

Territorial intelligence and the three components of territorial governance

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Abstract:

Globalization processes, on the one hand, and political decentralization, on the other, have increased the complexity of decision making processes on a territory, and have demanded updating the three basic components of territorial governance: cognitive, i.e., the way of thinking and understanding the territory and, as a result, territorial development; socio-political, i.e. the way in which abilities, responsibilities and resources are negotiated in the new decentralized political map; and technological-organizational, that is, the networks of actors and tools to act on the territory. This communication considers that the emergence of the concept of territorial intelligence takes place in parallel with these transformations in the different dimensions of territorial governance in the transition from the "information society" to the "knowledge society". In the first section the concept of territorial governance is presented. Its three main components – cognitive, socio-political, and organizational-technological – are presented in the second section. The third section analyses the way in which these three components of territorial governance are affected by the characteristics of the knowledge society. As a conclusion, in the fourth section it is claimed that the development of territorial intelligence is a consequence of the transformations undergone by the different dimensions of territorial governance in a context of globalization and political decentralization in the current knowledge society.

Keywords:

Territorial intelligence, territorial governance, knowledge-based society.

I. The concept of territorial governance

The economic crises of the 70s and 80s in the last century called into question the ability of nation states to provide effective answers to the economic and social problems these crises were causing. During the same period, analyses on the limitation of fossil fuel reserves and the environmental impact of growth called into question the western economic model itself, in a scenario where less industrialised countries were struggling to imitate it. The sustainability of the growth model shifted the focus a debate which had centred on the fight against poverty during the 70s. Simultaneously, the remarkable increase in capital flows and direct investments in foreign countries, stimulated by the development of the new information and communication technologies, intensified economic transnational integration, favouring what has been later called economic "globalization". Neither Keynesian policies nor the neo-liberal alternative managed to provide an escape from economic stagnation, high unemployment rates and the growing volume of people and territories excluded from the new economic growth model within the context of globalization. All this translated into a political crisis of legitimacy for national status and a reconfiguration of those spaces in which power was exerted. The consequences are produced in two directions: upward, in an attempt to regulate more and more globalized flows, supranational decision making structures are reinforced (the European Union is a paradigmatic example, but also the G7-G8, Trade Negotiations, etc.); downward, producing the emer-

gence or resurgence of territorial identities which are regional or local in character in an attempt by regional and local actors operating in these spaces to design their own strategies to find a way out of the crisis.

In this downward direction, the answer to this crisis of legitimacy takes the form of the decentralising processes of state power, which present two distinct dimensions. The first of these, the territorial dimension, confers greater autonomy on regional and local levels for management (decentralisation) or definition of public policies (transfer of responsibilities), accompanied on occasions by the requirement of some degree of financial co-responsibility. The second, the institutional dimension, provides greater political space for private actors, both in the decision-making processes (negotiation) and in their participation in the provision of goods and services (delegation). The strengthening experienced by civil society and particularly the resurgence of organisations in the third sector during the crisis years are to be interpreted in this context.

Greater consciousness of mutual dependence and of the need for cooperation among multiple actors and multiple levels to face serious social and economic problems has been translated into greater support for negotiation as a method in decision-making processes relating to territory. From the concept of government, understood simultaneously as an exclusive agent and as the principal result of a "top-down" decision-making process, we pass to the idea of "governance"¹ which makes reference to the need for governments to make room for other agents in the decision-making processes and to the need for all levels and areas of governments to be involved in these processes. All this results in horizontal cooperation (among different agents and areas of government) and vertical cooperation (among different levels) which is much more widespread (and also confused) than is produced in the traditional scheme. The result of this greater complexity is a reduction in the regulatory role of the state, with the network of projects by various territorial actors acquiring greater importance.

Coherent with this view, the concept of territory which is beginning to prevail in the political and academic media transcends the mere geographical or administrative space to become a space for institutional proximity, which acts as a reference for the actors' projects and visions of the future. These projects transform the territory, which is presented as a dynamic reality permanently in progress, continually reaffirming and preserving its identity in the face of its physical, political, economic and cultural surroundings, with which it finds itself in eternal interaction.

In this conception, territory is defined, "as an intersection of networks" (physical, human, formal, informal) of strategies and interdependencies among members who are interlinked, a place for production, for negotiation aimed at sharing a common future. The system is based on the geographical proximity of its actors, but also by the shared dynamic that reflects them, the actions that result from these relations, the rules, norms and principles that appear together (Leloup, Moyart and Pecqueur, 2004, p. 7). Territory appears as a permanent social construct in constant adaptation², as a specialised system of actors with a variable strategic capacity margin for its self-production. This capacity does not result exclusively from politics or the economy, but from a systemic behaviour of organised territory.

In this context, economic and social development comes to be understood as a virtuous "mix" of the self-organisational capacity of the whole social organisation³, on the one hand, and of the efficiency of "intervention engineering in the territory", on the other (Boisier, 1997, p. 43).

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1. An idea inherited from the approaches of the institutionalist economy of the 1970s, which referred to the development of reconciliation mechanisms and the coordination of actors who are institutionally different in nature in order to achieve economic efficacy and efficiency and which converge with the analysis which was being carried out at the same time by the political sciences, in relation to the problems of governability which appear in modern democratic states, in proportion with the growth of their structural and institutional complexity and which is accentuated by the processes of globalisation (Jáuregui, 2000).
 2. "On prend donc ici le parti de considérer le territoire (qui est le résultat) ou la territorialisation (qui est le processus) comme une forme particulière de coordination par la création de groupe. Cette forme de coordination est à l'origine d'une modalité particulière de création de valeur et d'émergence de ressources nouvelles ou latentes. Ces 'ressources territoriales spécifiques' sont plurielles et débordent dans de nombreux cas la seule sphère productive" (Leloup, Moyart and Pecqueur, 2004, p. 7).
 3. During the nineteen-sixties, A. O. Hirschman had noted that the development processes of specific territories do not depend so much on the volume of resources available (capital, natural, human) as on the degree to which they are used. Hence these processes depend to a large extent on the ability (and also on the discretion) of the various actors (public and private) with regard to the mobilisation of these resources (Meldolesi, 1997, p. 108 *et seq.*). As Perroux would say, the pro-

It is precisely in this confluence where the concept of territorial governance acquires full meaning and significance, alluding to the set of complex processes through which decisions are made regarding urban or territorial development and which shape the “intervention engineering in the territory”. In these processes local actors are involved alongside national and global actors present in the territory, whether these are public or private, commercial or social. The relationships between the actors include both relations that are formal and official in nature and informal relations regulated by a local political culture. The participation of multiple actors in territorial development decisions can vary in balance and synergy, based on the actors’ relative powers, and on the presence or absence of common goals (Bervejillo, 1998, p. 7).

In this context, the principal challenge faced by the architects of territorial governance is that of making full use of all the potentiality that present-day society offers to place it at the service of sustainable territorial development and making sure that greater institutional complexity does not hinder but rather stimulates the exercise of democracy.

This leaves public authorities with the difficult challenge of making the processes which make up territorial governance at least contribute to a double objective: on one hand, making sure that the solutions adopted mobilise the resources effectively, by providing relevant answers to territorial needs, both in the short and long terms; on the other hand, ensuring that the processes by means of which the solutions are proposed, debated and finally accepted contribute to the development of democracy, in a more complex context in which the traditional systems of representative democracy prove insufficient.

Definitively, territorial governance is presented with the challenge of seeing that “territorial engineering” takes advantage of and effectively stimulates the “organisational capacity of the whole of the social organisation” in order to manage to provide appropriate answers to the democratically expressed needs of the citizens.

II. Components of territorial governance

Already at the end of the 1990s it could be glimpsed that in order to confront these challenges to territorial governance it was necessary to carry out significant transformations in at least three dimensions: the cognitive, socio-political and technological-organisational (Bervejillo, 1998).

On the cognitive plane, the transformation referred to the need to revise the very concept of territory as well as the approaches used in analysis of territorial transformations. On the socio-political plane, the need to set up new institutional frameworks to promote democratic coordination of actors and their projects on territory was raised. Finally, on the technological-organisational plane, the need was raised to have available new technological and organisational tools for analysis, monitoring, management and communication on territory (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Dimensions and new components required for territorial governance

Dimension	Components
Cognitive	Renovation of the paradigms for thinking out territorial development. Renovation of substantive theories on territorial development. Production of new empirical knowledge about contemporary territorial transformations.
Socio-political	New forms of vertical and horizontal coordination. New project territories. Territorial forecast and new collective projects.
Technological Organisational	New agencies and institutional networks for territorial management. New tool kit for analysis, monitoring and territorial communication.

Source : Bervejillo, 1998.

tagonists will be the actors and not the factors, since it is the former who mobilise the latter and not vice versa. It is the former who connect the various material and mental structures through their activity and the latter which, on the basis of these interactions, can give rise to the emergence of new structures that aid and generate development (Perroux, 1984).

Today, a decade later, the decentralising processes which convert territories into the arena of governance have become universal, and these transformations continue on course, but basic contact with the actual experiences that are currently being carried out anywhere in the field of local, social or community development within the European Union reveals that at present, neither knowledge of territory, nor territorial institutional fabrics, nor the tools used for analysis and territorial management appear to be up to the challenges. On occasions, more than governance, we could talk of territorial "misgovernance" especially taking into account the miscoordinations and the inefficiency in assigning resources applied to territorial development.

We state that we live in the knowledge society, however, the strategic knowledge institutional decision-makers have available to them and, especially the actors who operate directly in the field carrying out their individual or joint territorial projects, continues to be quite wanting. In spite of the scientific and technological advances and despite the amount of energy used in territorial analysis, territorial actors still do not have the type of knowledge available to them to provide them with comprehensive representations of the territory's position in the global context. This prevents them forming a critical vision of the future to reveal their different opportunities for action.

Socio-political renovation, according to analyses performed by the OECD (2005), is also proving very complex. Although decentralisation processes are presented in principle as indispensable institutional transformation for socio-economic development and as a reinforcing factor for democracy, their effects do not prove to be automatic. As far as the first point is concerned, economic efficacy and efficiency, decentralisation in itself is not spontaneously producing an increase in administrative flexibility, or greater concentration on the most pressing problems, nor, consequently, the proposal of more pragmatic solutions. Everything seems to depend in each context on the degree of accuracy in the comprehensive diagnostic of territorial problems and on the ability of the politicians in charge to coordinate all the actions in the territory, bringing coherence to global action.

As to whether they favour the development of democracy, the empirical evidence is not conclusive. In principle decentralisation appears to give rise to more horizontal, participatory relationships and to favour some down-top processes by empowering the most disadvantaged local groups and the development of public deliberation processes. But they are still modest effects and much more significant on a municipal level than on a regional level⁴. The causal link between decentralisation and democratisation appears tenuous in the majority of studies carried out. In reality this depends on the process being accompanied by policies which reinforce compliance with laws, strengthen the development of civil society, ensure equitable investment of resources and which generate effective coordination among levels of government (Tulchin and Selee, 2004), all this by assigning responsibilities among the different levels and agents who are to receive the decentralised power based on the functions, abilities and resources of each actor.

To sum up, decentralisation being translated into more suitable solutions for the needs of sustainable territorial development, while at the same time strengthening democracy, depends on the actual form adopted by the processes involved in territorial governance in each case. These processes are affected by a number of factors, among which can be mentioned the territory's position and form of involvement in the global economic and political context; the institutional fabric made up by the formal and informal networks in which the actors from different levels and sectors whose action affects the territory interact; the individual responsibilities, abilities and preferences of these actors, as well as the characteristics of the forums where these actors meet and the methods they use to debate and cooperate, especially as regards the processes of production and exchange of information relating to the territory.

From the above it can be deduced that the success of the socio-political component depends to a significant extent on the capacity the territory has to produce a comprehensive, forward-looking vision of the territory's dynamic in the global context (with new paradigms, theories and cognitive component models), but also on the territory's capacity to create institutional agencies and networks

4. In this sense it should be stated that the decentralised state is a tapestry of variable configurations, just like the centralised state. The specific crystallisation of power and influence relations among local actors will depend not only on the resources and the local actors' ability in negotiation, but also on the place the local government occupies in a specific institutional space delimited by central-peripheral relationships, or if preferred, the local system of government where they operate (Ramírez-Pérez, Navarro-Yáñez and Clark, 2004).

for territorial management such as “territorial partnerships”⁵ and new coordination and communication tools which will allow the coherence of strategies and projects in time to be maintained (technological and organisational component).

III. Territorial governance in the context of the knowledge society

One fact of paramount importance that has not been mentioned more than superficially up until now is that all this discussion of governance is produced in the context of the emergence of what is being called the “knowledge society”⁶. In this globalized society, in which the cost of exchanging capital and goods has been reduced to an extraordinary degree, it is originality in the combination of the resources and technological and organisational innovation that confers the competitive advantage, with the result that knowledge, today more than ever, is presented as the principal productive factor, the generator of determinant economic value. Perhaps the most significant expression to summarise the role of knowledge in the world today is that attributed to M. Serres: “knowledge is now the infrastructure” (Lévy)

The knowledge society goes well beyond the concept of the information society. The latter is an instrument of knowledge, but not knowledge itself. The latter would be the result of the interpretation and critical analysis of the former and of the ability to draw useful conclusions, both for its practical application, and for living lives, which in A. Sen’s familiar expression “are worth living” (Sen, 1992). It is at this point that the concept of the knowledge society establishes a link with that of human development, with the twin facets of this understood: creation of life opportunities and development of the freedom of choice. Knowledge proves to be of paramount importance as much for one component as for the other. The information society refers to the technological; the knowledge society affects much wider social, ethical and political dimensions.

As Pierre Lévy explains (1994), the point is that the principal characteristic of knowledge societies is that we have recognised that knowledge is everywhere and intelligence is distributed universally (no one has all the knowledge and everyone has some): the knowledge society is conceived as a society which is nourished by diversity and ability. Lévy bases the concept of “collective intelligence” on this characteristic, explaining that we are not dealing with an intelligence which stems from interchangeable subjects in the way that an ant hill could be considered, but rather with an intelligence based on the knowledge of unique, exceptional individuals⁷.

Another distinctive feature of the knowledge society is that scientific and technological advances, increased by the stimulus of value production and the changing needs of modern societies, and amplified by feedback from new information and communication technologies, are causing the available knowledge to evolve very rapidly. As the process becomes universal, a larger and larger percentage of the population is becoming involved in the use and the production of new forms of knowledge, but not all people, groups, territories participate equally in these, nor is their knowledge considered of equal value. This produces differences (the cognitive gap) which reflect each group or territory’s degree of integration into this knowledge society based on its economic possibilities and level of education.

The report *Towards Knowledge Societies*, published by UNESCO in 2005, highlights the need for today’s societies to work to avoid exclusion or marginal participation of citizens in the production and use of knowledge. This organisation insists that the problem does not only mean facilitating access to infrastructures. It insists on providing basic education and training, developing cognitive abilities and establishing appropriate regulations with regard to access to the contents, but also and principally on

5. For specific experiences in this field see OECD (2004).

6. “The idea of the “knowledge society” was first used in 1969 by a university member, Peter Drucker, and in the 1990s it was entered into more deeply in a series of detailed studies published by researchers such as Robin Mansell or Nico Stehr. [This idea arose] at almost the same time as the concepts of “learning societies” and “lifelong learning for all”, which is not exactly a coincidence” (UNESCO, 2005, p. 61).

7. *L’intelligence collective n’est pas la fusion des intelligences individuelles dans une sorte de magma communautaire mais, au contraire, la mise en valeur et la relance mutuelle des singularités. Actuellement, non seulement les structures sociales organisent souvent l’ignorance sur les capacités des individus, reconnus par leurs seuls diplômes ou position sociale, mais encore elles bloquent les synergies transversales entre projets, ressources et compétences, elles inhibent les coopérations. Pourtant, la multiplication des intelligences les unes par les autres est la clef du succès économique. Ce serait également une des voies du renouveau de la démocratie. C’est, en définitive, le projet d’une société “intelligente partout”, plus efficace et vigoureuse qu’une société intelligemment dirigée. On passe du cogito cartésien au cogitamus” (Lévy, 1998).*

contributing to developing the capacity to generate new contents of knowledge. The latter is of paramount importance since people's abilities are not static, but dynamic, and it is a matter of favouring strategies in which people are protagonists in the changes in knowledge (bringing into play their capacities for diversity, participating in the building of collective knowledge) and not mere adapters of a state of global knowledge, which in any case is vast and permanently evolving.

This knowledge society is the breeding ground in which those transformations which affect the components (cognitive, socio-political, technological-organisational) of development of territorial governance are produced. And it is precisely with regard to this last point, the need to promote the ability of individuals to be protagonists in the creation and evolution of knowledge, which permits the coordination of these three components, pointing them towards a single concept, namely: territorial intelligence.

IV. Territorial intelligence as linking element of the three components of territorial governance

The concept of territorial intelligence, like any idea still in progress is a polysemic idea. The approach that we are proposing here is based on different definitions of territorial intelligence which place emphasis on different aspects of knowledge about the territory, whether that be in reference to all forms of knowledge to understand the territory (Girardot, 2002), to the processes of knowledge or self-knowledge of the territory (Dumas, 2004), or to the processes of transfer of knowledge among the actors from a single territory (Bertacchini, 2004)⁸.

In spite of their different approaches, all these definitions conceive the territory as a self-organisational reality with a capacity for learning (the ability to apply knowledge and expertise and to vary its state or actions in response to different situations based on past experience) hence the reference to territorial intelligence.

The territory's capacity for learning resides, primarily, in the actors, who have, on the one hand, different access to information, and on the other, different abilities to convert it into knowledge. But in turn, learning can be thought of as an emerging property of the system, in such a way that territories can be considered intelligent systems (or groups of systems), able to mobilise their knowledge and to adapt their states and actions to new circumstances, on a different plane from individual actors. The interaction of these two levels (individual and collective) of learning is what produces territorial knowledge. This is a holographic connection such as exists between society and the individual (Navarro, 1994). It is important to insist on one point: in the concept of territorial intelligence which is under discussion here, we only refer to intelligent territory in a metaphorical sense; intelligence resides in the territorial actors and individual agents. Territorial intelligence is based on the specific intelligences spread over the territory and which build knowledge in a conscious act of design, creation, collection, analysis and interpretation and mutualisation of the information they have available.

It has been said above that territory is a space with actors in which production and appropriation of resources occur. In the knowledge society the first resource that needs to be the object of this production and appropriation is the knowledge that exists throughout the territory, as well as the processes which contribute to its creation. In particular, knowledge "of the territory" and of the "action developed in the territory" is converted into knowledge of paramount importance for directing the action in favour of territorial development. Therefore, with regard to territorial governance, territorial intelligence can be defined as all knowledge relating to the understanding of territorial structures and dynamics, as well as the tools used by public and private actors to produce, use and share this knowledge in favour of sustainable territorial development.

In this way, territorial intelligence, based on the resources that the information society offers (new information and communication technologies), involves the production of theories and tools to understand the territory (cognitive plane of territorial governance), but also the way in which the members of a society as a whole produce and take in the knowledge available and apply it to solving their problems (technological-organizational plane). As was explained in the previous section, it is these two components which are called on to develop the socio-political component to allow the verti-

8. For a more detailed look at this concept see the texts linked to the CAENTI (Coordination Action of the European Network of Territorial Intelligence) project website, <http://www.territorial.intelligence.eu>.

cal and horizontal coordination of action on different levels and in different sectors in the territory in favour of sustainable development.

Conclusion

From this perspective, territorial intelligence is a tool for territorial governance; however both concepts have a complex relationship according to E. Morin (1992), since, in their turn the evolution of territorial governance promotes the development of territorial intelligence. The driving force behind this feedback process is the participation of the actors. The intensity and quality of the participation is what determines the way in which both processes feed off each other.

In fact, if territorial governance basically refers to "sharing what we jointly know and think as a result of our diversity and then undertaking coordinated, coherent action", territorial intelligence provides feedback for that process by means of analysis and joint evaluation of the action developed through diversity, resulting in new shared knowledge which allows an improvement in the action. In the knowledge society, where learning is shared, both are faces of the same coin.

Nowadays, thanks to the development of new information and communication technologies, there is an enormous amount of information available and a great many very sophisticated tools for collecting, processing and analysing it. The development of territorial intelligence means putting all this potential at the service of territorial action, contributing to the actors involved, not only institutional decision-makers, but the actors most directly involved in the action in the field, incorporating mechanisms in the course of their ordinary activities to facilitate interaction, promoting their individual and joint ability to manage information, to mutualise it and convert it into knowledge which allows them to assess, redirect or design new action. In this sense the design of tools and participatory work methodologies which allow the actors' abilities to be developed is of vital importance.

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