

Territorial impact assessment of national and regional territorial cohesion in Italy”

Maria Prezioso (a cura di)

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Here is a very expected book devoted to European spatial policies and territorial assessment applied to Italy. This book entitled “*Territorial impact assessment of national and regional territorial cohesion in Italy*”, coordinated by Prof. Maria Prezioso reports on a considerable work carried out in partnership with 10 groups of Italian academics Geographers mobilised to assess the impact of European public policy guidelines on the Italian regions.

This 586-page book is divided into two main parts. The first of 235 pages is devoted to generalities by raising some major problems of spatial analysis by crossing, for example, *The notion of territorial capital* and how to measure it, *Social Inclusion and Territorial Dynamics* (Chapter 4), *‘Inner Peripheries’ and infrastructural policies in Italy* (Chapter 7). The second part is an attempt to apply the STeMA-TIA model and the analytical grids to the different Italian regions. (STeMA means Sustainable Territorial environmental/economic Management Approach) (TIA for Territorial Impact Assessment).

The work is structured through 3 main issues:

- The European cohesion policies and the challenge to develop accurate methods to assess their territorial impacts.
- The STeMa TIA model to evaluate them and its capacity to adapt to the evolution of European priorities
- The implementation of this approach and this model in various Italian regions the cohesion policies of the European Union and their evolution.

The first mention of ‘territorial cohesion’ in a treaty dates back to 1997 in the Amster-

dam Treaty but it is in the Lisbon Treaty, ten years later, that territorial cohesion, besides with economic and social one, became a shared competence between the European Union and the Member States. The aim was to take into account the diversity of European countries and societies and the multilevel contexts. In order to make these goals credible the summary starts with the successive objectives and interpretations of this very polysemic and how this notion have been understood in Italy (Chapter 1).

Since the framework of ESPON projects has been launched, several Territorial Assessment tools have been produced. In a first view STeMA model could be seen as another ESPON TIA tool related to ESPON projects like TARGET_TIA or TEQUILA. Actually, STeMA-TIA methodology was elaborated for the first time in 2003 experimentally, and then it was used and improved to match with several ESPON projects. One have to keep in mind that the STeMA-TIA model has been designed to create an alternative model to existing theories that are based on approaches that do not consider how diversified a space may be and merely look at how cost-effective an investment is.

From an epistemic viewpoint this work is based on a specific conception of territory. For the authors a *territory* can be seen as a “system” that includes composed elements (society, politics, environment and the economy) interacting with each other. A territorial system can be investigated in relation to the policies that governs it from inside and from outside A territory can also be analysed with regard to the way it interacts with some specific oriented policies. This leads to the idea that each territory being unique, one can estimate the specific impact of a policy on this particular entity. And this is where the added value of the book lies: it gives a result for each territory and allows a general comparison of the effects of European cohesion policy on the Italian regions. Basically STeMA model focuses on the thematic of territorial Capital and how to measure the so-called Territorial Capital.

STeMA-TIA has been conceived as a support methodology that helps policymakers to face the challenge of sustainable choices. It draws on studies that attempt to establish an adequate level of interaction among the many factors that come into play during decision-making and political processes. This assessment tool was created within the context of spatial planning and as part of the territorial dimension of the European Strategies. STeMA-TIA is based on an original qualitative-quantitative methodological approach and is very efficient. To make the outcomes of the simulations liable and useful spatial data are based on the National Operational Plans (NOPs) and the Regional ones (ROPs) to understand both how territorial cohesion was interpreted and implemented.

The assessment process. In order to assess a territorial system, it is important to understand which process links all the elements that shape it. If the principles on which territorial cohesion is based are now well known (smart, sustainable, inclusive), the contribution of Prof. Prezioso and her team was to find the accurate statistical indicators and the corresponding spatial configurations to feed the model. A set of 74 indicators has been selected to coherently enter in the framework of the STeMA-TIA Methodology. They are organised to face the Europe 2020 Strategy: *Smart Growth* (9 indicators), *Sustainable Growth* (28 indicators), *Inclusive Growth* (27 indicators) and *Resources and Funds* (10 indicators).

About the territorial dimension, focusing on the territorial base of the Cohesion measure, seven Systemic Territorial Functional Typologies (STFT) were developed and they combine typologies of territories featuring geographical diversity (urban areas, internal areas, etc), with 7 STeMA typologies : like MEGA, low urban influence, etc. These typologies assume that a geographic economic region represents the quality, efficiency and identity of its territorial systems.

At the first step of the process, the model needs to analyse the national distribution of

each indicator and then each value is classified by quartiles distribution compared to an ordinal value from A for the high values to D for the low ones. Analysis starts with the *initial configuration* of the system. This initial configuration is called *Initial Territorial Value* (ITV) which can be measured and assessed before the policies have been implemented.

At this stage the capacity of a region to combine existing resources reflects the initial (ex ante) situation of a territory. Afterwards begin the simulation operations. In applying the STeMa TIA procedure, the system will change its initial balanced position but will remain within the limits that the indicators have established to cope with the changes that the applied policy has enacted. During policy assessment, the weight of an indicator can show how important the objectives and actions must be improved in order to reach a given target. Through interactive coaxial matrices (indicators-policies-effects), the model will return ex ante and ex post results and maps.

If territorial cohesion provides a legal justification to the regional policy and, by extension, to an action of the EU that aims to guarantee to each European citizen the same opportunities whatever their place of life, in terms of liability It was essential to test the TIA in all Italian regions. And this book highlights the real impact of selected policies on Italian regions.

One of the major interests of the model is to underline that the results do not necessarily have to be approached in positive or negative terms, but according to choices adapted to the regional situation.

For example, according to STeMA applied to Emilia-Romagna with reference of the impact of the ERDF ROP 2014-2020, the main results show:

- path dependency effects can be observed in cohesion policies and conclude that thematic concentration does not seem a solution.

- selected policy choices lead to marginal changes and keep the relative differen-

ces among the provinces. Moreover ICT and low carbon thematic objectives lead to increase inequalities between strong metropolitan areas and left behind areas. Other analyses lead to recommendations for decision-makers. This is the case of Sardinia.

Through the STeMa TIA model it is now possible and very useful to identify territorial gaps. Some regions have negative results comparing the national results (i.e. Umbria).

In some cases, the path followed from the model confirms a generally known situation (Molise), but other cases underline that unfortunately the European structural funds do not allow to reverse the trend (e.g. no province of Abruzzo obtains an A rating).

On the issue of provincial outcomes and how different parts within a region are concerned with cohesion assessment. The positive aspects resulting from this model, including the territorial dimension and its ability to highlight disparities within regions, should be highlighted. This is the case of the analysis carried out on Umbria. The province of Perugia got high values in terms of social inclusion, on the contrary the province of Terni which has not achieved high performance.

To sum up, thanks to the methodology developed here we are dealing with a major work of European spatial planning and the level of concordance between the European directives and the receptivity of the territorial systems of the regions. A book devoted to a major tool to help planners to make the right choices. A work that would be worth to be applied in other European Member States.

Bernard Elissalde
Université de Rouen

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Il secolo asiatico?

Parag Khanna

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«Preparatevi a vedere il mondo dal punto di vista asiatico». Con queste parole, il politologo indiano-statunitense Parag Khanna introduce il saggio *The Future is Asian. Commerce, Conflict, and Culture in the 21st Century*, edito in Italia da Fazi Editore con un titolo interrogativo: *Il secolo asiatico?*.

Lo scopo di quest'opera è principalmente quello di fornire una comprensione della geografia politica da una prospettiva asiatica. In questo senso, fu lo storico inglese Arnold J. Toynbee a profetizzare l'avvento dell'odierno protagonismo politico orientale a causa della «scheggia tecnologica» - ovvero dall'acquisizione delle conoscenze - lanciata dai conquistatori europei. L'elemento tecnico si unisce infatti ai fattori etnico-sociali, ambientali, religiosi e culturali, nel processo di «asianizzazione dell'Asia». A differenza della nota visione filosofica di Francis Fukuyama, la storia non è destinata a finire, poiché la linearità del tempo si sottopone all'elemento spaziale. Al XIX secolo «europeo» caratterizzato dagli imperi coloniali, ed al XX secolo «americano» fondato sul dominio marittimo, dunque potrebbe seguire il XXI secolo «asiatico» in un contesto multipolare. Partendo dalle origini con una sintesi sui fatti storici, l'autore si sofferma su aspetti più recenti come la crisi finanziaria (anni 2007-2008), di cui ritiene non si sia espansa globalmente bensì localizzata in Occidente. Secondo Khanna, grazie all'attenta gestione dei rispettivi governi, le potenze di Cina, India, Russia, Giappone così come le piccole «tigri asiatiche», non hanno subito nella realtà l'effetto domino di Wall Street.

Dal secondo dopoguerra ad oggi, i ceti politici asiatici hanno ritenuto necessario