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INTRODUCTION

1. *Some issues in Europeanisation of spatial planning systems. Introduction to the session*

The effects of European integration on the Member states are at the heart of the research which focuses on the Europeanisation of national systems, a research agenda which has flourished since the nineties in political science and considers European integration as the independent variable which influences the politics of the Member States. Essentially the term Europeanisation is used to signify the transformation of a variable at the national level, which adapts to a European model logic or constraint. The term is now widespread in different fields but, in general, the word Europeanisation describes all the transformations related to European integration process. Radaelli (2000, p.2) refers to: «Processes of construction diffusion and institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, “ways of doing things” and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies». In particular many studies and debates focus on the extent to which EU discourses have created a catalytic environment resulting in the so called ‘Europeanisation’ of domestic spatial planning systems.

Notwithstanding the fact that there are no legally EU binding tools for a European spatial development policy, a wide variety of EU policies are relevant for spatial planning at national and sub-national level (CAP, ESIF, Nature 2000, Territorial cooperation...), while EU Directives, are mandatory and indirectly influence territorial and spatial governance, as showcased by the Habitats Directive, Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive or Water Framework Directive (Evers *et al.*, 2016). Many countries and regions in Europe are gradually adapting their territorial governance and spatial planning systems in order to reflect the continuing advancements and complexities of macro-level EU cohesion and growth policies. «The concrete question of how European policies can be adjusted to the concrete settings of spatial planning and territorial governance systems appears as a pragmatic way to deal with the issue of a relevant and efficient use of European funding. In that sense, cross-fertilization is needed and can be considered as a multifaceted and heuristic (uploading and downloading process but also horizontal cross-fertilisation between European territories) asset»³.

The aim of the thematic session *Europeanisation of spatial planning systems*, organized in the context of the XXXII Italian Geographical Congress⁴ was to explore this question, thus investigating, on the one hand, the effects that European ‘support’ for domestic policies may have on policy development at state and regional level and, on the other hand, how EU-wide policies are influenced by feedback from implementation process at local level. Scholars from different fields were invited to present

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³ Frédéric Santamaria, 2016, not published document, confidential communication.

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research contributions both theoretical and empirical on Europeanization of national and regional planning systems, regional development policies, sector policies, territorial governance in cross borders or macroregional contexts.

This topic proposed for the *XXXII Congress* is based on two circumstances. Firstly, the organizers have been involved since 2010 in Italian ESPON Contact Point (ECP) work, under the coordination of Professor Maria Prezioso at University of Rome "Tor Vergata". ESPON (European Spatial Planning Observatory Network) is an applied research programme providing data, concepts and techniques, which can be used in the development of effective place-based policy. Many geographers are involved in this action, as well as many planners and policy-makers, first of many the DG Region and the same EU Commission. «ESPO provides territorial development concepts that can be adapted to specific situations in each participating state. It allows comparison against European regions and can therefore act as a platform for developing policies aimed at territorial cohesion». As Andreas Faludi said ESPON «is an important element in the "learning machine" of European spatial planning» (Faludi, 2009, p. 21).

During the past programming period (2007-2013) the Italian ECP team worked in Transnational Networks Activities, i.e. special projects focused on capitalization processes of the ESPON findings⁵.

This experience implied an active focus on the relationship among European policy development and the national and sub-national dynamics, and by means of a reflexive action in the dialogue with national and sub-national policy makers, as well as scholars and academics. In partnership with the colleagues from the other National contact points, the following elements have been explored: the use of European key concepts (CaDEC project); the building of an 'objet' as the Integrated Territorial Development Strategy for investigating the planning development in many European countries (with INTERSTRAT project); the way to teach and to learn the main research results and policy recommendations provided by ESPON, in order to apply them to different territorial context (ESPO Train project). In facing all these themes, the participants shared and merged their geographical background and interacted with policy-makers of all European countries (ESPO On the road). In addition ESPON programme developed specific applied research on this issue.

The second circumstance that generated the idea for the session was a warm suggestion by David Evers, with the occasion of the Amsterdam ESPON open Seminar on the Urban Agenda (the Pact of Amsterdam) – a document which promised to have great influence on the spatial planning systems in Europe and was presented few days before. During his presentation, David invited to activate research on the topic, both on the national ground and with a European feeling. This session welcomed his invitation. For this reason David Evers (Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency) was invited as key note speaker talking about «Governance in the shadow of hierarchy: A quest to detect the effects of European integration in domestic spatial policymaking».

The session hosted 13 contributions from Italy and abroad and has been developed during three slots. The contributors were scholars working in applied research, as well as researchers directly involved both in spatial planning process and in European policy implementation in different national contexts.

Many papers questioned the Europeanization concept adopting different theoretical approaches. However, we can consider that, implicitly or explicitly, they all agree with Santamaria's view as quoted: «crossfertilisation understood as a multifaceted process of uploading, downloading and crossfertilisation is needed» (Faludi, 2009). For understanding this process, the 'Stone Guest' is the concept of territory (Gottmann, 1973) – the multifaceted subject which is in the same time the target and the 'actor' in spatial planning. The territory issue emerges when we face the theoretical

⁵ For information about these activities, see the devoted web page on ESPON platform. <https://www.espon.eu/programme/projects/espon-2013/transnational-networking-activities>.

dichotomy between hard space and soft space (Elissalde and Santamaria) but also when we challenged the 'persistent territorialism of the modern state system' (Faludi, 2009).

Starting from the awareness on the complex nature of these processes, some contributions explored the way in which the EU construct could influence spatial planning systems in Europe. In this regard some contributions adopted comparative approach between both member states (Cocheci and D'Orazio) and non member states (Berisha, Cotella and Solly; Allkja and Marjankovic) – considering however their spatial planning systems as indirectly influenced by Europeanization –, thus trying to illustrate the actual dynamics of changes.

Considering the importance of the domain in the Italian spatial planning system, the case of cultural heritage legislation and regulation (Mangano and Ugolini) is useful to illustrate the mechanism of uploading, downloading and cross fertilization in building an integrated European policy.

In order to understand these diverse influences, other contributions focused on multilevel governance. The case of the EUSAIR macroregional strategy (Grandi and Sacco) shows the transnational cooperation lever as the powerful driver of Europeanization. On the other hand the same topic is useful to analyze the effect of cohesion policy process (elaboration and implementation) on the ground, at different level: metropolitan (Rivière), national/regional (Giannone). The urban level is explored by means of the 'Cities network' subject, analysing the cross-sectoral environmental policies (Coronato).

In investigating the spatial planning systems through a multiple dimension – which always involves, beyond fixed structure and tools, evolving practice and discourse – and in developing these analyses (as showcased also during the session discussion), a common issue emerged. Which is the role of diverse actors (spatial planners and scholars as well as officials acting in implementation of policies, researchers acting in European applied research program as ESPON) in «penetrating cultural exchange that generated those principles which are the basis of urban and territorial management in/of European cities [and territories]?» The risk is of a flattening around stereotypical themes that have no evidence in the real problems of territories and cities (Elisei). We need to overcome the current rhetoric ruling.

We can consider that the main actors in this Europeanization game are these subjects: the producers of both discourses and actions with direct effects on the territories.

On this basis, the research on Europeanization of spatial planning systems also implies an exercise of thinking about the reason and the context of praxis – in all the fields of action for all the Europeanization actors involved. Previously, an instrumental rationality appeared to be the basis of the scientific legitimacy of the planning activity. This activity was the product of "applied" research aimed at supporting decision-making and action, as in the evidence-based rhetoric (Davoudi, 2006). Now, after the so-called critical turning point, the hermeneutic turning or the linguistic turning, the planning related domains, first of all economic geography, should be interested in implementing a reflexive research programme.

The Europeanization research in spatial planning can thus be regarded as part of this larger movement by introducing a reflexive analysis of the corresponding knowledge tools and knowledge creation in spatial planning. We hope the results of this session (illustrated through the publication of the 12 papers) could stimulate this necessary task.

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