The Europeanization of territorial governance and spatial planning. A tool for analysis

Giancarlo Cotella & Umberto Janin Rivolin

Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning
Politecnico di Torino
Outline

1. Territorial governance and spatial planning systems as institutional technologies
2. The Europeanization of territorial governance and spatial planning
3. Downloading influences and domestic changes
4. Uploading influences and opportunities for horizontal exchange
5. Main findings and chances for cross-fertilization
1. Territorial governance and spatial planning systems as institutional technologies

1997 EU Compendium

- 15 countries
- Static portraits
- only superficial attention to the role of the EU
1. Territorial governance and spatial planning systems as institutional technologies

Comparative Analysis of Territorial Governance and Spatial Planning Systems in Europe

*June 2016 – June 2018*

**MAIN OBJECTIVE**

To describe and explain changes in **territorial governance and spatial planning systems** and policies:

- across Europe (32 + 7 countries);
- since 2000;
- with particular reference to the impact of the European Union.

To identify good practice on the relationship between spatial planning and EU (Cohesion) policy; and to recommend how those relationships can be improved.
1. Territorial governance and spatial planning systems as institutional technologies

Spatial planning system as:

- a set of practices subjected to **processes of institutionalization** (Gualini, 2001)
- an ‘**institutional technology** of government’ (Mazza, 2003)

The concepts of ‘**institution**’ and ‘**technology**’ are both recognised in science as subject to **evolutionary processes of innovation** (Fageberg, 2004; Gardner *et al.*, 2007, etc.),

in other words, through trial and error processes, they are capable to produce ‘qualitative novelties that constitute a new kind or level of reality’ (Moroni, 2010)
1. Territorial governance and spatial planning systems as institutional technologies

As an institutional technology, the system of territorial governance is a social construction, that constitute the “hinge between the government system […] and the spatial production and consumption system” (Mazza, 2003)

Institutions, technologies and, in general, all social constructions are end-products of creative selection processes of trial and error, based on:

I. the generation of variety (in particular, a variety of practices and rules)

II. competition and reduction of the variety (of rules) via selection

III. propagation and some persistence of the solution (the system of rules) selected

(Moroni, 2010)
1. Territorial governance and spatial planning systems as institutional technologies
2. The Europeanization of territorial governance and spatial planning

What is Europeanization?

- Not a “domestic reaction to Europe” but an **interactive** conception of Europeanization (Salgado & Woll, 2004).

- Not a linear “top-down” impact of the EU on the member states but a **set of complex logics of co-evolution and adaptation** (Gualini, 2003; Megie & Ravinet, 2004).

In this context the question to be answered is not whereas a nation is “Europeanizing” or not, but what are the **characteristics** and the **impact** of the **set of relations entwining EU and domestic realities** within EU multilevel governance.
2. The Europeanization of territorial governance and spatial planning

Mechanisms of Europeanization

Various “top-down” influences (Knill & Lehmkuhl, 1999):

i. The EU imposes regulatory models to which national devices must adapt

ii. The EU alters the “rules of the game” by changing local opportunities through the redistribution of resources and powers

iii. The EU indirectly influences national devices, altering the convictions and expectations of domestic actors

Combined with “bottom-up” influences (Wishlade et al., 2003):

- Double simultaneous process: “download” and “upload”

And crossed by “horizontal” influences

- From State to State, EU as exchange platform
2. The Europeanization of territorial governance and spatial planning
3. Downloading influences and domestic change

I. The EU imposes regulatory models to which national devices must adapt (Knill & Lehmkuhl, 1999)
3. Downloading influences and domestic change

Instrumental influence

II. The EU alters the “rules of the game” by changing local opportunities through the redistribution of resources and powers (Knill & Lehmkuhl, 1999)
3. Downloading influences and domestic change

Top-down discursive influence

III. The EU indirectly influences national devices, altering the convictions and expectations of local actors

(Knill & Lehmkuhl, 1999)
4. Uploading influences and opportunities for horizontal exchange

Bottom-up discursive influence

Spatial planning is a "contested field" where "high-regulation countries are at an advantage" (Faludi, 2001)
4. Uploading influences and opportunities for horizontal exchange

Practical (and horizontal) influence

Ultimately, European spatial planning takes shape by passing through the prism of progressive and complex changes in planning practices (Janin Rivolin & Faludi, 2005)

influence in other countries
Main findings and chances for cross-fertilization
5. Main finding and chances for cross-fertilization

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5. Main finding and chances for cross-fertilization

Europeanisation is not the explanans (the solution that explains the variables of a problem) but the explanandum (i.e. the problem that need to be explained) (Gualini, 2003)

The findings show that the analysed influences are neither homogeneous nor constant. They vary widely by country, by sector and over time.
5. Main finding and chances for cross-fertilization

Structural influence

Instrumental influence

Discursive influence
(top down)
5. Main finding and chances for cross-fertilization

Top-down influences are stronger than bottom-up influence

- The impact of EU legislation is more uniform (due to legal conditionality mechanisms).
- The impact of EU policies is more varied (relates to the magnitude of the financial support).
- The impact of the EU discourse is even more varied (new member states and Mediterranean countries appear more receptive).

However, no homogeneization: peculiar domestic traditions, cultures and institutions constitute as many variables determining the actual impact of top-down Europeanization of territorial governance.

Top-down Europeanization of territorial governance remains a bottom-up reaction to external stimuli
5. Main finding and chances for cross-fertilization

Discursive influence (bottom-up)

Practical influence
5. Main finding and chances for cross-fertilization

Bottom-up influence appear more fragmented, harder to grasp, and presenting swinging trends

- **No expert reported a high impact**, neither within the EU discursive arenas nor through exemplary practices

- Bottom-up influence mostly occurs as a result of **competitive processes** in which certain national actors are more engaged than others or are able to find agreement on concepts or ideas – **coalitions matters**!

- Despite the progress of evidence-based surveys, such as those promoted by ESPON, **inspiration from specific practices remains sporadic**.

- **Intrinsic difficulty in learning from practices** developed across very different national systems
5. Main finding and chances for cross-fertilization

The institutional complexity of European territorial governance derives from the large domestic heterogeneity and is reflected in the **typology of the engagement** of systems within European territorial governance, that features:

- the prevalence of ‘**engaged**’ systems, inclined to influence European territorial governance as to be influenced by it;

- a small group of ‘**leading**’ systems, perceived as exerting influence on European territorial governance, rather than influenced by it;

- a group of ‘**following**’ systems which are receptive to the influence of European territorial governance, but are hardly influential on the EU level;

- a group of ‘**unengaged**’ systems which are not receptive to EU influence and do not have an influence on European territorial governance
5. Main finding and chances for cross-fertilization

- Overall, European territorial governance appears as a complex and non-codified institutional process of vertical and horizontal interactions, aiming at strengthening the coherence between EU policies and domestic territorial governance and spatial planning.

- The outcomes of this process are however uneven because of the ‘filter’ role played by the numerous differences among the national systems.

- This points to the need for formal clarification, in institutional terms, of the role of the national territorial governance and spatial planning systems with respect to European territorial governance and EU Cohesion Policy.
Thank you

<Giancarlo Cotella, Politecnico di Torino | giancarlo.cotella@polito.it>

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