, 2001).

As far as spatial planning is more particularly concerned, the introduction of urban 'integrated intervention programme' (*Programma integrato d'intervento*) as of Law No. 179/1992 has been the specific legal provision allowing the launch of a dozen of ministerial programmes, based on the URBAN Community Initiative model, during the 1990s (Janin Rivolin, 2003). Local practices, starting with the urban areas concerned by the new regeneration programmes and through a fertile dissemination of best experiences, have therefore shown the possibility of 'new paradigms' for urban and territorial governance. These concern basically the rise of planning practices as formulating 'local development strategies', instead of, as has traditionally been the case, being only an administrative task or a design project.

In the emerging context of EU multi-level territorial governance, also the INTERREG initiative, inducing to elaborate joint programmes between various national and regional administrations, starting by drawing up rules valid in different and not always compatible legal contexts, seem to have triggered practices of 'forced learning' of domestic bureaucracies in inter-institutional negotiation, as well as in spatial visioning. New opportunities for multi-actor and cross-sector activities have been particularly allowed in Italy by new tools of inter-institutional partnership, such as the 'programme agreement' (*Accordo di programma*) as of Law no. 142/1990, and the 'conference of services' (*Conferenza dei servizi*) as of Law no. 241/1990. An advanced contractual

model for public/private partnership has then been introduced by the 'framework programme agreement' (*Accordo di programma quadro*) as of Law no. 662/1996.

However, such moment of 'great innovation' seems to have exhausted its effects during the 1990s, while there is no evidence of further changes in more recent decade, especially after the launch of the 'New cohesion policy' for period 2007-2013. Moreover, at the end of the day, successful experiences and contaminations observed did not show themselves capable to exert an appreciable influence on more ordinary and prevailing spatial planning practices.

Modes and directions of domestic change: From EU Discourse to domestic discourse (D→d)

The impact of the EU Discourse on territorial governance on the Italian domestic discourse can be indicated as *medium-low* and *stable*. This seems to be due to a combination of factors, including a traditionally scarce recognition of spatial planning in the political agenda, a relative international isolation of the prominent national planning culture[8] and, as partial consequence of both, the late involvement of Italian planners in the nascent discussion on European spatial planning.

As a matter of fact, the Italian contribution to the ESDP elaboration process (Faludi and Waterhout, 2002) was kept apart from national spatial planning responsibilities up to 1998, and thus only few months before its approval at Potsdam (Janin Rivolin, 2003). In a context of widespread political inattention, the jealousy of bureaucracies in charge has prevented a worth circulation of information and decisions (to be) taken among regional and local administrators and stakeholders, as well as scholars and professionals, for a long time. As a result, national competences on EU cohesion policy are currently contended between the Ministry of Economic Development (in charge of the whole cohesion policy management) and the Ministry of Infrastructures (responsible for domestic spatial planning and, as such, allowed to monitor the ESPON programme).

On their hand, after showing some instrumental attention towards EU spatial policies in the past decade (e.g. towards the implementation of URBAN), Italian planning scholars seem to have relegated European spatial planning and EU territorial governance mostly as eccentric topics, without any real appreciation of potentialities for institutional innovation. Concrete opportunities for connective analyses and purposive reflections are rare (Janin Rivolin, 2010) and, needless to say, ordinary professional discourse has never been really influenced by the EU planning discourse,

[8] While an autonomous professional order of planners (e.g. like RTPI in the UK) is not present in Italy (planning has been recognised as a distinct class within the professional order of architects only since last decade), the most prominent planning culture is basically active in the Universities and in two main 'free' associations: INU – *Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica* (National Institute of Urban Planning, founded in 1931 and welcoming professionals, academics and public administrations) and SIU – *Società Italiana degli Urbanisti* (Italian Society of Urban Planners, founded in late 1990s by academics concerned by the quality of educational activities and professional curricula).

if not accidentally and in relation to some 'greater' and more appealing themes (e.g. sustainable development, strategic planning etc.).

Forms and degree of influence on the EU progress: From domestic discourse to EU Discourse (d→D)

Also based on what above reported, an impact of the territorial governance domestic discourse on the EU Discourse can be indicated as *medium-low* and *stable* too. First an foremost, a long-term disconnection between the EU and national officials concerned by territorial governance (Ministry in charge of territorial cohesion policy is different from the one responsible for spatial planning activities) may have prevented any effective episode of 'discursive integration' (Waterhout, 2008). This lack seems to have major consequences in a country where traditionally, as recalled above, spatial planning is substantially active at a local level, mostly formal at regional level and formally non-existent at national level (CEC, 2000; Vettoretto, 2009).

Nevertheless, some at least indirect influence of the Italian spatial planning discourse at the EU level can be perceived in the adoption of certain concepts or topics, which are well familiar to domestic 'urbanism' tradition. One is, for instance, the attention to cultural heritage and its wise management, whose inclusion among the ESDP policy aims was claimed as an 'Italian conquest' at that time (Rusca, 1998). More interestingly, recent focus on 'territorial diversities' given by the *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion* (CEC, 2008) meets all in all the feelings of a national planning culture feeling generally uncomfortable with the supposed 'unifying' and 'generalising' approach of North-Western European spatial planning style (Janin Rivolin & Faludi, 2005).

Forms and degree of influence on the EU progress: From domestic practices to EU Discourse (p→D)

An impact of domestic territorial governance practices on the EU Discourse can be finally indicated as generally *low* and *discontinuous*. An attention to the concreteness of spatial planning practices has been in fact increasing in domestic studies and analytical approaches in the last twenty years but, also because of language constrains, analyses and findings tend to circulate locally. A possible influence from the evidence of local practices on the EU discourse can therefore derive from occasional comparative studies at an international level, in which the concreteness of domestic practices can be possibly appreciated (e.g: Vettoretto in: Knieling & Othengrafen 2009).

More generally speaking, what said recalls also the lack of institutional activities addressed to learn more systematically from spatial planning practices on the EU level. On the one hand, recurring reports on cohesion policy and evaluation procedures for the Structural Funds programmes are too partial (not addressed to ordinary spatial planning activities) and too general at

the same time (apparently not set to learn from detailed practices). On the other hand, a specific focus on (comparative) spatial planning practices has been never addressed by the ESPON programme, in which selected case studies are at the most analysed within research projects that are not focused on the effects of spatial planning as such.

Spatial planning and territorial governance in Poland

Among the post-socialist nations that recently joined the EU, Poland in the one boasting the stronger spatial planning tradition, that had its inception with an incremental consolidation of scientific and practical experiences in the interwar period. Then, with the advent of socialism, spatial planning evolved in one of the most significant experiences of the 20th century, characterized by a complex system of agencies and layers devoted to steer economic and territorial development. After 1989, the transition period led to the dismantling of the socialist planning structure and to the transition towards the free market aiming at the rapid replacement of the centralized system of planning with a market economy deprived of every state intervention.

The adopted macroeconomic reform paid little attention to contested fields such as planning, which has often been regarded as in contradiction with the free market. Hence, after the dismantling of central planning, it has been difficult to set up the administrative and legal framework for a new planning system. The newly established municipal self-governments started to develop a series of ad hoc approaches, often incorporating elements from before 1989 and favouring contingent political decisions over medium and long term strategic visions (Balchin *et al*, 1999). In few years time, the territorial disparities exacerbated by the neoliberal macroeconomic approach called for a revival of regional policy and the reintroduction of national spatial planning. At the same time, ever since the prospect of EU accession become real, the transition started to assume a growing European flavour due to the progressive adoption of EU's vast *acquis communautaire*. More importantly in relation to spatial planning, the pre-accession period brought along with it a series of financial measures that contributed to exert a direct influence on spatial planning reforms through mechanisms of economic conditionality (Cotella, 2009). At the same time, the EU territorial governance discourse exerted a strong influence on the changes through concepts and ideas developed within the European planning community.

The incapability of the plans created under this legislative framework to guide market processes under the new economic conditions led the Parliament to approve a new Act on Spatial Management in 1994, definitively abolishing the centralized hierarchical system of planning, through the institution of a new spatial planning system pivoted on two levels: the state and the municipalities. The former was responsible for spatial planning at the national level, as well as for the preparation, through its decentralised bodies, of regional development programmes. Local

physical planning operated by self-elected municipalities became the foundation of the planning system, with local physical plans gaining the status of legally binding documents (Sykora, 1999).

Serious weaknesses emerged almost immediately, as spatial planning activities became in some sense overtaken by private investors (Lendzion & Lukucijeski, no date). The 1999 administrative reform speeded up the obsolescence of the 1994 Act, leading to the approval of a new comprehensive Spatial and Territorial Development Act in 2003. According to it, the national level is now responsible for the preparation of the National Concept of Spatial Development and the National Development Plan linked to EU structural programming. On their hand, each voivodship is responsible for the drafting of the respective Spatial Development Plans as well as the EU Regional Operative Programmes. Finally, municipalities are responsible for the preparation of the Study on the Development Conditions and Directions for Municipality Spatial Development and of the Local Spatial Development Plans, the latter constituting the only legally binding planning document.

Modes and directions of domestic change: From EU Structure to domestic structure (S→s)

The impact of the Structural dimension of EU territorial governance on the structure of Polish spatial planning system is appraisable as *medium-high*, although *decreasing* since the EU accession. Such impact has been the highest during the pre-accession process, when the Polish government had to perform the so-called transposition of the *acquis communautaire*. Through this process, the transposition of environmental prescriptions such as the Habitas and Bird directives and Natura 2000 contributed to influence domestic territorial governance through a restriction on land uses. Additional influences are imputable to EU Competition Policy, whose prescription constrained the government incentives' policy towards the State enterprises apparatuses that were on their way towards privatization. The withdrawal of state subsidies contributed to the worsening of the production condition of enterprises located in the weaker areas, leading to their eventual shut-down and, in turn, to an exacerbation of spatial polarization phenomena.

However, the most relevant impact of the EU on Polish spatial planning structure has affected the administrative reform and, more in particular, the institution of self-elected regions (voivodships). Whereas municipalities enjoyed a growing degree of autonomy starting from 1990, voivodships existed only as administrative units subordinated to the central level. Starting from the second half of the 1990s. Through the so-called Madrid criteria[9], the EU could exert a strong pressure towards a reform of Polish administrative structure in order to guarantee a correct national transposition of the *Acquis Communautaire* as well as the correct functioning under future cohesion

[9] The Criteria, introduced by the Madrid European Council in 1995, complement the so-called Copenaghen Criteria introduced by the European Council in 1992 conditioning the award of EU membership to the establishment of specific democratic, economic and juridical conditions.

policy conditions, in so doing persuading the government of Poland to elaborate a regionalization proposal both reducing the number of voivodships – from 49 to 16 – and providing them with self-elected government bodies (ESPON, 2006a). Enforced in 1999, the new administrative division contributed to the resurgence of autonomous spatial planning at the regional level.

Modes and directions of domestic change: From EU Tools to domestic practices (T→p)

The impact of the EU Tools of territorial governance on Polish domestic practices can be indicated as *medium-high* and *stable*. Such impact started to be exerted through the programme Phare at the edge of 1990, and continued with the institution of new support instruments, as Phare Cross-border Cooperation (1994), ISPA and Sapard (2000) and with the shift under structural programming in 2004. Due to the described process, since the beginning of the 1990s, Polish actors at the different territorial level have been increasingly challenged with the aim to maximise the benefits from EU funding instruments, and therefore subjected to logics of economic conditionality forcing them to adapt their actions to conditions and approaches developed at the EU level. At the same time, as already mentioned, Polish spatial planning system was undergoing several reforms, mostly in order to provide effective answers to the new market scenario. Such a transitional, fluid configuration allowed for a maximisation of the impact that the new practices introduced through EU territorial governance tools had on the domestic discourse and, in turn, on the evolution of spatial planning at the different domestic level.

In first place, the need to effectively manage the pre-accession and structural support contributed to favour the already mentioned regionalization process concluded at the edge of 2000. Furthermore, the continuous involvement within the pre-accession framework and, after 2004, the structural funds programming, led to an incremental empowerment of the actors located at the different territorial levels, that progressively learnt how to play the game under the new scenario. This is evident at the regional level, where several attempts are put in place in order to fine-tune the priorities pursued under regular regional development planning with those defined under the framework of EU structural programming. Such a process also led to the introduction of a new set of tools, so-called “regional contracts”. Clearly following a EU-inspired contractual logics these specific agreements define the support provided by the state to the development of each voivodship (ESPON 2006b).

Finally, the progressive influence of the approaches promoted through the implementation of EU territorial governance tools contributed to somehow challenge ordinary local planning practices. On the one hand, this led to the emergence of some pioneering experiences of local strategic planning, mainly limited to the main urban areas. On the other hand, it contributed to weaken the role of ordinary land use-planning in favour of more flexible tools allowing for the direct negotiation of

local authorities and private investors, in so doing further embedding market influences into local planning practice (Sagan, 2010).

Modes and directions of domestic change: From EU Discourse to domestic discourse (D→d)

Whereas the impact of the EU Discourse on territorial governance on the Polish domestic discourse has been very *high* through the 1990s and the first half of 2000s, in recent year several elements points towards a *decreasing* of this trend. Starting from the second half of the 1990s, the progressive contact with the logics and concepts of European territorial governance contributed to a resurgence of national spatial planning and provided the latter with a strong European flavour both in terms of priorities and procedures (ESPON, 2006a). A first re-positioning of national spatial planning occurred in 1995, with the preparation of the National Concept of Spatial Development (NCSD - *Koncepcja polityki przestrzennego zagospodarovania kraju*. GCSS, 2001), and was followed since 2000 by the preparation of the National Development Plans (NDP) managing EU pre-accession and structural support. Several parallelisms emerge between the objectives pursued by Polish national spatial documents and the contents of the EU spatial orientation documents, and in particular the ESDP (CEC, 1999). In spite of the fact that Poland didn't take part to the ESDP process, the several channels opened between the process that gave birth to the latter and the knowledge arena within which the NCSD was being shaped could be identified as a factor favouring the described coherence[10] (ESPON, 2006a; Adams *et al*, 2011).

Despite presenting substantial heterogeneity in terms of approaches and priorities pursued, also the majority of the sixteen voivodships development plans presents a strong European flavour, with many of them explicitly or implicitly referring to the ESDP and the Territorial Agenda. In particular, this influence is evident in the emphasis attributed to concepts as polycentricity, the wise management of natural and cultural resources, the improvement of infrastructure and knowledge accessibility and the development of multi-functional rural areas (ESPON, 2006a).

Due to the several critics depicting Polish national spatial planning documents being exclusively focused on the appropriate way to obtain the highest possible share of EU funds (Grosse & Olbrycht, 2003; Grosse, 2005), in recent years, the newborn Ministry for Regional Development tried to emancipate national priorities from the hegemonic influence of the EU discourse. In this concern, the NDP 2007-13 represents an important step forwards as it integrates several elements not necessarily matching EU goals and priorities (IGPNDP, 2005). Similarly, the new National

[10] In this concern, it is worth to point out how the Polish Academy of Science, a state finance agency inherited from the socialist period, continue to play a crucial role in influencing policy-making activities. In particular, several members of the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization provide constant support to the government bodies deputed for the preparation of national spatial strategies and programmes.

Spatial Management Concept (NSMC) for the years 2008-2033 (NSMC, 2010), despite building on the most recent elements of the EU territorial governance discourse (the Barca's Report and the EU 2020 Strategy, respectively Barca, 2009; CEC, 2010), seems to emancipate from the a-critical transposition of EU concepts and aims, complementing them with peculiar domestic priorities (Szlachta & Zaleski, 2005: 81).

Forms and degree of influence on the EU progress: From domestic discourse to EU Discourse (d→D)

While being until recently appraisable as *medium*-low, the impact of the Polish domestic territorial governance domestic discourse on the EU Discourse is currently characterised by an *increasing* momentum, mostly imputable to the further engagement of Polish territorial knowledge communities with the knowledge arenas of European spatial planning as well as to more time-contingent events, as the forthcoming Polish presidency of the European Council. While the European territorial governance discourse started to mature simultaneously with the enlargement process through the process that gave birth do the ESDP, actors from CEECs weren't involved in the latter, having therefore no chance to influence it. Beside more geographically focussed experience – as the cooperation activities ongoing within the VASAB (Vision and Strategies Around the Batic Sea Region) framework since 1992 - first attempts of engagement of Polish stakeholders with the EU territorial governance discourse occurred in 2003, with the opening of the ESPON arena to Central and Eastern European actors. However, whereas an increasing number of Polish actors have become active within ESPON's organizational structure, an examination of the composition of the Transnational Project Groups responsible for ESPON 2006 projects still reveals the dominance of Western actors and a scarce involvement of Polish actors (Cotella *et al*, 2010).

As already mentioned in the above section, such a situation has been changing in recent years, with Polish actors (above all the newborn Ministry for Regional Development) aiming, on the one hand, at emancipating from the hegemonic influence of the EU discourse and, on the other hand, in uploading national issues and priorities to the EU territorial governance discourse (Czapiewski & Janc, 2011). More in detail, Polish actors are increasingly engaging with the two macro-arenas that characterise the EU territorial governance discourse: the territorial cohesion debate and the intergovernmental debate. On the one hand, as detailed analyses of the Territorial Cohesion Green Paper consultation process shows, Polish actors have been amongst the most active, contributing to as many as forty-six of the responses (see Cotella *et al*, 2010). On the other hand, they are playing a crucial role, together with Hungary, in the reformulation of the new EU Territorial Agenda and, in turn, in the definition of the future of cohesion policy for the period 2014-2020.

Forms and degree of influence on the EU progress: From domestic practices to EU Discourse (p→D)

Last but not least, the impact of Polish territorial governance practices on the EU Discourse has been generally *low*, although characterised by *discontinuous* momentum. On the one hand, until now it is hard to detect any feedback influence on the EU territorial governance discourse derived from the evaluation of Polish domestic practices. This situation is explainable if one considers the late engagement of Polish actors within EU cohesion policy, allowing Polish regions to benefit from the EU support only for the last two years of the programming period 2004-2006, and therefore leaving few or no room for a comprehensive evaluation of the experience. Similarly, the mentioned late involvement hampered any systematic evaluation of the participation of Polish stakeholders to the EU Community Initiatives.

On the other hand, one could say that Poland contribute to the overall feedback influence that the evaluation of the implementation of the different pre-accession programmes on the candidate countries had on the reformulation of EU pre-accession and neighbouring policy. Started with the institution of Phare at the edge of 1989, the latter evolved through the 1990s with the institution of a plethora of funding support instruments targeting different geographical areas and insisting on a set of heterogeneous thematic issues (Phare CBC, ISPA, SAPARD, CARDS, TACIS, MEDA etc.). The evaluation of the challenges that the implementation in the practice of such a high number of different tools – each provided with its own working mechanism and financial regime – led the EU to implement a substantial simplification of its pre-accession and neighbouring policy through the institution of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) (Cotella, 2009).

Channels		Germany	Italy	Poland
Domestic Change	**S→s**	**Medium low / Stable** Structural resistance of the German planning system due to its maturity and the strong role of the German federal states (Länder). Changes mainly deriving from EU directives (Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive).	**High / Discontinuous** Distance between domestic and the EU average standards of legality and government capacity but lack of systematic 'transmission chain' between EU territorial governance objectives and domestic spatial planning activities (e.g. Council Directive 93/37/EEC on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts).	**Medium high / Decreasing** The accession and the need to transpose the *Acquis communautaire* led to strong pressures towards regionalization (Madrid criterium). Influence of EU Competition policy (the State had to refrain its economic support towards former state enterprises). Influence of Environmental directives (e.g. Nature 2000, Habitats, SEA).
	T→p	**Medium high / Increasing** SF as central incentives for regional initiatives and planning activities (Structural Policy, INTERREG). Regionalisation of structural funds leads to strategies of experimental regionalism (Region Building and Rescaling). Increased competition between regions.	**Medium-high / Decreasing** Strong initial impact of cohesion policy (SF after 1988 reform, URBAN, INTERREG CIs etc.) Fertile dissemination of best practices and emerging of 'new paradigms' for urban and territorial governance. Lack of influence on more ordinary and prevailing planning practices, while moment of 'great innovation' seems now out of stock.	**Medium high / stable** The need to effectively manage the SF contribute to favour the introduction and consolidation of self-elected regions. Thanks to participation of EU pre-accession and cohesion policy, regional and local actors result empowered. Emergence of local strategic planning (in the second half of 2000s, and only in relation to main urban areas).
	D→d	**Medium low / Stable** Co-evolution of German and EU discourse. Central European ideas of spatial development can be found in German key documents before the ESDP. The new *Leitbilder* of spatial development adopted in 2006, representing a further development and renewal of the regional planning policy orientation framework take up important objectives of the ESDP.	**Medium-Low / Stable** Late involvement of Italian planners in the nascent discussion on European spatial planning (due to a combination of factors, including a traditionally scarce recognition of spatial planning in the political agenda and the relative international isolation of the prominent national planning culture). Instrumental attention to the EU spatial policies, but scarce appreciation of its potentialities for institutional innovation.	**High / Decreasing** Introduction of national development concept and national development plans following EU logics/concepts. Elements from the EU discourse trickling down into regional strategies (mediated by national documents). In recent years: first attempts to emancipate from EU discourse and to integrate and complement the latter with domestic priorities.
EU progress	**d→D**	**Medium high / Decreasing** Co-evolution of German and EU discourse Central (also in symbolic terms) role of Germany in the development of EU spatial planning discourse (ESDP and TA process) Decreasing interest in European Spatial Development after ESDP publication in 1999.	**Medium-low / Stable** Long-term disconnection between the EU and national officials concerned by territorial governance (Ministry in charge of territorial cohesion policy is different from the one responsible for spatial planning activities). Nevertheless, signs of some indirect influence (heritage issues in the ESDP, 'territorial diversities' in the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion).	**Medium low / Increasing** 1990s: scarce engagement of Polish actors within the EU territorial governance discourse. 2000s: growing participation of Polish experts to the knowledge arenas of EU territorial governance. In recent years, first attempts to emancipate domestic discourse from hegemonic EU logics and to promote domestic priorities to the EU agenda (important role played by Polish actors in the revision of the EU territorial agenda).
	p→D	**Low / Stable (Increasing)** Communication of best practices through INTERREG and ESPON projects. Experimental practices on a local/regional scale may help to discover structural problems which may lead to a gradual adaptation of EU practices in the future.	**Low / Discontinuous** High domestic attention to local practices but analyses and findings rarely overcoming national borders (language). Influence on the EU discourse derives from occasional comparative studies. Recurring EU evaluation procedures are too partial (not addressed to ordinary spatial planning activities) and too general at the same time (not made to learn from detailed practices).	**Low / Discontinuous** No feedback influence from domestic practices due to the late engagement in EU cohesion policy (since 2004). The participation of CEECs to pre-accession programming led to the incremental reformulation of the latter, until the EU decided to simplify its pre-accession and neighbouring policy unifying the plethora of existing funds (Phare, ISPA, SAPARD, CARDS TACIS etc.) into two main tools (IPA and ENPI).

Conclusive remarks

The aim of this paper was to provide an insight on the "special and growing challenge" (MUDTCEU, 2007b: 8) that EU territorial governance represents for both the EU and the various Member States. It did so by applying a conceptual framework elaborated in previous work by two of the present paper's authors (Cotella & Janin Rivolin, 2010) to the reciprocal interaction embedding the spatial planning systems characteristic of three distinct domestic contexts – Germany, Italy and Poland – within the complex frame of EU territorial governance.

Pivoted on four main analytical dimensions of territorial governance as an institutional process – namely *structure*, *tools*, *discourse* and *practices* – and on their complex relationships in the EU institutional context, the adopted framework contributed to shed some light on the complex combination of top-down (transposition of EU policies, concepts and procedures to domestic policy areas) and bottom-up (uploading national ideas to the EU level) dynamics that concern the theoretical field of 'Europeanization' (Wishlade et al, 2003). More in details, for each of the three analysed cases the adopted framework allowed for an appraisal of the impact delivered through three specific 'channels' conveying change in the Member States and two addressing progress at the EU level. An overall comparisons of the character the different channels manifests in relation to each of the analysed countries is reported in Table 1, and discussed in detail in the text below.

In first place, the analysis shows how, if compared to other policy fields of EU competence, the direct impact of the EU Structure of territorial governance on domestic institutional structures (S→s) proved to be relatively low[11]. On the contrary, a high influence is delivered by the EU on Member States through the same channel thanks to the transposition of spatially relevant sectoral policies and regulations, among them environmental policy being the most influential. The Polish case is rather peculiar, as the overall requirements linked to the pre-accession process, together with the fluid transitional situation characterising the country institutional framework, provided the EU with an important leverage to influence ongoing institutional changes, the most relevant evidence of this being the regionalization process concluded at the end of the 1990s.

As partial consequence of the lack of EU competence hampering the impact of the S→s channel the impact of EU territorial governance on the Member States seems to be delivered especially through other channels. More in particular, EU territorial governance Tools have a direct top-down influence on local practices (T→p) and hold in economic conditionality a strong argument in favour of domestic change, therefore producing a medium-high impact in all the analysed contexts. In Germany such impact is increasing together with the increase of the dedicated funds and is mainly

[11] This aspect is indeed matter of debate on whether this is an intrinsic feature of European spatial planning or a temporary condition subject to institutional evolution (Janin Rivolin, 2010).

felt at the Lander and Regional level. On the contrary, in Italy such impact is decreasing, as the phase of experimentation that characterised the 1990s and the beginning of 2000s seems now to have exhausted its innovative power. In Poland the impact of EU territorial governance tools is visible at all territorial levels and continue to be elevated, mostly due to the importance that EU financial instruments and resources continue to play in the overall framework of domestic development policy.

As far as the impact of the EU territorial governance Discourse on domestic spatial planning discourses (D→d), the analysis shows how the described process of discursive integration between the EU and the Member States has its impact maximised by the growing importance of evidence and knowledge in a context characterised by scarce official legitimacy (Richardson, 2001, Adams *et al*, 2011). However, the influence exerted varies from context to context, conditioned as it is by the effective engagement of domestic actors within the knowledge arenas of European spatial planning, as well as by the distance occurring between domestic spatial planning concepts and approaches and those concepts and approaches elaborated at the EU level. For instance, the impact of the EU Discourse appears stably medium-low in the case of both Germany and Italy but, while in the first case this is due to the partial overlapping of EU and domestic themes (as well as to the suspicious attitude of the Lander), in Italy it has been the low engagement of domestic communities with the EU territorial governance discourse (due to different reasons, among which a traditional approach to planning that pays scarce attention to supra-local initiatives) that hampered the conveying of relevant influences. Once again, the situation of Poland is peculiar: here, after almost a decade of substantial subordination of national priorities to EU concepts and precepts – often deriving from an a-critical transposition of the latter in domestic document – in recent years the impact has been decreasing together with the growing integration of Polish actors within the EU territorial governance discursive arenas.

When it comes to the actual capacity of the channels through which EU level progress is fostered, the analysis shows once again differential results. In the case of the impact of spatial planning discourse in the three Member States on EU territorial governance Discourse (d→D) this is due, on the one hand, by the effective engagement and lobbying capacities of domestic actors within the European spatial planning knowledge arenas (Adams et al, 2011). For example, the mentioned lack of engagement of Italian planning community with – and the initial suspicious attitude towards – EU territorial governance Discourse contributed to minimise its impact. On the other hand, Germany played a crucial role in the process of consolidation of the EU TG discourse also due to the maturity of its spatial planning system and, therefore, community of actors. Whereas Polish actors couldn't play any influential role within the process of EU territorial governance discursive integration until the early 2000s, they are now growingly influencing the EU territorial

governance debate, this showing how the EU territorial governance may be understood as a "context for situated learning" (Adams *et al*, 2011: 422-449, building on Lave & Wegener, 1991) where actors at the margins may progressively move towards the centre and exerting an increasing influence.

Finally, as far as the impact of the evaluation of domestic practices on the EU territorial governance discourse is concerned (p→D), this appears to be low in the case of all countries (the impact of the evaluation of the implementation of the pre-accession programmes on the overall EU pre-accession strategy constituting here an exception). This is most likely imputable to a sort of 'systemic-bug' characterising the channel that should deliver the impact of the evaluation of the implementation of EU territorial governance tools in the domestic practices. Partially this is due to the intrinsic character of practices that are extremely diversified and remain "less visible at the continental scale" (Janin Rivolin and Faludi, 2005: 211). Be that as it may, as the dimension of *practices* lies at the crossroads of domestic change and EU level progress in the whole operation of EU territorial governance, a higher attention to practices by scholars concerned by European spatial planning could perhaps contribute to enhance effective EU progress.

In conclusion, one should stress that the produced analysis of how the different channels of domestic change and EU progress convey their impacts in relation to spatial planning systems belonging to different spatial planning traditions constituted a first step towards a better understanding of the processes and mechanisms that characterise the complex landscape for territorial governance in the EU. A more comprehensive analysis of the different domestic spatial planning systems in the EU is indeed needed not only to embrace and cover all spatial planning 'traditions' but also in order to appraise similarities and relevant differences that may emerge between countries belonging to each of them.

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