RESUMEN (MÁXIMO: 150 PALABRAS)

Polyhedral concept of governance relates with economic and territorial development, with territorial cohesion in fact. It is an intangible issue for regional competitiveness, because improve quality of decision making processes, and is related with multi-level government also as with horizontal co-operation networks between agents, sectors and territories (contiguous or not). This paper offers an interpretation of the concept and an analysis of governance at EU level, paying particular attention to participation of actors in decisions leading to a better spatial and sustainable development.

El poliédrico concepto de gobernanza cabe relacionarlo con el objetivo del desarrollo, tanto económico, como territorial; con la cohesión territorial por tanto. Representa, en su calidad de proceso de toma de decisiones, un factor intangible para la competitividad regional, relacionado con el gobierno multinivel y con las redes horizontales de cooperación entre agentes, sectores y entre territorios (contiguos y no). En la comunicación se presenta una interpretación del concepto y un análisis de la situación a nivel de la Unión Europea, dedicando una particular atención a la participación de los distintos actores en las acciones conducentes a un mejor desarrollo (territorial y sostenible).

PALABRAS CLAVE (DE TRES A CINCO): Governance, Territorial Cohesion, European Union
(Gobernanza, Cohesión Territorial, Unión Europea)

CÓDIGOS JEL: R58, Z13
0. Introduction

What does this paper add to the understanding of territorial governance? Due to the involvement in the ESPON 2.3.2 project on Governance a rather unique bird’s eye view of a wide range of examples of governance in 29 countries, covered by respective National Overviews and on going 56 case studies, has been obtained. The full research hypothesis is that Territorial Governance Actions put the emphasis on territorial cohesion as a key objective.

In this context, territorial governance actions should: facilitate vertical and horizontal coordination and co-operation; foster participation; promote sustainable territorial development and cohesion. More specifically, vertical and horizontal coordination/cooperation deals with: subsidiarity, integration (among actors, policies, economic resources), devolution and decentralization. Participation deals with: involvement of stakeholders from public, private and voluntary sectors, and engagement with civil society. Finally, territorial development deals with: territoriality and sustainability.

Another important issue is that the project is only halfway through, so the conclusions drawn from it have to be viewed in this respect. The first part will mainly focus on defining and relating governance to the territorial dimension, taking a closer look at the Open Method of Coordination as one of the most important ways to deal with the issue of territorial governance. The second part will deal with the aspect of participation followed by final remarks.

1. Conceptual approach: about context, concepts and methods

1.1 Changes in government practices leading to a new governance

The principles modern States were based in, are in crisis in the new context of post-modernity and are not so useful as in the past: specialization (result of international division of work), centralization and consequent hierarchical structuring (as a method to control specialization processes) and regulation (control) of all processes. Post-modernity is characterised by individuality, internationalisation and segmentation of organizations (BOGASON, 2000).

As result of organizational segregation new organizations are involved in policies design and implementation, also as new private actors in a new relation with public

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1 This paper is a result of research developed in the project entitled "Territorial and Urban Governance from EU to Local Level", conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2000-2006 programme, partly financed through the INTERREG programme.

2 For more details see FARINÓS (2005).
ones. A new scenario characterized by an increasing level of decentralization and a complex network of actors has emerged. Public power becomes the vehicle of all kind of collective action, but public administration of State is not yet the most efficient way. Bureaucratic costs are replaced by transaction costs and flexibility becomes one of the main principles of the new system. Nation-states lose autonomy as a result of globalisation processes and the emergence of new organizations (supra and/or trans state) that leads to their adaptation. The essential reason of public power has not changed, what has been modified are the organizational structures, from hierarchical to networking. As a result of these changes a new institutionalism has emerged. Neo-Institutionalism understands the State inside a context of institutional networks, confronts it with New Public Managerialism (less bureaucracy and more –free- market), and complements Social Constructivism (focused on civil society, on analysis of actors that participate in design of public policies).

“If space is a product of practices, trajectories, interrelations, if we make space through interactions at all levels, from the (so-called) local and the (so-called) global, then those spatial identities such as places, regions, nations, and the local and the global, must be forged in this relational way too, as internally complex, essentially unboundable in any absolute sense, and inevitably historically changing” (MASSEY, 2005: 5)

The attribution of powers to a specific government level or to certain public or private body is not the main matter, but the policy to develop and the objectives it persecutes, also as the way to organize inter-dependence between government levels.

Achieving policies’ coherence implies coordination among different levels involved in their design and implementation. It’s generally accepted that decentralization for policy application helps increase their efficiency, but a double way is proposed: through a regulated process of distribution of formal competences or through a contractual style without legislative development. This second contractual (self-regulating) framework should be flexible (depending on policies, involved bodies and need of formalization), adapted to regional and local governments capacities (financial and human resources) and respectful with subsidiarity and proportionality principles (CEMR, 2001: 15).

As we said before, one way for restructuring sovereignty of States has been empowerment processes of sub-national tiers. The other one has been the emergence and strengthening of supra-national institutions with an economic
and/or political character. Sovereignty is now fragmented in multiple levels and has lost part of its meaning (multiple, shared instead exclusive) (FALUDI, 2003). The new network state arises (CASTELLS, 1997) sharing power through a new multi-level government based in governance principles. The network government presents a dispersion of responsibilities, where relations between local and other levels are less hierarchical, and horizontal relations (among territories and actors – partnerships) are stimulated.

Governance is different, even thought nor incompatible, to simple division of competences (powers). While the last one focuses on the delimitation of powers (in one or more list of competences), the first one looks through practices, rules, procedures and behaviours that must be adapted in order functioning of the system was understood as legitimate. While division of competences runs inside a “zero sum game”, cooperation among different tiers is a means to increase global capacities to solve shared problems and presupposes solidarity and mutual involvement among levels. So governance is much more than a simple method to wipe out the so-called democratic deficit, or than devolution for economic development.

The local level is the best level to develop new governance practices, both for economic development (see OECD, 2001) or with a more political focusing (EGPA, n.d.). Because at the local level it is easy to identify the two elements that define local government: territory and institutions. Governance in a territory could be defined as the capacity of key actors, public and non public, to share objectives.

Diverse are goals that could be shared:

- formalize an organizational consensus that involves the private sector to define objectives and common functions for regional economic development
- find an agreement about the contribution of each partner to achieve common objectives previously defined
- reach an agreed common vision for the future of territory among all levels and actors involved

In the latter case, territorial governance understanding is similar to spatial development that invokes consensus among all actors (public and non public, in all ambits –economy, equipment and infrastructures) looking for spatial coherence of their intervention. Regarding to territorial cohesion, governance underlines nuclear importance of institutional structures in delivering public services and goods that
determine competitiveness of each territory. The following section deepens these concepts.

**1.2 Understanding of Governance and Territorial Governance**

First of all it has to be acknowledged that *Governance* is an ambiguous concept, with several uses and understandings. Therefore it is important to have a common definition in order not to create misunderstandings. The operational definition that we use in the framework of this project\(^3\) is:

> Governance of territorial and urban policies is the capacity of actors, social groups and institutions (public, private, third sector) to build an organizational consensus, to agree on the contribution of each partner also as on a common vision. As we deal here with territorial governance, we specify “spatial” vision, and further refined the definition with the addition of aspects concerning the outcomes of governance processes: they should be aimed at helping territorial cohesion and sustainable and balanced spatial development.

Represent an evolution from “government to governance” -two not opposite concepts-, characterized for the involvement of several actors, the modification of policies and intervention objectives. Reflect a change from growth control to promoting development and collective action procedures, from authoritarian decisions to negotiated consensus building. In governance models, multi-actors interactions are regulated through a wide set of social modes of coordination rather than by a limited set of hierarchically defined organisational procedures, involving several actors. Governance process by definition involves a complex set of public and non public actors, based on flexibility, partnership and voluntary participation that represent all diverse social interests.

Key challenges for governance are creating horizontal and vertical cooperation/coordination between various levels of government (multilevel governance, vertical relations), between sectoral policies with territorial impact, between territories -neighbouring or not-, as well as between governmental and non governmental organizations and citizens (multi-channel governance, horizontal relations); and to achieve integration and coherence between disparate responsibilities, competences and visions of territories, that create the conditions that allow collective action in order to help territorial cohesion. Public powers have an important role to play here.

\(^3\) See Second Interim Report (SIR) of 2.3.2 ESPON Project. [http://www.espon.lu/online/documentation/projects/policy_impact/2785/sir-2.3.2.pdf](http://www.espon.lu/online/documentation/projects/policy_impact/2785/sir-2.3.2.pdf)
In general terms, *Territorial Governance* could be defined as a process of actors’ co-ordination to develop social, intellectual and political capitals and of territorial development based on a non destructive use of territorial specificities in order to improve territorial cohesion at different levels. In a more operative definition territorial governance is an organisational mode of collective action based on public and private actors’ partnerships and coalitions building, oriented towards a commonly defined objective. Unlike economic governance, confront with the interests representation problem, thus considering among its objectives the specific social and political dimension of the collective action. It refers to the territory not as a static and passive space, but as a dynamic and active context, as an actor itself in the development process, particularly stressing the role of proximity, sense of place and territorial identity to promote the collective action of local coalitions, and their capacity to organise relations with other territories4.

We can also distinguish territorial governance actions which are the outcome of a complex negotiated process in which resources are exchanged and partly shared, objectives are defined, and consensus is sought. Territorial governance actions are actions that, at different geographical levels: a) Guarantee vertical (multi-level) and horizontal (among territories, actors, policies) coordination and cooperation, b) allow participation and c) as result, promote spatial sustainable development. The conclusion of the above definitions is that territorial Governance is close to the concept of *Spatial Development* (see Figure 1) and strongly related with *Territorial Cohesion*.

**Figure 1: Building Space through Spatial Development Strategies**

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4 The idea of active territory is founded in the new territoriality paradigm. Territory is not yet the outcome of social behaviour over space, but the process of "construction" of this behaviour (RAFFESTIN, 1999).
The conclusion that follows from analyzing the national overviews is that, regarding official acceptance of governance concepts and principles, countries can be categorized into three groups (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Acceptance of Governance Concepts and Principles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active acceptance</th>
<th>Indirect acceptance</th>
<th>Low degree of acceptance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In countries with:</strong></td>
<td><strong>In countries with:</strong></td>
<td><strong>In countries with:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Long tradition of governance practices</td>
<td>▪ Strong national traditions based on a long established and largely successful system</td>
<td>▪ Political problems at the national level, involving separate communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ No experience, but recent actual legislation encouraging governance</td>
<td>▪ Positive intentions but fluid conditions of transition</td>
<td>▪ Internal political and economic delaying factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Clear and unequivocal acceptance by government authorities</td>
<td>▪ Clear official acceptance, but resistance built in the present socio-economic conditions</td>
<td>▪ Low penetration of governance concept in official thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Government system with important governance ingredients</td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Indifference because of a satisfactory and successful modus vivendi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Conditions, albeit diffuse, pressing urgently in governance directions</td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Serious difficulties of transition from previous regime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**1.3 Open Method of Coordination**

The next point of great interest is the role that the OMC can play in the field of territorial governance. The Open Method of Coordination or OMC is a relatively new and intergovernmental means of governance in the European Union, based on the voluntary cooperation of its member states. It is a systemised soft law technique which, through a wide range of tools seeks to induce compliance of State Members’ policies at national and regional level with commonly agreed EU objectives, even without binding legislation or formal sanctions, in areas that may be wholly within the competence of the Member States⁵. It seeks to engage concerned governmental and non-governmental actors and operates through common objectives, generic approaches, exchange of best practices, commitments to action, and joint evaluation of implementation. Examples include guidelines, indicators, benchmarking systems, networking, sharing of best practices and peer review. This means that there are no official sanctions for laggards. Rather, the method's effectiveness relies on a form of peer pressure and naming and shaming, as no member states wants to be seen as the worst in a given policy area. Originating in

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⁵ That relates to so-called ‘Soft law’. About it see ALONSO (2001) and MAZUELOS (2004).
the European Employment Strategy introduced in the Amsterdam Treaty and elaborated at the Lisbon submit, OMC is being promoted as an alternative in policy areas where the Community method does not apply, as social exclusion and pensions. According to FALUDI (2004), the OMC could be promoted as an alternative method for territorial cohesion.

1.3.1 The use of the Open Method of Coordination:

According to FALUDI (2004), the Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC) is being promoted as an alternative in policy areas where the Community method does not apply, such as employment, social security and pensions. The possibility is being explored to use it in territorial cohesion policy.

In table 3 the use of OMC in territorial planning is very marginal, represented by only 4 countries that mention OMC in this context. The majority of the use of OMC has to be found in other fields. Furthermore there is also a very high number of countries, 12, that don’t mention OMC in their national overviews. It seems to be fair to assume that this method is not being used\(^6\). Some doubt still remains whether this is a correct assumption or not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OMC used in territorial planning</td>
<td>Belgium, France, Ireland, The Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMC used in other fields</td>
<td>Belgium, Finland, Hungary, Malta, UK, Greece, Latvia, Ireland, Germany, Norway, Spain, Austria, France, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No indication of use of OMC in national overview</td>
<td>Italy, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SIR 232 ESPON Project, pág 114.

A general conclusion that one can draw from these data is that in a large number of countries there is a very low or no knowledge whatsoever about the OMC. If the OMC is known and used it is mainly used in other fields than territorial planning. When reading more in the national overviews in what fields OMC is used, one can see that it is mainly used in the field of employment, social protection and pension policy negotiations. Furthermore it is useful in international or at its best national sectoral negotiations and arrangements.

\(^6\) This is clearly stated in the case of Romania.
One other point mentioned in the UK national overview that is worth mentioning because it deals with the hesitation to use the method, is that the UK government did not support the notion that [OMC] should not be used when legislative action under the Community method was possible. This issue is at the very centre of the dilemma of using conventional methods as opposed to more innovative tools, like OMC.

1.3.2 Specific Instruments:

Although the use of OMC within the field of territorial development is very limited, there are a few examples worth mentioning. The partners involved in the project were asked to to give examples in the national overviews of agreements, contracts, pacts, etc. between formal, informal, social, voluntary and/or, private agencies (in any combination), to enable better co-ordination (vertical, horizontal, lateral, diagonal) and effectiveness. These data revealed that there it is very difficult to categorize the different forms of cooperation. This is mainly due to the richness and the broad spectrum of co-operation arrangements in countries with long traditions in this field. These countries naturally developed a wide range of instruments adjusted to a variety of situations build on years of contractual experience. There is a variety of methods being used that carries different labels, but more or less try to achieve the same goal. On the other end of the spectrum there are the countries operating with conventional planning instruments and thus lack any form of innovative arrangements. These countries still practice old fashioned top down hierarchical town planning. This does not imply that more federal and regionally organized countries are without problems (a good example is the Spanish case). Here the countries try to overcome the problems that come with a weak centre leading to nation wide implementation problems. Furthermore we can distinguish a domination of urban experimental innovative arrangements. Instruments with names like neighbourhood contracts, tripartite agreements or forms of participation etc. are widely used in Belgium, Switzerland and Spain while in Italy programming documents, pacts etc are highly popular. In Poland the form of the ‘alliance’ is used. The variations are such that a further categorisation cannot be made. Local development agreements can mainly be found in rural areas where efforts focus on tourism as a complement of agricultural activities. Specific conditions like the management of highly urbanized regions or the demands for technological development generate new forms of co-operation and contractual arrangements. Lastly there is also the ad-hoc form of cooperation used for the organisation of important events and special projects such as the Olympics in Greece.
2. The many faces of participation

Participation can be viewed from many angles. One can see participation in the vertical and in the horizontal way representing totally different perspectives. The aim of the following part is to view participation from these different angles in the light of the project in order to get a ‘complete’ picture of the concept.

2.1 Progress towards co-operation and partnerships

With regard to relative progress and prospects of vertical and horizontal co-operation and partnerships, the following patterns can be observed:

- Horizontal co-operation and partnership mainly occurs at the local level. Many unions and alliances are created by local governments and neighbouring municipalities. The motivations and stimuli vary from: expanding the scope of administrative competence, securing feasibility and viability of the locally needed infrastructure, for achieving emancipation from higher level political patronage and control, to bid for funds, and many more. In many cases horizontal cooperation is the inevitable step to be taken if efficiency and feasibility of planning schemes are pursued. In addition cooperation is related to sustainable development and the resolution of problems arising from environmental resource exploitation claims or environmental degradation (problems crossing administrative boundaries). A reasonable assumption is that the more limited and restricted the planning powers, territorial competences and funds of a local government are, the more reliant they are upon their co-operation in their network.

- At the national level the most common horizontal co-operation and partnership take place between the cabinet of ministers, inter-ministerial committees/boards or inter-ministerial working groups. The range of the partnerships on the national level rarely crosses the boundaries of the provided powers. It is more than logic that the devolution of powers at the highest level to non-elected organs provokes the public opinion. Besides national states are not willing to loose more political power in addition to those that have been lost as a result of the EU membership.

- The previous point might not apply to the former socialist countries where partnerships at the national level seem to be built more easily due to the still “fluid character”\(^7\) and the non-consolidated powers of the post-socialist regimes.

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\(^7\) SIR, p.121.
This is an untested hypothesis but it would be in line with the rest of the data. The phase of transition facilitates such experiments.

- In federal and highly regionalized countries with great regional autonomy such as; Germany, Italy and Spain, innovative tools and progressive arrangements in vertical co-operation can be found. The most frequently encountered pattern of horizontal partnership happens between public-public between regions, cities, local authorities etc. Public-private co-operation and to a lesser degree private-private agreements are most to be found in cases of infrastructural projects and urban regenerations plans. The NGO’s, mainly in the environmental field, seem to increase their role through horizontal partnerships related to sustainable development and spatial plans involving major environmental issues.

- Another actor that seems to be expanding their activities and their role are the universities and research institutes. The reasons behind this is that they are the information and knowledge providers, the are capable to perform a role as facilitator in conflict situation and they can lend validity and political prestige to decisions and views of other agencies, partners or the entity as a whole

- Contractual agreements are becoming more and more popular as effective mechanisms of public-private cooperation.

2.1.1 Partnership formation and co-operation: barriers and catalysts

After the view on the patterns that were observed in partnerships there are also patterns to be found in the barriers and catalysts. The national overviews produced a fair amount of information on the catalysts, but very few information is given in respect to the barriers. Clearly the most evident founder of governance practices is the EU itself through its policies and funding opportunities. This brings up the utilitarian character of the EU and thus the question about the long run prospect of EU-supported partnerships. The survival potential of the more recent partnerships is linked to the existence of the EU funds. Furthermore the partnerships encouraged and shaped by EU policy are in some cases criticized as undemocratic and elitist. However, long traditions through prior existence of partnerships in several countries also show that partnerships can survive without EU backing. At the other extreme in situations of low social consensus partnerships are used as a tool to oppose government policies. The authorities try to deal with this by incorporating the opposition in the decision making processes and thus is often used in order to avoid unwelcome protest of the NGOs. However when the NGOs are drawn into this consensus building process and insist on protesting against policies formulated by
formal government-dominated partnerships, the latter inevitable suffers from limitations and ineffectiveness. In the Mediterranean countries there are many cases to be found where partnerships are built to resist existing spatial planning policies and regulation instead of to uphold them. Therefore, initiatives with a governance appearance may well undermine spatial planning instead of promoting it. It is important to see that factors which support and promote governance initiatives in a particular society or community can sort contradictory effects in a different social political context. Some very obvious barriers to governance practices are the rigidity and complexity of partnership requirements creating inability to obtain funding. The problems experienced due to the bureaucratic structures are experienced in every field and thus also the field of governance. The countries that have no tradition of partnership formation also experience problems due to the mentality change that has to take place. The former socialist countries mainly experience problems during the partnerships involved in the preparation of the national development plans (e.g. Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovakia). Problems such as: complexity of processes of consultation and negotiation, limited flow of information, insufficient national funding, lack of transparency in the making of the final decision and the poor skills of the actors involved are often mentioned as the reasons of can be termed as a “bad governance paradigm”\textsuperscript{8}. In the south of Europe (Cyprus, Malta, Greece and Portugal) political polarization, society and public opinion fragmentation, lack of trust to the State and political parties, privatization and individualistic visions and interests are often mentioned as barriers to good governance. Thus the local political culture and citizen relations can also provide an efficient barrier that has a different character in all countries. In all countries the pursuit of departmental autonomy on central and local levels is seen as another critical obstacle. In general the progress towards good governance is often related to the creation of regional government bodies. Often one sees councils, committees and boards with representative membership that serves as a substitute of genuine partnerships.

2.1.2 Experience with participation processes and partnerships

The experience with participation processes reflects the historical background of a country while this past also influences the way a country handles the future. These historical factors are often recent, e.g. transition of political regime, explaining the familiarization with participation. Experience can serve in two ways. The first is as a substitute of genuine partnerships.

\textsuperscript{8} SIR, p. 123.
forms of governance. The second is that it can serve as shield that shields the enthusiasm of adopting a new philosophy of power allocation due to the knowledge and awareness of limitations and difficulties of these new structures. Thus experience can trigger scepticism in countries with a long history of participation or elevate governance into a major political challenge when coinciding with a transitional phase of political and administrative reform. The former socialist countries lack experience but are nevertheless very willing to experiment with new governance practices.

“Naturally, this willingness to innovate has to be looked at from another perspective, that of the weak identity of the newly born capitalist central state in the place of the former socialist regime. It is most likely that these newly emerging states are inclined to build alliances in order to consolidate their position”\textsuperscript{9}.

The former socialist countries have limited experience in both public participation processes and partnership structures. This lack of experience however did not stop those countries to make decisive steps towards governance. A good example of this is that in several cases the national plans are elaborated on the basis of widely open procedures involving a wide spectrum of partners: research institutions, business associations, environmental organizations, local authorities and the general public. This is exactly what was mentioned before that the western countries with a long tradition of governance practices and several years of EU membership are bigger sceptics when it comes to adopting more open procedures in elaborating their own national plans than the former socialist countries.

It is important to be aware that participation and partnership experiences have a strong correlation. Thus attention should be given to the fact that countries with extensive experience in public participation also are experienced in partnership building and vice versa, although Spain and Italy are exceptions. The reason for this can be found in the autonomy of the regions lead to experience in partnership building between the central state and autonomous communities but however does not necessarily imply advancements in public consultation for policy making.

With regards to experience in participation and consultation processes two different categories can be distinguished. In the first category formal provisions have been in place for a long time and the second category is formed by cases where experience and tradition derive from informal occurrences. In several countries with limited experience in public participation but in which formal provisions are in place, actual

\textsuperscript{9} SIR, p. 124.
participation does not even take place. This condition is usually met in some of the Mediterranean countries.

It also has been reported that the authorities try to go around legal provisions referring to public consultation, in order to avoid the embarrassment of conflict resolution processes. The mentality of individualism in promoting one’s own interest and other cultural patterns in the Mediterranean Region partly account for the inability to achieve consensus. Related to this issue is the phenomenon of negative or opposition alliances and networking in the Mediterranean countries to oppose existing policies, rather than participate and contribute in the formulation of new ones. Another important point is that a centralized political structure not necessarily blocks governance practices and openness to new forms of policy making. It even seems that at times decentralisation works against cooperation and partnership due to a power struggle. Once an actor has power and autonomy one doesn’t want to share it, on the other side actors with limited powers try to increase them through networking and coalitions. Regional autonomy and regionalization thus have a big effect. Lastly after all that has been said above we can also conclude that participation is more historically determined than partnership.

2.2 Participation on the local level

In the SIR we came to the conclusion that alternative favorable factors that have an impact on governance approaches come down to five main points of which three are of real importance in the light of local participation. First of all, the European Union policies and integration processes. However in some cases where there was already a local ‘governance’ culture the influence of the EU is having a mixed response. The Finnish for instance said that "the Finnish governance system has been modified and adjusted largely based on the European Regional Policy model of the Structural Funds…..the debates and attitudes towards reform processes within regional governance reflect mainly national concerns and processes and it was … argued by the policy makers … that the sources of governance reforms have in most cases been domestic and endogenous rather than exogenous". The overview emphasize that "the European White Paper on governance has themes that are seen as relevant for the Finnish governance model, but it is argued that transparency, openness etc. are much more based on traditional Finnish and Nordic values of public government than inspired by European debate.

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10 National overview Finland, p. 8
Secondly in northern countries in general there is a long tradition of associations, membership of organisations and co-operative with the authorities. In the Norwegian case for instance "the participation of the people in the political sphere takes place both through direct elections and through their membership of organizations. For example the average Norwegian is a member of four organizations and approximately 70% of the adult population is a member of at least one organization. Such organizations are able to exert influence on the authorities by means of formal and informal contacts with the public administration"\textsuperscript{11}.

The third point is related to the previous points and mentions internal political imperatives that lead to decentralisation and devolution of powers, again referring to the endogenous powers.

The Structural Funds on the other hand contain a contradiction. On the one hand they brought together actors and by doing so promoted policy coherence and cross-sector co-ordination, while on the other hand they were sector based in nature by their management structure. A different often heard complaint is that the SF is not suitable to promote cross-regional co-operation. Also the bureaucratic burden has increased with the introduction of the European structural policies.

Another factor towards governance comes from the transition from a previous political regime, but this mainly plays at the national level and consists of a list of complex factors that are irrelevant in the light of the local level. The same goes for the internal economic pressures to increase competitiveness.

\textbf{2.3 Mechanisms of participation and spatial conflict resolution:}

The main mechanisms of participation and spatial conflict resolutions are presented in Table 4. They are grouped based on two criteria: level of implication, that is, if processes are developed following participation principle or only that of consultation. The second criterion is the intensity of those mechanisms. Three levels of intensity have been distinguished. The lowest level relates to concrete planning procedures or a limited level of involvement by the society on the making of local or regional plans. The medium level unites examples whose participation or consultation methods are established parths of the planning process. The highest level concerns examples whose mechanisms of participation and spatial conflict resolution are regulated by national legislation. The overview is not comprehensive.

\textsuperscript{11} National overview Norway, p. 3.
Table 4: Mechanisms of participation typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intensity of mechanisms</th>
<th>Level of Implication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislation that encourages public involving mechanisms</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus, Finland, Hungary, The Netherlands, Sweden, Spain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and/or consultation mechanisms are part of the planning process</td>
<td>France, Germany, Malta, Poland, Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other soft mechanisms</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece, Ireland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SIR 232 ESPON Project, pág 111.

In the first group, Legislation that encourages public involving mechanisms, the intensity ranges from encouraging to participate reflected in some planning laws (as is the case of the Town and Country Planning legislation in Cyprus, or of the Planning and Building legislation and the Environmental Code in Sweden) to the establishment of arrangements in countries enjoy a high participative culture. Good examples here are The Netherlands and Switzerland. In the Netherlands there is a strong institutionalization of the participative mechanisms for planning issues. The Spatial Planning Act provides several procedures and obligatory public hearings during the planning procedure. In Spain participation at the local level is promoted by central government through the recent and highly criticized Law of Modernization of Local Government (FARINÓS et al., 2005: 128). This law provides instruments for the creation of the City Social Councils, made up by representatives of the most representative economic, social, professional and citizen organizations in order to elaborate proposals of strategic plans for cities. In Switzerland the most used is the consultation mechanism representing a major political tool in the Swiss legal system, because it is not only used in the planning process but also during the phase of the legislation process.

The second group, where participation and/or consultation mechanisms are part of the planning process, is the biggest and thus supposed to represent the most expanded method of involvement by citizens. However national overviews didn’t provide very detailed information. Some cases elaborate on participative or consultative mechanisms such as public meetings, conferences, written questions and responses, surveys of residents and experts or public hearings.

The third group, other soft mechanisms, contains some examples in which the participation and consultation procedures are not firmly established in the planning process or are developed at lower levels. In countries like Czech Republic or Greece
cooperation, discussion, consultation or participation is not common practice. In the Czech Republic the citizens have the opportunity to comment on planning documents they however hardly use it. In the Greek situation formal participation possibilities are limited or negligible with the exception of a few cases. However in this situation informal participation through for instance protests or legal challenges can sometimes have a significant influence on decisions. Conflict resolution is normally left to courts, especially the supreme administrative court and more recently to the service of the Ombudsman. In Ireland the participation debate is used at local level with the new period of urban policies.

2.4 Informal and ad hoc mechanisms for planning and development

There are few useful examples in the national overviews related to the issue of ‘ad hoc’ mechanisms for planning and development even though formal and well established. The classification used in the SIR, see table 5, organizes these mechanisms by level and purpose. The first category unites mechanisms that are dedicated specifically to spatial development. The second group gathers those that address the environment management and conservation that influences spatial planning. The thirst category deals with alliances or cooperation between municipalities. In the latter case, mechanisms really mean organizations or institutions at the various levels created to address the two main fields of spatial development and environment.

Table 5: Typology of ‘ad hoc’ mechanisms for planning and development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>National</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial Development</td>
<td>Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, The Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental, but with influences on Spatial Development</td>
<td>Finland, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliances or cooperation mechanisms</td>
<td>Belgium, Slovenia, Luxembourg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SIR 232 ESPON Project, pág 113.

The majority of the examples of the first group, Spatial Development, can be found in the national or regional government departments. All cases in this group work through research and statistical institutes. The most important ones being DATAR in France, BBR (Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning) in Germany and Nordregio (the Nordic Center for Spatial Development) in Sweden. Their work in the
field of spatial planning extends to the whole European space. Additional examples of national institutions for spatial development are the Center of Expertise Programme (Finland), The Hungarian Office for Spatial and Regional Development, The Netherlands Institute for Spatial Research and the Federal Office for Spatial Development in Switzerland.

On the regional level governments have carried out several initiatives of spatial planning institutes (Research Institute for Regional and Urban Development in North Rhine-Westphalia, and Institute of Territorial Studies in Catalonia) or Regional Development Agencies (Hungary).

The second group, Environmental, but with influences on Spatial Development, includes organizations or governmental departments focused on the field of environment, its conservation and its management (all at the national level). Most of the examples are departments or agencies included into the national Ministries of Environment and are environmental watchdogs. They are continuously elaborating data collections concerning to environmental issues but their works usually helps the improvement of spatial development.

The last group of examples is the alliances or cooperation mechanisms between municipalities all of them are situated at local level.

**3. Final remarks**

Here we will deal with the importance and difficulties of all forms of cooperation and the variety of tools and organizational arrangements used for this purpose. Recurrent issues in the countries reviewed are: coordination between sectoral policies or between sectoral policies and territorial policies, the mechanisms of drafting national and regional plans, the principles of vertical cooperation (like the German and Swiss counter-current principle), the operation of a variety of councils, committees and coordinating organs etc. Other examples of cooperation with and between agencies and departments encounter the same recurring themes like: Interregional schemes, various forms of contracts and agreements, cooperation in the form of regional / local associations, partnership with voluntary sector etc. In fact the responses regarding horizontal / vertical cooperation and cooperation between agencies, departments and authorities to a large extent reiterate information supplied on methods of cooperation and / or partnership formation.

The EU programmes and policies like Structural Fund policies, EU Initiatives (Interreg, Leader, PHARE, etc.), European Spatial Development Perspective, Trans-
European Networks, Community Support Frameworks, environmental and other directives etc. all have had their impact.

A particular form of cooperation is between countries sharing borders, transnational and interregional. Intense cross-border cooperation activity has been observed in several countries. In more advanced cases this takes the form of integrated territorial planning, which is naturally more extensive within countries, where it is the outcome, once again, of a variety of horizontal partnerships addressing a host of issues and problems. Strategic planning, particularly at metropolitan level, is evident and successful in complex urbanized regions, but is also misused in more conventional land use planning situations which are presented as strategic and policy-oriented\textsuperscript{12}. Organizations acting as exchange, meeting and discussion fora include a variety of associations of authorities, institutes, councils, professional associations etc., providing a platform of encounter, cooperation and debate. The overviews gave a variety of interpretations of the term. The same thing occurred with the mechanisms of participation. In most cases reference is made to participation in connection with statutory plan preparation. But there are clearly countries with a more sophisticated tradition of participation, extending to a variety of governing forms. Non-governmental organizations play a significant role here and they also appear prominently in connection with informal mechanisms, along with various training and research activities and agencies.

On the issue of OMC and territorial governance what does this brief analysis of preliminary results teach us. The OMC method seems to be the way towards balanced territorial governance; however there are also some remarks to be made. The road towards good governance is not a smooth road and there are many obstacles to be taken. Currently the main obstacle seems to be the limited knowledge and use of the Open Method of Coordination. The absence of the method’s use in territorial development and planning is profound. Partnerships are most frequent at the local level, while at the national level the usual forms of horizontal cooperation and partnership are mostly cabinets and committees of ministers and various working groups. Innovative arrangements of vertical coordination are usually found in federal or regionalized countries\textsuperscript{13}. Partnerships are encouraged by various conditions (EU policies, political culture etc.), but are also impeded by bureaucratic structures, poor state – citizen relationships,

\textsuperscript{12} For a Spanish case, see FARINÓS et al. (2005).
\textsuperscript{13} About conflicts among levels in Spain see FARINÓS, ROMERO & SÁNCHEZ (2005), FARINÓS (2004) and ROMERO (2005).
institutional rigidities, lack of resources etc. It comes as no surprise that where these conditions prevail, experience with partnership formation and participation is limited. Policy coordination and integration may suffer from similar obstacles. But they are also affected by genuine limitations of the possibilities to achieve coherence. The first priority thus should be in spreading the word on OMC, gaining knowledge on the topic through projects like ESPON 2.3.2 and applying this knowledge in case studies. Those cases should be monitored and one should learn from them in order to move closer, step by step, towards good governance. Sharing experiences and best practices is an important part of this, learning on and from OMC through the principles of OMC; among others subsidiarity, proportionality and institutional loyalty.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


