



C E P E L

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## **"Territorialized Political Exchange and European Integration"**

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### **Introduction**

This paper intends to examine how a political exchange perspective could be useful to improve the study of relationships between levels of governance, and within such levels, in the process of Regional European Integration. The empirical bases of the following reflections are :

- a series of fieldwork in the regional implementation of European policies in France (Negrier 1995),
- participation in the European Research Network (REGE), coordinated in Mannheim by Prof. Kohler-Koch (1995),
- empirical and theoretical debate developed by another research group, focussing precisely on "Territorial Political Exchange and Regional mobilization in Europe" (Négrier-Jouve 1997).

The relationship between territory and European Integration has already been the object of several analytical attempts, amongst which one could highlight the following :

- the neo-fonctionnalist hypothesis, for which the basic idea is that each gain in influence of one territorial level has, as a consequence, the loss of power of another. For instance, such a conception of European policy process has been very present in early work on European Regional Policy : the emergence of regional capacity to act within such a process was considered as a factor of decline for the Nation-State capacity to capture the main relationship with the European Commission.

The same kind of hypothesis is the core argument for Anti-Maastrichians of each European Country concerned about the consequences of European Monetary Integration : gain of power obtained by a European wide government of central banking is supposed to make national governments lose their own competence and influence within the monetary policy domain. Despite the logical appearance of such an hypothesis, several criticisms have been developed against its simplist, and consequently wrong way of describing and explaining reality. Just to give an image of such theoretical and empirical dilemmas, it cannot not explain the will of European Integration expressed by National Government in terms other than naivty or masochism, that are not sufficient to qualify their own strategies...More problematical is the fact that such a continuous zero-sum game is never based, analytically, on a defined standard of political power, which is nevertheless necessary to make such a calculation.

-The multi-level governance model (Marks 1993) : for which the European integration process could be defined as a codecision process between several levels of government, policy domains with a high level of uncertainty and change, and a consequently high level of potential conflict. In order to ease such constraints, multi-level governance could be defined as a continuous search for agreements on rules of the game, i.e. principles of decisional distribution adapted to a new political space. Such a theoretical framework could be adapted to describe several dimensions of European political activity.

The search for "ideological tools", global enough to mask conflicts and allow negotiations could be considered as a search for rules-of-the-game among actors at European level. The invention of subsidiarity is relatively well adapted to such an analysis. More generally, it could explain why European regulation tends to both standardize and centralize the establishment of rules, because of lack of certainty over its sphere of influence (Duran-Thoenig 1996). In a similar way, we could mention the idea of fonctionnal dissociation developped by P.Schmitter (Schmitter 1996): as Europe doesn't generate any unified territory,

its political sphere of action possesses a variable geometry spatialization due to fonctionnal and changing imperatives : Defense, Agriculture, Monetary Union, Social Affairs are policy domains with different territories of action and competence.

Such dissociation is supposed to be a long-term constraint for any European democratization perspective. Even if the criticism against neo-fonctionnalist analysis is answered by multi-level governance approach, the latter is in danger of considering territory as a ready-made category, taken into account on the basis of its institutionalized representatives, and not as a continuous building process, where variable geometry is not only an inter-territorial dimension, but also an intra-territorial one.

Even if the latter ways of analyzing the relationship between Europe and territory diverge on several points, there is one aspect which tends to present a similar analytical limit when studying Regional European mobilisation. That is the general limit of a top-down perspective : by taking into account levels in interaction, it reaches a high level of abstraction, but doesn't deal enough with differences among territories, mostly at regional level. However, if one accepts that inter-governmental analysis of regional policy on its own is not sufficient to reconstitute all the salient aspects, controversies and paradoxes of European integration, it is thus necessary to find some analytical tool adapted to such a plurality of levels, but which is also useful for treating identities, politics and political mobilization.

That's why, by deepening the theoretical perspective, we intend to use the tool of territorial political exchange in order to present if not an alternative to, at least a new dimension of, the European regional integration process. In that sense, we feel much closer to Michael Keating's analyses of regional capacities (1997) which embraces a bottom-up perspective on European Integration. Even if a critical discussion could be made about his cumulative conception of three different types of capacity (cf. *infra* 2.2.), his model is clearly focussed upon the different dimensions of what composes a political territory.

First it will be necessary to present the conceptual basis of territorial political exchange. Such a presentation will focus first on a critical discussion of Leonardo Parri's model (Parri 1990). We will then set out the different dimensions of our Territorial Political Exchange definition.

It will then be possible to illustrate such a model with several examples drawn from our fieldwork and also that of several colleagues. This analytical implementation will successively focus on the question of regionalisation in France, then on multi-level governance in a Political Exchange perspective, and finally on links between Political Exchange and Regional Mobilization.

## **1. Political Exchange and Regional Policies : a theoretical framework**

*Prologue* : How Political Exchange came to be :

When first focussing on implementation of European policies at Regional level, our main hypothesis was that such new programmes were supposed to modify both the perception and the classical policy conditions (i.e. procedures, leadership...) of territorial public action. Given that several dimensions of this policy such as subsidiarity, partnership, additionality, were, at least in France, unknown or not commonly used in policy contexts, we planned to focus on the changing aspects of territorial policies, due to European Policy implementation at Regional level. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, one of our first findings were that these perceptions and policy conditions were in reality mostly anchored to old practices, traditional ways of thinking and political forms.

Secondly, we found that modes through which actors used "traditional" interactions to deal with European programmes were reposed at least in part, on what we could call a "political economy of compensations", i.e. on exchanges of resources for which territory was a pertinent framework. Such resources were, in part, "material" : funding, regulation capacity, specialized know-how; and in part symbolic : the will to associate political representation and territorial programme provision, the political assessment of social networks, of deeply anchored territorial images. Such empirical findings drove us to directly take into account this category (political exchange) as potentially pertinent, instead of simply mentioning it as a detail within the wider landscape of public action.

before our adaptation of political exchange, this type of analysis was little developed in territorial politics. Despite the important use of social exchange theory in sociology (Blau 1964), political economy (Regini 1995), and anthropology (Levi-Strauss 1974, Mauss 1950), it was considered as secondary,

or even dangerous (March-Olsen 1995). Among the few authors dealing with it, three specific ones could be mentioned.

Using examples from center-periphery relationships in Great-Britain, R.Rhodes had used, but secondarily, such a notion to give some dynamic elements to his network analysis (Rhodes 1986).

The same lesson could be drawn from earlier French analysis of center-periphery relationship in the centralized context of the 1970s (Gremion 1976).

More important is the third one, who gave Territorial Political Exchange its real first conceptual form : Leonardo Parri. We concentrate upon the latter in our first discussion.

### 1.1. Limits of a model

Although this may appear contradictory, we decide to present at first the limits of the Territorial Political Exchange model, at least in Parri's conception.

His general hypothesis could be defined as follows : the main feature of contemporary political trends is the change from *power as imposition* to *power as negotiation*. Within that new perspective, the State becomes half-sovereign, and the notion of political exchange is the best way to give an account of it, and of the changing dynamics of political power. But territorial political exchange possesses several specificities, and must be differentiated from other types of political exchange. The latter are essentially two, to which we will refer to supra:

- Pizzorno's model of political exchange, drawn from his analysis of industrial relations between the State, trade-unions and Industrial interests representatives (Pizzorno 1977, 1993, Regini 1984, Mutti 1983) ;
- Marin's model of "generalized political exchange" (Marin 1990), the title of the book in which Parri gives his own version of political exchange.

The former could be defined as mostly dyadic, whereas the latter explores the possibilities of a global conceptualization of political exchange, among all parts and sectors of the polity.

To both these approaches, Parri adds his third dimension : Territorial Political Exchange, which could be defined as a relationship between, generally speaking, two public actors (central government and regional public authority), which takes place during the formulation and the implementation of a policy

within which a negotiation, based on mutually shared power resources, emerges in order to define and implement the policy goals".

From this perspective, a political exchange emerges when :

a) one of the two actors, and generally the one belonging to the highest level (i.e. central), allows the other to influence

- the content of decisional processes (either through official structures of concertation or through informal relationships);
- the modes of implementation, through different forms of executive cooperation.

In consequence, the latter is supposed to benefit from decision contents and policy outcomes.

b) in exchange for such benefits, the latter provides his consent to the former, i.e. he puts his own resources of power at the former's disposal, in order to guarantee the efficiency and the effectiveness of current policies.

From Parri's point of view, Territorial Political Exchange does not produce or depend upon any transaction chain, because it is limited to two, or three partners (territorial State and local institutions). Contrary to the "national political exchange" or the "generalized" one, territorial political exchange does not generate these complex problem of "inter-sectoriality" (Papadopoulos 1995) which are supposed to be the peculiarity of governmental policy arenas.

In opposition to standard corporatist or pluralist exchange patterns, one could say that the Territorial Political Exchange is based on four specificities :

i - the policy problem is less complex, because the issues are more individual : funding in a particular area, national policy impact at local level, struggle towards regulation relief,...etc.

ii - the configuration of actors is simpler, because the actors are less numerous, and more institutionalized;

iii - because it is less complex, this political exchange does not require as much trust between partners as other models.

iv - it rests on an unstable equilibrium between central regulation and local anarchies, and is based more on barter forms of exchange than on long-term strategic interactions.

This theoretical framework is very open to criticism. Its conception of territory is that of a political space of policy adaptation, which supposes in return at central level, there is a large capacity to define problems, solutions or even policy uncertainties. Even if, particularly in France, we could consider that these three capacities had been, some years or decades ago, gathered in the same central hand, Parri's model now creates more problems than it opens new windows of understanding.

Fundamentally, two main criticisms may be formulated :

i - concerning the diagnostic and its pertinence nowadays, all the studies of the decentralization process have already rendered obsolete the fact that regulation is only central, and that anarchy is only local. Several research projects have identified central anarchies, whilst others have unveiled local capacity to regulate even in the absence of juridical base. In the same way, the distinction between a complex center and a simple periphery does not work at all in order to define a political exchange space. The boundary between both become uncertain, and the local, or territorial space should also be considered as a complex level of government. In particular, the use of the notion of local or territorial governance (Le Galès 1994, Le Galès-John 1997), is destined to show in how territorial politics and policies depend upon several types of actors, and several combinations of the latter too. In other words, the pluralization of both peripheries and centers seems to collapse Parri's model. This pluralization has at least two dimensions :

- on the functional side, it entails dealing more rigorously with the relationship between several levels of government,
- on the political side, it makes necessary a re-exploration of dynamics and territorial identities of local societies.

ii. concerning the kind of theoretical approach it provides, our main criticism stems from to Parri's excessive focus on a fonctionnalist dimension of territory, and of the relationship between territories. Even if it is necessary to simplify in order to provide some global arguments drawn from comparing several realities, the top-down reduction to two main (and very institutionalized) actors doesn't

differ very much from a functionalist approach of balances between gains and loss of power in interaction, despite the fact that political exchange was, for this author a means of avoiding such a tendency.

Despite these criticisms, we don't agree with those who intend to *jeter le bébé avec l'eau du bain*, i.e. to completely abandon such a perspective. Among authors who have criticized the exchange perspective, James March and Johan Peter Olsen (1995) must be mentioned. In order to enhance an institutionalist perspective, their criticism possesses two pillars :

- the exchange perspective makes public action dependant on the answer to three questions (what are the alternatives ?, what are the consequences of each one ?, what are the preferences of the decisional actor in front of each alternative and consequence ?), it is thus limited to the analysis of Pareto's standard deviations vis-a-vis the status quo ante.

- the exchange perspective is deeply linked to a liberal conception whose standards are negotiation, coalition, interest (i.e. a rational-strategic approach). Because the inequality of capacities make voluntary exchange very unlikely as a base of social life, it is thus an ideology masked behind scientific appearance. Because every part of policy domains is not "exchangeable" (for instance : transferts between justice and economy), the focus on political exchange as a global tool is morally suspect, because it nurses the mad snake of corrupted exchange (Pizzorno 1993).

Even if this criticism is very seriously argued, in truth it doesn't refer to the political exchange pattern, but to economic metaphors of politics and policies. As few arguments concern the precise political exchange stream (like Pizzorno, Marin, Regini or Ceri...), it makes us simultaneously :

- take seriously such criticism into account (as potential limits or dangers of a simple model of exchange);
- try to go further with the political one.

Three main interlinked reasons emerge from our conception of territorialized political exchange and will be kept in mind :

- the empirical evidence of exchange processes within territorial policy domains;
- the potential value-added it provides to a better interpretation of the relationships between the plurality of actors, at several levels, and of their political dimension.
- the analytical gains we could obtain from using both synchronic and diachronic perspectives in territorial politics and policies.



These three dimensions now need presenting.

## 1.2. Beyond the limits

In order to take into account the different relevant dimensions of the territorialized political exchange, we must try to present a synthetic definition of it.

A territorialized political exchange is a transaction, or a series of transactions between several resources and actors whose main realm is public action within a given territory, and/or between different policy territories. These transactions depend on political rules of the game, and influence their change in order to legitimate the protagonists and make the action efficient.

*Seven consequences* are linked to such a definition :

i - *within a territory* : a territory can be defined as the result of political exchanges which are produced and reproduced among actors in situations of cooperation and conflict. Territory is thus in dialectical relationship with institutions, as providers of boundaries, but continuously called into question by new territorial boundaries. The dialectic between institutional territories and new zones of European programmes could be mentioned as a good example of this kind of dialectic. We will provide some examples of such a question (infra part 2).

ii - *between territories* : the relationship between several levels of public action can be analysed in terms of political exchange, where resources, legitimacies and capacities are interacting. To avoid the criticism of functionalism, the balance between the strategic aspect of such relations and the legitimating one must be highlighted. Andy Smith is developing, from Marc Abeles' anthropology, a nice analytical tool under the term of "concentric circles", in order to describe better the so called "multi-level governance", i.e. to not limit it to strategical interactions but to extend its political dimension (Smith 1997).

iii - *The relationship between intra-territorial exchanges and inter-territorial exchanges* can themselves be analyzed in terms of interdependency. We shall present some further examples of such relationships between types of regional

political exchanges and inter-regional or inter-level political exchanges (infra, 2nd part).

iv - Political exchange supposes the analysis of the *crystallization of interdependence* between levels, action domains, resources whose issues are social aggregation, policy leadership and political legitimacy. Consequently, we have to consider two different dimensions of the politicization of social relationships at the territorial level :

- the first is the classical one, and deals with the famous question of the *relevance of local politics* in territorial policies : does politics matter, and how ? Official political institutions and actors are here in the core of the debate. It is related to Bob Jessop's (Jessop 1990) famous metaphor of the State' need : the Invisible Hand likes a good Visible Hand to shake!

- the second is the *political dimension of relationships between actors who, at least in part, don't belong to the official political scene*, but the nature of which can be defined as political, i.e. oriented towards general interest, representation, collective identities and/or manipulation of them. Such a distinction could explain dilemmas generated by the notion of politicization, when two different positions exist and are in total contradiction to describe the contemporary reality : "excessive politicization" on the one hand, "depoliticization" on the other. In other words : multi-level politics vs hollow politics.

Such a distinction is useful, for instance in France, to avoid pejorative (and often wrong) interpretations of the consequences of decentralization. The fact that local politicians have benefited from new power spaces have, according to Yves Meny, politicized public action. Such fundings are only related to the first acceptance of politicization. On the contrary, the same change could be described as a depoliticization of the local public action, when describing, for instance, the growing empowerment of private companies at urban and regional levels (Lorrain 1991), the dependency of local politicians on extra-political or extra-territorial resources...Indeed what could be analysed on the one hand as a higher level of politics can be considered too as its own hollowing. Consequently, politicization doesn't refer only to the formal role the politicians play in the process. It must also refer to the political content of such a role, and,

by extension, to the political content of relationships which are not just restricted to politicians, but which include territorialised public-private interests.

v - the territorialized political exchange perspective must take local societies own peculiarities into account, with respect to two main dimensions :

- the *specific configuration of actors* involved in exchanges : institutional actors, but also organized social interests within the territory, regardless of their principal level of local anchorage. This first point leads to the need for synchronic analysis of interactions, and provides a specific landscape of political exchange, in order to compare, for instance, the relevance of the same levels of action between several territories.

- the *diachrony of exchanges interactions* : we put forward the hypothesis that the crystallization of interdependence depends, at least in part, on exchange frameworks inherited from the past, which constitute a constraint for future exchanges. In other words, the notion of path dependence (North 1990) could be adapted to analyse chains of political behavior that are political exchanges. This could be done by expanding upon North's perspective ("what determines the divergent patterns of evolution of societies, polities, or economies over time ? And how do we account for the survival of economies with persistently poor performance over long periods of time ?" p.92), in order to analyse the *path of territorial exchanges*.

In this perspective, French sociologists have already provided some arguments for using territorial path dependence theory. Inspired by the work of Arnaldo Bagnasco and Carlo Trigilia, Evelyne Ritaine's research on the Third Italy's economic development in relationship with social, political history at territorial level, highlights the fact that the most traditional dimensions of local societies are renewed within the most modern processes of development (Ritaine 1989, 1997). In the same field, Jean-Louis Briquet, learning lessons from his study of territory and politics in Corse, highlights the paradoxal relationship between old forms of *notabilité* ( i.e. the legitimacy of traditional politicians) and their capacity to invest new spaces of territorial policies such as those produced by the 5th Republic or decentralization (Briquet 1997). The political exchange concerns very different types of legitimacy, like the social control of a territory, based on long-term clanic and familial resources on the one hand, and the legitimacy and efficiency of the State territorial agencies on the other hand. This

kind of exchange can be considered as the main issue of every process of modernisation, or, at least, as the prior condition of each debate around such a process.

vi - the territorialized political exchange, considered in its diachronic perspective, is thus *simultaneously a functional constraint and a political matrix*. And contemporary exchanges that can be found within the field of public action tend to both reproduce and modify it. The tension between the latter can be observed empirically, even if its validation presents some theoretical difficulties. For many reasons, these are very closed to debate opened by Robert Putnam's "Making Democracy Work" (1993). Here is not the place to reopen this debate. Let us simply note that the territorial political exchanges dialectic between reproduction and change seeks to avoid two opposite analytical "dangers" :

- determinism, under which everything is already sewn up, and nothing can change with respect to cultural patterns which are so entrenched in minds, behavior and institutional practices that (despite formal, or political appearances) differences remain the same throughout history .

- "strategism" under which actors are only mobilized by gains from exchange, and where such political exchanges are considered as only resource providers, thereby excluding all the rich dimensions of Pizzorno's model (1978, for instance) : the role played by political exchange on the production and transformation of identities, the dilemma of representation (Regini 1995), or the question of legitimacy (Frognier 1995). Such a conception of political exchange will, in general, focus on synchronic aspects of uncertainty : an exchange, according to Friedberg's point of view (1993), will be defined as a political one (contrary to an economic exchange) because in such a situation, actors tend not only to use the rules of the game, but also to manipulate and re-define them to their own profit. Despite the interest of such a distinction, it tends to neglect two main dimensions of actors :

- their belonging to a historical chain of action (path dependence) that explains some specificities, and certain long-term territorial political structuring which go beyond the different public action contexts. In his diachronic analysis of Sicily formal regional networks Jurgen Grote (1997), concludes that composition and dynamics of such networks don't really change very much over time, despite appearances.

-their involvement within a political (and territorial) culture which leads to some particular territorial constructions of reality.

*vii - Political exchange and legitimacy* : beyond the philosophical debate about links between these concepts (Frognier 1995), a political exchange can only be considered as fully political if it possesses a legitimacy dimension. This is not to consider that a political exchange is an exchange of legitimacy. On the contrary, as legitimacy is partly rational and partly belongs to symbolic non rational reference (beliefs, charism...), we have to consider it as a non-exchangeable property. Consequently, between two (or more) different legitimate bodies, a political exchange consists of putting at the other's disposal resources that can legitimately be exchanged. In other words, legitimating is at the origin of a political exchange, but also one of its outcomes (by exchanging, actors can obtain, reduce or increase their own legitimacy). However, they can never exchange legitimacy itself. In terms of political philosophy, To the Rousseauist idea of the Social Contract as a general exchange of legitimacies, I prefer that of Hobbes'Leviathan : the political exchange is all the more powerful since the legitimacy is simultaneously provided by it, but autonomous from it. We are now going to try to illustrate this theoretical framework with some examples drawn from our research.

## **2. From Territorial Political exchange to Regional Mobilization in Europe**

In order to provide some concrete examples of our political exchange perspective, we are going to argue how it is a pertinent tool to analyse three processes : regionalization, with a special focus on examples of implementation of European policies within the Region; multi-level-governance, through turning its usual perspective upside down. And finally we will devote some attention to a reflection on the relationship between political exchange and regional mobilization.

### **2.1. Political exchange and regionalization**

Structured by such a theoretical framework, regionalization means much more than the institutional forms that exist at the regional level. Instead, regionalization is defined as a kind of crystallization of interdependencies determining the essential rules of the game, exchanges of major resources and the negotiation of equivalences. These processes are entwined at this level on the basis of a specific and hierarchically superior level of agregation. This definition of regionalization doesn't suppose that the region itself should be very powerful as an institution. In other words, the regions could have formally the same kind of institutional forces and weakness, but reveal different types and levels of political exchanges.

At a regional level, we could use Bruno Jobert's distinction between policy arena and policy forum, as a useful starting point (Jobert 1995). A policy arena could be defined as a political space where several resources are exchanged, and specific interests are intersected. In this sense, an arena supposes a low level of agregation, and a mode of combination whose hierarchical superiority to an other is neither evident nor inevitable. On the contrary, the forum could be defined as a space where macro-representations of society, and broad issues of policy regulations are defined. Such a distinction, made by Jobert at national policy level, could be adapted to the regional context in terms of political exchange.

The differences among regions could be that some of them appear to be forums for territorial policies, whereas others just play, among other levels of public action, the role of arena. More precisely, this distinction allows one to give

sufficient importance to the role of ideas in building different legitimate levels of action. It is in this sense that we interpret Marc Smyrl's work in France (1995a and b), and especially his comparison between several regions concerning the implementation of European Union IMP (Integrated Mediterranean Programmes) and Structural policies. Smyrl highlights several interesting divergencies between regions such as :

- a logic of consensus and information exchanges among different levels of territorial action that prevails in the French Region of Brittany, contrasts with the continuous conflicts and autonomization of policy networks which prevails in Provence-Alpes Côte d'Azur, a Southern French Region.

- more flexibility vis-à-vis the official rules of the game in Brittany, contrasts with obsessional and cautious behavior concerning the literal respect of procedures that prevails in PACA, especially for the regional State representatives (i.e. the *prefecture de Région*).

- The Regional State representative's influence in the European Policy process is higher when regional actors are fragmented and conflictual, and lower when a consensus logic prevails : in the latter case, it is obliged to take into account the Regional authority, i.e. its capacity to structure intra-regional interdependences.

The role of the regional level can thus be analyzed on the basis of a twofold capacity :

- the capacity to aggregate interests within a vertical logic (between different territorial levels) and a horizontal one (representation of public and private interests);

- the capacity to build a territorialized compromise depends on the management of interactions between several networks (European and National agents at each level, experts, professional interests representatives, technicians of local development...etc.).

Comparing Marc Smyrl's case studies and our research findings on regionalization in the French Region of Languedoc-Roussillon, it is now possible to distinguish regions in which the dominant type is the forum, from those where the regional level better corresponds to the arena type. Here, Brittany tends towards a forum type, even if actors' interest to present their policy environment as consensual must be cautiously taken into account.

Languedoc-Roussillon is more typical of the arena model. The regional level can be considered as one level of political exchanges amongst others, without any superior capacity of coordination and negotiation between territorial interests. When analysing its own limited role in the definition of European Policy zoning, or the fragmentation of European actors' regional *milieux* (reproducing the boundaries of institutional and political infra-regional cleavages) (Négrier 1995), the limits of regionalized political exchange emerge clearly.

For instance, we have analysed the role of the regional level in the context of the implementation of European structural policies and regional programmes in our region of Languedoc-Roussillon. Within each programme implementation (rural development, regeneration of industrial depressed areas, research & development programmes), the weakness of the region (as an institution, but also as a level of action) is evident. It doesn't mean that there is only one other major level : each programme seems to have its own dominant mode of political assesment (a technical corps in one case, a rural departmental agents network in the other, an experts network in a third situation). In such a situation of fragmented networks, the official regional role of planning is in reality that of a secondary space officializing compromises built elsewhere.

Such findings highlight some important features of comparative regionalization in France and could be adapted to other national and regional contexts. The legitimizing process of the regional level, and its own limits, are no longer to be related only to global factors (such as non-regional voting rules, scarcity of regional competences devolution compared with local and departmental ones...), but to regional peculiarities.

However, a problem of explaining differences still remains. One could limit such an explanation to the synchronic dynamics of interaction. However, such attempts produce very poor results, because in providing details on political exchange configurations, and in describing differences between such configurations, it doesn't give any answer to the question of the roots of such peculiarities.

The diachronic dimension of territorial political exchanges could provide such answers. Turning back to our examples, the Breton regional specificity is partly due to the fact that over the long term, several inter-organisational groups (public and private) have used the regional reference in order to structure their own image of political reality. For instance, the CELIB (Breton Interests Linking



Committee) initiated such political regionalization a long time ago. During the 1960's and 1970's, the relationship with the French State for territorial regeneration and modernization played its own role in the stabilisation of regional networks, sharing and exchange of resources, growth of trust among actors belonging to different organisations, parties and levels of territorial government.

The implementation of European Regional Policy thus takes place within a previously built matrix of exchanges. Any reflection about how European programmes penetrate and modify regional political perceptions must first take into account existing resources, territorial legitimacies, and social rules of the game which are continuously constructing political equivalences. In this example, the manipulation of Regional Identity seems to be one of the rules. It allows certain types of multiplex negotiations and compromises between frequent opponents, and prevent them from engaging opportunistic behaviors.

Another example of such a manipulation of identity is demonstrated in Chistopoulos and Herbert's (1996) recent study about the relationship between Strathclyde Region (Scotland) and Europe. Their analyse of forms of partnership activated, in the context of European programmes, by the Strathclyde European Partnership with several local public agencies, ministerial departments and the Scottish Office shows that the place given to each level is directly linked with the regional capacity to manipulate a collective identity and to structure at its own level such an identity on the basis of a "global vision of Scottish interests". This political construction of the regional reality compels actors to limit their opportunistic behaviors and to insert their own strategies within such a global image. In turn, it forces each non-regional partner to take it as a political constraint.

Such an example is all the more interesting since it diverges from others, for example a similar context in Wales concerning the Welsh Office (Loughlin 1997). In each case, the historical roots of such an "Identity in action" is a fundamental dimension of the present. Francesc Morata's research on the relationship between the Catalan Autonomous Community and Europe leads to similar results (Morata 1997). Thus, even if the analysis of political exchanges within, and between territories tries to describe the plurality of contemporary transactions, its main object is to pay more attention to specific structures in order to explain contrasts between territory and politics.

From this perspective, political and historical roots can lead to quite opposite results, i.e. uncertainty over regional identity, or, more precisely, to conflictual identity. The Languedoc-Roussillon Region is a good example of such a problem. Its fragmentation is due to several factors : a very unequal economic structure, where the wine-growing tradition had provided, in an important part of the territory, cultural identity, social traditions and a specific mode of leftist political representation. The industry was concentrated in a particular zone, very different from the others, with its own political peculiarities (importance of the Communist Party). To these two areas must be added two more specific territories : the rural zone of the Lozère, more typical of Central regions than a Mediterranean one, and the Roussillon, with its own cultural identity (the Catalan language) and centrifugal tendencies. Even if in this region, as in Brittany, the State had its own voluntary development programmes (coastal tourism and urbanism), it has not contributed to the stabilization of any Regional Interest. On the contrary, recent changes within the demography and economic growth have deepened the conflictual tendencies of the political relationships among interests and territorial levels. The State representatives, contrary to the Breton case, have to deal with a generalized competition between networks and institutions. The implementation of IMP's during the 1980's had already been the theatre of such struggles, a part of which was to promote one among several identities of the Region. In the context of the Structural Policies implementation, this conflictual and fragmented framework produces resource and new forms of exchange. Traditional networks have found a new lease of life within this field, and apparently old institutions often emerge as the most efficient and legitimate within the implementation of partnership. The political performance of old bodies is not contradictory with the fact that the implementation of several European policies within the same space tends to legitimate an extended number of actors : it is particularly the fact in the case of industrial regeneration (Objective 2), where the monopoly of strategic territorial political and economical reflection, traditionally given to the *Corps des Mines* (a high techno-administrative national and public organization) turned into discussion when Europe and the State simultaneously launched different programmes (STRIDE, SPRINT, Objective 2 general programmes, national programmes of restructuring and innovation...).

However, contrary to the idea of a spontaneous genesis of political legitimacy in action, the regional context in Languedoc-Roussillon tends more to reproduce the fragmented policy and political landscape than to give the Region an autonomous and wide-ranging legitimacy. This is particularly due to the fact

that conflict is an intrinsic dimension of long-term regional identity. This explains why territorial political exchanges are much more structured at urban and infra-regional level, and less relevant at the regional one. But it also explains the specific figures of multi-level relationships at European level.

## 2.2. Multi-level-governance : a bottom-up perspective.

Keeping in mind our last example about Languedoc-Roussillon, we would like here to link the question of intra-regional patterns of political exchange and the form and intensity with which multi-level relationships are developed. Contrary to certain hypotheses about regional capacity (Keating 1997), investment in higher levels of inter-level relationship dynamics may not be the sign of a high level of "regional governance" but exactly the opposite : a search to compensate its weakness.

The Regional institution of Languedoc-Roussillon is one of the most dynamic regions in the inter-regional and European partnership. Its involvement in cross-national relationships started very early : the Euro-Region with Catalunya, the *Communauté de Travail des Pyrénées*, with the latter and other French and Spanish Regions; the Mediterranean Arc with several Spanish, Italian and French Regions. Its participation in European programming was very early too, through the first modes of territorial European action : O.I.D. (Integrated Development Operation), IMP. Last but not least, its President Jacques Blanc was the first President of the European Committee of the Regions, and is generally well known as an pro-active regional leader within the Commission. Taking all these aspects of European mobilization, or multi-level political exchange, and regardless of the depth or the cosmetic nature of such activism, how can it be interpreted ? Our hypothesis is that the intensity and plurality of European involvement is directly linked with the constraints which limit internal regionalization : superiority of departmental political exchanges, conflictuality between political cultures, public and private interests, social and economical cleavages...). Facing such constraints, with Europe and inter-regional partnership, the Region finds the opportunity to get around such obstacles in order to legitimize itself within an alternative arena and, in turn, try to influence intra-regional networks, by providing resources and European legitimacy. Such a task is not easy, partly because the relationship with Europe is not Region's monopoly. On the contrary, it is the object of political competition either for operational support or for political accountability, between several regional and infra-regional leaders, and the decentralized State.

This example shows that regional political exchange and multi-level ones can be linked together in order to understand the different, and sometimes paradoxal dimensions of European regional integration. By Analysing the same question in the French Region Rhône-Alpes, Bernard Jouve gives similar conclusions : intra-regional and inter-regional relationships have both to be linked in order to not to undermine the political dimension of territorial policies (Jouve 1997).

Contrary to some assertions about multi-level relationships, the analysis of bottom-up conditions of political exchange provides some fundamental explanations of the modes, intensities and potential contradictions of the European political partnership. By comparing German lander relationships with Europe, Charlie Jeffery also highlights several interesting divergences (Jeffery 1997). Whereas it is generally taken for granted that the federal form of the German State provides its "regional" units a high capacity to act at the European level, and thereby be more successful in influencing the European political agenda, Jeffery shows that such a process is anything but homogeneous. If he points out some secondary divergencies between Western Lander, the main divergence remains between Western and Eastern lander. The former developed a precautious dynamic strategy of conquest in the Committee of the Regions, but, having quickly judged its weakness in the European process, subsequently reduced their involvement. By contrast, Eastern lander continue to be rather active in the Committee. As Western lander try to influence the Council level, especially over competence issue, their Eastern counterparts don't feel very concerned either by the level or by these issues. Within the Commission, Western lander prefer individual relationships with Directorates, and especially with those which are not directly dealing with their own competences, whereas Eastern lander prefer micro-collective relationships with Directorates which are nearer to the regional issue (DG XVI for instance). Whereas the Western lander focus on the competence issue, Eastern lander focus much more on funding and revenue providing issues.

From this analysis, Jeffery draws out the links between regional capacities and mobilization and patterns of bottom-up oriented multi-level exchanges of resources. The relationships differ on several points, according to a territorial identity whose basis is only in part economic, and related to a wider regional identity, particularly when he deals with differences between Bayern and Baden-Wurtemberg lander). Such divergences imply a differentiation either in the partner who is dominant in an exchange perspective, and in the content

they want to exchange (competence, funding,...). As the first example provided some explanation about the differential of intensity of multi-level exchanges, the latter provides some arguments, at a constant level of intensity, to disparities of forms. Such disparities partly explain why a simple transfer to the European level of the typical federalist rule of joint-decision is so difficult, if not impossible (Benz 1997).

Such a conception of multi-level exchanges leads to final reflection about links between political exchange and regional mobilization.

### **2.3. Political exchange and regional mobilization**

Both notions have one point in common and differ on another. The convergent element is their initial focus on processes. Both could be defined as tools, located within the more general debate about contemporary forms of governance in Europe. The difference is related to the status of institutions within the political and territorial dimensions of such processes.

The notion of mobilization, as defined by J.Loughlin or F.Morata (1997), essentially concerns institutional processes : such an approach distinguishes two main forms of mobilization : the internal mobilization on the one hand, and the external one on the other. It highlights two main points of interest : first, the comparative analyse of the relationships between internal and external mobilization; second, the links between mobilization and institutionalization processes.

The notion of territorial political exchange tackles the relationship between institutions and society under different aspects (cultural, economical, social, political) of territorial agregation and fragmentation. It also supposes a focus on inter-institutional relationship, thus considering institutions in their concrete territorial existence, as the sedimentation of political exchanges. In that sense, it could be partly linked with Hall-Taylor's sociological new-institutionalism, by focussing on cultural, social and cognitive genesis and evolution of institutions (Hall-Taylor 1996).

The analytical difficulties of such notions are contradictory :

- for regional mobilization, the challenge is to deal with regional realities where regional pro-activity does not really exist beyond their cosmetic aspects. In

other words, it expands the notion of mobilization in order to treat several types of "regionality".

- for political exchange, the challenge is to identify the empirical and conceptual limits of the paradigm. The temptation is high to consider every political form and each transaction as political exchange. That's why we already have to build some boundaries. More generally, we don't want to consider political exchange as a general concept, contrary to Bernt Marin's conception of "generalized political exchange" (Marin 1990). Such a notion seems in fact to be too...generalized. We can try to restrict its scale by using two elements :

- exchanges are not all political. Thus we have to find, theoretically, or empirically, the best criteria to distinguish (and not to separate) social, economical and political exchange.

- all political relationships are not exchanges. Legitimacy can be considered as a relation which is partly exterior to "the game" (even if provisionally). It could indeed be defined as a non exchangeable resource, as a political relation beyond exchange.

Having distinguished, both notions have to be reconnected. Such an articulation may be based on two different orders :

- the inter-institutional dimension, where mobilization is the collective form of political integration and motivation, and exchange covers the resources for interactions in conflict-cooperation situations.

- the territorial and political dimension : the structuration of political exchanges may explain some specific forms of mobilization. Our example of Languedoc-Roussillon's regional mobilization within Europe might be usefully compared with others, such as Catalunya, Wales, Rhône-Alpes...etc (Jouve-Négrier 1997).

### 3 Conclusion

This paper is a first attempt to take "seriously" into account an often used but never systematised notion. Its usefulness appears more clearly within two domains of European Integration : the divergent characters of regionalization through different intra-national and national contexts; the contrasted dynamics of multi-level relationships within Europe.

It is not normative to say that European Integration is very often seen as an inter-governemental matter, which does not sufficiently take into account infra-national, and territorial dimensions. Indeed there has been a growing involvement of regional actors within the European partnership since the beginning of European wide Regional Policy.

Contrary to certain analytical tendencies, which focus on different levels of performance in implementing formal procedures and programmes, it is therefore essential to assert that European programmes do not arrive in empty regional territories. On the contrary, the latter are often laden with other programmes and procedures which attempt to solve similar problems, with recipes that are not so far from each other. They are also full of history, identities and cultures that influence the way European policies are understood and then (re)constructed. Just as Captain Cook was considered as a god for Hawaiians when he reached the beach with his vessel, and as a brilliant hydrographical engineer when going back home, European programmes might be considered as events whose meaning is to be related to such identities (even if the cultural boundary between Shetland Islanders and Sicilians is smaller than that which existed between Sandwich Islanders and Royal sailors!) (Sahlins 1985).

Taking Territorial Political Exchanges into account may in addition provide some critical analysis of such processes of regional implementation. As Pizzorno noted, the relation between Exchange and Identity is complex. On the one hand, it describes the change of a partner's identity through processes of exchange. On the other, it describes the driving back, or the exclusion of identities. Within a territory, it means that political exchange conditions may be more or less socially comprehensive. We have noted that European programmes have contributed in several contexts to pluralizing policy networks, and sustaining new forms of territorial mobilization (Genieys-Smith 1997). Such impact has not only to be evaluated in terms of performance, but also in terms of changes within regional polities.

Highlighting changing forms of policy and political mediations could contribute to the debate on democratization within the processes of European Integration. One of the key conditions for such a debate would be to remind both participants and researchers that democratic polities rest always on two dialectic elements : efficiency and legitimacy (Négrier 1997)

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