

Abstract

The recent economic crisis has brought on the agenda the question of how to sustain in the long run an inclusive and spatially balanced development between and within European countries. In that regard, a renewed interest in industrial policies has emerged. In particular, industrial upgrading policies are considered a development model particularly suitable for less developed economies, whose impact on employment and living standards of local communities is however controversial. REGinTRAN tries to understand under which conditions highly constrained local societies are able to promote a sustainable pattern of local development, here intended as the combination of firm's competitiveness, well-being of workers and local communities as a whole. The research builds on a comparative historical analysis (2004 - 2018) of the socio-economic transformation of two regional economies on Europe's peripheries, Apulia, in Southern Italy and Lower Silesia, in Poland. The two regions are analysed as cases of the capacity of local political élites and organized social actors to build alternatives to neo-liberal globalization. The empirical focus is on the process of elaboration and contestation of industrial upgrading policies. The main innovative contribution of REGinTRAN will be to develop a theoretical reflection on the interaction between mechanisms of socio-economic change and institutional contexts, which can provide inputs for policy-transfer in the field of local development. Moreover, outreach activities will be organized locally with social actors in order to address the issues of how to build a strategic capacity of action and regulate conflicts.

Key - words: industrial policies; local development and globalization; diversities of capitalism; local politics and multi-level governance; labour power and collective mobilizations; transnational firms and local business interests.