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12 October 2024

ESPON ITALIAN EVIDENCE

IN CHANGING EUROPE

Edited by

Maria Prezioso

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The book reflects the positions and opinions expressed by the Italian partners in the execution of projects. More information on the ESPON Programme and the projects can be found on the website www.espon.eu .

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As experimental people we do not act as the theoretical ones: the originality of an idea is not intended to be printed on a sheet of paper but to prove it through an original experiment

(Blackett '62)

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7. TERRITORIAL APPROACHES FOR NEW GOVERNANCE - ESPON TANGO[1]

Nadia Caruso[2], Giancarlo Cotella[3], Umberto Janin Rivolin[4]

7.1 SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

The ESPON project TANGO (Territorial Approaches for New Governance)5 was tendered on December 2010, and performed during the period June 2011 / May 2014 by a Transnational Project Group led by Nordregio, Stockholm. Politecnico di Torino6 was partner of the TPG with the OTB Research Centre of the Delft University of Technology, the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, the Centre for Regional Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Science, and the Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering of the University of Ljubljana.

The TANGO project builds on the assumption that territorial governance matters in order to achieve territorial cohesion and the 'Europe 2020' Strategy's objectives. Its main aims are thus to assess the status of territorial governance throughout Europe and to propose recommendations for improvement. This has been done through a series of conceptual surveys and in-depth qualitative analyses of 12 case studies of territorial governance throughout Europe.

In brief, the TPG developed an operational definition of territorial governance as "the formulation and implementation of public policies, Programmes and projects for development (i.e. an improvement in efficiency, equality and environmental quality of a place/territory)" by five "dimensions", which were further detailed into twelve qualitative "indicators" for analysing the performance of territorial governance (Table 1). Besides, a typology of territorial governance across Europe was developed (see section 7.2).

Table 1: Overview of the five dimensions and twelve indicators of territorial governance

Dimensions of territorial governance	Indicators for analysing the performance of territorial governance
1. Co-ordinating actions of actors and institutions	Governing Capacity Leadership
2. Integrating policy sectors	Subsidiarity Public Policy Packaging Cross-Sector Synergy
3. Mobilising stakeholder participation	Democratic Legitimacy Public Accountability Transparency
4. Being adaptive to changing contexts	Reflexivity Adaptability
5. Realising place-based/territorial specificities and impacts	Territorial relationality Territorial knowledgeability and impacts

[1] English translation provided by the Authors

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[5] http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_AppliedResearch/tango.html

[6] Project team: Nadia Caruso, Giancarlo Cotella, Alberta De Luca. Francesca Governa, Umberto Janin Rivolin (coordinator) and Marco Santangelo.

The above definition, dimensions and indicators have served to provide guidelines for the case study analysis and constituted the underlying framework for the overall research. Particularly, a framework for the identification and transferability of good territorial governance "features" was developed in order to draft the handbook entitled 'Towards Better Territorial Governance in Europe: A Guide for practitioners, policy and decision makers', a forthcoming publication by ESPON (see section 7.4).

7.2 ITALY WITHIN ESPON TANGO

Single countries did not receive relevant attention in the TANGO project, since territorial governance was approached in more general terms and surveys were rather focused on policies and practices retrieved from specific case studies (often cross-border or transnational). However, national perspectives were analysed in order to develop a typology of territorial governance in Europe. Italy was therefore compared to other ESPON (not only EU) countries, in order to identify some general clusters according to their main common features.

Taking the existing comparative studies about government, governance and planning systems into account, the TPG developed indeed the seed of a possible typology of territorial governance in Europe. With the aid of hierarchical cluster analysis, seven socio-political macroregions have been identified in which the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI)7 are most similar (Table 2). The main key trends in territorial governance across these clusters of countries, as well as different approaches to tackling territorial policies, were then traced through an online survey.

Table 2: Europe's socio-political macroregions and Worldwide Governance Indicators

	Voice and account-ability	Political stability & absence of violence	Govern-ment effective-ness	Regulatory quality	Rule of law	Control of corruption
Nordic states FI, DK, IS, NO, SE	Very strong	Strong	Very strong	Very strong	Very strong	Very strong
Rhinelandic states AT, BE, CH, DE, FR, LU, NL	Strong	Strong	Very strong	Very strong	Very strong	Very strong
British Isles IE, UK	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Very strong	Very strong
Southern states CY, EL, ES, IT, MT, PT, SI	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Baltic states EE, LT, LV	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Visegrád states CZ, HU, PL, SK	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Balkan states AL, BA, BG, HR, KV, ME, MK, RO, RS	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

[7] The Worldwide Governance Indicators are publicly available at www.govindicators.org.

7.3 RELEVANT REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL CASE STUDIES

For its nature, territorial governance is difficult to measure empirically. Taking the gap between national trends and multi-level processes into account, 12 case studies were developed in order to provide an understanding of how actors and institutions at different levels formulate and implement policies, Programmes and projects. One case study focussed on the Target-based Tripartite Agreement developed in Lombardy. Italian governance practices were also considered, although marginally, in another case study: the Trilateral Nature Park Goricko-Raab-Örség (on the border of Austria, Hungary and Slovenia).

In 2002, the EU Commission launched the idea of experimenting "target-based tripartite contracts and agreements" to be subscribed by sub-national authorities, Member States and the Commission itself. The aim was to implement EU legislation with wider efficiency and flexibility. Among the 4 pilot projects developed, the Tripartite Agreement among the European Commission, Italian Government and Lombardy Region was the only one actually signed, while the others failed after lengthy negotiation processes. However, it was not carried out afterwards. The most interesting feature of this experience is the importance of political support, manifesting as vertical coordination in the form of assiduous relationships between the regional President and the Italian Minister of Foreign Affair. Even if appreciable, this feature proved to be insufficient on its own to guarantee the success of the process.

The case study of Trilateral Nature Park Goricko-Raab-Örség investigated rather the evolution of activities finalised to a coordinated protection and management of natural areas in a transnational context. The analysis of the Italian position throughout the whole cooperation processes showed how Friuli-Venezia Giulia started its involvement already in the 1960s, Veneto joined in the 1970s and the Alps-Adriatic Working Community, formally founded in 1978, included also other north Italian regions over time. This case suggests that the capacity to carry out cross-border coordination, consolidated as a legacy of informal contacts and decades of experience of actors involved, connections and trust, is of crucial importance for the effective governance of natural areas.

7.4 POLICY OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

Europe is still in recovery from a deep financial crisis and struggling with unemployment and social exclusion. At the same time it must switch to a low-carbon economy and adapt to the climate changes that are already underway. Responding to these daunting tasks requires effective and urgent policy initiatives and actions at European, national, regional and local levels as well as across different policy sectors. This is well indicated by the EU growth strategy for the coming decade, known as 'Europe 2020', and aimed at making the EU a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. The so-called "place-based approach" as delineated in the Barca Report and the existence of good governance with a strong adaptive capacity are recognised as critical factors in addressing the agenda set by the Europe 2020 strategy. Better territorial governance is thus needed for a place-based cohesion policy that can contribute to a better Europe.

Along these lines, the most relevant outcome of the ESPON TANGO project is constituted by the handbook 'Towards Better Territorial Governance in Europe: A Guide for practitioners, policy and decision makers', where research findings are distilled for practical purpose. One message conveyed by this handbook (currently in draft) is that, since territorial governance contexts differ quite dramatically across Europe, 'one-size-fits-all' recommendations would be misleading. Anyone concerned with better territorial governance in Europe should rather facilitate local engagement in common aims, thus contributing to turn the territorial diversity of Europe into strength.