

# 1. Territorialization and Europeanization of development. The case of Apulia<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Introduction

Over recent years, in the field of social sciences, a general consensus has emerged on the relationship existing between the role of the institutions, government, and economic development, especially at local level. The quality of local governance, more than other factors, affects the outcomes of public investments, hence also the long-term economic picture. The current forms of political intervention in Europe tend to overcome sectorial and hierarchical logics in favor of integrated policies, aimed above all at the production of local public goods where the territory, through its actors, recognizes itself as a whole, within a framework of reference whose central objectives are represented by territorial cohesion and polycentric development (Conti and Salone, 2011; Vázquez Barquero, 2010; Boisier, 1999).

Conventionally, the quality of local governance is fundamental when coordinating actions at all levels of administration, aligning policy objectives, improving the supply of goods and services, guaranteeing that local needs are represented and taken into account when defining policies on different scales (Rodríguez-Pose and Garcilazo, 2015).

As early as the 1980s, development policies adopted by the European Union reflected an increasing focus on territorial specificities and prompted processes of reorganization that were so profound as to impact on local identity trajectories. Indeed the strategies adopted had the effect

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, the introduction and the conclusions were written jointly by the two authors, heading 2 individually by Stefano De Rubertis, and heading 3 individually by Marilena Labianca.

of reducing the potential for innovation afforded by bottom-up approaches, frustrating the ambitions of next generation strategic planning and, in the final analysis, limiting the variety of possible “futures”.

Faced with a growing crisis in the model of local regulation, the loss of financial and political independence, the difficulties of management in situations that are complex and typified by marked uncertainty, several authors (Archibugi, 2005; Balducci, 1999; Bryson, 1995; Gibelli, 1999a; 1999b; Curti and Gibelli, 1999; Mintzberg, 1994) highlighted the innovative nature of strategic planning and its capacity to overcome the limits of the traditional approach. In this context, since the turn of the millennium, strategic planning practices have also been adopted in the regions of Southern Italy, often in response to EU policy guidelines rather than on the basis of any previous stand-alone experience. So it was that, in 2005, with the European Union calling for innovation and democratic participation (especially in the Convergence Objective regions), the experience of strategic planning was initiated in the Southern Italian region of Apulia.

Previous and current studies conducted on a regional scale show the limits and criticalities of the process and, more generally, of local governance. The effects, not only economic or in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness of investments, impact on regional planning in its entirety (rural and urban).

The purpose of this publication is to reflect on the regional situation, beginning with an analysis of the processes of territorialization and Europeanization, followed by a presentation of the regional case, and finally proposing a retrospective interpretation of the now completed planning experience.

## 2. Territorialization and Europeanization<sup>2</sup>

In the 1980s, the inclusion of 'territory' in the conception of development coincided with a clear tendency of governments and large international institutions to pursue neoclassical economic approaches that continued to consider growth as necessary, and to see its spread as a natural consequence of market mechanisms. In short, if on the one hand local specificities counted more and more (territorialization), on the other, the effects of pursuing a goal of universal development (free market growth) would naturally entail a diminishment of diversity. The 'local' card became the instrument of generalized growth that would lead to a homogenization of space (de-territorialization). In line with these trends, at the end of the first decade, European regional policy took on the nature familiar today, using structural funds as its tools and having cohesion as its goal.

European space began to be homogenized through the effect of Community policies, and at the same time differentiated as the result of single market strategies at national level. The search for supranational integration prompted the formulation and adoption of strategies for increasing the attractiveness of territories and of investment locations. Thus, de-territorialization — reflecting the attempt to standardize the European political and economic space — advanced hand in hand with a process of re-territorialization which, on many scales, saw various and variable political coalitions seeking to reposition territories more attractively/advantageously within the changing global scenario. Moves toward integration, differentiation and rescaling had the effect of generating new combinations of rich and powerful cities/regions, strongly interconnected with one another, and areas characterized by marked and persistent economic and social marginalization (Brenner, 2004, p. 258).

The free market turning point gave encouragement to strengthen the growth of cities and territories already strategically important for investments of transnational capital. Curiously, the regional imbalances and spatial differences that it was sought to eliminate became an absolute

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<sup>2</sup> This section is a shortened reworking of: De Rubertis S., 2014b, pp. 13-29.

precondition for the accumulation of capital and no longer presented dangerous barriers that could have destabilized this process (Brenner, 2004).

National plans and strategies focused on strengthening the supranational competitiveness of cities and city-regions. Whilst regulatory power was decentralized, investments in structures and infrastructures also started once again to be concentrated on areas of major strategic and economic interest. Government institutions and policies actively promoted “competition between localities, divergent local development pathways, international socio-spatial polarization” (ibid, p. 259).

The EU drive toward institutional integration, from the 1990s onwards, was so strong that numerous studies show how many countries were induced to shape their regional planning systems to the objectives of the European Union (Moisio et al., 2013, p. 740). Europeanization affects the territory in its entirety, impacting on distinctively subjective and locally varied dimensions (Clark and Jones, 2008). In effect, and more generally, Europeanization seems connected to a global process of reorganization (Radaelli, 2004) involving networks and actors, which redefines the spatial reference framework of economic decision makers, involving political, economic and social aspects. In short, Europeanization is nothing other than a method of globalization. At all events, the process materializes as the affirmation of a scale of governance targeting the realization of the European project, formally, by way of participatory methods that reconfigure the territorial bases of authority, so that the supranational scale becomes dominant (Clark and Jones, 2008).

Europeanization established, among other things, a principle of partnership between public and private actors, shaping a complex system of multilevel governance around the regions. In reality, the process of European integration implies a drive toward the sharing of a system of values that has direct effects on territorial identities and, as might reasonably be expected, could be seriously conditioned by the stronger identities with which it interacts.

Given the effects of integration on development strategies, European competitiveness has come to be viewed as strictly dependent on the

externalities offered by global cities and metropolitan regions, where the majority of decision-making powers and central corporate managements are concentrated, resulting in a strong hierarchization of the European space (Espon, 2010). This seemingly confirms the importance of the ability to compete, depicted as a genuine goal to be pursued by making the most of territorial specificities.

The question of Europeanization raises the more general question as to how development goals of endogenous origin can be made compatible with the objectives of policies formulated on other geographic scales (in this instance, Europe-wide).

As Messina observes (2011), the spread and institutionalization of formal and informal rules impact profoundly on modes of development, through their regulation. Thus, the European Union conditions not only the “formal structures” but also the modalities (and the objectives) of development, albeit in very dissimilar ways from one region to another.

In effect, the problem is particularly evident in cases where the resources to be employed in implementing policies are, entirely or in part, of European origin: how to reconcile the goals of non-local actors/funding providers with local demands and expectations?

Currently, the objective of cohesion represents “the second source of spending by the European Union, after the Common Agricultural Policy. In the last spending round (2007-2013), the Union improved the multilevel management architecture that had from the outset characterized its regional policy, adopting a more explicitly strategic approach” (SGI, 2013). Compared to the deregulatory period of the 1980s, it is possible to see a renewed interest in the overall planning of the future. Compared to the prescriptive hierarchical models of the past, there is the mature awareness that representing the future might not be an operation of ingenuousness, but the fruit of a more or less explicit plan designed to build it, denying alternative albeit possible futures. The selection of desirable alternatives must be made through a process of ‘community visioning’ that targets the sharing and identification of compatible projects (Gibelli, 2005; Labianca, 2014a).

It has already been seen how space, and social and cultural variances, have been included in the reference variables of development policies. It has been noted how the process helped to heighten attention on the search for competitiveness between territories on many, often unexplored scales, and how the EU rode and reinforced it in synergy with the acceleration of integration. Fragmentation and variety prompt the recourse to new methods of governance for coordination and for the management of conflicts. The strategic planning tool appeared to lend itself well to this purpose. Spatial strategic planning places the emphasis on territorial development and allows its definition in terms of specific investment programmes and regulatory practices, integrating different agendas/commitments/themes (economic, environmental, cultural, social and political) (Albrechts, 2006).

Strategic planning is not limited to mobilizing public resources and providing solutions to problems: it is also capable of activating the search for creative solutions — territorially differentiated — by mobilizing a plurality of actors, even with divergent interests, aims and strategies (Albrechts, 2005, p. 271). Since the potential for conflict between individuals and communities arises systematically, multi-scalar governance must be structured in such a way as to ensure that local decisions are coordinated and made compatible with those adopted on other scales. Vision is essential to the creation of a future, envisaged on a given scale and at a given time, but it remains to define the manner in which that future will be built (*ibid.*, p. 274).

Planning is a process of political and social mobilization that introduces new ideas and activates further processes. On this basis, planning could help to enhance local institutional capital, strengthening and expanding relationships and capabilities. Self-evidently, the techniques and procedures of planning are not neutral. On the contrary, being conceived, selected and utilized as a consequence of social processes (Healey, 1997), they will always reflect the meta-project, which should be expressed as explicitly as possible, of those who propose them and those who help to implement them.

Often in Europe, the tendency has been to focus on wide area projects in terms of scale, and long term temporal horizons, making the most of participatory practices (Gibelli, 2005). The process of convergence between wide area strategic approach, cohesion policies and integrated planning underwent a marked acceleration between the previous planning period and the period just concluded (2007-13). European, national and regional development plans have in fact institutionalized the application of a strategic approach to integrated planning.

This obviously is what has also happened in Italy, where experiences of strategic planning (tried out in a number of big and small-medium size cities) have been measured against and become influenced by those of integrated planning (SGI, 2013) based on place-based inter-municipal cooperation (experimented on sub-regional scale) that has its roots in the first Leader experiences and in territorial pacts.

The national strategic plan for rural development and the national strategic framework for the 2007-2013 planning period set the objectives that must be pursued on the sub-national scale. The stronger levels of participation are seen to occur at the stage of transfer to regional and sub-regional communities during the design process. At this level, the objectives are defined (for local actors, representing an exogenous variable), whereas the choice of tools and methods of implementation is left to local negotiation and creativity.

In the regions where the resources to be utilized are mainly external, inclusion/exclusion mechanisms undergo significant distortions. Consequently, policies and projects indicate development goals on a territorial scale that often do not coincide with the social space on which they will take effect.

Also, identity is often associated, both in literature and in planning documents, with the local availability of 'resources' (Labianca, 2014a). The obsessive search for 'vocations' — which through bold though not always realistic product differentiation routes can successfully project territories onto international markets — tends to limit rather than expand the range of possible trajectories open to local systems. Understood in these terms, identity places restrictions on pathways, betrays expectations, reduces

sharing; the constraints imposed by the process of Europeanization on objectives also extend to the tools and the solutions (and the failures) of governance.

The scenario is complicated further by the persistence of substantially sectoral development policies. Policies will reference plans and projects which, although organic to the meta-objective of competitive growth, are not always consistent and/or mutually informed. Overlaps occur between regulatory institutions, often specific to particular spheres of action (urban and rural, for example), and service institutions which, while dedicated to more modest objectives of a 'spending review' nature, nonetheless play their part in generating proximity effects that clash with those generated by other institutions. Likewise in this instance, with the pursuit of development policies based on participation (never fully achieved, in reality), the idea was to overcome the fragmentary implementation of actions and projects, but (as noted by Rizzi and Dallara, 2005) this proved to be complicated, and coordination with other restrictive forms of planning was often impossible, thus multiplying the inevitabilities of confrontation and occasions of conflict.

### **3. Development, identity and cooperation in regional planning**

In the field of urban and territorial policies, a reference framework took shape that would find agreement on a number of key concepts: a bottom-up approach, integrated as concerning development and multisectoral as concerning political action, agreement and negotiation between different actors, formal contractualization of the various interests involved, a strategic approach to planning<sup>3</sup>, recognition of the strategic and 'pilot' role of the regional level, of local identities and of democratic participation (Labianca, 2014a). In practice, as already noted, all this produced a range

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<sup>3</sup>According to Conti and Salone (2011, p. 34) the trend is toward a strategic planning approach, the aim of which is to arrive, "upstream of the process, at a vision of the future, and downstream, at a concerted and multi-level system of implementation".



of different and not always noteworthy effects in the various Italian regions.

More specifically, in the case of the Apulia region, this approach to development was highlighted especially in the 2007-2013 planning cycle, first and foremost in the sphere of wide area planning. With impetus from the Community, and by virtue in particular of having access to certain resources of the previous planning cycle, continuing with and institutionalizing the experience of the ITPs (Integrated territorial projects)<sup>4</sup> the region set in motion an ambitious process through the introduction of the strategic planning tool, extending its application to the regional territory (De Rubertis, 2010; 2013a; 2013b; De Rubertis et al., 2013; 2014). In many ways, the Apulian experience is emblematic of the process in question. In 2005, the region embarked on a course designed, on the one hand, to favour territorial self-organization (creating Wide Areas), and on the other to support initiatives having a high degree of experimentation (ibid). Regional organization, adopting an innovative approach based on strategic planning and on democratic participation, confirmed the importance and the full recognition of identity-related values in the different territories. Compared to traditional forms of planning and institutionalized democratic participation, the intention, viewed from a programmatic standpoint, was to launch and consolidate “community visioning” practices at regional level. In effect, these practices can address complex issues and problems of urban development, allowing the construction of alternative scenarios (shared vision of development anchored more firmly in the values of the whole community), through broad consultation and concertation processes. This purposeful approach emerges clearly from the analysis of regional documents, as also does the role attributed to territorial identity (Labianca, 2013; 2014a).

The macro-objectives established under the Regional Strategic Document and recurring in wide area plans, able to guarantee development of the Apulian system, can be correlated substantially to a general increase in the competitiveness of territories, in terms of attracting

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<sup>4</sup> About ITPs, see Bianchi and Casavola, 2008.

tourism and outside capital investments. Nonetheless, recognition of the role played by local actors and resources in favouring regional development requires thought on both the theoretical and the empirical level, or as indicated by Governa (2005), “on the territorial domains in which these processes are applied”. In the case of Apulia, as noted in previous papers (De Rubertis, 2010; 2013a; 2013b; De Rubertis et al., 2013; 2014; Labianca, 2013; 2014a), this raises two kinds of issues: on the one hand, identifying and evaluating forms of proximity of the organizational and strategic orders that have succeeded one another over time; on the other, the methods applied in identifying and interpreting territorial specificities and characteristics. The delimitation of boundaries, albeit left to the discretion of the single municipalities, would seem to have been dictated by custom, by opportunistic choices that have thwarted attempts at innovation in the area of local governance, and moreover, the identification and representation of local specificities appears to have been based on a mere stocktaking of local assets rather than derived “from the collective action of subjects as bringers of experience and builders of knowledge” (Governa, 2005) that would reflect the sharing of territorial values, and active involvement of the local community. Also, studies conducted on regional planning documents (De Rubertis, 2010; 2013a; 2013b; Labianca, 2014a) reveal a systematic alignment of visions proposed by the different territories in response to regional (and on occasion, national and European) guidelines and objectives. Thus, rather than being an expression of representations, of local expectations, these visions end up becoming redundant slogans. Strategic plans offer descriptions and context analyses that are strongly reductionist, and what is more, there are no clear indications on how the local development project should actually be implemented. The plan consequently becomes a mere exercise in rational-determinism, in the hands of subjects operating from outside the context of reference. As already discussed (De Rubertis, 2010; 2013a; 2013b; De Rubertis et al., 2014; Labianca; 2013; 2014a), the territories have been severely hampered in the formulation of development projects, regarding both substance and interpretation, by the restrictive and rigid nature of the Regional Strategic Document. The constraints with which the

territories had to comply — in order to access funding — inevitably influenced the subsequent planning phase, which in turn would be characterized by a pronounced ideological dimension and a general dumbing-down of the visions that had been formulated.

Also, if on the one hand the value and the role of identity in territorial development is recognized, emerging clearly on the other is the use of identity as a mere ‘brand’ or a generic channel for upgrading or enhancing key elements of local historic, naturalistic and architectural heritage, concentrated especially in the bigger or more influential municipalities, above all with the promotion and facilitation of tourism in mind. These are predominantly factors and resources linked to economic growth targets, unquestionably favoured over others (anthropic, social). Consequently, the territory is seen as a passive substrate on which to apply standardized packages of measures, exogenous in origin, irrespective of what might be the actual problems, specificities, local resources, and above all, local expectations (Labianca, 2014a).

In reality, if wide area planning was predicated on an innovative and more wide-ranging approach to development, it would also be shackled by weak integration with other cooperation and planning tools, in particular at rural level. Here too, the effectiveness of building a development project from the bottom up is undermined in practice by the strong sway of regional control. Similarly, the objectives appear hetero-determined and the territory is once again “reduced from a subject to a tool of development” (De Rubertis, 2013b, p. 123). Strategies, diluted and focusing on sectoral and agricultural growth objectives, are coordinated weakly with other plans and tools, consequently enfeebling the approach overall (ibid).

And so, the absence of coordination and integration between policy areas, actors and projects reflects a significant criticality of the region. If in some territories there are good levels of overlap discernible (De Rubertis, 2013b; De Rubertis et al., 2013; 2014; Labianca, 2014a; 2014b), stable partnership does not always lead to greater synergy or better performance.

On the basis of this survey, which recalls the main findings of previous research, it is possible to reiterate and confirm some observations regarding placement of the Apulian experience within a specific scenario.

More exactly, as seen already (De Rubertis, 2013b) from the analysis of experiences in Apulia during the regional policy period – combining the two variables of policy objectives and local organizational/institutional (identity-related) structure – three possible scenarios emerge: adaptation of policy objectives to local institutional qualities; adaptation of local institutional qualities to development policy objectives; adoption of no development policy whatever. In the first scenario “the flexibility of objectives set by local policies is not infinite, indeed one sees a tendency for them to tighten up as Community policies are strengthened” (ibid, p. 142). At local level, in the absence of financial resources, clients/funding providers should be willing to take stock of their expectations and render them more consistent with local practicalities. Even when this willingness is in evidence, the mechanisms of participation should function on all scales and at all stages of planning and implementation. However, as in the case of Apulia, the lack of appropriate participatory mechanisms, the constraints imposed on other (higher) scales and decisions made at local level have limited or precluded the possibility of formulating alternative development scenarios, more consistent with the local reality; in this situation “objectives therefore tend to be a variable exogenous to bottom-up development planning” (ibid., p. 144). In the second scenario, whilst it is possible to recognize attempts at spontaneous adaptation of the organization to policy goals, it is somewhat improbable that this will produce an effective convergence between the two. In this situation, the organization of the project will be based on a predetermined level of sharing/inclusion and on a higher level of exclusion. Since the objectives are hetero-determined, participation will be encouraged mainly among supporters of the project, excluding alternative visions. In this way, the development project will be strongly aligned with the stated objectives, and the identity to which territorial diagnostics are referred is often determined by “taking stock of ‘local assets’”, the emphasis here being placed on themes or aspects strictly consistent with the objectives of the

main programme, as this is a requirement for gaining access to available funding. In the case of the third scenario, adopting no development policy whatever does “not signify taking up an ineffectual position”, but rather, favouring approaches and projects formulated on other scales, without being explicitly involved (ibid., pp. 144-145).

Then, by combining an existing classification in literature (see Gibelli, 1999b) that separates strategic plans into three ‘families’, with different sources, it is possible to identify specific modes of integration and of participation on the part of actors and territories, corresponding to the different types of plan. Given this pattern, which sets out to identify and summarize the features of the three types of plan, it should be possible to match one of them to the Apulian experience.

Currently, the ineffectiveness and the reality of democratic participation, the constraints and objectives set on other (higher) scales which have thus limited or rather precluded the possibility of formulating alternative development scenarios more consistent with local circumstances, the identity explored by territorial diagnostics, consisting in an inventory of local assets, the consequent standardization and dumbing-down of planning models formulated by the different territories, the “hetero-determination” of objectives on other scales (regional and European) (substantially identifiable with the economic competitiveness and general attractiveness of territories), would appear to place the entire operation of regional planning, and not only wide area planning, chiefly in the second scenario.

#### **4. Conclusion**

As already discussed, strategic plans have shifted away from a top-down style of approach to development and moved toward a bottom-up approach. The gradual transformations in planning methods have brought with them a constant increase in the level of participation and integration of actors. In effect, the mere “consultation” envisaged under the top-down

approach has been replaced by participation and empowerment under the plans of the second and third generation, respectively.

The different essences that have distinguished territorial planning over time did not develop in clear succession one after another; rather, they were characterized by significant overlaps and mutual influences in matters of policy and strategy on regional development. In Apulia, it is clear how the approaches adopted for planning tools (and more especially, the attempts at implementation) take in elements peculiar to one or other family of plans. Indeed when reading and analyzing regional planning documents for the period 2007-2013, one finds in the content that there is a significant inclusion of elements simultaneously representing different families of strategic plans. Moreover, the approaches and practices — also the specific definitions of the concepts of place, identity and territory adopted in the documents — reveal intentions that are not always consistent with the type of plan they claim to follow.

In the more general sections of the framework documents (the Regional Strategic Document for wide area planning and the Rural Development Programme for rural planning), which set out the vision or development project for the territories, the construction of terms tends to suggest those of the third family of plans, namely linked-up and visionary. In the more practical sections of these same documents, the construction is strongly consistent with that of the first family of plans.

This singular contradiction seems to indicate that the original pressure for change was not appropriately supported by genuine awareness, willingness and culture of innovation. Generally considered, the planning proposals are markedly standardized and oriented predominantly toward the creation of infrastructures, land use, and mobility-related works. The real ambition of the plans is discernible from a significant series of elements: the low level of participation by the community indicated as recipient of the integration/coordination actions; the strict observance of formal (and less substantive) aspects of the process, to the detriment of more flexible and informal “learning processes”; the absence of real institutional and organizational change; a reduction of the personality

associated with places to a mere inventory of resources ripe for human exploitation.

These outcomes were probably influenced by context analysis based essentially on simplistic representations of the territory, conducted from the outside rather than from the inside, which consequently ignore or underestimate the qualitative dimension of social phenomena.

Documentary analysis reveals a strong contrast between what was hoped for, from a general standpoint, and what was actually delivered in the single territories and plans. From these, there emerges a strong alignment with the rational-deterministic line of planning. Territories are expected to organize themselves and to “implement” democratic participation in favour of a contractualist approach to planning. Without a genuine culture of participation, territories have often had to improvise the creation of networks, sometimes relatively closed, devoid of any proper shared, visionary project, and set up mainly for the purpose of ‘capturing’ European financial resources.

So, if from a programmatic point of view the hope was to see a linked-up and visionary model of planning that would entail, not least, the growth of empowerment, community visioning, integration and coordination between different policy areas, the reality was that in many instances, and often late in the day, territories adopted a planning approach involving no more than token participation, and digressions often of an opportunistic, standardized and sector-specific nature. These are limitations deriving from the adoption of a model for strategic planning that is neo-utilitarian in character, hence typical of the second family of plans.

In this context, it is no surprise to see a lack of continuity and consistency between goals and strategies, and insufficient coordination and integration of planning tools: not infrequently, the results and experiences of previous projects are either cancelled out by new initiatives, or clearly in conflict with concurrent or competing projects. Each project addresses different territorial systems, attributing standardized identities and goals that are rarely shared with the local community. This is compounded by a high partnership turnover that has characterized

experiences concerned with integrated planning, fuelling situations of discontinuity and rendering each successive attempt at coordination more problematic. Consequently, participation — as already observed elsewhere (Trigilia, 2005) — merely reflects the sum of the goals expressed by single parties, rather than their actual integration.

In short, for the three families of plans, one has three corresponding modes of controlling development, which in the case of Apulia (due not least to the joint effect of inflexibilities imposed by Europeanization, and local institutional specificities) have overlapped and influenced one another, sometimes even within the scope of the same single plan, producing decidedly problematic situations.

To reiterate, combining the acceptable degree of hetero-direction applied in determining policy objectives with the local organizational-institutional structure, it can be expected that three possible scenarios will emerge: adaptation of policy objectives to local institutional qualities; adaptation of local institutional qualities to development policy objectives; adoption of no development policy whatever.

The three scenarios are identifiable with the possible methods of controlling development afforded by the families of plans examined:

- the first scenario is compatible with the third family of plans, based as it is on the assumption that the fundamental participation mechanisms will function on all scales and at all stages in the design and implementation of the plan;

- the second scenario corresponds to the adoption of approaches typical of the second family of plans, predicated on participation; this favours hetero-determined objectives (dictated by the EU) and starts from the assumption that formulation and organization of the project will be based on mechanisms of exclusion that limit participation, disallowing alternative visions (and the attendant negotiating hurdles);

- the third scenario appears to be compatible with the first family of plans: the decision not to adopt any development policy, indicating a passive stance intended to support objectives and projects formulated on other scales, suggests a clear reference to this family (and therefore to a top-down development approach).



Clearly, in the light of the foregoing, any alignment with European guidelines on strategy and models of governance — not least when considering the future — must carry a significant risk that local visions, goals and planning ambitions will be dumbed down.

It seems that a thorough examination of local identity-related specificities, possible territorial futures and the variety/variability of their representations is now urgently required, and should be conducted before undertaking any other action on development. In reality, the search for optimum territorial planning frameworks should be accompanied — or indeed preceded — by the identification of dependable solutions for coordinating strategies, actors and goals brought together on different scales, while allowing all parties to retain their own territorial and sectoral points of reference.

