REGIONALISATION VIA EU MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE AND TERRITORIAL COHESION:

Path Dependency and Institutional Change in the Western-Mediterranean Islands of Corsica and Sardinia

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Abstract

This thesis looks at the definition and diffusion within the EU of a new model of policy-making and implementation based on regions acting within a multilevel system of governance. The focus of the empirical research is on INTERREG, an experimental Community Initiative that has promoted interregional cooperation across national borders. This thesis argues that INTERREG represents a particularly coherent case of the EU's approach to regional planning and territorial development: in fact, it extends multilevel governance to interregional partnerships defined beyond national borders and adds a territorial dimension to the goal of socio-economic cohesion. Since 1990, when INTERREG was first launched, territorial cooperation has become increasingly relevant to EU Regional Policy (and in the accession of new Member States) until when, in 2007, it was mainstreamed as one of the three new priority objectives of the policy. Drawing evidence from the implementation of INTERREG in the 'islands' programme between the regions of Corsica (FR) and Sardinia (I) from 1990 until 2005, this thesis shows how the process of administrative capacity and institution building promoted by the European Commission at the subnational level has gradually empowered regional actors to take responsibility for the planning and management of strategies for sustainable development of their territories. Although lacking the traditions of interregional cooperation and sharing a past of dependency on their respective central governments in development planning, regional actors have gradually adopted and learned to incorporate the cooperative logic of the EU model proposed by the programme and extended it to other policy domains. However, the potential of interregional cross-border cooperation in terms of enhancing territorial cohesion appears to be limited by the persistent peripherality of the islands and their wider territorial setting (the Western-Mediterranean), prompting the need for a wide-ranging spatial strategy capable of coordinating EU policies.

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ARC: *Action Régionaliste Corse* (later renamed *Azzione per a Rinascita Corsa*, Regional Corsican Action movement)

CAP: *Common Agricultural Policy*

CEDIC: *Centre d'Etudes et de Défense de la Corse* (Center for the Studies and the Defence of Corsica)

CES: *Conseil Economique et Sociale* (Economic and Social Council of the CTC)

CIs: *Community Initiatives*

CIP: *Community Initiative Programme*

CGP: *Commissariat Général du Plan* (French National Planning Centre)

CODER: *Comité de Développement Economique Régionale* (Commission of Economic Planning for French Regions)

CODEC: *Comité de Développement Economique de la Corse* (Commission of Economic Planning for the Region of Corsica)

CoR: *Committee of the Regions*

COREPA: *Comité Régional de Programmation d'Aides* (French Committee of Regional Funds Planning)

CPER: *Contrats de plan Etat-Région* (state-region Development Planning Agreements in France)

CRP: *Centro Regionale di Programmazione* (Planning Centre of the RAS)

CRPM: *Conférence des Régions Périphériques et Maritimes* (Conference of the Peripheral and Maritime Regions of the EU)

CSF: *Community Support Framework*

CTC: *Collectivité Territoriale Corse* (Corsican Regional Government)

DATAR: *Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale* (State Agency for Territorial Planning and Regional Policy in France)

DC: *Democrazia Cristiana* (Italian Christian Democratic Party)

DG REGIO: *Directorate General for Regional Policy* at the EC

EAGGF: *European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund*

EC: *European Commission*

EIB: *European Investment Bank*

ERDF: *European Regional Development Fund*

ENA: *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* (State School for Administrators in France)

ESDP: *European Spatial Development Perspective*

ESF: *European Social Fund*

EU: *European Union (European Economic Community, European Community)*

EURIMED: *European Islands of the Mediterranean*

FLCN: *Front de Libération Nationale Corse* (Corsican Front of National Liberation)

FPLC: *Fronte Paesanu Corsu di Liberazioni* (Corsican Paesant Front for the Liberation)

FRANCIA: *Front d'Action Nouvelle Contre l'Indépendance et l'Autonomisme* (Front of New Action Against Indepdence and Autonomy)

FRC: *Front Régionaliste Corse* (Corsican Regional Front, reuniting CEDIC and UCA)

GDP: *Gross Domestic Product*

HI: *Historical Institutionalism*

IG: *Intergovernmentalism*

IMEDOC: *Iles de la Méditerranée Occidentale* (Islands of the Western-Mediterranean, regional lobby later renamed EURIMED)

IMP: *International Maritime Park*

IMPs: *Integrated Mediterranean Programmes*

INSEE: Institute *Nationale de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques* (French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies)

INTERREG: *CI for Interregional Cooperation*

IR: *International Relations*

ISTAT: *Istituto Nazionale di Statistica* (Italian National Institute for Statistics)

MC: *Monitoring Committee*

MEDOCC: *Mediterranée Occidentale* (Western-Mediterranean)

MRU: *Ministère de la Reconstruction et de l'Urbanisme* (French Ministry for Reconstruction and Urbanisation)

MRG: *Mouvement des Radicaux de Gauche* (French Left Radical Party)

MS: *Member State* of the EU

OECD: *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development*

OP: *Operative programme*

PACA: *Provence-Côte d'Azur*

PCI: *Partito Comunista Italiano* (Italian Communist Party)

PDS: *Partito Democratico della Sinistra* (Italian Democratic Party of the Left)

PPC: *Partitu di u Populu Corsu* (Corsican People's Party)

PSd'Az: *Partito Sardo d'Azione* (Sardinian Action Party)

PSF: *Parti Socialiste Français* (French Socialist Party)

PSI: *Partito Socialista Italiano* (Italian Socialist party)

RAS: *Regione Autonoma della Sardegna* (Sardinian Regional Government)

RPR: *Rassemblement pour la République* (Assemblage for the Republic, French Right-Wing Party)

SEA: *Single European Act* (1986)

SEC: *European Social and Economic Committee*

SETCO: *Société pour l'Equipement Touristique de la Corse* (Agency for the Development of Tourism Infrastructure in Corsica)

SFs: *Structural Funds*

SGAR: *Secrétariat Général pour les Affaires Régionales* (General Secretariat for Regional Affairs, at French Prefectures)

SGAC: *Secrétariat Général pour les Affaires de la Corse* (General secretariat for Regional Affairs, at the Prefecture in Corsica)

SMEs: *Small and Medium Enterprises*

SOMIVAC: *Société pour la Mise en Valeur de la Corse* (Agency for the Enhancement of Development in Corsica)

SVIMEZ: *Associazione per lo Sviluppo dell'Industria nel Mezzogiorno* (Agency for the Industrial Development of Southern Italy)

TENs: *Trans-European Networks*

TEU: *Treaty of the European Union* (Treaty of the EU, signed in Maastricht in 1993)

TR: *Treaty of Rome* (Treaty of the EU, signed in Rome in 1957)

TA: *Treaty of Amsterdam* (Treaty of the EU, signed in Amsterdam in 1997)

UCA: *Union Corse de l'Avenir* (Corsican Union for the Future)

UDF: *Union pour la Démocratie Française* (Union for French Democracy, French Centrist Party)

UPC: *Unione di u Populu Corsu* (Union of the Corsican People)

US: *United States* (of America)

WW2: *World War II*

Introduction

At large, this thesis engages in the ongoing debate on the gradual emergence of post-national institutional frameworks for the organization of contemporary societies. One of the main tenets of modernity has been the political organization of societies in nation-states, formally defined as territorial units externally separated by fixed borders and internally organized according to a centralized and hierarchical regulative structure. Over the last decades this tenet has been challenged by several processes, streaming under the label of globalization, showing an increased interconnectedness of economic, social and political processes beyond the national level, challenging the exclusiveness of state regulative powers, and asking for an internal reorganization of its institutions, in order to meet the requirements and face the challenges of a new era.

Several authors have associated with these changes the process of integration of the European Union (EU)[1], considered as "an extraordinary political experiment" (Pierson 1998: 27) to test mechanisms and strategies for the reorganization of contemporary societies facing this epochal transformation. Particularly since the last three decades, they have identified an emergent European framework (often referred to as *multilevel governance*) where territory is organized according to flexible structures designing variable geometries and decision-making is shared beyond national borders across various levels of government and socio-economic actors (Marks, Hooghe *et al.* 1996: 342). One of the primary fields where this occurrence has been detected is in the EU's Regional Policy[2], aimed at promoting the harmonious development of the European territory through the reduction of disparities between different regions[3]. At a lower level of analysis, this thesis considers the ongoing shift, proposed by EU Regional Policy, from the consideration of regions as part of centralized nation-states, to one as

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[1] For the sake of simplicity, I shall use throughout the thesis the acronym 'EU' for 'European Union' (officially agreed since 1993 in the Maastricht Treaty) also to to refer to the names previously assumed from its establishment in 1957 with the Rome Treaty (European Economic Community, European Community), remaining aware of the fact that, in the strictest sense, when looking into issues related to the 'first pillar' of the EU, the more accurate term would be 'European Community'.

[2] After the 1988 reform of the Structural Funds 'EU Regional Policy' has also been called 'Cohesion Policy'. Some authors prefer to use exclusively the latter expression to indicate the relevance of the cohesion objective in the policy (see Leonardi 2005). While sharing this consideration, I found it preferable for the aim of this thesis (comparing the shift in regional policies' paradigm from the 'national model' to the 'EU model') to use the expression 'EU Regional Policy', which (if not otherwise stated) is thus used as synonymous with 'Cohesion policy'.

[3] "In order to promote its overall harmonious development, the Community shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic and social cohesion. In particular, the Community shall aim at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least-favoured regions, including rural areas" (SEA, title V: Economic and social cohesion, article 130a).

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active territorial subjects of networked societies in Europe within the reality of a Single European market that has eliminated borders as impediments to the free flow of goods, services, people, and capital.

Since the end of the Second World War most Western European states have identified regions[4] as the proper territorial level for policy analysis and implementation within the national territory, both to solve specific restructuring and developmental problems and redress the situation in disadvantaged and peripheral areas on the basis of the principle of national solidarity. The economic rationale inspiring many of those policies was linked to the Fordist industrialisation paradigm and to modernization theories. This was the case of the 'poles of development theory', providing for the setting of industrial poles in peripheral areas in the belief that the way to their economic take-off proceeded through an industrial stage of development (Perroux 1955). Regionalisation was mainly considered (when not in formal terms, in practice) as functional to national economic development: 'top-down' planning was passed to central government bureaucrats, in the belief that they possessed the information and technical expertise necessary to select areas and interventions and to coordinate policy implementation in the periphery.

During the 1970s, following economic recession and 'stagflation', the need on the part of central governments to cut back on public expenditure in order to control the rise of inflation brought about a retrenchment of policies for backward areas, as well as other welfare measures. In the 1980s, under the influence of New Right prescriptions of 'rolling back the state', governments started to undertake policies of economic liberalisation, deregulation, and privatization. The dynamism of some subnational areas caught the attention of scholars, who identified the key to their economic success in the adaptation of endogenous resources to technological changes and the organization of production through flexible cooperative networks among local SMEs (Bagnasco 1977; Piore and Sabel 1984; Becattini 1987; Brusco 1982; Pyke et al. 1990). This led to the definition of a new developmental model, largely in contrast to the previous one: promoting a 'bottom-up' cooperative approach between networked actors, putting emphasis on the role of local actors and immaterial resources (such as knowledge,

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[4] Early theories of European integration (Haas 1970) used the term 'region' to refer to a supranational area made of several states (for example Western Europe or the Middle East). However, in European studies today the term is almost exclusively associated with "territorial entities below the level of the nation-state" and, as we shall see, "sometimes crossing nation-state boundaries" (Keating and Loughlin 1997, p. 2). The shift to the second interpretation of the term is mainly attributable to the to the growing relevance of EU Regional Policy in the process of European integration (Bachtler 1997, p. 83).

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learning, innovation, social capital) set in an increasingly competitive international context, rather than within national borders.

The new developmental paradigm inspired the 1988 reform of EU Regional Policy, which before was limited in size and scope in the development of backward areas chosen and administrated by national govenments' management. Before 1989, for interventions aimed to regional development "[e]ssentially, the European Commission wrote a cheque and the individual state executives cashed it. How the money was spent, and who was involved, was basically left to the state executive's discretion" (Hooghe 1996: 2). On the heels of the ratification of the Single European Act, 'socio-economic cohesion' became the overall objective of the new Regional Policy (or, since then, referred to as the Cohesion Policy), which established itself as one of the most relevant European policies in terms of budget, territorial pervasiveness, and as a paradigmatic case of EU governance (Kohler-Koch 2002: 5). In the new policy the language of subsidies is abandoned for one of incentives focused on the goals of equal opportunity - i.e., providing equal access to public resources and socio-economic opportunity - and the efficient use of public resources to achieve development and growth, while regional and local authorities are recognised as crucial actors in the partnership structure managing the policy as a cooperative collective endeavour (as required by the multilevel governance approach) and responsible for implementation at regional level (following the principle of subsidiarity). This leads to a focus on the quality of the regional socio-institutional context where policies are implemented as a crucial ingredient to their success.

However, the positive view on the possibilities for institutional change and territorial development of backward regions posited by EU Regional Policy is not unanimously shared. Some scholars have argued that the effectiveness of institutional reforms is interrelated to the 'goodness of fit' between the new formal rules and the informal norms and values prevailing in a given context (Risse *et al.* 2001). In fact, the benefits presented by the adoption of the/ new institutional setting may not outweigh the transactions costs necessary for the actors to shift from their *status quo*. Resistance to change seems particularly strong in those areas that share a long-lasting tradition of peripherality and backwardness. A seminal research investigating the reasons behind persistent underdevelopment of regions in Southern Italy has pointed to the lack of cooperative culture in the area, explaining the low institutional performance of its regional administrations (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti 1993). Within the debate on European integration, arguments on the so-called 'Mediterranean Syndrome' or

'Southern Problem' have been used to explain the deficiencies of political and administrative performance of Southern European MS in complying with EU regulations, ascribed to a civic culture inclined to individualism, clientelism, and corruption (LaSpina and Sciortino 1993: 219).

A different view is held by other scholars, also investigating on the links between cooperative behaviour and institutional performance, arguing that cooperative behaviour does not only derive from 'shadow of the past' mechanisms (as in the case of civic traditions), but can also be promoted through the establishment of specific social frameworks used as mechanisms of coordination of individual actors' beliefs and from the shedding of a 'shadow of the future' over their interaction (Ostrom 1990; Trigilia 1995; Cersosimo and Donzelli 2000). As a consequence, policies which make use of frameworks designed in order to promote cooperation among actors involved in policy implementation may offer a way toward cooperation for actors embedded in socio-institutional systems locking them into paths of backwardness and peripherality.

It is the aim of this thesis to verify this second hypothesis, both at the theoretical and empirical level, as embodied in EU Regional Policy. Public policies can in fact be considered as social institutions, i.e. codes of conduct that include rules, structures and social practices, which both constrain and empower actors' behaviour by defining paradigms and networks of meaning within which they can operate (Gualmini 1998: 173; Regonini 1998). The focus will be on one of EU's Community Initiatives (CIs), i.e. innovative regional policies experimenting with new approaches to development, mainstreamed when successful. Launched in the early 1990s, INTERREG has always been given a high priority by receiving the largest share of resources allocated for Community Initiatives. From the beginning, it represented an attempt to introduce an 'innovation within an innovation', in that regions were encouraged to define their own geographic socio-economic space as if they were a single European actor managing the development of their combined territory, irrespective of what national boundaries had done in the carving up of the European territory. This vision had the goal of 'denationalising' the European territory: in that it challenges the concept of national boundaries, INTERREG strengthens the relevance of an area-based approach, rejects the imposition of a 'top-down' central national strategy and places responsibility for programme development and management with regional and local actors acting in a cooperative manner. In so doing, it attempts to go beyond the confines of national boundaries and reorganize regional economies according to coherent socio-economic areas reflecting the morphological character of the European geographic space rather

than the reiteration of national divides. The initiative was reiterated three times during the three planning periods between 1990 and 2006 and its growing relevance within EU Regional Policy culminated in the mainstreaming of the approach as one of the three priority objectives for the 2007–2013 planning period, thereby representing the attempt to go beyond national boundaries in the search of a rational reorganization of European territorial and economic space.

The empirical research focuses on the way two regional actors - i.e., Sardinia and Corsica - conceptualised and implemented this new approach in breaking out of the confines of a centralized national policy paradigm and seeking new opportunities within the ever-expanding European Union. Two main innovations introduced by the EU model, and particularly underlined by INTERREG, will be considered: the 'bottom-up' definition of interregional strategies within a territorial European context, and the structuring of power relations according to an extended multilevel partnership, enhancing the regional level in respect of subsidiarity. The focus on these two dimensions is justified by the fact that territory and power can be considered as 'trans-historical' social constructs, always present in the organization of societies, but varying over time and space in combinations that assume a specific shape and content during particular historical phases (Sassen 2006: 4). Social life, in fact, takes place within territories defined at the material and symbolic level according to a complex system of formal and informal norms, representational and ideational discourses structuring power relations at different territorial levels. However, the way in which territories and power are defined and represented shapes in turn the subjectivities of the actors and the spatial horizons within which their lives are set.

Have the regional actors administering the policy learned to act according to the 'EU model' of territorial relations and decision-making proposed by INTERREG, or do they continue to define their behaviour and strategies in terms of the nationalised pattern? What are the main reasons behind their response? The answers to these research questions will build upon a conceptual framework based on theories studying the impact of European integration in terms of processes of institutionalisation and legitimisation. As the first chapters of the thesis will clarify, these theories offer a multifaceted and dynamic approach to the study of European integration, moving away from early interpretations positing the EU as either prisoner or executioner of the nation-states regime. In fact, they allow the consideration of European integration not only as a formal process proceeding via 'grand bargains' between governments affecting the institutional frameworks of the Member States (MSs), but also at an

informal level, through the implementation of public policies defining rules, procedures, ideas and values that influence the practice of actors involved in the process. However, from the view of the thesis, Europeanisation has to be seen bi-directionally, in that it comprehends both the ways in which organizational fields are framed and progressively established at the EU level, and the ways in which those organizational fields are gradually incorporated into social contexts, traditionally autonomously regulating their political, economic, and cultural spheres. Europeanisation is thus not considered here as a linear process proceeding for inevitable stages of development explainable by simple models of causation: it is a complex and multidimensional process which involves several variables (Radaelli and Franchino 2004; Featherstone and Kazamias 2001). Thus the extent of its impact remains a matter to be investigated and evaluated through empirical analysis and in-depth research conducted in the different socio-institutional contexts engaged in the process, rather than to be assumed or deduced from abstract theoretical constructs.

Empirical studies on Europeanisation processes have looked extensively at the impact of EU Regional Policy in the reorganization of territorial relations, but mainly through the analysis of the implementation of mainstream programmes within a framework considering variations occurring within bilateral EU–MSs relations (Ladrech 1994; Boerzel 2001; Giuliani 2001; Gualini 2005). In these studies research on subnational units is mainly considered as a case study of the wider national context, often aiming for a comparison with other subnational units considered as representative of their respective national case. This approach, taking the nation state as the main research unit, makes it harder to appreciate the specificity of regional responses to EU policy, especially in the case of Member States territorially diversified internally. In fact, this underestimates the role played by other contextual factors specific to subnational territories, such as their geographical setting, cultural traditions, socio-economic conditions, in shaping regional response to EU action. This is particularly detrimental in the study of the impact of experimental EU regional programmes explicitly aiming to 'de-nationalise' regions in order to adopt novel approaches to territorial development.

As thoroughly explained in the methodological chapter, the present research has been specifically designed to contribute to filling this gap in the debate on Europeanisation. In fact the analysis of over ten years of implementation of INTERREG, a new EU policy for the development of regions belonging to different Member States, in Corsica and Sardinia will focus on the specificity of the response of

regional partners to the innovation. This perspective does not aim to posit an 'end of the State' scenario leading to a 'Europe of the Regions'. Rather, it builds on a historical-institutionalist approach considering the process of redefinition of present territorial structures and power relations as tied to the past institutional settings. The deliberate focus of the research on regional response to the European policy (starting with the oversight of any reference to the national level in the title) is here better interpreted as an analytical exercise directed to understanding the territories beyond that 'national paradigm' normalized throughout our cognitive experiences and within the conceptual frameworks of the social sciences.

Because, as acknowledged in the theoretical chapters, the 'new' is deeply imbricated with the 'old' (Sassen 2006: 4), the evaluation of regional response to the EU's policy is preceded by an analytical history of the main development policies implemented in the regions within the national paradigm since the end of World War Two. Our aim in adopting a historical approach to the study of institutions is not to use history to trace evolutionary paths of dependency, but to develop a deeper understanding of present openings and lockings in front of periods of change.

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Plan of the thesis

The thesis is divided into three sections, which can be broadly differentiated for being respectively theoretical, historical and empirical in character.

The *first section* frames – through a critical review of the pertinent literature – the theoretical and methodological background supporting the research. *Chapter one* argues in favour of a historical approach to the study of institutions. Recognising that 'history matters' in processes of institutional change does not lead us to a deterministic account of social causation. Conversely, it will allow us to identify those moments of substantial change allowing actors to orient their strategies according a logic considered as more appropriate or convenient. Deterministic explanations are also rejected when exploring the role of social networks in promoting cooperative behaviour: social capital resources, it is argued, are not only the result of the 'shadow of past' mechanisms (as in the case of civic traditions) and their creation can be also enhanced by the establishment of specific social frameworks used as mechanisms of coordination. *Chapter two* adopts the historical approach to consider the evolution of European integration and the definition of EU Regional Policy. Early studies on European integration were set within an analytical framework based on 'state-centric' models, interpreting the process as a sign of the demise or resilience of the nation-state system. From the same perspective the breadth of regionalisation processes promoted by EU Regional Policy was either read as a sign of the advent of a 'Europe of the Regions' or the confirmation of a 'Europe of the States'. Building on the historical institutionalist approach, the evolution of EU integration and the definition of EU Regional Policy is here set within a picture of transformation of the organization of power and territorial relations in Western societies considered over time. From this view, European integration is seen as proceeding not only via periodic intergovernmental 'grand bargains', but also creeping through the implementation of policies, defining rules, procedures, and ideas influencing the practice of the actors involved. Likewise EU Regional Policy is seen as an organizational field gradually framed and defined at the EU level and progressively transferred to different social contexts at the subnational level. Crucial for this transfer in diffusing the 'EU model', it will be argued, is the use of structures of multilevel governance functioning as 'transmission belts' for institutional change. Based on the involvement in cooperative practices of multi-actor constellations, those structures allow a better coordination of collective action at different territorial levels and, in showing the partners the long term advantages of cooperation, prompt the launching of new learning processes that are produced by their previous interactions. *Chapter three*

discusses the methodological choices of the research in light of the theoretical assumptions justifying the research design: the case study, the units of analysis, and the research design.

The *second section* traces the evolution, from the end of WW2, of the regionalisation processes through the implementation in Corsica (*chapter four*) and Sardinia (*chapter five*) of regional policies defined by the respective national governments in France and Italy. The main focus will be on the organization of territorial and power relations between the regions and their central states, as traced from the analysis of the evolution of regional development policies. The policies were mainly influenced by contemporary economic theories on exogenous growth, prescribing the location in backward areas of industrial firms capable of allowing the regions to integrate themselves into the national economy, and permit their firms to compete with other firms in the country's more core areas. Although since the end of the 1950s alternative approaches to the islands' development have emerged (defined through integrated and spatially balanced territorial policies), at that time they were not supported by the normative and organizational logic prevalent in the definition of state-society relations. In fact the 'national model' prevalently organized Western societies according to a centralized and hierarchical regulative structure, which also contributed to the shaping of the organization of economic processes, political and administrative life, and territorial relations. Thus also in the definition of regional policies, central governments' role as gatekeepers of state power, as well as their mistrust of the potential for differentiation of the socio-cultural and institutional potential of the two island regions, amounted to the fact that – even when formally authorised – they were practically denied the role of autonomous actors responsible for the development of their own territories. Rather, they were force-fed state subsidies, as a sort of side payment to compensate for their peripheral and disadvantaged role within the national political and economic structure. However, since the 1980s and 1990s signs of a transition to a different model organizing state-society relations started to emerge, as was also reflected in the definition of regional policies and regionalisation processes within member states, as well as within the European Union context.

The *third section* is dedicated to the definition of regional policy and regionalisation in Corsica and Sardinia according to the 'European model'. *Chapter six* considers, at length, the history of the ten years of implementation of INTERREG, an EU policy promoting territorial cooperation between the two island regions according to an extended version of multilevel governance. The main focus of the analysis

concentrates on the specificity of the response offered by regional actors to the model proposed by the policy, considering Corsica and Sardinia as distinctive territorial actors rather than agents of their respective nation state. From the theoretical perspective offered by historical institutionalism, the analysis will consider changes occurring in the role played by the partners involved in the definition of their territorial strategies and in the methods and criteria used to manage the programme, by tracing the evolution of the three editions (1990–93, 1994–99 and 2000–2006) of the Sardinia–Corsica 'islands' INTERREG programme. The findings show that processes of institutional change (such as building interregional cooperation, learning more effective policy management, shifting to a consideration of integrated development) for regional actors that were embedded in a very different model (based on territorial isolation, dependency relations with centralised state structures, bureaucratic practices, sectoral development policies) does take time to emerge, but when it finally appears it becomes a practicable path to pursue in the harmonious development of regional development policies between the two regions. In this respect, the contribution of policies adopting specific social frameworks to enhance processes of administrative capacity and institution building is gauged as a necessary – although not sufficient – means to promote self-sustaining development processes in backward areas.

The *seventh chapter* concludes the thesis by summarising and briefly discussing the contribution of the research findings at both the theoretical and operational level and suggests points that deserve further investigation.

SECTION I

Global change and Europeanisation:

redefining power and territorial relations via EU Regional Policy

Territory and power can be considered as permanent features defining the organization of societies; however, as social constructs, they vary over time and space. One of the main tenets of modern Western societies is the political organization in nation states, territorial units separated by external borders and, traditionally, internally organized according to centralised regulative and hierarchical structures. During the last decades this organization of territorial and power relations was challenged by the increasing relevance of processes related to globalisation, showing an increased interconnection of economic, social and political processes beyond the national level and asking for a reorganization of social institutions in order to face those changes. This thesis sets EU integration within the wider context of the transformation of contemporary Western societies, and considers its contribution to the definition of alternative post-national institutional frameworks. In fact, since the end of the 1980s, a new model for organizing territorial actors according to networks of cooperative relations emerged in different fields relating to European integration, and especially in the definition and implementation of a renewed EU Regional Policy.

However, before empirically investigating the influence of the 'EU model' on previously nationally defined territorial settings, we need to assert our theoretical position on one of the basic concerns of the social sciences, namely that of the relationship between actors and institutions, and see how it applies to the study of Europeanisation processes. Therefore, in this section the first chapter, after having considered the main theoretical perspectives on the study of institutional change, will argue in favour of a historical approach; the second chapter will use this approach to interpret the evolution of European integration and EU Regional Policy and define the features of the 'EU model' of organizing territorial and power relations; while the third chapter will explain the methodological choices made in the light of theoretical assumptions, in order to operationalise the research.

Chapter 1: Between path dependency and institutional change

How do we interpret institutional development: as a result of a deliberate design of the actors or as a process shaped by the institutional settings adopted in the past? Is the

actors' participation in institutional life and social interaction a voluntary act derived from the calculation of self-interest or an obligatory form of behaviour dictated by social control and in line with role-expectations?

The answers to these questions vary according to the different definitions of institutions and social actors adopted by scholars. In this chapter I will first discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the main theoretical approaches to this issue, explain why the approach I have chosen seems to be the most suitable for the research task, and indicate in what ways it contributes to the framing of empirical expectations concerning my research.

Institutions from opposite standpoints: the neo-institutionalist debate

The revival of institutional studies in social sciences emerged in the late 1970s as a reaction to the supremacy of the behavioural approach during the 1960s and 70s (especially in the US) to explain political behaviour and outputs. In its attempt to apply to social sciences quantitative research methods of scientific disciplines, behavioralism managed to draw more attention to intellectual precision, quantification, and the development of empirically grounded generalisations. However, following a well-known 'iron cage' destiny (Weber 1958), the means often became an end in itself. In this way the systemic approach to the study of societies and political systems, which had been developed to improve the quantitative and comparative potentials of analysis (Parsons 1951, Easton 1953), resulted in the tendency to view institutional features as fixed and neutral, and reduced collective action to the sum of individual choices.

What unites authors of the neo-institutionalist approach is their "common scepticism toward atomistic accounts of social processes" (Powell and DiMaggio 1991: 3). However, common scepticism has been expressed quite differently, in terms of theoretical assumptions and empirical applications. Hall and Taylor distinguish two main analytical approaches, interpreting the relationship between institutions and social agency as a 'calculus' and a 'cultural' one:

Central to any institutional analysis is the question: how do institutions affect the behaviour of individuals? (...) In broad terms, new institutionalists provide two kinds of responses to this question, which might be termed the 'calculus approach' and the 'cultural approach' respectively. Each gives slightly different answers to three seminal questions: how do actors behave, what do institutions do, and why do institutions persist over time?
(Hall and Taylor 1996: 7)

Both approaches "observe that institutions affect action by structuring expectations about what others will do" (Hall and Taylor 1996: 7). However, while expectations for the calculus approach are shaped by what seems 'instrumentally rational' on the part of the actor, for the cultural approach they are shaped by what should seem 'socially appropriate' to the actor. The calculus approach can be related to Rational Choice Theory (RCT),[5] maintaining that our every-day problems can be reduced in their essential components to an abstract decision game, solved when the player chooses the best option within a given set of alternatives. The analogy requires some assumptions: game theoretic models posit that players are wealth-maximising actors, in possession of sufficient information to evaluate correctly the alternative choices and follow the logic of instrumental rationality (looking for the best means to achieve desired ends). Early RCT studies showed that a non-cooperative behaviour is the most rational for the individual players, even when they would have been better off cooperating (as exemplified in a well-known series of dilemmas, such as the tragedy of the commons, the battle of the sexes, the chicken game, or the prisoner's dilemma).

The detection of the irreconcilability of a wealth-maximising behaviour with social co-operative outcomes suggested a "discouraging perspective on the problems of human co-operation and co-ordination" (North 1990: 13). However, since the publication of Robert Axelrod's *The Evolution of Cooperation* in 1984, the interest of game theorists has shifted from the static analysis of a two-person/zero-sum game, to the definition of the situations in which cooperation is easier to achieve, and those in which it is difficult to sustain. Cooperation was easier to achieve when "the play is repeated, when they [the wealth-maximising actors] possess complete information about the other players' past performance, and when there are a small numbers of players".[6]

Following those developments, the calculus approach to the study of institutions suggests that "what prevents the actor from taking a collectively-superior course of action is the absence of institutional arrangements that would guarantee complementary behaviour by others" (Hall and Taylor 1996: 7).[7] Institutions provide the individual with mechanisms (such as information, enforcement mechanisms, penalties for defection) in

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[5] In *The Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour* (1944) Von Neumann and Morgenstern suggested the application of mathematical game theory to explain economic behaviour. Since then, RCT has been applied to different fields of social sciences, but especially to economics and political science (see Moe 1984; Brennan and Buchanan 1985; Schepsle 1989).

[6] In his book Axelrod found that "the winning strategy under these conditions of continuously repeated plays is a strategy of tit-for-tat, one in which a player responds in kind to the action of the other player", Axelrod (1984), p.13.

[7] A course of action is said to be collectively-superior – or collectively optimal – when no other action whose outcome would make at least one of the actors better off – without making the others worse off – can be found.

a context of repeated interactions that allow that person to have a certain level of certainty about others' behaviour and to take this into account in their own calculations. The instrumental consideration of collective action, in which the individual participates because they are moved by self-interest, is linked to the utilitarian assumptions of the approach that tries to avoid any normative prejudice: what explains the choice between alternative institutional equilibria is a 'logic of effectiveness'. The survival of inefficient institutions is thus explained in terms of second-best convenience: "individuals adhere to these patterns of behaviour because deviation will make the individual worse off than will adherence" (Hall and Taylor 1996: 8).

Opposite to RCI's position is the so-called 'cultural' approach – identifiable with Sociological Institutionalism (SI).[8] In contrast with the calculus approach, the cultural one maintains that actors' behaviour cannot be seen only in strategic terms, but rather as "deeply imbricated in a world of institutions, composed of symbols, scripts and routines" (Hall and Taylor 1996: 8). The individual's choice is dictated by his world view, his rationality is 'context-bound', and thus his behaviour is more a matter of interpretation than an instrumental calculation (Nee 1998: 8). The stress on the cognitive and cultural embeddedness of social action brings most SI authors to adopt a very broad definition of institutions, breaking down the conceptual divide between *institutions* and *culture*: institutions are not just "formal rules, procedures or norms, but the symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates that provide the 'frames of meaning' guiding human action" (Hall and Taylor 1996: 14). As a result, they are not neutral frameworks, but rather moral or cognitive templates that structure actors' identities, self-image and preferences. Under the cover of rationality and technical requirements, their formal structures and activities represent the myths and ceremonies of post-industrial societies, asking actors to follow a 'logic of social appropriateness' (Meyer and Rowan: 1983).

These arguments also provide an alternative explanation to that offered by RCT to the permanence of dysfunctional institutions: besides the fact that institutions "cannot readily be transformed by the actions of any one individual", there is the consideration that they have shaped the behaviour of individuals, who thus tend to take them for granted (Hall and Taylor 1996: 8). Moreover, institutions are created after a limited set of ideas and options borrowed from the existing world, selected according to the

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[8] This branch is sometimes also referred to as *Organizational Institutionalism* because it arose within the sub-field of organization theory, investigating why a specific set of institutional forms and procedures is adopted by organizations, and what explains their similarities through organizational fields or across nations.

prevailing cultural myths and moral values, rather than following abstract efficiency considerations apt to devise the technically better institutional solution (Powell and DiMaggio 1983). However, in asserting the relevance played by cultural factors and the diffusion of ideas in processes of institutionalisation, SI approaches the slippery slope of cultural determinism or relativism and its aporetic position over the critical assessment of cultures and the conditions to promote social change. How can we keep the best contributions offered by the two approaches to the study of institutions, while avoiding their main flaws?

Historical institutionalism and the *embeddedness* of social agency

The contrast between the calculus and cultural approaches to the study of institutions can be reconciled within a third theoretical position stressing the historical *embeddedness* of social processes: for Historical Institutionalism (HI) many of the implications of contemporary institutional arrangements are imbricated in past choices and thus institutions have to be studied as the result of a process which unfolds over time (Pierson 1998: 34, 29). Within the debate over agency set up by the two approaches, HI presents a kind of 'third way', searching to take into consideration important elements of both approaches (Hall and Taylor 1996: 10). On the one hand it acknowledges the importance given by the calculus approach to the role of human intentionality in the determination of institutional assets and the relevance of strategic considerations in social and political interaction. Although not entirely realistic, situations exemplified by RCT offer useful models for the analysis of decision-making processes and the impact they have in terms of institutional outcomes[9]. On the other hand HI is critical, along with the cultural approach, about an image of institutions as exclusively purposive and efficient mechanisms, and stresses the role played by irrationality and culture in institutional life:

It is necessary to dismantle the rationality assumption underlying economic theory in order to approach constructively the nature of human learning. History demonstrates that ideas, ideologies, myths, dogmas, and prejudices matter; and an understanding of the way they evolve is necessary for further progress in developing a framework to understand societal change. The rational choice framework assumes that individuals know what is in their self-interest and act accordingly. That may be correct for individuals making choices in the highly developed markets of modern economies, but it is patently false in making choices under conditions of

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[9] "The best of these [historical institutionalist] analyses already effect something of integration (...) by showing how historical actors select new institutions for instrumental purposes from a menu of alternatives that is made historically available through the mechanisms specified by sociological institutionalism", Hall and Taylor (1996), p.24.

uncertainty - the conditions that have characterised the political and economic choices that shaped (and continue to shape) historical change.
(North 1998: 250)

From this perspective, institutions can be defined as "the rules of the game in a society or (...) the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction. As a consequence they structure incentives in human exchange, whether political, social or economic" (North 1990: 3). Institutions "specify the limits of legitimate action in the way that rules of a game specify the structure within which players are free to pursue their strategic moves using pieces that have specific roles and positions" (Nee and Brinton 1998: 8). However, just as in games, they do not only include formal regulations, but also informal codes of conduct (North 1990: 3).[10]

In trying to identify what limits to individual action are determined by historical or culturally-specific features, HI looks for the "asymmetries of power associated with the operation and development of institutions" that give some actors more power than others over their operation (Hall and Taylor 1996: 21). In fact, to see which power relations caused those asymmetries (also using the tools of RCT) can help in explaining why societal forces were organized according to certain norms rather than others (contrasting a 'calculus' idea of institutions as the result of a voluntary agreement among actors). The state, in particular, is not considered as "a neutral broker among competing interests, but as a complex of institutions capable of structuring the character and outcomes of group conflict" and thus channelling institutional life within distinctive national trajectories (Hall and Taylor 1996: 5-6; Evans *et al.* 1985).

Besides contextual limits, time factors linked to decision-making also undermine the rationality of individual action: HI reminds us that the short-term horizon of actors does not coincide with the long-term perspective needed to analyse the evolution of institutional processes: actors cannot foresee unintended consequences or shifts in policy preferences due to changing historical conditions (Pierson 1998: 33). The recognition of the influence of history in the development of institutions leads HI authors to adopt a 'path-dependent' model of social causation, which emphasises the fact that, once embraced, institutional paths are difficult and costly to leave, and this explains the persistence of ineffective institutions. However, pressure to change inefficient institutions also increases with time (Pierson 1998: 47). Thus, periods of continuity within a given institutional path are "punctuated by 'critical junctures', i.e. moments when substantial institutional change takes place thereby creating a 'branching

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[10] For its inclusiveness, North's definition is one of the most quoted in contemporary literature as a useful basis for common discussion across the social sciences; see Putzel (1997), p.940.

point' from which historical development moves into a new path" (Hall and Taylor 1996: 10). As further argued in the second chapter, one of the main 'critical junctures' within the process of European integration was the introduction of the objective of socio-economic cohesion (later extended to include a territorial dimension) and the ensuing redefinition of EU Regional Policy.

Social networks and collective action

The concept of *embeddedness* allows us to adopt a view of social agency that rejects the alternatives posited by the cultural and the calculus approach: thus it admits the possibility for institutional change, whilst not denying the dependency of institutions on previous paths. The concept was first used by Karl Polanyi with reference to the fact that the economy, uprooted (or *disembedded*) from society in the capitalist era, represented an integral feature of (was *embedded* in) pre-capitalist societies (Polanyi 1944). The sociologist Mark Granovetter widened the concept in its critique to the 'hyposocialised' self adopted by neoclassic economics and the Parsonian 'hypersocialised' trapped in the social system:[11] "the embeddedness argument stresses instead the role of concrete personal relations and structures (or *'networks'*) of such relations in generating trust and discouraging malfeasance" (Granovetter 1985: 490).

This position permits a multifaceted view of the social actor, engaging with different groups and through different strategies. The representation of social interaction from actors embedded in a plurality of *social networks* (rather than influenced by the social system) strengthens the relevance of micro-foundation of social processes in a time when, within national societies, role expectations become less predictable and culture more fragmented (Bagnasco 2003: 68). At large, the network can be defined as a set of interconnected nodes creating a logic of inclusion/exclusion: "the distance (or the intensity and frequency of interaction) between two points (or social positions) is shorter (or more frequent, more intense) when both the points are nodes of the same network than when they belong to different networks" (Castells 2002: 536).

Understood as a semi-permanent, flexible structure, the image of the network is increasingly used to represent the prevalent organizational logic of contemporary societies. Information technologies and communication are increasingly interlinked at a

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[11] The structure of those contemporary debates on the relations between the individual and society are very similar within different disciplines: the debate between the *calculus* and *cultural* approach in neo-institutionalist studies, between the *hyposocialised* and *hypersocialised* actor in new economic sociology, or between *liberals* and *communitarians* in political theory. It is therefore disappointing that there has been relatively little dialogue among them.

global level, post-Fordism asks for a reticular organization of production, and network structures are also used to depict extended family ties or new social movements: "[n]etworks constitute the new social morphology of our societies, and the diffusion of networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experience, power, and culture" (Castells 1996: 469). Although all networks present a similar morphology and logic, their nature clearly changes according to the different goals and objectives driving their concrete functioning:

They are stock exchange markets, and their ancillary advanced services centres, in the network of global financial flows. They are national councils of ministers and European Commissioners in the political network that governs the European Union. They are coca fields and poppy fields, clandestine laboratories, secret landing strips, street gangs and money-laundering financial institutions, in the network of drug traffic that penetrates economies, societies, and states throughout the world.
(Castells 1996: 470)

The *embeddedness* argument points to the long-term structural characteristics of network relationships as some kind of "general conditions that are capable of reducing the transactions costs of negotiated agreement" (Sharpf 1997: 137). What explains the fact that social networks permit the reconciliation of individual actor interests with social co-operative outcomes is that they guarantee, more or less reliably, that there will be repeated interaction among its members:

The fact that two actors have memory of past encounters as well as an expectation of future dealings with each other is assumed to have an effect on the individual interaction (...) Such relationships arise and are maintained because of the benefits that they provide in comparison to 'single-shot' interaction.
(Sharpf 1997: 137)

Thus participation in networks is based on certain rules and expectations which tend to avoid defection; after repeated interactions "[t]he *reputation* of the parties for cooperation rather than for competition becomes *expected* and 'socially embedded' as a result" (Thompson, 2003: 164). Therefore repeated interactions allow actors to look at the advantages of cooperation in a longer term perspective, setting up a virtuous learning cycle: "[t]he overall system involves 'learning by doing' in which collaborative problem solving predominates, and a process of mutual capacitation between the parties unfolds" (Thompson 2003: 184). The cooperative potential deriving from actors' interaction in the social networks where they are embedded presents advantages at the individual level as well as at the systemic level: it produces "socially appropriable resources" or "social capital" (Coleman 1990). At this second level its role has been investigated, among other fields, also in relation to processes of territorial development

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at the subnational level, as part of a recent debate that attracted the interest of a varied public (from different academic fields, policy-making areas, civil society sectors).

Before concluding this first chapter I will consider in more detail the concept of social capital in order to show in what ways the detection of a relationship between a cooperative culture and a good institutional performance may lead to divergent conclusions when applied to regional policies, according to the theoretical approach used in the analysis of institutions, and to specify the interpretation offered by the theoretical position adopted in this thesis.

fig. 1.1- Different approaches to the study of collective action and institutions

	CALCULUS	CULTURAL	HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONALISM
Actor	*hypo-socialised self :* actors as free and rational contracting individuals	*hyper-socialised self:* individual's action and choice bound to its social context	*embedded self:* limited rationality of the actor inserted in a net of social relations
Logic of collective action	result of the sum of independent strategic calculus ('efficiency logic' and individual rationality)	result of context-bound 'appropriateness logic' based on shared cognitive templates (role of ideas and culture)	result of the interaction of actors' strategies within social networks discouraging defection
Institutions	formal rules, procedures or norms; instruments in individuals' hands	formal and informal rules, cognitive and moral templates, symbols shaping individuals' life and sources of meaning for their action	formal and informal rules; humanly devised constraints that shape *and* enable human interaction
Institutional change	change is possible for the individual whenever a more efficient solution is available; the only exception is when deviation is more costly than adherence	difficult because institutions tend to be 'taken for granted' by actors and are unlikely to be changed by individual action (social legitimisation)	when institutions are inadequate pressure to change increases with time and becomes feasible in front of *critical junctures*

The productivity of social networks: introducing *social capital*

The odds of cooperation are objectively increased for actors (regardless of their original orientations) when they are faced with frequent multipurpose interactions that increase the costs of defection. This productive character of social networks has been particularly investigated within the debate on 'social capital'. The concept was defined by analogy with that of physical and human capital:

Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the attainment of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence (...) Unlike other forms of capital, social capital inheres in the structure of relations between persons and among persons.
(Coleman 1990: 302)

Having gained a great deal of attention in the literature over the last few decades, the social capital approach has been applied to many different fields, with often diverging

purposes: this fact has initially created doubts as to its analytical effectiveness and usefulness. After years of debate, theorists today generally agree on some of the common features which should characterise the concept and its use. Like other types of capital, social capital implies an investment (the spending of time and effort in activities to build tools or assets today in order to increase welfare in the future) and the risk that it might fail; the imposition of some constraints for the creation of new opportunities; and a potential dark side where it is used to harm others (Ostrom and Ahn 2001: 5). Unlike other kinds of capital, social capital does not wear out with use, but rather with disuse, and it is difficult to observe and measure and hard to build through external intervention, although institutions strongly influence its effectiveness in pursuing long-term development efforts (Ostrom and Ahn 2001: 5).

Authors have used more or less inclusive definitions of the concept of social capital or, better, of its use, according to the aim of their research. Considering a distinction drawn by Ostrom,[12] we can differentiate three main types of social capital, according to the scale at which it is applied: individual, organizational, or institutional. A lower level of application of the concept considers the use made by single individuals of the social resources within the network of their connections in order to maximise their financial and human capital (Ostrom and Ahn 2001: 6). This type of social capital has been analysed by Pierre Bourdieu in relation to the other forms of capital (economic and cultural) that explain the structure and dynamics of differentiated societies (Bourdieu 1992: 119). The backing of this collectively-owned capital, allows the individual to 'credit' resources from other spheres as well. In this sense the concept has been used, for instance, to study the impact of social capital present in family or neighbourhood connections in receiving a certain education or finding a job (Granovetter 1973).

The second level of application of the concept refers to social capital as a means of achieving collective goods, and thus to the idea (commonly expressed as 'strength in unity') that certain ends are unachievable for the individual without the cooperation of others. The embeddedness of actors in social networks increases the costs of defection, leading them to orient their behaviour towards cooperation with other group members; in the long run this might lead "to the creation of a community within which the gains of those with whom one identifies are considered in a light similar to one's personal gains" (Bukowski *et al.* 2003: 10). This type of social capital is particularly relevant in

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[12] However, following a frequent tendency of the debate, even Ostrom sometimes seems to confuse social capital and the networks allowing its production (i.e. social structures). See Bertolini (2001).

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exploring the functioning of various groups and organizations (neighbourhoods, sport clubs, mafia networks).

A third, wider level of application looks at the role of social capital in promoting participation in civic life and thus improving the functioning of public institutions and collective action. Intended as those "features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated action" (Putnam *et al.* 1993: 167), the concept of social capital has had a wide diffusion – both among academics and policy-makers – especially through the works of Robert Putnam (Fukuyama 1995; Portes 1998; World Bank 1998).

It is this at this third level, as applied to the issue of territorial development of subnational areas, that the concept will be considered in this research according to the theoretical approach of historical institutionalism as presented in the previous paragraphs. I shall further specify in the following paragraph the role played by the adopted theoretical approach in evaluating the concept of social capital and its potential, using as an example the seminal research of Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti on Italian regions and the following contributions to the debate.

Social capital and institutions

The work of Putnam and his co-authors on Italian regions analyzes "how the overlapping networks of small-scale civic engagements create the foundations for democratic governance at a higher, regional level" (Ostrom and Ahn 2001: 9-10). *Making Democracy Work* (1993) evaluates the institutional performance of Italian regional governments almost twenty years after their establishment in 1970, when the fifteen 'ordinary regions' were "endowed with essentially identical constitutional structures and mandates" (Putnam *et al.* 1993: 6). The data cited by the study confirm the well-known picture of 'two Italies' with opposite levels of regional performance, high in the North and low in the South. Putnam believes that this duality cannot be attributed to the institutional framework (common to the regions considered) nor explained exclusively in terms of different levels of socio-economic development. Rather, he points to the different degrees of 'civic culture' (that is, the social web made by ties of solidarity and engagement among citizens) possessed by the regions. Association indicators show an attitude toward cooperation in the Northern regions, and an 'always-exit' rule led by a logic of individualistic (or, better, familistic) mentality in the Southern regions (Banfield 1956). Territorial differences in social capital assets are

traced back by Putnam to the late Middle Ages, when communes in the North created a system of horizontal bonds characterised by mutual trust, while in the South vertical ties imposed by centuries of tyranny created a culture of distrust and lack of cooperation.

The many critiques which followed the enormous success of the book have highlighted several problems in Putnam's use of the social capital concept.[13] Here I want to dwell on two of them, which have a direct link with the formulation of my research hypothesis. The first critique deals with the *nature* of the concept: social capital as a resource that can be used in many different ways, and thus is not necessarily 'good', as implied by Putnam's adoption of a normative definition that identifies 'social capital' with 'civic culture' and thus considers it as an indicator of democracy.[14] Like other types of capital, social capital is a means whose value is relative to the goal to which it is addressed.[15] A 'dark side' of social capital is identifiable at all three levels (*see table 1.2*): the strength of family ties, for instance, can be expressed in practices that range from 'immoral familism'[16] to caring support; members' solidarity serves both charitable associations and racist movements; while political networks can be used both to reinforce clientelistic links or promote wider participation and democratic exchange (Edwards and Foley 1997; Trigilia 2001).

The second critique is related to the *origin* of social capital. Putnam sees social capital resources as plants stemming spontaneously, 'bottom-up', from a fertile soil, which could not grow in a sterile setting: "[w]here the regional soil is fertile, the regions draw sustenance from regional traditions, but where the soil is poor, the new institutions are stunted" (Putnam 1993: 182). However, if soils have not been ploughed before the sowing, it is unlikely that they will produce a healthy plant. Following on from the previous example: "[t]he new Italian regions were certainly installed in different soils in northern and southern Italy. But an important part of that difference was a public culture

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[13] For a review of some of them, see Goldberg (1996), Levi (1996), Sabetti (1996), Tarrow (1996), Foley and Edwards (1997, 1999), Harris and DeRienzo (1997), Putzel (1997), Bagnasco (2001).

[14] In Putnam's works the social capital concept is linked with the older argument which, from Tocqueville (1856) to Almond and Verba (1963, 1980), considers *civic culture* as a key element in the success or failure of a democracy, and associationism as the main indicator of 'civicness'. As for those arguments, here the thesis rests on the unproven assumption that political attitudes and values shape behaviour and not the other way around.

[15] It was Coleman in particular who stressed the functional connotation of the concept, for which social capital "is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of the individuals who are within the structure", Coleman (1990), p.302.

[16] The expression became famous after Banfield's book (1956), in which it is used to define a close and exclusive individualism of Southern Italian society, where the individual only pursues what is in his and his family's interest. This non-cooperative behaviour is considered to be the origin of the lack of development in the *Mezzogiorno* (for similar conclusions, see Nuzzo and Righi 2005, and Sabatini 2005).

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shaped by more than a century of political and administrative dependency" (Tarrow 1996: 395).

fig. 1.2 - Different uses of social capital resources: some examples

Use/ends	'Dark side': vicious circles	'Bright side': virtuous circles
Individual	Use of family ties to press for obtaining access to an exclusive education or position (*closed networks*)	Use of neighbours networks, rotating babysitting or sharing cars to gain time or save money (*open networks*)
Communitarian	Use of bonding trust and loyalty ties by organizations directed to criminal action (*mafia connections; terrorist movements*)	Use of 'bridging' solidarity among actors sharing the same values by organizations aiming at their defence (*environmental lobbies; human rights movements*)
Systemic	Use of territorial solidarity networks to define regional/national strategies against other territorial actors operating in the area (*reactive nationalism or regional secessionism*)	Use of territorial solidarity networks to define regional/national strategies in coordination with other territorial actors operating in the area (*communes consortium, interregional cooperation*)

Putnam's recognition, following new institutionalism's lesson, that 'history matters' (Putnam 1993: 7) adopts a 'culturalist approach' to institutional change, which excludes the fact that institutions can 'artificially' create ('top-down') social capital resources. However this approach indirectly discourages the adoption of policies for the development of backward territories.[17] I believe that this limit in Putnam's approach can be traced to his conception of institutional performance, resting on what he himself calls a "simple model of governance: societal demands → political interaction → government → policy choice → implementation" (Putnam 1993: 9). This model can be read as a sort of 'theoretical reaction' to early modernisation paradigms, superimposing institutional change through hierarchical relations that gave no incentive, and sometimes even destroyed the virtuous action of social bonds of solidarity and cooperation among citizens.

Later research on social capital (and partly Putnam himself) has helped to distinguish between a *systemic* (or *culturalist*) version of the concept and a *relational* (or *interactive*) one (Bagnasco 2003: 24). The first version, more restricted, sees social capital as the disposition to cooperate, deriving from a shared cooperative culture: it is thus based on a 'shadow of the past' mechanism, which "produces a certain disposition in the present amongst the players, based upon their experiences of past interactions" (Thompson 2003: 180). The second version considers social capital as including all

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[17] In Italy the book was enthusiastically welcomed by Lega North members, using it in an instrumental and decontextualised way to form part of its arguments. See Tarrow (1996), p. 389, n.4.

those resources for individual or collective action deriving from the cooperative social networks within which an actor is 'embedded'. In fact, as already seen, frequent multipurpose interactions among actors increase the cost of defection while casting a shadow over their future cooperation (Thompson 2003: 180).

From this second view, that I share, social capital is considered as a feature of social organizations (Bagnasco 2003: 24), which can be reproduced and accumulated or depleted according to yet scarcely investigated factors. Several authors have stressed the relevance of institutions in enhancing social capital resources. In a wider sense, this refers to the positive role played by a democratic environment, well-functioning institutions, low levels of social unrest, in inducing or reinforcing participative practices, levels of trust and cooperative behaviour among citizens (March and Olsen 1989: 164). On a more specific level, it refers to the possibility of public policies promoting cooperative practices among the stakeholders involved in a decisional process of setting in motion learning processes having as a by-product the production of social capital (Ostrom and Ahn 2001: 25). Other authors stress the role of specific policies in 'converting' primary social capital resources (growing out of thicker, traditional relations) into the relational extended type of social capital needed by contemporary society and oriented to more universal principles.[18]

All those cases share, as does this thesis, a conception of institutional performance which rests on a more complex model of governance, constituted by bilateral relations that – for analytical purposes – can be analysed from both directions: 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' (policy implementation ←→ societal demands). We shall see in the next chapter how this applies to the study of institutional change within the EU.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have considered some of the questions relating to the study of institutional change and the implications deriving from the adoption of different theoretical approaches to answer them. The theoretical perspective I have chosen to adopt is that offered by historical institutionalism, recognising the influence of past

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[18] In the Sardinian case:"The inadequacy [of social capital in Sardinia] would seem to reside in the fact that, even assuming that a form of social capital is present in the Sardinian society, this is not suitable, at least not fully, to support 'modern' developmental processes, that are self-sustaining and can expand", Bottazzi (1999), p.93, n.66. The same argument, at a general level, is made by Trigilia (2001), pp. 15-16. Following the publication of Putnam's book extensive research developed to identify in the *Mezzogiorno* significant traditions of cooperative practices, solidarity networks, high levels of cultural associationism or local initiatives making a virtuous use of endogenous resources (Mutti 1992; Trigilia 1995; Bodo and Viesti 1997; DeVivo 1997; Cersosimo and Donzelli 2000).

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institutional settings in present institutional life, but also allowing for the occurrence of 'critical junctures' when historical development moves onto a new path. A similar perspective is adopted in conceiving social actors as able to define their own strategies, although chosen among the limited range of possibilities offered by the organizing logic and the relational systems in which they are embedded. The link between this logic and actors' cooperative/uncooperative social behaviour is here maintained, but interpreted as a two-way relationship.

From these theoretical arguments we can derive a first set of indications that will serve to orient the research hypotheses and design, as better discussed in the methodological chapter. *First*, from the fact that the 'time factor' is recognised as an essential component in the analysis of institutional change, the research design will have to adopt an adequate time-frame in order to be able to appreciate eventual change. *Second*, the historical analysis of institutional development asks to identify what moments can be considered as 'critical junctures' in order to test empirically if the new institutional path has been embraced by actors: the empirical test becomes crucial because in the adopted definition of institutions we have also included informal, or not yet formalised, institutional arrangements and practices. Thus, *third*, also shifts in the discursive logic, values and principles orienting action that, although not yet formalised may indicate the increasing legitimisation of an alternative organizational model of society not yet prevalent. *Fourth*, the adoption of an 'extended and bidirectional view' of the relationship between the organizing logic of relational systems and the strategies adopted by the actors allows to posit the possibility of institutional change towards cooperative systems, also in the case of actors opting for non-cooperative strategies in the old setting.

Chapter 2 - European integration and Regional Policy
from a historical-institutionalist perspective

In the previous chapter I argued that the theoretical perspective offered by historical institutionalism (HI) seems to be well-suited to meeting the aims of the research that underpins the thesis. In fact, as I will now show, it offers a view to the process of European integration which – going beyond traditional state-centric models – is able to account for the growing complexity of EU-related processes of institutional change, as increasingly registered by empirical research since the mid-1980s. From the longer-term perspective offered by HI, in fact, European integration is considered not only through the analysis of formal intergovernmental 'grand bargains', but also through looking at the increasing definition at the EU level of policies defining rules, procedures and ideas, gradually influencing the practices and horizons of the actors involved in the process.

One of the most relevant outcomes of European integration identified through the new perspective is the emergence of patterns of 'multilevel governance' (MLG), organizing territorial and power relations within the European territory through cooperative networks created by a multiplicity of partners acting at different levels. I will maintain that the reformed EU Regional Policy after 1988 represents one of the most significant cases of institutional change undertaken by the process of European integration based on the translation of the MLG model into specific principles for the interaction of different institutional levels and the mobilisation of different territorial levels and socio-economic actors. Finally, I will consider which are the main mechanisms used to identify both the ways in which the 'EU model' has been defined and implemented throughout its territory and the responses provided by the domestic (national and subnational) actors to the institutional changes.

Explaining European integration with 'state-centric' theories

The main theoretical approaches studying the first decades of the process of European integration were derived from the discipline of International Relations (IR), where the nation state was assumed to be the fundamental political unit organizing national activities vis-à-vis the supranational level. Because of the influence of the Westfalian paradigm in structuring the political organization of modern societies, European integration was initially studied "[stretching] established concepts over the new phenomena" (Hooghe and Marks 2003: 234), and thus the debate was mainly stranded on variations on the demise or resilience of the nation-state paradigm. The EU case was

located within the category of international regimes, i.e. "institutionalised forms of collective actions among nation-states" (Pierson 1998: 31) that allowed countries to benefit from collective goods unachievable without coordinated inter-state action. Starting from this 'inter-state perspective', the main issue was to explain the reasons leading nation states voluntarily gave up part of their sovereign powers and to define the implications of this delegation of authority.

Scholars drawing on aspects of the functionalist tradition in IR explained this feature of integration as led by a mechanism of incremental steps towards cooperation only in selected areas of policy-making, where the benefits derived by co-ordinated action appeared to be greater than those derived from individual nation states' action (Haas 1958; Lindberg 1963). Most of the continuation of the process would be explained not as a consequence of 'grand bargains' between states, but rather as 'spill-over effects' following pressure for integration of functional or political nature, from one successful field to the other. Some authors have later argued that the neo-functionalist position could be interpreted as a kind of 'cautious' or incremental interpretation of the process of European integration responding to the federalist project (Bache 1998: 18). In fact spill-over could also be seen at work in EU institutions that cultivated contacts with lobbies and subnational actors in order to have them allied against MSs: 'cultivated spill-over' could explain why EU institutions (especially the European Court and the Commission) had gained through time an increasingly important role in many domains, and started using it for 'their' purposes (Bache 1998: 18).

The neofunctionalist model was also gradually discarded following the assertion of the 'Luxembourg compromise', which seemed to confirm a model of European integration led by the domestic concerns of effective gatekeepers of national sovereignty (Bache 1998: 19). The most influential explanation of European integration became that of intergovernmentalism (IG), which adopted a realist position seeing governments as effective gatekeepers of state powers and responsibilities by acting in the national interest. Domestic concerns would also explain the powers partly devolved to European institutions, only after a stringent cost and benefits analysis (Hoffmann 1964). In the same manner as neofunctionalism, IG ignored and explicitly discounted the role of subnational actors or organized interests in shaping the agenda of national governments or in participating in either the decision-making or implementation process with regard to regional or any other policy that had been Europeanised. According to the intergovernmentalists the Member States continued to operate as the ultimate arbiters of

key decisions that were discussed at Council meetings, and assumed exclusive competence for the implementation of European decisions.

However, since the end of the 1980s, critiques were developed of the IG approach by scholars from different research fields – such as juridical, economic, regional, social, or environmental studies – who felt that they could "no longer understand the domestic process and outcomes that interest[ed] them without addressing the role of the E[U]" (Pierson 1998: 28). The concern which informed their sectoral, empirically grounded research was not to advance grand theories of integration, but rather to concentrate "on the detailed investigation of day-to-day policy development in areas where the E[U]'s role is prominent (...) content to reveal the density and pluralism of actual policy-making while simply observing that the focus of international relations theory on grand diplomacy among sovereign member-states does not square with what is actually occurring 'on the ground'" (Pierson 1998: 28).

From a theoretical point of view, the critiques of intergovernmentalism followed similar lines to those more generally moved against a 'calculus approach' in institutional studies (as reported in chapter one): its tendency to consider as the only real authors of European integration nation states discrete units led by merely individualistic considerations, did not allow for the consideration of the impact of contingencies and change.[19] What seemed to be the main interest informing national strategies of the 'grand bargains' defining the rules of European integration was the preservation of domestic power and interest against that of other territorial actors. From this win/lose approach to collective action, for the intergovernmentalists European institutions are neutral tools used as interstate forums to provide heads of governments with a set of common rules and a vocabulary to express their preferences and exchange information, so as to allow the "lowering of bargaining costs and the reduction of uncertainty" (Pierson 1998: 33).

As seen in the previous chapter, such an instrumental conception of institutions overestimates the room for manoeuvre of decision-makers, and their effective possibility of subjecting the evolution of institutions to tight control. Conversely, it leads to an underestimation of the fact that, over time, policy activity of the Community's institutions has expanded, increasing the number of interactions between actors involved and the density of issues considered. Faced with this overload of decisions to be taken under conditions of time constraints and scarcity of information

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[19] This theoretical problem has been discussed by Moravcsik (1991), who in his theory of 'liberal intergorvernmentalism' agrees that governments' preferences can shift over time.

(especially in new fields of regulation), MSs delegate their decisional power to those new actors (both at the supranational or subnational level) that may be ready to seize this opportunity. Those processes allow the formation of gaps in government control in the evolution of European policies and regulations that are later difficult to close because – as explained by a historical approach to institutional processes – with time there is a growing resistance to change from the new actors and increasing costs of exit from the institutional path embraced (Pierson 1998). New theoretical frameworks were needed to better study the complexity and novelty of processes of institutional change related to European integration increasingly revealed by the empirical evidence.

The emergence of multileveled patterns of governance

The empirical research carried out, especially since the mid-1980s, in different fields affected by EU policy and politics brought researchers to search for new definitions and theoretical tools more apt, compared to established concepts, to describe the nature of the ongoing change. This sometimes brought an overload of neologisms and approaches. However, a certain agreement among authors studying different fields of European integration was found in the description of the emerging EU polity as "an elaborate set of networks, closely linked in some ways, particularly decomposed in others" (Keohane and Hoffmann 1991: 5; Kohler-Koch 1999; Castells 2000).

As indicated in chapter one, the image of a network, often used today to describe the logic of several processes of structural change, becomes particularly appropriate in defining a new concept of power distribution that is decentralised and shared among groups and movements in continuous transformation and interaction (Mutti 1998: 62). Faced with the decline in legitimacy of modern nation-states (Van Creveld 1999; Cassese 2001), preventing citizens' defection on the basis of a 'shadow of hierarchy' mechanisms, contemporary societies find in the network structures an alternative means to overcoming collective action problems through the involvement of multi-actor constellations at different territorial levels in coordinated cooperative social relations.

With reference to the changes affecting the distribution of power in territorial relations, the adoption of the network as the prevailing organizational structure in the EU is related to the emergence of a new and distinct model of "power sharing across multiple jurisdictions" (Thompson 2003: 160). This model contrasts analytically with that of *government*, organizing power in the modern nation-state, defining its action following a 'top-down' logic legitimized by virtue of a centralistic hierarchy (Mayntz

1999: 7; Kooiman 1993; Rhodes 1996). The expression that – among many others – has established itself to denote this novel concept is that of 'multilevel governance' (MLG).[20] Hooghe and Marks have analytically distinguished two types of networks according to their prevalence in structuring patterns of MLG:

- *vertical networks*: authority and competence are redistributed according to hierarchical levels sharing a series of tasks, and are linked to mutually exclusive territorial borders (building on the previous nation-states model) and in limited number. Those types of networks would tend to stabilise in a definite and stable order, to confine the dispersal of authority;

- *horizontal networks*: the number of actors is high and not limited, their relations are horizontal (of reciprocity); they are generally created around a specific goal, sometimes lack a clear distinction between internal and external questions and operate at different territorial levels which cross cut in a flexible and unstable way (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 6-7).[21]

When introduced in the mid-1980s, the concept of MLG mainly referred to empirical studies on structural policies of the EU. Those studies were influenced by the success in those years of 'new regionalism' theories within the debate on the European integration.[22] The focus of MLG authors in describing the emergence of European governance was mainly on the study of the vertical dimension of governance (Marks, Hooghe *et al.* 1996: 342), linked with the implementation of Structural Funds. From this perspective, EU Regional Policy was sometimes interpreted as part of the gradual process of the erosion of the exclusive authority of national governments, always "less able to govern the activities of other domestic actors on the international stage" (Bache 1998: 22). Among authors and activists there was also a sort of optimism and high

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[20] The concept seems to have established itself over a number of alternative novel terms proposed to define a similar concept, although each with different shades of meaning: 'quasi-federal' or 'multitiered' political system, 'polycentric governance', 'condominio', 'network governance'.

[21] The first type of governance would picture a *semi-federalist option* that "lends itself easily to intergovernmental relations" and can be illustrated by the image of a layer cake, while the second one (also called *polycentric governance),* corresponds to a 'marble cake' model, which "pictures governance as a complex fluid patchwork of innumerable overlapping jurisdictions (...) overlapping geographical territories and functional domains (...)", that can "respond to changing citizens' expectations and preferences, and be sensitive to functional requirements as they evolve", Thompson (2003), pp.160–161; Marks and Hooghes (2001; 2003), Kohler-Koch (1999).

[22] Gary Marks, among others, developed the concept of multilevel governance in the late 1980s as a new formulation of the pluralist approach earlier expressed by neo-functionalist interpretations of European integration (Bache 1998, p.21). The revival of regional movements in the 1980s, claiming the right of regional and local actors to have a greater say in decisions concerning their territories, tended to read European integration in the context of a general weakening of the national level. See Keating (2000). The introduction of the role of the regions was engineered by President of the Commission J. Delors as a way of mobilizing additional forces behind the project of the establishment of the Single Market: see Leonardi (1993, 1995).

expectations of the demise of state-centred models, favouring the emergence of a variety of new supra- and subnational territorial actors: "[t]he term multilevel governance, when used in the context of the policy-making process associated with Structural Funds, and in particular when related to the notion of 'partnership' introduced by the 1988 reforms, was as much an aspiration as an accurate analytical description" (Allen 1998: 216).

Those aspirations were partly frustrated by the later downsizing of the political leverage of the decentralisation processes sweeping across most EU states (Hooghe 1996: 111; Nanetti 1996: 70). While the role of nation states as exclusive providers of collective goods for their citizens had certainly "increasingly been eroded due to the multiple involvement of supranational and/or subnational players" (Conzelman 1998: 8), it had not faded away but only changed to become the crucial level of a wider model of power-sharing and coordination within the EU arena (Mayntz 1999: 10). From this new perspective European integration and regionalism were to be viewed "not merely in negative terms, as forces undermining the state, but also as attempts to create new political arenas at the supranational and subnational level" (Keating and Hooghe 1998: 218).

This gradual shift in the conceptualisation of multi-level systems of governance from a 'layer cake' to a 'marble cake' image, i.e. "a representation of a penetrated system of governance" (Kohler-Koch 2002: 5), brought MLG scholars to a reassessment of their theories and to extend their empirical investigations on the reorganization of governance powers 'on the side' through the consideration of horizontal (transnational, trans-regional, public-private, economic and social) and other mixed forms of network governance. Increasingly, this 'extended view' of multilevel governance could be traced across different EU policy domains and decisional arenas as the privileged decision-making framework (from 'comitology' to the 'open method of coordination', or the growing recourse to electronic consultation of civil society on thematic issues), both for its effectiveness in coordinating different actors as well as for its reference to a normative ideal of participatory democracy. However, EU Regional Policy remained one of the most prominent fields in which the phenomenon could be studied.[23]

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[23] "Cohesion Policy is not the only area where the partnership principle has gained ground – one can find traces in policies as diverse as research and development, social policy, or environmental policy – but the partnership arrangements in Cohesion Policy represent by far the most sustained and most comprehensive effort to bring together policy actors at different levels of governance" Hooghe (1996), p. 7.

The following figure gives a visual representation of three ways of organizing territorial and power relations. In the first structure (corresponding to the old 'national model') territorial relations have a hierarchical nature based on state sovereignty: regions are only considered as subunits of Member States. The second structure depicts a model of multilevel governance (corresponding to the new 'EU model' as expressed by EU Cohesion Policy): regions are now recognised as territorial units, and have direct relations also with the EU level. The third structure is a variation of multilevel governance: the network is more polycentric in that it also includes direct relations among the regions and allows the creation of transnational and trans-regional actors. It will be in this extended version that we will consider MLG in this thesis, by looking at the implementation of an initiative within EU Regional Policy called INTERREG, which aims to promote interregional partnerships for the development of territories defined beyond national borders.

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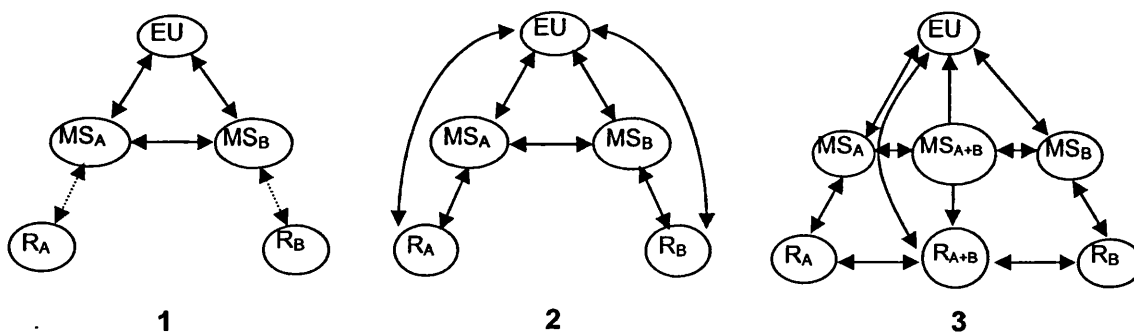
fig. 2.1. – **Different structures of territorial and power relations:** (1) the intergovernmental model; (2) the multilevel governance model, restricted version; (3) the multilevel governance model, extended version.

Regionalisation *via* national regional policies

In order to understand the nature of the changes proposed by EU Regional Policy we have to briefly consider, as already argued in chapter one, the main features of the Regional Policy defined according to the 'national model' hitherto prevailing in the organization of territorial and power relations before 1988.

Intended as a "meso level between the national and the local" (Keating 1998: 17), the region had been identified by most Western European states since the end of the Second World War as the appropriate territorial dimension for policy analysis and implementation to solve large-scale restructuring and developmental problems. The commitment of central governments to equalising living standards through the

regionalisation[24] of the national territory was particularly felt in those states where there had been a history of separatist forces and ethnic minorities located in areas which usually, although not exclusively, were also the most backward and peripheral. During the 1960s several of those areas experienced a wave of revival of ethnic and regionalist movements, reacting against the threats of cultural homogenisation following the centralising tendencies of welfare states, but also increasingly questioning central governments over the origin of the divide between them and the wealthiest areas of the country.

Later other kinds of developmental problems also started to arise, such as those related to the excessive growth of urban areas and unemployment in declining industrial areas (Viesti and Prota 2004: 85). In both cases regional policy was seen by governments as the best instrument to tackle developmental problems throughout the national territory. At the socio-institutional level the adoption of regional policies was legitimised by the philosophy underlying contemporary Keynesian planning, for which market imperfections should have been rectified following a principle of national solidarity, as well as by diffused social-democratic and christian-democratic traditions, both favourable to measures redressing citizens living in peripheral or disadvantaged areas on the basis of their membership to the same political community (Keating 1997: 17, 19). The goal of interregional equity through the equalisation of salaries, education and job opportunities, was mainly pursued through measures aimed at reducing the costs of localisation of economic activities in backward areas, where funds were invested to create public infrastructure and settle public enterprises, and financial aids were given to private investors choosing to locate their businesses there (Keating 1996: 32; Viesti and Prota 2004: 85).

At the economic level, the main inspirer was the 'poles of development theory' developed by Francois Perroux (1955), arguing that "growth can be planned and concentrated by geographic area into development poles, such as those that have been identified in urbanised, metropolitan areas" (Leonardi 2005: 37). Growth pole theory "accepted to a great extent the Fordist industrialisation paradigm" in that it devised large industrial poles to be located in the least developed areas, in the belief that

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[24] The term *regionalisation* usually refers to 'top-down' processes, while the term *regionalism* refers to 'bottom-up' movements emphasising the role of the region as a political unit, in demanding greater control over the affairs of the regional territory by its inhabitants. The main element of regionalism which entered into EU Regional Policy since the 1988 reforms was the introduction of the principle of partnership involving regions which already existed as institutional realities, or leading to the creation of regions on an administrative basis where directly elected bodies did not yet exist. See Keating and Loughlin (1997), pp. 4–5.

"peripheral areas are underdeveloped because they lack the necessary industrial base that would allow them to compete with core areas" (Leonardi 2005: 35). However, "in contrast with classical models of economic growth it introduced into the development equation a significant role for national economic planning and political decision making" (Leonardi 2005: 37). Thus 'top-down' planning and administration were handed over to central government bureaucrats, in the belief that they possessed the information and technical expertise necessary to select areas and interventions and to coordinate policy implementation.

Although the policies usually started with technocratic character and as temporary measures, aimed at the reintegration of underdeveloped regions in the national economy, they gradually tended to become more and more interventionist and act in a rather centralised fashion (Keating 1996: 20). In fact, the investments of the development poles located in backward territories never had a spill-over effect on surrounding areas in terms of stimulating the growth of supporting firms, or developing a skilled local workforce, hence gaining the nickname of 'cathedrals in the desert' (Keating 1996: 20). Their implementation was never followed by monitoring and evaluations: the interventions were undertaken with the hope that in time their impact would be noticed, but no specific provision was ever made to monitor and evaluate the effects of the projects undertaken. Thus regional aid often became a powerful instrument used in exchange for the electoral support of local *élites* (Regini 1991).

During the 1970s, following a period of sustained inflation and economic recession (stagflation), the need of central governments to cut down on public expenditure in order to control the rise in inflation brought about a retrenchment of regional policies, as well as other welfare measures. In the 1980s, under the influence of New Right thinking and its prescriptions about "rolling back the state" (Loughlin and Peters 1997: 42), governments started to undertake policies of economic liberalisation, deregulation, and privatisation. As a consequence financial resources for national regional policies – whose effectiveness was increasingly questioned – were reduced and their objective downsized, especially in Northern Europe.[25] The European Commission's control of state aid to watch over MSs' adherence to the requirements set by EU Competition policy – asking them to eliminate barriers to growth and monopolies and disqualify assisted players in order to prepare for a European liberal market space – grew more strict (Hooghe 1996b: 115), reducing significantly the room

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[25] This was the case in Belgium, Denmark, France, Holland, and the UK. On the contrary, as we shall better see in the Italian case, the expenditure increased or remained constant in Southern Europe and Ireland. See Viesti and Prota (2004), pp. 87–88.

for manoeuvre of national governments in the planning and implementation of regional policies within their territories.

Meanwhile, the dynamism of some subnational areas (such as the Central and North-Eastern Italian regions), caught the attention of scholars searching for alternative models of production after the crisis of the Fordist model, based on capital-intensive, vertically organized firms designed to exploit economies of scale (Piore and Sabel 1984). The key to the economic success of those 'industrial districts' was identified in the adaptation of the endogenous resources of a specific area to technological innovation and to the requirements of an increasingly competitive international context, and on the organization of the productive process according to cooperative networks among small firms led by local entrepreneurs (Bagnasco 1977; Becattini 1987). After those cases a new developmental paradigm was defined, mainly in contrast to the previous one, given that past policy failure is one of the main factors influencing policy learning (Hall 1993: 278). It is by this new policy paradigm that the 1988 reform of European Regional Policy was inspired.

A historical view of EU Regional Policy

It was since the establishment of the EU in 1957 that MSs had declared themselves to be "anxious to strengthen the unity of their economies and to ensure their harmonious development by reducing the differences existing between the various regions and the backwardness of the less favoured regions" (Preamble, TR). However, the Treaty made no specific reference to the development of a European Regional Policy, in the belief that the gradual reduction of territorial imbalances would have been the natural result of the "establishment of a common market and by the progressive approximation of the economic policies of the member states" (article 2, TR).[26]

The decision of leaving positive action in territorial policy as a competence for national governments had to do with the already mentioned strength of the linkage between territory and national sovereignty, but also with the fact that among the six EU founding MSs – a group quite homogenous from an economic point of view – only Italy

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[26] More positive dispositions pertained to the establishment of the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) in 1957, directed to obviate for labour mobility problems favoured by European integration (as in the case of migration of Italian labour to West Germany, Belgium and France) and finance developmental projects with low-interest loans. In 1962 a European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) was also devised as part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) package, to encourage price stabilisation and contribute to public financing for the improvement of production, transformation, and selling of agricultural products.

and France had serious regional problems, and the latter "during the period of Gaullist grandeur, was reluctant to admit this" (Keating and Loughlin 1997: 6). It was only with the 1973 enlargement – which saw the accession of Denmark, the UK, and the Republic of Ireland[27] – that the increase in economic disparities among regions of the EU justified the adoption of common action through the coordination of European and national regional policies. The Commission's demands for a more positive approach to Regional Policy turned more insistent, backed by arguments suggesting that the persistence of regional disparities could endanger the EU's process of economic integration and that the shock of market integration in peripheral areas needed to be compensated (Nanetti 1996: 63).[28]

Thus in 1975 the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was created,[29] mainly to aid less competitive sectors and territories, such as agricultural or declining industrial areas, via subsidies sustaining local production and employment: "the primary focus in the E[U]'s Regional Policy was the support of uncompetitive producers and non-mobile labour in the peripheral areas (...) Regional Policy was conceived primarily as a social policy designed to absorb the negative consequences of market integration in non-productive sectors" (Nanetti 1996: 63). The limited resources of the ERDF were allocated on a national quota basis and implemented through development programmes in support of regions designated by MS, and thus could not hope to have a significant impact on regional disparities within the EU territory (Bachtler 1997: 17; Viesti and Prota 2004: 18; Martin 1998). No active role was foreseen either for the Commission – which merely transferred the funds to national governments – or for regional and local actors (Nanetti 1996: 63) and it remained unclear where the funds went or who were the final beneficiaries of the transfers.

This started to change at the end of the 1970s, again after pressure from the Commission who proposed "to take a systematic approach to analysing regional problems and the development of regional policies in Member States" (Bachtler 1997: 17). A five per cent 'non-quota' section of the ERDF was created which, integrated with other financial instruments was destined to support the development of rural areas or

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[27] Unemployment rates were high in England and Northern Ireland, while Ireland's GDP was nearly half the European average. Martin (1998), p. 8.

[28] This was also following the diffusion by the Commission of the Werner Report (1970), the Thomson Report (1973) and the MacDougall Report (1977). See Bache (1998) and Leonardi (1995).

[29] Given the fact that the Treaty of Rome did not foresee its creation, legitimacy for the creation of the ERDF in 1975 was derived from article 235, allowing the Council to take appropriate measures at Community level when necessary for the completion of the Common Market. Conversely the creation of EU Cohesion Policy in 1988 was part of the Single European Market programme foreseen by the Single European Act, which explicitly provided for the creation of a European Regional Policy (article 130).

areas touched by reconversion crisis. However, it was another enlargement that gave the decisive drive in the path towards the building of a common European Regional Policy. The close accessions of Greece (1981), Spain and Portugal (1986), nearly doubled the population of the least favoured regions in the EU, and "finally established Regional Policy at the top of the European agenda" (Martin 1998: 7).

In those years the acceleration given to the completion of the Single European Market project was accompanied by a wider reappraisal of the EU's aims and objectives, in which the position of those arguing that further integration among MSs' economies might not automatically lead to a decrease in territorial disparities but could even risk increasing them, started to gain ground.[30] The potential risks of increasing regional imbalances due to the 'backwash effects' of market liberalisation discouraged MSs from considering economic integration as the solution for the development of backward areas and allowed the Commission to present EU Regional Policy as the social counterpart to "the dominant economic European project of the creation of a frontier-free market" (Hooghe 1996b: 99–100, 1996a: 5).

In the Single European Act (1986) – designed to prepare for the setting up of the Single Market in 1993 – a new title was dedicated to the Community's objective of promoting *economic and social cohesion* by reducing "disparities between the various regions and the backwardness of the least-favoured regions" (SEA, title V, art.130a). This moment represented a crucial turn in the process leading to the adoption of a distinctive European Regional Policy as well in the wider process of European integration. In the Treaty of the EU signed in Maastricht (1993) the objective of economic and social cohesion became in fact one of the three pillars supporting the Community's structure (art.2, TEU). Additionally, EU Regional Policy (or Cohesion Policy) was endowed with two new financial instruments[31] and dispositions were given for the creation of an assembly of elected regional and local representatives with a consultative role (the Committee of the Regions).

The 1995 enlargement, which saw the entry of 'northern countries' (Finland, Sweden and Austria) with a GDP *per capita* in line with the EU average and minor regional imbalances, was less influential in the evolution of cohesion policy.[32]

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[30] This argument was present both in the Padoa Schioppa Report (1987), the Cecchini Report (1988), the Delor's Report (1989) and was adopted by the Commission (1990). See Viesti and Prota (2004), p. 20 and Bachtler (1997), p. 18.

[31] The first instrument is the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance, for the diversification of the fisheries sector; the second is the Cohesion Fund, established to finance projects in environmental protection and transport infrastructures in MSs whose GDP was less than 90% of the EU average.

[32] Nevertheless the Commission added a new priority objective to tackle problems of low population density in Finland and Sweden (Objective 6) and included the Austrian Burgenland region, suffering

However, in the late 1990s the fears of possible negative effects for economically backward areas of the imminent adoption of a single European currency and the opening of negotiations for annexation with several candidate countries,[33] called again for a wider reflection on the EU's objectives and on the potential of EU Regional Policy (cohesion policy) to face those future challenges, also in the light of its recent achievements. In the document 'Agenda 2000', the Commission presented the proposals for the following reform of Regional Policy, reiterating the need for a stout engagement of the EU towards the objective of socio-economic cohesion.

The policy was supported by an ambitious financial allocation covering the first five year period (1989–93) to the tune of 71.36 billion ECU, which over the years, with the combination of national, private and EIB loans, mushroomed to 211.8 billion ECU (Leonardi 2005: 51–55). During the second financial cycle, 1994–99, the financial commitments were doubled in terms of both initial EU allocations (162.1 billion ECU) and overall expenditure (421 billion ECU). The growing share of the EU's budget destined for Regional Policy confirmed its increasingly important role within the process of European integration: from 18% of the total allocation in 1987, to 29% in 1993, and 36% in 1999 (Viesti and Prota 2004: 24, 27). In this way Regional Policy became "the only redistributive policy of importance in an almost exclusively regulatory project of European integration", second only to the CAP for the allocation of financial resources (Hooghe 1996b: 115).

Regionalisation *via* EU Regional Policy

Having considered the process bringing the institutionalisation of a truly European Regional Policy, I shall now look at the main innovative features organizing its approach to territorial development. The main points of reference in framing this 'quasi-experiment' (Leonardi 2005) were contemporary endogenous growth theories in regional development, partly experimented in minor innovative programmes launched in the previous years (such as innovative actions under art.10 of the ERDF or the IMPs),[34] and principles of 'new public management' reforms.[35]

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industrial decline, in Objective 1 (promoting the development of the least developed EU regions). Those cases show the bargaining logic based on political consideration also often operating behind Structural Funds allocations. Viesti and Prota (2004), p.31.

[33] Negotiations were widened at the European Council held in Nice in December 2001, and in May 2004 ten of those countries became MSs of the EU: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta.

[34] The Integrated Mediterranean Programmes (IMPs) were projects launched in 1985 for the development of regions in Greece, Southern France and all of Italy following an innovative planning approach

Funds were no longer assigned to individual projects, but to programs covering a defined period of time according to a limited number of principles, in order to increase the policy's impact and to avoid the dispersion of available resources: there should have been *concentration* of resources in areas defined by *priority objectives* (i.e. disadvantaged areas designated by common EU criteria),[36] *complementarity* and *additionality* of EU measures *vis à vis* national regional policies, and both planning and implementation had to be undertaken within a *partnership* structure following the *programming* of the interventions, after prearranged phases.[37] Of those principles the one most relevant for our investigation is that of partnership, because it translates into practice the MLG idea of shared authority between actors at different territorial levels. According to the partnership principle, in fact, competent territorial authorities (chosen by the MS at national and regional levels, in agreement with the principle of subsidiarity) are asked to present to the Commission a multiyear plan in which development objectives for their territories were clearly stated. Following the submission of these plans, and in partnership with the interested territorial authorities, the Commission then drafted the Community Support Framework (CSF), which defined the priority axes of action, the financial means, and the forms of intervention. On the basis of the CSFs, the national and regional levels prepared their operational

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anticipating the following reform, to compensate the economies of those Southern MSs for the entry of Portugal and Spain (Bianchi 1993). The logic behind their adoption further confirms the tendency of MSs to adopt a nationalistic logic in bargainingover Structural Funds distribution (Viesti and Prota, 2004).

[35] The 'New Public Management' is an approach characterised by the introduction of organizational criteria of private companies (such as effectiveness, efficiency, quantification of results, customers' satisfaction, etc.) within public administrations, in order to improve their services to the citizens and lower their costs for governments. The approach builds upon a wider redefinition of state functions towards a reduction of public intervention and the opening to competition, the promotion of public-private partnerships, and a decentralisation of responsibilities. It has been mostly tested in Australia, the U.K. and the U.S. See Osborne and Gaebler (1992).

[36] There were five priority objectives for the 1989–93 planning period: Obj.1: promoting the development of the least developed regions; Obj.2: converting the regions seriously affected by industrial decline; Obj.3: combating long-term unemployment; Obj.4: facilitating the occupational integration of young people; Obj.5: a) accelerating the adjustment of agricultural structures, b) promoting the development of rural areas. The 1994–99 planning period added a sixth objective and slightly modified the others: Obj.1 and 2 were not changed, Obj.3 was dedicated to combating long-term unemployment and promoting the entry into the labour market of young and disadvantaged people; Obj.4: to facilitate the adaptation of workers to industrial changes; Obj.5: a) to speed up the adjustment of agricultural and fisheries structures, b) to facilitate rural developmental and structural adjustment of rural areas; Obj.6: to enhance the development of sparsely populated Nordic areas. For the 2000–2006 period priority objectives were halved in order to respect the principles of simplification and concentration: Obj.1 remained for the less developed regions, strictly limited to those whose *per capita* GDP was less than 75% of the EU average; Obj.2 was to assist regions confronted with major economic and social restructuring needs (industrial, services or fisheries sectors, rural and urban areas); Obj.3 would cover remaining regions, helping them to adapt their systems of education, training and employment. Bache (1998), pp.84, 124.

[37] For the 2000–2006 period objectives were reduced to three: *simplification* (reduction of programs, regulations and objectives); *concentration* (more resources distributed in smaller areas); enhanced *partnership* (a greater role of the local partners in the administration of resources); and *efficiency* in fund spending (directly rewarded with a reserve premium).

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programmes (OPs) indicating in greater detail the measures to be financed. Once the operational programmes were presented and accepted by the Commission the first transfer of EU funds could take place.

Over the different editions of the policy the Commission's requirements became more demanding, asking for increasingly accurate assessments in terms of planning, time scheduling in programming and spending, regular monitoring and especially of the different phases of the *evaluation* process (*ex-ante*, *interim* and *ex-post*) as a fundamental instrument to test and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the policies.

At a wider level a crucial innovation of the policy was the definition of its main objective. Although 'socio-economic cohesion' was said simply to translate the old wish of achieving a 'harmonious development' of the Union, its choice had not been fortuitous. The Commission's preference for cohesion among a variety of alternatives considered during the drafting of the SEA[38] had taken into account the "double-edged purposes of the policy" (Hooghe 1996b: 123): on the one hand EU Regional Policy had to respond to the value of solidarity, helping territorially disadvantaged or socio-economically deprived areas to enjoy equally the benefits of EU membership; on the other hand it had to promote competitiveness, stimulating local growth to make also backward regions able to compete in the global market and contribute to increasing the potential of the EU's economy. The choice of the term, however, also indicated the political will to give to the social component of the objective priority over the economic one. In fact the declared plan of President Jacques Delors when launching the reform was "to make cohesion the social counterpart to the dominant economic European project of the creation of a frontier-free market" (Hooghe 1996a: 5). From this perspective, the process of *negative integration* necessary for the establishment of the principle of free competition in view of the single market had to be flanked by one of *positive integration* actively supporting less advantaged areas and groups: "the '*espace libre*' needed to be complemented by an '*espace organisé*'" (Hooghe 1996a: 5-6).

The new policy regulations extended to virtually the whole EU territory a common vocabulary representing new organizational procedures as well as core principles and values. In this way, EU cohesion policy gradually became recognised as an organizational field, that is to say a "recognised area of institutional life which carries

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[38] Among the other possibilities considered ('structural policy', 'redistribution', 'solidarity/equity mechanism', 'convergence', 'regional and social development', 'social dimension', etc.) 'cohesion' – a term of French derivation – resulted in the most 'politically imaginative'. See Hooghe (1996b), p.123, n.9.

on an interrupted action of issuing of norms and regulations and control on the activity of other bodies" (Bonazzi 2000: 456), such as MSs, regions and local authorities. This mechanism was steered by the Commission, gradually taking on the role of an 'ideational entrepreneur', administering and disseminating ideas of appropriateness on regional development (Kohler-Koch 2002; H.Wallace 1998).[39] The extension of the Commission's fields of jurisdiction from the mere rule-making function officially attributed by the Treaties was actively sustained by a dense network of relations cultivated with experts (*comitology*) and clients (regional and local actors), giving birth to 'epistemic communities' around selected policy ideas (H.Wallace 1998: 57; Pierson 1998).

The following figure identifies the shift of the Regional Policy's paradigm promoted by the EU's Cohesion Policy following four main dimensions of proposed change: the organization of territorial relations and of decision-making procedures in planning, the means and the objectives of the policy). As previously argued, this shift mirrors the one from the previous 'national model' to the new 'European model'.

fig. 2.2 - Paradigm shift in the evolution of regional policies

Regional Policy	The 'national model' (1950s–1980s)	The 'EU model' (1990s–present)
Territorial relations	vertical relations based on state hierarchy, territory divided in centre and peripheries;	multilevel governance (EU, MS, regions) based on subsidiarity and cooperation, policentrism and territorial cohesion;
Planning	'top-down' planning; regional authorities as agents of the central government (principal);	'top-down' and 'bottom-up' planning, cooperative competition, regional authorities as actors responsible for their territories
Means	exogenous growth theories, sectoral actions, development of big industrial poles, bureaucratic management, indiscriminate distribution of economic subsidies in exchange of political consensus (short term);	endogenous growth theories, integrated actions, development of SMEs, new public management, selected incentives directed to institutional building (long term);
Objectives	state intervention to accommodate market requirements and equalise living standards within the national territory.	socio-economic and territorial cohesion: promoting economic growth and the reduction of inequalities in the European territory as a collective endeavour.

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[39] "Attributing to the Commission the role of an ideational entrepreneur does not imply that it creates new concepts, rather that it takes up what has been developed elsewhere and gives it a new drive. The power of such an entrepreneur, the relevance of EU framing and the importance of policy networks is an empirical question", Kohler-Koch (2002) p. 7.

The Europeanisation approach

The development of new theories acknowledging the emergence of multi-tiered structures of governance at the European level allowed a shift in the debate on European integration from the 'either-or' position of intergovernmentalists and supranationalists over the 'resilience-demise of the nation-state' thesis. On the other hand, however, "empirical research focusing on multilevel interactions tends either to emphasize the uniqueness of its objects, or to create novel concepts – which are likely to remain contested even among Europeanists" (Scharpf 2002: 11).

An adjustment to this flaw is offered by those approaches that, like historical institutionalism (HI), insert the study of European integration within a wider time-frame, not only registering change but also testing its range and questioning its direction: "[j]ust as a film often reveals meanings that cannot be discerned from a single photograph, a view of Europe's development over time gives us a richer sense of the nature of the emerging European polity" (Pierson 1998: 30). The assessment of emerging distinct EU policies and polity as a result of the gradual process of European integration brings HI near to neofunctionalist theories. However, HI diverges from neofunctionalism in two important aspects. First, it does not consider redistribution of power as a one-way transfer to supranational actors (as in a zero-sum game) but rather emphasises "how the evolution of rules and policies along with social adaptations create an increasingly structured polity", which offers political actors new opportunities while gradually limiting the range of possible options (Pierson 1998: 48). Second, it adopts a 'ladder model' of social change that also includes the possibility for backtracking: "[i]f interpreted in a dynamic, non-deterministic way, the path of institutional change is not seen as necessarily irreversible. Thus, the course and progression of the changes brought about are unclear and uncertain" (Featherstone 2001: 6).

As a consequence, the theoretical perspective of HI extends its field of observation over the process of European integration considering not only the emergence of distinct patterns of multilevel governance, but also their different degree of interpenetration and adaptation in the organizational logic of domestic politics and policy-making of actors (Ladrech 1994: 69). This kind of overarching approach has recently gained ground within the stream of 'Europeanisation' studies, considering institutionalisation related to EU integration as a combination of processes of "a) construction, b) diffusion and c) institutionalisation 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 EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic

(national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies" (Radaelli 2004: 3).

The influence of HI in Europeanisation studies is evident in the appreciation that institutions are embedded in specific historical paths and thus convergence towards a common European model will differ according to the features of the various socio-institutional settings: "[t]he effects of Europeanisation are generally asymmetrical: varying between sectors and location affected by distinct institutional settings" and therefore "[c]onvergence as a result of EU participation is far from being inevitable" (Featherstone 2001: 11, 3). As already seen in the case of HI, this means *first*, that an empirical investigation becomes crucial to assess the nature and extent of Europeanisation processes. *Second*, that like all processes of institutional change Europeanisation will have to be analysed in its two directions: '*top-down*' and '*bottom-up*'. The first direction is concerned with the mechanisms by which EU law, policies, principles and ideas influence the structural organization of society at various territorial levels; the second direction considers the ways in which EU institutions are influenced by the actors involved in the process of institutional change through their adaptation, imitation, use, translation or refusal of this change, giving input to the feed-back loop of the process of institutional change or blocking it (Czarniawska and Joerges 1995).

A distinction widely appreciated within the Europeanisation debate (*illustrated in table 2.2*) identifies three foremost mechanisms through which European integration proceeds 'top-down'. A *positive* kind of *integration* introduces binding prescriptions which replace national ones, although the level of adaptation required is partly left to national discretion and mainly depends on the institutional compatibility between the old and new institutional pattern ('*goodness of fit*' between domestic and European arrangements). *Negative integration* proceeds by removing those regulations which are considered as incompatible with the requirements of EU integration, and in so doing it alters the domestic opportunity structures organizing the distribution of power and resources among the actors, putting pressure for change on previous established equilibriums (Scharpf 1996). Finally, *framing integration* refers to a looser mechanism, which – following a cognitive logic – proceeds towards spreading common values and ideas, preparing the ground for future moves or policies that will probably need greater support to be implemented because of the underlying conflicts of interests between the different MSs, and that has to be oriented into a longer time-frame (Knill and Lehmkuhl 1999). It is especially this third type of European integration that we will see at work in the case study presented in the empirical part of this thesis.

Table 2.3 - 'Top-down' mechanisms of European integration
[after Knill and Lehmkuhl (1999)]

Types of European integration	Description of mechanisms used
NEGATIVE	removes regulations considered as incompatible with the requirements of EU integration; alters domestic opportunity structures, putting pressure for change on previously established equilibriums
POSITIVE	introduces binding prescriptions replacing national ones; adaptation varies according to institutional compatibility ('goodness of fit') between old-domestic and new-EU arrangements
FRAMING	spreads EU values and ideas, preparing – in a long time-frame – ground for policies that need greater support to be implemented because of their innovative potentials or of conflicting interests between MSs

A second distinction (*illustrated in table 2.3*), looks at the 'bottom-up' direction of Europeanisation, identifying three main kinds of responses given by domestic actors to the institutional change proposed by the EU: negation, adaptation and learning (Leonardi 2005: 80). In the case of *negation*, actors adopt a 'resistance to change' behaviour, which may represent a rational strategy when "the costs to the internal equilibrium within the political institutions and administrative structures are immediate and therefore considered to be greater than the external benefits to be accrued by civil society and the economy in the medium to long term" (Leonardi 2005: 80). The strategy followed by the *adaptation* response is that of a non-maximizing behaviour trying to innovate as little as necessary in order to accept the formal adoption of changes: "the maintenance of the administrative status quo is considered to be a higher good than the full implementation of the policy. Therefore, the extent of internal changes is reduced to a minimum, and what change is introduced has to be carried out in an incremental and gradual fashion" (Leonardi 2005: 82). Finally, the *learning* response typifies a strategy of compliance with the new rules and regulations in the attempt to maximize the benefits of the implemented policy, as perceived in a medium–long term perspective (Leonardi 2005: 82).

Table 2.4 - 'Bottom-up' responses to European integration

[after Leonardi (2005)]

Types of responses to Europeanisation	Actors' behaviour	Actors' time-frame perspective
Negation	non compliance with the new rules and procedures that administer the implementation of the policy	Short term
Adaptation	non-maximizing behaviour trying to innovate as little as necessary in order to accept the formal adoption of changes	Medium term
Learning	full compliance with the new rules and regulations in the attempt to maximize the benefits of the implemented policy	Long term

Crucial to the definition of the 'bottom-up' response is the presence or absence of 'mediating factors' (i.e. "the institutional and cultural conditions that facilitate or prohibit flexible responses to adaptational pressures") and actors able to exploit the opportunities offered by the institutions to produce structural change (Risse, Green Cowles, Caporaso 2001: 9, 11).[40]

Clearly those distinctions represent ideal-types: in reality the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' directions of change are intertwined; there may be different kinds of motivations influencing the integration mechanisms or adaptation strategies, and the shift over time from one type to the other is not necessary or linear in nature. These distinctions only represent useful analytical tools for the study of institutions and the comparison of variations through time and between the units analysed in empirical research, as will be better specified in the next chapter.

Conclusion

As seen in the first chapter, the theoretical perspective adopted here – that of Historical Institutionalism – recognises the influence of past institutional settings in present and future institutional life, but also allows for the existence of 'critical junctures' when historical development moves onto a new path. In this chapter I have argued that one of those moments is represented by the introduction of socio-economic cohesion as one of the main objectives of the EU, and a new regional policy as one of the means to realise it. The institutional change in the organization of territory proposed by the reformed EU Regional Policy offers regional actors the opportunity to shift from the centralistic model of hierarchical relations organizing nation states to a polycentric one, consisting of intertwining cooperative networks of governance throughout the EU territory, here seen as the application of a wider 'European model' in the organization of power relations.

This consideration does not posit a 'Europe of the Regions' vs. a 'Europe of States' scenario. *Regionalisation* is here interpreted as part of a wider shift of structural organization, diffused throughout the EU territory, towards a model based on multi-tiered and cooperative decision-making and power-sharing. However, the response of national and subnational actors within the EU to the regionalisation promoted by the

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[40] Among those factors, the authors suggest the presence/absence of: multiple veto points (given that the more power dispersed across the political system the more difficult it is to foster the domestic consensus to introduce change); mediating formal institutions (improve actors' capacity to induce change); political and organizational cultures (since cooperative decision-making culture facilitates policy learning); see Risse, Green Cowles, Caporaso (2001), p. 10.

'EU model' will vary according to the different socio-institutional contexts and thus convergence remains a matter of empirical investigation. It is thus the aim of our research to focus on the case of the regional response, to consider in what ways the regionalisation model proposed by the EU through its Regional Policy since 1988 has influenced the organization of subnational territories previously defined according to the 'centre-periphery' logic typically distinguishing the organization of modern nation states. Before doing that, I need to acknowledge the methodological choices made to operationalise my theoretical assumptions into a research design that frames the empirical work.

Chapter 3: Linking theory and evidence
in the study of institutional change: some methodological reflections

The previous chapters have set out the theoretical assumptions underpinning this research, while the next ones will consider the empirical evidence deriving from the research analysis that, in turn, will inform the theoretical assumptions and lead us to the thesis conclusions. This twofold movement from theory to evidence is a basic feature of social research: "[a]s researchers our primary goal is to link the empirical and the theoretical – to use theory to make sense of evidence and to use evidence to sharpen and refine theory. This interplay helps us to produce theoretically structured descriptions of the empirical world that are both meaningful and useful" (Ragin 1992: 225).

What establishes the link between theory and evidence, allowing for this circular movement, is the research methods. In this chapter I shall clarify the main methodological issues that emerge in the main steps undertaken to build the link between the theoretical assumptions and the empirical evidence in this thesis.

Qualitative analysis and research on institutions

The different theoretical approaches to the study of institutions considered in chapter one (and in chapter two when applied to the EU case) are adopted by scholars according to the empirical task in hand, but they also indirectly reveal something of their epistemological beliefs. In the case of the author of this thesis, the recognition of the *embeddedness* of the actors as well as their limited rational behaviour, the acknowledgement of existing paths of dependency but also of the possibility for social change, the adoption of a definition of institutions including informal norms and discursive logic, all show a preference for a 'middle-range theory' (Merton 1957).

The 'weaker' theoretical assumptions of this approach require research methods that proceed to the framing of evidence according to a flexible research design, allowing for a multifaceted consideration of the variables. This does not amount to developing theoretical concepts only after immersion in the details and specifics of the data observed. The 'selective attention' adopted by theoretical premises limiting the cases studied, in fact, is crucial in helping the researcher to restrict the field of inquiry, which would otherwise become boundless and entangled.

As said, this choice also has to do with the empirical task of the research, which in our case (exploring the promotion of institutional change in two path-dependent regions) requires design flexibility in order to allow the researcher "to [adapt] inquiry as

understanding deepens and/or situations change; avoids getting locked into rigid designs that eliminate responsiveness" (Patton 1990: 41). In this way the researcher will be able to register also unexpected patterns or events if they emerge. For these reasons, a research method flexible and particularly oriented towards exploration, discovery and inductive logic was identified as better suited for the purposes of this thesis: (Patton 1990: 45): the 'case study', investigated through detailed historical and empirical analysis.

Choosing the case study

In a very broad sense a case can be defined as "a whole circumscribed in time and space" (Wieviorka 1992: 166). However there are different ways of looking at and using the case study as a research method. In line with what has just been said with regard to this author's methodological position, this thesis adopts a view looking at the case study as a theoretically motivated narrowing of the empirical focus (Ragin 1992). From this view case studies are considered as theoretical constructs which allow researchers to carry out empirical investigation, while case categories are conceived as constructs that are built in the course of the research itself. Thus what the research is really 'a case of' may not be known until after part of the empirical investigation has been carried out (Ragin 1992: 6; Wieviorka 1992; Becker 1992).

This was so also for this research, whose very first cue came from the reading of Putnam's work on Italian regions and his challenging thesis linking the poor performance of the *Mezzogiorno* regions, at both the institutional and economic level, to its socio-cultural traditions (Putnam 1993). Besides the more specific theoretical problems of Putnam's book (largely investigated by the literature and partly discussed in chapter one), what as a 'Sardinian reader' I found problematic in his argument was the inclusion of Sardinia within the wider category of Southern Italy not only because of shared developmental problems (linked to the dual economy of the of the Country) but also because of socio-cultural and historical similarities. However, for historical and cultural reasons, Sardinia sharply differs from other Southern Italian regions (which, in their turn, are internally differentiated) and holds among its most established 'political myths' a past of self-government and rebellion against foreign rule. Moreover, official statistics show significant differences between Sardinia and other Southern Italian regions in terms of social indicators (because of its relatively lower rates for births, population density, diffused criminality) also with reference to those indicators linked to

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the 'social capital' dimension (such as a relatively higher number of voluntary associations and political participation rates in the island) (Istat 2001, Nuzzo 2006). Cultural and social specificity are partly linked to another feature differentiating Sardinia from other Southern regions also often neglected, namely its territorial remoteness from the rest of the South, as well as from the rest of the 'continent'. Therefore the reasons behind the developmental problems and the poor institutional performance approximating the Sardinian case to that of Southern Italian regions seemed to deserve further investigation.

Those considerations confirm the fact that in social research it is not only methodological issues but also practical and contextual considerations that lead to the choice of a research design (Gerring 2004: 352–353). In my case the fact of being Sardinian played a crucial role in fostering the initial motivation behind this thesis. However, the decision to delve into the study of the Sardinian case was gauged as an opportunity to reflect on wider theoretical issues, namely over the reasons behind the persistent backwardness and institutional failures of territories which have noteworthy potentials in terms of socio-economic development but share the heavy weight of a history of peripherality, backwardness and dependency, and over their possibilities for change.

As we shall see in chapter five, mainly after the Second World War the question of Sardinian backward development was included, together with the wider *Mezzogiorno* issue, within governmental plans for reconstruction and industrial development in post-war Italy. As seen in chapter two, those national regional policies, defined 'top-down' according to exogenous theories of growth privileging large industries, were related to a model organizing territorial and power relations within nation states according to a centralised and hierarchical logic. The historical analysis of development policies in Sardinia from the 1960s considered in chapter five will show that alternative models of development were also introduced, but that the prevailing 'national model' organizing society at the time did not allow them to take root. Conversely, as argued in chapter two, the reference to theories of endogenous development made by EU Regional Policy since 1988 was supported by a European model of multilevel governance respective of subsidiarity and a 'bottom-up' definition of territory.

As already said, scholars of Europeanisation processes have looked at the impact of EU Regional Policy in the reorganization of power and territorial relations predominately through the analysis of mainstream programmes considered within a framework gauging variations occurring within the EU–MSs' relationship. Accordingly,

subnational units are mainly considered as a case study of their respective nation state and compared with other subnational units considered as representative of their respective national cases (Ladrech 1994; Boerzel 2001; Giuliani 2001; Gualini 2005).

This thesis, in order to better emphasise the specificity of the regional response to the 'EU model', will consider an innovative experimental case of EU Regional Policy (Community Initiative INTERREG) rather than mainstream Structural Funds. In fact, *first*, the experimental character of the initiative extended the innovative approach introduced by EU Regional Policy to territorial partnerships defined beyond the national logic (according to what later became defined as 'territorial cohesion') making it a particularly coherent case of what I termed the 'European model'; *second*, its relatively low budget (if compared with that of mainstream Structural Funds) allowed me to focus on the institutional rather than on the socio-economic impact of the policy; *third*, the policy was among the most relevant of Community Initiatives, and thus it was reconfirmed during three planning periods, allowing a sufficient time to evaluate its impact in the regions; *fourth*, the fact that the policy was directly addressed to interregional cooperation (as well as its lower budget) generally allowed a limited intervention in the programme of the MSs, concentrated on the management of mainstream funds.

When this research was begun in 1998, INTERREG was not as well-known as it later became within EU Regional Policy. Over time, the initiative has grown in relevance in terms of its coherence, importance, financing, and visibility in extending its logic and influence through the strengthening and proliferation of the policy networks. The growing role attributed to the initiative within EU Regional Policy culminated in the mainstreaming of the approach as one of its three priority objectives for the actual 2007–13 planning period. This outcome can also be read as a confirmation of the significant contribution given by INTERREG to the evolution of EU Regional Policy: by promoting the 'European model' among regions and other subnational actors cooperating beyond national borders, the initiative has contributed to legitimise territorial development as an European rather than an inter-state matter and to add a spatial perspective to the cohesion objective.

The INTERREG programme identified for the aims of the present research was the "France–Italy 'islands' programme", promoting cooperation between the island regions of Corsica and Sardinia, no longer seen as peripheries of two bordering nation states but as European territories defining a common strategy for their development.

Defining the units of analysis

While the choice of the first unit of analysis (the Sardinian region) was, as previously mentioned, motivated by both practical and theoretical concerns, the choice of the second unit of analysis in a sense 'imposed itself', because of the existence of the INTERREG programme between Sardinia and the French island region of Corsica. As I shall explain in chapter six, the initial idea of the European Commission in launching the initiative between the islands was that the creation of a Corso-Sardinian pole would have helped the regions to overcome their peripherality and better integrate with the activities of the EU's economic core, within the picture of the Single European Market. However, gradually the INTERREG initiative was inserted within an increasingly coherent innovative approach to territorial development defined by the Commission's services for Regional Policy, considering institutional capacity building and interregional cooperative planning as a fundamental aspect enhancing socio-economic and territorial cohesion.

The case of Corsica was functional to the comparative aims of the thesis: in fact "[a] comparison may have at least two main functions. It may help deconstruct what common sense takes to be unique or unifies. On the contrary, it may construct the unity of what seems to be broken up into practical categories. It is never so useful as when it combines these two functions and thus justifies both the deconstruction of a preconception and the construction of a scientific category" (Wieviorka 1992: 170).

Analysing the implementation of the same regional policy in two regions belonging to different states could help, on the one hand, in the task of 'deterritorialising' the regions from their previous national model (i.e., 'denationalising' them): thus Sardinia could be seen not (mainly) as a case of Italy, or of the *Mezzogiorno*, and Corsica not (exclusively) as a case of France, but rather as territorial actors with specific features seen from a 'bottom-up' perspective. On the other hand, the INTERREG programme also provided the regions with an existing policy framework, recontextualising their territories as 'islands of Western-Mediterranean Europe'.

Several similarities can be found between Corsica and Sardinia (*see also the figures in the annexes*). *First*, the insular condition and their geographical setting in the Western-Mediterranean, only 15km of distance from one another. *Second*, the long-lasting condition of socio-economic backwardness and peripherality that characterises

them within their respective states and the EU.[41] *Third*, a similar past history, diverging from that of what later became their nation states, characterised by the notion of a local 'people' and experiences of self-government and local heroes, regularly mythically revived by separatist movements. Related to the previous point is a *fourth* similarity, namely the presence on the islands of distinctive cultural and linguistic traditions, traditionally dismissed or banished in social life by national culture and language, thus nurturing the feeling of – material and cultural – distance of islanders from their fellow citizens (who they used to call '*continentals*') and, *fifth*, a stereotypical image of the islanders diffused within their respective national contexts – more often than not expressed in negative but also romantic terms – as being individualistic people linked to strong family ties, archaic and violent social values, typical of traditional pastoral and agricultural societies.

The main differences between the two regions, besides the smaller dimension and lower population density of Corsica, are to be related – in the opinion of this author – to their relationship with their respective nation states, which will largely be considered in the second section. The formal structure of France and Italy is quite similar (as it will be said, the newborn Italian state used the older French one as its main model): they both can be classified as Western nation-states having a centralised bureaucracy, a multi-party system, a capitalist economy allowing extensive state intervention in the market (Tarrow 1977: 6). Also relations between centre and periphery are organized in both states according to a decentralised system of political and administrative territorial authorities. However, at an informal level, while Italian territorial authorities always benefited from a large degree of independence from state control, the presence of the state (in the person of the prefect) has always played a strong 'tutorship' role ('*la tutelle*') in the life of the French periphery.

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[41] In 2002 Corsica and Sardinia were still amongst the EU-15 regions with the lowest employment rates, respectively 44.8% and 46.7%. In the same year, the total unemployment rate in Corsica was 13.1%, of which 44.2% concerned young people; in Sardinia the respective rates were 18.5% and 48.3% (Eurostat 2002). Structural unemployment drives young people to look for work on 'the continent' or abroad. The problem of depopulation is particularly relevant in the internal areas, since induced modernisation propelled the population shifts towards the few larger cities and the coast, where job opportunities are offered by public administration and a tourism sector concentrated in the summer season. Another problem is the poor quality of public infrastructure: the regions present the lowest level of electrification within their countries, an outdated and inadequate system of internal transport, and the additional costs of insularity for external transport for passengers and freight (CRENOS 2003). Since the reform of the SFs, Corsica and Sardinia have been inserted into the Objective 1 programmes designed for regions whose GDP per head is less than 75% of the EU average. After an initial period of stalemate, both regions gradually converged until they exceeded the threshold: Corsica entered the 'phasing out' stage in the 2000–06 programming period, while Sardinia was inserted for the 2007–13 period in the 'phasing in' (a sort of transitional phase) to the Regional Competition and Employment objective (differently from Southern Italian regions, which were all included within the Convergence objective, with only Basilicata 'phasing out').

The 1948 Republican Italian Constitution defined regions as one of the three levels of local government (in France this recognition came only with the 1982–83 reforms) and granted the Sardinian region an autonomous status and a special statute. We shall see how this has been partly a facade, and how in reality Italian regions – especially in the *Mezzogiorno* – were entangled within a dependent relation with the central government, based on a clientelistic political system. Nevertheless, this allowed the possibility for the regional identities, also in the case of a 'special region' like the Sardinian one, to be 'inserted' in the national picture. Conversely, the French state repeatedly refused to recognise the 'speciality' of the Corsican region within the national framework, if not for geographic reasons linked to insularity; regional identity in the island thus came to be defined in antagonistic terms *vis à vis* the French state (as documented by the violent hallmark of separatist movements). Given those premises, the INTERREG 'islands' programme presented itself as a 'least likely case' or at least a 'difficult case', where the success of public policies based on the use of cooperation to facilitate the achievement of common goals could be tested.

Accounting for the time factor

As argued in the previous chapters, the time factor is a crucial aspect to be considered when studying processes of institutional change. This has been taken into account in the research design through two main steps. *First*, the INTERREG 'islands' programme, identified as the 'new' European model proposed to the regions, was considered in all its three subsequent editions (from 1990 to 2005), allowing a sufficient time lapse to test the results of its implementation in the regions (presented in section III). Despite proximity, common problems and similarities the two island regions had never engaged in long-lasting exchanges or cooperation, but rather looked to their central government as the almost exclusive interlocutor. The fact that Corsica and Sardinia were lacking previously relevant traditions of partnership could allow better control of the role of INTERREG in promoting cooperation and cohesion among the two regions. *Second*, in order to better appreciate the significance of the proposed change in respect to previous relationships, I have included a historical analysis of the developmental policies implemented in the regions by their central government since WW2 (section II). In a before/after comparison, the previous 'national model' (reconstructed through the analysis of secondary literature) will be contrasted with the new 'European model', as defined by Cohesion Policy in INTERREG (reconstructed through field research).

These two steps are driven by the theoretical indications offered by the historical-institutionalist approach to the study of institutional change, as seen in the previous chapters: on the one hand, to consider how constraints imposed on institutional reform may be dependent on previously adopted institutional paths; on the other hand, to make sure that the recognition of the *embeddedness* of social action in given historical and social contexts does not amount to assuming deterministic accounts of social change, but considers the institutional gaps and historical junctures offering actors possibilities for variation and change.

Formulating the research hypotheses

The theoretical position of HI is thus reflected in the definition of our explanatory model. In this regard, this thesis follows those scholars arguing that Europeanisation, like most processes of ongoing institutional change, is a process that "comes about through a series of steps" (Becker 1992: 208) and thus does not easily fit within the language of dependent/independent variables or with a logic of regression analysis (Olsen 1996: 271; Featherstone and Radaelli 2003: 4). Rather, it implies the idea of a multiplicity of factors coevolving, parallel, and not necessarily strictly coupled (Olsen 1996: 271; Gualini 2005: 499). From the standpoint of the model of 'weak causation' here adopted, the 'independent variable' can be considered to be the INTERREG 'islands' programme, seen as a case of the 'European model' (a new institutional setting, organizing power and territory according to the principles of MLG and territorial cohesion). Our dependent variable will be the regional administrations of Corsica and Sardinia, considered as actors embedded in the norms prevalent in their respective socio-cultural and institutional contexts.

As argued above, the research has been designed as a 'least likely case' to strengthen the validity of the argument developed by the research hypothesis, if confirmed: on the one hand, INTERREG represents an innovative Regional Policy requiring the two regions to cooperate in the self-management of strategies for their territorial development; on the other, the regions share a long experience of state-assisted development policies, whose failures have been related to local traditions of individual-familism, hampering institutional performance and thus regional development.

The theoretical hypothesis developed in the previous chapters, however, holds that institutional settings may change actors' behaviour, and more precisely, that cooperative

behaviour can be enhanced by specific forms of network governance. Thus the research question will be: "How have regional actors responded to the new institutional setting proposed by INTERREG?"

If the prevalent response through the different editions of the INTERREG 'islands' programme is lengthy refusal of the European model by the regions, or even a merely formal adaptation (while informally it is the old logic that moves the actors), our hypothesis would be negated. Indeed, in this case, the fact that the actors adopt a strategy exploiting the benefits of the policy with a minimum adoption of the formal requirements may indicate that the transition costs linked to change from the previous setting of reference are still too high (and thus that it is not yet time for multilevel governance and territorial cohesion). Or, it could be read as a validation of a deterministic version of the path dependency argument.

The research hypothesis would be confirmed if we predominantly notice a significant change towards the 'EU model', as coherently registered in regional actors' behaviour, planning strategies, and discourses. In fact this would suggest that the institutional setting proposed by the EU facilitates the regions in learning how to operate as responsible actors, participating in a collective endeavour and considering what are the long-term advantages of cooperation. In this case a possible explanation of the persistence of regional backwardness could suggest that the individualistic component of their socio-cultural traditions may have been nurtured by their previous centre-periphery setting, as proposed at the national level – a hypothesis to be explored with further research.

A second question to be addressed is that, considering possible differences between the two regional actors, do the responses adopted by the Sardinian and the Corsican region differ? In what ways? The answer to those questions will refer to the similarities or differences between the two regions in terms of the presence or absence of those 'mediating factors' (such as features of institutional context, or political or economic entrepreneurs) that may have reinforced or obstructed ongoing change.

Collecting the data

The evaluation of the impact of INTERREG in the regional actors involved in the policy (described in chapter six) constitutes the original part of the empirical research, and is based on the analysis of two main types of primary sources relative to the planning and management of the policy: documentary analysis (official and internal

administrative records, such as planning documents, minutes from monitoring committees, letters between the partners) and in-depth interviews with the national, regional, and EU administrators involved in directed management of the analysed policy. The data collected have been further triangulated with information derived from secondary sources (such as evaluation studies) and short interviews with informed observers (such as administrators, politicians, or academics only partly involved in the programme considered).

The interviews started in 1999 and were followed up until 2005. Each interview has been coded according to the main issues emerging from discussions starting from basic questions posed by the author to the administrators, with reference to the implementation and management of the programme from their side and that of the other partners. Quotations from different interviews (either with different interviewees or with the same interviewee in a different phase of the programme) have been confronted among them, as well as with further information from the pertinent planning documents. Quotations from the interviews have been extensively reported in the text, without revealing the name of the interviewees – out of respect for their privacy – unless the information was not considered to be sensitive, but always indicating his or her institution of reference (E = European Commission; I = Italy; F = France; S = Sardinia; C = Corsica). The language of the interviews was either Italian (for partners at the Sardinian region, the Italian ministries, and the Commission) or French (for partners at the Corsican region, at the French prefecture and at the Commission) and sometimes a mixture of the two (for some Corsican partners); the translations into English in the text are mine (a complete list of the interviewees' names and their institution of reference is included in the annexes).

Being Sardinian has certainly represented a comparative advantage in terms of access to information and institutional actors at the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (RAS), but also at the Collectivité Territoriale Corse (CTC) – given Corsican sympathy for islanders and Italians in general. Crucial for the research was my traineeship at the European Commission, Directorate General for Regional Policy (October 2000– February 2001), which represented a unique opportunity both for grasping the functioning of EU Regional Policy, the organization and workings of the Commission's services, and having access to the material and people related to the programme I was analysing.

The choice of reiterating the interviews, in order to add necessary information and adopt a longer time-frame, has often allowed the creation of friendly contacts with the

administrators involved in the policy management. The establishment of a setting where the interviewees could feel at ease has been crucial to developing a better insight into the point of view of the different territorial actors and thus to better appreciate what represented for each of them the main difficulties in the programme management. Interviewing people at their place of work was also very instructive, in that it allowed me to compare the different internal structuring of the institutions considered, as well as their accessibility and openness to the civil society.

Finally, further research on related issues (by participating in a CRPM study on the INTERREG IIC for the Western-Mediterranean regions, or evaluations of the Sardinian region in the management of the Structural Funds, or some of the INTERREG 'islands' projects) has represented a further opportunity to broaden my knowledge on the questions considered by this thesis.

Conclusion

The choice of studying Europeanisation by deepening the historical and contextual analysis of a focused case study clearly presents some weaknesses that need to be acknowledged.

First, case-oriented research, differently from the variable-oriented approach, places cases at the centre, studying how different features or causes fit together in individual cases (Ragin 1992: 5). This leads to the researcher engaging in the research to "dirty his hands" (Hirsch *et al.* 1990: 43) with in-depth empirical research and the consequent emergence of a multiplicity of factors, not necessarily strictly coupled, which hinder the explanatory power of the analysis. *Second*, the rootedness of a focussed study in a given social, historical, and temporal context hampers the possibility of generalising findings across time and space because of their 'context sensitivity' (Patton 1990: 40). *Third*, both the contextual character of the case study and its weak causal explanatory power lead to the criticism that "such analyses devote so much attention to how the result comes about that critics complain that the explanations are tautological" (Becker 1992: 209).

These limits are inbred in the adopted methodological approach, which has been chosen in line with the aims of the research as well as with the epistemological position adopted by the researcher: for this reason they may also appear – in her view – like as many strengths. *First*, research on institutional change or on Europeanisation using in-depth qualitative analysis reveals the priority of the researcher's investigation to gain

heuristic learning rather than theoretical stringency (Gualini 2005: 499). *Second*, part of the criticism moves from an epistemological bias towards an evolutionary, positivistic interpretation of the social sciences, which considers the categories produced by the research as social laws, rather than analytical tools. However "[c]ase studies have now acquired a different status. No longer located in an evolutionary perspective that transcends it, nor defined by its incomparability, a case becomes the opportunity to discover knowledge about how it is both specific to and representative of a larger phenomenon. Its originality does not keep us from making comparisons, and its representativeness does not refer to a metasocial law, but to analytical categories" (Wieviorka 1992: 170). Thus what is considered in the comparison of responses to institutional change in Corsica and Sardinia may be noteworthy in the study of other actors locked in paths of dependency.

Finally, even assuming as a limit of the in-depth analysis of a case study its weak, causal explanatory power, this limit would be compensated by the greater richness the analysis offers from the 'understanding' side of research methods. In fact, while avoiding the undervaluing of the object of his or her study, the researcher deepens the case study analysis in order to reveal unexpected features that challenge traditional views on the matter, to discover subvarieties of what seemed on the surface to be one sole thing, or to confirm or disconfirm what is already known with new, updated evidence (Becker 1992: 210). The stereotypical or simplistic representation of the regions, for instance, is certainly rejected by the present research, offering a different view of the two islands.

SECTION II

Regional policies and regionalisation in Corsica and Sardinia: the 'national model'

In the first section we saw that institutional change is constrained by previously adopted paths. Because the 'new' is embedded in the 'old', in order to appreciate the quality of the possible change of regional actors towards the model organizing territorial and power relations proposed by the EU, we need to consider their adaptation to the 'national model' hitherto established. Thus, before considering the response of the island regions of Corsica and Sardinia to an EU policy launched in the 1990s promoting interregional cooperation (*section III*), in this section I will build an analytical history on the evolution of territorial relations and regional policies on the islands since the end of World War Two.

In fact both France and Italy – following the principle of national solidarity – launched development policies aimed at tackling the backwardness and peripherality within their territories, which were increasingly demanded by regionalist movements also calling for the protection of their local language and traditions. However, central mistrust of the potential of the endogenous resources of Corsica and Sardinia – still structured in traditional socio-economic patterns – led to the adoption of exogenous models of development aiming to launch modernisation and integration in the shortest possible term. Regionalisation was mainly (when not formally, in practice) defined according to an image of territory structured according to a centre/periphery model, and policy planning for backward regions was defined 'top-down' by central governments' bureaucrats.

The frequent distorted use of the public funds destined for regional development, often paid out to the regional *élite* by national politicians in exchange for electoral consensus, degraded civic and political life on the islands and frustrated their expectations for future change. As we shall see, there were notable endeavours moving towards an alternative model in organizing territorial relations and development policies, but they were not yet widely legitimised. It is only since the 1980s (in France) and 1990s (in Italy) that wide-ranging efforts to redefine relations between state and society were launched, and regional policies revised in the light of those new reflections and the failures of previous models.

*"Comme la belle France serait plus heureuse si,
au lieu d'avoir un centre elle en avait dix,
dispensant autour d'eux la lumière et la richesse".*[42]

Chapter 4 - Regional policy and the Corsican question in France

The island of Corsica is a relatively recent territorial acquisition of the French state. Located in the centre of the Western-Mediterranean, the history of the 'island of beauty' was punctuated by external raids and occupations by different seafaring peoples. The most long-lasting influence on local customs, culture and architecture came from Genoese rule, which lasted nearly four centuries. A crucial episode in the collective identity of the islanders is the 'Corsican Revolution', a period of prolonged unrest against foreign rule, which culminated in 1755 with the election of Pascal Paoli as General of the Corsican nation. Under his rule a Constitution was adopted, a liberal legal code introduced, and agriculture and education encouraged for the new independent Republic,[43] which, however, did not have a long life: in 1768 Genoa, recognising its inability to maintain control over the island, sold its sovereignty rights to France, which defeated Corsican patriots at Ponte Novo in May 1979.

Corsica was thus 'attached to the hexagon' both before the French Revolution (as a dependency of the monarchy) and after it (as one of the departments further sealed in the centralistic structure by one of the island's most distinguished sons, Napoleon Bonaparte).[44] French institutions were rooted in a long-established ideological tradition of *étatisme* (a conception expressing a 'state above society' relation for which the state has the right and duty to intervene to shape the destiny of the country).[45] State interventionism and control also extended to the cultural and the social *mores* of the periphery, leading to a "gradual but ruthless suppression of all linguistic and regional identities, and the idea of nation became largely synonymous with that of the state itself" (Cole 1998: 6).

Thus French was imposed as the official language of administration, education, commerce and politics on the island, but Corsican remained the spoken language of the

[42] This citation from J.W. Goethe (1749-1832) was quoted in the Hautreux-Rochefort Report (1964), which, within the debate in those years on territorial development, supported the need to develop metropolitan areas alternative to Paris, able to redress an imbalanced spatial pattern of territorial development. Loeiz (2002), p.23.

[43] The city of Corte, in the centre of the island, was both the capital of the new state and the seat of a University which, founded in 1765, was closed by the French four years later. Hudson (1997), p.xxii.

[44] Napoleon Bonaparte was born in Ajaccio on the 15th August 1769, just a few months after the defeat in May of Corsican patriots by the French army in Ponte Novo.

[45] Wright (1998), p.361. The legacy dated back to the *Ancien Régime* (assimilating royal authority to divine will) and particularly to the politics of state interventionism and central control launched by Louis XIV and his minister Colbert. Stevens (1996), p.8.

inhabitants, still organized in *clans* (social networks based on customary schemes of self-help and mutual aid derived from extended family circles). The clans were headed by the *capurali* (or *principali*), who effectively ruled the island (Ramsay 1983: 13). It was with these individuals that the various national representatives had to ally themselves in order to exert their control: the exchange was between "the undoubted influence of the clan leaders and to give them in return patronage and favours to distribute amongst their *clientèle*" (Ramsay 1983: 13). Still today family names are often a more reliable label than party affiliations and political posts are 'inherited' by sons from fathers, which is why *clanisme* was repeatedly denounced by contemporary regionalist movements as one of the main obstacles to political reform in Corsica (Briquet 1997).

At the end of the 18th century Francois Miot, the General Administrator of the island, granted a series of concessions (*les arêtes Miot*) covering customs, administrative, judicial and fiscal fields, originally conceived as temporary derogation to national regulations. The poor conditions of the island gradually improved during the 19th century, when a railway and new roads were constructed, agriculture was expanded bringing under cultivation *maquis* areas, primary schools were established, and banditry was strongly suppressed. However, the agrarian collapse at the end of the century and the losses in manpower due to emigration and later to heavy conscription for the World Wars interrupted development plans put forward by the government, leaving the island in a condition of social and economic backwardness that triggered the resurgence of banditry.[46] The increased gap with the rest of the country, which was meanwhile experiencing the first wave of industrialisation, was also in terms of delayed socio-political modernisation: politics on the island continued to be organized around local notables, while entrepreneurship, trade unions and civic associationism were almost non-existent.[47]

In the period straddling the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, France experienced an outbreak of regional movements (in Alsace, Bretagne,

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[46] Tracing the history of the demographic evolution of the island is very problematic, because censuses were very imprecise and often inflated for electoral reasons. Available data show that emigration was quite high in the 17th and 18th centuries, diminished in the 19th century, and grew again after 1918, especially to the US and the French colonies (where Corsicans represented a large percentage of the administration), as well as towards mainland France (especially Marseille). Hudson (1997), pp. xxiii-xxiv); Antonetti (1990).

[47] Gramsci's thesis on the lack of an organized working class in Southern Italy because of its late modernisation is also applicable to the Corsican case. The regeneration of trade unionism was mainly a top-down initiative born with development policies in the mid-1960s, given central planning's attempts to bypass the traditional network of power of the local notables in order to include *les forces vives* of society. Crettiez (1999), p.275.

Languedoc, and Pays Basque), mainly expressing the defence by conservative peripheral *élites* of local identities and rural traditions against republicanism's modernising reforms (Pasquier 2003: 123). Also, in Corsica there was a revival of awareness of the specificity of insular identity and culture,[48] bringing again to the surface the old conflict between its Corso-Genoese and French traditions.[49] However, when in 1938 the Italian Fascist press called for the annexation of Corsica, '*terra italianissima*', the answer of the population reunited in Bastia was the solemn oath "*Before the world, and with all our soul, we swear in our glories, on our tombs, and on our cradles, to live and die French!*" (Ramsay 1983: x; Antonetti 1990: 461). After Corsica's occupation by Mussolini's troops in 1942, the '*Opération Vésuve*', launched by de Gaulle in October 1943 made Corsica the first French *département* to be liberated. The island would remain one of the most Gaullist regions: "Corsican identification with France was never higher than at the moment of the Liberation".[50] Unfortunately, this *entente* was not destined to have a long life.

The challenges of territorial planning to economic growth

The government of the Fourth French Republic – the political regime created by the 1946 Constitution – faced both the needs of post-war reconstruction and those of modernisation of a predominantly rural society with a stagnant economy that was still mostly based on agriculture (Hall 1986: 140). The strategy chosen for the rapid upturn of the country's economy, which in the spate of thirty years (*les Trente Glorieuses*) transformed France into an urban industrialised country and one of the leading world economies, was one of state-led growth characterised by the "expansion of the nationalized sector, a highly interventionist industrial policy towards the private sector, the extensive use of diplomatic pressure in support of exports and the development of a system of national economic planning" (Hall 1986: 140).

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[48] In 1896 appeared *A Tramuntana*, the first review in the Corsican language and in 1922 the autonomist movement *Partitu Corsu d'Azione* was founded, which became *Partitu Corsu Autonomistu* in 1927.

[49] Corsica was considered as one of the lands that had been stolen from Italy, and thus was not yet redeemed (*terre irredente*) by the Italian movement of '*irredentismo*'. In his *Primato morale e civile degli Italiani* (1843) Gioberti called on Corsicans to free themselves from France, while in the 1840s Mazzini repeatedly tried to involve them in the movement that eventually led toward Italian unity (*Risorgimento*). After the fall of Napoleon III the dislike on the part of the republicans in power of an island that had given birth to the first tyrant of France led the radical deputy Clemenceau to propose to the National Assembly a separation of Corsica from the Republic. However, Vittorio Emanuele II (the new king of Italy) believed that an Italian annexation of the island would not have benefited good-neighbour relations with France. Antonetti (1990), pp.457–459.

[50] Ramsay (1983), p.23. Besides this emotional link with the memory of General de Gaulle, it is a more general tendency toward conservatism that characterises electoral behaviour on the island that can explain the continuing support for Gaullism in Corsica. See Antonetti (1990), p.484.

The centrepiece of the strategy was national economic planning, initiated in 1946 with the establishment of an independent national planning commission (*Commissariat Général du Plan*), reporting to the Prime Minister and headed by Jean Monnet. The CGP's main task was the preparation of a five year national socio-economic planning document (*Plan de modernisation et d'équipement*), positing a series of economic scenarios for the following years and giving indications on the industrial goals and techniques to be adopted in order to reorganize and modernise the productive system of the nation (Hall 1986: 140). The CGP could rely on data provided by the Ministry of Finance and the newly-created National Agency for the Analysis of Economic Statistics (INSEE) as well as the advice of a network of committees ('modernisation commissions') whose opinions were integrated into the draft of the Plan to be discussed in front of the National Assembly before preparing the final draft (Hall 1986: 141). The correct implementation of the large-scale decisions of the Plan was to be assured by functionaries trained at the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* (ENA), which opened in 1945 and soon gained an influential position. The ENA graduates thought "that the restoration and rebuilding of the French economy depended upon them as much as, if not more than, upon the politicians" (Stevens 1996: 137). This sense of mission of the *énarques* often spilled over into an arrogant attitude *vis à vis* local authorities: they "had a strong feeling of competence, modernity and general interest, and believed they were up against tradition, self-interest, or inefficiency in the province. The weakness of grass-roots politics would be overcome by a technocratic *élite* oriented towards the future" (Balme and Jouve 1996: 225).

The first Plans, developed under the urgency of economic recovery following the World Wars, were mostly concerned with the need to invest Marshall Plan aid and scarce domestic resources in those industrial sectors (such as steel, coal, transport and electricity infrastructures, and some agricultural modernisation) and territorial areas which could drive faster national economic growth (Hall 1986: 145–146). This choice did not go unchallenged. In 1949 a Directorate for territorial planning was set up at the *Ministère de la reconstruction et de l'urbanisme* (MRU), and soon entered into competition with the CGP: although officially the latter had responsibility over economic rebuilding and the former for urban reconstruction, in practice, the MRU challenged the CGP's economic and sectoral approach by proposing a more integrated approach to industrial decentralisation (Pasquier 2003: 109). The friction came out into the open in 1947 with the publication of the book *Paris et le désert français* by the economist Jean François Gravier, employed at the MRU, that accused the first Monnet

Plan (1948–1952) of further exacerbating the existing imbalance between the Paris area (concentrating economic and political power) and the demographic and industrial decline of the rest of the national territory. Only a territorialisation and regionalisation of the national Plan, he argued, could have allowed a spatially balanced development of the country. The book was published with the support of the Federalist movement, looking at territorial policies as a possible field in which to raise the regionalist cause, discredited because of its previous links to reactionary groups involved with the Vichy regime. The Federalists' insertion of regionalist themes within the new framework of a united and federal Europe aimed to gain the favour of local modernising *élites* and present them as part of the wider struggle for greater citizen autonomy from state *tutelle* (Pasquier 2003: 106).

In 1950 Claudius-Petit (at the head of the MRU from 1948–1952) reported Gravier's arguments to the Council of Ministers during a discourse. Starting from the housing shortage created by industrial expansion in urban areas, he blamed the Monnet Plan for not having considered those consequences when locating industrial poles: "*What does a powerful economic structure and even a developed social structure matter* [he challenged fellow Ministers] *if the physical and moral health of a large part of the inhabitants wilts in a miserable life?*" (Claudius-Petit 2003: 131). Claudius-Petit persuaded the government of the need to have a national policy of territorial planning (*aménagement du territoire*) able to match growth with quality of life. A 'green book' prepared by his Directorate suggested among the priority policy options the decentralisation of industrialisation investments and cultural resources, the modernisation of agriculture and the improvement of services in the tourism sector. These arguments fitted with the widely legitimised Keynesian paradigm, with its search for a balance between economic growth and social equality. Thus in the same year a national fund for territorial planning (FNAT) was created and a central commission for territorial planning studies was established at the MRU. Meanwhile the regional movements strengthened their demands to the government for a fairer distribution of resources within the national territory (Pasquier 2003: 109).

In 1955 the CGP decided to group the *départements* into 21 Regional Action Areas (RAA), subnational planning areas where Regional Action Programmes (RAP) were implemented. The twenty-one regions corresponded to today's regions (with the exception of Corsica, merged until 1972 with the Provence-Côte d'Azur region). However, the meaning of the move was underplayed and explained with reference to the fact that economic restructuring and infrastructure development would have been more

effective if planned at an intermediate level between the central government and the departments (*functional regionalism*). The RAP drafted for Corsica by the CGP in 1957 constituted "the first official recognition of Corsica's special difficulties and the first suggestion as to how the island's problems might be tackled on the economic front" (Ramsay 1983: 26). Following a technocratic approach, the Plan tried to identify which were the sectors where investments could have spread growth more rapidly, neglecting the delicate social aspects of development of the island (Kofman 1981: 175). In order to lay the foundations of the tourist industry – identified as the priority sector to boost the island's development after the successful example of the PACA region – a company was set up, the *Société pour l'equipement touristique de la Corse* (SETCO). The other preoccupation of the Plan was to halt the decline of agriculture: to modernise the agricultural sector it provided for the development of the Eastern Plain through a diversification of an agricultural system relying too heavily on wine production (Kofman 1981: 175). The Plan also thought that the Eastern Plain's development, although run primarily by Corsicans, would probably have needed additional, expert handling, most likely coming from the French settlers in North Africa. Also in this case, a developmental agency was devised, the SOMIVAC (*Société pour la mise en valeur de la Corse*). The rationale behind these structures fell within the logic of technocratic modernisation of central planning services, trying to impose innovative methods of public management as well as to bypass the power of local notables (Briquet 1997: 272).

The weakness of political institutions during the Fourth Republic on the one hand allowed for the active interventionism in economic planning, in the hope of boosting France's economy more rapidly than that of other Western European countries (Cole 1998: 19); on the other hand, it paralysed its foreign policy. Involved in armed conflicts in a futile attempt to block nationalist movements following the decolonisation process, the French state had progressively to retreat from Indochina, Tunisia and Morocco: "France was gradually forced to accept that it was no longer a first-rank international player, that it could no longer sustain a far-flung empire, and that its interests lay in cooperating with others in Europe, and the Atlantic alliance" (Cole 1998: 18). However, in Algeria French colonial settlers (*pieds noirs*), supported by the armed forces, refused to give greater autonomy – let alone independence – to the predominantly Muslim Algerians. In May 1958 the Fourth Republic collapsed after the insurrection in Algiers, where military forces threatened to invade mainland France if General de Gaulle was

not brought to power and, to reinforce their point, invaded Corsica with paratroopers (Cole 1998: 19, 22).

Functional regionalism and regional movements in Corsica

De Gaulle became the first president of the Fifth Republic in 1958, and soon imposed his personal authority and the role of the presidency as the institution granting political stability to the new Republic (Cole 1998: 24). To foster the renaissance of a patriotic spirit of self-confidence in the French people he sought to re-establish in the economic domain the national ambition that had been frustrated in the military field: his consolidation of the Franco-German tandem as the motor of EU integration and the adoption of an international role more independent from the US[51] both moved in this direction (Lacour and Delamarre, 2003: 25–26). National economic planning, which had started as a relatively technical operation managed by competent civil servants, under de Gaulle became increasingly exposed to political pressures from the government. The Prime Minister started to appoint Planning Commissioners according to political considerations and the Plan became seen increasingly as the government's creature and responsibility (Hall 1986: 150). However, economic planning was also increasingly subject to the requirements of the international market and European integration. Thus the main feature of French 'nouvelle politique industrielle' was translated into selective incentives given to support a few national firms of international size in most industrial sectors (Hall 1986: 148).

Despite opposition from the prefectures and departmental administration, the region was confirmed again as the appropriate level to plan economic action and territorial readjustments (Balme and Jouve 1996: 226). In 1962 the Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale (DATAR) was created with the task of coordinating different ministerial actions in territorial planning and regional policy. A year later regional prefects were set up in each RAA in order to coordinate state interventions. They were flanked by Commissions for Regional Economic Development (CODER): local consultative bodies representing the first institutional structure at regional level, but lacking proper financial resources and having a mere advisory role (Pasquier 2003: 101; Kofman 1981: 174; Hayward 1969). The DATAR

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[51] French 'exceptionalism' in foreign and security policy was justified by de Gaulle in terms of national independence from the Atlantic Alliance: in 1961 he declared that France would have built its own nuclear missiles rather than buying them from the US, and in 1966 he announced withdrawing from NATO's integrated military command structure. Cole (1998), p.25.

shifted the approach of the Plan from earlier large-scale projects to a variety of actions also directed toward areas located in the South-West of the diagonal Le Havre-Marseille, traditionally identifying the dividing line of the wealthier industrialised core – which had attracted most of the investments of the earlier Plan (Lacour 2003: 28). Following the theory of industrial poles of development promoted by the economist François Perroux, the 4th (1962–1965) and 5th Plans (1966–1970) launched a spatial policy of urban rebalancing within the eight major cities of the hexagon, which aimed at offering to local enterprises and populations the services that, until then, were available only in Paris (Lacour 2003: 39).

Not one of the industrial policies covered Corsica, whose territory fell under DATAR's category of 'rural renovation'. The Plan for the island, shelved during the crisis of the 4th Republic was reactivated in 1962 when, following the ratification of the Evian agreements granting Algeria's independence, it served to facilitate the re-incorporation of around 17,000 French *pieds noirs* settlers, often of Corsican origin.[52] Owing to the Plan the island's infrastructure was improved, nearly 30,000 hectares were reclaimed, and modern techniques and the cultivation of citrus (*clémentines*) and kiwi were introduced.[53] In order to spread modernising ideas and methods in the region, the Agency tried to use alternative networks to those controlled by local notables, by establishing direct relations with the socio-economic actors operating on the island (Briquet 1997: 273–275). For the same reason a high proportion of the incentives for crops in the reclaimed areas were allocated by the SOMIVAC to the *pieds noirs*, rather than to established local farmers. Resentment on the part of Corsicans involved in viticulture was partly justified by the fact that the activities of those who had maintained control of the quality wine areas (such as the *Sartène* or *Cap Corse*) were increasingly challenged by the large-scale production of ordinary wines initiated by some of the *pieds noirs*, which had a more entrepreneurial and unscrupulous attitude. However, more generally, local resentment was due to the feeling of expropriation and betrayal on the part of central government, which had granted to those latest arrivals the financial and fiscal incentives locals had long requested but never received (Antonetti 1990: 469–

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[52] De Gaulle's decision to grant independence to Algeria was met with fury by French settlers and the army in Algiers, and there were several military uprisings and attempts to assassinate the General. Many of the settlers were of Corsican origin, and Corsica was in fact the only French *département* to vote against the Evian agreements. Cole (1998), p.23; Hintjens, Loughlin and Olivesi (1995), p.121; Antonetti (1990), p.468.

[53] However, increased competition from other Mediterranean countries during the 1970s hit viticulture, as well as other local produce sectors on the island. Also, the traditional sector of ovine and bovine production, despite the funds given by the state and the EU, did not develop. Antonetti (1990), pp.490–491.

470). The expansion of the tourist industry on the island was also not having the impact hoped for by local development: in fact the modernising approach of the SETCO encouraged the expansion of large-scale tourist resorts, mainly owned by French and foreign companies and recruiting personnel from outside the island,[54] while neglecting the more modest forms of accommodation typically owned by the locals, such as family hotels.

The perpetuation on the island of conditions of backwardness produced by inadequate internal and external infrastructure and communication, the absence of research centres or universities, low wage levels and high unemployment rates (masked by the high emigration and official statistics, which amalgamated Corsica's data within the PACA region), became more striking in the eyes of the Corsicans in comparison to the growing affluence in mainland France, where many of them emigrated either to find jobs or to continue their studies (mainly in Marseille, Paris or Toulon).[55] Rising expectations boosted the regionalist movement – which until then had mainly concerned itself with issues of economic development[56] – that spread throughout the island and the mainland presenting detailed projects to promote structural and political change in the region, supported by the work of Corsican student associations and newspapers.[57] Among the main regionalist movements there were the UCA (*Union Corse l'Avenir*), founded by the socialists Charles Santoni and Dominique Alfonsi, and the UPC (*Unione di U Populu Corsu*), formed in 1964 by a middle-class group from Bastia led by Edmond and Max Simeoni, and linked to the *Centre d'Etudes et de Défense de là Corse* (CEDIC).

In 1966 the CEDIC and UCA united in a common *Front Régionaliste Corse* (FRC), denouncing how the island was prey to both the French colonialist regime and the local

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[54] "In 1974 only 28% of the salaried employees in hotels were Corsicans, 43% were French from the mainland and 29% foreigners". Kofman (1981), p.177.

[55] Unlike Corsica, Brittany, a peripheral region, saw in that period the location of large industries, research centres, and a special regional plan for its territory. The different treatment could be explained with reference to different factors: the lower location costs with respect to Corsica, and the good networking of the economic actors and their cohesive lobbying through the Breton members of parliament. In fact, also thanks to the strong mobilisation of the local authorities and the socio-economic actors united in the CELIB (*Comité d'études et de liaison des intérêts Bretons*), at the end of the 1960s a major project developing transport infrastructures in the region (*Le Plan routier Breton*) was realised. Pasquier (2003); Lacour and Delamarre (2003), p.58.

[56] The most well-known had been '*Le mouvement du 29 novembre 1959*' which, animated by the communists and led by Paul Silvani, arguing that Corsica was still not fully integrated into the French state, called on the latter to intervene to grant the island basic infrastructure and economic measures to improve its backwardness, also in consideration of its insular status.

[57] In 1960 the periodical *Union Corse* was first published and a year later the *Association des étudiants corses* (AEC) was created in Paris by Dominique Alfonsi, uniting students of socialist sympathies, and in 1962 the *Union nationale des étudiants corses* (UNEC) was formed in Corsica. In 1964 the UC and AEC groups united in the *Union Corse de l'avenir* (UCA).

clan system, and demanding an end to this state of affairs.[58] A year later the less ideological fringe of the movement led by the Simeoni brothers created the ARC (*Action Régionaliste Corse*), defining itself as Corsican, democratic, and committed to "the economic, social and cultural development of Corsica through the achievement of the status of an autonomous region within the framework of the French Republic".[59] While sharing many of the FRC themes, the ARC tried to reach a wider audience: assisted by a new newspaper in the Corsican language *Arritti* (1966), its aim was to gain support from the traditionally right-wing Corsican electorate living on the island who were reluctant to support the FRC (which was mainly composed of cultured Corsicans with socialist orientations, residing on 'the continent').

Regionalist considerations on the importance of regional policy collided with that of central planning services', mainly seeing it in terms of a technical matter necessary to spur national economic growth (Balme and Jouve 1996: 226). Also, de Gaulle's later project for further regionalisation was essentially supported by arguments functional to economic growth.[60] However, when social unrest and regional movements started to gain a more radical dimension, de Gaulle added a political justification and presented regionalisation as '*la grande affaire*' of his presidency. In launching the campaign for the 1969 referendums – which included regionalisation reforms – he stressed that the upgrading of regions to the status of *collectivités territoriales* with elected regional councils would have allowed ordinary citizens to overcome the growing feeling of alienation and distance from institutions. However, after the victory of the 'no' front (promoted by local authorities and prefectural corps) de Gaulle had to resign and regionalisation reforms were dropped.

Regional voices and national deafness: the Corsican question as a national issue

President George Pompidou (1969–1974) tried to maintain continuity with de Gaulle's politics in most policy areas and especially those at the core of French 'exceptionalism':

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[58] Antonetti (1990), p.477. The introduction of the postal vote in 1958, given the high numbers of emigrant Corsicans who became entitled to vote and the "notoriously inaccurate electoral registers", increased the diffusion of electoral fraud. Hudson (1997), p.xxx.

[59] Though declaring itself apolitical, the ARC presented a regionalist candidate at the elections, Max Simeoni, who was one of the founders of the CEDIC. However, electoral results between 1967 and 1971 were disappointing, thus the ARC decided to concentrate on militant activism. Antonetti (1990), p.478.

[60] "*L'évolution générale port, en effet, notre pays vers un équilibre nouveau. L'effort multiséculaire de centralisation, qui fut longtemps nécessaire pour réaliser et maintenir son unité malgré les divergences des provinces qui étaient successivement rattachées ne s'impose plus désormais. Au contraire, ce sont les activités régionales qui apparaissent comme les ressorts de la puissance économique de demain*", quoted in Alvergne and Musso (2003), p.15.

foreign policy[61] and interventionist economic management (Cole 1998: 30, 31). However, the intensification of presidential interventionism, through closer supervision in industrial and urban policy and control over the ruling Gaullist party, was characteristic of his weaker political legitimacy and charismatic leadership (Cole 1998: 29). Further regionalisation of development policies was also continued, although presented in terms of functional moves to economic competitiveness. The objectives of the 6th Plan (1971–1975) were territorialised and regions were involved in the negotiations with the CGP *via* the DATAR (Alvergne and Musso 2003: 54). In 1972 a presidential decree set up regions as *établissements publics* provided with a largely advisory role in economic development, and a limited budget for infrastructure improvements and studies. Corsica was eventually separated from the Provence-Côte d'Azur grouping and become the 22nd RAA. Two regional bodies with advisory functions were set up: the *Comité de Développement Economique de la Corse* (CODEC), composed of local members of the national Chambers and Corsican department and communes; and the *Conseil Economique et Social* (CES), made up of representatives of the socio-professional organizations, where the autonomists fringe played an important role. These innovations notably reinforced the visibility and legitimisation of socio-economic actors on the island, increasingly challenging the traditionally undisputed power of local notables (Briquet 1997: 277).

Meanwhile, a second territorial planning document (*Schéma d'aménagement de la Corse*) had been prepared by the *Mission Interministérielle* in Corsica, where technocratic suggestions on how to launch the Corsican economy were moderated by the recognition that growth could not be the only criterion informing development. The *Schéma* presented measures for the renewal of the tradition of raising livestock, consolidating wine and citrus fruit production, preserving the natural environment,[62] interlinking projects for the development of coastal areas with those to halt the decline of interior areas, and even foresaw the introduction of some light industry on the island (Kofman 1981: 176). However, the document did not critically revise the problems created by the previous Plan and reiterated its logic in concentrating intervention in selected areas (such as the Easter Plain) and its consideration of tourism merely in

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[61] Pompidou was, however, much less of an enthusiastic supporter of the Franco-German axis in European integration and retained a more open approach to the US and UK, for which he removed the veto for entry into the EU. Cole (1998), p.30.

[62] The PNR Corse, one of the *Parc naturels régionaux* created by the Decree of 1st March 1967, was established in 1971. It extends for 350,894 ha. and covers 184 communes. Lacour (2003), p.46.

quantitative terms, without gauging the impact of the policies in terms of social costs for the environment and the local population.[63]

Criticism was focused on the *Schéma* by the agencies invited to give their opinion, such as the CODEC and the trade unions (Kofman 1981: 177). However, the situation was made worse by the fact that, before drafting the *Schéma*, the DATAR had commissioned the Hudson Institute to prepare a report on development in Corsica, which it did not deem suitable for publication. The Hudson Report criticised policies adopted by the French government up until then and proposed two alternative scenarios: either to continue promoting waves of immigration leading to the wiping out of local culture or to define a policy aimed at the protection of the identity of the region and to give voice to the will of the Corsican population (Kofman 1981: 177). A copy of the Hudson report fell into the hands of the FRC movement that – once it realised that the suggestions had not been taken into account by the DATAR – replied with the publication of the document *Main basse sur une île* ('Pillage of an island'), corroborating the colonisation thesis and arguing that it could only be solved with the recognition of a statute of regional autonomy that placed in Corsican hands decisions over the island's future.

Probably because of the declared socialist alignment of the FRC and the fact that its leaders were mainly intellectuals of the *diaspora*, the document did not have the impact on the local population that its authors would have hoped for (Antonetti 1990: 477–478). Thus a 'corsification' of regionalist movements was launched to solve this problem: the FRC changed its name to *Partitu di u Populu Corsu* (PPC) and the ARC, while retaining its acronym, became *Azzione per a Rinascita Corsa*. The number of attacks of clandestine armed wings of regionalist movements against government properties started to spread across the island, the movements demanding that the French government formally recognise the Corsican people and nation.[64] Increasingly covered by the media, by 1974 the Corsican question had became a public issue: on the island, where the population was divided between support for regionalists' demands and doubts

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[63] The lowest of the two projections made to estimate tourist capacity by 1985 foresaw a number of tourists which was seven times that of the local population. Kofman (1981), p.176.

[64] In December 1973 the FPCL (*Fronte Paesanu Corsu di Liberazioni*) chose military action as its strategy for 'liberation' from France, as declared in its manifesto *Ultimatum to the French Government*, in which it asked for the recognition of the Corsican people as a nation according to UN criteria. The FPCL was involved in the famous 'Red Mud Affair': in the face of state indifference, it bombed one of the Tuscan boats dumping effluent mud from a Montedison chemical plant forty miles from the Corsican coast. Dumping continued for months, until five responsible directors of the Montedison chemical plant received suspended prison sentences and heavy fines in a court action in Leghorn.

about their means of action,[65] and in mainland France, where it became one of the standard reasons for political confrontations at elections.

The vicious circle between regionalist violence and state repression

During the campaign for the presidential elections in 1974, the declarations of socialist leader Francois Mitterrand, visiting Ajaccio to show his sympathy for "the right to be different" (Antonetti 1990: 479), spread the idea that better times could come with the Left in power. Albeit narrowly, the victory went, to Valery Giscard d'Estaing (1974–1981), who explicitly rejected the notion of a 'Corsican people' and recognised Corsica's diversity only within the larger picture of local differences within the *Patrie:* "*il n'y a pas de problème corse, il y a des problèmes en Corse*" (quoted in Crettiez 1999: 209). During his campaign, Giscard d'Estaing had presented himself both as the heir of General de Gaulle and a pro-European reformist with modernist ideas. However, the possibilities for internal action were severely constrained by the external conditions created by the international economic context (Cole 1998: 30). In fact, the recession prompted by the 1973 oil crisis challenged the mono-sectoral model of production on which the '*Trente Glorieuses*' had based its success. State intervention in the economy was reduced and incentives were reserved for firms and regions that seemed better equipped to respond to the changing needs of competition in an increasingly globalised market. The 7th Plan (1976–1981) continued on the path towards more direct involvement of regions in planning, drawing closer to later formalisations in the *Contrat de Plan* between State and regions (Lacour and Delamarre 2003: 55; Alvergne and Musso 2003: 241). The *étatist* foundations of national planning became increasingly challenged by the diffusion in public opinion of arguments defending the right to self-determination of local communities, which could not be manipulated in the name of national interests (Lacour and Delamarre 2003: 62). Faced with declining legitimacy, national territorial planning retrenched its efforts to basic guidelines – such as measures of urban policy – and a sectoral approach led by more day-to-day concerns (Alvergne and Musso 2003: 219, 220).

In Corsica the victory of Giscard d'Estaing disappointed the ARC movement, which reacted by publishing the document *Autonomia*: the only solution to the colonial

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[65] There was broad support from the population on issues ranging from land speculation and expansion of large-scale tourism favouring capital from outside of the island, to the stationing on the island of French Foreign Legion troops, or plans to carry out nuclear testing and dump atomic waste on the island. However, the violent strategy chosen by the FPCL had created a movement of protest among Corsicans, both on the island and abroad. Hudson (1997), p.xxx; Antonetti (1990), p.479.

system responsible for Corsica's decay, it claimed, was the provision of an autonomous statute for the island. The statute, justified by the island's territorial features, should have presented a *de jure* recognition of the Corsican people – albeit within the French Republic – and made provisions for the setting of regional institutions in the administration of specific development policies, as well as other measures enhancing local identity.[66] This time the document found a strong backing amongst the Corsican population, which in previous years had been involved in the initiatives of the ARC in a process of emotional reassertion of the founding myths of Corsican identity: the use of the local language, the adoption of a Corsican national anthem and flag, the cult of the founding father Pascal Paoli ('*U Babbu*').

Perceiving the sensitivity of the situation, the government revised its approach to development policy on the island and asked an experienced administrator and manager, Libert Bou, to mediate with the local population, in order to turn local needs into an effective policy. After having listened to politicians, administrators, regionalist groups and organizations on the island, Bou prepared a Charter of Development, which spoke of harmonious and balanced development, protection of the cultural heritage and sites, and mentioned Corsicans' resentment against large-scale tourism led by outsiders. The policy recommendations of the Charter included the need to find a reasonable balance between the number of tourists and the local population and included measures for the renewal of rural renovation aid for the pastoral economy (Kofman 1981: 77). The document was quite innovative compared to previous Plans, whose failures were, however, only reported in terms of social tensions arising from the launching of modernisation processes in the island. The Interministerial Committee, which had once considered the Charter, submitted it to the government that adopted it in July 1975, though changing its title from '*Charte*' – suggesting the language of rights used by the autonomists – to '*Programme*' – better befitting governmental concerns over economic development. Corsican suspicion over centralist good faith was also lifted by the creation in 1975 of two Corsican *départements* (*Corse du Sud* and *Haute Corse*) which, although presented by the government as a first step to appease demands for a wider

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[66] Among the development policies to be administered directly by the region, the book included EU regional policies, as well as national funds for the improvement of transport, the integration of coastal and interior areas and the preservation of the natural environment. Measures for the safeguarding of regional identity included the recognition of bilingualism and the reopening of the old University in Corte. See Kofman (1981), p.179.

reform of decentralisation, was interpreted by many Corsicans as a tacit intent to undermine their resolve.[67]

The growing wave of mistrust and violence against the government on the island[68] reached its peak in 1975 with the dramatic episode of Aleria when armed ARC men occupied a *pieds noirs*' property to denounce his continuing illegal practice of 'chaptalisation'.[69] The action resulted in the deaths of two of the 1200 policemen that, backed by helicopters and armoured cars, had been sent by the government to end the siege. The government reacted by announcing the dissolution of the ARC (whose militants regrouped in the UPC). However, it was also anxious to show a conciliatory face and appointed the Corsican Jean-Etienne Riolacci as *préfet* of the region – the first Corsican prefect for more than a century.

For its dramatic nature the Aleria incident received great attention from the media, and became an excuse to discuss the more general issue of local autonomies in France: the majority of public opinion in France showed support for the motivations of the autonomists, and the socialist leader Mitterrand commented that the episode was a consequence of a too limited form of regionalisation. The Gaullist Prime Minister Jacques Chirac replied that a sharp distinction had to be drawn between decentralisation of administrative structures – which he fully supported – and the notion of political regionalisation, which represented "a great danger to national unity" led by a sort of "sudden romanticism" (quoted in Ramsay 1983: 153). Also in Corsica most *chefs de clan* (both left and right wing) feared that further regionalisation could undermine their influence. During his Presidential visit to the island in 1978 Giscard d'Estaing insisted that national solidarity would ensure the island's economic and social development, given its specificity,[70] but with no exceptional constitutional or institutional measures: "*this unity is our strength, and it is no coincidence that we should have inherited this unitary conception of the French Republic from the most illustrious of all Corsicans*" (quoted in Ramsay 1983: 153).

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[67] In 1796 Napoleon had already advocated the division of the island into two *départements* corresponding to the geographical division of *en-deca-des-monts* (*U Cismonte*, this side of the mountains) and *au-delà-des-monts* (*U Pumonte*, the other side of the mountains) with the aim of dividing the Corsicans in order to weaken the possibilities for revolt against the central government. However, in 1811 he revoked this decision by signing a decree making the island a single *département* of France with Ajaccio as its administrative centre. Hudson (1997), p.xxiii.

[68] The number of bombing attacks grew from nearly 46 in 1973, to 110 in 1974 and 242 in 1975. Antonetti (1990), p.479.

[69] The practice of *chaptalisation*, consisting of adding sugar during the process of grape fermentation, was prohibited by French law in 1972 Kofman (1981), p. 178.

[70] It was after the Aleria episode that President Giscard d'Estaing wrote to Prime Minister Chirac instructing him to apply the principle of territorial continuity to the island. Kofman (1981), p.180.

Aleria acted as a "detonator of a new violence" (Antonetti 1990: 480): on 4th of May 1976 twenty-one separate incidents on the island introduced the newly created *Front de Libération National Corse* (FLNC), a clandestine movement more radical and better organized and equipped than its predecessors.[71] As a response, anti-separatist groups such as *Action Corse Francaise*, *Ghjustizia e Libertà*, *Action Verité Corse* and especially the *Front d'Action Nouvelle Contre l'Indépendance et l'Autonomisme* (FRANCIA) also started to arm themselves and counterattack, often with the support of local state authorities, unable legally to control the situation on the island (*polices parallèles*). Despite official denials, allegations of the action of *barbouzes* (government undercover agents acting violently to intimidate the autonomists) were confirmed by another dramatic episode in Bastelica in 1980.[72] The denunciation of the episode as one of 'racial terrorism' from the French government showed the hardening of its line towards separatist movements, not only in Corsica but also in Brittany, and in its overseas territories. A major investigation of FRANCIA was launched and more alleged FLNC men were arrested. However, while trials for members of the former were held in ordinary courts, those for the members of the latter had to be held before the State Security Court. During the following April the President called the six Corsican Parliamentarians to discuss with ministers further economic measures to be taken in favour of the island, but made clear once more that there was no question of conceding a special statute to Corsica.

Decentralisation and the reform of state–society relations under Mitterrand

In 1981 the advent of the Left to power for the first time during the Fifth Republic was preceded by an atmosphere of expectation – nourished by the 110 propositions of the presidential manifesto – of the arrival of a new political era, aiming to launch a

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[71] Their manifesto supported the recognition of national rights of the Corsican people; the removal of instruments of French colonialism from the island; a popular democratic government of Corsicans; the confiscation of colonial estates and property of tourist industry trusts; agrarian reform. Targets of its attacks were the symbols of 'colonialist exploitation': banks, police offices, governmental agencies and institutions, large-scale hotels, etc. Also, teachers coming from the mainland, considered as a means of destruction of the Corsican culture, were exposed to intimidatory actions. The only targets carefully avoided were those related to tourism, although the attacks did damage the island's appeal as a holiday destination.

[72] On 6th January 1980 local UPC activists stopped armed FRANCIA men trying to attack one of their members in Bastelica (a mountain village near Ajaccio). Once the prisoners admitted their intentions, the UPC men decided that they would not release them until a magistrate was appointed to investigate the links between FRANCIA and government officials. Again national forces were sent to the village in armoured jeeps and helicopters, while the UCP activists occupied the Hotel Fesch in the centre of Ajaccio. The building was surrounded by the police when shooting started from the crowd, killing a policeman and seriously injuring three others.

profound process of collective renewal of French society (Cole 1998: 25). One of the main objectives of this aim was to overcome the *étatiste* ideology that had informed Gaullist policies: in order to respond to the challenges of modernisation, the state could no longer attempt "to change society by decree" (Crozier 1979), but rather to involve all citizens in the process of definition of their future. The Right was not the only ideological adversary of the programme of the renewed Socialist party:[73] on the Left the statist tradition found strong support in the 'Jacobin' faction (led by J.-P. Chevènement),[74] arguing that the unity of the Republic was to be severely jeopardised by the '*autogestion*', while regionalist arguments were supported by the '*girondin*' reformist fringe (represented by M. Rocard).[75]

A crucial brick in the Socialists' project of reform of state-society relations was the process of decentralisation, presented by Mitterrand as "*la grande affaire du septennat*" and a necessary step in the evolution of the Republic: "*La France a eu besoin d'un pouvoir fort et centralisé pour se faire. Elle a besoin, aujourd'hui, d'un pouvoir décentralisé pur ne pas se défaire*" (quoted in Alvergne and Musso 2003: 15). With the law promulgated by the Minister of the Interior and Decentralisation, Gaston Defferre,[76] the twenty-two regions became the third layer of local government in France: their upgrade was both at a juridical level (since they were finally recognised as a '*collectivité territoriale*')[77] and at a political one (their democratic legitimacy being endorsed with the setting up of directly elected regional councils). The Defferre reforms (voted in between 1982–83) were presented by the government as a coherent continuation of the illuminist vocation that set up the Republic, in that it freed citizens from a tutelage by the state and allowed them to become masters of their own destiny

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[73] The PS (*Parti Socialiste*) was created in 1969 from the ashes of the SFIO (*Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière*); two years later Mitterrand was elected Secretary of the Party. He represented the 'middle way' for those PSF members who were not advocating a widespread structural reform, but rather were renewing the efforts of the state in reducing unemployment and engaging in redistributive policies. Hall (1986), p.193.

[74] Jean-Pierre Chevènement was the leader of the CERES group, "a neo-Marxist enclave which tended to favour large-scale nationalisation and an all-out dash for growth behind protective tariff barriers" and embraced "an étatist conception of socialism according to which the state would impose reform from above", Hall (1986), p.193. As we shall see, he later intervened in the Corsican question by resigning from his Ministry in opposition to Prime Minister Jospin's decision to give more autonomy to the region.

[75] Michel Rocard led the other major fringe of the party, namely "an anti-Marxist group which favoured a decentralised form of socialism" whose members "hoped to reduce the role of state in society and find a new path to growth based on *autogestion*, or worker's control, within a more autonomous civil society", thus on social change from below. Hall (1986), p.193.

[76] Both Deferre (former mayor of Marseille) and the Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy (former mayor of Lille) were known as confirmed regionalists.

[77] Title 11 of the French Constitution recognised as basic units of local government (or *collectivitées territoriales*) the *commune* (municipality) and the *département* (district). However, it provided for the creation of other units by law, and this allowed the law of 2 March 1982 to add the *région* (region) as a third level of local government.

(Alvergne and Musso 2003: 234). As a consequence the role of the prefect – representing the state in the periphery – was changed "from a tutoring to a co-ordinating one" (Balme and Jouve 1996: 231).[78]

In the Socialists' original programme further decentralisation did not amount to a rolling back of the state: on the contrary, it was strictly intertwined with central planning, also a crucial point of the electoral manifesto. The 1982 Nationalisation Act took into public ownership leading industrial groups and the main private banks. A Ministry for the Plan and Territorial Development was set up and assigned to Rocard, main advisor of the *Contrats de Plan Etat-Région* (CPER),[79] planning contracts defining redistribution of competencies and division of financial responsibilities between the State and each region for five years over a series of development programmes agreed between the president of the regional council and the regional prefect. The Defferre reform set the legal framework to insert central planning within the processes of nationalisation and regionalisation initiated by the government (Alvergne et Musso 2003: 242) and in the 9th Plan, drafted to cover the 1984–88 period: "[f]or the first time, regional plans to implement the national program were to be negotiated with the new regional governments" (Hall 1986: 213).

The CPER, which greatly influenced the 1988 reform of EU Regional Policy, represented "a striking institutional innovation" (Hall 1986: 213), in that it marked the shift from a paradigm where the state as a solitary actor applied unilaterally defined developmental priorities in a national territory uniformly defined, to one where it became the promoter of participatory modes of decision-making, giving voice to local differences coordinated within the larger national picture (Hall 1986: 218; Alvergne and Musso 2003: 229).

After the first years of strong presidential interventionism, Mitterrand had to abandon the more anti-capitalistic points of his presidential manifesto under increasing pressures, both from the EU and the global economy, towards further deregulation and openness of national economies (Cole 1998: 35). Gradually he shifted the responsibility of domestic politics to his prime ministers, leaving for himself a prominent role in foreign politics and especially in the field of European integration, which became the

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[78] The prefects' executive powers were transferred to the presidents of the regional councils, his *a priori* financial and administrative powers abolished, and *a posteriori* control assigned to the administrative tribunals and the newly created regional *Cours des Comptes*. Renamed *Commissaire de la République*, the prefect was, however, left a relevant role of coordination of economic planning between the regional authorities and ministerial field services.

[79] See Balme and Jouve (1996). The priorities of the government on territorial development are defined in the *Comité interministériel de l'aménagement et du développement du territoires* (CIADT), headed by the First Minister or, in his absence, by the Minister designated for Territorial Development.

leitmotif of his second mandate (Cole 1998: 36, 37). National territorial policies abandoned the previous logic of 'top-down' decentralisation to look for synergies between successful initiatives in different territories by using network structures (*réseaux d'entreprises, réseaux d'activités et d'emplois*, etc.). Their reference was the contemporary development of industrial districts in Northern and Central Italian regions – also a driving force for EU Regional Policy – showing that medium-sized and socially integrated communities were not only reconcilable but even more suitable for market requirements in the post-Fordist era (Piore and Sabel 1984; Becattini 1987). Within this picture, the DATAR – which some had suggested should close down because of its links with previous centralistic planning – gradually found a new *raison d'être* as coordinator of territorial networks and mediator between the state and local authorities (Alvergne and Musso 2003: 247, 248).

Priority in territorial development policies was given to investments in quality goods and high technology: '*technopoles*' were developed in Montpellier, Nice, Grenoble and Lyon (Lacour 2003: 71) while works on the TGV, the high-speed train connecting main cities with the capital, promised an even brighter future for the economic development of mainland peripheries. The upturn of economic activities in the South-Western part of the country, in a time when traditional industrial areas of the North-East declined, made some authors talk about the "revenge of the Souths" (Lacour 2003: 53). However, the expression sounded a little sinister if referred to the situation in Corsica, where autonomist violence had branched out across the island. The increasing links between autonomist movements and ordinary criminality further deferred hopes for the catching on of the development policies launched with national and EU funds, which continued to assist the island's economy.[80]

The institutional approach of the Socialists to the Corsican question

The institutional change promoted by the Socialist governments in the organization of centre-periphery relations was also reflected in their approach to the Corsican question. During his campaign Mitterrand had presented the deterioration of the situation in the island as an example of the right-wing authoritarianism he planned to overthrow (Ramsay 1983: 199). The decentralisation reforms proposed for the whole of France

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[80] In 1985 Corsica was included in the Integrated Mediterranean (IMP), for which it received for the 1986–88 period 274 million francs (intended? for ports or airport equipment, SMEs, agriculture, forestry). Antonetti (1998), pp. 493–94. In 1989–93 Corsica was granted Objective 1 status in the use of Structural Funds (although it exceeded the established threshold of 75% of the EU's average GDP), while for the following planning period (1994–99) it entered into the 'phasing out' regime.

were to be of particular relevance for the island, *"une petite patrie dans une grande nation"*.[81] Corsican autonomists and the FLNC proclaimed a cease-fire so as not to damage the Left during the elections. After his victory, Mitterrand dissolved the State Security Court, liberated several Corsican nationalists, and provided for the reopening of the old University in Corte and the inclusion of a special statute for Corsica within the decentralisation reforms.[82]

Minister Defferre agreed that Corsica's specificity deserved to be considered separately, as in the case of Sicily and Sardinia in Italy; however, its statute would have represented a blueprint for decentralisation in the rest of the country also (Hintjen, Loughlin, Olivesi 1995: 123). With the new statute Corsica became a *collectivité territoriale* of the Republic and its elected body was named the 'Corsican Assembly' (instead of 'regional council', as in the case of other regions) and was flanked by two consultative committees. The major achievement was the unique capacity of the Corsican Assembly, which did not have legislative powers, to communicate directly with the government on all matters concerning Corsica (article 27). Hostility to the reform from Right wing opposition parties and local *chefs-de-clan* forced the government to attenuate the most innovative parts of the law, reaffirming the safeguards of the national interest: article 1 of the statute recognised Corsica's geographical and cultural specificity and gave to its representatives control of its economic development and the preservation of its culture, but the expression *'le peuple corse'* appearing in the original version of the text was removed (Hintjen, Loughlin, Olivesi 1995: 123).

Dissatisfied with the statute, but also worried about the fading away of revolutionary zeal in the face of a more conciliatory government, the FLNC revived its attacks, the first one demonstratively carried out on the same day of the election of the new regional assembly in August 1982,[83] and started imposing on militants and sympathisers a 'revolutionary tax', similar to that of other armed national movements like the Basque ETA. The increasing number of episodes of racketeering and extortion (nearly 800 in 1982), which demonstrated the links between the nationalist army and the

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[81] This Mitterrand quote is cited in Crettiez (1999), p.209. Part of the regionalist demands, such as the amnesty for imprisoned autonomists and a special statute for the island were included in the 110 propositions of the Mitterrand programme. See Loughlin and Mazey (1995), p.92; Hintjens, Loughlin and Olivesi (1995), p.122.

[82] Relevant also was Mitterand's appointment of the Corsican Bastien Leccia as Parliamentary Secretary of the Home Office, with special responsibility for Corsican Affairs.

[83] Antonetti (1990), p.481. The elections were preceded by strict control of the electoral lists, which brought the striking off from the rolls of nearly 5,500 names of deceased or incapacitated people and the banishment of another 8,500 registered on the mainland but voting in Corsica. Prosper Alfonsi, of the *Mouvement Radical de Gauche* (MRG), became the first president of a Corsican Assembly, which immediately became well known for its chronic instability: in the space of ten years it had to call elections no less than four times. Hintjens, Loughlin and Olivesi (1995), p.124.

island mafia, led the government to decree the dissolution of the FLNC in 1983 and the appointment of a *Commissaire de la République* with police powers in the region. The strategy adopted by the government was to continue the institutional dialogue with the autonomists, while using an iron hand with the nationalist clandestine movements, branded as criminal organizations (Crettiez 1999: 210).

The victory of the Right at the legislative and regional elections in 1986 brought about Mitterrand's cohabitation (1986–88) with Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, leader of the RPR–UDF coalition, who "engaged in a radical programme of economic liberalisation, combined with a strong dose of social and political conservatism".[84] Charles Pasqua, the new Minister of the Interior, intensified a strategy of police and judicial repression of clandestine movements in Corsica, by acting through police blitzes and the carrying out of search warrants, interrogations and arrests. However, requests for the liberation of imprisoned nationalist militants was no longer backed by the expression of solidarity from the population of the island, due to the violent drift of nationalist action (Antonetti 1990: 482). The cohabitation ended with the 1988 election that confirmed Mitterrand as President of France against Chirac, who was replaced by Michel Rocard becoming Prime Minister with a relative parliamentary majority. The Socialists' victory – supported by the FLNC through a pre-electoral ceasefire – confirmed the institutional approach to the Corsican question: the government engaged in a process of greater devolution for the island, based on a dialogue with local politicians as well as representatives of legal regionalist movements. This exchange excluded the armed nationalists and separatist factions.

The functioning of the new regional institutions proved to be harder than expected: over a period of ten years there were four rounds of elections for the Corsican Assembly and the region was discredited due to the spread of financial clientelism practices. Faced with the chronic instability of the Corsican Assembly, the Minister of the Interior Pierre Joxe set up in 1988 an Inter-ministerial Committee to deal with the cultural, economic and social development of Corsica. The Committee presented in May 1991 the new *Statut Particulier* for Corsica, which upgraded the island to a *collectivité territoriale* with greater powers than those defined by common law for the other regions and provided it with an elected assembly (*Assemblée territoriale*), an executive *(Conseil exécutif)* and a consultative body (*Conseil économique, social et culturel*). The Assembly, elected for six years in a two-round proportional election, did not have

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[84] Chirac's political line had "obvious overtones of Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the United States", see Cole (1998), p. 37.

legislative powers, but rather worked as a deliberative body consulted by the government in matters directly concerning the island. Among the members of the Assembly, seven were selected to form the Executive Council, headed by a president. The role of the CESC was mainly to deal with issues related to territorial development on the island (from economic to social and cultural matters). Article 1 of the *Statut Particulier* also recognised the existence of a Corsican people, although as a component part of the French people. This time accepted by the Parliament, the article was later declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Council, on the grounds that in France there was only one people: *le peuple français*.

The new statute became effective with the 1992 regional elections, confirming the victory in the islands of the Right, which lost only two French regions. The regionalist movement, however, grew in electoral force[85] while the FLNC revived attacks using a 'Europe of the regions' rhetoric as an argument for liberation from centralised nation states (Antonetti 1990: 493). Interlinked with the persistent difficulties in performance of the reformed regional institutions were the failures of policies launched for the development of the island: Corsica had become one of the French regions benefitting most from state aid as well as from lower transport fares to the mainland, lower taxes on cigarettes, car fees and petrol. However, those measures were not supported by a strong strategy to launch self-sustaining development in the region, considering the daunting socio-institutional context of the island.[86] Despite the resources received by the island from the EU, the 1992 French referendum on the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty was voted against by 57% of the voters in Corsica, while it passed at the national level with 51% of the vote. The vote revealed Corsicans' fears of assuming a further peripheral and vulnerable role within a more enlarged and competitive European context (Olivesi 1999: 748), as well as the increasing gap between the reliance on state protection of the majority of people and the separatist ambitions of a violent minority in the island.

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[85] The nationalists received 14% of the votes and gained nine seats at the Assembly. As we shall see in section III, the elected President of the Council Jean Baggioni (RPR) was extremely active in organizing and defending the *dossiers* relative to the less-favoured Mediterranean regions within formal and informal European settings (as member of the European parliament elected in 1994 for the RPR–UDF coalition, at the CRPM within the Inter-Mediterranean and Islands Commissions, and within the presidency of the IMEDOC partnership).

[86] Since the 1990s the inactivity of the French state *vis à vis* Corsica became increasingly questioned. In 1989 Prasa recommended a progressive return to Common Fiscal Law in Corsica; in 1995 Oudin estimated that the transfers Corsica received from Paris and Brussels amounted to 7 billion Francs in 1993; in 1997 the General Inspection of finances denounced the 'fiscal paradise' that the island had become and the National Assembly carried out an official investigation (see *Report of the Parliamentary Investigation Commission on the Administration of Public Funds*, 1998).

The 'Matignon process': strengthening the path towards institutional change

The cohabitation between the RPR President Jacques Chirac and the PSF Prime Minister Lionel Jospin (from 1997 to 2002) was characterised by a package of economic austerity measures, required by the strong commitment of France in adopting the single European currency (Cole 1998: 39–40). Within Chirac's objective to restore the pivotal role of the state, the DATAR was handed back its central role in territorial planning. However, planning was now conceived as a flexible instrument defining a developmental perspective coordinating different territorial actors in a common vision, made of few identified priorities but open in principle to contributions and revisions with the aim of creating a wider consensus over interventions as well as improving their effectiveness.

The Corsican question saw the front line engagement of Prime Minister Jospin, determined to solve it by reinforcing the Socialist approach to dialogue and institutional reform. As stated before, the situation on the island was still deteriorating: the nationalist front was reduced to inaction by the atomisation of its factions,[87] and was increasingly involved in the racketeering and other illegal activities (as became apparent from the fortunes built by leaders as Santoni, Orsoni, Filidori).[88] In February 1998 the prefect Claude Erignac, who had passionately engaged in Corsican institutional life (and, as we shall see, also in the implementation of EU programmes), was murdered in Ajaccio in an attack claimed by *A Cuncolta* (the Cargèse stream of the FLNC). The murder had a very emotional impact in mainland France, discrediting the Corsican question in the eyes of national public opinion. The attempt by Bernard Bonnet, Erignac's successor, to use an iron hand to impose law and order on the island was stopped by the '*scandale des paillotes*',[89] resulting in the jailing of the prefect and the government's failure to tackle the Corsican problem.

In November 1999 – five days after two day-time attacks in Ajaccio – with the aim of opening up a process to assure peace and development on the island, Prime Minister Jospin launched an official dialogue with political forces in Corsica. With five of his

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[87] Officially declared ceasefires, for instance, were no longer respected by the different factions.

[88] Audition de M. Yves Bertrand, Directeur central des renseignements généraux, 29 June 1999 (in "*Auditions de la Commission d'enquête parlementaire sur le fonctionnement des forces de sécurité en Corse*", Assemblée Nationale, *www.assemblee-nationale.fr*).

[89] During the summer of 1999 one of Bonnet's men set fire to the seaside restaurant *Chez Francis* to 'teach the owner a lesson'. The owner was a nationalist sympathiser but in close contact with the local police. However, the papers left to attribute the act to armed anti-separatist movements, were copied with the prefecture's photocopier. The episode reaffirmed the persistence of the *barbouzes* problem on the island.

ministers he met a delegation of Corsican deputies in Matignon (after which the initiative became known as the 'Matignon process') and asked them to draft their proposals. Split between two factions, one favouring autonomy and the other greater decentralisation, in May 2000 the Corsican Assembly voted by a margin of a few votes to support the latter option. The MRG leader Zuccarelli triumphantly commented: *"Now it can no longer be said that Corsicans want autonomy!"*[90]

Both proposals (of consultative nature) were brought to the attention of Jospin, who set up two working groups, composed of Corsican deputies and government representatives, in order to define the law's details.[91] Finally adopted by the Parliament in January 2002, the new law gave significant autonomy to the Collectivite Territoriale Corse (CTC), which can now write its own development plan fixing the objectives of economic, social, and cultural development and preservation of the environment; pass its own budget, and ask the Parliament to adapt national laws to the specificities of the island. The law also provides for the Corsican language to become a taught subject in the nursery and elementary schools of the region and for the transfer to the CTC of all historical sites, ports, airports and railway in Corsica in possession of the State. Finally, it reasserts the principle of territorial continuity and some fiscal incentives.[92]

The juridical *iter* prior to the adoption of the law on Corsica was accompanied at the national level by a heated political debate: on the one hand there were those approving the government's action and on the other were those complaining about its weakness in yielding to the bomb-strategy of nationalist clans, or worrying that the Corsican precedent could induce other regions to claim a similar form of treatment, thereby endangering national unity.[93] Thus it looked as if the 'Corsican Question' would

[90] *"On ne pourra pas dire: les Corses veulent l'autonomie"* (Le Monde, 11.3.2000). Zuccarelli, regional councillor and mayor of Bastia, previous Ministre de la Fonction Publique et de la Décentralisation in the Cresson government, belongs to one of the most well-known families of *notables* in Corsica.

[91] The final draft, approved by the Corsican Assembly, provided for a reform to be completed in two phases: the 'transitional stage' saw a first transfer of powers (in development, territorial administration, culture, education, infrastructures) to the CTC and a delegation of legislative powers under the Parliament's control. The second, 'constitutional stage' foresaw the extension of the transfer following a reform of the French Constitution, and the introduction of one single regional institution (instead of the CTC and the two *départements*), provided that civil peace was maintained.

[92] Besides the confirmation of the measures deriving from the Law on a Free Trade Area for SMEs in Corsica, an extraordinary program covering investments for fifteen years is foreseen, coordinated with the objectives of the CPER and Structural Funds planning, in order "to help Corsica overcome the natural handicaps constituted by its relief and insularity" (law 92/2002, title IV, art.53).

[93] One month after Jospin's proposition of the law to the Corsican Assembly, the Minister of the Interiors Jean-Pierre Chevènement, resigned because of his open disagreement with the Prime Minister over the reform. He declared that he would never have signed a document that endangered the unity of the *République*. As seen, Chevènement had been one of the historic adversaries of decentralisation, which he saw as contrary to the Left's tradition of egalitarian, universalist and republican values. Cole (1998), p. 255.

become one of the issues on which to play out the presidential election in April 2002.[94] However, as abruptly shown by the success in the first round of Jean-Marie Le Pen (the xenophobic and anti-European candidate of the extreme Right), the issues at stake for the French electorate at the dawning of the new millennium seemed of a wider nature, likewise those worrying other European countries: unemployment, criminality, terrorism, immigration, EU enlargement.[95] The defeat of the Socialists favoured the reconfirmation of the RPR leader Chirac, followed by the victory of the Centre-right in the legislative elections.

Despite criticism of Jospin's approach to the Corsican question, the Centre-right government coalition partly continued his policy. However, both Prime Minister Raffarin and Minister of the Interior Sarkozy privileged the economic and pragmatic aspect of the Corsican laws and inserted them within a more general plan of constitutional revision on decentralisation in France, glossing over the political and ideological implications.[96] The aim to bring back to 'normality' the Corsican question in avoiding a federalist drift once again raised tensions with armed nationalist groups in the island – partly improved during the Jospin mandate – further strengthening their justification in continuing the status of conflict with the centralistic state.[97] Sarkozy's attempts to proceed with institutional reform in Corsica were frustrated by the failure of the referendum he launched on the island in July 2003 to suppress the two *départements* and create a sole, more effective regional body holding general jurisdiction for Corsican affairs. The 51% of contrary votes revealed the prevalence of the forces aiming to keep the *status quo* on the island. At the national referendum of 2005, asking French citizens if they wished to ratify the European Constitutional Treaty, again the majority of the Corsican electorate voted 'no' (58%). However, this time they were in good company, given that 55% of the French electorate also voted against the European Constitution.

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[94] In fact one of the candidates was Chevènement, at the head of the *Movement for the Citizens*, trying to capture the electorate with a revival of the traditional democratic and republican values for a unitary, Jacobin state.

[95] "As old cleavages based on class and sub-cultural identity have diminished, however, new ones have emerged, notably those tied up with the advent of a post-industrial society, European integration and immigration", Cole (1998), p.219.

[96] Reuters news: "*Nicolas Sarkozy présente la Corse comme un 'précurseur' de la décentralisation*" (27 July 2002), "*Visite surprise de Jean-Pierre Raffarin en Corse*" (28 July 2002).

[97] Agence France Presse, "*The FLNC reacts to the visit in Corsica of Raffarin and Sarkozy*" (1 August 2002). The FLNC reacted to the governmental visit by organizing a masked and armed press conference in which it expressed its doubts on the possibility that the government was better able to solve the Corsican question than its predecessors.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen, following the case of the island of Corsica, how gradually in France regions became recognised as one of the main levels of subnational government within a wider picture of less centralised territorial relations. A crucial role in this process was played by territorial development policy which, since the Second World War, was organized into regional areas in order to grant a balanced and integrated development of French territory, and not only the growth of its economic system. Regionalisation through regional policy, however, was officially defined by governments in functional terms as an effective means to plan economic restructuring and infrastructure development, and still answering what I have defined as the 'national model' of organizing territory and power. In fact the strongly centralised nature of the French state and its republican values based on a 'simple egalitarianism' (Walzer 1993) – implying the promotion of universal citizenship and culture within its boundaries – did not allow a justification of regional autonomy nor a recognition of ethnic distinctiveness within the nation. In those cases where, as in Corsica, regional differences were more pronounced, the imposition of an 'equal treatment' by the central government fuelled the action of regionalist movements, asking for recognition of the special features of their cultural, socio-economic and geographical context. The only recognition by the French governments of a special status to the region was based on its geographical features, justifying state aids, while regional claims for greater autonomy in respect of cultural and historical differences were firmly repressed. This gradually led to a 'reactive formation' of the autonomist ideology on the island (Hecter and Levi 1994: 184–185), which grew by defining its goals mainly in opposition to the French state and initiating a spiral of violence still active today. Meanwhile, the result of 'top-down' planning, ignorant and distrustful of local resources and traditions, led to the implementation of regional policies raising social problems without launching self-sustaining development in the island.

However, increasing external pressures from globalisation and EU integration, backed by internal requests from subnational actors and civil society for greater participation in decision-making processes, gradually challenged the 'national model' even in France, where it was chiefly rooted. After a series of governments' makeshift solutions, the advent of the Socialists in power in the 1980s brought about a comprehensive of revision of state and society relations in France. The wider setting for this change, tying to accommodate to the changed context without repudiating national

traditions, was offered by the EU.[98] Within this wider-ranging project of social renewal, reforms on decentralisation were recognised as a crucial position. Besides formal institutional reforms (from the 1982 Deferre Act to the Constitutional Law 2003-276), the redefinition of the French model in centre-periphery relations and territorial policy was also reflected at an informal level in the adoption of a negotiation approach (*concertation*) between national and regional actors, acting in partnership in the definition of the *Contrats de Plan* (CoR 2004: 274), which influenced in turn the design of Structural Funds' management. Accordingly, the government's approach to the Corsican question was revolutionized: political dialogue was launched with local authorities and leaders of regionalist movements, a special status was formally recognised to the island and powers concerning the economic development and the protection of cultural and natural heritage were devolved to regionally elected institutions. The fact that the shift to the new institutional model was not rewarded with immediate success does not change the relevance of having offered to the Corsican question the prospect of a long-term solution. In the next section we shall see how the 'EU model' has further strengthened the feasibility of this path.

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[98] As summed up by President Mitterrand's catchphrase in his 1988 New Year's Eve speech to the nation: "*France is our homeland, but Europe is our future!*", quoted in Guyomarch, Machin, Ritchie (1998), p.1.

*"One day Sardinians saw from their shores
a column of smoke which advanced towards their ports.
It was Europe coming to them".[99]*

Chapter 5 - Regional policy and the Sardinian question in Italy

Like Corsica, Sardinia became part of the mainland only during the last two centuries. Inhabited since prehistoric times by the Nuragic civilisation, the island experienced the invasion of the different civilisations of the Mediterranean. After the 'judical period' of the early Middle Ages (when it was governed by four independent constitutional monarchies) Sardinia fell under Spanish rule for nearly 400 years. In 1720 the Kingdom of Sardinia was ceded by Austria to Carlo Alberto, Duke of Savoy and Prince of Piedmont, in exchange for the Realm of Sicily. Despite opposition from the liberal Sardinian *élite*, in 1847 a 'perfect fusion' of the Sardo-Piedmontese institutions was carried out: parliament, government and the judiciary of the realm were all located in Turin, exacerbating the island's peripherality from the decision-making centres of the new kingdom. A year later Vittorio Emanuele II, flanked by his Minister Cavour, launched the military operations that led to the unification of Italy in 1861, through a policy of annexation of different geographical and cultural realities in Italy to the Sardo-Piedmontese realm.[100]

In the debate leading up to the unification of Italy, Carlo Cattaneo and other leading figures of the Risorgimento had advocated a federal design of regional decentralisation and local self-government for the new State. However, contemporary agricultural riots in the South alarmed both Piedmontese *élites* and the great landowners of the South who, fearing that federalism would encourage centrifugal tendencies, opted for a model of centralised state.[101] To stress the continuity of its dynasty, the king maintained the old numbering in his new title. However, despite the fact that the Kingdom of Sardinia could be considered as being at the origin of the Italian state (Casula 1997), the island was to become one of its most peripheral and forgotten areas.

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[99] J.P. Jurien de la Gravière, *La marine d'autrefois. La Sardaigne en 1842*, Paris, 1862; quoted in Mattone (1998), pp.14–15, with reference to the fact that the diffusion of steamships in the middle of the 19th century allowed for more regular connections between Sardinia and the mainland, which until then had been quite problematic.

[100] This was the meaning of the famous phrase of the statesman Massimo d'Azeglio after unification: *"We have made Italy, now we must make Italians!"* In fact the movement which had led to political independence and unification had involved only a restricted *élite*. Germino and Passigli (1968), p.1.

[101] In 1861 a law promulgated by Prime Minister Bettino Ricasoli extended the centralised and uniform Piedmontese administrative structure to the whole of the new Kingdom of Italy. At the formal level, the law followed the model put into place by Napoleon III, which assigned to powerful prefects the control of budgets and activities of local authorities. However, at the informal level, it was characterised by a great deal of accommodation and compromise with local *notables*. Partridge (1998), p.52.

Within the larger picture of the new Italian state the 'Sardinian question' soon became interweaved with that of the *Mezzogiorno*, with which it shared a condition of economic underdevelopment and social backwardness – as dramatically witnessed by the mass emigration of Southern Italians to the American continent.[102] The model of capitalist development chosen by the Italian government to boost the country's economy turned to financing the development of the industrial sector in the Northern areas – more developed and at an advantage in terms of location in relation to the advanced European markets – while customs protectionism hit the more dynamic areas of the *Mezzogiorno* (Barbagallo 1996: 614, 615). This dualistic pattern of development was further strengthened by the World Wars, when the weapons industry developed in the North and Southern men were sent to war *en masse*.

Although the peripherality of the island did not allow Sardinians to participate fully in the debates animating Italy over intervention, the First World War represented a crucial moment for the ideological formation of the political class. As with other Southerners, Sardinian men were sent to the front in great numbers: most of them served in the Brigata Sassari – one of the few regional units in the Italian army, reuniting soldiers of modest rural origins with cultivated officials in the same daunting experience. Soon the Brigata gained a reputation for its heroism and a consciousness of its regional identity. After the war, the debate over autonomy regained importance, animated by intellectuals and ex-officials (such as Umberto Cao, Camillo Bellieni, Emilio Lussu)[103] who in 1921 founded the *Partito Sardo d'Azione* (PSd'A), a regionalist political party supporting the development of the island, advocating political and administrative autonomy and free trade. Although there were several interpretations of the notion of autonomy on the island, the one that was mostly shared referred to regional self-government, rather than to independence from mainland Italy. Sardinia was in fact defined as a kind of 'abortive nation', whose fate had become interlinked with that of Italy in an indissoluble way. As a consequence, cultural nationalism "was recognised as a historical and linguistic legacy, but it was curiously left at a subordinate

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[102] Over four million people from the South of Italy emigrated to the Americas in the first fifteen years of the 20th century. The exodus was later limited by the new rules regulating emigration flows to the US in the 1920s. Barbagallo (1996), p.618.

[103] Umberto Cao published the booklet *For Autonomy* in 1918, which underlined that the traditional Sardinian fatalistic attitude toward the possibility of change had been altered by the heroic experience of the war, and which proposed the foundation of an autonomous Sardinian party. Once faith was found again in the possibility of changing things, Sardinians would be ready to fight for autonomy even inside a united Italy. Clark (1990), pp.392–393.

level" in autonomists' claims (Clark 1990: 397).[104] The war experience also specified the terms of the autonomy issue on the part of the government, which accepted Sardinian requests for special treatment partly on the grounds of the 'debt of gratitude' the Italian state had contracted with the island (Clark 1990: 392).

When fascism made its appearance, the PSd'A firmly condemned it as an instrument of Northern capitalism. However, with Mussolini in power, several of its members joined the fascist party. The most influential leaders of the PSd'A stayed out of this fusion, and the party continued to exist as the major anti-fascist force in the region until 1926, when it was dissolved by Mussolini and Lussu was sent into exile to the island of Lipari.[105] During the 1920s, within Mussolini's policy of modernisation for the South,[106] agriculture and infrastructures were developed in Sardinia through state interventions that were not compatible with the traditional economic activities of the island.[107] As part of the 'battle for wheat' (*battaglia del grano*), aiming to make Italy self-sufficient in food production, the government discouraged the flourishing local sector of cheese exports – which were smuggled through Corsica – to fund investments in agriculture in the island's plain areas (Clark 1990: 408). Two new villages, Mussolinia and Fertilia, were settled with farmers from the Po valley, major drainage projects were completed and even land that was not suitable was ploughed, at the expense of vineyards, gardens and pastures. Fascist policies were thus not "directed to self-development within competitiveness, but rather on growth within autarchic and political protectionism" (Sapelli 1995: 165). Moreover, early interventions were not followed up by other projects and thus lost some of their potential benefits; in fact attention towards Sardinia declined in the 1930s as a result of the increasingly critical international situation. The still difficult connections with the mainland made unprofitable the investments in the agricultural sector, and the island was viewed as mainly a source of raw materials and labour to be used in urgent military expeditions.[108]

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[104] This was also the view of Camillo Bellieni, one of the main leaders of the PSd'A. Sardinian traditional values were seen as something peculiar, "but backward, they certainly did not constitute a platform for respectable and modernising political men", Clark (1990), p.397.

[105] Lussu escaped from the island of Lipari with Feruccio Parri and the Rosselli brothers to Paris, where they founded the anti-fascist *Giustizia e Libertà* movement.

[106] In 1924 the 'billion law' (so called because it destined 1,000 million lire for a ten year period to be spent on public works in Sardinia) was promulgated and a *Provveditorato alle Opere Pubbliche* was created in Cagliari to plan and administer the funds.

[107] Initial projects were based on the debatable theory that wide reaches of uncultivated pastures could be made fertile. Moreover, the 'nuclear' structure of the Sardinian family did not match the traditional extended family of the *mezzadri* in central Italy (where sharecropping represented a predominant structure for the cultivation of land by landless farmers). See DaRe (1990).

[108] The Sardinian mining sector (in crisis since the Great Depression) was expanded to cover military needs. The major part of the investment was not Sardinian and most of the coal, lead and zinc extracted was exported.

However, although they remained very isolated, Sardinian cities were growing and illiteracy on the island started to decline.

The Southern question in the aftermath of World War II

The impact of the Second World War was less significant in Sardinia than that of the First World War. Given the island's distance from military actions and the lack of participation in the *Resistenza* and the liberation movement,[109] the island did not participate in the formation of a shared background of common patriotic and political experiences between the citizens and their political leaders. However, Sardinians clearly experienced the economic downsides of the war, worsened by the already backward socio-economic conditions of the island. These conditions were described in reports drawn up by two delegations of the Italian Parliament in the early 1950s, listing the factors making the "vicious cycle of Sardinian underdevelopment" (Bottazzi 1998: 2–3): malaria, low population density, lack of security, malnutrition, low productivity, lack of skilled labour, difficult transport and communications both internally and with the mainland. Underdevelopment characterised the life of the islanders, who lived in the interior, divided into small villages, without any prospect or hope for change.[110]

To break this vicious cycle, common to most Southern Italian regions,[111] and launch a process of development, structural actions were needed to challenge the traditional dualism of the country's economy.[112] With this aim in mind, the Italian government elaborated a policy of state intervention for the South with an 'extraordinary' character (the so-called *Intervento Straordinario*, based on additional rather than ordinary funds supplied by the state for regional economic development) planned in two stages: a first phase, designed to buttress the development of agriculture and basic infrastructure, was to be followed by a second phase, focussed on the completion of the process of industrial development. In 1950 an agency for the development of the South (*Cassa per*

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[109] However, many Sardinians fought for the *Resistenza* on the mainland. The main effect was the allied bombings of Cagliari (February 1943) and ports of Olbia. Even at the fall of fascism there were no great demonstrations on the island: General Basso assumed civil power and let the German troops on the Island leave peacefully, passing through Corsica almost without a fight.

[110] The absence of expectations, or the will to react or improve, was another of the characteristics identified by the Parliamentary Reports. Italian Parliament (1953a; 1953b).

[111] At the beginning of the 1950s Sardinia held, with Sicily, the lowest activity rate of all Italian regions: 35.4% (which worsened to 31.1% ten years later). Mutti (1981a), pp.200–201.

[112] Of fundamental relevance for the island's development was the US troops' disinfestation of the coastal plains with DDT in 1946–49, which allowed the rooting out of malaria.

il Mezzogiorno) was created – based on the model of the Tennessee Valley Authority – benefitting during the first decade from decisional and administrative autonomy.[113]

In the first years of activity the *Cassa* funded measures including the creation or improvement of transport, electricity and water infrastructures, the modernisation of the agricultural sector, the establishment of schools and social services, regional agencies and cooperatives.[114] In Sardinia a significant exodus from the agricultural sector took place in the labour market, leading to a progressive emptying out of internal and rural areas and the expansion of cities and coastal villages.[115] However, this migrating working force could not be entirely absorbed by the weak, insular industrial sector: funds from the *Cassa* for industry were scarce and the local mining industry – quite developed before the Second World War – was declining.[116] Thus workers leaving the agricultural sector either left the island completely (mainly for industries in the Centre and North of Italy),[117] or poured into the island's tertiary sector in search of employment. With reference to this second aspect, some authors have written that the evolution of the Sardinian labour market and society has in a sense 'skipped a phase' of modernisation, and thus Sardinia "has become post-industrialised without having really been industrialised" (Bottazzi 1998: 6).

Increasingly the 'extraordinary' funds of the *Cassa* were used by the Italian government as substitution, rather than in addition, of ordinary resources made available for public works, and the *Mezzogiorno* seemed to serve mainly as a source of labour for the expanding economy of the North and as a market for the goods produced there (Barbagallo 1996: 620; Mutti 1981a: 205–206). Gradually doubts on the possibility of breaking the cycle of dependence linking Southern development to central budgetary transfers began to surface even among the early promoters of the *Intervento*

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[113] The Tennessee Valley Authority had managed the development of a depressed area following the New Deal policies launched by F.D. Roosevelt in the U.S. The adoption of a similar model was thus welcomed by the World Bank, financing investments for the development of the South within the Marshall Plan. Barbagallo (1996), p.620.

[114] Among the main regional agencies or credit institutions created in those years: *Ente autonomo del Flumendosa* (1946), *Istituto zootecnico e caseario per la Sardegna* (1948); *Ente sardo industrie turistiche* (1950); *Ente per la trasformazione fondiaria e agraria della Sardegna* (1951); *Banco di Sardegna, Credito Industriale Sardo, Ente sardo di elettricità* (1953), *Istituto sardo organizzazione lavoro artigiano* (1957). Mutti (1981a), p.202.

[115] The percentage of the working population in the agricultural sector represented in 1951 more than 50%, but only 10% thirty years later. Bottazzi (1998), p.6.

[116] After WW2 the mining industry experienced a progressive decline in the changing international division of work, because of its 'proto-industrial' character. In Sardinia mining activities had been concentrated only in some parts of the island (mainly the South-Eastern area of Sulcis-Iglesiente) and had been limited to the less profitable phase of extraction. See Bottazzi (1998), pp.9–10 and Mutti (1981a), p.203.

[117] The annual emigration rate, more or less stable until 1957, of around 3,500 people, increased exponentially during the following years: in 1960 nearly 15,330 people were leaving the island (Istat 2001).

Straordinario. However, the Sardinian region had an additional card on which all hopes for its development were to be played: the 'Rebirth Plan' (*Piano di Rinascita*) promised by the Italian state to the island at the awakening of the Italian Republic.

The Italian Constitution and the Rebirth Plan for Sardinia

The Italian Constitution (1948), a highly progressive document written by the main anti-fascist forces in society (including Sardinian autonomists) with a fresh memory of the risks deriving from the concentration of power, provided for a decentralised state structure "as a safeguard for the democratic system against the risks of a return to totalitarianism" (Desideri 1996: 66). Three different levels of elected local government were identified, without strict hierarchical relations: the *comuni* (municipalities), the *province* (districts),[118] and the *regioni* (regions). Among the regions, the Constitution distinguished between fifteen with 'ordinary statutes', activated through ordinary national legislation, and five regions with 'special statutes'. The latter were granted greater legislative and administrative autonomy in recognition of their differentiated historical and cultural traditions, often linked to a peripheral location within the country or to the presence of significant ethnic groups or linguistic minorities.[119] The Sardinian representatives were offered a statute giving them exclusive legislative powers in many fields, based on the one drafted by the representatives of the Sicilian region and accepted by the De Gasperi government before the election of the national Constituent Assembly writing the Italian Constitution with royal decree.

However, the offer was proudly (and perhaps unwisely) refused, on the grounds that Sardinians wanted to write 'their own' statute. In April 1947 the *Consulta Sarda*, after long debates among its members on the interpretation to be given to the notion of autonomy, presented a draft text of the statute to the Constituent Assembly. In the statute the interpretation of regional autonomy that was adopted – after the initiative of the local DC party leader and future president of the Republic, Antonio Segni – offered to the regional government only a limited transfer of legislative powers. Claims to exclusive competence in the major fields of economic, educational or cultural policy-making for the island were thus waived for the recognition of a special status set in the

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[118] Due to the above mentioned influence of the French model in the foundation of the Italian state, decentralised state agencies were located at the provincial level, although their role was limited to a supervision of local authorities and co-ordination of national services. In Sardinia, there were initially three provinces: Cagliari, Sassari, Nuoro. Oristano was added in 1974 while another four provinces have been added since the 2005 elections: Ogliastra, Medio-Campidano, Sulcis-Iglesiente and Gallura.

[119] The 'special statute' regions created in 1948 were Sardinia Trentino-Alto Adige and Valle d'Aosta. The Sicilian Region was created in 1946 and Friuli-Venezia Giulia in 1963.

framework of a centralised Italian nation state.[120] The most convincing answer to the question of why most Sardinian politicians were so hesitant (*vis à vis* their Sicilian counterparts) in asking central government to provide them with more independent powers remains that of Antonio Gramsci. In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci wrote extensively on the Southern question and his native Sardinia, noticing among other things that while Sicilian landowners were (economically, politically, culturally) very powerful and had interests to defend against Rome, most of the Sardinian *élite* came from a middle class dependent on the state's colonial power and resources (Gramsci 1997: 197; Clark 1990: 423–424).

The national Constituent Assembly revised the Sardinian statute further by limiting the legislative and financial powers of the regional Assembly and the president of the region. However, the Sardinian political *élite* observed that those losses were worth the acquisition of article 13, which stated that: "*The State, in concert with the Region, provides for an organic plan to favour the economic and social rebirth of the Island*". This was an implicit acknowledgement of Sardinia's special condition, in that it embodied the promise from the state of a specific development policy for the island, which no other Italian region had been granted. However, it inevitably led to the gradual shift of the debate from that on the island's autonomy to one concerning the adoption of developmental plans dependent on state funds: "in Sardinia autonomy did not mean self-government, but a quest of material concessions and modernisation" (Clark 1990: 428).

Expectations and disappointments with regard to the island's 'rebirth'

During the drafting of the Italian Constitution the regionalists' front had been strongly supported by the Christian Democratic Party (DC) which included subsidiarity and decentralisation as points of its electoral programme (Dente 1985: 128). However, once in government, the DC started to strengthen central control, fearing that the Left could get into power in the 'red regions' of central Italy (Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany and Umbria). Equally the Left, for the same reason, abandoned its position of centralism for one supporting regionalisation. This explains why the constitutional provisions setting

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[120] See Clark (1990) pp.423, 426. The Sardinian statute contemplated a series of 'delegated' administrative tasks from central authorities which, however, were transferred very slowly, partially, and with reluctance: see Ballero (1983). There was no reference to the use and teaching of the Sardinian language mentioned in the case of other 'special statute' regions, such as the Trentino-Alto Adige (for the German-speaking community in Alto Adige), or later the Friuli-Venezia Giulia (for the Slovene communities in Venezia Giulia).

fifteen regions with ordinary statutes had to wait over twenty years before being finally enacted. Resistance by the central government to the devolution of powers in favour of local authorities was also linked to the organization of the Italian political parties in a system – later known as *partitocrazia* – which perpetuated traditional clientelism, systematically favouring specific social groups in return for electoral support (Dente 1985: 105). The state thus retained its prerogatives over most policy areas (especially over the territorial redistribution of resources and economic planning) as well as over the administrative class (mainly recruited and backed in its career patterns through party affiliation, both at the central and local level) (Grote 1996: 259–261; Cerase 1992).

Also in Sardinia, as in the rest of Italy, the first legislative elections after the war (April 1948) saw the success of the DC party, confirmed in the first regional elections (May 1949) with the victory of a centrist DC–PSd'A coalition.[121] The PSd'A had addressed its electoral programme to the 'Sardinian people', defined as victims of colonialist state exploitation protecting the monopolies of the Centre-North through policies managed by a centralised bureaucracy (Mutti 1981a: 222). In contrast, the party claimed economic liberalisation and a broader range of regional autonomy (sometimes making use of minority nationalism arguments, stressing the different national roots of the Sardinian people *vis-à-vis* the Italian one, and hinting at separatist solutions).[122] However, despite the popularity of its arguments on the island, especially among farmers and shepherds, the PSd'A did not regain the political influence it had had in the early 1920s. This had partly to do with the memory of its fusion with fascism in 1923 but mainly with the fact that by then the autonomist arguments had been adopted by all other regional political forces (such as the local DC, adopting several of the arguments against central colonialism) and therefore ceased to be a unique ideological blueprint.[123] Soon DC leaders gained control of most of the posts in the civil service, regional agencies and the commissions for agrarian reform or economic development on the island. The distribution of posts followed a power-sharing logic organized on a provincial basis: the local DC politician took "the role of patron usually played by the landowners and the lawyers, and he played it even better" (Clark 1990: 432). The puppet-masters of the patronage were, however, in Rome and this further demeaned the cause of regional autonomy: "autonomy did not mean a Sardinian concerted effort for

[121] The first president of the Sardinian government was the DC leader L. Crespellani (1949–1954), while the first president of the regional assembly was A. Contu, of the PSd'A.

[122] See the collection of articles of '*Il Solco*', mouthpiece of the PSd'A, in "*Stampa periodica in Sardegna 1943–49*" (1975).

[123] After the 1948 electoral defeat, Lussu left the Psd'A to found a more leftist faction (the PSd'AS), joining the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) a year later, in whose ranks he was elected as senator in Rome for the following twenty years. Clark (1990), p.429.

self-government, nor even a concerted expression of Sardinian requests; it meant government – in fact, party – concessions to clients on the island, just as the old centralisation had done" (Clark 1990: 435).

However, the autonomist ideology still held a strong cohesive potential on the island. This was proven by the response of civil society to the debate over the 'rebirth', launched by the Left and the Labour Chambers of the three provinces during the early 1950s. The mobilisation was preceded by several preparatory encounters throughout the island and the initiative culminated in a two-day 'Congress of the Sardinian People' held in Cagliari in 1950. Participation in the Congress was widespread and it brought together a great number of representatives of political parties, agricultural and mining sectors, and other civil organizations. Opened by Lussu, calling for unity of those who loved their land beyond political or social divisions, the Congress was a great success for the Left[124] inasmuch that local DC deputies – ignoring the initiative after the national leaderships vetoed their participation – were forced to acknowledge its relevance and embraced its conclusions in the regional Council (Ruju 1998: 834; Accardo 1998: 31, 35). Among those conclusions was the refusal to adopt a secessionist interpretation of autonomy for the island. The island's rebirth was considered to lie within the wider interests of the national community. As a consequence, the Rebirth Plan (*Piano di Rinascita*) was presented as a policy to be defined in agreement between the state and the island in order to cover all aspects of regional development and not to be packaged within the *Cassa* funding, whose interventions had a different aim and characteristic (Accardo 1998: 34).

However, the evolution of the Plan failed to meet the great expectations it had raised. At the national level, in fact, there was resistance to the setting up of the policy: the research committee created in 1951 by the government to define the content of the Plan was left without funding until 1954 (Ruju 1998: 835). A year later the regional president Alfredo Corrias resigned in protest against the government's delays in assuming its obligations toward the industrialisation of the island and the operationalisation of the Rebirth Plan (Ruju 1998: 835). When in 1958 the final report was presented, it was economically and politically outdated: in fact, it identified agricultural development as the main means to achieve the equalisation of regional GDP

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[124] The main leaders of the Sardinian PCI (Italian Communist Party) were Velio Spano – who tended to focus the party's line on the Sardinian workers' movements, especially around the issues involving the mining sector – and Renzo Laconi – who supported a more overarching strategy, uniting all movements on broader issues: see Ruju (1998), pp.832–833. Laconi's contribution was crucial in the drafting of article 13 of the Sardinian statute as a recognition of the need to define for the island a policy specifically designed for the integrated development of the island, rather than ordinary public works interventions. See Accardo (1998), pp.30–31.

with the national average within 15–20 years ,[125] while the Italian government had just launched the second phase of the policy of modernisation via industrialisation for the *Mezzogiorno*.

Changing the Rebirth Plan's objectives to those of the *Cassa*

The tendency of the Sardinian political *élites* to conform to the twists and turns decided nationally was strengthened both with the increased watering down of the autonomist cause and the gradual integration and homogenisation of civil society on the island with the national one (Accardo 1998: 45). In the mid-fifties the national DC leader Amintore Fanfani promoted a general renewal of the party's organizational structure in order to make the DC's political power more independent from external influences (especially those of Catholic Action and Luigi Gedda's Civic Committees). Party representatives were strategically placed in leadership posts within public firms (Mutti 1981a: 210), the leadership was renewed and recruitment came from the ranks of the party bureaucracy rather than from the bourgeoisie's notables.[126] In Sardinia this renewal became evident between 1956 and 1958, when in Sassari the local DC leader Campus was defeated by a new faction – the so-called 'young Turks'[127] – supported by the national leadership and the local church.[128]

To a lesser extent, changes also took place in the more conservative and less dynamic DC section in Cagliari, whose new leader Efisio Corrias was elected president of the region for two terms (1958–66). Corrias – a member of the urban groups reasonably open to the important social issues of the day, supported by the labour organizations and the Acli – helped to 'ferry' the Sardinian regional government

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[125] A role for small industry was also foreseen, linked to the development of local productions (such as the dairy or olive oil industry). However, the identification of economic development with industrialisation was clearly rejected as a dangerous mistake. See Ruju (1998), pp.836–838.

[126] DC youth was thus encouraged to obtain public posts as a first step in their political careers. Sidney Tarrow, in analysing those organizational changes within the DC party, has defined it as the passage from 'notables' clientelism' to 'bureaucratic or organizational clientelism'. In the first case the political exchange between support and benefits or protection is based on a vertical relationship of solidarity based on personal trust and faith and linked to a more traditional agricultural society, while in the second case there is a horizontal relationship between the voters and the organizational structure of the party, with associations set in the middle. Tarrow (1972), pp.270–319.

[127] Nino Campus was one of the founders of the Popular Party in Sardinia and cousin of the later President of the Republic Antonio Segni, who surprisingly did not oppose the 'white revolution' of the 'Young Turks'. Ruju (1998), p.829. This new class of young professional politicians (whose main leaders were Cossiga, Dettori, Soddu, Colavitti and Giagu de Martini) declared among their aims that of bringing to an end the clientelistic management of the party based on the personal prestige of the old leaders, by establishing the supremacy of the party. However, in reality this amounted to gaining power within the party and replacing the old guard.

[128] A clear sign of the strong links between the national DC leadership and the Sassari was the election of two Sassari DC leaders as Presidents of the Italian Republic (Segni and Cossiga).

towards the support of the Centre-Left path in creating governing coalitions. This path followed the national trend, which with the opening to the Left aimed to isolate the growing force of the PCI through an alliance with the PSI. The Sardinian version of the strategy contemplated the involvement of the Psd'A and the identification of the Rebirth Plan as the main battleground for the fight for regional autonomy (Accardo 1998: 46). During his first government, Corrias assigned the crucial regional Ministry for Industry to the Psd'A leader Pietro Melis and created a regional Ministry for the Rebirth, giving it to Francesco Deriu.[129] The latter organized in 1959 four conferences on the Rebirth Plan, which testified to the resilience of the political and social consensus over the issue of the island's autonomy, attainable via socio-economic development.[130] Wide agreement was found on the basic tenets that should have formed the basis the operationalisation of the Rebirth Plan: a 'bottom-up' definition of the priorities to be followed by regional planning; the additionality of resources *vis à vis* those destined to the *Cassa* for the development of the *Mezzogiorno* as a whole; the central role to be played by the Sardinian region in the management and implementation of the funds (Accardo 1998: 49–50).

Following changes in the political leadership, a new working group was created to present a new project for bringing the objectives of the Rebirth Plan into line with the second phase of the extraordinary intervention of the *Cassa* in the South.[131] A newly created planning centre (the CRP, *Centro Regionale di Programmazione*) directed by Colavitti (one of the ex 'young Turks') was created to implement a developmental strategy whose guidelines were defined at the central level by a DC-led government that followed the latest economic modernisation theories. As we have already seen in the third chapter, the recipe of industrialisation via development poles consisted of the funding of the installation of large industrial plants whose spill-over effects should have launched the development of the region in the short-term. The choice of the chemical, iron and steel industries was dictated by the need for Italy to widen its productive base

[129] A further step towards the opening to the Left was taken by Corrias during his second term (lasting only one year), when he presented a government in which the Socialist Party made its first appearance. Accardo (1998), p.48.

[130] The sprouting of journals in those years on the islands' development (*Il Bogino, Ichnusa, Rinascita Sarda, Il Democratico, Sardegna oggi; Autonomia cronache*) represented a conscious attempt on the part of politicians but also intellectuals (such as R. Laconi, A. Pigliaru, M. Pira) to link the issue of regional identity and culture to the political debate over the Rebirth Development Plan. Accardo (1998), pp.65–77; Ruju (1998), pp.836–837.

[131] One of the main advocates of the need to merge extraordinary and ordinary development funds was Francesco Cossiga (ex-leader of the 'young turks' and future president of the Republic), who argued that the role of the region had to be reduced in favour of a greater presence of the state. Accardo (1998), p.51. Quite ironically, Cossiga today advocates extreme forms of regional nationalism, such as in the case of the Basque nationalists.

by providing the country with the necessary basic resources to further develop the industrial sectors as the mainstay of the 'economic miracle' of the 1950s in North-Western Italy, based on heavy industry and car production.

In 1962 the Rebirth Plan was approved by the national Parliament and officially launched. Among its declared priorities was the modernisation of the economic and social structures throughout the region, in order to achieve the highest levels of steady employment and a faster increase in wage rates (Mutti 1981b: 383). The 400 billion lire allocated for twelve years (1962–1974) should have represented additional resources *vis à vis* other national funds destined to the island within the government's policy for the South. However, the additionality of the funding was soon 'forgotten' by the national government. The bulk of resources, initially destined for agriculture, was redirected mainly toward the industrial sector (especially in the petrochemical and basic chemicals) and unevenly distributed in the provinces, while almost no reference was made to the mining and sheep-farming industries – considered as backward and unproductive.[132]

Although supported by most of the political class and economic categories on the island – looking at industrialisation as a necessary stage for modernisation (Ruju 1998: 840–841) – the limits of the industrial poles approach soon became apparent. The petrol-chemical industries financed were capital intensive and largely external – both for their input and outputs of economic factors – to the economy of the region; the limited number of jobs they offered was often reserved for specialised technicians called from mainland Italy, while Sardinians continued to emigrate. Since the industrialisation process was not diffused throughout the territory, but rather concentrated in areas that became known as 'cathedrals in the desert', the higher demand for goods produced by the rise in regional income, instead of stimulating internal production, resulted in a growth of imports of those goods from the outside.[133] This led to a crisis in the regional craft and SMEs, unable to compete with those of the Centre-North of Italy, while the agricultural sector continued to decline. What had been launched in the *Mezzogiorno*

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[132] Of the investments financed the distribution by sector saw 74% of resources to industry and only 10% to agriculture, while territorially 63% of resources went to the Cagliari province, 30% to Sassari and only 7% to Nuoro. These differences between the intentions of the Plan and its implementation emerged from the comparison of the original formulation of the Plan with the 6th Periodic report. See Mutti (1981b), pp.384–386.

[133] In 1959 the Lumbard entrepreneur Nino Rovelli – strongly supported by the Sassari DC *élite* – founded the SIR (*Sarda Industrie Resine*) to build a petrochemical plant in Porto Torres (on the Northern shore of the island). He later bought the chemical firm Rumianca in Assemini (near Cagliari) and the two main daily papers of the island, *L'Unione Sarda* and *La Nuova Sardegna* (this fact clearly did not help to develop a critical perspective on the issues at stake in public opinion on the island). In 1964 the Lumbard entrepreneur Angelo Moratti started to build in Sarroch (on the coast near Cagliari) the SARAS refinery, still the main provider of industry on the island today.

was a 'modernisation without development' policy (Barbagallo 1996: 621; Trigilia 1992).

The limitations of the chosen developmental strategy were exacerbated in the case of Sardinia by factors internal to the region, such as the inefficiency of regional agencies, or the relinquishing – by the local political *élites* – of decisional power to the central government. The autonomy formally granted to the region had, in fact, been translated by the political *élite* only in terms of the quantity of resources which could be squeezed from the state, "abdicating completely the negotiations on the quality of development" (Mutti 1981b: 394). The cycle of dependency of the region started with the discretionary use of public funds by politicians and administrators, resulting in large numbers of 'assisted' voters who offered electoral support in return (Mutti 1981b: 412; Regini 1991). Regional coalitions, which had found in this perverse mechanism a source for their 'reproduction', were held together by a logic of power-sharing rather than ideological legacies proposing different approaches to development (Mutti 1981b: 398).

A policy against the mainstream: the OECD Pilot Project

While modernisation theories based on industrial poles were establishing themselves, a totally alternative policy paradigm was being proposed on the island. The OECD 'Pilot Project Sardinia' was instituted in 1956 with the participation of the Italian government, SVIMEZ, and the Sardinian region, and with a total budget of 1,035 million lire. The area identified for the development of the program included 41 communes in the triangle between Bosa, Macomer and Oristano (in the eastern part of the island) with a total population of nearly 100,000 inhabitants. The rationale behind this innovative project was to stimulate the development of human and social capital while experimenting with an integrated approach to the socio-economic development of the area.

The initiative included the mapping of existing and potential local resources and their coordination within an integrated development strategy that could link traditional activities with modern economic requirements, and also give special attention to the condition of women (Anfossi 2000: 6). Although the concept of social capital was not yet developed, we can see how one of the specific goals of the OECD Project was to promote "local development and communitarian actions": thus it deliberately identified social networks present within the communities (although within traditional settings),

and reinforced or created relations of trust through the involvement of social actors engaged in common tasks and the promotion of innovative practices and information aiming at the development of their territory (Anfossi 2000: 6, 19).

During its most active period, the Project counted only 50 people, chosen after a selective recruitment process following the criteria of technical competence and personal and human skills that were needed for the different tasks and fields of intervention, which included adult education, agriculture and zoo-technique, rural domestic economics, art craft and social services. No specific measure was dedicated to industry, absent in the area considered. In order to prevent opportunities for corruption, often linked to development funds, the Project offered free of charge assistance and information or sometimes asked for the payment of a token fee, just to make the public appreciate the value of the service provided (Anfossi 2000: 14, 18). The units were located in strategic sites, easily reachable, and searched to build the necessary familiarity and trust that could lead the inhabitants to cooperate in local development initiatives, learning to orient their actions not exclusively according to utilitaristic motivations, but also following social concerns.

To bear fruit, such an innovative project would have needed another element: sufficient time to take root in the social context. However, when at the end of 1962 the OECD project was closed, despite its role in the successful launching of a series of initiatives, both the state and the regional partners, now committed to the development of industrialised 'development poles', did not show any will to invest further resources. Although at its launch Sardinian authorities had agreed they would carry on the Project once OECD funding was exhausted, only a few measures were followed up by some regional and local offices, and even these were soon abandoned (Anfossi 2000: 15). Part of this lack of interest was also due to the fact that the Project had focused on local communities and overlooked local and regional authorities, who hence either dismissed the Project – failing to understand its innovative character – or openly opposed it – perceiving it as representing a potential menace to their power, directly linked with the redistribution of funds (Anfossi 2000: 16).

The issue of internal areas, between past traditions and assisted modernisation

In the first twenty years of the politics of public intervention in the South – which represented a phase of great economic development for Italy as a whole – another 4 million people emigrated from the South to Northern Italy and Europe. In Sardinia from

1960 almost 10% of the population left over the course of ten years, mainly from Barbagia, the central area of Sardinia in the province of Nuoro, which had received only the last scraps of the Plan's funds.[134] This was a result of having ignored the Plan's original objectives in favour of the adoption of the policy of developing industrial poles chosen for the South (Mutti 1981b: 386–387). Moreover, the unaccomplished administrative decentralisation to communes and provinces (as provided for by article 44 of the Sardinian statute) had led to a kind of 'ministerial feudalism' in the distribution of roles among the regional president and the members of its executive (Accardo 1998: 49).

It was in Barbagia that, in the late 1960s, there was an escalation of violence and protest. On the one hand there was a resurgence of banditry – a longstanding feature of Sardinian shepherd communities – which became more professional and progressed from the stealing of sheep to the kidnapping of affluent people to collect ransoms. Faced with the rising number of kidnappings (33 between 1966 and 1968), the government proclaimed a state of siege, sending policemen and trained soldiers (*baschi blu*) to scour the mountains and control the area. Sociologists debated the possible causes of the phenomenon, seen either as an expression of a culture of violence, isolation and underdevelopment or an anticolonialist movement for liberation of the Sardinian people (Clark 1990: 447). In the same period there were also several cases of occupation of city councils in the area by citizens protesting over issues ranging from unemployment, militarisation of the island, to 'top-down' developmental projects favouring private capital.[135] Also, on the rest of the island there were public outcries on the part of miners, students and factory workers that went on for months until the national Parliament, pressured by Sardinian politicians, instituted a commission to investigate criminality and public discontent in Sardinia.

Predominately in Barbagia there was also a flourishing of a new cultural wave (*neosardismo*), which proposed the idealisation of an agro-pastoral world that was fighting against a forced form of colonialist modernisation: "it was the first time that the Sardinian cultural identity was recognised by many as something desirable, that was worth defending against modernity" (Clark 1990: 453). In this way the internal areas, humiliated by the oblivion of regional and national politics, found a kind of moral

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[134] In the 1962–1970 period the province of Cagliari absorbed 62.7% of the total of the Plan's investments. 30.4% went to the Sassari province, while only 6.9% went to the Nuoro province. Mutti (1981b), p.386.
[135] Opposition to the government's plan of creating a national park in central Sardinia or locating a shooting range in the Pratobello area was mainly driven by the fears of shepherds' communities losing their traditional access to those areas for grazing.

legitimisation as the cultural core of the island. Arguments about the 'violated culture' or 'historic resistance' of the Sardinians against colonisers (Lilliu 1970; 1971) or the revival of the use of the Sardinian language (*sa limba*), animated nostalgic debates on the Sardinian nation with a flavour of ethnic separatism – sometimes inserted within the picture of a Europe of regions (Simon Mossa 1984; Ruju 1998: 872) – which, however, remained in the domain of a minority group (Clark 1990: 428; Mutti 1981b: 402).

These waves of popular and political discontent were exploited by young DC leaders from Nuoro (the so-called *Forze Nuove* movement, led by Ariuccio Carta) which attacked the old notables. P. Dettori, DC president of the region from 1966, launched against the state a 'policy of contestation' (*politica contestativa*), based on cooperation among all of the regional autonomist political forces. He called on the state to carry through the promises made to the island over the Rebirth Plan and demanded a new role for the Sardinian region: allowing for a greater participation of its institutions in decision-making over economic planning and the insertion of its development within the Mediterranean area, through projects such as the establishment of a free trade zone or a large canal port in Cagliari.[136] The ideology of autonomy was thus renewed by using 'neo-sardist' rhetoric, reassembling Sardinia's political forces around the regional government while placing all of the blame for past failures on the central government, responsible for a colonial logic of exploitation via industrialisation. However, after less than a year the government collapsed due to scandals within the DC party. Moreover, the feasibility of the project to re-establish the original drive of the autonomist discourse in regional politics was hampered by several factors: the resistance of the local *élite*, unable to cut the umbilical cord with the central government (Accardo 1998: 85; Mutti 1981b); the decline of DC votes following the diminishing influence of the Church in Italy, leading DC leaders to ally with almost every other party in search of a majority. This dispersion of power – for which each party felt entitled to a ministry or a development agency – created growing political instability within the executive branch of regional government and made it unable to carry out a coherent programme that could please everyone. Finally, the rhetoric used in the neo-autonomist discourse of regional politicians was linked to a rural world that did not exist anymore, rather than being adjusted to a social context that had been transformed by thirty years of state intervention (Mutti 1981b: 428).

Del Rio (DC), who was elected president after Dettori, took up this autonomist programme by declaring his commitment to the internal zones (especially Barbagia,

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[136] Mutti (1981b), pp.426, 427. The canal port project became operative only during the last few years.

defined as the area of the authentic Sardinian identity) (Accardo 1998: 86). In May 1969 his executive approved the fourth executive programme of the Rebirth Plan, which for the first time tried to supply 'autonomous' regional planning: after having expressed serious concerns over the process of industrialisation on the island, it provided for measures in favour of SMEs or industries with high labour intensity. In 1972 the results of the parliamentary report on criminality in Sardinia were presented:[137] the underdevelopment and precariousness of the pastoral condition were identified as the main causes of the phenomenon and a critique of the previous industrialisation model was addressed. The report recognised the failure of central institutions in administering the Plan and recommended for the next version measures regarding sheep-rearing, the creation of small-sized industries with high labour intensity, and the setting up of police stations in Barbagia.

The recommendations of the report were taken up by the following Plan (law 268/1974), which financed the 'rebirth' with another 600 billion lire for the following 10 years.[138] Dettori, now regional minister of the Budget and Planning, tried to reform regional planning by introducing 'projects' operationalised in 25 territorial districts (*comprensori*). The three priority axes identified were the industrial development of SMEs and labour intensive industries, the expansion of urban areas, and the reform of the agro-pastoral system.[139] Also, a measure was envisaged to reduce to three (one for agriculture, one for industry and one for tourism and water resources) the multitude of regional agencies. However, despite all the criticism of previous policies and the declared good intentions of the new one, the first half of the 1970s saw further large investment in the petrochemical sector, although this time it was mainly destined to the centre of the island with the establishment of the Ottana pole in the Barbagia area. Although the pole was justified as being the first to be really integrated into the economy of the territory, its goal was mainly political, intending to give an answer to banditry and revolts in the internal areas through forced modernisation of local society (Mutti 1981b: 413). The international crisis of the petrochemical sector in the mid-

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[137] Senato della Repubblica, *Commissione parlamentare d'inchiesta dei fenomeni di criminalità in Sardegna*, (1972).

[138] Sardinia's under-populated areas have been seen as the ideal place for military training and NATO bases. The Italo-American agreement of 1972, to set up in Santo Stefano an American nuclear base, was signed by the Italian Defence and Foreign Office Ministers without prior consultation or informing the Sardinian assembly (or the national Parliament).

[139] The reform, at the centre of attention because it was meant to solve the problem of criminality in the internal areas, was to transform sheep-rearing from being nomadic to being residential and the constitution of a common area reserved for grazing (the so-called 'mount of pasture'), that could relieve the shepherds of the cost of paying in order to pasture the flock, through the acquisition or expropriation of uncultivated land.

seventies hit the Sardinian plants particularly hard, which were little differentiated and mainly concentrated on basic chemicals, and thus the remaining funds from the Plan were used following a logic of an emergency to save the sector. The project of downsizing the regional agencies was blocked by strong resistance from corporative interests; rather, Nuoro DC leaders were included in the redistribution, in recognition of their growing influence in the power-sharing game of regional politics (Mutti 1981b: 422–423).

The rise of the Communist Party (PCI) on the Italian political scene and the subsequent 'historic compromise' adopted by national parties was reflected in Sardinia with the signing of the *Intesa Autonomistica*, a general agreement linking the DC president with leftist and autonomist forces in a common project of unity and solidarity. Starting from the conclusions of the parliamentary report on criminality, the agreement identified as priority fields of intervention an agro-pastoral reform and industrial development driven by the utilisation of local resources, like the development of mining activities (Mutti 1981b: 423). However, one result of this alliance was the withdrawal into a defensive attitude by the social movements, which calmed social protest and opposition to encourage regional governments to adopt rescue operations of the industries as a response to the socio-economic crisis afflicting the island.

Signs of transition:
from the closing of the *Cassa* to the outset of the 'Sardinian Project'

The 1980s represented a moment of retrenchment and stagnation with regard to the Italian state's policy for the *Mezzogiorno*: in 1984 the *Cassa* was suppressed and was substituted two years later by the Agensud (*Agenzia per la promozione dello sviluppo nel Mezzogiorno*). The latter was introduced "with the expectation that it would adopt a more technocratic approach to the implementation of projects and undertake serious forms of evaluation of the impact of nationally managed and funded projects. However, the reality proved to be considerably different" (Leonardi 1995b: 234). The policy of extraordinary intervention was replaced with aid measures based on state transfers sustaining the purchasing power of southerners. Funds previously destined for the development of a weak and monosectoral industrial structure were redistributed through clientelistic channels to low quality interventions, unable to stimulate investment and to create jobs (Barbagallo 1996: 621): "[t]he result was an apparent modernisation and a

facade of affluence compounded by a general deterioration of local politics towards clientelist methods, corruption and crime" (Desideri 1995: 84).

Also in Sardinia disillusionment over the possibility for change gained ground again among the population, faced with the inability of the political class to present a common front against the central government and to sustain their calls for an autonomous definition of the island's development prospects. After thirty years of DC government, the presidency of the region went to the socialist F. Rais (1980–82), whose executive was prevented from launching the development plan by continuous political crises (Maurandi 1998: 302). Returning to a DC leader for another two years, the regional presidency went to the PSd'A leader Mario Melis from 1984 to 1989, who renewed autonomist and separatist themes within the wider enthusiasm over the 'Europe of the Regions' debate. Together with other prominent figures in the debate on autonomy (such as Umberto Cardia, Michele Columbu, Pietrino Soddu) and somehow anticipating the approach of the 'Barcelona Process', he tried to carve out for Sardinia a proactive role in the definition of cooperation initiatives among islands and regions of the Mediterranean (although the initiatives mostly remained at the symbolic and definitional level).[140]

Meanwhile, the territorial question was brought back into the Italian political debate by the secessionist challenges of the regional Leagues (*Leghe*), protesting against an unproductive and corrupted South dependent on state subsidies dispensed with money from a prosperous North by an inefficient and clientelistic government, and proposing a federal division of the territory in three macro-regions. The more separatist sectors of the PSd'A – claiming a sovereign, democratic and pacifist Sardinian state – started to flirt with the Leagues, meeting their leaders and joining their denunciation of Roman centralism and partitocracy (Accardo 1998: 134). However, those arguments were harder to support in the Sardinian case, where the despised state subsidies represented an essential means of sustenance of the region. The success and affirmation of the Leagues[141] was amplified by the occurrence of the 'Bribesville' investigations (*Tangentopoli*), which in the early 1990s uncovered the thin line dividing clientelism from corruption in the Italian political system. The decline of the already quite weak faith in state institutions and feelings of national identity further undermined the

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[140] The project for the setting up of the "Conference of Mediterranean Regions, Islands and Middle-towns for a Common Policy" and having Cagliari as the headquarters of the general Secretariat, was drafted between 1987 and 1988 and presented to the regional government, but it was never formally accepted. See Marilotti (2005).

[141] In the 1992 parliamentary election the Lega Nord obtained over 8% of the vote, thus becoming the fourth largest party in Italy; once in government, its early extremely provocative positions were notably moderated.

argument for solidarity as the basis for the redistribution of resources that was traditionally adopted by the Italian government to tackle the persistent economic differentiation between its regions (Diamanti 1996).

In the 1990s, within the wider national picture of transition to the 'Second Republic', Sardinian politics seemed to follow a policy of drift and retreat from the definition of an autonomous political project. The fact that regional presidents managed to hold onto their positions throughout the legislature should not be misread as the regional governments having finally achieved political stability: the executives of the DC, M. Floris (until 1991), the Socialist A. Cabras (until 1994) and the PDS, F. Palomba (until 1999) all represented weak centre-left coalitions that were constantly subjected to political blackmail by the different allies, and thus were unable to confront the central government with a coherent developmental strategy (Accardo 1998: 135). Also, the opportunity for change offered by the new EU Regional Policy was not exploited, given the evident difficulties of the region in implementing the funds received according to the new policy paradigm.[142]

This situation was shared with all other Italian Objective 1 Southern regions, whose political leaders seemed more concerned about continuing to get – from the EU today and from the state in the past – their share of allocated funds,[143] rather than investigating the reasons for their backward development. Moreover, it further amplified at the European level the already diffused reputation of Italy for its low level of administrative capacity (Bull and Baudner 2004: 1065), often explained with reference to the 'Mediterranean Syndrome' (LaSpina and Sciortino 1993: 219). However at the end of the 1990s a newly created Department of Development Policies (DPS) within the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning launched a new series of policies (*Nuova Programmazione*) aimed at enhancing the virtuous use of local resources in backward areas (Viesti 2003: 98-99). This 'New Planning' was inspired by several of the tenets of EU Regional Policy (such as 'bottom-up' strategic planning regulated by transparent norms on monitoring and evaluation) and later extended to the

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[142] The percentage of use of the IMPs funds received by the Sardinian region for the 1989–93 period (almost 336,046 million Italian lire) was only 70%. See Pruna (2001), p.92. The spending rate for the same period for Objective 1 regions, as registered between the end of 1993 and June 1994, was 47% in Italy, while 89% in Spain, 91% in Portugal, and 94% in Greece. When, by the end of 1995 the latter countries had almost reached 100%, Italy still registered only 72% in spending rates. Naldini and Wolleb (1996), pp.53–54. The failure was also striking at a domestic level, where most areas of the centre and north have adopted a leading role of 'motor regions', making the most of the opportunities offered by the EU. See: Bull and Baudner (2004), p.1066.

[143] Running in the 1999 elections for the European Parliament, the ex-president of the Sardinian region Palomba presented his candidature proudly reminding the electorate that he was the man who had confirmed Sardinia's Objective 1 status (a clear message to his 'clientele', but which, however, meant he had managed to keep the region in the group of the most backward EU regions).

management of the 2000–06 Structural Funds in Italian regions, focussing on qualitative measures aiming to improve regional institutional capacities (Viesti 2003: 100; Barca 2000).

The rising discontent of the Sardinian citizens with regard to their regional political class became evident in the 1999 regional elections. As quoted by the local press, the candidate for the right wing coalition M. Pili (a young journalist whose campaign – presented as a blueprint for change – had been directly supported by Berlusconi),[144] received a very high level of support from the electorate, although this was more on the basis of distrust of the well-known 'official' figures of politics than for his personal merits.[145] The local ex-DC leader Floris, backed by the Sardinian ex-president of the Italian republic, Cossiga,[146] denounced Pili's victory as the abandonment of the Sardinian region to external forces, and proposed an alliance of the centrist parties with the declared aim of restoring its 'autonomy'. Although elected by the regional council with a small majority in August 1999, Pili was forced to resign two months later after a political gaffe[147] and replaced by Floris in November. However, legitimised by the popular support and strengthened by the contemporary ascent to the national government of the Forza Italia (FI) coalition, Pili managed to get re-elected, although with an unstable majority, causing the executive to undergo a prolonged crisis: between 2001 and 2003 he was able to govern only for twenty troubled months.

Despite the instability of his government, Pili managed to engage in several of the debates concerning the development of the region, showing commitment and familiarity with the vocabulary of a policy agenda increasingly defined at the EU level, and directly participating in the activities of European regional lobbies or the Committee of Regions on the issue of insularity (which had growing relevance following the realisation that Sardinia would soon exit Obj.1). The same claims were also used at home to support the 'territorial continuity' argument – often using the Corsican case as a model – asking the

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[144] In the 1999 regional elections Pili received 151,000 preference votes, compared to the 90,000 of his predecessor. Only thirty-two years old at the time of the election, Pili had previously been a journalist and mayor of Iglesias (the main city in the southwest of Sardinia), directly elected from a civic list. In 2000 Silvio Berlusconi (national leader of the moderate right coalition Forza Italia and former and future Prime Minister) nominated Pili regional coordinator of his party.

[145] For further details on the election, see the articles in the local daily newspaper, L'Unione Sarda (10.08.1999).

[146] After the dissolution of the DC party Floris, who had already been president of the Region, joined in the centrist party founded by Cossiga called Union of Sardinians (UDS).

[147] It was discovered that part of his introductory speech, which contained his programme for governing the region, had been copied from the one made three years earlier by the FI regional president for Lombardy, Formigoni. Together with some copied lines on unemployment, environment, social services, some ludicrous passages on "the eleven Sardinian provinces" (which were four at that time) or stating that "Sardinia had to look towards the Alps" made it even more plausible that the 'accident' was more of a conspiracy on the part of the old guard against what they perceived to be an 'external' element.

Italian government for reduced special fares to reach mainland Italy from the island. However, many of his initiatives were blocked by internal resistance of the regional administration to his authority and continuous crises within his government.

For the regional elections in 2004 Pili based his campaign on the need for continuity, so that what he had started could be brought to fruition. However, this time he had a stronger opponent: Renato Soru, founder of *Tiscali* (the well-known internet access provider company), who was also a 'new man' of politics but was able as well to build on his own reputation as a skilled businessman with a strong attachment to the island. Building a centre-left coalition around a 'Sardinian project' (*Progetto Sardegna* became the name of the coalition) undertaking to launch on the island a development strategy linking technological innovation with the preservation of the environment and cultural identity and a moral renewal of regional politics. His victory brought new technical figures borrowed from civil society (university professors, managers and administrators, with women significantly represented) to main posts of regional institutions, traditionally held by professional politicians and local notables, and a political strategy increasingly restive with national decisions regarding the region's socio-economic development.[148]

The Soru government has launched an internal restructuring of the region inspired by the models of New Public Management (as we shall see in the next section, those models are supported by EU policies), with a special emphasis on the improvement of regional services and communication with the citizenry (health service, e-government, etc.). However it is too early to judge his overall accomplishments. Moreover, what has still not emerged is a clear 'proactive' regional strategy linking the project of integrated development in with a wider territorial setting. Regional action seems to follow the traditional logic dictated by deadlines or 'emergencies' in the different policy areas: Sardinia is present in several EU and international projects with individual initiatives led by universities, cultural centres, firms, chambers of commerce, communes and provinces, as well as regional services which, however, have not been networked and enhanced within a common line of action adopted by the regional government.[149]

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[148] Typical examples are the recent conflicts between the regional executive and the Italian government over the NATO military base at LaMaddalena and radioactive waste disposal (typical themes of the autonomist tradition), and the law prohibiting building in coastal areas.

[149] The Regional Law 19/96 "Norms on cooperation with developing countries and international cooperation", which had also identified the Mediterranean as at the centre of regional initiatives, has never really been implemented. See Marilotti (2005).

Conclusion

Although the regionalisation of the Italian territory was introduced by the 1948 Constitution, it took over 20 years to implement. The resistance of DC central governments to regional devolution was linked both to their fears of the seizing of power by the Left in the 'red regions' and to the clientelistic relations linking political parties to their electorate. During those decades the state managed to retain its prerogatives over most policy areas, especially development policies and economic planning, as well as over the bureaucracy, mainly brought through party affiliation.

Sardinia, however, had been granted, with the other four peripheral regions, an autonomous status providing a limited transfer of state powers. Its special statute also included a formal commitment from the state to the social and economic 'rebirth' of the island: thus the autonomist rhetoric used by regional politicians was soon translated into requests addressed to the central government of material concessions for modernisation, rather than for a real exertion of self-rule on the island. Despite its commitments, the national government inserted Sardinia's 'rebirth' within the policy of 'extraordinary intervention' for the development of Southern Italy. Policies for the island's modernisation were defined in a 'top-down' manner in accordance with the same development model, which did not activate connections with the local socio-economic structure of Southern Italy, but rather encouraged a collusion of public and private industries with political power. The Sardinian regional *élite*, embedded within the clientelistic system of redistribution of state funds, exchanged its political support of the central government by negotiating over the quantity, and not the quality of development policies for the region. Although there were occasional attempts by the regional class to change this situation and regain self-rule over the development of its territory, the culture of subsidies spread over a declining civic and political life in Sardinia (as in the rest of the country).

Since the 1990s the redefinition of relations between politics and society has become a priority issue in national as well as regional politics. As we shall argue in the following section, a way towards a new path to regionalisation is that offered by the 'EU model', legitimising regions as autonomous actors responsible for the definition and implementation of their developmental policies in partnership with other territorial levels.

SECTION III

Regional policies and regionalisation in Corsica and Sardinia:
the 'European model'

Chapter 6 - The story of the 'islands' INTERREG

In the present section I will examine the influence of the 'EU model' of organization of power and territory through the analysis of the implementation in Corsica and Sardinia of an initiative of EU Regional Policy extending MLG to cooperation among regional actors belonging to different MSs. I will analyse the story of the INTERREG France–Italy 'islands' programme for Corsica and Sardinia since its launch in 1990, in order to establish the response of regional actors to the innovative logic introduced by the programme. How INTERREG, through its different editions, has gained a more coherent and effective structure, winning itself an increasingly relevant role within EU Regional Policy, will be considered. I will then introduce the main characters of our INTERREG story and reconstruct in detail what have been their main activities (planning, monitoring, financial management, evaluation) through the consideration of evidence drawn from the analysis of planning documents related to the programme, and the key points emerging from the interviews.

Finally, the core features of the 'EU model', as presented by INTERREG, will be contrasted with that of the 'national model' (traced in section II through the historical analysis of the regional policies implemented on the islands in the post-war decades). The notable innovations proposed by the programme included, *inter alia*, that the two regions should cooperatively plan and manage according to an 'area-based approach', integrated developmental strategies linking their outlook within the wider picture of a spatially coordinated development of the European territory. Our task will be to see whether regional actors – used to implement regional strategies defined according to the 'national model' – have been willing or capable to adopt and learn the quite different logic suggested by the INTERREG or, conversely, if mechanisms of path dependency have prevailed.

The backgrounds: the evolution of Community Initiative INTERREG

Since the 1988 reform of EU Regional Policy, a small part of the Structural Funds budget was devoted to Community Initiatives (CIs), innovative projects experimenting with new approaches and generating new ideas in European regional development to be applied to mainstream policy when successful. The action of CIs had to be complementary to that of other SFs, and thus had to follow their general rules and objectives. However, while measures proposed for financing in the Community Support Frameworks of mainstream policies were drafted by the MSs, in agreement with regional and local actors, the Community Initiatives Programmes (CIPs) were drafted by the Commission, defining objectives, participants, measures and policy areas to be targeted.[150] Their main aim, in fact, was to tackle development problems through coordinated action at Community level, targeting specific disadvantaged groups and involving regional and local actors. In order to be able to realise what arguably represented the most creative and coherent translation of a truly European approach to regional policy, it was important to avoid gatekeeping or rough adaptation from the national level. Thus, especially at the beginning, the Commission negotiated national programmes on the basis of a 'carrot and stick' strategy: "while the Commission usually gave in on the implementation of the infrastructure part of the package [...], it insisted on proper implementation of the more innovative programmes" (Grote 1996: 278).

The experimental character of the policies justified the relatively modest sums involved, and also considered the high number of initiatives launched in the first edition. For the 1989–1993 planning period 13 CIs were funded with a budget of 5.8 billion ECUs, almost 9% of the total Structural funds allocation.[151] During the second planning period (1994–1999) the contribution for CIs nearly doubled – in line with the overall increases to the SFs; the followed-up initiatives were improved and those surpassed by events were substituted. For the third planning period (2000–2006) the number of initiatives was drastically reduced to four, in order to increase their visibility, and received little more than 5% of the Structural Funds budget (see figure 6.1).

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[150] After having heard the opinion of the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee, and – since 1993 – the Committee of the Regions, the Commission adopted the final guidelines published in the Official Journal, and invited MSs to submit proposals and projects for the financing of specific projects.

[151] A share of the CIs funds also went to Community projects adopted before 1989: STAR (telecommunications), VALOREN (renewable energy resources) RESIDER (conversion of steel-making regions) and RENAVAL (conversion of shipbuilding regions). See Commission (1994).

fig. 6.1 - The evolution of Community Initiatives

(1990–93)	**INTERREG** (cross-border cooperation); **RECHAR** (converting coal mining areas); **RETEX** (converting textile areas); **KONVER** (economic diversification of areas reliant on defence industry); **LEADER** (rural development); **REGIS** (integration of the most remote regions); **TELEMATIQUE** (advanced telecommunication services); **PRISMA** (business services related to the single market); **EUROFORM** (new types of vocational qualification); **NOW** (equal opportunities for women in the labour market); **HORIZON** (access to the labour markets for disabled and disadvantaged groups), **ENVIREG** (environmental protection); **REGEN** (energy networks); **STRIDE** (research, technology development and innovation in the regions). Initiatives launched before 1989 and included in the CIs: **STAR** (telecommunications); **RESIDER** (converting steel areas); **RENAVAL** (converting shipbuilding areas); **VALOREN** (renewable energy resources).
(1994–99)	**INTERREG II, RECHAR II, LEADER II, REGIS II, RESIDER II, RETEX, KONVER, URBAN** (development of urban areas); **SMEs** (Small and Medium Enterprises); **PESCA** (diversification in areas reliant on fisheries); **ADAPT** (adaptation of the workforce to industrial change); **EMPLOYMENT** (vocational training measures in disadvantaged regions); **PEACE** (initiative for peace in Northern Ireland).
(2000–06)	**INTERREG III, LEADER+, URBAN, EQUAL** (transnational cooperation to combat discrimination in the labour market)

fig. 6.2 - The evolution of Community Initiative INTERREG

Community Initiative's Goals/ Time-frame	**INTERREG I (1990–93)**	**INTERREG II (1994–99)**	**INTERREG III (2000–06)**
cross-border cooperation	31 programmes (4 maritime)	A) 59 programmes (16 maritime), of which 31 internal and 28 external border programmes	A) 53 programmes (14 maritime), of which 24 internal and 29 external border (12 external with new MS, internal by 2004)
completion of energy networks		B) Continuation of the REGEN CI (3 programmes)	
transnational cooperation		C) focus on regional and spatial planning (ESDP): programmes on transnational cooperation (7), flood mitigation (2), drought prevention (4)	B) 13 programmes, mostly related to previous IIC programmes and pilot actions; 2 new programmes for outermost regions
interregional cooperation			C) 4 programmes dividing the EU administratively into four large areas of territorial cooperation (North, East, South, West)

[source: our elaboration from INTERACT (2005), Commission (2000)]

INTERREG was one of the initiatives that survived the shake-out. Promoting cooperation between bordering regions as if they were a sole geographical entity, INTERREG was always recognised as a priority within CIs and received nearly half of their resources (*see figure 6.2*). When launched in 1990 the initiative had the explicit aim of contributing to the economic integration of designated cross-border areas in view of the completion of the Single European Market project. Claims for a wider participation of peripheral and border areas in the benefits of European integration had been raised by regional lobbies since the 1970s,[152] and were strengthened during the subsequent decade under the 'Europe of the Regions' tide. This led the European Commission to devise a group of pilot projects, undertaken in 1989 by the Commission under article 10 of the ERDF regulations, to promote cooperation between border regions, counting on a 21million ECU budget. INTERREG was drafted on the basis of those projects and was launched a year later with the task of helping internal and external border regions of the EU to surmount specific developmental problems deriving from their relative isolation within national economies and the wider EU setting. In complementary fashion, the REGEN Community Initiative was launched the same year, to complete some missing links in the trans-European network for transport and energy distribution in Objective 1 regions. The total budget for INTERREG was 1,075 MECUs (of which the Community contribution covered nearly 57%),[153] to be used within a three-year period in thirty-one programmes of cooperation between neighbouring border regions, statistically defined at the NUTS 2 level: nine for external frontiers, the rest for internal borders.

However, it soon became apparent that the objective of economic integration of peripheral areas was beyond the means of the programme. The structural nature of the core-periphery distribution of economic activities in the European territory, in fact, could not allow INTERREG, given its limited resources and area of intervention, to achieve the integration of the regional economies of border regions. Its specific contribution seemed rather to consist in the promotion or enhancement of cooperation between territorial actors at a horizontal level, against the competitive logic led by national or local interests. As reported in the *ex post* evaluation assigned by the Commission for an assessment of the first edition: "[t]he least established impact, at the end, is the economic development of cross-border areas, although it constituted the

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[152] Among them, two of the most influential are − even now − the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), and the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CRPM) respectively founded in 1971 and 1973.

[153] Nearly 80% of Community's contribution came from ERDF funds, while the rest was derived from the ESF, EAGGF, and article 10-ERDF. See FERE (1996), p.15.

primary objective of most of the programmes" (FERE 1996: 20). On the other hand it became apparent that, as put by the First Report on Economic and Social Cohesion, "INTERREG, in particular, represents an unprecedented example of regional cooperation under the Structural Funds" (Commission 1996: 111).

Table 6.3 - The evolution of CIs' and INTERREG's allocation within the SFs' budget

1989–93 (EU-12)

□ INTERREG 1.7%
■ other CIs 6.7%
■ other SFs 91.6%

1994–99 (EU-15)

□ INTERREG 2.5%
■ other CIs 7.6%
■ other SFs 89.9%

2000–06 (EU-15)
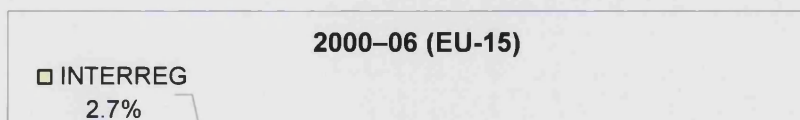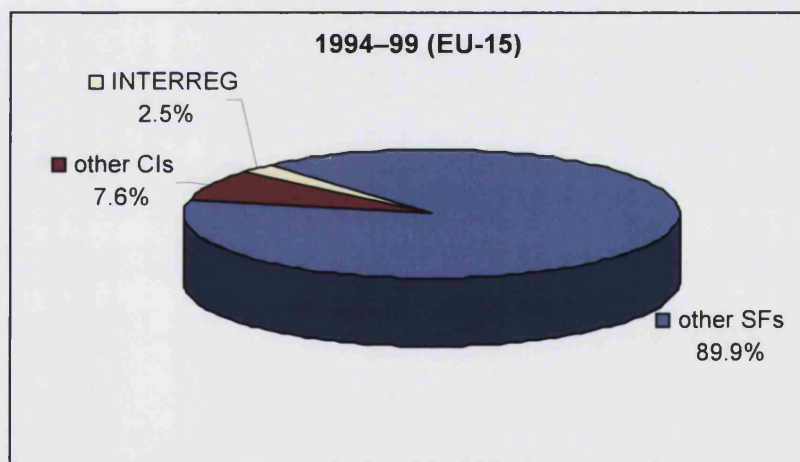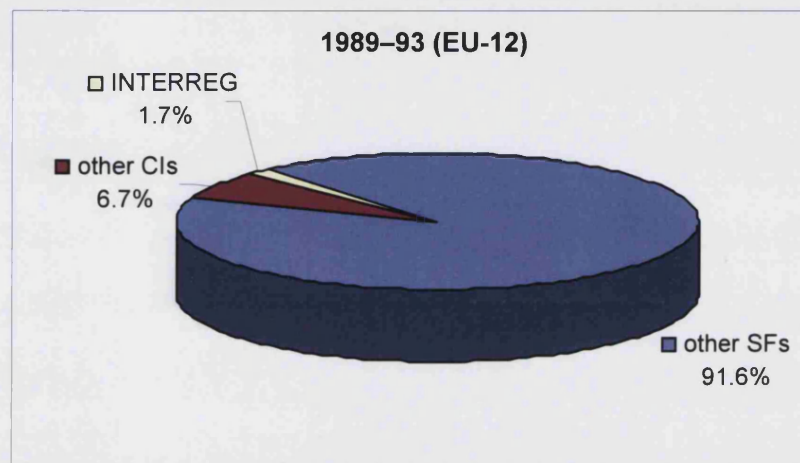
□ INTERREG 2.7%

Once it was recognised that a strong economic impact was beyond the programme's scope, INTERREG was directed by the Commission to 'softer' outcomes, particularly related to that 'quality' of territorial partnerships which was emerging as bearing the most 'integrative potential' of the policy. Precisely because of the unexpected relevance of this aspect of the policy, initially territorial partnerships were not cultivated, but grew out of a more 'voluntarist' approach (FERE 1996: 18). This fact clearly facilitated those territories that already shared a tradition of cooperative practices or where the interest to cooperate was stronger. Conversely, where these factors were not present – as in the case of our island regions – in front of aims and procedures not yet clearly defined, regions tended to adopt innovations only in terms of a 'minimum level of adaptation' logic for the new administrative and planning procedures (FERE 1996: 18).

Beginning with the second CSF cycle (1994–1999) the policy was tied to the budget and regulations of the Structural Funds. INTERREG II was divided into two strands: *strand A* was dedicated to cross-border cooperation in internal and external border areas of the EU (also with the aim to ease the accession of applicant countries), while *strand B* inherited the task of the former REGEN initiative – to complete the trans-European network for transport and energy distribution. In 1996 *strand C* was introduced, to promote an integrated approach among groups of regions, cooperating to solve problems linked to territorial development, flooding and drought. INTERREG III (2000–06) maintained the triple structure, although varied on the last two strands: cross-border cooperation remained unchanged (*strand A*), transnational cooperation (*strand B*) continued the approach that had been tested with the II-C strand in the previous edition, and interregional cooperation (a new *strand C*) was devised to facilitate the exchange of know-how on territorial development among macro areas of regions).

Thus, although today INTERREG arguably represents the most well-established case among Community Initiatives, it underwent several changes and reassessments concerning both its internal organization as well as the evolution of its strategy (*for a synthesis, see figure 6.3*). In this last regard the introduction to the policy, with the II-C strand, of an innovative spatial approach to the integrated planning of regional areas defined by the Commission deserves special attention. The approach reflects what is today known as the *European Spatial Development Perspective* (ESDP), a document adopted in Potsdam in May 1999 by the informal European Council of EU Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning. The document was the end product of a series of informal meetings organized among representatives of the Commission's services and national ministries responsible for regional and spatial planning.

The 'revolutionary' potential of the document lays in the fact that it proposes a 'territorialisation of the EU', i.e. a consideration of the European territory in its entirety, beyond those borders traditionally defining the contours of national societies. The document considers EU regional policies as manageable on an area-wide and integrated basis, against a traditionally sectoral policy approach. On the premise that "growth in itself or convergence of economic key figures is not sufficient to develop a balanced and sustainable economic and spatial structure of the EU", the document draws a 'triangle of objectives' inserted within a virtuous circle: *Economy* (intended as a more balanced competitiveness of the European territory), *Society* (social cohesion and conservation of cultural heritage), and *Environment* (conservation of natural resources) as the interconnected objectives collectively contributing to achieve the main goals of EU policies (Commission 1999b: 9–10). Such an integrated and multi-actor approach to development policies relies on increased efforts of coordination through cooperative networks: "[c]o-operation is the key to an integrated and spatial development policy and represents added value over sectoral policies acting in isolation (European Commission 1999b: 35).

**fig. 6.4 – The triangle of objectives
for balanced and sustainable spatial development**
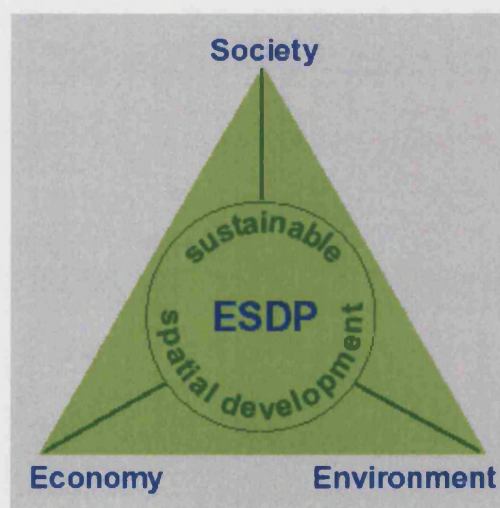
[source: Commission (1999), p.10]

Since the drafting of the ESDP, the Commission has sought to diffuse the document among national, regional and local authorities, enterprises and government officials and the general public. However, the Treaties did not contemplate any specific competence for the EU on spatial planning. After its adoption, the ESDP represented "a legally non-binding document" for MS: "the existing competencies of the institutions responsible for Community policies remain unchanged" (Commission 1999b: 11). The only way the Commission could proceed in this field was thus to prepare the ground for future integration concerning EU spatial planning through soft mechanisms of 'framing integration'. The extended approach to MLG proposed by INTERREG offered a perfect tool for this aim, and was further extended to wider regional areas: "[f]rom a spatial development standpoint, the Community Initiative INTERREG is the most significant measure of the Structural Funds, as it provides an integrated approach to spatial development. Priority (...) is given to the relation between the factors influencing territorial organization in an integrated development approach in border regions and larger transnational cooperation areas" (Commission 1999b: 16).

In the third INTERREG edition the ESDP became one of the primary references in the planning documents of the territorial partners. Thus, through its evolution, the policy managed to find an objective suited to its properties: the main aim of interregional cooperation was no longer to promote integration of peripheral regions in the European market but to contribute to the socio-economic and, especially, territorial cohesion of the European territory.

Prologue: launching the INTERREG between Corsica and Sardinia

Despite being only 15km apart and having commonalities in cultural traditions, environmental resources and developmental handicaps, Corsica and Sardinia did not engage in long-lasting practices of cooperation (with the exception of transport in illegal contraband). Economic weakness and dependency on the central government proved to be a stronger barrier than the strip of water dividing their shores. This started to change from the 1980s when, following the drift of the European new-regionalist wave, both the islands joined the increasingly organized lobbies of peripheral and maritime regions, contributing to the creation of 'islands committees' in their midst. One of the main aims of those lobbies was to intervene in the ongoing debate on European integration asking MSs to display the value of European membership also in peripheral or disadvantaged areas.

As seen in the second chapter, EU Regional Policy represented one of the main fields in which this confrontation was played out. In the case of our island regions, in 1989 the European Parliament proposed to adopt a common approach to their territorial development and appointed the socialist deputy Alonso Cabeson *rapporteur* for the Commission of Regional Policy and Regional Planning on a dossier regarding the 'Regional problems of Corsica and Sardinia'. After his report, the Parliament produced a Resolution where it invited the Commission to give "special attention to those two regions because of their near geographical situation, their specific socio-economic characteristics due to their insular and peripheral character", and encouraged "a policy of development of economic, cultural and social exchanges (...) notably for the development of maritime and air links".[154]

In 1990, following the Parliament's invitation, the Commission included in the list of eligible areas for cross-border cooperation under the INTERREG initiative the département of Corse-du-Sud and the provincia of Sassari in the North of Sardinia, considered as areas divided by a 'maritime border' between France and Italy. The political choice of including the two island regions in the programme required a few interpretive adjustments. The consideration of the Strait of Boniface as a maritime border between France and Italy was certainly a new idea for the two islands, surrounded by the Tyrrhenian Sea and used to locate the borders of their respective states on the mainland ('the continent'). The maritime border between Northern Corsica and the Leghorn province in Tuscany, defined by the INTERREG II-A programme, later merged with the 'islands' one, was a case of a border between France and Italy even more disputable. This is how the functionary following INTERREG programs at the Italian Ministry of transports expresses the peculiarities of the programme:[155]

[In Italy] the 'islands' INTERREG programme is unique in different respects: first, it has been the only maritime frontier considered as a border since the first edition (later also recognised for the Adriatic); second, it is the only cross-frontier with two regions from the same state (Sardinia and Tuscany) in the A stream. (I.2.I-III)

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[154] Resolution of the European Parliament (26.5.1989). See Olivesi (1999), pp.752–753.

[155] All the quotations are extracted from the interviews I had with administrators directly involved in the partnership management of the INTERREG 'islands' programme. The reference at the end of each sentence indicates the institutional affiliation of the interviewee (C = Corsican region; S = Sardinian region; I = Italian state; F = French state; E = European Commission), the different identity of the interviewee (a different number is associated to different persons of the same institution) and the INTERREG edition to which he/she has participated (I-II-III). A complete list of the people interviewed is provided in the annexes. Translations from the original French/Italian text of the interviews to English are mine.

The declared aim of the 'islands' programme had the double objective of overcoming the isolation of the two regions both at the national and European level, and encouraging the creation of a 'Corso-Sardinian' economic block, to be integrated within the European single market. With the same objectives the programme was reconfirmed for the next planning edition (1994–99), while in INTERREG III (2000–06) the overall strategy was revised in light of new developments in the definition of the policy's objectives. However, since the first editions it was evident to the partners that the rationale of the policy was mainly political: in fact, despite the ambitions of the declared aims, the modest sums involved suggested that the main goal of the programme was to grant visibility to, or even 'pay off', two peripheral regions of the EU that had only limited participation in the benefits of the process of economic integration of the EU. As we shall see further, the tangible effects of the policy later also came to the fore, and were especially relevant for the Corsican partner. Similarly, with the advancement of the programme the link between the goal of territorial cohesion and the 'denationalisation' of territory accomplished by a truly 'Europeanised' approach to development was reinforced.

INTERREG moves little sums, therefore it rather has a political value: it is seen [by the island regions] as an offered opportunity to narrow the gap with other European regions. (S.2.I-II)

INTERREG is not a rich policy: the Corsican part of the PIC funds is nearly 5% of what the region gets with its Structural Funds share. However, it is important and this time not only at the institutional level. In fact in the new edition the CTC is also the Managing and Payment Auxiliary Authority: in order to perform these functions we have opened a single office ('guichet unique') at the CTC, also offering advice to the partners interested in benefiting from the funds. (C.4.III)

I have followed INTERREG as [regional] planning minister from September 1994 to January 1998, thus until the closing of the first edition and the launching of the second. In my opinion it is not a policy of great impact on local development, as in Sardinia there has been LEADER (...) its main result has been some projects realized. (S.1.I-II)

More than all other Community Initiatives, INTERREG responded to what had been the Commission's intention when launching them, namely the construction of Europe, as it was never realised by the MSs. (I.3.2002)

INTERREG has facilitated the reciprocal knowledge, among the administrations of Corsica and Sardinia, of the different working practices and the different approach to planning. The programme suggests thinking in terms of initiatives going beyond the national level. (C.3.II-III)

The actors: role of the partners in the 'islands' programme

The French and the Corsicans

In the first editions of the programme, the INTERREG 'islands' was managed by the decentralised services of the French state in Corsica. At the Centre for Planning in Corsica (SGAC) of the Prefecture,[156] INTERREG planning was formally included within the tasks of a Planning Committee set up to follow the Single Planning Document for the SFs and other CIs. Along the lines of planning dictated by the DATAR, the SGAC had to elaborate, in partnership with the CTC and other local institutional and socio-economic actors, the drafts of the regional programmes which – after being examined by the prefect of Southern Corsica and the General Councils – were again submitted to the DATAR and the ministries concerned,[157] finally presenting it to the European Commission. Initially directly followed only by a single functionary, lamenting its 'oversized' character in terms of planning requirements, the policy was passed in 1998 to the newly created 'Europe unit' (*Cellule Europe*) at the SGAC, where it was handled by a team of around three people (backed by the functionary that had followed it previously).

I found a general acknowledgement, among the partners, of the good level of preparation of French administrators, strictly interlinked with a feeling of national pride:

In France there is a good tradition, given from the ENA [the National School of Administration, n.o.a.], creating a category of administrators, the so-called 'enarcs', to whom the idea of the grandeur of France, country at the centre of the world, is inculcated. (E.1.I-II)

The characterization of *enarchs* is often completed by the partners by defining their preparation as rigid, and thus often not fitting with the flexibility required by the INTERREG programme, and their sense of national superiority as often leading to an arrogant attitude improper with the partnership's cooperative requirements (even when they are, in principle, right).

... discussion with them [the enarchs, n.o.a.] is like trying to have a conversation with a tape recorder: it always gives back the same answers! (E.1.I-II)

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[156] The General Secretary for Regional Affairs (SGAR) replaced in 1982 the Regional Missions in application of the decentralisation laws. Following the 1991 law for decentralisation in Corsica, it was named General Secretary for Corsican Affairs (SGAC).

[157] In France formal responsibility for territorial policies passed from the Ministry of the Interior (under whose supervision are the regional and district prefects) to the Ministry of Environment (Secretariat for Regional Planning); however, the practical competence is under the responsibility of the DATAR (the French State Agency for Territorial Planning and Regional Policy).

A few times the French prefecture has entered into the merits of the Sardinian programme, disputing its functionality to the cross-border objective (especially for the measures on the port in S. Teresa di Gallura and on the holiday-farms). From the Sardinian side we have never discussed the Corsican measures, although even from their side more often than not measures did not have the required cross-border impact! (S.1.I-II)

From the Corsican side the role of the SGAC, formally that of a mediator between the State and the Corsican territorial communities, was seen as that of a 'tutor' frustrating local initiative on matters concerning their own territory. As confirmed by the other partners, this situation certainly thwarted the 'bottom-up' approach of the policy in its early stages.

Among the internal difficulties I would recall that of associating the State services with those of the CTC (...) All has to pass through the prefect, representative of the State in the region! (C.2.II-III)

The Corsicans have internal problems. One of those is the brake of the French authority... (E.1.I-II)

The difference between the roles played by the two MSs in the project is that for Italy it was a role coordination, while for France it was of strong centralism delegated to the Prefect, which created tension in the dialogue with Corsica, always to be mediated by him. Also the co-presidency at the Monitoring Committees was with the higher State authorities, and not with the territorial ones. The situation was not without resistance from the Corsicans, and thus a 'triangle situation' emerged... It had been the same thing also in the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes and in the other EU programs. (I.2.I-II)

Sometimes the Corsicans have tried to make agreements with the Italians against Paris! (I.1.I-III).

The attitude of the French state in the programme partnership seemed to be reflected by the location site of the Prefecture in Ajaccio, capital city of Corsica, entrenched on the belvedere on the top of the city. Both during the interviews and through emails and phone calls, conversations were very formal and fastened (although not in the case of the Corsican functionaries 'attached' at the Province service, some later passed to the CTC) and additional information on internal documents (such as financial plans or annual reports) was given reluctantly and in minimum quantity. The opposite impression is offered when visiting the CTC, located in a beautiful villa in one of the main streets crossing the centre of Ajaccio, and with the informal attitude of its functionaries. The antithesis is often used by the partners in describing the French and the Corsican functionaries.

Local administrators in Corsica, on the contrary [to enarchs, n.o.a.], are neither prepared nor industrious: they aren't eager beavers... (E.1.I-II)

A better knowledge of the Corsican regional administrators was gained by the other partners only after an increasingly active role was offered to the CTC within the programme. In fact, during the implementation of INTERREG II, launched in a line of continuity with the previous edition, changes in the organization of the management of the policy began to emerge, anticipating those defined in the third edition. When in 1997 the INTERREG IIC strand was introduced – in which Corsica could participate within the Western-Mediterranean area – the CTC was 'allowed' by the state services to have direct financial and planning management. Functionaries at the CTC seemed to compensate for the lack of direct experience in administrative and financial management, both at an individual and at an institutional level, with an enthusiastic approach to their new role, also shown through their availability and cooperation during the interviews. Moreover the potential offered by INTERREG for a greater role for the region was readily seized by Norbert Pancrazi, a brilliant young functionary following the policy at the CTC. Pancrazi was supported, at the political and ideological level, by Jean Baggioni, influential president of the executive of the Corsican region (and as such participating in the INTERREG committees) and a charismatic advocate of the insular cause within European regional lobbies, often used as platforms to gain more visibility at home.

Thus the new Territorial Planning Unit at the CTC was established, having already in mind a clear picture of the potentials offered by INTERREG to the island in terms of the autonomous redefinition of its own territorial identity within the European setting. One of the first moves of the CTC as the formally recognised Management authority for its territory since 2000, was the creation of the *guichet unique* (a single office situated on the ground floor of the CTC), working under the direction of Pancrazi to provide assistance in all INTERREG programmes.

The Sardinians and the Italians

The situation on the Italian side was quite different, where since the first edition the programme was directly managed by the Sardinian region, keeping the contacts both at a subnational and supranational level. The Centre for Regional Planning (CRP), as seen in the previous section, was an *ad hoc* office originally created within the Planning Ministry of the Sardinian region to manage the Plan of Rebirth and to later administer other EU development funds. The CRP is located in one of the many anonymous buildings hosting the regional offices spread in Cagliari, capital city of Sardinia, and

responding to the typical image of bureaucracy 'Italian style' (Cassese 1994; Ichino 2006): grumpy or bored porters, loafers out of their office to chat in the corridors or to shop around, leaving the donkey's work on the shoulders of the other few. Within the CRP, INTERREG was assigned to one single functionary, with a degree in engineering, not entirely convinced of the benefits that the region could get from a policy he found disproportionate in terms of demanding requirements and 'meagre' budget. In the third edition, the Sardinian region was chosen as a single Management Authority coordinating the work of the three auxiliary management authorities (the provinces of Sassari and Leghorn and the CTC). At the CRP, which became the official interlocutor to the Commission for the programme, two functionaries substituted the previous one (who was leaving the post for a career advancement). Also, in the province of Sassari the INTERREG Unit was reorganized.[158] All the functionaries interviewed have always been very friendly and cooperative in giving useful material for the research (the different versions of the CIPs, annual reports, financial plans).

The central role of the CRP in the partnership allowed the other partners to develop a quite defined impression of the Sardinian one, with which they declare to have worked well and in a nice environment. However, shortcomings also emerged from the interviews, when I asked for an indication if there had been difficulties encountered with any of the partners.

Also, Sardinians do not speak foreign languages and administrators are little trained, with a few exceptions... (E.1.I-II)

As for those [difficulties] with the Sardinians, they relate to a certain unreliability in terms of meeting deadlines and problems in communicating (they do not answer the phone in their offices and they leave for lunch at 2pm, while in Corsica the lunch break starts at 12am) (C.2.II-III)

A problem with the Sardinians has been the different working hours: in the afternoon it was difficult to find them in their office. (F.1.I-III)

There are other peculiar attitudes [of Sardinians, n.o.a.]: on the one hand their resignation that things will continue as they always have; on the other hand a sort of will of 'doing it by themselves' and the tendency to minimize the problems instead of facing them. (E.3.II)

I found this latter opinion to be particularly piercing, in that it shows a contradictory tension between Sardinian thrusts towards ambitious goals and lack of motivation to support their realisation in the long-term, or incapability to revise the goals ahead of obstacles (Elster 1983). This shortcoming was also found in some of the more relevant

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[158] PIC INTERREG IIIA, Italia-Francia, Sardegna-Corsica-Toscana, DOCUP 2000–2006, p.148.

episodes in chapter five (like the one on the drafting of the regional statute). Continuing with examples related to the analysis of INTERREG, since the first edition the CRP expressed its coordinating role in the programme with reference to a governance structure, represented with the image of a star featuring the CRP at its centre and other regional and local actors at its ends. However, things in reality looked quite different: regional agencies and ministries, as well as local authorities, did not recognise a coordinating role for the CRP, while the sought devolution for the province of Sassari was blocked by the absence of reference in national legislation. Also in this case, as we shall see, the situation notably improved with the advancement of the programme.

The Italian state, formally responsible for the 'islands' INTERREG, participated with functionaries from the Service for Community Funds of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, moved in 1997 to the Ministry of Public Works (later named Ministry for Transports and Communications), playing a supervisory role, and the ministries of Finance and Economy for the ordinary monitoring of financial accounting.[159] The ministries are located in a huge historical building in the middle of the travelling centre of Rome, internally articulated in a Kafkian labyrinth of corridors; however, in a closer view, bureaucratic life looked very similar to that seen in the Sardinian region. The functionaries have been very pleasant and seemed quite self-assured and relaxed in their work in INTERREG; perhaps too relaxed, according to the opinion of their partners.

The participation of the Italian ministry is virtually non-existent. There are representatives of the different ministries which assist the Monitoring committees without saying a word. Unfortunately Italian functionaries earn a poor wage, and thus are attracted from the mission [to the Monitoring committees, n.o.a.] as money for jam. (E.1.I-II)

So far the intervention of the Italian state has been non-existent, or rather it has intervened with wrong or poorly coordinated directives; perhaps in the future there will be a sort of 'comeback' of ministerial control. (S.2.I-II)

Representatives from the Italian ministries have been absolutely non-influential (however we did not miss the directives from the centre...). In addition they were often replaced, and so they did not know the programme details (S.1.I-II)

Our relations with the national level have been non-existent: 'do as you like' they used to tell us from the Public Works ministry. Instead, from the Ministry of Finance, we have often had

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[159] The move was only motivated by internal organizational reasons linked to the transfer of the head of the service (as well as her staff), following the policy at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to the latter Ministry of Public Works. The *Ministero del Bilancio e della Programmazione Economica* and the *Ministero del Tesoro* were later merged in a single Ministry (*Ministero dell'Economia*) that became responsible for the coordination of the interventions co-financed by the Structural Funds (*Dipartimento per le politiche di Sviluppo*), the financial monitoring of the interventions (*Ragioneria Generale dello Stato-Igfor*) and the collection of all information on the situation in the regions (*Cabina di Regia Nazionale*).

contradictory directives (for instance in early July they approved the financial plan of the programme, and two weeks later they sent us a fax with a new financial plan.) (S.3.I-III)

However, as recognised by the same Sardinian partners, this 'relaxed' attitude of the Italian functionaries seems to be particularly related to the management of the INTERREG programme, requiring a stronger role for the regions, while a more traditional centralistic and 'gatekeeping' role was played in the administration of mainstream EU regional policies for the *Mezzogiorno*.

The Sardinian OP has to conform to that dictated by the CSF for Italian Objective one regions, without the regions being allowed to identify their strategic lines for their development (for instance, an interim report of ours mentioning the transport axis as a priority of the [Sardinian] region was refused by the State). (S.3.I-III)

In INTERREG the State has been more in the background, and in fact each of the Italian INTERREG programmes is completely different, with the only exception, in the Italian case, being the IIIB programme, where the transnational coordination authority is precisely the Italian Transport Ministry. However, also in this case the programme has been transferred to the CRP [the IIC was managed by services at the RAS Presidency, n.o.a.]. (S.4.II-III)

The European Commissioners

Initially the INTERREG 'islands' was followed at the European Commission by two functionaries from the DG for Regional Policy in Brussels, while functionaries from other DGs occasionally intervened for measures also concerning their field. The two functionaries belonged to two national (French and Italian) Geographical Units of DG REGIO where – given the little relevance initially given to. INTERREG within the SFs administration – their task was not particularly sought after. Their participation in the Monitoring Committees of the 'islands' programme was regular, but considered by the other partners to be unhelpful in either giving a clear direction to the programme or solving technical disputes of a legal or bureaucratic nature. The functionaries were both close to retirement and of Italian nationality, and thus had a better acquaintance with the practices of the Italian partners, although they had no greater esteem. The opinion was reciprocated:

The EU really gave us the 'leftovers' of the Commission: their role was not adequate for the necessities in the first two editions, now [with the new functionaries for the 3rd, n.o.a.] the situation has notably improved. (I.1.I-III)

Overall, in the interviews regional and national actors lamented the lack of dialogue and lengthy delays of Commission services in providing them with operative answers, faced with the problems emerging each time. In reality, several of the problems attributed to

the functionaries were partly linked to the programme itself, as confirmed in a later interview with a functionary from the newly created Evaluation Unit in 2001:

Some difficulties in the CIP Corsica–Sardinia derived from problems inbred in INTERREG itself: before, at DG REGIO, there wasn't a specific office for technical assistance with INTERREG, and within the Geographical Units, dealing with the much more substantial resources of the Structural Funds, the programme was often overshadowed. (E.4.II-III)

In the second edition the policy was handed over to a younger functionary (again, an Italian) from a new INTERREG unit, who also followed the Western-Mediterranean area for the INTERREG IIC-IIIB strand. Given the increasing relevance of the latter strand, the 'islands' programme was later passed to another, half-French, half-Sardinian functionary in the same unit. Most of the partners those changes recognised as an improvement, although some lamented the excessive formal and standardized character increasingly assumed by the regulations in the new editions of the programme, burdening its management.

The Commission exerts a sort of 'psychological terrorism' through a tough aprioristic control, not contextual to the programme (for instance, we received a standardized form making observations on the requirements unattained by the programme, which often did not match with the programme actually presented). (S.3.I-III)

Other characters

As the new regulations for SFs and INTERREG II had extended the partnership principle formally to include economic and social partners, greater care was taken by the partners of the 'islands' programme to involve competent bodies and authorities. Representatives of socio-economic interests had always been included in the delegation of the Corsican region, where they already played an institutionalised, consultative role within the regional structure. In the case of the RAS, the province of Sassari organized prior to the planning phase a round of consultations with the main socio-economic actors, stakeholders and potential beneficiaries.

The participation of socio-economic actors in the extended version of the MC – including all subjects involved in the implementation of measures – varied according to the location where it was held: the expensive costs of travelling from one region to the other in terms of time and money led most partners to follow the MC when it was convened in their own territory. Following regulations for the third edition, representatives for equal opportunity and for environmental issues were also involved in the partnership.

A two act play: the evolution of the 'islands' programme

I) 1990–1999: INTERREG I and II

There have been three editions of the INTERREG 'islands' programme, but analytically we can discuss the first two jointly, because the findings clearly indicate that organizational change only emerged from the end of the second edition. This is also linked with the brevity of the first edition, launching cross-border cooperation between the Corse-du-Sud *département* and the province of Sassari in the North of Sardinia, with a maximum of 20% of the resources also available to fund projects in the bordering provinces.[160] The programme should have covered the period from 28th February 1991 to 31st December 1993. However, delays of a bureaucratic nature led to an approval of the programme by the Commission only in May 1992. At that point, the regional executive of the Sardinian region underwent a long period of crisis "preventing for months the undertaking of operative decisions": the programme became actually operative only in the middle of 1993, and thus the Commission allowed the postponement of the deadline for payments for one year.[161] The second edition of INTERREG, attached to the subsequent SFs programming period (1994–99), could count on a longer time span for implementation: the deadline for the obligations of funds was fixed for the 31st December 1999, and two years later for the payments. The 'islands' programme was reconfirmed, but again delayed by the complicated bureaucratic procedures necessary to obtain the Commission's decision approving or modifying the programme.[162] Moreover, the postponement of the deadline for the completion of the first edition led to an overlapping of the two programmes, which did not allow the partners to engage in a useful reassessment of the validity of the means and strategies used in the continuation of the policy (which is the rationale behind planning within defined periods of time).

In the first editions the partners chose to decline the Commission's suggestion of adopting an integrated approach to the management of the cross-border programme. The

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[160] There were exceptions to this rule, as in the case of academic cooperation: cooperation between the University of Sassari and the University of Corte was allowed, although the latter was located in the department of Haute-Corse, because it is the only one on the island and this justified the entry of the University of Cagliari in the Southern province of Sardinia.

[161] See RAS, Final Report of the INTERREG I (1999), pp.9, 29. The number and date of the Commission's decision referring to the INTERREG I France–Italy 'islands' programme is C(92)948 of 21.05.92.

[162] The references to the Commission's decisions concerning the INTERREG II France–Italy 'islands' programme are: C(99) n. 4579 of 28.12.99, which modifies the C(99) n. 827 of 7.4.99, which modifies the C(97) n. 3223 of 20.11.97, which modifies the C(96) n. 2580 of 27.09.96.

planning of measures was thus drafted independently by the partners, according to their national administrative practices, and only in a second stage confronted, discussed and integrated with that of the other partner in order to be eventually jointly adopted at the MC. Even in the second edition, despite increasing understanding, this choice was confirmed and thus the programme continued to have a 'parallel' coordinated management, with all the consequent limitations in terms of waste, both of time and of potential added value in the achievement of common goals.

Initially there wasn't a great deal of working together, if not for the proposition of the programme: the Sardinians were having some difficulties in implementing the programme as to the devolution to the province of Sassari, while in Corsica it was always the Prefecture to take decisions. (F.1.I-III)

Unfortunately the will of the few able individuals (such as this or that elected Sardinian or Corsican politician) did not manage to break through this situation of lack of cooperation. (E.1.I-II)

The management was 'regionalised' and was not 'cross-border'. At a first level of agreement the projects were defined by the MSs, only later we had to reorganize with communications among regions: it required nearly two years to get to the final version of the programme. (C.1.II-III)

Different reasons emerge from the interviews to explain this choice: one obstacle was represented by the larger devolution powers granted to Sardinia *vis à vis* the gatekeeping role still willingly played by the Prefecture with the CTC; on the other hand, Sardinians seemed to be content to manage the programme at their convenience, without further intrusion from the French *énarques*. The costs to be paid in order to overcome those obstacles did not seem rewarding in front of the limited benefits envisaged from closer cooperation.

The planning document of the INTERREG programmes, called the Community Initiative Programme (CIP), was very similar to that of mainstream policies, and thus included an *ex ante* evaluation or analysis of the situation; an account of the planning process; a statement of the joint strategy and priority axes for the development of the geographical area covered by the programme, with a summary description of the measures planned; an indicative financing plan and commitments for a transparent information and active promotion of the programme. In the case of the 'islands' programme, each page of the CIP was presented with a parallel version of the text in French and in Italian. In the first INTERREG edition – and to some extent in the second – planning requirements were not particularly binding, and much was left to the good will or practices of the partners. Until INTERREG III the *ex ante* evaluation was not

compulsory, but only subject to an 'appreciation'; also the CIP of the 'islands' programme only presented a very general description of the socio-economic situation, the common handicaps and local assets; however, unsurprisingly, the document did not lead to the formulation of a focused common strategy.

The CIP was developed by the regions as a sort of complement to their individual planning documents for the management of their respective Structural Funds. The only exception is the Marine Park, which has received common interest from the two parties. As for the rest, there was reciprocal indifference to the others' problems. (E.1.I-II)

The initial total budget for the first INTERREG 'islands' programme was 43 MECU, half of which was paid with a EU contribution from the three SFs: almost 24.5 MECU for the Italian side and 19 for the French side. Private funding, although initially foreseen for each edition, was never activated. The amount of resources available, although consonant with the experimental character of CIs, was meagre if compared to what was received by both regions under the Objective one status. This 'minor' character of the policy (whose specificity, as seen, was covered by the high number of CIs launched in the same period) also meant that lower attention was paid to its management within administrations, having more urgent matters to follow. The breakdowns indicating financial planning and progress in engagement and spending were presented by each partner separately with different editing styles and descriptions of measures, often only in the national currency, and this created mistakes and delays in the later integration of documents for the MCs.

[In the first editions] even the financial tables of the two regions for expenses in the INTERREG for Corsica and Sardinia presented different data! (E.1.I-II)

For the French side, the CTC was excluded from the management of the financial contribution, which was assigned to decentralised state services in Corsica (the regional and departmental Prefecture). The delays in the launching of the programme and its demanding planning and organizational requirements made spending the funds in due time problematic, despite the limited amount of resources involved. This was particularly true for the French partners, because of their complicated system of payments, and partly of unfulfilled devolution. From the first Monitoring Committees, the Corsican side asked for a reduction of its funds share, since they could not be committed within the set deadlines, and yet it was not able to spend all remaining funds

in time.[163]

*On the French side a problem was caused by the rigidity in the administration of the funds:
there had to be three payments, one for France, one for the CTC and one for the EU, while in
Sardinia all the funds were given to the RAS with only one payment.* (F.1.I-III)

For the Italian side the financial management of the programme was delegated to the
Sardinian region, while the national ministries responsible for Finance and the Economy
performed an essentially procedural control. Also, the Sardinian partner showed
problems in meeting the deadlines for financial spending, deriving from the late
engagement of the funds, and this led to the failure of some planned measures.
However, the RAS managed to limit the amount of funds lost, largely through the
substitution of some of the planned measures, with others already accomplished
independently from the programme.

For the second edition of the INTERREG 'islands' programme, funds almost
doubled, receiving an allocation of 74.5 MECU (*see table 6.6*). The amount assigned to
the Corsican side remained almost unaltered from that of the first edition and was
exiguous if compared with that received by the region under the Objective 1 status
(nearly its 2%).[164] Yet the region again showed problems with spending the funds in due
time, complicated by the opening of the debate between the central government and
regional and local representatives over devolution for the island (*see chapter 4*). When
at the end of the second edition it became apparent that Corsica was at risk of losing its
funds again, the MC allowed their transfer to the Sardinian partner. This move was
presented as the realisation "of the principle of partnership and of the complementarity
of resources inside INTERREG, which therefore increases its value as a single and joint
programme",[165] and anticipated the solution adopted in the third edition.

In the first edition, monitoring and technical assistance for the Italian side was done
by the CRP of the Sardinian region, without any aid or control from external actors. The
annual or final reports were usually issued quite late and only considered the measures
concerning the Sardinian region. Although quite detailed, and revealing a certain

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[163] From the initial allocation of nearly 19M Euros, the funds for the Corsican side were downsized to
nearly 15M Euros: part of the ERDF funding was shifted to another Community Initiative on
environment (ENVIREG), and 25% of the ESF funding was diminished (Region de Corse, PIC
INTERREG A, Italy–France 'islands' – Sardinia and Corsica (1990–93), Summary Report of the
Monitoring Committee (Ajaccio, 07.03.96), p.4.

[164] If the total budget for the 'islands' programme was of 74.5M Euros, for the same programming period
(1994–1999) Corsica received under the Objective 1 status about 679M Euros of SFs (other CIs excluded)
while the only EAGGF contribution to Sardinia was about 644M Euros.

[165] INTERREG IIA Italy–France 'islands' – Sardinia and Corsica (1994–1999), Summary Report of the
Monitoring Committee (Sassari, 15.12.99), p.3.

practice of the region with the management of development funds, those reports had a self-indulgent approach that did not sufficiently address the reasons behind the delays and shortcomings of the programme, and thus did not leave space for constructive feedback. Much shorter were the reports issued by the SGAC, which mainly referred to the financial evolution of the programme (only for Corsican funds). For the second edition, the Sardinian region assigned the interim evaluation of its part of the programme to a temporary association of firms also carrying on the interim evaluation of its OP,[166] while the Commission continued to manage the *ex post* evaluation for the whole programme.

At the RAS, 'evaluation' initially meant the Commission's approval. In the CSF 1994–99 it was assigned to a consulting company, which, however, did not do a good job: essentially it was an accounting type of evaluation, of little efficacy. One has learned a great deal with the new CSF [for the 2000–06 edition n.o.a.]. (S.1.I-II)

Also, the culture of evaluation developed much later: before INTERREG III the ex ante *was not required, only an 'appreciation' of the programme.* (E.4.II-III)

There has been a great impact of EU Structural Funds on the methodology [necessary for planning]: monitoring, evaluation, control. Before, in Italy, with the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno resources were spent without any control taking place afterwards. (I.1.I-III)

Thus familiarity with planning and evaluation techniques and trust in their usefulness increased in INTERREG, also as a result of contemporary practice of regions and MSs with SFs management, supported by the diffusion by the Commission of publications and guidelines dealing with different issues on territorial development planning.[167]

In the first editions of the 'islands' programme information and publicity were quite scarce. Some sporadic initiatives were taken (such as the launching of unofficial web pages or communications in the local newspapers) but they were not updated or targeted. Participation in the programme mainly amounted to word-of-mouth advertising among regional and local actors. In Sassari, the province organized

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[166] The evaluation of INTERREG was carried out within the general interim evaluation of Structural Funds for the Sardinian region in the 1994–99 planning period, and thus included the evaluation of the POP Sardegna and the CIP LEADER II: this explains why the space dedicated to INTERREG was relatively limited. The temporary association of firms (ATI) to which the evaluation was assigned was constituted by the following societies: Coopers & Lybrand-Consulting Spa, ISRI (Institute of Studies on Industrial Relations), Passamonti Spa (the ATI later changed its name to 'Gemini Consultants and CENSIS Foundation'). Although the evaluation was assigned to the ATI in 1996, registration procedures (and especially the approval of the Regional Court of Accounts) were completed only in December 1998, delaying its work and reducing the usefulness of its task.

[167] One of those reference texts for evaluation is the MEANS (Methods for Evaluating Structural Policies) collection, a set of handbooks on various evaluation techniques to be used in different policies, published by the European Commission in 1999, which soon became a standard text of reference for European planners and evaluators. Recently the collection was updated by the volume 'Evaluation of Socio-economic development. The Guide', available online at the publication website of the Commission: *http://www.evalsed.com/frame_downloads.asp.*

informative meetings for the communes, which, however, only participated in small numbers.

In Sardinia the communes did not show up at the informative meetings concerning INTERREG: it was the functionaries that had to go to each single commune to mobilize them. Today [2001] there is more attention [paid to the programme]. But it is hard to change the [well-established] way of thinking that one cooperates only if he is adequately paid. (S.2.I-II)

Despite the parallel planning and management of the programme, some of the most relevant measures planned from the first edition had a genuine cross-border character. In fact, more than 63% of resources were placed in the first axis (infrastructures), which comprised the project for the setting up of an experimental airline connecting the two islands in order to overcome the effect of the geographic break represented by the Straits of Boniface. Both partners launched (separately!) feasibility studies on the project, while the Sardinian partner also defined a measure for the introduction of an experimental daily flight. In fact, the Sardinians seemed to be firmly convinced that efficient transport connections between the islands represented a prerequisite for the development of closer cooperation among the partners. It is interesting to consider the technicalities of the complications which led, despite the perseverance of the planners, to the ultimate failure of the project (*see table 6.5*). The official justification for the failure of the airline project was that the estimated traffic of passengers between the islands did not make the investment competitive as well as the fact that, using the words of a functionary at the Italian ministry, "*quite different amounts of funds would be needed in order to set it up!*" However, it is also instructive to consider the different reactions of the partners ahead of the emerging difficulties, revealing their different motivations in supporting the project.

The airline project [in INTERREG A] was blocked because of a mistaken detail in the call for tender. However, the Corsicans have immediately given up! The RAS, on the contrary, will try to insist that the measure be inserted in INTERREG IIIB, perhaps including the air link between the islands within a wider circuit in the Mediterranean. (S.3.I-III)

[In the first edition] there was also an airline measure, proposed by the Sardinians, which failed. However from the Corsican side there was no equally strong interest: in fact Corsica did not consider it a necessity to create an infrastructural link with Sardinia, but was rather more interested in developing links with other French regions or with the European continent (and therefore continental Italy). Moreover, Corsica already benefits from 'territorial continuity', that is to say cheaper flights to Marseille, Nice and Paris, to compensate for the burden of insularity. (F.1.I-III)

As we shall see, a better fate lay in store for the projects planned within the second axis, dedicated to the enhancement of the maritime area between the two islands' shores, included the setting up of an International Marine Park in the area between the Bouches de Boniface and the La Maddalena archipelago, and studies for its protection and management. Measures in the third axis, dedicated to economic exchanges, covered services for enterprises, professional training in sport and tourism, and common organization of initiatives in the handicraft or agriculture sector. The fourth and fifth axes covered scientific cooperation between universities (already launched in 1989) and research centres and the promotion of studies and activities with a cross-border character.

INTERREG II maintained many of the measures and experience of the first edition, both because of the short duration of the latter and the preparatory character of many of its projects. However the priority order of the axes – and thus the distribution of the funds – was changed according to what had been taught by previous experience (*see table 6.5*). The transport axis was downsized globally to nearly two thirds from the first edition[168] and was divided into projects of more modest cross-border impact, such as the improvement of roads and harbour infrastructures. On the contrary, funding destined for the environment axis globally nearly tripled (on the Corsican side it passed from 8% to 44%). Action taken for the creation of an International Marine Park was continued, applying the preliminary studies launched in the previous edition, arranging common structures for better surveillance and the monitoring of the quality of coastal water. Following a logic of internal synergy of the programme, some of the formative actions contemplated by the fourth axis were directly related to the realisation and maintenance of the Park, in prospect of the possible future employment of the participants. A measure on fire-fighting interventions that had not worked in the first edition because of difficulties in coordinating the partners, was successfully put forward again because of the clear added value as a cross-border action. The exchange of practices and experiences on the subject was activated between working groups from the two islands and the region of Tuscany, linked with Corsica by another INTERREG programme. A specific axis was dedicated to the promotion of sustainable tourism with integrated actions in the field of cultural and natural heritage. Different kinds of exchanges (economic, scientific, sport and culture) were reunited within the fourth axis, which also

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[168] In the case of Corsica it passed from having 59% to 5% of the region's allocation, while in the case of Sardinia its share was nearly halved.

confirmed the cooperation between the universities. A fifth axis originally planned for electricity grids was suppressed.[169]

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fig. 6.5 - A critical case: the failure of the airline project

In the first INTERREG edition the 'islands' CIP planned within the first axis a measure for the establishment of an experimental airline connecting the islands, which arguably had the greatest potential in terms of enhancing the cross-border character of the programme. In fact, air connections between the two islands were very expensive, both in terms of time and money, as they required the passage through the respective main national hubs. In December 1993 the RAS engaged the planned funds (nearly € 873,000): almost 5% was spent on a preliminary feasibility study while the rest was meant to be a contribution for the aircraft purchase to the company that would have granted the service. In March 1995 the RAS sent the Commission the approved Final Report of the study, stating that "preconditions exist for the institution of an interregional service of transportation between Corsica and Sardinia, justified by an objective necessity of modernisation of the transport system concerning the two islands" and also suggesting the possibility of integrating the service with internal connections. The RAS launched an international call for tender, won by a company from Genoa but later debarred because of delays in providing the necessary documentation for the signing of the contract. A second tender was won by a company from Olbia (SS), but the Regional Administrative Tribunal (TAR) suspended the adjudication after an appeal by one of the participating firms. In April 1997 the Director of the CRP explained to the Monitoring Committee that the low percentage of the expenses was "not attributable to deficiencies of this Administration, but to judicial obstacles." Consequently, he asked the Commission for a deferment in payments or – as the second best option – the substitution of the measures with already completed works on a street connecting two villages in the north of Sardinia (Castelsardo-S.Teresa di Gallura). In May 1997 the Commission allowed the latter solution (Note CE n.97431590 of 22.05.1997).

II) 2000–2006 : INTERREG III

The 'islands' programme was reconfirmed within INTERREG III A (2000–2006), when it was merged with the cross-border programme initiated in the previous edition between the Northern *Haute Corse* department and the Tuscany province of Leghorn. This solution was devised by the Commission also for other cross-border programmes, in order to avoid the fractionalisation of interventions and promote the integration of wider territorial areas, following the indications expressed by the ESDP and by the revised SFs regulations. However, in the 'islands' case it also served to clamp down on the defensive and close character increasingly shown by the islands' lobby, also through the use of the INTERREG programme (as we shall later see). The merger was welcomed by the Corsican partner, facilitated in the common management of the two programmes, but was not as much appreciated by the Sardinians.

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[169] "The low level of electrification in Corsica and Sardinia can mirror the difficulty in sufficiently supplying those island regions with electricity", see EUROSTAT (2000), p.90. The axis originally planned for electricity grids was suppressed following an agreement between the Italian State and Sardinia on the methanisation of the island, defined within a TENs project for a pipeline from Algeria passing through Sardinia and Corsica (still in the process of being defined at the time of writing).

For Corsica to administer both programmes together represented an advantage. However, the initiative was taken by the European Commission, which set the cross-border axis Sardinia–Corsica–Tuscany: now the objective of realising measures with a real cross-border character is more evident. (C.4.III)

Tuscany has been added in order to allow a 'triangulation' of planning. (I.1.I-III)

The management of a sole programme is more complicated, even more if with the region of Tuscany, which has different concerns. (S.3.I-III)

With the third edition, if on the one hand the single programme Corsica–Sardinia–Tuscany seems more complicated, on the other hand, at a wider level, it increases the relevance of regional and local authorities. (S.5.III)

There was an internal querelle *between the two Italian regions: the Tuscans are perseverant, but only participate with a small territory; they managed to have their funds allocation relatively increased for Livorno and this altered the touchy Sardinians, participating with a larger area.* (I.1.I-III)

Other changes brought about by the Commission in the organization of the initiative followed the direction taken by the wider review of the SFs' regulation: greater attention for the respect of the subsidiarity principle (placing greater responsibility in policy management on national, regional and local actors, while leaving to the Commission a merely advisory role); a concentration of resources in a limited number of actions; the simplification of procedures to improve the efficiency of programmes; a better definition of the tasks assigned to the different actors to increase their accountability and the operationalisation of partnership; the inclusion in the MC of representatives of agencies for the safeguard of the environment and equal opportunity rights.[170] The problem of the slow mobilisation of Community credits was improved by funding the programme only through the ERDF. To avoid delays created by the time needed to produce a decision from the Commission for each change to the programme, the Commission asked regions and MSs to supply its services directly with the Operative Programme (this move, however, initially created delays to the launching of programmes).

The new INTERREG regulations required the setting of a single Management Authority (MA), which – as already mentioned, was identified in the CRP of the Sardinian region. At the request of the Commission the CIP, initially presented by the regions divided in two sub-programmes (one for Corsica and Sardinia, the other for Corsica and Tuscany), was redrafted to include only one programme for the three

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[170] Official Journal of the European Communities, (26.6.1999 L 161/11), article 8.

regions.[171] The single *ex ante* evaluation, was assigned to an association of consultants led by an Italian company (from Val d'Aosta) with funds from the Corsican side (ACD 2001), while a call for tender was launched to find an external independent evaluator for the interim evaluation of the programme. Monitoring was thus carried out by the company entrusted with the technical assistance acting in cooperation with the CRP, and collecting every three months the data from the Payment Authorities. The process still experienced difficulties, mainly due to delays in the organization of the electronic collection of data, and the incompleteness and lack of homogeneity of the forms presented by the different beneficiaries, especially in the Corsican case (ESA 2004: 11–12).

The presentation of information to the public was greatly improved: since the launching of the programme, the CTC prepared a brochure containing basic information about the different strands of the INTERREG programmes in which the region participated (sent to all actors reputed as potentially interested), and a more detailed *vademecum* for each of them, available on request. Common general information leaflets and procedural instructions for beneficiaries were prepared in the two languages by the MA, and were later included with the other information on the recently launched website,[172] presenting official documents and updated information on the programme.

Initially the Commission's requests were 'indigestible', while today they are taken for granted. Tables on financial advancement are regularly sent from the regions, as well as the Annual Report. (I.1.I-III)

Informal meetings are frequent, nearly once a month; email is increasingly used, especially by the Tuscan partner, a little less by Sassari and the CTC (referring to the III edition, n.o.a.). (S.4.II-III)

We have diffused information via seminars, brochures, radio and email. Now we are preparing a cross-border communication plan... The main actors – Chambers of Commerce and Agriculture, Universities, etc. – do know INTERREG by now, although maybe not so much the general public (referring to the III edition, n.o.a.). (C.1.II-III)

Those improvements (in terms of monitoring, evaluations, transparency and access to information) are mainly traceable to a better definition and stricter demands of the Commission in those matters. As mentioned, in 2000 a unit at the DG for Regional Policy was dedicated exclusively to the development of evaluation techniques, criteria and indicators in development policies. National and regional administrations were

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[171] Decision C(2001) n.4016, (18.12.2001).
[172] The general website about the programme (containing general information, official documents, examples of financed projects, updated news and materials, contact details), was launched by the Management Authority in February 2005 at the web address *www.interreg-it-fr.net.*

increasingly required to adopt in the drafting of their planning documents a common vocabulary established by reference texts on different planning and evaluation techniques (such as the MEANS collection, or the ESDP), regularly updated with *ad hoc* documents for each initiative, and greater attention was paid to granting the inclusiveness of the partnership tables and improving transparency in information. However, increased standardisation and formalisation of the policy requirements endangered the operativeness of its management.

The new edition is also complicated because of there being too many structures: DG Environment has required a 'technical cross-border group'. Considered the financial dimension of the programme, its complications really seem too many: INTERREG is an 'out of scale' programme! (S.3.I-III)

There have been many improvements in the new programme: the simplification given by uniting two programmes in one, the fact that many axes only three, and the creation of common authorities... the CTC was delegated the management of ERDF funds for INTERREG III: the French State remains generally responsible and has a control of second degree (it controls 5%) (...) The State is associated with the Monitoring and Managing Committee, where it has one place with right to vote. However, the presidency of the programme is now with the CTC. Nevertheless the State is quite happy to be no longer involved both in IIIB and in IIIA. In fact INTERREG is a complex programme, it requires time without giving many funds, and the fact that the French system is very complicated in terms of norms of payments does not make the job easy! (C.1.II-III)

A major change in the management of the programme came, as anticipated, from the recognition of the Corsican region as a main partner responsible for its territory: as auxiliary Management and Payment Authority, its services at the CTC established direct contacts with the CRP and the other territorial partners; at the MC the chair of the presidency for the French delegation was entrusted to the President of the CTC, rotating with his Sardinian counterpart. From 2002 those changes were confirmed at the national level by the reform resulting from the 'Matignon process' (*see chapter four*). It is carefully specified by functionaries at the prefecture that reforms in Corsica do not represent an exception to the rule, but are rather inserted within a wider process of decentralisation decided at the national level for the whole country after pressures for regionalisation flowing from the implementation of EU policies.

Before, the Management Authority was the prefecture. Since INTERREG III it was devolved to the CTC. This stems from the State's will to transfer part of its responsibilities to all regions (not only Corsica), also following their criticism of the State, arguing that the regionalisation of the EU programmes required a more direct role for the regions and a closer link with the Commission: this explains why since 1999 they have been devolved the management of the programmes. The process does not stop at the regional level: the commune of Bastia, for instance, is the Management Authority in the URBAN initiative. (F.2. II-III)

However, the turmoil created by this revolutionary change complicated the already problematic situation of the region in regard to the management of the funds. The third edition of the programme had received a budget of 115.5M Euros, allocated in the following way among the regions: 62M Euros for Sardinia, 28.5 for Corsica, and 25 for Tuscany. This redistribution disappointed the Sardinian partners, who – having engaged with the incentives logic – thought they should have been rewarded for the good spending performance recorded in the previous edition. Moreover, they feared complications deriving from having to coordinate their action with a third party, but also the daunting comparison with such a partner as Tuscany, which could rely on a tradition of skilful politicians, a dynamic socio-economic fabric, and well-functioning administrative and institutional structures. Following the new regulations, a single Payment Authority was set up for the programme as a whole: after at first dithering on the Tuscan partner, the Sardinian region was chosen, whose Planning ministry could start to receive into a single account all programme resources and redistribute them to the other auxiliary payment authorities (the province of Sassari, the province of Leghorn, and the CTC). The setting up of a single Payment Authority, responsible for the whole programme and presenting – after reiterated demands from the Commission – a sole financial breakdown, avoids the disengagement of funds when only one partner registers delays in payments within the set deadlines. This was particularly relevant after the introduction of the 'n+2' rule in the new Structural Funds regulations, for which funds are lost if they are not spent within two years from engagement. The consideration of a single financial plan allowed the programme as a whole to meet the deadline of December 2004, despite the Corsican region's difficulties in spending.[173] The establishment of a single financial management system for the whole programme has strengthened the ability of the partners to operate as a sole actor but at the same time it has hidden the enduring difficulties of Corsica. The fact that the Commission officially receives only a global figure of the programme's spending rates does not lead its services to further investigate the causes of the persistently slow progress of the programme in the case of the Corsican partner (INTERACT 2005: 66, 71).

Concerning the planning process, although the new CIP for INTERREG III presented a sole programme for the three regions, most of the measures continued the projects initiated in the previous editions with the respective regional partners.

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[173] In 2004, the capacity for engaging the funds for INTERREG III was even higher in Corsica (60%, while 50% for Tuscany and 46% for the RAS) but its spending capacity rate was only 6% (23% for Tuscany and 14% for the RAS). See ESA, Service of Independent Evaluation of the CIP INTERREG IIIA Italy–France: 'islands', Sardinia–Corsica–Tuscany (2000–2006), Semi-annual Evaluation Report (Jan–June 2004), November 2004, p.14, p.33.

There is significant resistance to the idea of introducing a sole programme with the same strategy, and only one Management and Payment Authority, especially from the two Italian regions. The actual programme is clearly the assemblage of two single programmes. (E.5.II-III)

Nevertheless, the overall strategy of the programme was improved, becoming more coherent and focussed. The division of axes was simplified and their goals were identified in three common objectives, defining more clearly the cross-border strategy: *to get near* (networks and services: actions to improve the supply of air and sea connections and cruise and harbour services, and to tackle problems with water and energy supplies); *to develop* (environment, tourism and sustainable economic development, measures for the evaluation of the International Maritime Park and protected areas, the promotion of fire-fighting and anti-pollution interventions, the development of the SME, technological exchanges, and quality tourism); *to confront* (cross-border exchanges between universities, sporting centres, economic actors, administrations). Once more, the initial distribution of funds which gave priority to the infrastructure axis was revised in favour of the environmental one (ESA 2004: 17–19).

Because the programme (to be closed in December 2008) was still ongoing at the closing of the field research (February 2005), it is not here possible to assess the success of its different measures. What seemed to be confirmed by the partners as the most successful result of cross-border cooperation are the actions related to the setting of the International Maritime Park between the shores of the two islands.

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fig. 6.6 - The successful case of the International Marine Park at 'La Maddalena-Bouches de Boniface'

The project of instituting an International Marine Park (IMP) for the protection of the area between the extreme southern part of Corsica and the La Maddalena archipelago in North-East Sardinia (which became National Reserves in 1999 and 1996 respectively), foresaw the setting up of a common Corso-Sardinian coordination team for the gradual application of homogeneous norms of protection, management and evaluation of the area. However, the project represented one of the first cases of International Parks in Europe, and thus could not rely on well-established legislation. INTERREG I allowed the launch of a first coordination phase among the partners: at the end of 1992 in Aosta (I), the presidents of Corsica and Sardinia, the representatives of the French and Italian state and their Environment Ministries formally declared their willingness to engage in common action for the protection of the area, signing an agreement defining the necessary conditions for the creation of the IMP. In January 1993 the 'Boniface protocol' was defined for the land and marine conservation of the natural environments of the IMP and in November a coordinated French–Italian monitoring service for sea traffic in the area was set up. In the following years small steps were taken in defining the juridical framework relative to the IMP. However – without waiting for the juridical procedure to run its course – cooperation continued at an informal level through intense coordinated actions between the partners within the subsequent editions of the INTERREG programme. Measures included common studies on monitoring and intervention in the areas, the development of a common database and coordination units for the monitoring of the area and provision for their equipment (boats, scuba diving gear, photo and video devices, etc.).

What is the ending? Main policy outcomes of the 'islands' programme

In chapter two I identified four main dimensions to contrast the shift proposed by EU Regional Policy from the 'national model' prevalently defining regional policies in the post-war decades. Notably, EU Regional Policy introduces innovations in four main dimensions of territorial development: the definition and the organization of power and territory, the objectives of regional development and the best means to realize them.

I will now return to these dimensions considering for each of them whether INTERREG (seen as an emblematic case of EU Regional Policy) has influenced the interaction of the regional actors involved in its management. Have the regional partners learned to act according to the logic proposed by the 'EU model' or do they still continue to define their behaviour and strategies in terms of the nationalised pattern? Does the response adopted by the Sardinian and the Corsican regions differ in some relevant respect?

a)   pyramidal government vs. multilevel governance

The territorial partnership proposed by INTERREG programme responds to what in section I has been defined as an 'extended version' of multilevel governance, made of territorial polycentric networks based on subsidiarity and cooperation also extended horizontally at the subnational level. However, as seen in section I, the national model assigned the two regions the role of peripheral areas embedded in a pyramidal pattern of relations only linked with the centre. This explains why relations between the two island regions were almost nonexistent and why the level of communication and cooperation at the launching of the programme appeared quite discouraging.

The two islands do not talk to each other. (E.2. I-II)

In general, the past culture of the two peoples in dialogue is missing... unfortunately the will of a few able individuals (such as this or that elected Sardinian or Corsican politician) did not manage to break through this situation of lack of cooperation. (E.1.I-II)

Changes in the organization of centre-periphery relations among the partners were visibly mirrored in the evolution of the Monitoring Committees (MCs), gathering the main actors involved in the management of the programme to watch over the correct use of the resources transferred by the EU and improving the undertaking of operative decisions.

In the first editions, in the MC meetings the Corso-French delegation outweighed the Sardo-Italian one numerically and representatively. For the former, there were the

Prefect, the DATAR representative, the general secretary of the SGAC and some of its functionaries (to represent the French state), the Presidents of the CTC executive and assembly, the General Director of the CTC Services, the functionaries following INTERREG, the President of the *Chambre régionale d'Agriculture* (for the region), and for the Southern Corsica department the President of the Council, the General director of the departmental services, the Presidents of the *Chambre de Commerce* and of the *Chambre des Métiers*. In contrast, the Italo-Sardinian delegation consisted of regional functionaries with an almost exclusively technical role: one or two functionaries from the delegated ministries representing the Italian state, and for the RAS a delegate of the President of the executive (the director of the CRP and – only very occasionally – the Planning ministry), one or two functionaries from the CRP and a few other representatives of the Sassari province (usually a delegate of the president and some functionaries from the INTERREG office).

The Prefect was opening the business of the Monitoring Committee, presenting the greetings and introducing the programme. (S.1.I-II)

In Italy the issue of devolution is solved, while in France administrative devolution still does not work and this explains why at the Monitoring Committee the delegation has such a great number of people. (I.1.I-III)

[The Corsicans] are eager to participate in INTERREG, while in Sardinia it is considered a minor intervention, in financial terms: they arrive at the Monitoring Committees 'en masse', President Baggioni always in attendance... Conversely, the Sardinians at the Committees are few and rarely accompanied by provincial or regional ministries. (S.2.I-II)

We were going to the Monitoring Committee meetings in numbers of eight to ten people. The same was more or less true for the Corsicans, although they were bringing authorities at the highest level (such as the Prefect or the President of the region). Conversely, from Sardinia there were no high-ranking functionaries. Perhaps the highest rank was mine [that of regional minister, n.o.a.] but it was more of an exception: generally not even the provincial minister was showing up, since he was a politician, while I was a technical [a University professor in Economics, n.o.a). (S.1.I-II)

The composition of the French delegation was very formal, also in the restricted version of the MC, which saw the participation of two authoritative personalities such as the President of the Regional Executive, Jean Baggioni. and the Prefect, Claude Erignac, whose assassination in 1998 gave the Italian partners a tragic example of the level of brutality reached by the autonomist movements in Corsica (*see chapter 4*), partly explaining the tensions between partners on the French side. Given those premises, even the starting point of the 'islands' programme could have been worse, as illustrated by an example referred to by the functionaries at the Italian ministries.

The overall judgment [over cooperation in the 'islands' programme] is positive: at the Monitoring Committees everything happens with consensus; the general environment is friendly. In Italy we have experienced much harder cases and problems of communication, such as those of the INTERREG with the Austrians, now improved thanks to the mediation of Bolzano [autonomous bilingual province in the Italian region of Trentino-Alto Adige, n.o.a]. (I.1.I-III)

At the first Monitoring Committees the Italians from Alto-Adige were seated next to the Austrians at the table of delegations! (I.2.I-II)

As seen, through the evolution of the policy, the CTC was increasingly involved in the management of the programme until it became both Management and Payment Authority for its territory in the third edition of the programme. However, this evident shift towards a model of multilevel governance, also extended to interregional cooperation, did not amount to an unconsciousness of the previous situation. Tension among the French and the Corsicans could clearly not be completely brushed off and many of the comments from the functionaries reveal the persistence among the actors of the 'win-lose' interpretation of devolution, long maintained within the 'national model'. On the French side, the acceptance of devolution was obtained through compensative devices minimizing its breadth (such as the 'sour grapes' argument used in saying that, after all, the French state was no longer interested in that kind of power, or showing its fundamentally unchanged role in contrast with that of the Italian one). On the Corsican side, the logic is often that of 'tit for tat', thus using their new areas of competences to informally exclude from decision-making processes those that had previously excluded them.

The Italian State is retiring![174] In the case of the French State, the Prefecture is still responsible today for INTERREG, just as for other EU funds. Only, while before it managed the programmes, now it will devolve the management to the CTC, although also accompanying it. In fact, the dossiers are instructed and agreed together in co-participation between CTC and SGAC, which each month take part in the COREPA. With the software 'Presage', we [at the Prefecture] can track all the financial data: now the CTC is allowed access, if only for those concerned with it... There have been new laws in Corsica since January 2002. Decentralisation was already active in France with the prefects' system, and it is now transferred to the CTC. (F.1.I-III)

The financial monitoring is still managed by the Europe Unit at the SGAC. We have been allowed limited access to the software 'Presage', used by the French prefectures. However, we find it has technical problems and we are working on alternative software, maybe more similar to that used in Italy... For the Prefecture, although they have the right to vote as one member, they do not want to have any more responsibility for this edition of INTERREG, and therefore they do not participate in the technical committees. Thus, often we do not even invite them... (C.4.III)

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[174] *"L'Etat italien est en retraite!"*. The expression is used here with sarcasm by the Prefecture functionary, drawing on the double meaning of the French term *'retraite'* meaning both 'retirement' and 'retreat'.

b) *assisted development vs. proactive planning*

As seen in the previous section, development policies implemented in the regions according to the 'national model' were characterised by strategies defined at the central level and implemented in the regions through bureaucratic management. The 'European model' proposed by EU Regional Policy, conversely, referred to regional and local authorities as actors responsible for their territory, involved in cooperative partnerships with the national and EU levels in the management of the policy. In addition, INTERREG asked regions belonging to different MSs to develop a common territorial strategy disengaged from a national logic and redefined within the wider European setting.

I have already shown how the introduction of a recognition for the region in the role of planner and coordinator over the matters concerning its territory represented a revolutionary institutional change in the case of Corsica. According to most of the actors involved in the INTERREG 'islands', in the first editions of the programme the omnipresence of the state representatives frustrated initiative from the CTC. Even assuming that this might have served technical efficiency, because of the recognised preparation of French administrators, it certainly undermined the 'bottom-up' character of the cooperation. This situation gradually changed through the implementation of the policy: the Corsican region was increasingly involved in the management of the policy until it was recognised as the main management and payment authority for its territory for the third edition of INTERREG. This process of ongoing change during the implementation of the policy, anticipating the outcome of the national decentralisation law effective since January 2002, clearly created delays and inefficiencies relative to the programme outcome. The transfer of management and payment procedures from the Prefecture to the CTC, whose staff is still limited in terms of numbers and experience and whose resources and infrastructures heavily rely on those of the decentralised state services, was ongoing during the programme.

In the Sardinian case regional autonomy had been enacted since the Constitution; however, the regional apparatus had been structured in quite a centralistic way. Since the first editions of the INTERREG programme the Sardinian region favoured the suggested devolution of power to the provinces, even in this case anticipating later reform at the national level, and not without impediments delaying the normal course of the programme.

The devolution of authority to the province of Sassari was already given by the Sardinian region since the INTERREG I. (I.3.2002)

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Because of the lack of legal references within national law, we could only partly delegate to the provinces... The risk with delegating [the funds management] to the provinces is, however, that of greater clientelism (even more when the provinces delegate to the communes). (S.1.I-II)[175]

[In Sardinia the l]ack of coordination among the different territorial authorities (region, provinces, communes) is detrimental to the implementation of the policies, in that it creates delays or non-compliance... the CRP has had problems in coordinating communes and provinces but also the action of different regional agencies. (E.3.II)

The risk of favouring clientelism derives from the consideration of devolution processes according to the old 'win-lose' logic for the distribution of power among territorial actors; this also explains why the regional level was not legitimised by other local authorities in its role of strategic planning, but only as a conveyor of funds to be distributed among them later. In the logic of multilevel governance, conversely, the 'higher levels' do not disappear, but rather change their role from one of main decision-maker or distributor of funds to that of strategic coordinator of planning; clearly, also this new role needs to be recognised by territorial actors at lower levels in order to be effective.

As seen in section II, regional policies launched in the island regions by their respective states were based on an exchange between the consensus of the backward periphery and central resources for development planning. This fact discouraged the formation of an entrepreneurial spirit at the local level, while consolidating inefficient networks of parasitism between centre and periphery. Since the early 1990s central governments' indulgence in front of the deterioration of political life in the regions (characterised by chronic instability of the executives, clientelistic relations in power sharing, inefficient spending of public funds) was increasingly denounced within national debates.[176] The development model of EU Regional Policy offered a totally alternative role to regional and local actors, entrusted with the responsibility of contributing proactively to define and carry out sustainable developmental strategies, turning the fate of their territories from the previous paths of dependency. Change,

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[175] The devolution of powers from the region to the provinces suggested by the programme did not have previous legal references in Italy. It took some time before the RAS could devise the necessary adjustments to legally sort out the delegations to the province of Sassari. As proudly noticed by the regional functionaries, this move anticipated the later national Law 142/90 (Italian Parliament, 1990) on local autonomies, providing that provinces and communes contribute to the definition of the objective of socio-economic planning and the management of financial resources for their territories, in the terms defined by regional law and regulations.

[176] Ritaine (1998), p.74. The laxness of the French state *vis à vis* Corsica, in terms of economic benefits and fiscal allowances given to the island, has been increasingly questioned by a series of reports published in the 1990s. In the same period in Italy the Northern League gave voice in the political arena to the secessionist ambitions of an industrious North towards a parasitic South, fed its money by the central government.

however, was not automatic, given the rootedness of the 'logic of subsidies' in the regions. In Sardinia, for instance, the identification with the *Mezzogiorno* intended as a peripheral area doomed to backwardness and to be redressed by state subsidies, led many regional politicians to feel a kind of 'entitlement' to the Objective one status within EU Regional Policy. When first interviewed on INTERREG, functionaries in the Sardinian region lamented the imbalance in the policy between the poverty of the resources on the one hand and the demanding planning requirements on the other. However, when in recent years it became clear that the region would have exited Obj.1 in the subsequent planning period, INTERREG and the insularity argument were used to redefine a regional development strategy independently from national directives. One of the main claims of the Sardinian government since the late 1990s has been that of 'territorial continuity', asking the state for special fares to reach mainland Italy, often citing the Corsican case as an example. Similarly, open dispute of the regional government with national 'top-down' instructions over the island's development has become increasingly frequent.

[Corsicans] share the idea of the 'Etat Providence' [the providence (or welfare) state], though they often asked to remove the SGAC (the prefectural services for the Region, n.o.a.). (E.1.I-II)

The Sardinian reality is very different from that of Southern Italy: culturally, I mean, but also socially... (think, for instance, of its comparatively low crime rates). What is shared with other Southern Italian regions is the lack of activism and effectiveness of the political class, used to the assistentialistic (i.e. subsidized, n.o.a.) culture for which, having obtained the funds (and having declared this to the public opinion) they don't care anymore about them. While the regional presidents or ministries of Tuscany, Abruzzo, Umbria, for much less funds get directly involved in meetings and dialogues, nobody turns up from the Sardinian region (once the funds are obtained)... They are used to an 'assistentialistic logic' in territorial planning and thus have difficulties reasoning in terms of strategic planning. There is a need to adopt a more liberistic approach to the economy, also in light of the limits of the region in terms of the size of the population and the market. (E.3.II)

In opposition to the old statalist and dirigiste planning, one should understand the Commission's logic, for which, in order to have the resources, he has to demonstrate strategic-planning qualities ('progettualità') related to specific targets, rather than wait to receive the funds to later spread them throughout the territory. (S.2.I-II)

A crucial step towards the more transparent and effective planning and management of regional development funds was the 'administrative revolution' introduced in 1988 by the rules and regulation of the reformed EU Regional Policy. Inspired by 'New Public Management' models, the SFs' reform introduced, within the bureaucratic traditions of different MSs, shared European administrative practices. Those practices focussed on the definition of different tools to improve the planning cycle, aiming to constantly enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the policies. I have already shown how these

innovations, introduced in the regional administrations of the islands through mainstream EU Regional Policy, were gradually adopted also in the management of the INTERREG programme. However, this learning process was limited in both regions by administrative difficulties linked to their national systems.

Another difficulty at the administrative level had been the fact that the rule that the regional section of the Courts of Account [in Sardinia] should examine each norm before approval was interpreted literally. This implies severe delays and bureaucratic rigmarole. (E.3.II)

The Corsicans have had difficulties in spending due to a complicated financial management and disbursement procedure. In Italy these procedures have recently notably improved. (I.1.I-III)

Corsicans do not use the international call for tender, as required by EU regulations. This is probably a habit due to the fact that they are not many, so it works that they directly assign to the works to be realised to private partners. This looks quite discretional and so, given that in the third edition of the programme we are the Management Authority, we asked them to sign a declaration stating that they operate in agreement with EU regulations. In this way, in the event of non-observance, responsibility would be their own. (S.3.I-III)

As for associations and private partners, in Italy they use the call for tender, which creates long delays, while in France usually the administration independently chooses the partner whose profile better suits the requirements. (C.1.II-III)

c) *exogenous vs. endogenous growth models*

A third dimension of the policy shift consisted in the casting away of the exogenous growth theories that had been privileged by the 'national model', prescribing sectoral actions concentrating on the creation of industrial poles for the take-off of backward economies. Conversely, the 'EU model' opted for endogenous growth models integrating actions to enhance socio-economic development following a sustainable approach. In addition, INTERREG asked the two regions to define a common strategy building on the *ex ante* evaluation of the main strengths and weaknesses of the cross-border area. Also in this case the range of change proposed to the regions was quite extensive.

I have already noted how in the first editions of the programme evaluations were not considered as a relevant part of the planning process, and how the definition of actions was generally carried out by the regions autonomously and coordinated only in a second stage. However, cooperation gradually improved and taught the partners that cross-border partnerships were a feasible option, especially in fields such as tourism, environment and culture. In the measures with greater added value (as with those for the setting of the International Marine Park) the 'win-lose' logic of the 'national model' accompanying the first edition is gradually substituted by a shared interest in cooperation and the setting in of interregional working groups (*see table 6.6*). Thus

gradually increased acquaintance among the partners allowed the resolution of a typical 'tragedy of commons' dilemma, through the placement in the area of governance structures (Ostrom 1990).

There is a delay in all those measures which are new. (E.3.II)

In the first edition of the INTERREG between the islands, interventions were directed to one's own territory, especially in the French case. In fact the measure for the establishment of the Marine Park and thus the agreement to diminish the transit of ships flying the French or Italian flag in the Bouches of Boniface strait, has a high environmental impact, given the type of boats which used to pass through there (the so-called 'tramp ships') and the frequent tempests which increase the risks of a disaster. However, the traffic in the Bouches was mainly Italian, while Lebanese ships directed to Marseille continue to transit! (I.2.I-II)

(...) with the only exception of the Marine Park, which has received common interest from the two parts. As for the rest, there is reciprocal indifference to the others' problem. (E.1.I-II)

(...) the greatest success was the International Marine Park. (F.1.I-III)

In the first edition of INTERREG cooperation was only a hypothesis. The choice of the partners was for separate planning. Only gradually, through notable improvements, INTERREG became a reality with the third edition. (I.1.I-III)

Following the success of the IMP, over the three editions the 'environment' axis gradually increased from 8% to more than one third of the whole budget (*see table 6.5*). However, the relevance of the environmental vocation of the islands also turns out to be a brake for those measures aiming to make infrastructural interventions that seek to boost the integration of the insular system. In fact, if too often or rigidly employed, the 'environmental brake' may hamper the advancement of economic development on the islands; as bitterly commented 'off the record' by a policy advisor: "*The little darlings; they talk about environment so that one does not catch up with them!*". The harmonious triangulation of objectives proposed by the ESDP is indeed difficult for the partners to realise in practice, as shown by the following example on the failed measure for the enhancement of what represents the main entrance from Sardinia to the Corsican shores, the Port of Boniface.

One of the most relevant measures of the programme, which referred to building a new access to the Port of Bonifacio, was very controversial and needed preliminary studies to assess its impact (...) The measure was presented again in the second edition, but it was blocked for environmental reasons. Thus, it was substituted with measures for road upkeep and improvements (...) So the greatest failure was the Port of Bonifacio measure, showing the difficulty of linking economic development with environmental concerns (...) (F.1.I-III)

The greater difficulties linked with the planning and realisation of measures of common interest led the partners to adopt, for most of the other minor interventions, a more

practical method coordinating individual regional strategies, which only indirectly contributed to interregional development.

We have already had several meetings of the new single Management Committee for INTERREG III. However, of the proposals made only a few have a cross-border character and those having it more are more difficult to coordinate, and therefore take longer to pass. Those that pass more easily only have an indirect effect, in that they facilitate communication and cooperation among the islands through the development of each region. (S.3.I-III)

Culture and sports were among the privileged fields for exchanges and cooperation: satisfactory results were obtained by the launching of a regional radio programme conducted in the Italian and Corsican languages called '*Mediterradio*', the jazz festival on a ship sailing the Boniface Mouths, or scientific cooperation among research centres. All those actions unquestionably improve and strengthen mutual knowledge and relationships between islanders. However, their impact appears to be limited because of the peripheral role of the islands, which cannot stand comparison with regional realities inserted in more dynamic territorial networks, as we shall better see in the discussion of the fourth innovation (remaining with the examples of the academic exchanges within the 'islands' INTERREG, researchers from both the regions would better benefit from insertion within a network with innovative research centres with fully equipped research labs and libraries).

d) *centre-periphery development vs. socio-economic and territorial cohesion*

A fourth dimension of the change proposed by the 'European model' consisted in directing Regional Policy to the achievement of greater socio-economic and territorial cohesion of the EU. The latter dimension – recognising the relevance of location in development processes – was particularly emphasised by INTERREG, trying to integrate development planning among territorial areas traditionally peripheral within their respective national setting. As already noted, since the beginning it became apparent that, despite the fact that the policy was originally aimed at integrating bordering regions' economies into the European market, it was not easy to quantify its impact from the economic point of view (FERE 1996: 19–20). In fact, it was rather the Structural Funds which should have realised the objective of socio-economic cohesion, while INTERREG should have further strengthened its territorial dimension.

However, in the 'islands' case, as seen, cooperation appeared to be problematic in measures of cross-border or interregional character. One of the main obstacles to the development of a thicker territorial cooperation is identified by the actors in the 15 km

of maritime border. In the first editions, although MC should have met at least twice a year, the time-consuming and expensive connections between the islands – especially during the winter season – compelled the partners to cancel or to reduce the length of their encounters, or the number of participants.

The lack of traditions in communication is worsened by the difficult connections among the islands, for which whoever wants to go from Sardinia to Corsica has first to pass through Rome, then Nice, and eventually arrive in Ajaccio. This clearly also has negative implications for the monitoring committees of the INTERREG programme. (E.1.I-II)

The maritime border makes transfers more difficult: the pace of contacts is slackened by the fact that the costs, both in terms of time and money, are higher [than for transfers in other border areas, n.o.a.]. (C.1.I-III)

The longer time required for the transfers also made it difficult to schedule the MC, especially for the French side which, in the first edition, had to agree a date suitable for all the highest national and regional authorities in Corsica.

We had one Monitoring Committee per year (...) because each time the proposed date didn't suit either the Sardinians or – especially– the Corsicans. (E.2.I-II)

Official evaluations of the INTERREG initiative requested by the Commission lament the fact that in most programmes nearly half of the funds were spent in the axes concerning infrastructures for communication, and energy supplies for measures that were cross-border only in the loosest sense of being located near the frontier (FERE 1996: 16). However, in the 'islands' case, as seen, this was mainly the consequence of the difficulties ingrained in the weaknesses of the area in terms of market and infrastructure endowments.

The diffusion of ICTs, also through the use of INTERREG funds, has partly improved communication among the regions (from video-conferencing, to email exchange and common services and information through the programme's website).

In the INTERREG I and II there has been no use of email, therefore we used to send floppy disks: today the exchange of information is much easier! (F.1.I-III)

A further obstacle to interregional communication, largely underestimated at the launch of the programme, was constituted by the language barrier. Until today in fact, the working language mostly used in the 'islands' programme was Italian. However, despite similarities with the Corsican dialect, Italian is not fluently spoken by all Corsicans

(especially among new generations) and certainly not by mother tongue French partners, finding themselves in a relatively disadvantaged position in terms of communication.[177]

A difficulty specific to the PIC Corsica-Sardinia is the problem of internal bilinguism (the presence of two different and minoritarian languages), absent in most successful cases of INTERREG (such as that between the UK and Ireland, or the Netherlands and Belgium...). (E.4.II-III)

An obstacle was presented by the fact that the functionary responsible for state services does not speak Italian. (C.1.2000)

The problem was probably underestimated because of this nostalgic view of the 'Mediterranean soul' uniting the islands.[178] In the last edition this issue was raised by the functionary following the programme at the Commission who, being half-French and half-Sardinian, could better appreciate communicative problems and therefore suggest a translation system for the MC as a necessary step for the deepening of cooperation.

Improvements in communication, however, did not solve the partners' difficulties in terms of devising measures with a real impact on the integration of the territories, both among them and the rest of the European territory. The reasons behind this weakness of the insular partnership are mainly attributed by regional actors to the common disadvantages of their territories. The size of the territories involved in cross-border cooperation was a first obstacle, surmounted, as said, with a flexible interpretation of the eligibility areas. In fact the eligibility of NUTS III only regions (provinces or departments) – which may well be the proper planning size for populated border areas in the continental core of the EU – caused implementation problems on the islands (especially in Corsica), related to their low population density and economic weakness; it was sometimes difficult for the Sardinian partners to find a Corsican equivalent to cooperate in a common action. When interviewed, both the regional partners seemed to share the conviction that – precisely because of their similar handicaps – the islands would have better benefited from the insertion in a more

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[177] I have experienced this language problem myself in the interviews with the Corsican partners. In fact, the strong similarities between the Corsican dialect and the Italian language often led the interviewees to switch our conversation from the official French to a curious Corso-Italian mix, which clearly made the conversation much more informal and friendly but was often difficult for me to decipher, especially when speaking of technical issues (and at that point it was clearly embarrassing to ask the interviewee to switch back to French because his or her Italian was incomprehensible!).

[178] In this regard, I remember the passionate intervention during one of the seminars organized at the University of Corte (under INTERREG measures for academic cooperation) of an old Corsican from the public audience, protesting that – at a conference on cooperation between the islands – people were not speaking their common language (the dialects of the North of Sardinia and of Southern Corsica share many similarities), but that of the 'invaders' (French, Italians and even Americans!).

dynamic network rather than from a cooperation 'among the poor'. The same reason explains the preference of local actors on the islands for applying for the IIB-IIIC INTERREG programme in the Western-Mediterranean ('Medocc') area.

These considerations [over the limitations of the 'islands' programme] lead to the question: what is the real interest of these regions in cooperating with one another? This explains why regional and local actors [in Sardinia] prefer the strand INTERREG Medocc, which allows a wider choice of partners. (S.4.II-III)

For Sardinia, Corsica is not relevant. In Corsica there is a stronger desire to open up to other countries, but it is obstructed by strong private interests. (E.1.I-II)

[There are more economic measures in the INTERREG Corsica–Tuscany] also because the relations between the regions were already existent, while the one between Corsica and Sardinia were all yet to be set up. Moreover the North of Corsica is a more economic province, and this explains the exchanges between Bastia and Livorno, while Ajaccio is the administrative city of the region. (F.1.I-III)

[In Corsica] INTERREG adds up to the Obj. 1, LEADER, and other development programmes. However, EU funds need a counterpart: the capacity of accomplishers ('maître d'ouvrage'). However, [on the island] there are few local enterprises, and the continental ones do not find it convenient to establish themselves in Corsica; the economic web is very little developed, but the artificial rise of the GDP pro capite in a region with a very weak number of inhabitants hides this problem without solving it, without bringing economic development. For similar reasons, this explains why the DOM had to be considered not only within the Obj. 1, but also under the Cohesion Funds and other specific programmes. (F.2.I-II)

The structural weakness of the regions seems to be specifically related to their insular condition, representing a source of permanent disadvantage for their development. The consideration of 'insularity' as a handicap to regional development was supported, within the debate on EU Regional Policy, by the Economic and Social Committee, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, and – in a more cautious way – by the Commission, all agreeing that island regions should have benefited from special interventions allowing them to compete on equal grounds with other European regions.[179] Both Sardinia and especially Corsica had participated in the action of regional lobbies claiming that the insularity handicap should have been taken into account by EU Regional Policy, also using the INTERREG partnership in this aim. This was related to the fact that, as seen when discussing social networks, "a group that has learned to work effectively together in one task can take on other similar tasks at a cost in time and effort that is far less than bringing an entirely new group together who must learn everything from scratch" (Ostrom and Ahn 2001: 14). As shown by a thematic

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[179] Parliament (1997), p.249; SEC (1998), p 32. In its proposals for the reform of the Structural Funds for the 2000–2006 edition the Economic and Social Committee went a step further in the demands for extending the criteria establishing eligibility proposing (without success) a *de facto* inclusion of islands among Objective 1 regions.

evaluation of the partnership principle ordered by the Commission "[t]he partnership principle has had a particular innovative effect on programmes concerned with cross-border cooperation where formal partnership has accelerated the development of (the ultimately more important) informal partnerships and norms of consultation and coordination" (Tavistock 1999: 72). However, as pointed out in the first chapter, social capital developed within cooperative social networks can be directed both to individualistic or collective goals, and used in more virtuous or vicious ways. In this last paragraph concluding our story on the 'islands' programme, I will consider how the INTERREG logic taught the regions to use their insular networks within the European polity in a more inclusive and cooperative way.

Redefining insular claims through the INTERREG logic

The direct reference to insularity in the denomination of their INTERREG 'islands' programme facilitated Corsica and Sardinia in also using it as a platform to express the claims of European island regions. The recognition of insularity as a handicap to territorial development to be taken into account by European regional and structural policies was officially recognised by the EU with the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997),[180] after intense lobbying carried out by several European regional associations, which also saw the participation of Corsica and Sardinia. The action of those associations was particularly successful during the 1980s, within the 'Europe of the regions' climate, in cultivating relations with the Commission, the Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, and later with the Committee of the Regions. Corsican representatives – eager to cut loose from national tutelage – were particularly active in organizing the islands' commissions within the most influential lobbies, such as the

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[180] *Article 158*: In order to promote its overall harmonious development, the Community shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic and social cohesion. In particular, the Community shall aim at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least favoured regions or islands, including rural areas. *Declaration n.30 on island regions*: The Conference recognises that island regions suffer from structural handicaps linked to their island status, the permanence of which impairs their economic and social development. The Conference accordingly acknowledges that Community legislation must take account of these handicaps and that specific measures may be taken, where justified, in favour of these regions in order to integrate them better into the internal market on fair conditions. *Article 154*: 1.- To help achieve the objectives referred to in articles 14 and 158 and to enable citizens of the Union, economic operators and regional and local communities to derive full benefit from the setting up of an area without internal frontiers, the Community shall contribute to the establishment and development of trans-European networks in the areas of transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructures. 2.- Within the framework of a system of open and competitive markets, action by the Community shall aim at promoting the interconnection and interoperability of national networks as well as access to such networks. It shall take account in particular of the need to link island, landlocked and peripheral regions with the central regions of the Community.

Council of Europe or the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions.[181] In 1995 the presidents of the executives of Corsica, Sardinia and the Balearic Islands (Spain) signed a constitutive agreement linking their regions in a project of institutional cooperation and lobby, called IMEDOC (an acronym for Islands of the Western-Mediterranean). The primary objective of the lobby, presented in Barcelona for the conference launching the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and in Brussels the following year, was to include measures specifically designed for island regions in the 2000–06 edition of EU regional policy.

The initiative was mainly taken by the Corsican region, whose active participation in the different lobbies, however, revealed a quite individualistic approach, contrary to the logic of interregional cooperation of the 'EU model'. We have already noted how, in the first two editions, the INTERREG programme with Sardinia was characterised by the choice of the island regions to have a parallel policy management. The same instrumental approach to the IMEDOC partnership was evident in the lack of common organizational structures, besides a Directive Committee composed by the presidents of the regions and their staff, meeting each year. Also, the representation offices of the regions in Brussels were opened separately (in 1995 for Sardinia and a year later for Corsica) and rarely shared contacts or information (as confirmed during my visits in Brussels), although there were already other examples of interregional offices of regions cooperating under INTERREG (as that between the Alto Adige and the Tyrol regions) (Olivesi 1999: 760).

This 'competitive approach' to lobbying noticed in the Corsican region was in fact very 'French' in style, and had been already successfully adopted by the national government in the case of the overseas territories.[182] Similarly, in autumn 2000, within the 'Matignon process', launched to promote a dialogue between the French government and Corsican representative to enhance wider devolution and peace on the island, Prime Minister Jospin sent a letter to the President of the European Commission

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[181] Conferences of European Island Regions, held within the framework of the Council of Europe, were organized in Sardinia (1980), the Canary Islands (1981) and in the Azores (1984). Within the CRPM Corsica and Sardinia participate in the Islands Commission (created in 1980) and the Inter-Mediterranean Commission (founded ten years later).

[182] The French *Départements d'Outre Mer* (DOM), the Canary Islands (FR), Madeira and Azores (P), all islands or groups of islands with the only exception of French Guyana, were recognised as 'outermost regions' (often referred to as RUP, after the French acronym for *Régions Ultra-Périphériques*), i.e. regions belonging to the EU but not geographically located in the European Continent, suffering from a combination of factors hampering their development, such as "remoteness, insularity, small size, difficult topography and climate, economic dependence on a few products, the permanence and combination of which severely restrain their development" (Treaty of Amsterdam, art.299, ex art.227). Since the reform of the SFs the RUP have been eligible for Objective 1 (benefiting from specific adaptations in their administration), a continuation of fiscal facilities, and of EU initiatives to compensate for peripherality and insularity, later merged within a specific strand of the INTERREG III edition.

Romano Prodi asking him to set up a study group to consider the disadvantaged conditions of Corsica. After this letter, an Interministerial Committee for Corsica was set up by the Commission. The expectations raised on the Corsican side by this action are traceable in the interview with one functionary at the CTC:

[The action of IMEDOC is needed because] we are still far from integration: our physical handicaps are of permanent character, just like in the case of (...) archipelagos, mountains, where there are high unemployment and low population rates. The action of our president, Baggioni, has found an attentive interlocutor in Commissioner Barnier, and we are trying to also link to other groups of regions with similar problems (...) We can also find references in the White Book on Governance (when it talks about the tri-lateral contracts between State, EU, and regions) or in the Memorandum on Corsica and in the 2ⁿᵈ Cohesion Report. (C.1.I-III)

However, complaints from the Sardinian government and other island regions led the Commission to disband the Committee for Corsica and to launch instead (in December of the same year) a study of all European island regions whose publication – delayed until spring 2003 – should have provided a starting point for a wider reflection on possible EU strategies for island regions in future regional policy (Planistat 2003). Meanwhile the Corsican lobby concentrated on the proposal to insert a specific stream for islands in the INTERREG III within the transnational strand in the Western-Mediterranean (Medocc) area, in which both Corsica and Sardinia had participated in the II-C edition. Also in this case, the Commission refused the proposal on the grounds that the islands needed to be integrated and not further isolated from other regions.

With the Corsicans we have had some difficulties because of their insistence on a specific strand in the new edition of INTERREG III-Western-Mediterranean dedicated to insularity, without understanding the logic of the programme. The fact is that they still tend to consider the EU funds with a competitive approach, and that is why they insist on specific measures on insularity: however the problem of accessibility has to be inserted within a larger perspective than that on insularity (I.3.II-III)[183]

Corsicans have mobilized and also used INTERREG to recognise their insularity status, while Sardinians haven't. (E.5.II-III)

The relatively low interest shown by the Sardinian region in the insularity issue had mainly to do with the fact that, besides the lower levels of activism of the Italian actors within the process of European integration, the 'Sardinian question' had been incorporated within the wider *Mezzogiorno* one (*see chapter five*). Despite the fact that islands constitute nearly 17% of the Italian territory (Sicily and Sardinia are the largest

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[183] The functionary interviewed at the Italian Ministry for Transports and Communication was one of the members of the Transnational Unit for the Management of the Western-Mediterranean area in the INTERREG IIC-IIIB.

islands in the Mediterranean) the Italian government almost ignored the insularity issue, and the work done on the subject by insular lobbies as well as the Italian representatives at the European Parliament and the CoR. Still in 2001, in the *Memorandum* presented in June to define its priorities for the 2007–13 edition of EU Regional policy, the Italian government made no reference to insularity, included in the draft proposal of the Commission among possible themes to be considered by MSs for regional assistance. After the complaints of the regions Sicily and Sardinia, a second version of the *Memorandum* was provided in December 2002, eventually including an article on the need to take into account the theme of insularity in cohesion policy.

The cooperative character of lobbying on insularity was shown instead by the Committee of Regions and the Island Commission within the European Parliament, urging the Council and Commission to adopt practical measures in agreement with the above mentioned articles on insularity.[184] It is also thanks to their action that the case of island regions was gradually inserted at the Commission within the reflections undertaken at the DG REGIO on territorial cohesion. In fact, the principle by which people should not be disadvantaged according to wherever they happen to live or work in the Union was particularly pertinent to the arguments developed to elucidate the handicap of insularity. In the Second Report on Economic and Social Cohesion, launching the debate over the future of cohesion policy after 2007, mountains and islands were included under the label of 'geo-morphological areas' whose nature is difficult to reveal with only the socio-economic criteria utilised for EU regions to qualify for SFs (Commission 2001: 34). In its Conclusion and Recommendations, the Report quotes, among the priorities to secure the objective of socio-economic cohesion, "areas with severe geographical natural handicaps", including within the category outermost regions, islands, mountain regions, peripheral regions and regions with low population density (Commission 2002: 3).

Meanwhile, in Corsica and Sardinia networks among European island regions continued to spread, although they increasingly declined in a more inclusive way with reference to the wider Mediterranean setting.[185] In 2004 IMEDOC – under the presidency of the region Sicily, which had entered four years before – was extended to Crete and opened to all other Mediterranean islands, "in the prospect of the constitution

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[184] European Parliament (1997), p.249, (1998); Committee of the Regions (2002). An important role within the Island Commission of the European Parliament was played by the Sardinian deputy Mario Segni.

[185] In 2000 the INSULEUR network was created, reuniting the chambers of commerce and industry of Mediterranean island regions; a year later the Islands Committee was created within the ArcLatin partnership and the MODEM network among mountain areas of the Mediterranean island regions of Europe.

of a Euroregion of the Islands of the Mediterranean", and changed its acronym to EURIMED (IMEDOC 2004). This cooperative approach to interregional networks, diffused by the Commission through INTERREG programmes, seemed to trickle into the logic of action of the Corsican region and its partners.

Also, islands have to root in the European market, where they are not different from the other regions. Moreover, within the INTERREG programme the two island regions have more weight than the province of Pisa or Grosseto, and the insular problem has been recognised also for the case of the Tuscany archipelago. Also, what was experienced with the INTERREG III B, where the Commission has not recognised a specific strand to the islands, has to teach us something. The prefect of the PACA region (who coordinates the French regions for the programme, n.o.a.) has talked in this regard about an 'identity withdrawal' ('repli identitaire') and both the Commission and the French state want to avoid that... (C.1.I-III)

Conclusion

In this section I have considered the story of the implementation, in the regions of Corsica and Sardinia, of an innovative initiative of EU Regional Policy considering bordering regions as a sole European actor managing the integrated development of its territory. For this reason, INTERREG represented a particularly coherent application of what I have defined as the 'European model', organizing power and territory according to the principles of MLG and territorial cohesion.

Monitoring is a fundamental means of testing the efficiency and effectiveness of a policy; however, in the case of INTERREG it would have been important that the monitoring of physical progress could address not only the socio-economic impact, but also the extent to which programmes have contributed to the achievement of the 'softer' objectives of INTERREG (INTERACT 2005: 66), such as the promotion of a culture of dialogue and cooperation, processes of capacity building through the exchange of experiences between regional administrations, etc. My analysis of the implementation of the INTERREG 'islands' programme over almost fifteen years since its launch in 1990 shows a gradual but constant process of adoption, by the regional partners administering the programme, of the main innovations it suggested. This progress partly grew 'naturally' from reiterated cooperation and increasing acquaintance among the partners and with the programme, but received a decisive drive from the more 'constructivist' approach adopted by the Commission in a second phase of the policy's implementation (traceable from the last years of the second edition). In the first years of INTERREG II the strategy adopted by the two regions seemed to draw close to a type of 'adaptation' response (typifying a non-maximizing behaviour trying to innovate as

little as necessary in order to accept the formal adoption of changes), reducing to a minimum extent internal changes and introducing them in an incremental and gradual way. However, in the last years of the second edition, and even more noticeably since the launching of INTERREG III, the situation shifted towards a 'learning' type of response, while regional partners extended the use of the logic promoted by the programme beyond its direct scope (as in the definition of regional claims on insularity).

However, the analysis has also shown that in its implementation the programme was constrained by a range of mediating factors, usually not adequately captured by standard evaluations, and whose resolution seem beyond the means of INTERREG. One of the main obstacles derived from the strength of the 'national model' in structuring territorial and power relations according to a centralized hierarchical logic (particularly strong in the case of France), although in the most recent years its definition has notably changed towards greater levels of regionalization and decentralisation. At a wider level one of the main brakes to territorial cooperation in the 'islands' programme seems to reside precisely in the unresolved difficulties linked to the condition of insularity shared by Corsica and Sardinia (isolation from 'core areas', higher costs of transports, weakness of the economy, peripherality of markets, limited supplies, depopulation, etc.). Rather than a happy ending, an appropriate conclusion to the story of the INTERREG 'islands' programme would sound like "to be continued...".

**fig. 6.7 – Italy–France 'islands' programme:
the evolution of planning**

INTERREG IA	INTERREG IIA	INTERREG IIIA
1. Transports and communications (59%) development of port assets; study on the internal and external transports' system in the area; setting of an experimental airline (*cancelled and substituted with road infrastructures*)	**1. Transports and communications (36%)** development of road and port infrastructures and communication services	**1. Networks and services (52.5%)** realisation and improvement of networks, services and infrastructures for water and energy supplies, and communication
2. Enhancement of the maritime area (8.5%) establishment of an International Maritime Park and rationalisation of tourism in area	**2. Environment (23%)** establishment of the International Maritime Park; environmental monitoring of the quality of coastal waters; coordination of fire-fighting interventions	**2. Environment, tourism and sustainable economic development (35%)** protection and enhancement of the environment; sustainable development and promotion of tourism in the cross-border area
3. Economic exchanges (10%) business services; professional formation in sports and tourism; study on the economic impact of cross-border exchanges	**3. Tourism and culture (21%)** development of port assets for tourism and enhancement of the sea basin; definition of itineraries for 'cultural tourism'	
4. Scientific cooperation (10%) scientific exchanges and academic cooperation; agronomic research	**4. Cross-border exchanges (19%)** creation of a centre for Corso-Sardinian exchanges; socio-cultural and educational exchanges; economic exchanges; scientific exchanges and academic cooperation	**3. Cross-border exchanges (10.5%)** socio-cultural and educational exchanges; scientific exchanges and academic cooperation; institutional cooperation
5. Cross-border exchanges (10%) creation of a centre for Corso-Sardinian exchanges; development of common databases; scientific exchanges and academic cooperation	**5. *Electricity grids (cancelled)***	
6. Monitoring and technical assistance (1.5%)	**6. Monitoring and technical assistance (1%)**	**4. Monitoring and technical assistance (2%)**

[source: our elaboration from the analysis of primary sources]

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fig. 6.8 – Italy–France 'islands' programme: the evolution of financial management

	INTERREG I A: France–Italy: 'Islands'											
	I (1991–1993) Total budget: 40M Euro *				II (1994–1999) Total budget: 74.5M Euro *				III (2000–2006) Total budget: 115.5M Euro * (25M Euros for Tuscany)			
	CORSICA (15.5M Euro)		SARDINIA (24.5M Euro)		CORSICA (16.5M Euro)		SARDINIA (58M Euro)		CORSICA: (28.5M Euro)		SARDINIA: (62M Euro)	
Axes	Planned	Spent	Planned	Spent	Planned	Spent	Planned	Spent	Planned	Spent**	Planned	Spent**
1	52%	73%	66%	97%	1%	97%	36%	96%	33%	11%	20%	39%
2	7%	89%	10%	96%	56%	45%	23%	99%	45%	13%	58%	24%
3	11%	87	9%	63%	24%	49%	21%	141%	14%	24%	14%	16%
4	13%	74%	7%	96%	15%	100%	19%	99%	8%	26%	8%	7%
5	14%	93%	6%	63%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	2%	28%	1%	83%	5%	98%	1%	99%	-	-	-	-
Tot.	100%	73%	100%	92%	100%	57%	100%	107%	100%	15%	100%	25%

* The percentages are relative to the last modulation of the programmes available.
** The percentage of funds spent in the third edition refers to the situation declared on date 23.12.04. The final deadline for acceptability of spending of the programme is set for 31.12.08.

fig. 6.9 – Italy–France 'islands' programme: the evolution of partnership structures

	INTERREG IA (national model)	INTERREG IIA (transitional phase)	INTERREG IIIA (European model)
Management Authorities	Two separated MA: the Sardinian region and the French decentralised planning services in Corsica (SGAC).	Two separated MA: the RAS and the SGAC, but increasingly direct involvement of the CTC.	A single MA for the programme (the RAS), flanked by auxiliary MA (the CTC and the Tuscan region).
Payment Authorities	Separated financial authorities: the RAS and the SGAC.	Separated financial authorities: the RAS and the SGAC (direct management of the IIC by the CTC).	A single PA for the programme (the RAS) flanked by auxiliary PA (the Province of Sassari; the CTC; the province of Leghorn).
Monitoring Committees	More relevance on the vertical (institutional) dimension of partnership; national *tutelle* (on the French side).	Increased involvement of the socio-economic partners; increased participation of the regional (Corsica) and local (Sardinia) levels.	Also representatives of the environmental and equal opportunities rights; regional presidents as chairs of the MC.

[source: our elaboration from the analysis of primary sources]

CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 7 - The role of regionalisation within the process of EU integration: conclusive reflections starting from the 'islands' case

In introducing this thesis I related its object of study to the wide debate on the emergence of post-national institutional frameworks for the organization of contemporary Western societies. The focus on the organization of territorial and power relations as the main dimensions of structural change to be analysed was justified by the fact that territory and power are social constructs constantly present in the organization of societies, although differently institutionalized for each historical formation. The thesis has considered the definition and diffusion by the EU, since the end of the 1980s, of a model of governance based on cooperative relations among the different actors involved in the process of EU integration. Through the implementation of EU Regional Policy, it was required that this model be adopted by regional actors in different socio-institutional contexts and often accustomed to 'centre-periphery' structures typically distinguishing the organization of modern nation states. This was the case of the regions considered in the thesis, which share a past of backwardness and dependency on their respective central governments, as reflected in the analysis of regional policies launched for their territorial development.

In this conclusive chapter I will recall the main assumptions that allowed me to frame the theoretical puzzle that was presented by the research and summarize the main findings of its empirical analysis. Having considered in what ways they relate to each other, I will gauge in what ways this thesis has contributed to the theoretical debates considered and acknowledge as well the questions it leaves open that face scholars interested in further pursuing these topics.

Main theoretical debates and empirical questions considered

At a wider theoretical level, the issue of path dependency and institutional change in backward regions has been considered from the angle offered by historical institutionalism (HI). As argued in section I, this position recognises the fact that 'history matters' in processes of institutional change and thus that it is not sufficient to promote 'top-down' reforms or policies to change institutions which are both context-bound and path dependent. Consequently, our methodology has led us to preface our

empirical section, gauging regional reaction to the 'EU model' proposed by INTERREG (*section III*), with a historical analysis of the policies based on previous institutional settings (*section II*). The historical analysis was very relevant to the research, in that it has allowed a better understanding of both the obstacles hampering innovation and the significance of registered change in the realisation of the EU policy in the regions, as in the case of the troubled relationship between regional actors and state institutions in Corsica, or the clientelistic logic grounding the distribution development funds in Sardinia, as in the rest of the *Mezzogiorno*.

According to the HI approach, however, acknowledging the relevance of history in institutional life does not necessarily lead researchers to adopt deterministic accounts of social causation but, on the contrary, leads them to search in its evolution for those moments of substantial change allowing individual actors to orient their strategies according to a different logic of collective action, legitimised as more appropriate to the changed conditions of society. In fact, through the analysis of the evolution of regional policies conducted in Corsica and Sardinia from the end of WW2 by their respective states, we have also noticed the emergence of policy proposals based on ways of considering territorial development and decision-making procedures similar to those later supported by the reformed Regional Policy of the EU. However, they did not respond to the normative and organizational logic of the prevailing 'national paradigm' shaping industrial policy, political and administrative life, territorial and social relations according to a centralised and hierarchical regulative structure.

In the last decades the 'national paradigm' has been challenged by several processes, streaming under the label of globalization, showing an increased interconnectedness of economic, social and political processes beyond the national level, challenging the exclusiveness of state regulative powers, and asking for an internal reorganization of its institutions in order to meet the requirements and face the challenges of the new era. The evolution of EU integration is set within this picture of transformation of the nation-state system, and thus the theoretical debate within European studies has initially sought to interpret the process as either a sign of its demise or its resilience. The adoption of an institutionalist perspective to study European integration joins a recent contribution to the debate, known under the label of 'Europeanisation studies', considering European integration as proceeding not only by stage of development following intergovernmental agreements, but also gradually through the implementation of policies defining rules, procedures, and ideas influencing the practice of the actors involved in the process. The HI perspective considers

Europeanisation as bidirectional and multidimensional: in fact it includes within the concept both the processes through which organizational fields are framed at the EU level and those through which they are transferred to social contexts traditionally regulating their political, economic, and cultural spheres according to the national model. Therefore in the empirical section of the thesis, following the story of the 'islands' INTERREG programme, while the main focus of the research was on the response given by regional actors in Corsica and Sardinia to the model proposed by the policy, another concern was to consider how the Community Initiative was gradually framed and refined in order to gain more effectiveness and coherence. Departing from most research on Europeanisation and SFs implementation, our analysis has considered the specificity of regional action focussing on Corsica and Sardinia as distinctive territorial actors (and not as agents of their respective MSs).

A third debate specifically considered in the theoretical section is that concerning the role of social networks in promoting cooperative behaviour among the actors, and thus on the mechanisms allowing the production of social capital resources facilitating collective action. Also in this case we have refused deterministic approaches considering social capital as a mere result of 'shadow of past' mechanisms (as in the case of civic traditions), and allowed for the possibility of enhancing its creation through the establishment of specific social frames used as mechanisms of coordination of individual actors' beliefs and shedding a 'shadow of the future' over their interaction. Thus our hypothesis was that INTERREG, interpreted as a public policy designed to promote partnership among actors asked to implement an innovative approach to territorial development, could offer a long-term perspective showing the advantages of cooperation through the direct involvement in policy networks of regional actors sharing a past history of backwardness, isolation, dependency and peripherality.

The key findings: contribution to the debates and open questions

a) path dependency and cooperative culture: building interregional cooperation in the shadow of the past

Evaluations launched by the European Commission on Community Initiative INTERREG show that in the first edition and in the early years of the following one, the programme was overall successful in more dynamic areas with previous traditions of cooperation, while results were much more limited in those areas lacking experience in

terms of economic exchanges and cooperative practices.[186] On the basis of this evidence, the Commission's Second Report on economic and social cohesion sketched a picture distinguishing three levels of cross-border cooperation taking place in INTERREG programmes:

1.   at its most basic, cross-border cooperation involves the enhancement of physical links, whether in the form of roads, rail, sea ports or airports (...) but a lack of real involvement by local and regional authorities was noted in the evaluations.
2.   more intensive cooperation is evident in the development of networks and partnership between organizations and institutions situated relatively close to each other, but which, since they are separated by a border, focus on other parts of their region or country instead.
3.   countries which have a long history of cooperation and INTERREG has built on this by forging even stronger links in certain areas of regional policy.
(Commission 2001a: 143)

The Report continues to relate the three types of cooperation to the territorial location where the programmes were implemented, noticing that levels of cooperation increase when one moves from Southern to Northern regions. The first type of cooperation, in fact, refers to Mediterranean countries, "which often lack experience of cooperation"; the second to cooperation between France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany (the EU's 'core'); the third to the Scandinavian countries, which share a longstanding and diffused tradition of cooperative practices (Commission 2001a: 143). As argued in the discussion of the social capital debate, these observations could be interpreted according to a culturalist view explaining present cooperation among regional and local actors in territorial development with reference to 'shadow of the past' mechanisms. This could indirectly lead to the argument that territories that do not share previous experience in terms of exchanges, trading, and the proactive engagement of local actors are not worthy strategies of territorial development building on those factors. Moreover, in its reports and informative leaflets the European Commission tends to emphasise those 'success stories' matching what it has codified as 'best practices', without sufficiently dealing with critical cases or appreciating slow improvements in the case of difficult starting conditions.

As seen in section III, part of the problems encountered by territorial actors involved in the first edition of INTERREG was related to several shortcomings of the initiative, progressively solved or improved in the following editions: the contradiction between the real means of the initiative and its declared aims, the short time lapse available for the actors to learn its logic, the great number of CIs contemporaneously

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[186] FERE (1996), LRDP (2003). Both evaluations were commissioned by the DG REGIO of the European Commission.

launched covering the specificity of its action, the vagueness of regulations relating to rules on evaluation and information, the limited assistance offered by Commission's services. This explains why several of the flaws that we have noticed in the case of the 'islands' programme (such as the dispersion of the small amount of funds in many actions, the lack of quantified objectives, the little attention in selection procedures, the substitution of failed measures with pre-existing projects with little cross-border impact), were faced by most of the other INTERREG programmes in the first edition (FERE 1996: 18, 19). Clearly, these problems were more easily overcome by regions boasting stronger institutional, economic, and infrastructural assets, or even vaunting traditions of cross-border exchanges; however, they represented a greater and perhaps crucial drawback for traditionally backward regions suffering from isolation and peripherality and used to relying on state aid for their development.

Nevertheless, the 'constructivist' approach to territorial development here adopted leads us to consider the role played by INTERREG as particularly important also in those latter regions that, as in the 'islands' programme, presented themselves as a 'least likely case' of interregional cooperation. In fact, despite its limitations, the first edition established the "reliability of the idea of cross-border cooperation": "INTERREG I has clarified, in all borders, the stakes and obstacles of cross-border cooperation", creating expectations and aspirations among backward and peripheral areas about their future (FERE 1996: 20, 21) and thus represented a point of departure unfolding a new path at their horizon.

b)   institutional change takes time: building interregional cooperation in the shadow of the future

Also in the case of the INTERREG 'islands' programme, similarly to that of other Southern regions, official evaluations concluded that the outcomes of the Corso-Sardinian programme were 'limited' (LRDP 2003: 25, 26). However, as argued from the theoretical perspective adopted, the picture changes when regional response to institutional change is analysed a longer time-frame: on the one hand, in light of its distance from the prevailing paradigm organizing the socio-institutional context of the two regions (as seen in section II); on the other hand following the story of the three editions of the INTERREG 'islands' programme, looking not only for success stories but also explaining failures. In fact, it is important to be able to learn not just from policy success but also from policy failure, and thus to confront outcomes with an

analysis of the contextual obstacles of the actors managing and implementing the policy.

From this longer time-frame adopted by the analysis, it has been possible to appreciate the gradual but constant shift of the two regions towards the adoption of the 'European model' proposed by the policy. Until the first years of INTERREG II the strategy adopted by the two regions in implementing the programme seemed to draw close to a type of 'adaptation response', trying to reduce internal changes to the minimum extent possible in order to meet the formal requirements of the programme. There were actually efforts to launch initiatives aiming at the new goal of interregional cooperation (notably with the failed initiative of the airline); however, they followed separate paths in the planning and management of the regional administrations, who continued to follow the logic of their respective 'national model'. This was also because of the strong limitations imposed on an autonomous action of the Corsican partner in the policy by the gatekeeping role played by state services on the island.

However, since the end of the INTERREG II edition, and even more noticeably since the launching of INTERREG III, we could register a shift of regional administrations towards the rules and values prescribed by the policy, both in the vocabulary but also in the logic of action adopted. This shift towards a 'learning type of response' was not without reserves, neither was it always consistent; however, as seen, it marked a sharp departure from the 'national model'. Crucial in leading the regions to learn the logic proposed by the 'EU model', besides the incentives to cooperation already offered by the first INTERREG edition, have been: the high *credit of trust* offered by the Commission to the regions, fully legitimised as the main referent for the development of their territories in the programme (also in the Corsican case); the *time factor*, that is, the reiteration of the policy through several editions offering regional partners a medium–long time perspective, allowing them to seize the benefits of interregional cooperation; the choice of the Commission to use *framing integration* – that is, a process of implementation of the 'EU model' proposed by INTERREG proceeding through flexible mechanisms, able to adapt to the specific features of the institutional contexts; the insistence of the Commission on the use of *network structures* for the common management and planning of the policy process leading the regional partners to consider the development of the cross-border area as a collective endeavour.

The idea of realising the 'area-based' approach proposed by INTERREG through a common management and planning among the regions involved had been suggested by the Commission since the first launch of INTERREG. Consequently, within the cross-

border programmes vaunting traditions of territorial exchanges, interregional partnerships were organized since the first edition according to formal or informal network structures (FERE 1996: 20). Conversely, in those regions lacking these traditions, the setting of common structures received a decisive drive from the more 'constructivist' approach to institutional building adopted by the Commission in a second phase of the policy's implementation, traceable from the last years of the second edition. In fact, once it became officially recognised that the main feature of CIs was that of bringing 'institutional rather than economic added value', the Commission started to focus on the mechanism stimulating the achievement of those 'softer' outcomes of cooperation. Thus, it defined more demanding requirements on the teamwork of the cross-border partnership: from the common planning of integrated strategies to updated financial monitoring and evaluation of the programme as a whole.

From this view, we can conclude that our case confirms the hypothesis that cooperative behaviour does not only derive from 'shadow of the past' mechanisms, but can also be enhanced from the establishment of specific social frames used as mechanisms of coordination of individual actors' beliefs and casting a 'shadow of the future' over their interaction. In making use of this kind of frames to promote cooperation among backward regional actors belonging to different nation states, INTERREG has empowered them to discern new prospects, turning from their past of dependency and peripherality. A further hypothesis suggested by this evidence, which would deserve further investigation, is that the prevalence of the individualistic component of socio-cultural traditions in the islands and its relation with the persistence of paths of dependency and backwardness, was nurtured by attributes of the 'national model' grounding previous regional policies in the regions.

c)   the role of EU Regional Policy within the process of European integration

The conclusion of the previous paragraph also leads us to a reflection on the role of EU Regional Policy. Given its increased relevance in the share of the EU's budget since the 1988 reform of the Structural Funds, greater attention was paid to assessing the outcomes of Regional Policy in terms of meeting the cohesion objective, both to justify the proper use of citizens' resources and improve its effectiveness. However, also depending on the methodology used, interpretations of the contribution of the policy vary broadly both with reference to the cohesion objective and to the wider process of European integration. On the one side there are those authors arguing that unbalances among regions and MSs of the EU are still growing, exacerbated both by enlargements

and a process of integration further favouring regions in the EU core ('divergence thesis'), and that EU Regional Policy is 'paying off' disadvantaged and peripheral regions (Fagerberg e Verspagen 1996; Martin 2000; Boldrin and Canova 2001; Ederveen *et al.* 2002). On the opposite side, those that claim that regional economies in the EU are – slowly or quickly – catching up ('convergence thesis') but, because cumulative effects within an imperfect functioning of market can produce divergence, EU Regional Policy plays an important role in promoting the catching up of disadvantaged regions (Bradley *et al.* 1995; Mauro and Spilimbergo 2001; Viesti and Prota 2004; Leonardi 2005).

It is clearly beyond the scope of this thesis to contribute directly to this complex issue, mainly based on the measurement of convergence through the analysis of the evolution in time of the main socio-economic indicators. However, the thesis indirectly adds to the debate further elements of reflection on the role of EU Regional Policy within the process of EU integration considering its contribution to the institutionalisation of the 'EU model'. In fact, our analysis of INTERREG confirms the way in which EU Regional Policy, since its 1988 reform, has promoted in the regions throughout its territory common rules, regulations, means and values, despite their broad variations in socio-economic conditions and institutional settings. In enhancing processes of institutional and capacity building and diffusing a culture of cooperation extended to different territorial levels, EU Regional Policy reinforces the visibility of the subnational layer where it was weaker or nonexistent and legitimises its role as decision-maker, responsible for its territorial development. More importantly, this legitimisation is redefined according to an institutional pattern of multilevel governance, allowing for a new articulation of centre-periphery relations in cooperative – rather than mutually antagonistic – terms.

As shown in the second section in the case of Corsica and Sardinia, within the 'national model', regional policies were mostly based on state-led, 'top-down', sectoral interventions revealing central mistrust and pessimism over the potential of the socio-cultural and institutional resources of the regions that, even when formally authorised were practically denied policy-making capabilities as politically autonomous actors. The unfruitful struggle and debate between the central governments and the island regions over regional autonomy was essentially played out by both sides as a 'zero sum' game – for which gaining autonomy for the latter only meant a loss of sovereignty for the former – or was otherwise resolved through an increase in the disbursement of state funds to the regions. Conversely, the European regionalisation allows territorial actors

to redefine their identities in an inclusive way rather than according to a defensive localism attempting "to do without the state" (Bagnasco 2003: 120), or even to go against it: the reorganization of the regional and local levels is rather declined as an attempt to redefine spatial reorganizations adaptive to new conditions in the globalization era. From this view, regional and local authorities are recognised as crucial actors bringing added value to the definition of coordinated developmental processes, seen as a collective endeavour within the wider undertaking of EU integration.

In the case of INTERREG, the pattern of multilevel governance was further extended following a transnational approach to the EU's territorial development. This initiative was particularly relevant for those regions that – as in our case study – for reasons often linked to their specific geo-morphological conditions or ethnic origins, owned a story of backward development and peripherality within their national context. In fact, the consideration of a 'denationalised' organization of space and power offers peripheral regions the possibility to review the location of their territories, inserting them within the global context through efficient economic synergies. However, our analysis of the 'islands' INTERREG has shown how, with reference to this point, the potentials of the programme were severely limited by a range of contextual factors, usually not taken into consideration by evaluations. Only recently, reports on INTERREG have started to acknowledge the need to more fully take into consideration the different contextual factors characterising the programmes, such as the level of openness of borders, the infrastructural supply and the socio-economic conditions of the regions, their possibilities in terms of additional funding sources from the private sector, besides their institutional status in terms of self-government (INTERACT 2005: 127, 134). Thus, although INTERREG proved to be effective in contributing to the promotion of 'softer factors' enhancing developmental processes also in backward regions, successfully involved in cooperative processes of institutional and capacity building, its contribution to the objective of territorial cohesion was limited in the 'islands' case by obstacles of a more structural nature. Those obstacles (such as the weakness of the market and the infrastructural endowment in the regions, worsened by the insularity status and the peripherality of the Western-Mediterranean area *vis à vis* continental Europe) would in fact need a wider EU strategy promoting a balanced spatial development of its territory as a whole, in order to be effectively tackled.

The relevance of the action carried out by INTERREG was recognised by the Commission with the introduction of territorial cooperation as one of the three priorities

of the new EU Regional Policy (2007–13), although the one with the poorest endowment fund. However, without a wider coordination of all EU policies according to a spatial sustainable development strategy it is likely that there will continue to be limitations to the effectiveness of EU Regional Policy in terms of enhancing territorial cohesion in the European territory, and thus to meeting one of the main declared objectives of the process of European integration.

d) from European integration to Europeanisation and return

A final set of reflections I want to make refers to the contribution of the thesis to the debate on Europeanisation. Through its emphasis on cooperation and territorial integration in areas defined beyond the limits of national borders, INTERREG has strengthened the role of regions in patterns of multilevel governance, orienting their action towards the achievement of a harmonious development of the EU territory as a whole. A *first point* is that this consideration confirms, within the debate on European studies, the relevance of EU policies based on multilevel governance as a means of institutional change and further European integration. The flexibility of structures of multilevel governance allows for a reduction in time and coordination constraints needed by the traditional inter-governmental processes:

Constitutional reforms in response to EU treaty revisions are few and far between. But many actors that operate in national and subnational institutions are exposed to European governing concepts and quite a few of them are engaged in Community procedures. They may constitute a far more effective transmission belt for institutional development than parliaments and government enacting institutional revisions.
(Kohler-Koch 2002: 6)

However, the relevance of adopting MLG structures, as argued, does not only refer to their organizational effectiveness, but also to their correspondence with an ideal of participatory and deliberative democracy. From this view the greater regionalisation promoted though MLG structures can be considered as a partial response to the issue of democratic deficit in the EU, in that by granting regional and local representatives a greater involvement in the decisional processes affecting their territories it contributes to bringing Europe nearer to the life of its citizens.

Today, as said, the organization of territory and power proposed by INTERREG represents one of the three main objectives of EU Regional Policy, as well as one of the tenets inspiring the new Neighbouring and Partnership Policy; however fifteen years ago it would have been difficult to formalise its role within a Regional Policy still mainly managed through national channels. Like other CIs, INTERREG was thought of

as an experimental action, whose effectiveness and validity of objectives had to be tested and revised in due course. Thus my *second point* refers to the fact that the reforming role played by those looser mechanisms of framing integration within the process of European integration does not have to be underestimated. In fact they respond to the need of the EU to prepare the ground for innovative 'post-national' policies that, to be mainstreamed, need greater support in order to overcome the resistance of the actors to revise the old national logic legitimised in the social context within which they are embedded, or greater flexibility to accommodate the variety of different starting conditions. The role of these mechanisms becomes particularly important in the case of a process of European integration where policies have to be defined, coordinated and implemented throughout an 'ever-enlarging' European territory. In the third section we have seen how regional politicians in Corsica used INTERREG as a platform to strengthen their position and visibility both at home and at European level. Gradually the CTC – initially attached to the prefectural services – was increasingly involved in the direct management of the programme, becoming by the 3rd edition the only management and payment authority on the French side. These changes within INTERREG anticipated the reform of Corsican laws on decentralisation, effective since January 2002, as well as provisions for the management of SFs in other French regions.[187]

At its launch, INTERREG did not have a clearly focussed strategy and its aims and methods were gradually refined by the Commission, mainly through two different paths: on the one hand, debates were launched among working groups at different territorial levels reflecting on the limits of EU Regional Policy in achieving cohesion and defining innovative solutions to overcome them; on the other hand, possible solutions were tested on the ground, through the direct involvement of regional actors and their contribution in suggesting adjustments to make policies more effective and devising best practices emerging from policy implementation. Our analysis could consider this double direction in the process of institutional change between policy implementation and regional demands because of its refusal of simple models of causation in explaining processes of institutional change. Thus a *third point* that can be strengthened by the findings is that *Europeanisation is a complex process made of a multiplicity of coevolving factors*, although it can clearly be 'decomposed' in its parts or

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[187] Initially the prefects acted as the management and payment authority of Structural Funds. Practical difficulties in the implementation process later led the government to grant a partial delegated management role to the regions (acting under the prefect's supervision), and experimented in 2003 with a direct transfer of responsibilities in management to the Alsace region, see CoR (2004), p.331.

directions for analytical purposes. We have seen, for instance, how the lobbying of the island regions for the recognition of their territorial handicaps had contributed to the launching of the programme by the Commission. The implementation of the programme, however, gradually changed the approach of both sides to the issue: on the one side, the regions learned to define their territorial identity and claims in an inclusive way, rather than according to a individualistic logic led by defensive localism; on the other side, the revised strategy of the islands' lobby brought the Commission to formally recognise the disadvantages of regions having specific territorial features (such as islands or mountain areas) in developmental processes.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have analysed the impact of the institutional change promoted since the 1990s by INTERREG, an innovative EU regional policy based on cross-border policy networks, in two regional administrations lacking traditions of cooperation and sharing a model of development dependent on their respective central governments. Despite the fact that the focus of our research was on the in-depth analysis of change in the case of two island regions, I believe that its findings – as shown in this final chapter – may offer material of reflection for wider debates at theoretical and empirical levels involved in the complex research field of Europeanisation.

Our hypothesis, holding that cooperative behaviour can be enhanced by the setting of specific structures of network governance, was fundamentally supported by the findings. Although the 'islands' programme presented itself as a 'least likely' case to test the success of INTERREG, the use of cooperative networks for the common administration of the policy has set in motion interactive learning processes leading the actors to conform with a model distributing authority and policy-making across multiple levels of government extending beyond national borders.

Several factors emerge as having played a major contribution in persuading regional actors to shift from the previous institutional setting to the new 'EU model': the credit of trust given to regional actors by the European Commission, gradually empowering them to take responsibility over developmental strategies for their territory through processes of capacity and institutional building; the longer time-frame perspective of the regional partnership, since the programme was continued for three subsequent editions; the use of flexible mechanisms of integration, allowing for gradual adaptation of the different institutional contexts to the proposed 'EU model'.

However, the potentials of interregional cross-border cooperation in terms of enhancing the objective of territorial cohesion appears severely limited by the persistent peripherality of the island regions, as well as their wider territorial setting (the Western-Mediterranean) both at the national level and within an enlarged EU. This limitation seems to suggest that in order to achieve further cohesion of the EU territory, Regional Policy should be coordinated with other EU policies having a relevant impact on territory by a wide-ranging European spatial and sustainable development strategy.

Annexes

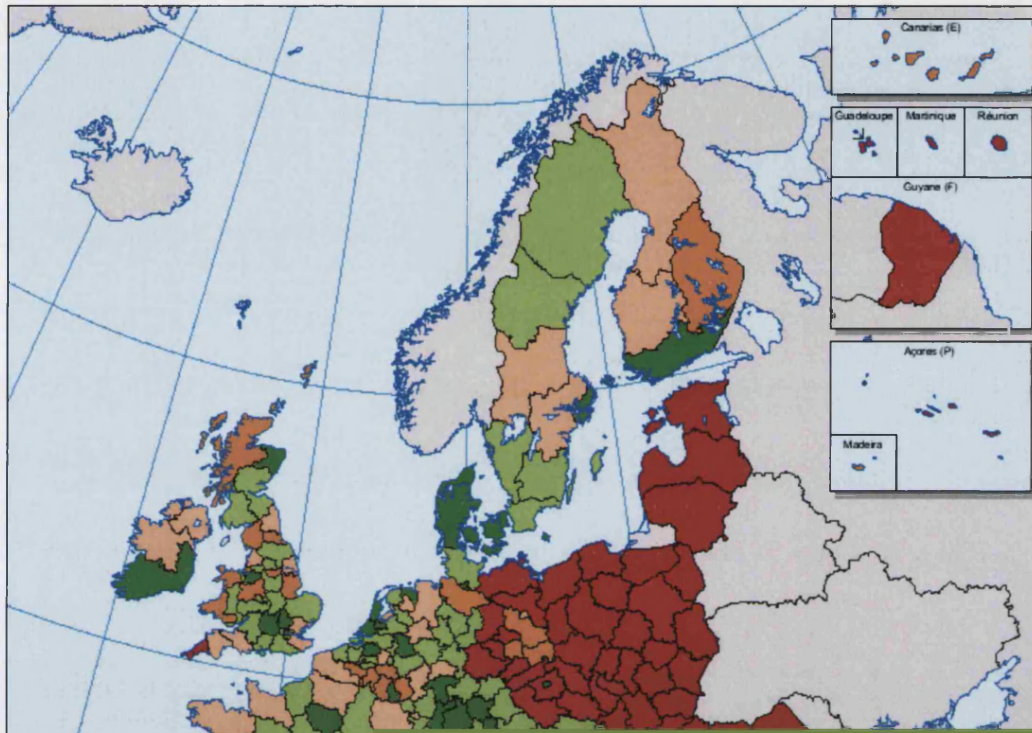fig.a.1 - The island regions of Corsica and Sardinia:
a view from the past

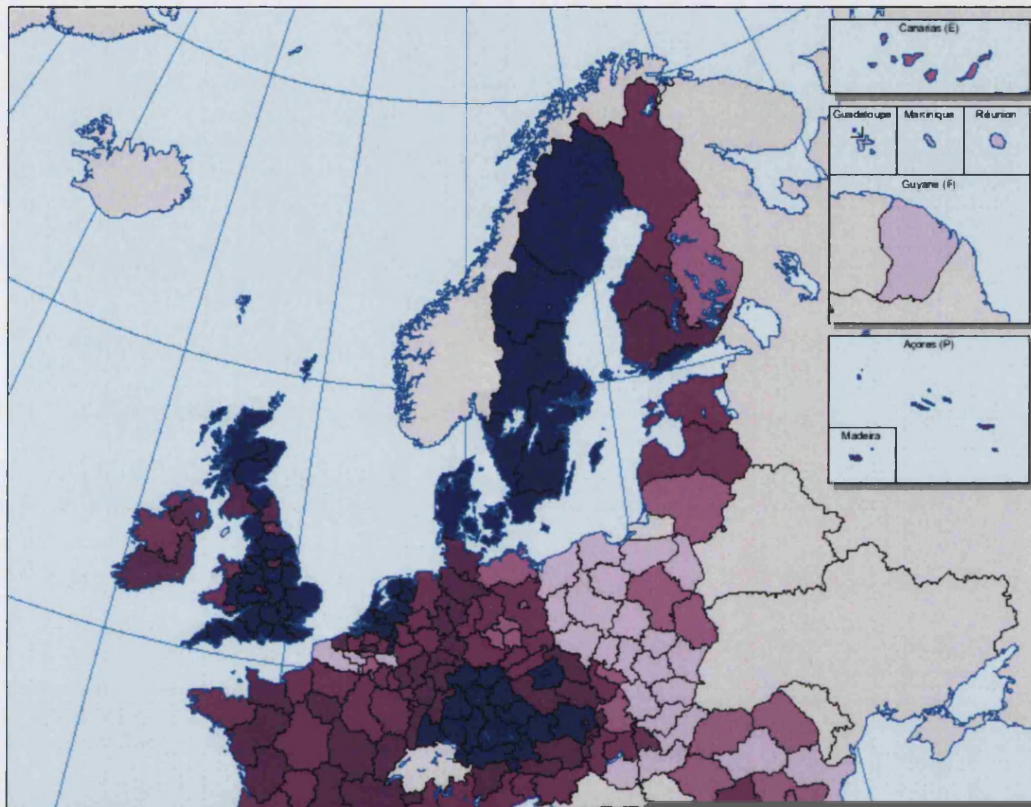fig.a.2 - The island regions of Corsica and Sardinia:
a view from space
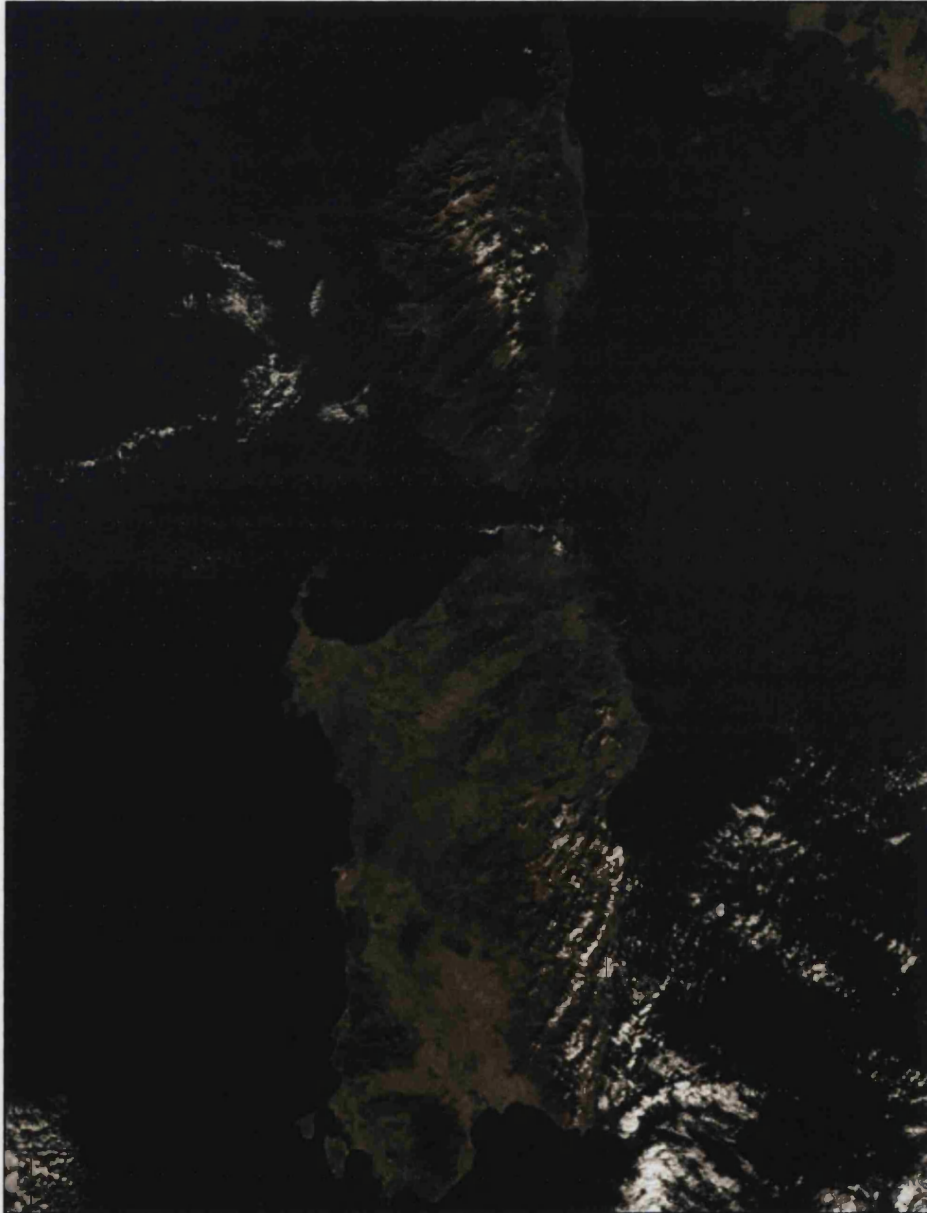
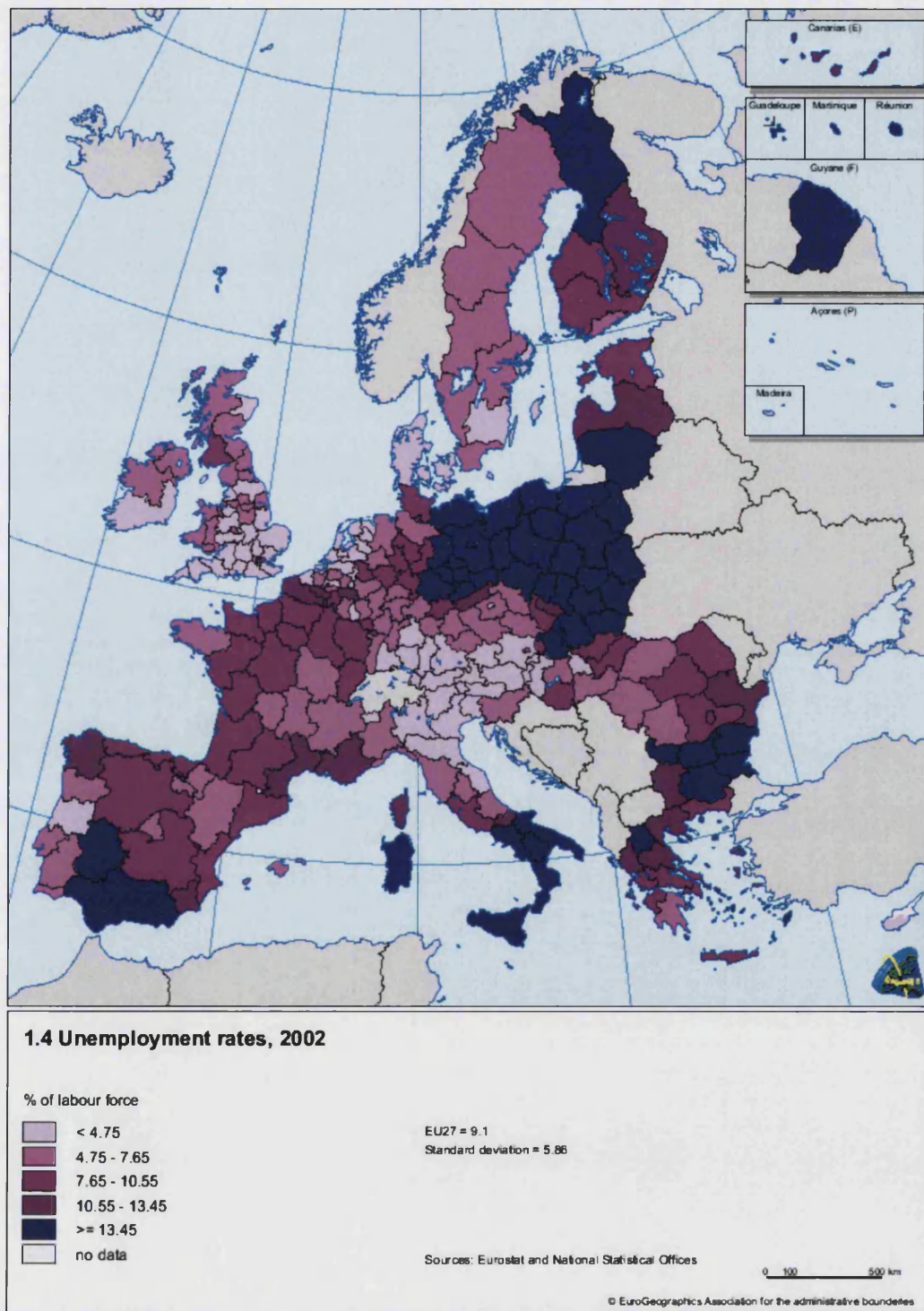

[source: Liam Gumley (2001), *http://www.ssec.wisc.edu*]

**fig.a.3 - The island regions of Corsica and Sardinia:
a view from Europe (GDP per head)**

fig.a.4 - The island regions of Corsica and Sardinia:
a view from Europe (employment rates)

fig.a.5 - The island regions of Corsica and Sardinia:
a view from Europe (unemployment rates)

1.4 Unemployment rates, 2002

% of labour force

	< 4.75
	4.75 - 7.65
	7.65 - 10.55
	10.55 - 13.45
	>= 13.45
	no data

EU27 = 9.1
Standard deviation = 5.86

Sources: Eurostat and National Statistical Offices

0   100   500 km

© EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries

[source: Commission (2004), p.21]

**fig.a.6 – The island regions of Corsica and Sardinia: a view from INTERREG
(IIIA: the 'islands' programme; IIIB: the Western-Mediterranean programme)**
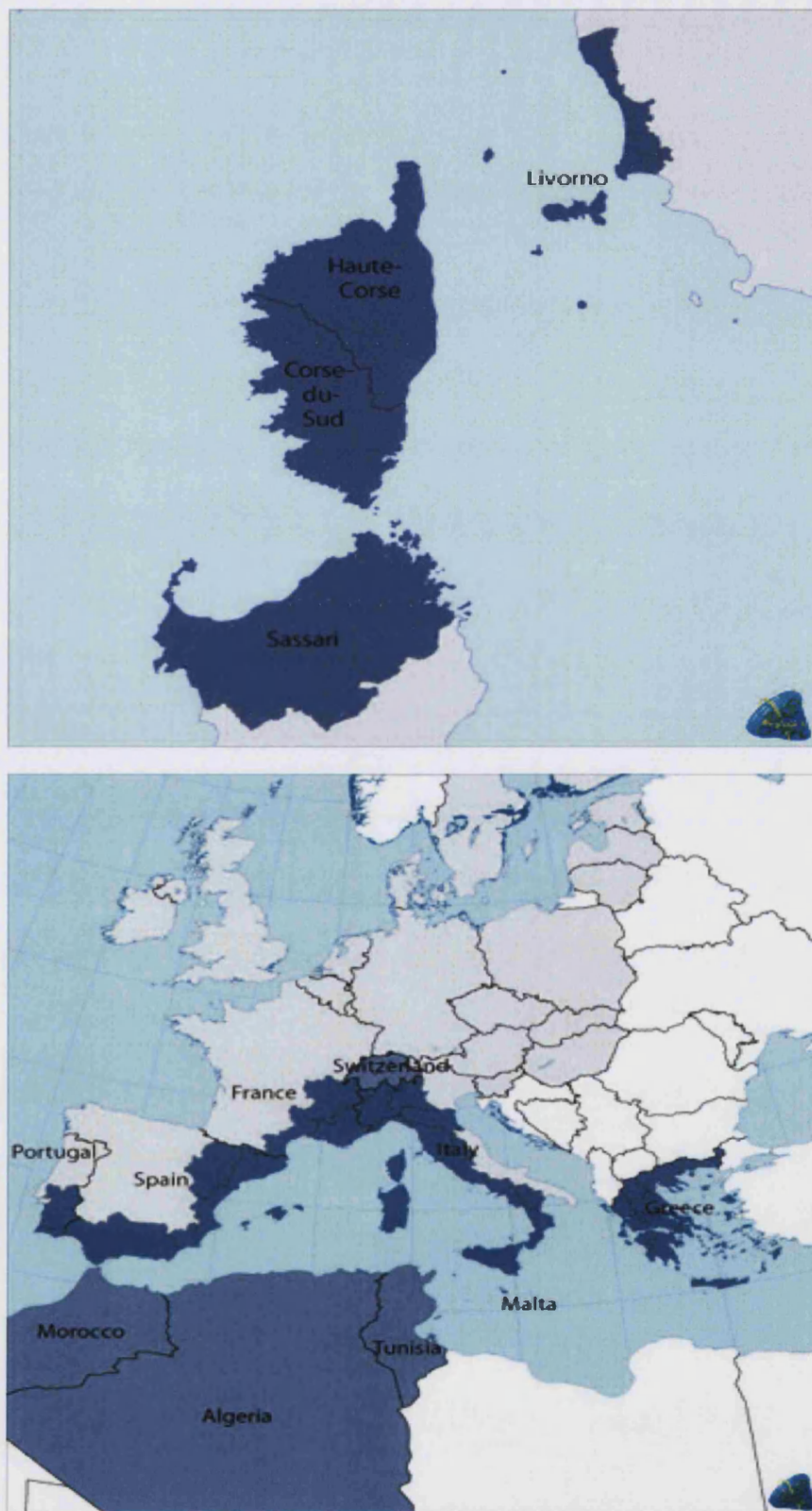
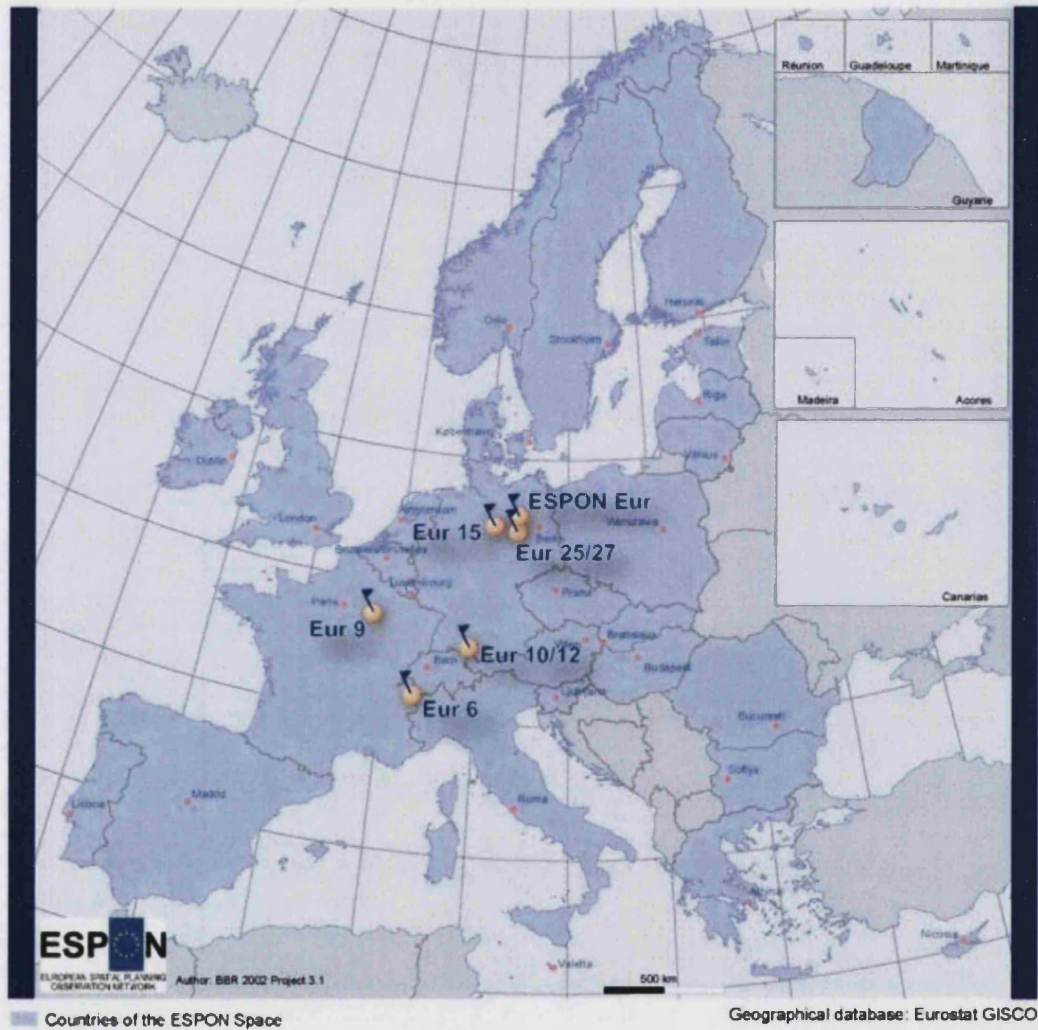**fig.a.7 - The island regions of Corsica and Sardinia:**
a view from Europe (distance from the centroid)

The Union's Moving Centroid

[source:ESPON, *www.espon.lu*]

List of interviews

People who have directly managed the 'islands' programme
(in-depth interviews followed up from winter 2000 to summer 2005):

European Commission (DG REGIO, Brussels):
Claudio CARUSO, Fausta CORDA, Roberto DANEO, Frederique LORENZI, Mario GARILLI SEREGNI, Filippo TURLI;

Ministero delle Infrastrutture e dei Trasporti (Office for EU programmes and initiatives, Rome):
Clara COLLARILE, Francesco GAETA, Claudio GRAMACCIONI;

Regione Autonoma della Sardegna
Centro Regionale di Programmazione, Cagliari:
Salvatore DESOGUS, Antonio SASSU, Elisabetta SCHIRRU, Franco VENTRONI;
Province of Sassari (INTERREG Office, Sassari):
Marco Dario CHERCHi;

Prefecture de Corse (Secretariat General pour les affaires de Corse-SGAC, Ajaccio):
Jean Marie OLIVIER, Jean Camille PIETRI, Letizia SALINI, Monia SANNA;

Collectivité Territoriale Corse (CTC), (Decentralised Cooperation Unit, Ajaccio):
Carine BALLI, Norbert PANCRAZI, Dominique PIAZZA D'OLMO, Monia SANNA; Evelyn STROMBONI.

Other people involved in the implementation of INTERREG programmes on the islands
(brief interviews linked to specific aspects of the initiative):

Olga Luisa ANGHELAKIS (EC, DG REGIO); Bruno ASILI (RAS, CRP); Cristina CASULA (RAS; EU unit); Bianca BIANCO (RAS, EU office in Brussels); Nicola CORRIA (Province of Nuoro); Fabio CROCCOLO (Min. Infrastrutture e Trasporti, MEDOCC unit); Maria Assunta DESSI (University of Cagliari); Michela FARINA (RAS, EU unit); Paolo FOIS (University of Sassari); Thierry GARCIA (University of Corte); Catherine ISTRIA (CTC, EU office in Brussels); Alexandre KAMAROTOS (Joint Technical Secretariat in Rome, MEDOCC); Mario LEONI (RAS, EU unit); Andrea MAIRATE (EC, DG REGIO); Romano MAMBRINI (Director of 'Insuleur', Cagliari); Gavino PISCHEDDA (RAS, CRP); Graziella PISU (RAS, CRP); Michel ROMBALDI (CTC, CESC); Paolo SAU (RAS, Ministry for local authorities).

N.B. Translations of the interviews from French or Italian into English are author's.

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