European Model of Local Development and Territorial Policies in France and Spain

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to explore the cognitive Europeanisation of territorial policies and its influence on multilevel governance. Since two decades, several European spatial programmes developed similar norms of action at the local and regional level. From a comparative study of territorial policies in France and Spain, my hypothesis is that these European norms shape a model of local development, which has deep political effects on territorial governance because local and regional actors use these cognitive resources to implement their own policies. So, the Europeanisation of local development policies, with a migration of EU-level norms, values and cultures of governance, is producing structural changes in the territorial governance in Europe.

Keywords

Europeanisation - Territorial policies - Local development - France - Spain

Romain Pasquier
Centre de recherches sur l’action politique en Europe (CRAPE)
Institut d’Etudes Politiques
104, bld de la Duchesse Anne
35000 Rennes
FRANCE
Tél : +33 (0) 2 99 84 39 05
Mob : +33 (0) 6 71 74 47 05
Fax : +33 (0) 2 99 84 39 02
Email : rpasquie@hotmail.com

Very first draft - Do not quote
Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explore the cognitive europeanisation of territorial policies in the EU and its influence on multilevel governance. Since two decades, several European spatial programmes (Leader, Interreg or Urban for example) developed similar norms of action at the local level: vertical partnership between levels of administrations, horizontal partnership between the public sector and the civil society, networking of the “best practices” of local development etc. (Pasquier 2004, Pasquier et Pinson 2004). My hypothesis is these European norms shape a model of local development, which has deep political effects on territorial governance, because local and regional actors use now these cognitive resources to implement their own policies. So, the Europeanisation of local development policies, with a migration of EU-level norms, values and cultures of governance, is producing structural changes in the EU territorial governance.

The early effect of Europeanisation on sub-national governments as implementers of EU policy in the 1980s - e.g. regional policy - is well-documented (Jeffery 1997, Keating and Loughlin 1997, Pasquier 2003). However, an analysis of the more recent processes of de-centralisation within EU Member States is largely absent from this literature. Rather, much of the recent literature on europeanisation has focused on the institutionalisation of a European sphere, and the consecutive adaptation of the domestic political systems of the EU Member States, as a change in process of national policy-making (Featherstone and Radaelli 2003, Green Cowles, Caporaso and Risse 2001, Hix et Goez 2000). We consider here that sub-state institutions participate to a learning processes through a migration of common norms e.g principles of partnership, mobilisation of the civic society. Local and regional actors and institutions use these cognitive resources to elaborate and implement their own territorial policies. Regional actors and institutions

1 Two notables exceptions being the works of Goldsmith 1993 and of Börzel 2002.
europeanise their policies without Bruxelles, through a socialisation to a European model of local development (Pasquier 2004). Like this, regional institutions in France and Spain developed new territorial policies since the second half of the 1990's (Belza 1993, Leurquin 1999, Oudart 1997, Vasquez Barquero et Precedo Ledo 1993). These policies institutionalised new intermediary levels between the commune and the province, called “pays” in France and “comarcas” in Spain. These innovating policies aim to transform local governance by structuring new local institutions, new territorial references and new rules of collective action. From a comparative study of these territorial policies in one French region, Brittany, and one Spanish region, Galicy my analysis will be organized in two directions:

(1) The europeanisation of territorial policies

First, I will analyse how these policies have been clearly influenced by a European model of local development. Since the 1980's, this model diffused similar norms of actions to local and regional actors through varied programs as for example Leader. Since the beginning of the 1990's, regional institutions in France and Spain take this European inheritance to implement similar territorial development policies : the policy of “pays” in Brittany and the policy of “comarcas” in Galicy.

(2) Cognitive europeanisation and territorial governance

Secondly, I will see the effects of this cognitive europeanisation on the territorial governance in France and in Spain. These innovating policies produced many institutional conflicts. The “pays” in France and the “comarcas” in Spain are more or less institutionalised according to national and regional context. They progressively become the main local interlocutors of French and Spanish regional administrations about different issues such as economic development, public
investments, environmental or tourism programs. However, their institutionalisation produced many conflicts between different levels of governments. In France and Spain, the “conseils généraux” and “diputaciones”, but also the central administrations, try to limit the emergence of these new local spaces and institutions, whereas regional institutions support them.

1. The europeanisation of local development: a learning process

In France and in Spain, regional institutions are intermediary levels, that is to say they are both in charge of local problems and partners of national and European administrations (Pasquier 2004). This strategic location for local development explains why French and Spanish regional actors, which have now a political capacity, have gradually elaborated and implemented new territorial policies. The inheritance of national and European programs of local development has been very important for the socialisation of French and Spanish regional actors. To implement their own programmes, regional institutions now use this inheritance in order to make their own policies.

1.1 The national and European inheritance

The paradigm of local development has a long history. Its theoretical origins came from the criticism of productivist logic during the 1950s and the 1960s (Joyal 1987; Pecqueur 1989). At the end of the 1960s, left theorists adopted this paradigm whenever new problems and new needs emerged in towns and campaigns of West Europe (Le Galès 1993). Gradually, since the beginning of the 1970s, Local development policies have been implemented by different authorities in order to face the crisis of centralist policies of regional planning (Madiot 1996; Pérez Andres 1998).
In France, agricultural trades unions first promulgated this paradigm in the rural environment during the 1960s before it being diffused in urban areas. In this way, in the first half of the 1970s the French central administration through the DATAR (Délégation à l’aménagement du territoire et à l’action régionale) implemented the contracts of pays to resolve rural exodus reinforcing solidarity between actors of the local society (DATAR 1977). At the end of the 1970s the pays fashion declined but, from the beginning of the 1980s, the decentralisation facilitated the implementation of new experiences of local development soon as, in 1983, the “inter-communal charts of development and planning” (Chartes intercommunales de développement et d’aménagement) or touristic contracts at county level (contrats de pays d’accueil).

In Spain, this paradigm was diffused during the democratic transition in the regions in which identity was strong as it is in Catalonia. In these regions, local development was perceived as a means to struggle against the centralism inherited from Francoism (Vazquez Barquero 1996). Moreover, Spain’s entry in the European Community, in 1986, incited local and regional actors to organise in order to benefit European programs. In this way, Institutes of community development (Institutos de desarrollo comunautario) were created.

Since the 1970’s, the European administration, particularly the regional policy directorate and the agriculture directorate, have been very interested by these national experiences of local development. In 1978, the French department of Lozère is one of the first territory experimenting an European innovative program - the “integrated operation of development”- which tested new policy norms of local development. At the end of the 1980s, the European Commission generalised its local development programmes with the reform of the structural funds. The LEADER community initiative is the best known. Through this programme, the European Commission legitimated a policy conception based on

---

2 At the beginning of the 1970s, the franquist central administration also studied to what extent it was possible to use the “comarca” as a scale for an administrative reform (Ameijeiras Castro 1973).

3 In Madrid, Barcelona and Santiago de Compostela.
partnership, development project and experimentation (Geddes 2000). Indeed, with LEADER programme, local actors are incited to co-operate around a territorial development project. “Local action groups” were selected and have to implement LEADER programmes by regrouping social, economic actors and administrative authorities in territories (Smith 1996). Leader 1 (1991-1993), Leader 2 (1994-1999) and Leader + (2000-06) have been a great success in the European Union, particularly in France and Spain. Moreover, the LEADER programme incorporates a transnational dimension. A LEADER network links all the Groups of Local Action, giving birth to a “European problematique of local development” (Muller 1996: 312). The European association for information on local development (EAILD) gave life to this Leader network. Seminars, training are organised for local animators facilitating the emergence of common repertoires. The European Commission not only sustains this network but many others, as for example the European association of local development agencies, the association Innovating regions etc. Moreover, each European programmes on territorial development has its transnational network: INTERACT for INTERREG (community initiative for interregional cooperation) URBACT for URBAN (community initiative for sustainable development in the troubled urban districts).

This work of networking is an important dimension of the process learning linked to the europeanisation of local development. For the European administration, these networks are new means to diffuse its norms of action, its methods, its “best practices”.

---

4 For LEADER 1, the European Commission selected 217 projects in the European Union from which 52 were in Spain and 40 in France (Smith 1996).
1.2 Regional contexts and the logics of learning

However, from this inheritance of programs and norms of actions, the logics of fit vary according to each regional context (Pasquier 2004). We can identify in Galicia and in Brittany two different dynamics: adaptation and reactivation.

In Galicy, the socialization of regional actors to territorial development norms is largely due to the adaptation to the European policies. Since the mid of the 1980’s, Spanish policies had to adapt to European norms (Goma et Subirats 1998). The regional government of Galicy – the Xunta – quickly reacted to this new situation. Many regional civil servants went to Bruxelles to be socialized to European policies. In 1986, the Institute of community development was created in Galicy to help local actors to manage European programmes. However, the local development paradigm really imposed in the regional political agenda when Manuel Fraga Iribarne\(^5\) became president of the Xunta in 1989. Indeed, he centred its political project on the reconquest of Galician identity and economic development. This policy, as the linguistic policy, was a means for the regional government to occupy the political space of the nationalist party – the Galician nationalist Bloc - (Bloque nationalista galego). This party, which is the second regional political force, centres its discourse on the reconquest of regional identity. So, as the comarca has been a traditional claim of nationalist parties in Galicy during the twentieth century, this territorial policy traduces the regionalization of the regional government repertoires (Yebra Martul-Ortega 1993). So Fraga and its staff and the regional government imposed the comarca as the new space of local development to notably demonstrate its interest to develop the singularity of the Galician identity defended by the BNG (Pasquier 2001). In this perspective, the regional government created, in 1991, a general secretary\(^6\) for the development of comarcas.

---

\(^5\) Minister during the Franco regime, Manuel Fraga Iribarne is the historic leader of the Spanish right. Until 1989 is president of the Xunta and the Galician popular party (Partido popular gallego, PPG).

\(^6\) Andres Precedo Ledo, well known geographer, became the new general secretary.
In Brittany, the situation has been different. The European policies already had a long history in this region. At the beginning of the 1990’s, these programs came to reactivate an old inheritance of regional mobilizations around local development since the 1950’s\(^7\) (Pasquier 2002). In a region very sensitive to local development and European stakes, the regional council took this opportunity to relaunch the regional territorial policy. In 1993, an expert’s report proposed the division of the regional territory in 24 “pays” to institutionalise a new level of local development closed to inter-communal structures. In Brittany, the regional policy aims to structure new territorial spaces of local development to concentrate regional, national and European funds.

1.3 European convergence of local development norms

According to Theodor Lowi typology (1972), these new territorial policies can be defined as “constitutive policies”, that is to say policies defining rules of the game between legitimate actors who deal with a specific problem. There are the “ programmes régionaux d’aménagement du territoire” (PRAT) in Brittany and the “Planes de desarrollo comarcal” (PDC) in Galicy. These territorial policies have two common objectives, territorial planning and territorial organisation. Comparative analysis demonstrates that French and Spanish regional administrations implement territorial policies, which display very similar principles of action: (1) new territorial spaces for local development; (2) stabilised partnership (3) and development project.

The convergence of these rules of action in differentiated regional configuration indicates the europeanisation of territorial development policy.

\(^7\) At the end of the 1960s, in Brittany, various political and economic actors structured committees of local development: the “Société d’économie mixte d’études du nord-Finistère” (SEMENF) in 1963 by Alexis Gourvennec, the “comité d’expansion économique de Cornouailles” in 1964 by Louis Le Pensec, the “comité d’expansion du Mené” (CEM) by Paul Houée in 1965, the “comité de coordination et d’aménagement du pays de Redon” (COCAPAR) in 1969 and the “comité interdépartemental de développement économique du centre-ouest Bretagne” in 1970.
instruments in France and Spain. A European model of local development is emerging.

New territories for local development

Regional administrations contribute through these policies to shape new territorial communities by integrating several municipalities and creating intermediary levels between communes and province, the pays in France, the comarcas in Spain. For instance, in Galicy, the county development act (Ley de desarrollo comarcal) adopted in June 1996, defines the comarca as “an intermediary territorial framework between the municipality and the province shaped by a set of nearby municipalities which have an internal coherence based on historical, economic or functional facts”. In Brittany and Galicy regional administrations define territorial spaces respecting or creating local uses of co-operation. Moreover in the three regions, the territorial spaces have to be economically viable and to show a quite important social unity. So, they try to associate one urban pole to the rural environment by adopting inter-communal spaces as a territorial frame. The pays and the comarcas respect also a demographic threshold. Counties have to represent a sufficient socio-economic space to permit local development. Actually Brittany is divided into twenty one counties. To delimit these territories, the regional administration co-operated with the State administration. In Spain, the situation is different because the regional governments have more administrative resources. In 1991, the Galician government has created a specific administration, the “sociedad de desarrollo comarcal” (SDC)\(^8\) which has been charged to divide the Galicy into counties. In 20 February 1997, a regional decision officialized the Galicy’s parcelling into 53 comarcas (Precedo Ledo 1997).

\(^8\) This service is consists of geographers, urbanists and economists staff administered by the “secretario general de la planificación y del desarrollo comarcal”, Andres Precedo Ledo, himself directly linked to the presidency of the regional government (the Xunta).
A stabilised partnership

French and Spanish regions do not only delimit new territories for local development but they also organise economic and political local actors around this challenge. Regional administrations institutionalise a partnership with local actors. If the degrees of institutionalisation of this partnership vary among the regions, two constant elements compose it: administrative structures and development agents.

In Brittany, the policy implemented by the regional council is the least institutionalised. The PRAT program is based on the great density level of inter-communal structures and economic development agencies at the local which have been diffused co-operation norms since the 1960s (Allain and Baudelle 1995). In each territory the regional council is associated with a partner structure which implement local development project. It can be an association (the GALCOB in the west centre Brittany), an urban district (county of Lorient in the south of Brittany) an inter-communal structure or a local development agency (territory of Lannion in the north west of Brittany). Moreover, the regional council imposed the shaping of informal structures, named “local comities of co-ordination”, which group local politicians and local socio-economic representatives. One regional councillor manages these committees. In Galicy the policy is more institutionalised. The SDC created county foundations (fundaciones comarcales) in each comarca. In these foundations, the director organ is composed of one regional deputy, one provincial deputy, all the mayors of the comarca, one representative of the SDC and socio-economic representatives. Last, a development agent is charged to implement the development project of the comarca. In 1998, 26 county foundations had been already created (Barreiro Rivas 1997; Precedo Ledo 1997)
The last common policy principle is the development project. All regional territorial policies have the same objective, the struggle against territorial economic inequalities. To realise this aim, regional institutions do not use sectoral programmes but a global strategy of development. With this principle of project development, regional institution try to give development tools to each territory in order for them to create territorial project communities. These territorial project communities seem to be able to generate endogenous development.

So, regional administrations and local actors jointly elaborate regional programmes of territorial planning in Brittany, the development charts of county in Centre, and the county development plans in Galicy. Each programme is based on a demographic and economic territorial balance from which development priorities emerge for a plurianual period. For a period of years, regional administrations leave policy sectoral logic to adopt project logic. Then, the flexibility of these programmes permits the actors to deal with differentiated problems. Each territory, each pays, each comarca by evaluating its own priorities, by shaping common interests tend to build new territorial communities.

2. Cognitive europeanisation and territorial governance in France and Spain

More broadly, these policies very influenced by the “European model” participate to the reshaping of territorial governance in the EU. They permit the regions to stabilise relations of co-operation with local actors organised into supra-communal spaces. However, in these two countries, these innovative policies produce institutional conflicts at two levels: at the regional level and at the central
level. These institutional conflicts reflect the transformations generated by the new territorial policies and the reshaping of national territorial organisations.

2.1 Innovating policies and Institutional conflicts

These new territorial policy principles create new frameworks of interactions, which participate in the “modernisation” of Local Government. Indeed, by institutionalising new territorial spaces, regional elites try to establish new relations between regional administrations and local actors and are transforming traditional territorial exchanges.

Regional political leaders who support these policies have similar characteristics. In Brittany, regional councillors who support these policies cross the left-right cleavage. They have the same political repertoires based on their socio-economic know-how and their capacity to control public policies at different levels: local, regional, national and European (Genieys et Smith 1998; Grémion et Muller 1990). They appear as the political elite of the new territorial governance in France and Spain. They are also regionalist that is to say they want to increase the regional political capacity. It is notably the case in Galicy where the regional government consists of the Galician popular party (PPG) it opposes to other sectors of this party who are attached to a territorial organisation bases on the province (Pasquier 2001). So, in our two regions, these policies produce sub-regional conflicts, which put in oppositions regional institutions and provincial institutions. The effect of these regional policies are all the more important because they interact with European policies. If the regional policies have been influenced by the European model of local development the new regional structures try now to catch European resources. Regional policies and European programs are in continuous interaction.

In France, the emergence of the pays produces conflicts between regional councils and provincial councils (conseils généraux). However, the intensity of
conflicts varies among regions. In Brittany, the local co-operation was already developed\textsuperscript{9} and general councils accept the regional council leadership in territorial policy. In contrast, in other region as Centre, the general councils have been opposed to the similar regional policy. In this region, the municipal fragmentation has always reinforced the territorial domination of the provincial council\textsuperscript{10}. 

In the same way, in Galicy, the regional organisation of counties represents a risk for the territorial domination of provincial councils (diputaciones provinciales). Provinces remain the main financiers of rural municipalities through provincial plans of equipment (Alvarez Corbacho 1995). As the county policy generates municipal regrouping and public rationalisation, this policy deeply transforms territorial exchanges and the role of provincial councils. So, even if this policy is one of the emblematic programs of the regional government, it will allow for some flexibility. Initially, this policy should have institutionalised the \textcopyright{comarca} as a new scale of public administration with legal status as in Catalonia (Cassasas 1993). But the regional government has been constrained to choose another solution under the pressures of the provincial councils and by some barons of the Galician popular party (PPG), that is to say the government party. The county development act recognises the \textcopyright{comarca} as an historic entity but does not give it any administrative existence. It is only a new space for local development and the co-ordination of local and regional programmes. This opposition between regional government and provinces continued during the delimitation of the \textcopyright{comarcas} because they did not respect some political territories. During the process of county's delimitation 49 \textcopyright{comarcas} were initially delimited by the SDC. However, the final result has been quite different with the officialization of the county map composed of 53 \textcopyright{comarcas}, because some political leaders forced to the regional administration that it respects their political territory.

\textsuperscript{9} It is in Brittany that the first community of municipalities was born in France (Nevers 1998).

\textsuperscript{10} In Centre, only 9% of the municipalities are integrated into inter-communal structures with their own taxation (EPCI) against 64% in Brittany, the national average being 31,4%.
2.2 Central regulations

Faced to these territorial changes, central administrations in France and Spain develop different strategies.

In France, the central administration is regulating the local and regional experiences by law. Indeed, since the beginning of the Fifth Republic, some French politicians and high ranking civil servants would like to transform the French territorial administration at two levels, the regional level and the county level, both by eliminating provinces and regrouping municipalities (Le Lidec 1997). The regionalization referendum in 1969 and the municipal fusion law in 1971 were the first such attempts (Novarina and Martin 1988). So, as it was very difficult to reform the administrative map with voluntary acts, the French central administration prefers now to create gradually co-operation tools, which have already been experimented at the regional level. The central government is trying to use these new territories to promote a long-term administrative reshaping of territorial organisation. The aim is gradually make municipal amalgamation and to have a better balance between administrative territory, economic space and public policy (Commissariat général au Plan 1993; DATAR 1996).

Since the beginning of the 1990s several Acts have been voted in this way11. The LADDT act, named Voynet’s Act regionalized the emergence of the pays. A regional conference of territorial planning composed by State administration representatives and regional councillors is tasked with controlling the formation of the “pays” (Leurquin 1999). Moreover, regional councils and the central government co-financed the building of county and agglomerations structures through the 2000-2006 State-region planning (Contrat de plan État-régions). In

---

11 The Regional and Territorial Administration Act in 1992 (loi ATR), the Regional Planning Act in 1995 (loi d’orientation sur l’aménagement du territoire LOADT) and in 1999 (loi d’orientation sur l’aménagement durable du territoire). The debates of each law have shown the opposition between politicians who are in favour of inter and supra-communal co-operation and those who are status quo followers (Le Saout 1997).
Brittany, the regional council and the central administration co-finance the institutionalisation of the pays respectively with 60 millions euros.

In Spain, the central administration strategy has been completely different. The central government has not accepted the regionalization of local government and the territorial organisation. For this reason, the central government is promoting a new reform, the Local Pact (Pacto local). Negotiated in 1997-1998 between the central government and the Spanish federation of municipalities and provinces (Federación española de los municipios y de las provincias FEMP), this reform aims to bring back into balance the relations between Autonomous Communities and Municipalities¹² (Rodriguez Alvarez 1999). In April 1999, several Acts have been voted in order to empower municipalities and provincial councils: reinforcing of mayor role; constitutional possibility for local governments to preserve their autonomy; and delegation of some competencies from to the State to local governments.

However, the future of the Local Pact depends on Autonomous Communities. Indeed, they have the majority of competencies, which could be devolved to local governments. So, the central government objective is the conclusion of Local Pacts in each Autonomous Community. As in many public sectors in Spain, the regulation by political parties is very strong (Pasquier 1999). All depends on the capacity of central politics parties the Socialist party (PSOE) and the Popular party (PP) to impose the Local Pact on political regional agendas. This process varies among regional configurations and the permeability of regional political agendas to national stakes. For instance, in Galicy, the regional government tried to transform the Local Pact. The regional administration tends to limit the devolution of competencies to municipalities and to empower through

¹² In 1998, Spanish local administration (municipalities and provinces) expenditures amounted to 13.6% of all public expenditure against 26.1% for autonomous communities.
these negotiations the shaping of urban counties. The regional government aim is to always control the local development policies.

**Conclusion**

From a comparative study of territorial policies in French and Spanish regions, I analysed in this paper how the cognitive europeanisation of local development policies affect the territorial governance in these two countries. Through varied logics of learning, the “European model” of local development give to regional actors new cognitive resources to structure new territorial spaces for local development. These spaces, the “pays” in France and the “comarca” in Spain, really produced innovating practices in the territorial governance. If the territorial policy styles remain clearly different in France an Spain, the main consequence of this cognitive processes is the emergence of a similar level of local development in these two countries. So, the migration of norms, values and cultures of governance from EU-level to local and regional levels could be a key variable to better understand the transformations of territorial governance in Europe.

**REFERENCES**


**Alvarez Corbacho X.,** 1995, La agonia del municipalismo gallego, Santiago, Fundacion Caixa Galicia.


DATAR, 1977, Politique des contrats de pays, Paris, La Documentation française.


