



Interreg III B “Alpine Space”

DIAMONT

Data Infrastructure for the Alps / Mountain Orientated Network Technology

Work Package 5:

**Analysing the Influence of Cultural Differences on
Regional Development in the Alps**

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Executive summary

The mission of DIAMONT Work Package (WP5) is to enhance the understanding of the influence of cultural differences on regional development in the context of a sustainable future in the Alps. The purpose is to establish a solid basis for further scientific discussion. Ideally, it could be a starting point of a process to enhance the mutual understanding of the similarities, but also of the differences and particularities of each alpine region, and thereby provide a basis for monitoring the sustainability of regional development in the context of the Alpine Convention (AC).

In a time of sharply increasing influences of modernization and globalization processes in social, economic and also ecological matters, there is growing evidence of a common development strategy of all relevant actors, whereas the original regional differences (partly of cultural, historical and political causes, partly because of diverse location qualities) are diminishing as decisive factors of regional development. Investments (public and private), production and consumer behaviour (especially in tourism) are considered to be the main driving forces of regional development in general, not specific for the Alpine realm. The processes of global competition are bound to an inherent tendency to allow free access of all sorts, thereby eliminating the barriers and frictions (as e.g. local regulations or language patterns) which up to now were a consequence of specific regional identities, and also the root of specific forms of development. In contrast to this evolving mainstream there are some efforts by public and private bodies to improve the often adverse terms of location conditions by implementing specific measures to meet the challenge of global competition - regional policy can be understood as a regional answer to globalization. If at all there are differences in regional development in the future, then they will be caused by specific regional policy measures.

Therefore, this report portrays the influence of cultural factors, values, attitudes and specific goals on regional policy and thereby (indirectly) to the future regional development at large. It describes the different approaches, the structures, tasks and objectives of regional policy in the Alps. And finally, the report further illustrates measures, tools and institutions of regional policy in the alpine countries. A comparative analysis across the whole alpine space tries to portray such a regional policy "landscape".

Not quite surprisingly, the results of WP 5 research reported in this working paper qualify¹ to a certain degree the diversification impact of regional policy measures: In all alpine countries there is a general and common endeavour (however different in details) to reduce regional socio-economic disparities by improving the economic competitiveness; general socio-economic factors such as innovation and productivity are increasingly relevant in regional policy. There is also a common tendency to enhance the focus on regional strengths and potentials. Also common is the pledge for a "sustainable development" (whatever this should mean in a specific case), normally connected with efforts to increase the impact of participatory and integrative processes, and to searching for an optimal mix of bottom-up and top-down oriented decision-making in regional policy. But then, looking closer at the institutional aspects of regional policy, we come across some major differences among the alpine countries: Although most often governmental entities or agencies are in charge of

¹ "To qualify" is here used in the sense of "modifying, adding reservations, making less absolute" (Concise Oxford Dictionary 9\1998).

implementing regional policy, there are quite marked differences in terms of the "territorial geometry", i.e. which levels of government are responsible for such measures. Also, in spite of a general tendency at increasing the involvement of civil society, there are relevant differences regarding the degree of participation and the involvement of private partnerships.

Concluding, we remark that the traditional influences of most cultural factors on regional development are decreasing (while still intuitively present in our perception), leaving an open trail to a generalized development, which generates its peaks and shallows more from globally determined location qualities (like easy access and urbanization, i.e. along the village-metropolis gradient²) than from local or regional culture, which in itself tends to become more uniform. Traditional cultural differences then are more an expression of time lags and bound to diminish on the long run. This in turn is a clear signal to DIAMONT: For monitoring regional development in the Alpine Convention context we must not spend too much efforts on indicators based in traditional cultural differences, but more on indicators measuring sustainable progress in a globalizing world. However, this may well include information on regional identity, provided it means not a mere leftover from times past or folklore, but a conscious profile and strategy to future challenges. Such modifications of the general trail of development according to the Lisbon strategy would really be essential as "good governance" for alpine regions, in the true sense of sustainability, and perfectly matching the Alpine Convention pledge.

² Cp. Borsdorf (2005b)

1. Introduction: The Task

1.1. Task and mission statement

The task of Work Package 5 (WP5) of the DIAMONT project is to enhance the understanding of "*the influence of cultural differences on regional development*" in the context of a sustainable future for the Alpine realm, and specifically in the context of the Alpine Convention (AC): DIAMONT shall support the efforts to monitor sustainability development across the Alpine Convention states. Therefore, six national project teams, from Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland, have contributed their findings - based on common working procedures - to the final report, which eventually was prepared by the Swiss partner. Therefore, the mission of this text is to provide the necessary platform for these endeavours.

1.2. Main activities of Work Package 5

According to the basic project documents, the following are some of the main activities mandated to the Work Package 5-module of DIAMONT:

- Conceptualisation of the analysis;
- Analysis of the structure, tasks and general objectives of regional development in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, and Switzerland;
- Interpretation of the results considering common goals, measures, tools and options for the evolution of regional development in the respective countries;
- Compilation of the results as a basis for the interpretation of the results in the test regions (Work Package 11).

Also listed in the basic documents are some research questions to be investigated in this Work Package and possibly followed in other Work Packages:

1. Which goals are put to the fore in the alpine countries considering a sustainable regional development? Do they lead to differences in the structure, tasks and general objectives of regional development?
2. Which driving forces lead to convergences or divergences in objectives? Within these driving forces, which express the role of cultural factors?
3. To what degree do cultural factors lead to divergences in sustainable development objectives implementation?

Based on these guidelines, in this introduction we try to establish and explain a coherent methodology, in order to identify the scientific questions, to develop reasonable approaches to address them, and to formulate some basic hypothesis for these questions. As a starting point we assess mandatory some considerations regarding the *central notions and terms* of this mission. With the next step following the logic of this methodological concept, we prepare the *working tools* in order to provide the national research teams with a common platform of procedures. This was intended to generate the information sources and ensure their quality necessary for the *comparative research* for the final synthesis report.

It is self-evident that this package of research questions is quite challenging. As it turned out, there was a considerable lack of resources (esp. in terms of time allotments) available for this

task. Therefore, it was necessary to focus and concentrate the research efforts. As a result there is a considerable gap between the expectations conveyed by the ambitious title and mandate, and the results reported with this working paper. Among the principal sources of misunderstandings (and therefore also possible disappointments with this report) is the term "cultural differences": From the onset there were basic controversies among the DIAMONT project partners about content and scope of this term, and how to deal with it, rooted in differences of scientific approaches and traditions, which could not be clarified to a satisfactory degree during the very short period of common discourse about this work package. As a consequence this paper reflects the specific methodological understanding of the Swiss partners (reported in chapters #1.3 & #1.4), and is in no way committing the other project partners or the project as a whole.

1.3. Logical structure of the scientific question

How to analyse '*the influence of cultural differences on regional development*'? What do we mean with these key words and relations? And how can we acquire reasonable answers to these questions?

To start with, we should realize that the scientific question mandated to WP 5 has some methodological flaws, which during the survey did cause no little problems. First, it is a closed (or rather prejudicial) question, because it contains some *a priori* assumptions, immunizing the research procedure itself from doubts about the validity of the very question. Implied propositions are that there really are cultural differences relevant for differences in regional development - both terms and the directed relation between them³ being taken for granted. Furthermore, it is pretended that both terms (*cultural differences*, *regional development*) are established scientific notions, where in fact they are among the fuzziest terms in use.⁴ This is especially true in the context of *sustainability*, which of course is predominant for this research project, but in itself a fuzzy construct.⁵ Therefore, we will start this section with some considerations about the possible meanings of the two key terms, and how they will be used in this paper. Such precautions are not mere methodological prattle but signal a certain risk that the results of the research are different from the ones expected.

We understand *Culture*⁶ as a very broad concept, encompassing both action and structure (in the sense of Giddens's theory of structuration).⁷ Culture means the attitudes, visions and behaviour of humans, social groups, regional populations, even nations, etc. to handle their life, to shape their environment, and to making sense of their very existence; but 'culture' means also the results of such actions, manifest in (cultural) objects (i.e. artefacts),

³ There is even some danger of tautological relations between the two terms, which will be discussed to some extent later on.

⁴ Cp. Eagleton (2000) for a discussion about "culture".

⁵ It is remarkable (and a severe drawback for this survey), that "Sustainability" and "sustainable regional development" still remain open terms within the Diamont community.

⁶ Or as synonym '*the cultural*'.

⁷ Cp. the key-word "Culture" in The Dictionary of Human Geography (Johnston et al., Blackwell: Malden 4\2000), and also the key-word "Kultur" by B. Werlen in 'Lexikon der Geographie', ed. by Brunotte et al., Spektrum: Heidelberg 2001f. It seems that the English term 'civilization' is also appropriate to express this meaning. - Eagleton (2000).

institutions, economic structures, landscapes, settlements, land use patterns, etc.⁸ Such (cultural) structures and (cultural) attitudes and traditions are reciprocally interrelated, and they may re-enforce each other in an evolutionary (accumulative) process, or they may be linked in a dissipative and destructive way. It follows that culture is an element of a dynamic system, part of a process, which may be called '(ac)culturation', a continuous adaptive development,⁹ of which we can perceive an instant impression between past and future, here and there.

Considering the normative dimensions of this term, it is evident, that 'culture' in itself is an objective and value-free concept - we must be especially careful about this just because of the imminent temptation of scaling different forms of culture, of grading different civilizations or aspects of regional cultures. On the other hand, given the context of this study, we should reflect the relation between culture and *sustainability*, which of course is a normative proposition. In this sense, sustainability may be interpreted as a culture (or behaviour), which cares for the ecological, social, and economic capitals, even trying to mutually increase them. It follows, that of some interest is the question if traditional forms of alpine cultures were more oriented towards or committed to sustainability, in contrast to actual modes of living, of production and consumption, caring less about these obligations. And even more interesting will be the question, if the future orientation of alpine cultures might be borne by sustainability, as the Alpine Convention demands. Certainly, this is a trace to be followed.

Gradually, our attention shifted from 'culture' to '*cultures*', hereby addressing the differences among them. And of course, given the interrelationship of action and structure as an inherent quality of 'culture' it seems to be obvious that all 'cultures' are related to people (as actors) and to their places (as locations of structures such as settlements or landscapes) - or at least we perceive it that way. And of course we identify different cultures metaphorically in terms of people (nations?) and places (regions?) like "French culture", "Tyrolean culture", or "Carnia-Friuli culture". In this manner, it is tempting to open an equation of the form <region = people = culture>, much in the way of the well-known 17th century rule "cuius regio - eius religio".¹⁰ But how homogeneous are such constructs? What about the "Inner" and "Outer" Appenzell cultures in Eastern Switzerland, which are much the same or quite different, depending on the scale of scrutiny?¹¹ And given the task of an alpine-wide survey, should we rather deal with differences *among* nations, or with differences *within* nations? And what about the well-known fact that the (local or regional) culture gradually shifted from a strict traditional pattern, being always influenced by "outside" forces and "strange" people, thereby adapting their content and identity in an evolutionary manner.¹² What then exactly are 'cultural differences', one main object of this study? We as well could speak of "*regional differences*", meaning that in different regions of the Alps there were and still are different ways of living,

⁸ Example (from Carter/Urban Geography 1972): Cultural differences between traditional Mennonites and modern Canadians leading to quite different retail and consumer structures, driven by different attitudes and value systems, as mobility behaviour.

⁹ In the sense of a civilization process (Elias 1976; cp. also Huntington 1996). For an example about the impact of globalization upon culture cp. Riegler (2005).

¹⁰ Ironically, this quotation brings into this discourse the political (or governance) dimension, which later on will merit our special attention.

¹¹ One as well could replace the names in this sentence with "Tyrol" and "Upper Bavaria": Assessing them from a global perspective (e.g. with help of the Human Development Index) there are no relevant differences.

¹² These deterministic and rather static constructs have come under growing criticism, esp. by Werlen (1997) who pointed out to the growing tendency of "foot-loose" cultures.

still regional (cultural) identities persistent to our days, although strong convergence processes may be reported. And there remains the scale question which will be discussed later.

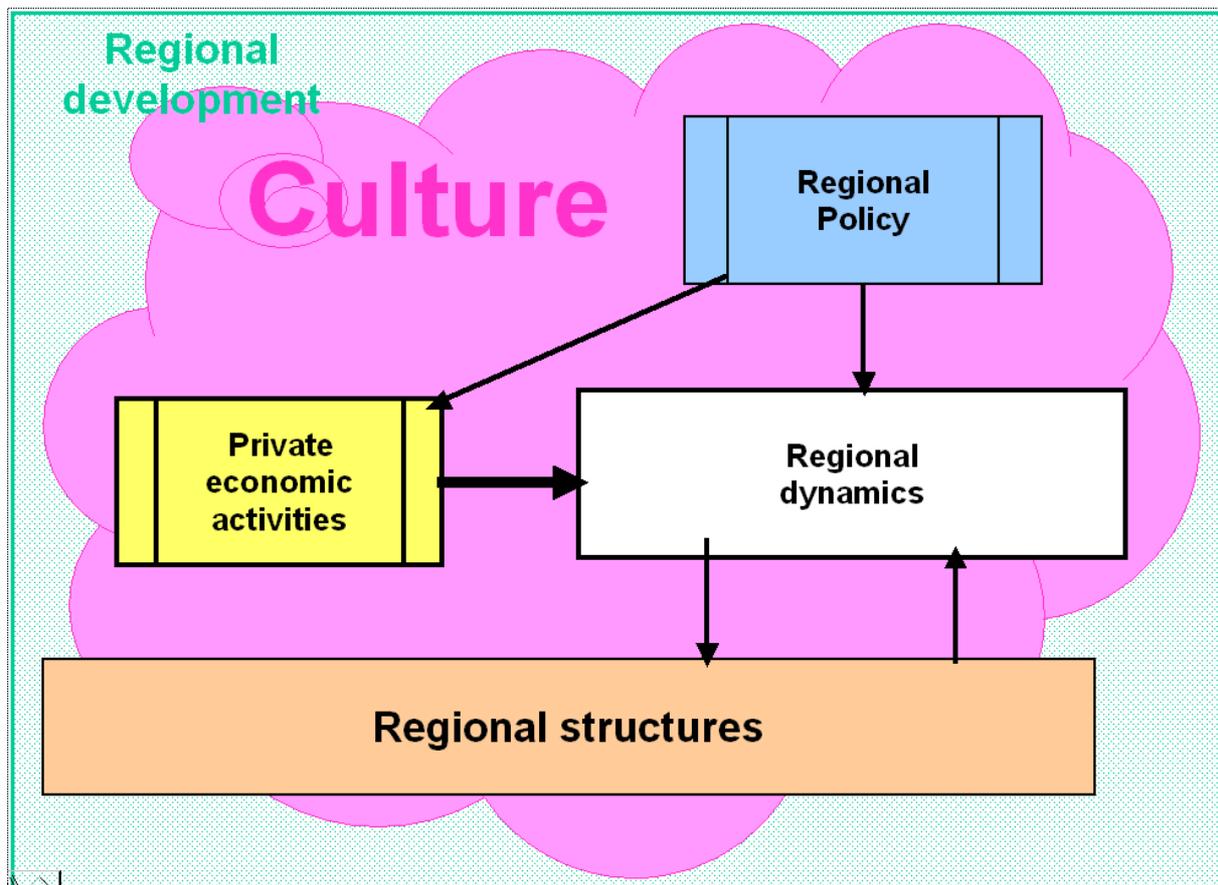
In other words, we must not assume that there is a common and identical understanding of 'culture' and its most important elements (or dimensions) - language? clothing? settlement structures? land use systems? heritage traditions and rules? administrative practice and fiscal systems? religion? sense of community? diligence? leisure time habits? Some of these might be decisive in one case, and completely irrelevant in others. What could be the scientific gain of a comprehensive (alas encyclopedic) approach? Therefore, from a methodological point of view, and given the extensive and also fuzzy character of this concept of 'culture', it would be absolutely mandatory to precisely and explicitly select those aspects, which are of specific interest in a certain scientific context, and which are part of a scientific hypothesis - 'culture' itself is much too broad to serve such a purpose, it is an almost all-encompassing construct. There is of course abundant literature about Alpine culture in general¹³, and their regions down to local scale, but most of it is of an idiographic character, and there is an obvious lack of thematically focused comparative studies. Therefore, the task of WP 5 was a considerable challenge, and deserved a careful design to achieve. We made some attempts to try to identify some indications as to which cultural dimensions might be of special importance in the context of this study. However, given the resource restrictions, these efforts could not be more than quite modest regarding the complexity and openness of the question. Obviously, to meet this challenge and at the same time avoiding a truly Herculean task, we had to look for some key factors, based on careful systems analysis: What really makes a difference in regional development?

Regional development¹⁴ is a construct as extended and at the same time fuzzy as culture - it's up to everybody's discretion, which dimensions to include and which not. We decidedly chose here a structuralist view, given the context of this research. Furthermore, the focus should be obviously much more to the future strategies and options than to the past changes. Therefore, we interpret regional development as a result of a universe of both private activities, structural restrictions and opportunities, and public (collective) decisions, the cultural context forming a general background of these processes, but without a clearly defined or traceable causality (cp. fig #1). According to the logic of the regulation theory (Bathelt 2002; Liepitz 2000) the relevant private activities are of two kinds, namely economic activities (production, consumption, investments) and socio-cultural attitudes and activities as base and underpinnings of formal public decisions, which influence (both in a supportive or restrictive way) private economic activities. It follows that cultural differences influence regional development (only) in indirect ways, mainly via the implementation of regional policy (in the broadest sense of the meaning). Other ways of influence are nowadays diminishing because of changes in economic attitudes (globalization, elimination of local, regional and even national

¹³ Cp. CIPRA (1998), CIPRA (2001), Bätzing (2002), and e.g. for Austria Borsdorf (2005a).

¹⁴ It should be noted that we agreed in the DIAMONT project team to understand "development" simply as "change over time" of some given entity (as objects, constructs, processes, attributes, etc.), in a value-free sense. Cp. the DIAMONT glossary. Thus, "regional development" means merely the changes of a region over time. - On the other hand, "development" often bears a normative connotation, in the sense of "growing bigger" etc. (cp. Concise Oxford Dictionary 9\1998). - More specifically, the UNDP defines human development as "a process of enlarging people's choices. Enlarging people's choices is achieved by expanding human capabilities and functionings. At all levels of development the three essential capabilities for human development are for people to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable and to have a decent standard of living." Levels of development are measured by the Human Development Index HDI (<http://hdr.undp.org/hd>).

protective regulations and specialties).¹⁵ Economic behaviour and decisions (e.g. preferences for regional products / producers) are gradually getting streamlined towards a uniform competitive attitude with only short-term perspectives¹⁶; in the same manner settlement structures or agriculture are losing their regional uniqueness. Therefore, cultural differences (while still present) are losing their previous importance as a driving force for regional development, giving way to more market-oriented globally unified regional patterns.



¹⁵ Consider e.g. the impact of the credit system as an important source of investments upon regional development: In many Alpine region there was a well organized system of local banks (in the sense of the Raiffeisen Sparkassen), credits being supplied by local lenders und provided to the local small entrepreneurs and households at reasonable conditions. Thus the locally generated surplus remained in the region, supporting the accumulation process at large. Now, considering the change in the banking system, with the growth of financial companies of national and international dimensions, local funds tend more and more to flow outside of the region, and on the other hand, it becomes very difficult for small businesses and also communes to get credits from such globally oriented lenders. In Switzerland e.g. the small local banks disappear, the cantonal banks with their former "state guarantee" for small-scale customers are changing to regular universal financial companies, and communes are nowadays being rated by lending agencies according to their location quality: If they are small-sized, under populated and underfinanced, not very well equipped with infrastructure, and rather far away from urban centres, then they get low ratings, and in consequence they and all private customers there have to pay above average interest rates for their credits. - Considering such fundamental changes it does not make much sense to analyse past circumstances and developments, because the future opportunities are less based in the history of a region then in the actually prevailing conditions.

¹⁶ Cp. Boesch (2005)

Fig. 1: The influence of cultural factors upon regional development
Basic structural set up and relations

Regional development is a set of regional structures and actions (both private and public), and their change over time. The cultural as a whole is a fuzzy and complex construct forming the general background of these processes. Arrows and their widths are indicating the fact that economic activities (investments; production & consumption) are regarded as the main driving forces of regional development. Source: Boesch 2005.

Competitive locations for instance are now determined by global headquarters, no longer by regional preferences. However, cultural aspects may be taken into account in the company's strategies (for example in their marketing propositions like "products from the region XYZ for the customers in region XYZ"). Therefore, one can say that cultural differences (or aspects) are about to lose their previous importance as driving forces for regional development in a relative sense, because general competition aspects have a leading role at national or regional levels (at the macro-scale) and they are of strategic importance, while the role of the cultural is more apparent at local levels (at the micro-scale), in the details of everyday life, where the influence of globalization effects may not yet be too determinant.

In this situation, *regional policy* is understood as a set of goals and measures, which will have effects on regions, to influence the regional development towards desirable directions. Common goals for regional policies are to support the competitive advantages of regions, to correct setbacks and regional or local unbalances, and to give better responses to civil society expectations.¹⁷ Depending on the relative importance of such regional policy measures, and the efficiency of their implementation (as compared to the absence of measures or an undifferentiated implementation within a country) they may or may not have a decisive influence on the regional structures. And as has been shown, regional policy is very open for cultural differences, esp. the scopes and ways public decisions are taken and public funds are allocated, the modes and specifications of legislation and administrative procedures, the general socio-political conditions, especially the interrelations of the civil society with the formal structures and bodies of state authorities and the economy. An outstanding example in case is the set of agricultural policies: In comparison with the general trend, (i.e. the EU and national levels), what is the focus of the regional level? Are there specific regional implementations in terms of objects, target subjects, means and measures, amount of funds available, criteria for subsidies, implementation and controlling, adaptation processes? Or in other words: Are there regional differences, which can be accounted to regional policy (which in turn is as an aspect of cultural differences)?

Paradoxically enough, we finally come to the conclusion, that the basic question is: If and how regional differences (of the cultural) generate, via the regional differences of the political, regional differences of structures, or in short: regional differences of development? More general, the question then is: What is the influence of culture on development? - Truly a heavy and almost philosophical question, by far exceeding the scope of this work package. But we as well could ask: What is the impact of regional differences on regional differences?

¹⁷ Cp. Armstrong/Taylor (2000).

In fact, the danger of tautological circles is evident! To avoid such traps, careful research design and analyses based on clear questions are necessary.

1.4. Research design

The research design follows from the considerations and conclusions about the structural set up and interrelations between culture and regional development: A thorough analysis of regional policy is the most promising way to get adequate answers to the scientific question pondered by Work Package 5. Within this framework, we intend a double comparison: *among* the six AC nations, and also *within* these reference spaces in the sense of regional differences at a sub-national level.

A special challenge with such an analysis in the context of DIAMONT is the fact, that all partner countries have (to some extent) a hierarchical political structure, with different layers of decision making, fiscal sources, funding, etc. Depending on the specific conditions (and 'cultures'!) in each partner country of DIAMONT, the relevant levels of regional policy measures had to be identified by the project partners. This should provide a basis to address the influence of these territorial-political structures, which by themselves are (partly) resulting from or expressing cultural differences, namely historic-political and administrative traditions.¹⁸

Therefore we designed a research procedure, which was intended to deliver comparable responses by all six national teams to questions (organized in a well structured questionnaire) focused on regional policy objectives and implementation, dealing with aspects like

- Scope of regional policy measures, references to sustainability issues;
- differences of goals and objectives of regional policy, and probable role of cultural factors to interpret these differences;
- regulative corrections of global market conditions in regional contexts;
- role of cultural factors in regional policy implementation.

However, it was a central principal of the research design to conduct a very open survey and not to ask leading questions¹⁹, in order to avoid the danger of some traditional "hypotheses" (or rather prejudice) about other cultures and their effects, which are quite common even among very sophisticated scholars. Therefore you will not find in the questionnaire closed questions based on such expectations as to how cultural differences might influence regional development, but only very open ones, leaving it up to the experts what and how to answer.

Main instrument of these comparative analyses across six nations with their many sub-national regions is a well structured questionnaire divided in eight sections. The project partners in each of the six participating AC states were asked to fill out their questionnaire and delivering their sources of information - their answers then being the prime source of information to avoid biases by a single working team and keeping the balance of comparativeness as well as possible. Knowledge and information provided by the project teams in the six AC states come from a broad range of sources: administrative reports and

¹⁸ It was a special challenge for the project partners to avoid tautological circles!

¹⁹ *Leading* here used in the sense of "suggestive question", based on some obscure or fuzzy hypotheses.

statistics, legal records, assessments and benchmarking documents. That's why a thorough document analysis was considered a key factor for the success of this project, and recommended as an information source to the project partners. In some cases this approach was backed by some interviews with experts in the field (state officials, regional promoters, researchers, etc.). - Given the scarce resources allotted to this work package and the tense timetable, no further extended literature or web research beyond the content of the project partners' feedbacks were possible.

The formal expression of this methodological approach - given the scarce amount of resources available, and the little time provided for such analyses - is a set of well-structured questions, addressing a bundle of key issues. In spite of the structure provided for rankings and quantitative or binary responses, there were always opportunities to express personal judgements, opinions, case-oriented knowledge from other projects, etc. For ease of handling and across-country comparison, the universe of actors and activities respectively, which are relevant for this analysis, is structured (at least in some sections of the inquiry), along the major regional policy concerns, which may be economic sectors and branches like agriculture, tourism, public transportation, etc.²⁰ or which refer to social or environmental issues, like nature preservation or access to public education.²¹ As a control set there are some sections in the questionnaires to gather information on the state of the regional development as such.²² In this context three different types of regions (prosperous, steady, and declining), were defined and some efforts to categorize the respective territories accordingly were undertaken. At least this differentiation was thought to be necessary because it is a well-known fact that the disparities among Alpine regions (or locations) are quite enormous.

The finalizing comparison and report was elaborated by the Swiss team in a qualitative manner²³, simply by cross-checking the six project partners' questionnaires and trying to find some nominal clusters of common or diverging characteristics both at the level of a single topic (or question) and at some aggregate levels. At that stage it seemed to be tempting to issue some considerations about underlying cultural traits responsible for such differences and clusters. However, we resisted in order avoiding statements, which could be no more than of a hypothetical quality for lack of proper evidence, namely truly proofed causal or intentional relations. Notwithstanding there are of course some considerations of a rather qualitative character aimed at gathering some interpretative clues about the topic. It seems to be quite important to perceive this methodologically justified caution not as a drawback of this inquiry but as a necessary modesty given the research conditions allotted to this work package.

In addition to the above statements about the research design of WP 5 it should also be clarified what alternate approaches were not followed, and why not. First, for lack of resources and time available there is no quantitative information included in this report, e.g. data about some key indicators of regional development like population growth or economic prosperity, or land use change.²⁴ Second, there was no attempt to work with examples (like

²⁰ Cp. especially section V of the inquiry.

²¹ Cp. especially section VII of the inquiry.

²² Cp. section VIII of the inquiry. We were well aware of the considerations in chapter #1.3 about the risks of such a broad approach without sufficient focus.

²³ There are but a few questions, which allowed also a kind of quantitative analysis, at least tentatively.

²⁴ . The only exception to this principle was an attempt to gather quantitative information about transfer payments, which then proofed to be too difficult. Cp. question #5 (Q V) of this survey.

test regions, or case study method), but rather we followed a rigid systematic approach at the macro level, in order to gain as much information as possible suited for a cross-nation comparative analysis. And thirdly there are no a priori hypothesis about specific cultural dimensions and their probable impact in the questionnaire, but always open questions, in order to keep the inquiry as open and uninfluenced as possible.²⁵

Summarizing we may state that the scientific approach of WP 5 can be characterized as a heuristic, qualitative comparative analysis, based on the evidence gathered by a well-structured questionnaire as the main source of information. Therefore, methodologically speaking, WP5 is *not* reporting the influence of cultural factors on regional development *per se*²⁶, but rather how a group of experts perceive and interpret the relations between the cultural and regional development and policy.

1.5. Procedure & Products

As was shown in the preceding paragraphs, the core approach of Work Package 5 is an analysis of the impact of regional differences (which may be interpreted as cultural differences) on regional policy in the Alpine Convention (AC) states. For this purpose a questionnaire was developed, which was then distributed to all participants. All project partners were given the opportunity to comment on the draft, whereupon the questionnaire was adjusted in some points to our partners' needs. The information contained in these questionnaires is the basis for this report.

The general structure of the questionnaire was the following (see Appendix):

1. General overview on cultural differences of regional policy;
2. General structure, tasks, and objectives of regional policy;
3. Measures & tools of regional policy;
4. Institutions of regional policy implementation;
5. Financial transfers into different sectors of economy or public services;
6. Influence of cultural factors on regional policy (in general);
7. Influence of specific values or attitudes, specific initiatives or goals;
8. State and dynamics of regional policy and impacts of regional policy measures.

Each topic was organized as follows: At start-up there are some general remarks about the topic, followed by a well structured answering section. The partners were welcomed to give additional information or unstructured comments referring to the topic.

²⁵ However, this proved to be quite a challenge for some experts who complained about the lack of given answers and therefore deficient inquiry. Quote (about the lack of closed questions about the third cycle education): "Das Bildungssystem ist doch in den Alpenländern z.T. ganz unterschiedlich: So ist z.B. in Italien (außer in Südtirol) und auch in Frankreich das duale System (Handwerkerausbildung) unbekannt, in Österreich, und Deutschland Standard.... udgl. Da gibt es sicherlich massive Einflüsse auf die Regionalentwicklung." However, no expert mentioned this topic anywhere. Cp. for this methodological dispute note #21

²⁶ Nobody could answer such a question, leading straight away into an open ontological trap.

It should be noted that the final report delivered in the following sections and paragraphs is organized in a slightly different way; this proved to be reasonable in order to improve the logic and stringency of the inquiry.

To gather truly comparative clues across the six AC states it was intended to organize the survey in two phases, with preliminary answers to all questions (or at least as much as possible) in the first round, and the option to let all partners participate from these answers at the beginning of the second round. That way we expected to enable all partner teams with a comparative basis for their final reporting, and enhance the quality of the final comparative analysis. However, the pace of the actual procedure, which was necessary to keep the tight timetable, did not really allow all project partners to attain this ambitious goal.²⁷ This in turn proved to be an additional disadvantage searching for comparative information.²⁸

In all AC states national and regional experts answered the questionnaire. This task was organized by the project partners in various ways. While in some countries the replies to the questionnaire were elaborated by the national partner together with some outside experts, other countries assembled an expert team to perform the task. In some countries the completion of the questionnaire caused some difficulties, so that several explanations were needed. In the end, the result was a completed questionnaire of high quality from each partner country to the disposal of the Swiss team, ready for the comparative analysis. However, it proved to be necessary in some instances to call back to the project partners to make some clarifications.

The results of this survey were first delivered as a technical report in due time (Oct 15, 2005). Subsequently, it underwent a crosschecking and scrutinizing by all project partners. Eventually, the WP5 lead finalized the report based on these feedbacks and delivered this research paper to the Diamond lead. Specific results of this survey will be published in different formats thereafter.

The report is organized into four chapters, with a general introduction and overview in chapter #1. Chapter #2 is devoted to the first part of this survey, dealing with the question which cultural influences on regional development and policy could possibly be identified by the experts, and how this information could be interpreted. This direct approach has to be seen in contrast to the following chapter #3, dealing with a regional policy analysis, where we will look at regional policy and its instruments, in an attempt to gather analogue information indirectly. Both approaches should deliver consistent results, which will be checked for plausibility. This evaluation is contained in the final chapter #4.

²⁷ However there are a few remarks (especially in the French questionnaire) related to answers of other teams, which proved to be very valuable during the evaluation period. - The questionnaire was elaborated after the kick-off meeting in March 2005 until mid-May, when the first-round answering phase started. This phase lasted until the end of June 2005. The final deadline for handing in all answers by the project partners was end of August 2005. During September 2005 the Swiss team worked out the final report which was delivered to the project lead in due time by October 15th, 2005. After cross-checking and scrutinizing of this draft report by all project partners, the Swiss team finalized the report based on their feed-backs between mid December 2005 and January 2006.

²⁸ This is of course a well-known basic methodological problem with comparative analyses.

2. Cultural influences, attitudes and regional development

2.0. Introduction

Chapter #2 is devoted to the first part of this survey, dealing with the question which cultural influences on regional development and policy could possibly be identified by the experts, and how this information could be interpreted. The chapter is divided into three sections: Section #2.1 is based on question #1 (Q1) of the questionnaire, looking at the experts' own view on this topic. Section #2.2 deals with cultural factors in the sense of traits, traditions, and structural properties,²⁹ whereas section #2.3 looks for attitudes and values (Q VI and Q VII of the questionnaire), both inquiries of course being always related to regional development and policy.

2.1. The experts view:

Different approaches to regional policy in the Alps (Q I)

2.1.1. Introduction

In this section, question #1 (QI) will be evaluated. This section's purpose at the beginning of the whole inquiry was to get a fresh and undisturbed record of the experts' own perception of the regional policy approaches in the different Alpine countries - more or less corroborated by facts, more or less guided by their broad general knowledge and estimation about the situation in the Alps. As they were asked about "*cultural influences*" upon regional development, their perception of culture relevant to regional development could be captured. This approach allowed getting the underlying hypothesis and scientific perceptions with which the experts went to work. According to the stated questions, the experts should also issue some comparative remarks regarding the regional policy in the six AC countries, following the specific tasks to

- describe the ***different approaches*** of regional policy for the Alps in the partner countries of DIAMONT;
- state their opinion regarding the ***cultural reasons*** for differences in the regional policy for the Alps in the partner countries of DIAMONT;
- name some of the ***driving forces*** and factors responsible for a culturally differentiated regional policy in the alpine regions.

As will be seen by the end of this report, the underlying hypotheses will be measured against the evidence, which in the following sections will be collected and presented. Not quite surprisingly some of the hypotheses can not be maintained by the experts' own testimony, either for lack of data or because of constructs too fuzzy to be captured validly.

²⁹ Such structural properties are also the context of the UNDP's understanding of '*culture*'. The Human Development Report (HDR) 2004 points to "culture as a new dimension of inequality, and highlights the conceptual as well as data gaps that currently exist, which limit the ability to measure and monitor cultural exclusion effectively. There is a need for disaggregated data to monitor group inequalities along cultural factors such as ethnicity, language, religion."

In the following three paragraphs the major results of this part of the inquiry are reported, always along the same structure. First, there will be a very brief summary of the experts' opinion, in a rather enumerative manner. Then, in an attempt of a synoptic view, the major traits mentioned by the experts will be listed, with indications of the source of such remarks.

2.1.2. Different approaches in the six AC countries

Austria's regional policy is described as quite decentralized. At the state level there is a constitutional objective, but no laws concerning regional policy, whereas each one of the *Bundesländer* passes its own regional policy, with the communes having quite a large scope of competences. Due to the influence of the European Union, regional policy is fairly developed, and it is mentioned that sustainability is rather important compared to the other AC countries. Moreover, regional management has been greatly advanced and well organised in recent years.

Regional policy in *France* does not have the importance found in the other countries. It is described as a centralistic, top-down approach where the central government intervenes in regional policy matters through its local services. Sustainability is implemented in regional and national parks, but no topic outside their limits. France's brand-new land use planning law has not developed its full force yet.

Germany's approach is designated as federal and decentralised at the state-*Länder*-level: the central government setting the framework laws while the *Länder* have legislative power in a more detailed way on their territory. The communes, on the other hand, have fewer competences than in other federalist countries. Since only a tiny part of Germany's territory and also a rather limited part of Bavaria lies in the Alps, there is mention of a difference in perception of the Alps as a task or problem area, in relation to the rate of territory within the AC limits.³⁰

Italy's approach is hard to grasp, since the Italian Alps are split into seven administrative regions with their specific and different approaches. Moreover, from a constitutional point of view, the Italian regions have different statutes and legislative power and their development status differs significantly depending on the morphology of the territory, their population, their infrastructure and their remoteness from major cities. As is the case with Austria, it is assumed by the experts that the European Union has a substantial influence on Italy's (or rather the Italian regions) regional policy, although it is not mentioned in what respect.³¹

³⁰ The term "Alpenzentrismus" used in this context could best be translated by "alp-centric view". However, it is not mentioned as to how this specific view could have an influence on regional development: does it imply more or less weight for Alpine concern? It may be true that there is something like an Alp mythology, but then also the countryside, nature and the urban sphere have symbolic connotations beyond their more mundane qualities. Such implicit relation hypotheses are very difficult to handle unless they are clearly and directly addressed.

³¹ It is note-worthy that this remark was made in connection with Italy and Austria - does it mean, that this would not be true for the other AC countries? Or does it mean, that for some reason Italian and Austrian experts are more aware of this influence?

Slovenia's approach is described as rather centre-oriented than concerned about its peripheral regions. This is attributed to the historical context, since the structural changes or transformation towards an urbanised and globalized country runs now at full speed, in order to catch up with the neighbouring countries of Central Europe. As urbanisation advances, there are enormous challenges in rural areas, as a lack of natural resources, depopulation, high unemployment, significant pollution and extremely small-parcelled land. It is reported that all of these grave problems are not adequately addressed by policy measures and therefore hampering a prosperous regional development.

The situation in *Switzerland* is described as decidedly decentralised, especially in the policy fields of land use planning and ecology, where the central state has only limited legislative competences. However, regarding agriculture and rural infrastructure, the Swiss federation has an explicitly federal regional policy with an elaborate system of goals, strategies and tools. Recently, a need to revise the current model has been manifest, which should lead towards a new regional policy with a stronger economic orientation.

In the following list all major differences mentioned by the experts are contained, the list being ordered according to the significance given by the experts to the specific factors. If possible it is indicated to which countries the characteristics mentioned apply. In the country columns, it is marked if the experts of that country share the opinion or remarks stated.

Approaches / Characteristics	A	F	D	I	SLO	CH
importance of "territorial geometry" (e.g. level of decentralization or urbanization), administrative structures		X		X	X	X
centralized vs. decentralized political and administrative structures, influence of the central state authorities, type of governance: top-down or bottom-up (F & I vs. D-A-CH)	X	X		X		
"Latin" approach ³² (in F & I) vs. approach in D, A & CH				X		
perception of the Alps, meaning or importance of Alpine perspectives, in relation to the territorial structure (" <i>Alpenzentrismus</i> ", " <i>Alpenmythos</i> ")			X	X		
formalized planning procedures vs. case-to-case decisions (CH / A)	X					X
tremendous regional diversity, gradient between centres and periphery (I & SLO)				X	X	
importance of urbanization, neglecting the rural areas (SLO vs. CH & A)				X	X	

Fig. 2-1a: Different approaches to regional development
Countries are indicated with their code.

³² "Latin" approach implies a bias towards urban life-style with a certain disdain for the countryside (or mountains), whereas other traditions tend to glorify rural life as the source of a sound development. Cp. the questionnaire of the Italian experts.

2.1.3. Cultural reasons of regional differences

It is quite elucidating what kind of influences the experts regard as "cultural". Since it was decidedly intended to work with a very open term of "culture", this result is a valuable contribution about the state of the discourse on cultural influences. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that all remarks of the experts in this paragraph concerned some kind of differences (regarded as cultural causes) but rarely or even never giving an indication about the impact of such differences.³³ Other remarks are mere guessing about causal relations with no adequate stringency down to the core of the question about relations between culture and regional development.³⁴ This leaves the door open for hypothesis building and further fact-finding research.

Here follows a list of the most important or frequent remarks, with some of them mentioning the same or similar traits already remarked in paragraph #1:³⁵

Historical context and influences: As the prime cultural factor of differences in regional policy most experts mentioned the historical background.³⁶ It is their common opinion, that it makes a difference where people are coming from, what their (collective) fate was and where their roots lie. In this context there are also remarks about the legal system and the different traditions (of Romanic vs. Germanic type). Otherwise it is mostly left to the reader's imagination as to how such divers history might in fact influence regional development at present and in the future.

If we look closer at the substance of such an historical context (what not all experts did), then most often the key factor is the shape, structure and functioning of the ***politico-administrative system***, whether it's a centralized (top-down) or decentralized (bottom-up) system, whether some regions or even communes have more or less autonomy (like e.g. the Aosta valley or the communes in the Swiss canton of Grisons), and if there is to some degree cooperation (even solidarity) among mountain regions, in order to pursue their own interests as opposed to some objectives stated by a far away central power (symbolised by it's capital³⁷). Also mentioned was the administrative mood, handling affairs rather pragmatic (as in the French culture) or more formalized (as in Austria) or value-oriented (?) as in Switzerland. And into this context belongs the observation, that the mere size of a territory has an influence upon the perceptions

³³ An example in case is the remark that the mere size of a territory would be of importance (for what?), comparing Bavaria and Tyrol, with the fact that Tyrol has about the size of a Bavarian administrative district (*Regierungsbezirk*). So what? - Or from Italian experts: "If the alpine area covers only a small part of the territory and only a quite small percentage of the population lives there, then priority will be something else and somewhere else" - what else? where else? - It seems to be evident, that without a clear stated relation of cause and effect (at least as a working hypothesis) such remarks are not very helpful.

³⁴ There is e.g. an observation by German experts that the mere size of a settlement or administrative district (much in the sense of "*Lebensraum*") would improve the cosiness of social life. However, it was left open to the reader's inspiration how this relation should affect regional development (improving it? retarding it?), although with an implicit bias towards a positive connotation, no hints to the phenomenon of urban emancipation processes or social control being made.

³⁵ This way there is some redundancy within these two paragraphs, stemming from the fact that the experts did not interpret the questions the same way - in itself a difference of perception, which could also be attributed to the cultural.

³⁶ With "historical background" the experts refer to the divers flow of historical events over the last centuries, at least going back to the Napoleonic era with its tremendous reshaping of the European political landscape.

³⁷ Cp. the remark by German experts that Italy's regions were on their way of "emancipation from Rome".

and attitudes, especially regarding the functionality of the administration. One can conclude from these remarks that there is no clear-cut relation visible between the factors mentioned: If the centralized top-down administration works pragmatic, and the decentralized bottom-up system functions much more rigid, than what is the concrete result in regional policy decisions, what is the concrete impact to regional development?

Quite close related to the question of the administrative system is a third trait, which most experts regarded as an important factor, though not a cultural phenomenon s.str., namely the so called "*territorial morphology*" (or *geometry*), which is described as a perception-based impact, related to the territorial shape and conditions in a given country, especially depending on the rate of alpine areas partaking, their remoteness and importance for the state in question. It is argued that the more eminent alpine territories and resources are, the more attention is being paid to their problems and concern;³⁸ or vice versa: the more marginal this alpine part being (compared to the territory as a whole) the more neglected would be the relevant topics.³⁹

In contrast to these remarks are statements by other experts who noted that they observed tremendous *convergences* in perception, objectives and measures, not at least because of the growing awareness that in all countries similar problems should be resolved, and that cultural factors probably would be of some meaning only at the local level, but of no decisive influence at the macro-level.

It should also be noted with interest, that language or ethnic differences were never mentioned in this context, neither were different approaches, perceptions or attitudes towards nature or the sustainability paradigm, technology, social emancipation, participatory processes or other forms of modernization.⁴⁰ Also not mentioned was the topic of "civil society" - new forms of public-private partnerships and involvement of non-structured citizens' bodies, which assume a rather important role in the general literature on transformation and development.⁴¹

In the following list all major factors of influence mentioned by the experts are contained, the list being ordered according to the significance given by the experts to the specific factors. If

³⁸ Cp. the remarks by the Italian experts, and also the comment in note #33:

- "if the alpine area covers only a small part of the territory and only a quite small percentage of the population lives there, then priority will be something else and somewhere else;
- if the administrative centre is far away from the mountain area, then perception of problems of the mountains will be smaller;
- if the majority of people doesn't live and work on the mountains, then there won't be a strong opinion strength to direct interventions to the mountains and there won't be any mountain culture and identification with the mountains.
- if mountain covers most of the territory, then people relate themselves every moment with them, setting a high priority to the intervention policies on the mountains."

³⁹ Of course, as with all factors discussed, also this one should be seen in a relative context, not in a monocausal relation.

⁴⁰ In paragraph #1 though there was one remark about the "Latin" mentality, which has a comparable content. And some expert noted that the Alps as a whole could be described as a region characterized by a "*cultural retardation*", but this opinion was not shared by the others (or even contested), and it was not further corroborated by evidence whatsoever.

⁴¹ Cp. e.g. Merkel (2000).

possible it is indicated to which countries the characteristics mentioned apply. In the country columns, it is marked if the experts of that country share the opinion or remarks stated.

Characteristics	A	F	D	I	SLO	CH
Historical context	X		X			X
Political and administrative structures and traditions, type of governance: top-down or bottom-up (F & I vs. D-A-CH)	X		X	X		X
Size and shape of territory	X		X			
importance of "territorial morphology": portion of alpine areas (A & CH vs. I & F); perception of the Alps, meaning or importance of alpine perspectives, in relation to the territorial structure			X	X		X
convergence of problem perception and solving, cultural factors with only minor influence, diminished influence of internat. borders		X			X	
pragmatic vs. rigid administration (F & I / A & CH)			X			
cultural retardation of the Alps, mountain oriented mythology			X			

Fig. 2-1b: Cultural reasons of regional differences
Countries are indicated with their code.

2.1.4. Driving forces

The third question in this section addressed driving forces and factors, which in the experts' view had and will have a decisive influence on the course of regional policy. Since this question addressed again the same set of factors as in the previous questions (like language, administration, value system) but with a special focus on the active role they may play, there is of course some redundancy in the answers. Therefore in this summary only new entries and the most important factors are reported.

The *Austrian* experts remarked that their country's access to the European Union (in 1995) brought about a significant change of regional policy, both in terms of resources available and in activities performed. The EU guidelines and strategies were implemented, and common programs (like LEADER) were joined, with a special impact in border regions. A similar impact is attributed to the Alpine Convention, with about the same effects.

This observation obviously corroborates the opinion of other experts, that there was in the last years a significant evolution towards common approaches across previously separated territories, or (in other words) less significance of former (historical or cultural) differences.

According to the *German* experts two influences are of special importance: again mentioned are the specific administrative structures and traditions (see above), and then also the economic-geographical situation seems to play a major role: the regional policy is oriented depending on the structural context to meet the specific problems.

The *Italian* view emphasizes (in addition to already mentioned factors) the role of an active population or their participation in regional policy decision. This in turn is depending on the rate of autonomy in territorial management, and also of the rate of infrastructure and services for the population. A further factor at last is a successful monitoring and evaluation of policy decisions.

The *French* experts raise again the argument, that the "government culture" and the "governance systems" lead to differences in regional policy, but also differences of perception of the Alps as object of specific policies, which in turn depends on specific cultural traditions (like attitudes towards nature, towards local autonomy, towards the role of the State, etc).

The *Slovenian* perspective is mainly influenced by the fact that in recent years (of course related to the access to the EU) the national regional policy seems to be focused mainly towards the urban regions, whereas the rural and alpine regions depend largely on their own (and very limited) resources. Thus the cooperation between public and private sectors to seek synergies becomes a decisive factor to promote regional development.

The *Swiss* experts share the opinion that administrative tradition played a major role in the past but its influence is reported to diminish gradually, although specific regional identities could make a difference.

Summarizing and commenting these answers it seems to be obvious that most experts can hardly deliver precise indications about the decisive impact of some factors in the sense of distinguishing forces. As in the earlier paragraphs administrative traditions and regional identities are mentioned, but there is no information about the specific impact (or at least its direction) of such traits: Is tradition retarding progress towards sustainability (as some experts seem to suggest) or is it one big success factor for regional development? No evidence whatsoever is reported. Another sector to be discussed is human resources: In the general discussion about regional development there is growing evidence that human resources (education, knowledge, skills) seem to play a major role as a driving force, and therefore should be supported for capacity building reasons.⁴² However, in all expert reports there is not a single clue to this discussion, although it may be an option for regional policy measures for some regions to improve their respective standing with specific educational efforts - much in the sense of driving forces. This absence of information in the experts' reports about specific efforts towards capacity building then must, of course, clearly be interpreted as strong evidence that there really are only few differences, as some experts explicitly pointed out: This seems to be plausible, given the common challenges by quite strong exogenous impacts upon all alpine regions, and the requirement of rapid transformations: There is a unifying necessity, which leaves but little margin for specific action.

2.1.5. Conclusions

Interesting enough, there were only marginal remarks regarding *sustainability* as a matter of policy about the Alps, as a benchmark that could differentiate between truly diverse approaches. And there were no attempts to measure the alleged bias between different types of regional development (let alone policy) with some clues connected with the Alpine Convention. Also of revealing interest is the fact, that in most cases there were but vague indications about differences in approach, but without any hard facts about the effects of such differences. E.g. what is the effect of the often purported "Latin" approach to development? Does this mean, that in such a context the development is more effective, just, or sustainable,⁴³ or quite to the contrary? Or in other words: If there are no control variables (at

⁴² Cp. section #2.3.3., paragraph "Education", p.34.

⁴³ Cp. Daly (1992).

best measurable ones like population growth, growing skills and knowledge capacities, social participation and integration across ethnic boundaries, careful land use systems, or economic activities), the mentioning of differences is about worthless, because their effects are not traceable⁴⁴. Are the experts trapped with a misleading perception of traditional (cultural) traits, are they overestimating their importance, and at the same time unable to provide adequate evidence?

We conclude that considering the complete set of answers by the experts to the first questions it is obvious that no traces of really decisive cultural differences are reported in a way as to gain enough evidence for hypothesis building, with the intention of corroborating them subsequently. Therefore we suggest (in the sense of a conditional working hypothesis for the inquiries to follow) to adopt the opinion of the French and Slovenian experts, who state, that facing common challenges at a speedy rate means that also the regional policy responses in such a situation follows a pattern of convergence (in goals and means) to meet such challenges in the future. In this context, the cases of Austria and Slovenia in connection with their access to the EU and the reported impacts upon regional policy in those countries⁴⁵ are very interesting indeed: They show clearly two key elements: First one is the "time-lag"-effect inherent in transformation processes - this means, that regional differences are foremost an expression of time-lags between stages of a convergence process, and not fundamental everlasting diversities. And second, this is clear evidence of the accelerating and converging effects of a quite new situation, which gains much relevance compared to the traditional factors, which in turn loose their importance. Or in other words: The cultural heritage in the Alps is a splendid treasure of cultural differences, but these are not of strategic influence any more, facing the challenges of the decades to come.

2.2. Influence of cultural factors (Q VI)

2.2.1. Introduction

Regional policy and regional development at large in the alpine countries may be influenced by specific *cultural factors*, at national, regional, and even local levels. Cultural factors such as different languages, the existence of minorities, traditional cultural values and characteristics and others, may have a more or less strong effect on regional policy and development⁴⁶. This section deals with the impact the different cultural factors on regional policy in different countries and regions, as reported by the experts in section #6 (Q VI) of the questionnaire. They were asked to indicate the present state and also the trends recognizable to them, in terms of stages of importance of a specific trait. Furthermore it should be mentioned to what respect (into which direction) a specific trait would influence the regional development (promoting or slowing it somehow). There was also an opportunity to mention traits not listed in the questionnaire, in order to gather as much information as possible.

We tried to summarize the results of this survey in *table format* (cp. figures 2-2 a & b), indicating the future importance of specific factors of cultural impact, combined with the

⁴⁴ Cp. the remarks about the temptation of tautological observations.

⁴⁵ Cp. the related remarks in the sections 2.1.2 to 2.1.4

⁴⁶ Cp. Ipsen (1991)

recent trends involved. We are fully aware of the facts that (1) the experts' opinions were normally based on just a few sources, and that (2) there is but a qualitative scale, thereby inhibiting elaborate calculations.

2.2.2. Language

If we think about culture most often one of the first associations is language. And for good reason: In a time of oral tradition⁴⁷ culture was passed over to the next generation or diffused to neighbouring regions mostly by face-to-face contacts using a common language. Therefore the usual equation "*culture = language*" has to a certain degree some justification. For centuries the languages, language groups and dialects had a differentiating effect with regard to the socio-cultural development of the Alps. Next to the dominating standard⁴⁸ languages, minority-languages, dialects and linguistic sub-groups were of great importance. To this day there are within the scope of the Alpine Convention, next to the four dominating languages Italian, German, French and Slovenian, numerous other language groups, as well as regional and local idioms and dialects.

The evaluation of the influence of the cultural factor "language" on alpine regional policy and development in each alpine country produced different outcomes. In most countries the influence of this factor is considered of *little importance* – in the future even as unimportant. Solely in Slovenia the language's influence is regarded as very important and will remain a significant differentiating factor in the future.⁴⁹ By several experts it was argued that a situation of a "cultural divide" seems to be developing: While the regional or national alpine languages keep their relevance in daily use, they lose their significance in large-scale business (as e.g. tourism) and also in cross-border cooperation more and more, because of the widespread use of the English language. In the course of urbanization tendencies and cultural assimilation processes, minority languages such as ladinic and Rhaeto-Romanic as well as local dialects (e.g. in Austria and Switzerland) are increasingly under pressures. It seems to be impossible (or not worthwhile?) to compensate this trend with elaborate promotion and support measures. Therefore, within the realm of the Alps, there is a tendency that the cultural factor language is going to decrease its influence on regional policy and development. In this context, an interesting phenomenon is the case of regional identity: As in many cases regions were instituted in the second half of the XXth century more according to governance rationality than along traditional language (or cultural) territoriality, the latter factors thereby lost much of their former influence.⁵⁰ Thus, regional policy differentiation about the cultural factor "language" is going to lose its relevance completely.

2.2.3. Minorities

For a long time, minorities had a *substantial influence* on regional policy in some alpine countries (e.g. South Tyrol and the Aosta Valley in Italy, Slovenians in Carinthia, Rhaeto-Romanic ethnics in Grisons/Switzerland, German and Rhaeto-Romanic ethnics in Venetia and Trentino/Italy, Italian ethnics in Slovenia). In many cases, they called for special attention

⁴⁷ Here used in the sense of "passing knowledge, attitudes, etc. from one generation to the next".

⁴⁸ I.e. national languages

⁴⁹ However, there was no indication about the direction of this impact.

⁵⁰ Consider e.g. the case of the Safien valley in Switzerland, inhabited by Walser people, proud of their old alemannic tradition. Nevertheless, since 1974 they are part of the Surselva region, dominated by Romanic people. However, there is no clear evidence about the development effect of this specific situation.

and support for their difficult situation, they asked for specific measures and resource allocation in reference to their minority status.

Today however, the influence of this cultural factor is considered of *little importance* in the alpine regions of most countries. Exceptions to this assertion are Switzerland and Slovenia where this factor still seems to be important. In the future the influence of the presence of minorities is going to lose all or almost all of its importance for the alpine countries- except for Slovenia, and there is also a tendency that the cultural factor "presence of minorities" is going to decrease its importance for regional policy measures. However, there is a new phenomenon emerging: new cultural minorities, which are getting increasingly important in some regions due to recent work-related immigration. So far, there is no indication about the impact of this new situation, and how regional policy should deal with it.

2.2.4. Indigenous cultures & traditional value systems

For centuries, indigenous cultures and traditional value systems formed the socio-cultural, economic and environmental development of many regions within the Alps. This had not only a direct effect on various forms of societal organisation in alpine communities, but also on land use, cultivation systems, and thereby upon structure and aspect of traditional (cultivated) landscapes. To this day, the influence of the cultural factors "presence of indigenous cultures/presence of traditional value systems" on specific regional policies of most alpine countries is considered to be important, if not very important – especially its impact on *tourism*. An exception to this is France, where these factors are reported to have little significance.

However, the impact of these factors is going to decrease and become of little importance in the future in all countries. An exception is going to be Slovenia where these factors are expected to be important, if not very important in the future, although there is no indication if this tendency will improve or hinder regional development.

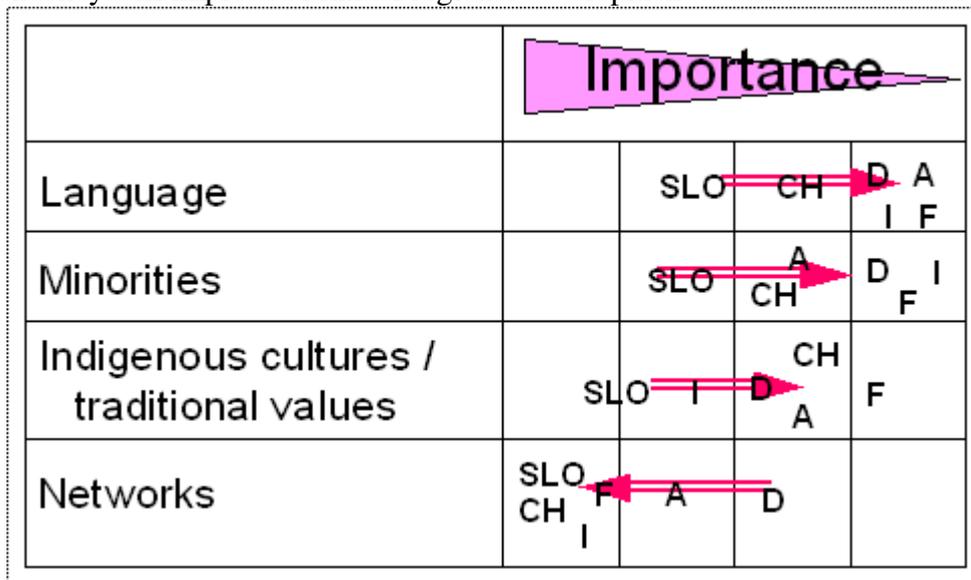


Fig. 2-2a: Importance of cultural factors on regional policy & development I
 Entries indicate the experts' opinion for the future situation, arrows show the actual trends. Countries are indicated with their code.

Generally speaking one can assign a stronger differentiating influence to the difference of *rural and urban areas* than to the above-mentioned cultural factors. In the future, the trend is even stronger that the influence of the cultural factors "presence of indigenous cultures/presence of traditional value systems" on regional development and regional policy is going to decrease, even though there is an increasing need in tourism to stage the "cultural factors" which will open the gap between every-day life-style and tourist event-production.

2.2.5. Local projects & networks

Within the framework of alpine regional development, local projects and networks (e.g. Euregios, Leader-projects, steady regional conferences) are of a special importance. Such projects and networks are often based on a bottom-up approach and unfold an immediate effect on the societal base of alpine regions and municipalities. One has to bear in mind the corresponding projects and networks in alpine towns.⁵¹ According to the experts' opinion, local networks contribute to a better consciousness of competitive advantages, a better knowledge of the territory and a coordination of efforts for a common goal.

Currently, the influence of the factor 'presence of local projects/networks' is considered in the alpine regions of most countries to be important, if not very important - with the exceptions of Switzerland and Bavaria, where at present this influence is judged as less important due to a lack of resources available, although its usefulness is recognized. The future situation in the six countries is judged to be quite similar, with a general tendency of still growing importance.

2.2.6. Other influencing factors

In order to gain as much information as possible there was at the end of this section an open question about other factors of influence. The experts were invited to mention whatever they deemed to be important. The results of this inquiry are very interesting indeed: German and Austrian experts mentioned again some factors already discussed in section #2-1, such as cultural heritage, regional identity or religion.⁵² They argued about their relative importance, with an implicit opinion that such traditions would improve regional development. However, Italian experts asked if such traits would not hamper regional development, at least in the short run (which means: under the actual conditions of global competition). This opinion coincides well with some additional considerations by French and Italian experts: They argued that lack of interaction due to marginalization and absence of urbanization processes, as well as lacking confidence in authorities would be important reasons of insufficient regional policy efforts and whence development.

⁵¹ Cp. Stalder 2001

⁵² Again there was but a hint about the question, in which sense "religion" could improve or hamper regional development, mentioning Max Weber's well-known but disputed argument of the superiority of the "protestant work ethic" compared to the "catholic culture" - but no evidence corroborating this thesis was reported.

	Importance			
cultural & natural heritage / regional identity		D I A		
sustainable development	D	←		
marginalization / lack of interaction	I	←		
urbanization		F		
confidence to authorities		F		

Fig. 2-2b: Importance of cultural factors on regional policy & development II
 Entries indicate the experts' opinion for the future situation, arrows show the actual trends. Countries are indicated with their code.

2.2.7. Conclusions

To most experts, the alpine-wide trend is a decreasing influence of traditional cultural factors, such as language, presence of minorities as well as presence of indigenous cultures and traditional value systems, much in the sense of speeding up the processes of transformation. Reversely, the presence of local projects and networks as well as modernization efforts in general (such as increasing urbanization) are judged to be of increasing influence upon regional policy and development.⁵³ However, it is evident that the perception of such modernization efforts and their importance are very different among the experts involved in this inquiry. We can distinguish two opposite schools of thinking, one linking regional policy and development to traditional cultural values that are (still) firmly tied to territories and the people living there. The other view is that regional development (and policies supporting it) depends more on the urbanization profile and the socio-economic potential of a given location, rather independent of cultural factors, thereby generating completely new geometries of progress, which may or may not coincide with the traditional structures. Since both views were not supported by overwhelming factual evidence, it must be left open which one of these hypotheses were more plausible than the other.

Another result of this inquiry is also very revealing: With but some minor exceptions there is almost no mentioning of "sustainable development policies" as a strategic advantage for a region (or for a culture according to the traditional view linking territory, people and their culture) - this is interesting indeed for a survey, which is firmly tied to the Alpine Convention strategy. It is tempting to interpret this result as a hidden confirmation of the opinion, that mainstream economic progress is the road map to regional development, even if (or just because!) it is not sustainable in the strict sense of the term. This then would be a truly disturbing result, explaining some resistance to acknowledge it. However, if a survey is not able to collect the results that were expected, should the inquiry then be scrapped, or amended?⁵⁴

2.3. Influence of specific values and attitudes (Q VII)

2.3.1. Introduction

Whereas the scope of the last section was the influence of specific cultural factors, we now turn our attention to specific values and attitudes. Unfortunately, this difference⁵⁵ was not

⁵³ Cp. also Gualini (2005) as an example of the "Europeanization" of regional policy.

⁵⁴ Cp. e.g. one expert's opinion, who criticized a draft of this report as follows: "It is this chapter which seems for me quite insufficient. The fact that we do not find the real cultural differences of the Alpine states in this matrix may be regarded a good indicator that quite a lot of cultural elements are missing in the analysis. What about religion, education, national identity/official history, gender etc.? How to explain the role of machismo in the "Dorfkaiser"-syndrome in Tyrol and its impacts to regional development? What about the role of "personal networks" in Austria and Bavaria? And what about "Proporz" as a decisive factor for regional policy? What about the under-surface resistance of Socialist ideas of planning in Slovenia? My suggestion is to implement these ideas and more in a more voluminous and rich synthesis. However I would like to find at the end of this chapter an estimation on a higher intellectual level on what may be culturally defined in the regional policy".

⁵⁵ When we asked in section #2.2 about minorities, it was a question about their (direct) influence on regional development and policy, e.g. in terms of specific projects or their active participation in such projects. On the

very clear to some experts. However, in the general discussion about culture and cultural change in a time of multi-optionality, transformation and globalization⁵⁶ it is generally agreed upon that traditional cultural traits such as language or religion (question #6 (Q VI), treated in section #2.2 of this report, are nowadays still important as formal or structural characteristics. But factual human activities are rather driven by attitudes and values, which more and more shift away from the former well-structured social categories.⁵⁷

This is especially true if we consider the shift in *economic attitudes*: They were formerly (and partly still are) dominated by the focus on locally based and oriented small-scale agricultural and artisanal enterprises, but the scope is rapidly changing to national and even global co-operation and competition. The concern of this section of the survey was to gather information about the state and direction of such transformations, both in terms of basic attitudes as well as their influence upon regional policy measures. The first four paragraphs of this section deal with such economic perspectives, whereas the second half of this section (questions 5 through 9) turns to environmental and social attitudes. Again, as in section #2.2, we tried to summarize the results of this survey in *table format* (cp. figures 2-3 a & b), indicating the future importance of specific values and attitudes, combined with the recent trends involved.

2.3.2. Economic attitudes

Among the experts there was overwhelming accord that the general *economic progress* of a nation and its *extra-alpine growth* are fundamentally relevant for the alpine regions of the country, both for regional development as such, and also for the direction of regional policy measures. The Alpine space is evidently dependent on external economic impacts.⁵⁸ Moreover, there was also a general accord that this dependence would still increase in the future. Interesting enough, this influence was never seen as divergence effect,⁵⁹ quite the opposite: There was a common opinion that extra-alpine growth and progress will produce spill-over and network effects beneficial for the Alpine realm. Some experts even considered the metropolises as "engines" of alpine regional development. This is especially true for tourist regions: In some regions of the Alps, tourism is an important (if not the most important) economic sector, whose dependence on general economic cycles increases the effects mentioned. Regional policy then should and would follow this strategy, trying to enhance spill-over effects and networking efficiently.

Looking now at the alpine *regional economies*, it would only be logic that the same paradigm as mentioned in the preceding paragraph was relevant in this context, signalling a decisive shift from the old-fashioned traditional economy (and policy measures to protect it from transitional stress) towards an open, innovative and dynamic performance. Not surprisingly

other hand, in section #2.3 we would like to know what attitudes concerning minorities and their rights there are present in specific contexts, e.g. if they are seen as assets or draw-back, etc.

⁵⁶ Cp. Gross (1994); Eagleton (2000); Merkel (2000).

⁵⁷ This seems to be a paradox statement in a time when Moslems and Christians struggle over items such as religious symbols; but if we look closer we realise that arrogance, disdain or hatred are not tied to a persons religious confession, neither are humbleness and peacefulness. - Cp. Gerhards (2005).

⁵⁸ Not only that headquarters of companies, which have an impact on the alpine space, are located outside the Alps, but this is true also for the markets of most alpine enterprises.

⁵⁹ Cp. the economic theory of polarized development between centre and periphery (Myrdal 1957); and recent evidence on this topic: Caesar R. et al. (2003); Cuadrado-Roura/Parellada (2002).

then and perfectly consistent, all expert teams report that economic innovation and improved productivity of single enterprises have high relevance for the actual alpine regional development, and that such qualities are at the core of regional policy actions. Furthermore, the actual trend indicates an even bigger influence of this strategy. This is reported to be especially true for the growth poles within the alpine regions, but it is also intended for the alpine peripheries.

However there are some remarks that although this strategy might be well intended it could not be implemented very easily, due to *adverse location conditions*, such as insufficient access infrastructure and/or insufficient urbanization. Due to the given settlement structure, innovation is fragmented and spread out too lean instead of being clustered as in the growth poles. As a consequence many places are losing business and traditional local artisan firms are fading out gradually, in spite of the innovation strategy - just because it is not very effective under such structural conditions. It is worth mentioning that the experts attributed such a "divided" development between centre and periphery not to some cultural factors but mainly to adverse spatial structures, which can be found everywhere in the Alps, but cannot easily be overcome. On the other hand, there is a positive message in the sense that alpine growth poles can be successful if they are plugged into the overall (national and global) network.

As already mentioned the new economic paradigm is not only based on innovation, but demands also a high performance in *regional cooperation and networking*. Therefore looking only at single enterprises is not adequate. All expert teams reported accordingly that they observed these upcoming requirements to be important,⁶⁰ with a perspective of an even very important significance in the near future.⁶¹ Also regional policy strategies are reported to pick up this new orientation very fast. However, as long as the regional economy is not very well structured, or not even reaching critical mass, cooperation is not easy for lack of business partners.

⁶⁰ Again Swiss experts reported that this new orientation was only gradually implemented, but quickly gaining momentum. This fact might be related to the peculiarities of the Swiss political system, with its checks and balances, which is said to generally slow down political innovation. But given many opposing examples, such an explanation might as well be dismissed into the realm of myth and legends.

⁶¹ Cp. Thierstein /Walser 2000. - Only the Italian and German teams mentioned that according to their expertise this factor remains important. Again as in the case of Switzerland it does not seem adequate to over-interpret such minor deviations in perception and judgement.

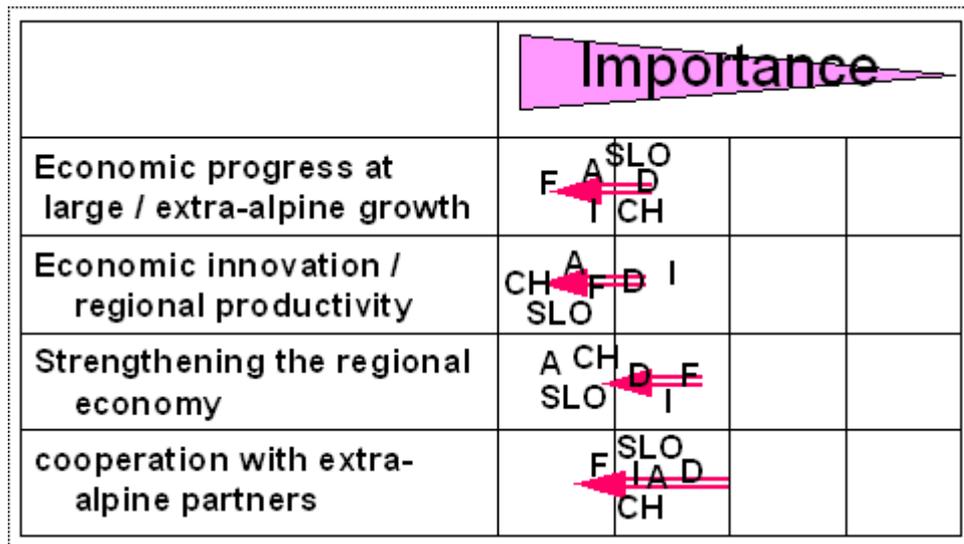


Fig. 2-3a: Importance of economic attitudes on regional policy & development

Entries indicate the experts' opinion for the future situation, arrows show the actual trends. Countries are indicated with their code.

Now completing the new economic strategy set it remains to look at the *cooperation with extra-alpine partners*, exactly because of the difficulties treated in the preceding paragraphs. Again with perfect logic, all expert teams report the growing significance of this requirement. They argue that alpine regions very often have only fragmented value creation chains, that alpine economic systems don't function in a closed cycle any more, and that they are not mainly oriented towards domestic activities any more but are opened to the "outside world". At the same time they point out to the fact that there are specific alpine resources (especially for the tourism business) and that the alpine remoteness could as well be a competitive advantage of the area, at least for specific activities, thus giving rise to a truly reciprocal relation.⁶² Furthermore, cooperation with extra-alpine partners is already institutionalized as 'functional cooperation' at the administrative level of many countries. Thus, administrative and planning regions of some countries contain areas inside and outside of the perimeter of the Alpine Convention. Therefore, cooperation with extra-alpine partners is considered by almost all expert teams to be important (and common practice), with a trend to become even more important in the future.⁶³

⁶² Cp. Perlik/Messerli 2004

⁶³ Consistently, Swiss experts observe that extra-regional cooperation was not so important in the past, but is catching up fast. It should be noted that this judgement is related to the paradigm shift of the Swiss regional policy which only in 2005 started to be implemented, whereas the Alpine economic relations at large were of course for a long time focused at the extra-alpine areas with their tremendous market capacity.

Concluding, it is obvious, that the experts unanimously had all⁶⁴ observed in their specific contexts the new *mainstream economic paradigm* of the nineties, thus arguing that in a world of growing interdependence the less dynamic and less potential regions must join the economic main road as good as possible instead of looking for a path of it's own.⁶⁵ There was no indication of a critical approach to this paradigm, e.g. doubting about the convergence theory, or a question about the environmental impact of extra-alpine growth on alpine ecosystems (as is the case in the transit traffic debate).⁶⁶ Therefore, the conclusion from this inquiry is that there are no differences (cultural or others) among the opinions reported.

2.3.3. Environmental and social values

Ecological sustainability has a special place in alpine regional development, specifically for the Alpine Convention community, because a sound environment is often considered to be a regional asset. Therefore the experts should assert the importance of the idea of ecological sustainability as an emerging value in regional development and policy. Most teams reported concurringly that they found a strong significance of this environmental attitude, and they even reported that sustainability is considered to have an important influence on regional policy, with a trend of still increasing influence. On the operational level it was remarked that a significant issue was the integration of landscape issues into regional economy, and that in tourist regions sustainability goals would support nature- and landscape protection as a measure to safeguard the natural capital. In addition, in the context of environmental management sustainability goals were considered to be well established. Furthermore, the significance of ecological qualities was generally expected to increase as soon as external costs were internalized. There was even a certain expectation that ecological sustainability could become in the future some kind of a competitive advantage for the Alps, as compared to other regions. In this sense, ecological sustainability could lead towards the development of new forms of activities, combining value creation with environmental responsibility.⁶⁷ With the exception of the French team, there was almost no deviation of assessments among the experts.

However, there is a certain *credibility gap* because many decisions by business and public administrations do not conform to sustainability goals. Only the French team reported in this sense that at present ecological sustainability was not very important, because it would be considered mainly as constraints for economic development. And the Swiss team remarked that Switzerland is still behind schedule with accepting and implementing the AC rules. Currently, for most purely economic actors it is hard to imagine how ecological sustainability would function as a driving force for economic development. So there is a suspicion that the reported attitudes were more like wishful thinking and politically correct double-talk than real hard evidence. However, there was no factual evidence provided as to the question whether this awkward situation was typical only for French and Swiss regions, with the other countries

⁶⁴ A slight deviation from this general statement concerns the Swiss experts who reported that in Switzerland this paradigm shift is only gaining momentum with a revision of the relevant legislation (cp. section #3.1.2 of this report), thus generating a time-lag situation in a Alpine-wide comparison. There is some guessing about the reason of this time lag, but no solid evidence.

⁶⁵ Cp. Gualini (2005).

⁶⁶ Cp. the Journal of Human development as a rich source of "Alternative economics" <<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/carfax/14649888.html>>.

⁶⁷ Cp. Mose/Weixelbaumer (2002).

showing much better compliance with sustainability goals,⁶⁸ or whether the other experts (from Austria, Germany, Italy and Slovenia) just had no adequate information to this problem.

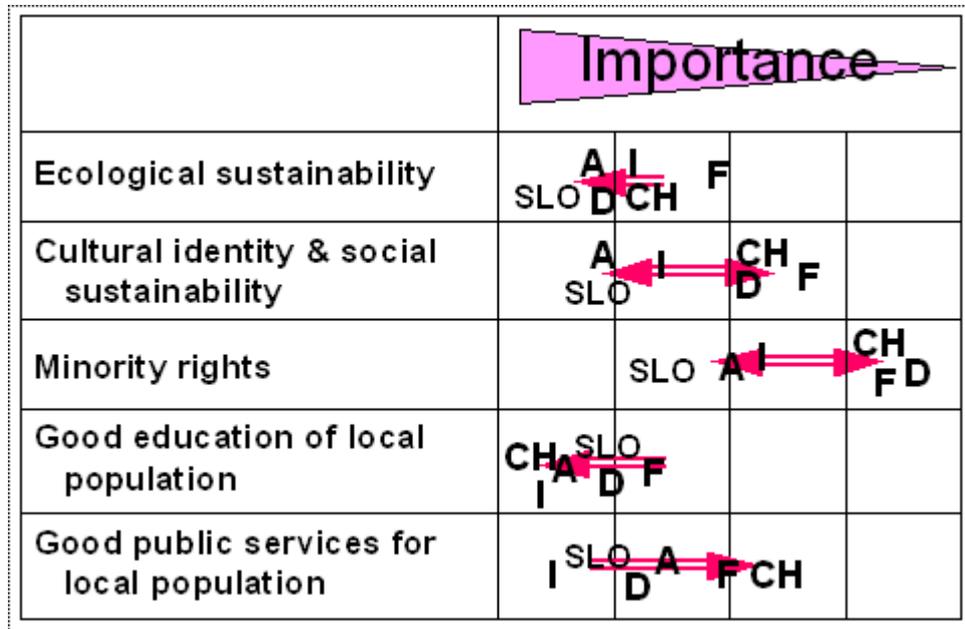


Fig. 2-3b: Importance of environmental & social attitudes on regional policy & development

Entries indicate the experts' opinion for the future situation, arrows show the actual trends. Countries are indicated with their code

For a long time, *cultural identity and social sustainability* were considered essential aspects of regional development in the Alps, and they were also goals of regional policy actions. However, tightly knit communities and cultural references that were typical for agrarian societies are since rapidly disappearing, whereas urban lifestyles and new forms of sociability appear, following the general socio-cultural innovation diffusion.⁶⁹ The assessment of these attitudes and values as relevant factors in regional development and policy was quite controversial, even contradictory, among the expert teams: Whereas cultural identity was considered as quite important by the experts in Italy, Austria and Slovenia, and even with increasing significance in the future, experts in France, Germany and Switzerland assessed these values as of little and diminishing importance. Along the same line of judgement, the experts discussed the question of minority rights.

⁶⁸ Explicitly, German experts report an excellent standing of sustainability goals. However, if one considers for instance the position of Germany (or the state of Bavaria) in the "Brenner issue" (Alpine transit traffic) the reported assessment should be double-checked. It could be that ecological sustainability is considered to be fine for regions anyway off-beat, but not for serious issues like transit traffic. Cp. also note #32 about the importance of alpine regions.

⁶⁹ Cp. Wöhler (2002).

Obviously, as in some topics in section #2.2, there are two competing perspectives, one considering *modernization* processes as a challenge to follow also in the alpine regions, as a promising road to the future. According to this perspective, specific regional identities, minority particularities, and traditional values are just leftovers from the past, not very useful or even impeding in the future. On the other hand, traditional lifestyles could as well be an asset for the future development, especially if forms of tourism could be developed, which would base on such identities. As with ecological sustainability, it is open which one of these scenarios is in fact being implemented, and with success. Since urbanization seems to be a driving force of modernization, it could as well be, that in the future an even more disperse pattern of different life-styles would be found across the whole Alpine realm, depending primarily (but not exclusively) on location factors like ease of access, size and potential of settlements, spill-over influence, etc., but not tied to national properties. Thus, beneath the time-lag effect there would also be a location discrimination⁷⁰ effect, which both together generate a rather heterogeneous pattern

In general, *education* is regarded as a factor for progress. So, a good (even excellent) education for the local population is a particular challenge in the rural areas of the Alps, because there is a dilemma between intention and efficient implementation: The operation of training centres is expensive, if economies of scale are unavailable for lack of a critical mass. Alternatively, the students should travel for long distances between home and school, or leave home altogether for their education - all of which normally is considered less attractive than the possibilities in urbanized areas. Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that there is a tremendous brain drain from rural areas to the metropolises, with a growing tendency for higher education levels.

Nevertheless, all expert teams unanimously agreed that good education was indeed an essential factor for regional development, and with rapidly increasing significance, given the present situation that is quite often still not adequate. This assessment seems to be quite understandable given the fast transformation from an agrarian/artisanal culture towards a knowledge-based society and economy, and with the additional challenge of "learning regions",⁷¹ which implies that the local population at large should be involved in supporting endogenous development dynamics. Consequently, it was undisputed that a good education would be one of the predominant public responsibilities, a core task for regional development, based on the constitutional mandate to create equal living conditions in all regions, including the Alpine space. However, the experts did not further go into specifics, how this vision could possibly be implemented and what differences then would emerge, if at all.⁷²

⁷⁰ Discrimination is here used in the value-free sense of "making a difference", as in the well-known statistical method of "discriminant analysis" (Tatsuoka 1970).

⁷¹ Cp. Thierstein (2001).

⁷² One expert commented this paragraph that even with a general consensus about the importance of education there were decisive differences (esp. in third cycle), thus massively impacting regional development: "Das Bildungssystem ist doch in den Alpenländern z.T. ganz unterschiedlich: so ist z.B. in Italien (außer in Südtirol) und auch in Frankreich ist das duale System (Handwerkersausbildung) unbekannt, in Österreich, und Deutschland Standard. ... udgl. Da gibt es sicherlich massive Einflüsse auf die Regionalentwicklung". However, this hypothesis was not further elaborated (what would be the logic of such an impact?) nor was it supported by any other information in the survey. For instance, one could imagine an education offensive combining the goal of an excellent general education with an orientation towards sustainability and regional identity (including native language), as part of a regional policy strategy - however, no such news were reported by the experts.

Sufficient *public services* are relevant for the local population and business, especially in the alpine periphery. However, due to the difficult financial situation of the public sector in general, and in many alpine regions in particular, public services (even basic ones) are challenged in many places. Whereas the importance of so called public services was not disputed among the experts, their significance for regional policy was much the more, the great challenge being the growing trend for privatization of such services. It is generally agreed that under conditions of privatization and diminishing public funding, the costs of servicing sparsely populated areas will rise up to a point where the costs are no longer bearable by the private costumers, thereby diminishing the attractiveness of such places. Therefore, depending on the scope of action of regional policy, some experts (French and Swiss teams) argued that former public services in the future would be dismissed from the agenda of regional policy because of their new private character. Quite contrarily, the other experts found that exactly because of the growing need of providing such services adequately, and because the development of such deprived regions would deteriorated, there is an urgency for ongoing support of public services activities by the public sector, whence still an obligation for regional policy. Obviously there were again opposing visions present among the expert teams: To what degree should the public sector be involved (in the sense of a binding obligation) in providing adequate conditions, and to what degree the valuation of the attractiveness of a place should be left entirely to the individuals involved, reducing public commitment to other fields of action. And again the question arises whether well-intended goals and the means available were powerful enough to overcome the hard facts of a socio-economic system in full transformation, calling for an intensified competition among regions and places. Since this challenge evolved only recently there is but little or even no empirical evidence as to how the political system or society at large handles this new situation, but it is fair to assume that the question of public services will be among the decisive factors, and that there will probably be quite a set of different solutions in the AC countries.

2.3.4. Other values

Answering the open question about additional values or goals relevant for regional development and policy, the experts provided the following entries:

- improving the access to alpine regions both by private or public means;
- improving the image of regions (in the sense of location marketing);
- improving the attractiveness of regions quite generally to adjust the growing unbalances and disparities.

These of course are common ends and means, permanently discussed in the ongoing regional policy debate. However, due to the scarce result of this paragraph there is no room for additional comparative remarks. But it seems fair to state that most other experts, independent of their experiences and perspectives, would probably support such general answers.

2.3.5. Conclusions

As far as values and attitudes are concerned, we can distinguish two trends, as reported by the expert teams:

- If we look at economic attitudes there is unanimity about the validity of the mainstream economic paradigm. Alpine regions clearly are part of the national, if not global economic system and the keys to development are competitiveness, productivity, innovation and networking. There is not a shadow of a doubt whether this road really can be successful also for disadvantaged, not so well endowed regions, nor a hint of a

questions what could happen with regions not able to catch up with such competition.

Even more surprisingly in the context of the AC-discussion, there was no mentioning at all of the environmental burden which this paradigm is loading upon the Alps, especially in their function as transit corridor between northern and southern Europe, and as source of environmental resources for the growing needs of the extra-alpine metropolis regions.

- If we consider environmental and social values, than the survey shows a much more complex situation. On one hand there is unanimity about the fast growing importance of education. Public services are also valued of importance, but it was disputed among experts as to what degree regional policy should be mandated with ensuring such services, or whether they should be left to the private sector at the risk of inadequate or costly supply. Even more disputed were the traditional values of cultural identities and minority rights: is their significance growing or diminishing? Both assessments were expressed in the survey, on the grounds that they were valuable and helpful in a globalizing world rapidly loosing its regional diversities (SLO, A, I), or contrarily that they were becoming obsolete, by the same token (F, D, CH). A similar (but somewhat hidden) dispute concerns the growing significance of ecological sustainability: is this statement valid only in terms of a proclaimed goal, or is ecological sustainability already an implemented policy? It will be revealing to see if these different assessments are reflected in adequate regional policy measures, or if these are incidents of well-founded visions yet without concrete effects.

It is obvious that these trends - economic and socio-cultural transformation - are the two sides of a single coin. Therefore it is quite interesting to see two opposite modes of handling these transformation processes. However, it remains to be validated that these modes are different action plans and not only differences in perception and intentions.

3. Regional policy analysis

3.0. Introduction

In chapter #3 the inquiry changes direction, using an "indirect" approach: We will look at regional policy and its instruments, in an attempt to gather information about the impact of cultural factors upon them. The chapter is divided into four sections, according to questions #2 to #5 of the questionnaire. Section #3.1 (corresponding to Q II) looks at strategies (objectives and main approaches) of regional policy, section #3.2 at (Q III) at measures and tools, section #3.3 (Q IV) at institutions and implementation, and section #3.4 (Q V) at the financial transactions connected to regional policy.

Each section is organized the same way: For all countries there are short summaries of the information provided by the experts⁷³, followed by a comparative conclusion.

3.1. Strategic aspects of regional policy (Q II)

The strategies of regional policy are the central topic of this section. It is divided into four paragraphs, dealing with

- structures, tasks and objectives;
- main approaches and governance;
- relation between intra- and extra-alpine realm;
- trends and future orientation.

In all countries, regional policy has a more or less extended tradition, based on the general political and administrative structures, on the specific view upon the Alps and the perception of their resources, potentials and problems. Nowadays, due to the Europeanization process and due to global structural changes, the way we tackle regional policy is being questioned. Scarcity of public funds, outsourcing strategies, cluster building or the pressure from developing countries to enter the markets of the developed countries, especially in agriculture, makes this process not any less urgent. In the following paragraphs, the state and future trends of regional policy are reported (country by country), followed by some summarizing conclusions.

3.1.1. Country summaries

Austria

Austria does not have a federal law for its regional policy and land use planning. Therefore the states (*Länder*) together with the municipalities have control over these policy decisions. Only for some specific tasks (like motorways or railways) and by specific legislation the

⁷³ It follows, that the wealth of information available depends solely on the project partners' questionnaires.

central (federal) government is responsible. To fill the gap at the top, there is the Austrian Planning Conference (ÖROK - *Österreichische Raumordnungskonferenz*), which serves the major stakeholders to coordinate their policies. In addition, Austria has a federal strategic conception of its overall development (ÖREK - *Österreichisches Raumentwicklungskonzept 2001*), which is a kind of master plan, but given the restricted competences of the federal level in these matters, ÖREK is without a direct legal impact. Nevertheless, its goals and visions extend a certain normative power down to states and communes. The strategy conveyed by these goals is a combination of strengthening the urbanized regions in order to meet the challenges of Europeanization (if not globalization), and at the same time supporting rural areas in order to reducing the growing disparities between regions.⁷⁴

To implement the goals mentioned, ÖREK contains a sophisticated arsenal of propositions, addressing both federal and state authorities. Accordingly, also some of the states worked out their master plans with a few of them still lacking such an overall guideline. As for procedures of implementation, during the 1990s the Austrian states (*Länder*) developed integrative approaches to regional policy with more or less bottom-up processes, in order to overcome the former sectoral and hierarchical approaches. However, the implementation of this new strategy created some difficulties due to a lack of resources, and also due to conflicting sectoral interests supported by strong lobbies. Nevertheless, Austria has many regional associations and regional managements with integrative approaches.

Concerning the relation to extra-alpine areas and specific perspectives for the Alpine space it was reported that there is no special mountain development plan, on the grounds that almost the whole of the country is alpine territory⁷⁵, and that there is a very intense cooperation between intra- and extra-alpine areas at the fringes of the Alpine space. However, in some sectors of regional policy, especially in agriculture, there of course are specific programs for mountain areas.

As for future trends, the Austrian experts mentioned especially the important role of the European Union,⁷⁶ both with specific programs (like Natura2000 or LEADER), guidelines (e.g. environmental impact rules), and also funds available for regional policy measures. All this will contribute to a shift of governance competence and impact from the federal level to the regions. This trend will be supported by increasing cooperation of communes, empowering regions as central agents of development, although there seems to be some resistance by local stakeholders to prevent their losing influence.

France

⁷⁴ In extenso ÖREK stipulates the following six strategic goals:

1. Strengthening Austria's position in Europe
2. Sustainable use of resources
3. Improving territorial and social cohesion
4. Improving and containing mobility and its adverse effects
5. Strengthening urbanized regions by improving their dynamics and capacities
6. Supporting rural areas by utilising their diversity as opportunities

⁷⁵ About 60% of the Austrian territory are situated within the Alpine Convention perimeter.

⁷⁶ Cp. section #2.1.4 with mentioning EU influence as a driving force of transformation.

For centuries, France was governed by a firm Central Government, and its departments and municipalities had and still have no legislative power. This is about to change: Decisive decentralization efforts have been undertaken, in part triggered by the European Regional Policy. They will move more competence to the level of the regions. Therefore a system of combined efforts both from the national level and at the regional level itself will evolve, where the state sets overall objectives of cohesion and durable development, whereas the region will be responsible for specific development projects.

The goals of regional development are formulated as follows:

- to strengthen the metropolises and regional centres towards better competitiveness in the EU;
- to promote equal chances for all territories;
- to strengthen the value creation also in rural areas;
- to improve the relations between public and private agents on local and regional levels, in order to empower them towards more endogenous development initiatives.

Regarding the relation of Alpine and extra-alpine territories the situation on the national level is characterised by the fact, that there is not an exclusively specific alpine policy, but a general policy for mountainous areas, because France comprises 6 mountain massifs. Of course these are not the main concern of national authorities. - On the regional level, there are two different situations depending on the portion of alpine space at the whole regional territory. In the case of Rhones-Alpes with a dominance of extra-alpine urban areas the Alps have much less importance, compared to Provence-Alpes, which is almost entirely within the Alpine realm. Whereas in the Rhones-Alpes region the strategy is focused on a functional (territorial) complement of urban and rural areas, the Provence-Alpes region tries to implement development projects *sui generis* for remote areas.

The trends concerning the future orientation of regional policy comprise three main topics:

- increasing efforts to achieve a harmonious balance between development and environmental protection, sustainability playing a more important role, especially in the context of spatial planning measures;
- major shift towards decentralisation, giving more competence and resources to regions and even *départements*;
- increasing involvement of local people (public officials and private persons) and organisations into development programs and projects.

The combination of decentralisation and increasing involvement of local stakeholders results in growing complexity of processes and communication, which of course is inherent to a bottom-up approach.

Germany

Germany's general regional policy and planning approach is a mixture between top-down and bottom-up approaches, combining sectoral and integrative elements, because all levels of government are to some extent involved in these policy fields.

The main general goals of regional policy in Germany are to reduce disparities between regions and to secure equal conditions of living for all regions. These goals are approached by a combination of planning measures and economic incentives. On this level there is no special consideration of specific alpine problems or strategies. However, if we look at the state of Bavaria, we find a different approach: the Alpine Space has its own unique position in the state masterplan, with specific goals and measures. However, given the marginal size and importance of the alpine areas (as related to the whole territory) there is a tendency to ascribe to this rather remote part of the state a more passive role, much in the function of a complement to the powerful metropolitan regions.⁷⁷ This way there is an emphasis on protective measures, such as preserving the efficiency and regenerative capacity of the natural environment, as well as the preservation of the recreational function and reducing the hazard potential. While the general outline of this strategy is set by the state, afterwards the planning regions substantiate these goals for the regional level, and the specific implementation usually occurs at the local level by the districts (*Landkreise*) and the municipalities respectively, the latter often working closely together in order to reach significant weight.

As for the future trends, there is a tendency to complement the traditional tools (like formal plans and regulations) by incentives and networking, by regional management and marketing. Based on the main principles of voluntariness, partnership and consensus it is an attempt to reach the specific planning targets.

Italy

The framework for Italy's approach to regional development is set on the national level. In principle, the national state is responsible for regional policy, which follows the basic strategy of the EU with four main objectives (and therefore different target areas), namely

1. areas with a general development gap (often coincident with object 4);
2. areas with outdated industries facing structural difficulties;
3. supporting agriculture;
4. updating the educational system and fostering employment in general.

In this context, there is no specific Alpine policy or strategy at the national level, not least because the alpine areas comprise no core regions of Italy's identity. Not surprisingly then, more attention is being paid to overpopulated urban areas, to coastal and rural areas in middle and southern Italy. In addition, alpine areas are part of eight different administrative territories,⁷⁸ in most cases with rather marginal importance. Furthermore, they cover a wide range of diverging characteristics, developmental states, demographic situation, and relations to extra-alpine areas. At best, support for alpine regions had a distributive character, but there were no specific development objectives or appropriate funds available.

However, this is about to change, partly because of the influence of European regional policies, stressing subsidiarity and fostering local initiatives and private-public cooperation. Consequently, an important event for regional policy was the constitutional reform in 2001,

⁷⁷ This way, the masterplan is seen by local businessmen more of an obstacle to development than a true contribution.

⁷⁸ These territories are the six Regions – Liguria, Piemonte, Valle d'Aosta, Lombardia, Veneto, and Friuli Venezia Giulia (two of them with an autonomous statute: Valle d'Aosta and Friuli Venezia Giulia) and two autonomous provinces – Bolzano and Trento)

one of its goals being to reform government structures and competences, shifting away from centralism toward more "federalism".⁷⁹ Henceforth, the subsidiarity principle shall guide public action. In addition, the reform provides for an "equalization fund" for areas that have less fiscal capacity per inhabitant.

Based on this reform, regions and provinces and also mountain communities intensified their efforts with regional policy measures, partly based on and supported by EU funds. Unfortunately one drawback of the constitutional reform is an ensuing lack of (vertical) coordination between the different levels of government, which before was ensured by hierarchical lines of order. Aggravating this issue is the absence of interconnectedness of policies (i.e. horizontal coordination), which results in a lack of effectiveness.

Regarding objectives and goals, a kind of mountain policy was started in the 1960s, when measures were implemented (nation-wide) to sustain people living in disadvantaged marginal areas. Since the creation of the regions in the 1970ies, a great part of "mountain policy" is conceived and decided on a regional level, that way ensuring a wide range of objectives and measures appropriate to the local needs and potentials. The regions set up sectoral and integrative laws and development plans for their territory, and in some cases also Mountain Communities are implementing measures for local development and cooperation.

Future trends comprise integrated area planning to reduce the deficits of coordination, new forms of inter-institutional cooperation and promoting subsidiarity in the administration. Bottom-up dynamics, with incentives for networking and a higher participation of private initiatives will be privileged.

Slovenia

Slovenia has a bi-polar political-administrative system, consisting of the national government and administration on the one hand and the municipalities on the other hand. Regions are only evolving slowly as a third level, and it still has to be decided by legislation what competences and resources regions should have. Nevertheless, in a pragmatic sense, regions are very important for many issues, simply because they are the adequate territory for them. This way, the normative power of the factual development is influencing the new structures evolving fast. This trend is strongly pushed by the EU accession in 2004, with new regulations and funds rapidly supporting transformation processes.

The state of economic development is characterized by the fact, that there are quite marked disparities among regions, with more than half of the population and economic power located in about 20% of the municipalities (both in terms of number and territory). On the other side of the scale there are marginalized municipalities with about the same number and territory but only 10% of the population, with a heavy and still ongoing out migration. Therefore, the starting point of regional policy focused clearly on stopping this trend and aiming at reducing the disparities. In the seventies of the last century, economic indicators as well as the state of

⁷⁹ Italian experts stress the point, that in Italy the lower levels of administrative structures (regions, provinces) have not the same constitutional legal standing as e.g. *Bundesländer* in Germany or cantons in Switzerland, because they are not states in their own right (like e.g. the *Freistaat Bayern*), even if they have a rather extended autonomy statute, like the autonomous province of Bolzano, or the autonomous region of Valle d'Aosta. Therefore "federalism" is not perfectly correct to describe the subsidiary structure

infrastructure were used to define target areas. However, in the nineties the focus shifted to demographic criteria: Marginalized regions were mainly defined by indicators like population growth (or rather decline) and ageing.

Given the size of the country and the amount of mountainous areas, there is no specific policy for the Alpine regions. Rather, regional policy is oriented towards general objectives and measures valid for the whole country. However, many alpine areas belong to the most disadvantaged group of municipalities. So it can be said as well that there really exists such an alpine oriented regional policy. Looking then at this strategy, it follows the principle of a polycentric development, because it was recognized that development should be based on competitive centres. To reach this goal it was attempted to strengthen economic productivity by improving the infrastructure and supporting key business by subsidies. This production-oriented policy is supplemented by a service-oriented strategy for the most marginalized areas, aiming at infrastructure and public services to secure minimum standards of living and to improve the environment.

Increasing public and political interest in regional issues over the last few years has facilitated an important shift towards building partnerships between state, regions, municipalities, employers, employees and civil society. Furthermore the scope of research and expertise in regional development has increased. Thus, the government programmes for efficient accession to the European Union dedicate an entire chapter to regional development. In a new bill, balanced regional development is defined as the joint responsibility of the state and municipalities, and shall be implemented by establishing public and private partnerships in the creation of regional development councils. It seems as if Slovenia is shifting away from the bi-polar-system, establishing a third (regional) layer of governance between the central administration and the municipalities.

Switzerland

The constitutional (political-administrative) structure is characterized by a three-level federal system, with cantons as autonomous members, forming together the federal state; cantons in turn are subdivided into municipalities. Some larger cantons are even organized into districts or counties, although the size of these territories in general is rather small. Given the small-cut territorial geometry, during the last decades many public tasks at the communal level called for cooperation. Consequently, regional structures evolved as a fourth layer of governance, and it seems as if regions would further gain importance. Furthermore, the "culture landscape"⁸⁰ is as well very diverse, if not fragmented, with a cluster of ever-changing traits that are not tied to administrative borders, but follow their own history and present-day logic, which is mainly influenced by the agglomeration process, spreading out from the four metropolises.- Looking at the European level, Switzerland plays a special role as it is not a member of the European Union, but adhering to the Alpine Convention and other multinational agreements. The consequence is that Switzerland adapts many EU provisions in a so-called "autonomous follow-up implementation".⁸¹

The term "Regional policy" in Switzerland has a very limited significance, meaning just "mountainous areas policy", i.e. some specific measures to improve the difficult situation in

⁸⁰ This must not be mixed up with *cultural landscape*.

⁸¹ In German: "autonomer Nachvollzug". The English translation does not quite get the paradox of the expression.

most of the alpine valleys. It is an expression of the fragmented administration with insufficient coordination, not to mention coherent policies for specific regions as the Alpine space. Starting in the Seventies of the last century, when the agglomerations started to boom, and the alpine valleys lost population and economic potential, the so called "first generation regional policy" as a new federal instrument aimed at improving the conditions of living and working in the alpine valleys. That way it was intended to stop the population drain and keep the mountain communities alive.

At that time it seemed to be obvious that one of the most decisive drawbacks of marginal areas was their lack of sufficient infrastructure, mainly at the responsibility of the municipalities, which were not capable of investing as much as the communes in the lowlands into their facilities. For that reason, a federal law for investments in mountainous areas was implemented. Its objectives were to support mountainous regions in their efforts to keep their potential for living and working, by improving their infrastructure. For the last ten years, the strategy shifts more and more to incentives for private business or public-private partner projects. There are also some approaches that focus on soft factors such as learning and innovation. In addition, Switzerland participates to some degree on EU programs in cross-border projects. A very important side effect of this federal law was the regionalization of the hitherto small-scale communal structures, since regions were called for to bear the responsibility for programs and projects.

However, it should be mentioned that other sectors of policy were and still are at least as important for regional development in the Alps; especially agricultural subsidies play a decisive role, just by the sheer size of funds available.⁸² Also to be mentioned are public services (especially public transportation) and regional planning schemes with a focus on reconciling tourist investments and landscape protection goals.

Regarding the perception of Alpine space problems by the population in the lowland agglomerations (which are the net payers for regional policy measures) it is fair to say that there is still a high degree of appreciation for the Alps and their populace, even an almost mythological delusion. It seems that the mountains are a core part of Swiss identity. However, this is about to change, fiction and reality shift apart. Regional policy seems to follow this shift of orientation, paying more attention to urban development (metropolises, agglomerations) than to the marginal spaces in the Alps.

Considering future trends of regional policy, two lines of progress are visible: First there will be a shift away from infrastructure investments to entrepreneurial initiatives and innovation promotion, from public action to private-public cooperation. Economic competitiveness will be much more important in the future than equal living conditions. Second, the direct link between federal administration to regions as agents of development will be abandoned, replaced by a "cantonalization" of objectives and implementation, leaving the federal government with just strategic controls. There is hope that this new orientation will improve the coordination of different administrative sectors, because they are much closer at the place of action. It is intended that several branches of administration like agriculture, public transportation, public services, regional planning of tourism and nature protection should coordinate their decisions much better than in the past. Also the efficiency of regional policy should be enhanced by focusing on decisive projects instead of spreading the support too

⁸² Agricultural subsidies amount for ca. 3.5 billion CHF p.a., whereas the regional policy *sui generis* disposes of 80 million CHF p.a.

thinly. All this will leave certain valleys with less support than before, with the consequence of a final loss of potential. It seems that this "pull-out"-development is seen as acceptable condition for more efficiency elsewhere.

3.1.2. Conclusions

Strategic Approaches to Regional Policy	A	F	D	I	SLO	CH
Bottom-up (federalized or decentralized) implementation	X		X			X
Top-down (centralized) implementation		X	(X)	X	X	
Specific Alpine perspective	X		X			X
Alps perceived as marginal spaces		X	X	X		
Influence of EU policies & provisions	X	X	X	X	X	(X)
Trend towards regional competences	X	X	X	X	X	X
→ down from national level		x		x	x	
→ up from communal level	x		x		x	x
				X	X	

Fig. 3-1a: Strategic approaches to Regional Policy
Countries are indicated with their code.
"D" stands for Bavaria, not Germany as a whole

Objectives & trends of Regional Policy	A	F	D*)	I	SLO	CH
Diminishing disparities / Equal living conditions	X	X	X	X	X	X
Stopping (slow down) out-migration		X		(X)	X	X
Strengthen urban centres for European/global competition	X	X	X	X	X	X
Improving rural areas by providing infrastructure	X	X		(X)	X	X
Protection of nature / cultural landscapes / environment	X	X	X		X	X
Sustainable development / Economizing resources Keeping balance between development & protection		X	X		X	
Improving public-private partnerships Improving soft factors		X	X	X	X	X
Improving coordination, integrated planning & development	X				X	X

Fig. 3-1b: Objectives of Regional Policy

Countries are indicated with their code.
"D" stands for Bavaria, not Germany as a whole

In sum, one has to conclude that a common objective of all alpine countries is reducing disparities. The reasons for this are manifold. One reason is certainly the attempt to reduce migration from rural to urban areas, but also to keep a certain 'peace' within a country. The degree of priority to go about the issue of reducing disparities might differ in each country. Regional particularities, history, morphology, in short their departure point, can explain the different tasks and objectives in regional policy. It seems that an integrative approach is increasingly sought after in each country. A justification for this trend is certainly the post-Rio sustainability discussion, which tries to integrate social, economic and environmental issues, as well as the increasingly popular win-win strategies, which attempt to create mutually beneficial situations by trying to enlarge the cake before dividing it.

The main administrative levels of regional policy are the Cantons in Switzerland, the Länder in Germany and Austria, the Regions in France, the Regions and autonomous Provinces in Italy and some sort of a hybrid version between central government and villages in Slovenia. There is a significant difference in the size of population between these levels (e.g. Switzerland's cantons are NUTS 3, Germany's Länder are NUTS 2). Generally speaking it is fair to say that within the alpine countries, a bottom-up approach is being pursued to better implement regional policy in the regions. In countries that are still using mostly top down approaches, the bottom-up approach is at least a strategic goal.

A common trend that can be observed as a result of the spread of bottom-up approaches is the increase in stakeholders. With increasing local participation the ability of cooperative negotiation abilities becomes more important in the future. The skill to deal with conflict will decide whether the stakeholders stick together to create something or whether each player does its own thing. - Another observation is the trend toward clustering or niche. Clustering means that a region is best-in-class or specialized in one particular field and therefore tries to promote this particular activity - thereby attracting competitors from the same field, because you can for instance recruit experts more easily. Niche means that you are doing a particular activity that only few others are doing – the advantage of a niche is the protection from competition, the disadvantage could be the lack of growth opportunities.

A further trend in some countries is the shift away from a view where the mountains are the centre of interest, towards a focus on alpine towns which are considered as the economic engines in the Alps. It is interesting to note that in Switzerland, the present regional policy already provides for a focus on towns. However it contains an inherent contradiction, because it is centred on the principle of 'decentralised concentration'. Regional centres are supposed to prosper and have an effect on the surroundings.

3.2. Measures and tools of regional policy (Q III)

This section deals with a further step in analyzing regional policies in the AC states: their conceptual and legal structures and bases are at stake. Therefore, the measures and tools of regional policy are scrutinized, and each measure or tool should be classified according to

some parameters, as for instance

- hierarchical level of the measure (national / regional / local);
- level of decision making and implementation (decentralized / federalized / centralized);
- orientation of the procedure in the given political structure (bottom up / top down);
- the factual approach (sectoral / integrative);
- monitoring efforts and adjustments for such tools;
- relation to sustainability goals (adverse / neutral / declarative / contributory);
- potential for improvement towards better sustainability.

Furthermore, the experts were called to rank the tools and measures according to their importance for regional development, specifically considering the imperative of sustainability. It is clear that such a qualitative evaluation reflects to a certain degree the subjectivity (and also limited scope) of the experts. Nevertheless, the results of this survey provide a good overview upon the arsenals of tools and measures implemented in the different countries of the Alpine Convention.⁸³ Given this context the evaluation focused on integrative rather than sectoral approaches.

The results of this survey are reported in short texts for each country, followed by a table with the most important measures, and topped by some concluding remarks, with an effort to gain a comparative view on the most important regional policy tools.

3.2.1. Country summaries

Austria

As international law the Alpine Convention needs to be mentioned first, since it has priority over national or state laws. On the next level, as reported above, Austria does not have a nation-wide land use planning law, but regional policy and planning in Austria lies in the competence of the states (*Länder*). The course of regional policy is strongly set by sectoral laws, although all states have their planning law. Binding sectoral laws from the central government and the *Länder* are: water rights, forestry laws, conservation laws, tourism laws, construction laws and national parks law. On the communal level, land use planning ordinances and decrees (settlements, infrastructures, ski runs, golf courses etc) have a decisive influence.

Austria distinguishes many tools and measures with a programmatic character; . they are not self-executing, which means that they can't be legally enforce. However, even if they are not binding they are used as a guiding instrument, such as Agenda 21, mission statements (e.g. *Zukunftsraum Tirol*), the Austrian sustainability strategy and sectoral programs with supra-regional land use planning. As such they still have some normative influence, at least indirectly and at the long run.

⁸³ Instead of reporting about Germany (as a whole) it was decided that the survey should only encompass the state of Bavaria, treating it like the other participating nations.

Austria's regional policy may be regarded the most decentralized in the Alpine realm. The communes have quite a lot of power and may decide more or less independently on their local and regional planning concepts. Also, in Austria engineers (*Ziviltechniker*), most of them architects, are the only certified planners, whereas the expertise of geographers or other space-scientists is neglected. This may explain to some degree the lack of integrative planning and the focus on local and not regional attempts, the focus on modelling landscapes instead of developing them, and the lack of economical and ecological planning strategies. Thus masterplans (*Leitbilder*) as a base for strategies may be developed by interested institutions (e.g. tourism), but they do not have any normative power. The participation of the local population is reported to be rather limited.

Measures	Legal Base	Objectives	Hierarchy	Orientation of measures	Monitoring/ Adjustments
The Alpine Convention	Bundesgesetzblatt der Republik Österreich BGBl.I 477/1995	Sustainable regional development, diversity, protection of natural and cultural heritage	International and national level	Problem of implementation	permanent reports about the condition of the Alps
Ratified protocols of the Alpine Convention	Bundesgesetzblatt der Republik Österreich BGBl.III Nr. 230/2002 bis BGBl.III Nr. 238/2002	sustainable regional development	National and regional level	Problem of implementation	permanent reports about the measures to reach the aims
Carinthia state planning law Kärntner Raumordnungsgesetz	Landesgesetzblatt LGBl Nr. 76/1969 i.d.g.F LGBl Nr. 136/2001	sustainable regional development, economic growth	Regional level	Decentralized, top down/bottom up, integrative/ sectoral	six amendments
Upper Austria state planning law Oberösterreichisches Raumordnungsgesetz 1994	LGBl.Nr.. 13/1977 i.d.g.F LGBl Nr. 32/1999	sustainable regional development	Regional level	Decentralized, top down/bottom up, integrative/ sectoral	nine amendments
Lower Austria state planning law Niederösterreichisches Raumordnungsgesetz 1976	LGBl.Nr.. 13/1977 i.d.g.F LGBl Nr. 26/2005	sustainable regional development	Regional level	Decentralized, top down/bottom up, integrative/ sectoral	fourteen amendments
Salzburg state planning law Salzburger Raumordnungsgesetz 1998 - ROG 1998	LGBl Nr. 44/1998 i.d.g.F LGBl Nr. 65/2004	sustainable regional development	Regional level	Decentralized, top down/bottom up, integrative/ sectoral	eighteen amendments
Styria state planning law Steiermärkisches Raumordnungsgesetz 1974	LGBl. Nr. 127/1974 i.d.g.F LGBl Nr. 13/2005	sustainable regional development, facing negative consequences of de-industrialisation	Regional level	Decentralized, top down/bottom up, integrative/ sectoral	eighteen amendments
Tyrol state planning law Tiroler Raumordnungsgesetz	LGBl. Nr. 93/2001 i.d.g.F LGBl Nr. 35/2005	sustainable regional development, steering of transit	Regional level	Decentralized, top down/bottom up, integrative/ sectoral	one amendment

2001		traffic and commercial development			
Vorarlberg state planning law Vorarlberger Raumplanungsgesetz 1996	LGBI. Nr. 39/1996 i.d.g.F LGBI Nr. 33/2005	sustainable regional development	Regional level	Decentralized, top down/bottom up, integrative/sectoral	seven amendments

Fig. 3-2.1: Austria’s tools and measures

France

In a country with a centralized tradition such as France you would expect all measures originating in the capital, being oriented top down and certainly not decentralized. Interestingly, the top four measures are located on a regional or local level and their orientation is decentralized and bottom up. However on a closer look it has to be mentioned though that all these four measures are planning measures. In addition, this chart does not tell us to what degree these measures are being implemented.

In the paragraphs about the realisation of sustainability, there are indications about a great potential to achieve sustainability, but in many cases the chart shows that there is an element missing; e.g. the pays charter is focused on the economic element of sustainability – the social and environmental elements are missing. Another example for challenges and risks in achieving sustainability is the parks charter’s time frame of ten years. Granted the limited period helps to have more people sign it, the process creates higher acceptance among the participants and might be more sustainable for the region in the long run. However a limited period always bears the danger that in economically dire times the acceptance level might decrease again. This would infringe upon the long term aspect of sustainability. In conclusion one has to observe that France, like all other alpine countries, is well on its way to more sustainability, but not quite there yet.

Measures	Legal Base	Objectives	Hierarchy	Orientation of measures	Monitoring	Realisation of sustainability
State Region Planning Contract (Contrat de Plan Etat-Région)	Loi n°82-653 réforme de la planification,83-32,95-115 d’orientation pour l’aménagement et le développement durable du territoire,99-533,95-115	Defines 7 year regional action plan. State and regions contractualize their priorities.	Regional level	Decentralized, bottom up, integrative	High achievement	Since 1999 the planning contracts have to consider sustainability.

Pays charters	Loi n°95-115 d'orientation pour l'aménagement et le devl.du territoire,loi n°99-533,95-115,2003-590	Stimulates local initiatives. Effort to coordinate regional development	Local level Helps to organize funding in areas not taken into account in sector-based policies.	Decentralized, bottom up, integrative(The spirit is the local voluntary service)	Rather High-current survey takes place	Possibilities because of the voluntary involvement of local actors.
Contractual procedure: The region nature park charters	Loi n°67-158 instituant les parcs nat.régionaux, also lois n°93-24,99-533,95-115	Sustainable development based on local and regional initiatives. Negotiated boundaries, engages signers for 10 years.	Regional/local level Competence shared between regions/local level, based on persuasion subject to public inquiry	Decentralized, bottom up, integrative (Normative profusion weakens reach of nature park charter)	High, because every ten years the park needs to be evaluated and renegotiated.	The regional nature park join the sustainable regional development and implement actions defined by decree.
Regional planning and development scheme	Loi n°95-115 d'orientation pour l'aménagement et le devl.du territoire,loi n°99-533,95-115	Forward-looking Orientation for sust. develop.of the regional territory. Must be compatible w/ collective services plan	Regional level (reference document for all players)	Decentralized, top down/bottom up, integrative/sectoral	No	Possibility to define future scenarios for the regions.
Collective services plan (schema des services collectives)	Loi n°99-533 d'orientation pour l'aménag.et le develop.durable du territoire, loi n°95-115	Strategic document aimed at all territories, covers all sectoral policies of which only trans-portionation is binding	National and regional level	Decentralized, top down, integrative/sectoral	Monitoring foreseen, problems with implementation	Possibility to define future scenarios for the regions.
Objective 2 measure	EU regulation n°1260/1999 general provision for structural funds	Objective 2 of Structural Funds aims at revitalizing areas with structural difficulties. Documents w/ action plan (DOCUP) are presented toEU Commission	Regional level (Priorities match up with the State/Region Planning Contract)	Decentralized, top down, integrative/sectoral	Yes, so-called Committee of follow-up considers it as satisfactory.	Focus on the economic dimension of sustainable development.
Leader	EU regulation n°1260/1999 general provision for structural funds	Intended for rural zones, private players are participating, networks of rural areas are encouraged	Local level	Decentralized, bottom up, integrative/sectoral	Yes, through a national animation unit and the network leader+ Implementation difficulties	Encourages original strategies of sustainable and integrated development (uncertainties after 2006)
Interreg III	EU regulation n°1260/1999 general provision for structural funds	Aims at strengthening economic and social cohesion. Emphasis on remote regions Wants Cooperation	Regional /local or regional /national depends whether Cross-border, trans-national or interregional cooperation	Decentralized, bottom up, integrative/sectoral	Yes, systems of evaluation and follow up	Promotion of regional integrated regional development.

Fig. 3-2.2: France's tools and measures

*Germany*⁸⁴

Bavaria's top three integrative tools or measures find their origins in almost the same laws. The same three instruments can only realize sustainability to some extent. Bavaria's development master plan has conflicting interests, the regional plan's goals tend to be not very specific and the partial land survey, together with the regional development concept, is neglecting the social component of sustainability. The table also shows that during the regional planning procedure sustainability has a good realization level, but that there are lobbies that try to influence the procedure – this flaw can also be observed in other countries. Nevertheless, it seems as if Bavaria has quite a few integrative tools compared to other countries. Even though other countries have regional managements and regional marketing, Bavaria is the only country that lists these measures as integrative, and almost all its tools or measures include a monitoring device. The achievement levels are hard to evaluate, but seemingly weak. Except the top two measures, all of Bavaria's integrative measures or tools are located on a regional or local level with a decentralized, bottom-up approach.

Measures	Legal Base	Objectives	Hierarchy	Orientation of measures	Monitoring	Realisation of sustainability
Bayrisches Landesentwicklungsprogramm LEP, (Bavaria's development master plan)	Raumordnungsgesetz des Bundes/ Bayrisches Landesplanungsgesetz	'Hard' tool of land use planning	Regional level Bundesland	Federal, top-down, sectoral/ integrative	Yes. Bavaria's 'area information system' and controlling. Achievement level is mediocre	Good, however there are conflicts of objectives within a LEP
Regionalplan (Regional Plan)	Raumordnungsgesetz des Bundes/ Bayrisches Landesplanungsgesetz	Located between master plan and local plans	Regional level- planning region is between NUTS3 and NUTS2	Dezentra-lized, top-down (w/ some bottom up), sectoral/ integrative	Yes, like LEP Low level of achievement	Middle, sustainable concept, goals need to be more specific
Teilraumgutachten +Regionale Entwicklungskonzepte (partial land survey +regional develop. concept)	Raumordnungsgesetz§13	Implementation aid for municipalities, short survey dealing w/ settlement, traffic, environment	Local to regional	Decentralized, bottom-up, integrative (considered specific and successful)	Evaluation happens, specific pinning down of success is difficult	Middle, the social component is neglected
Regional marketing	Since 1994 part of LEP	Increase the value of the region for locals and economy	Regional and partly local	Decentralized, bottom up, integrative	Evaluations happen despite difficulties Middle level of achievement	Hard to evaluate. However promotion of sust. develop.
Regional management		Goal is getting all players, innovation and implement	Local to regional	Decentralized, bottom up, integrative	Yes, detailed evaluation High level of achievement	Good, promotion of environmentally sound

⁸⁴ Instead of reporting about Germany (as a whole) it was decided that the survey should only encompass the state of Bavaria, treating it like the other participating nations.

		projects locally.				measures
Raumordnungsverfahren(regional planning procedure)	Raumordnungsgesetz des Bundes/ Bayrisches Landesplanungsgesetz	Impact of single supra-local projects is being assessed (EIS-included)	Local to regional	Decentralized, top down, integrative	Not known- this tool is only binding for the administration. High level of achievement	Good, however sustainability issues can be influenced by lobbies

Fig. 3-2.3: Bavaria’s tools and measures

Italy

Italy did not develop identical political structures in the different regions but adapted them to the specific necessities, which makes a comparison difficult. A further difficulty is the enormous variety of regional policy tools, because legislation of the central government and the regional governments often overlap. Aggravating this issues are the uncertainties that the constitutional changes triggered – it is hard to interpret which law applies or which board is in charge.

The major tools and measures mention sustainability as a main goal. Normally, a monitoring is provided, but the monitoring instruments are not homogeneous and therefore the results are only partially reached and comparable. Compared to other countries it is striking that Italy has a lot of regional and sectoral oriented measures. Particular Italian measures are the negotiated programming tools.

Measures	Legal Base	Objectives	Hierarchy	Orientation of measures	Monitoring	Options for sustainability
Regional Program for Development	e.g. L.R.18/94 Liguria L.R.43/94 Piemonte L.R. 27/85 Friuli Venezia Giulia L.R. 4/02 Lombardia L.R.35/01 Veneto L.P. 4/96 Provincia autonoma di Trento L.P. 18 gennaio 1995, n. 3 Provincia autonoma di Bolzano L.R. 6 aprile	Analysis of principal elements of regional development-long term strategy	Regional level	Federalized, top down, sectoral/ integrative	Yes: prevalently by case studies carried out in irregular intervals. Level of achievement: different in the respective regions.	Good, as a general rule sustainability is a major goal, even if it changes in the different regions and autonomous provinces.

	1998, n. 11 Valle d'Aosta					
European Development Instruments	Council Regulation (EC) 1260/99, Del. CIPE 67/00	Structural Funds-attempts to reduce disparities	European level	Fosters bottom-up initiatives involving every government level +privates	Yes High level of achievement	Good. Sustainability is a major goal
Regional Financial and Economic Program	DPREF (Regional documents of financial and economic programming) are different for each Region/ Autonomous Province	Contains feasibility and evaluation of the achievement of strategies and specifies financial tools needed.	Regional level	Federalized, top down, sectoral/ integrative	Yes: prevalently by case studies carried out in irregular intervals. Level of achievement: different in the respective regions.	Middle
Sectoral Development Guidelines	Different for each region and aonomous province	Defines a non –mandatory direction for interventions in a specific sector	Depends on sovereignty	Decentralized Federalized, centralized-federalized, Top down, sectoral	Yes: prevalently by case studies carried out in irregular intervals. Level of achievement: different in the respective regions.	High , locals can specify depending on their situation
Laws and Codes	e.g. L.1102/71; L97/1994; Ddl 3036 La Loggia.		National and regional level	Federalized, centralized-federalized, top-down, sectoral /integrative	Yes: prevalently by case studies carried out in irregular intervals. Middle level of achievement.	
Negotiated Programming Tools for Coordination among Institutions and between institutions and private parties	e.g. L.662/96; Del. CIPE 21.03.1997	Promotion of subsidiarity and effectiveness of development policies through coordination of government layers	National, regional and local level	Decentralized, bottom-up, sectoral	Yes: prevalently by case studies carried out in irregular intervals Level of achievement: Monitoring is usually not updated and contradictory depending on the source.	High for it allows bottom-up dynamics.
Evaluation tools	Different for each region and aonomous province	Helps define next steps after the evaluation	All levels	All orientations	Middle level of achievement,	High, allows correction of disparities
Territorial Planning tools	Different for each region and aonomous province	Deepen the knowledge to better plan interventions	Regional level	Federalized, top down, sectoral	Yes Low level of achievement	High, allows observation of the territory and sustainable governance

Incentives	e.g. L.46/82; L.488/92; L.215/92; L.236/93; L.598/94; L.95/95; L.341/95; L266/97; L.388/2000.	Foster entrepreneurial activity and support bottom-up dynamics	Local level	Decentralized, bottom-up, sectoral	Yes High level of achievement	Good, it makes it profitable for privates to invest in sustainable projects.
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Fig. 3-2.4: Italy's tools and measures

Slovenia

The Slovenian government has a major influence on urban development as such, especially on knowledge and innovation (universities, research), on the economic sphere and often on the spatial planning sphere (especially big projects such as motorway construction, etc.). Issues of urban development have been addressed recently, but only on a declaratory level in the 'Strategy of spatial development' – polycentric development, re-urbanisation, re-vitalisation, equality, rationality, sustainability are considered the key objectives. The issue of urban development has been overlooked somewhat on the national level in the past – intense urban sprawl and housing crisis may be the result.

Local communities have the basic right to arrange the spatial management and planning of their territories, with the exception of site plans for projects of national importance and planning control activities such as building permits which are also under direct jurisdiction of the central government. It is interesting that in Slovenia, except for the first measure, all measures are top down. Slovenia seems to have monitoring and a high achievement of all measures where the data was available. Special about Slovenia, compared to other countries, are the two very specific measures of reconstructing coal mine areas and areas shattered by earthquakes.

Measures	Legal Base	Objectives	Hierarchy	Orientation of measures	Monitoring	Realisation of sustainability
Enhancement of regional development	Zakon o spodbujanju skladnega regionalnega razvoja (UL 60/99)	Balanced economic, social and spatial development Smaller differences in economic development between regions To ensure equal living conditions among regions Comprehensive development of the countryside To hinder the development of new problem regions Stimulation of polycentric system of settlements Enhancement of environment-friendly	Regional level	Decentralized, bottom up, integrative	High – annual report on regional policy implementation	Sustainability as horizontal aim of all interventions

		economy and protection of natural and cultural heritage				
Reconstruction of areas damaged by earthquake	Zakon o popotresni obnovi objektov in spodbujanju razvoja v Posočju (UL 76/98)	Reconstruction of objects Economic development of the affected area	Posočje region/area	Integrative, top-down, bottom up	High – annual reports, some reconstruction offices even monthly	Enhancement of sustainable economic development, protection of natural and cultural heritage
Reconstruction of mine areas	Zakon o postopnem zapiranju rudnika Trbovlje – Hrastnik in razvojnem prestrukturiranju regije (UL 61/2000, UL 42/2003, UL 71/2004)	Reconstruction of devastated areas Economic reconstruction of Zasavje region Human capital development Building of development infrastructure	Zasavska region + some other municipalities	Integrative, top-down, bottom up		Enhancement of sustainable economic and social development
Spatial planning	Zakon o urejanju prostora UI 110/02	Sustainable spatial development Ensure quality living conditions both in towns and in the countryside Balanced distribution of economic activities Planning friendly buildings approachable to functionally disabled people Environment, natural and cultural heritage protection-protection from natural disasters	National, regional and local	Integrative, top-down, bottom up	Every four years	Enhancement of sustainable spatial development

Fig. 3-2.5: Slovenia's tools and measures

Switzerland

Regional policy in Switzerland is a sectoral policy dealing with economic development measures in mountainous and rural areas. Other important policies such as agriculture or tourism policy are partners of regional policy. These indirect regional policies are often more significant than regional policy in the strict sense. Switzerland's most important direct regional policy instrument is the investment support in mountainous areas, second is the law enabling support to restructure down-graded industrial areas, followed by the RegioPlus and Interreg programs. The new financial equalisation system⁸⁵ is no direct regional policy tool. However, with agricultural subsidies⁸⁶ they have quite some impact on the regions. The 80-90 Million Swiss Francs that are allocated to direct regional policy look like a very little amount. Nevertheless, this sum can be quite powerful – because the money can be distributed into very specific projects and thus have a leveraged effect.

⁸⁵ 3 billion Swiss Francs are transferred from the prosperous to the lagging cantons per year.

⁸⁶ 2.5 billion Swiss Francs per year.

With the exception of the investment support in mountainous areas, which has been decentralised in 1996 to give the cantons more influence, all other instruments are steered by the central government. It gives the cantons a four year budget for the investment aid program, with the competence to use it according to their own needs and priorities.

Measures	Legal Base	Objectives	Hierarchy	Orientation of measures	Monitoring	Realisation of sustainability
IHG - Investment support	Bundesgesetz über Investitionshilfe für Berggebiete	Support investments into public infrastructure	Local	Decentralized Bottom up, sectoral	Yes, main goals misses	Mediocre
Industrial revitalization (Bonny-Beschluss)	Bundesbeschluss über die Hilfe zugunsten Wirtschaftlicher Erneuerungsgebiete 1995	Tax incentives to promote investments.	National/ regional. (company-level)	Top down, federal, sectoral		
Regioplus	Bundesbeschluss über die Unterstützung des Strukturwandels im ländlichen raum 1997	Fosters bottom-up initiatives – corresponds with leader	Regional	Top down, federal, sectoral	Not yet	Good, but weakness with the economic element
Interreg	Bundesbeschluss über die Förderung der grenzüberschreitenden, transnationalen und internationalen Zusammenarbeit		Regional	Top down, federal, sectoral	Not yet	
Agriculture	Landwirtschaftsgesetz (LwG,1998)	Promotion of agricultural production.	Local, (company-level)	Top down, federal, sectoral	Yes	Provides incentives for eco-farming
Financial equalisation system	Bundesgesetz über den Finanzausgleich unter den Kantonen 1959	Reducing disparities	Between cantons	Top down, federal, sectoral	Yes	Poor

Fig. 3-2.6: Switzerland's tools and measures

3.2.2. Conclusions

With the exceptions of Austria and Switzerland, the most important tools or measures mentioned are some sort of a master plan, land use or development plan. They have a certain integrative (or conceptual) power, but they lack resources or incentives to promote their goals. On the other hand, sectoral instruments like agriculture subsidies or the Swiss development scheme have financial resources to allocate, but lack a broader view beyond the scope of the sector in case. It remains a challenge to reconcile the two approaches.

A remarkable fact is that in the top measures or tools of each country, the realisation of sustainability is considered to be 'good, but...' or to be mediocre. It follows that sustainability is still a more or less distant goal that should be achieved in the end, but that the way to achieve this goal is a constant struggle, a challenge, in short, a process that needs to be kept alive.⁸⁷

An interesting issue is the trend of urban development in the Alps. There are no urban-specific integrative measures or tools in the charts above, except perhaps Slovenia. This could be a task for the future – the basic notion is, that in land use planning the focus was on rural areas and later the focus of interest shifted towards metropolitan areas – consequently this could happen now with the alpine discussion – away from the mountains towards mountain towns.

3.3. Institutions of regional policy implementation (Q IV)

In all alpine countries there are public and private institutions which are involved in the implementation of the goals and measures of regional policy. In the following section the most relevant institutions will be described and evaluated. For ease of comparison the same criteria as in section #3.2 were applied. And as with tools and measures the experts were asked to rank their entries according to their importance for regional policies and development, again with a special focus on sustainability.

The results of this survey are reported in short texts for each country, followed by a table with the most important institutions. Finally, there are some concluding remarks, with an effort to gain a comparative view on the most important regional policy institutions in each AC country.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ See also Heintel 2001; Cerosimo 2004; Thierstein/Walser 2000.

⁸⁸ Instead of reporting about Germany (as a whole) it was decided that the survey should only encompass the state of Bavaria, treating it like the other participating nations.

3.3.1. Country summaries

Austria

As the leading implementation institutions, the experts named the Austrian land use conference (Oesterreichische Raumordnungskonferenz) and the Regional policy agency of the federal government. However, other important Austrian institutions are various departments of the government and the Länder, the land use advisory board, social partners, regional managements as well as regional planning associations and local authorities associations.

Hard to rank, but also included are the chambers of commerce, agriculture and labour, the respective “Bünde” (leagues of commerce, agriculture and labour), the alpine club (Alpenverein), non-governmental organisations (e.g. transit forum, traffic club) trade unions, private players, technology and innovation centres and the private corporations, some of them trans-national, which make their own regional policy and may influence the regional development in a quite effective way.

Unique about Austria is the lack of a national land use planning law and the lack of normative power in the regional development plans, even in those Länder, where they exist. There never have been any attempt to create inter-local institutions, like the German Regionalverbände.

Institutions	Objectives	Hierarchy	Orientation	Realisation of sustainability
Oesterreichische Raumordnungskonferenz (Austrian land use conference)	Because of the lack of a national land use planning law- this conference was created. Government, Länder and municipalities are at eye level.	National	Federal, top down w/ bottom up elements, sectoral and integrative	
Bundeskanzler-amt Abteilung IV/ 4 Raumordnung und Regionalpolitik	Gives advice to project executing organization	National and regional	Central- federal, top-down, integrative	

Fig. 3-3.1: Austria’s most important regional policy institutions

France

In France, the top 4 institutions are all located on state level, mostly having their measures oriented top down. Noteworthy is moreover that the French chart lists civil society (Agenda 21) as an important regional policy institution. An institution unique to France seems to be the ‘Commissariat de Massif des Alpes’, a committee that consults the regions on specific alpine issues. A similar institution is not listed in the other charts. The idea of having an alpine expert panel looks like a good idea – experts giving their input from a neutral point of view could improve the quality of alpine specific solutions. The French chart contains valuable information as to the challenges to realize sustainability in general. Institutions are all too often short term oriented and therefore hinder sustainability. Furthermore, a lack of

supervision can spoil an undertaking that was originally meant to be sustainable. The chart lists also the problem that some institutions are very sector oriented and hence neglect at least one of the other two elements of sustainability.

Due to lack of space the last five bottom-up, local institutions are listed not in the chart. They are listed here in order to have a complete list: 8. 'Pays' and other territorial organisations/institutions (integrative) 9. Inter-municipal co-operation structures with its own tax system (communautés de communes, communautés d'agglomérations) (Bottom up/top down, integrative), 10. Ad-hoc actions perimeters (sectoral), 11. Agenda 21 and other local initiatives (integrative), 12. Communes (sectoral)

Institutions	Objectives	Hierarchy	Means	Orientation	Realisation of sustainability
Datar (délégation à l'aménagement du territoire et à l'action régionale – (Territorial planning and regional action agency)	Definition of policies and priorities for land planning and regional development	State (inter-ministerial agency)	At nation's level: CIADT (Comité interministériel pour l'aménagement du territoire – Interministerial commission for land planning) At regions level : CRADT (Conférence régionale d'aménagement et de développement du territoire – regional land planning conference)	Integrative, top down	'Sustainability' is the underlying principle, thus a main objective is to reduce territorial unbalances in economic development and to define rules and long term visions to ensure coherence in policy objectives face to sustainability issues
Ministries of Environment, of Agriculture, of Infrastructure, housing and transportation, of education and research, of youth and sports, etc	Definition and implementation of sectoral policies	State	At national level: central administration and public institutions under regulatory authority of central administration At regions or départements level: deconcentrated services	Sectoral, top down	In theory, all sectoral policies have something to do with the three pillars of sustainability. In practice, these policies focus on short term objectives
Préfecture de région – Secrétariat Général pour les Affaires Régionales	Definition and implementation of the States' policies at regions level; coordination with regions policies	State		Integrative, top down	The influence depends on how thorough its supervision is.
Commissariat de Massif des Alpes	Implementation of specific Alpine mountain policy in partnership with Regions	State	Comité de massif des Alpes (consultative committee)	Integrative, top down/ bottom up	Good, great potential. -as far as the Alps are considered as a 'laboratory' in terms of sustainability
Conseil national de la montagne and Comités de Massif	Definition of objectives which are considered desirable for the development, of the mountains	No hierarchical power	Consultative committees at nations level (Conseil national de la Montagne) or for each mountain massif (as for example Comité de Massif des Alpes)	Integrative, bottom-up	Mountain policy is a matter of debate : which specificity for the mountains development, to which degree mountain policy objectives are already obsolete, etc

Conseils régionaux (regional councils)	Definition of regions planning and development policies and implementation through contracts with State authorities	Regional	Schémas régionaux d'aménagement du territoire, established in partnership with State authorities Advises of regions Comités Economiques et Sociaux (consultative organs for the Regional councils)	Integrative / sectoral, bottom-up	Middle, more focus on economic aspects assuming they can secure social conditions, which in turn impact on environmental conditions.
Conseils généraux (départements councils)	Implementation of some sectoral policies (transport infrastructure, education and culture, etc) in the field of competence of the départements	Regional		Bottom up, sectoral	Middle to low, no integrative approaches

Fig. 3-3.2: France’s most important regional policy institutions

Germany⁸⁹

Bavaria’s first five institutions are integrative. Furthermore almost all institutions of regional policy implementation are located on a regional level. The realization of sustainability seems to be once more particularly good in integrative institutions. A Bavaria specific institution is the ‘LfA Förderbank’, a bank that supports regional projects by granting loans. Having a separate specialized institution to finance your projects can be seen as a competitive advantage over other countries, because it can facilitate the investment process – if the bank’s interest is not primarily on accumulating earnings, you might get a better deal.

Further mentioned as sectoral institutions are water management administration, as well nature protection and environmental agencies

Institutions	Objectives	Hierarchy	Orientation	Realisation of sustainability
Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Verkehr, Infrastruktur, Wirtschaft und Technologie-Abteilung Landesentwicklung	Highest planning authority responsible for the master plan and the supervision of lower authorities	Regional level-Bavaria	Federal, top down, integrative	Good
Regionale Planungsverbände (regional planning associations)	Main task are the development of regional planning	Regional	Decentralized, top down/ bottom up, integrative	Good

⁸⁹ Instead of reporting about Germany (as a whole)it was decided that the survey should only encompass the state of Bavaria, treating it like the other participating nations.

Bezirksregierungen(NUTS 2), höhere Landesplanungsbehörden	Elaboration of single goals in land use planning, participation in regional management	Regional	Decentralized, top down, integrative	Good, the influence depends on how thoroughly its supervision.
Landkreisverwaltung (County administration)	A county administration combines several authorities. Closest contact to the specific area next to the municipalities.	Regional	Decentralized, top down/ bottom up, integrative	Good, great potential
Municipal administration and affiliated services	High amount of autonomy in their planning. Greatly involved in implementation	Local	Decentralized, bottom up, integrative	Good, cooperation is needed to achieve a supra-regional level
Association to promote economic development (Wirtschaftsfördergesellschaften)	Free services such as consulting for financing, locations, business partners	Regional	Decentralized, bottom up, sectoral	Middle, next the economic aspects they can secure social conditions.
LfA Förderbank	Public institutions granting loans	Regional	Decentralized, bottom up, sectoral	Good
Bavarian Tourism Marketing	Securing home market and development of foreign markets	Regional	Federal, top down sectoral	Poor- too sectoral
Bavarian Ministry for environment, health and consumer protection	Influence through its particular tasks.	Regional	Federal, top down, integrative	Good

Fig. 3-3.3: Bavaria’s most important regional policy institutions

Italy

Due to Italy’s varying regional policy institutions in the different regions, the Italian experts argued that they were unable to use the parameter grid given by the survey questionnaire. Therefore, they reported in an unstructured manner and the table was adjusted accordingly.

The regional governments are ranked number one in Italy despite their enormous differences, they seem to be very important when it comes to implementing regional policy.

The European Commission is ranked second as an implementing institution, for through its development tools (Interreg Programs “Alpine Space”, as a specific intervention) have a deep impact on the Alps in a specific bottom-up development dynamic.

Institutions	Description
Regional Governments	They have the competence in setting integrative or sectoral plans and programs, as well as in transferring financial resources to the mountains. It is important to note that the competences vary largely from region to region – the different perceptions can best be illustrated, if you take a closer look as to where the competent department is located. This can range from a specific department to the

	agricultural, forestry or even tourism department.
The European Commission	Set the framework for the European regional policy and therefore impacts also Italy
The Central Government	It has legislative power on general subjects, which will be specified by Regional Governments. Rome also transfers financial resources to the regions destined to the mountain areas.
Sub-regional governments (municipalities and provincial governments, district coordination boards, <i>comunita montane</i>)	They have operative competence. Mountain Communities are supposed to arrange and accomplish development programs and territorial plans for their own mountain district.
Public/private agencies and partnerships	Their task is to implement sectoral policies to promote entrepreneurship, agriculture, tourism by means of a bottom-up strategy and incentives
Private initiatives and associations of businesses, unions and associations and lastly NGO's	

Fig. 3-3.4: Italy's most important regional policy institutions

Slovenia

The system of spatial planning has the following organisation at the Slovenian national level: the Ministry for environment and spatial planning has the Spatial planning directorate which is then divided into three individual areas - construction, housing and spatial development. The Office for spatial development is responsible for the preparation of basic directions of spatial development and other important topics, for instance international cooperation and implementation of international conventions. The office also assures the development of techniques, methods and contents of spatial planning.

The regional level: The Slovenian Law of Spatial Planning/Spatial Planning Act (*Zakon o urejanju prostora - ZUreP*) determines the contents and responsibilities about a preparation of regional design for regional/spatial development (the latter being liable to the Ministry for environment and spatial planning, and, if so agreed, to the municipalities). Beside the Ministry for environment and spatial planning, other ministries or municipalities and regional agencies from the certain area can submit initiatives.

The local level: The organization of the offices at the local level is unclear. The findings show that there are substantial differences in the organization of offices in the field of spatial management. Better organization due to a higher number of inhabitants, a former 'seat of commune' (i.e. contemporary seat of Administrative unit), diverse structure of work places and labour force is the common characteristic of bigger municipalities, as opposed to newly formed rather small municipalities. The amount of skilled employees is insufficient in roughly half of all municipalities, in some cases even critical, especially in those formed after 1994. According to data from the field of the local organization of offices, there is a discrepancy in the scope and complexity of some tasks and duties on the one hand and the lack of skilled personnel for those services on the other hand.

Institutions	Hierarchy	Orientation	Realisation of sustainability
National Government	National	Federal, top down, sectoral/ integrative	unknown
Government office for local self government and regional policy	National, regional, local	Decentralized, Sectoral / integrative	unknown
National Agency for Regional Development	National, regional, local	Decentralized, Sectoral / integrative	unknown

Fig. 3-3.5: Slovenia's most important regional policy institutions

Switzerland

Switzerland's list is compared to others more focused on institutions that implement integrative regional policy.

The current institutional trend is the increase in lobbying groups, which try to form regional policy based on their interests.

Institutions	Hierarchy	Orientation	Realisation of sustainability
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs	National	Federal, top down, sectoral/ integrative	poor
Regional development agencies (Regionalsekretariate IHG)	Regional, local	Decentralized integrative	fair
Cantonal departments for economic development	Regional	Federal, Sectoral	poor
COSEREG - Coordination Committee of the regions	Regional,	Decentralized, Sectoral / integrative	unknown
Fachstellenkonferenz der Kantone (Expert Conference of the Cantons)	Regional,	Decentralized, Sectoral / integrative	unknown
SAB - Consortium for mountainous areas- lobby group	Regional	Integrative	fair
Private organisations such as Berghilfe	Regional,local	Sectoral, dezentralized	

Fig. 3-3.6: Switzerland's most important regional policy institutions

3.3.2. Conclusions

Again, as with former topics, there are three main dimensions of differences between the country-specific approaches to regional policy implementation:

- top-down vs. bottom-up;
- sectoral vs. integrative;
- public vs. private.

Obviously, implementation follows the same considerations, attitudes, or traditions as do strategies, tools and measures. However, the impression is evident, that such country-specific differences (or "cultural" differences) do not really lead to fundamental deviations of (future) regional development, given the observations of the experts, that there seems to be a kind of convergence towards a common scheme, a shift of implementation procedures towards a mix of approaches.

This remark has to be substantiated, as follows:

Regarding the dimension "public-administrative sector vs. private sector/civil society" there are the least country-specific differences reported by the experts. Most institutions in charge of implementing regional policy and to promote regional development are administrative (governmental) entities. However, to some extent there are also private institutions involved, like agencies, business chambers and even NGO's, and it was reported that there are considerable efforts to develop more public-private-partnership schemes, e.g. in the form of councils. As a conclusion, one can state that there is a trend that civil society gains more influence, as such stakeholders involved in regional policy are increasing in number and competence. This is especially true if sustainability is at stake: private institutions quite often have clearer visions and better grips of this field of action than traditional administrative bodies.

As far as the other dimensions (top-down vs. bottom-up; sectoral vs. integrative) are concerned there we find more country-specific differences, quite in accordance with the findings about strategies and tools/measures. However, all experts reported that in their country there were trends to combine traditional approaches with recent experiences, leading to mixed approaches. So in the countries with mainly top-down implementation schemes (F, I, SLO) there are e.g. newly developed councils at local/regional levels or rising competences for local government, to draw on their knowledge base and expertise, and to improve the acceptance with the local population. On the other hand, in the countries with mainly bottom-up approaches (A, D, CH) there are increasing efforts of coordinating them at upper levels of governance. And the same phenomenon is reported for the sectoral-integrative gap: quite efficient ("technocratic") sectoral approaches are being combined with coordinating tools.

As a final conclusion we observe that all approaches have their advantages (like for instance better acceptance of bottom-up tools, or higher efficiency of sectoral tools over broad integrative schemes) as well as their drawbacks. Therefore, improvement of implementation should follow a logic of combining chances and avoiding disadvantages. This then is the rationale behind the observed trend of convergence.

3.4. Financial transfers (Q V) / Dynamics of regional policy (Q VIII)

The questionnaire comprised two sections that proved to be very hard to deal with: Q V and Q VIII. As a consequence, no information can be reported about these two topics. In turn, these are some of the more interesting open questions which have to be handed over to future research efforts.

Question #5 (Q V) was intended to get information about the financial transfers into Alpine regions from outside sources (mainly subsidies from state agencies). The experts were asked to contribute to gaining an overview of the public transfer payments in the different alpine countries, which are motivated by regional policy. Here, the term “transfer” comprises payments or equivalent goods and services of state authorities to a region (to private actors & public corporations), with which no simultaneous transactions of commercial products or services are related. Subventions are a common form of transfer payments, but not the only ones. Based on experiences in Switzerland⁹⁰ we intended to get at least rough estimates on the amount, sources and distribution of such transfers, in order to attain a comparative overview for all AC countries - as it turned out an ambitious task indeed.

Consequently, there were no positive responses to this type of questioning. The experts involved indicated that there were no reliable sources (or rather: no sources at all) available, not even approximate data or estimates. Given the importance of this issue in the public (political) discussions about disparities between Alpine regions and metropolises, and given the importance of such transfer payments for the people and (small) businesses involved, it is quite surprising that such data seem to be unavailable. At least in Switzerland this is bound to change, accelerated by the emerging scarcity of public funds available, and the related controversy of the future strategy of regional policy for the Alps.⁹¹

Question #8 (Q VIII) should open the door to the future prospects of sustainable regional development. It was intended to get some insight into the differentiated development paths of Alpine regions, based on the well-known fact that the variance of development is within the Alpine realm at least as large as between the Alps and the metropolitan areas. Based on experiences in Switzerland⁹² we expected to identify three types of regions (prosperous, steady, and declining), and wanted to get more information about the respective development tracks. Of specific interest was the question as to how sustainability (in the sense of the AC goals) was related to this typology - would it be possible to recognize a causal link to cultural traits? Would it even be possible to reverse the old wisdom and state: "Cuius religio - eius regio", meaning that the cultural, esp. the attitude about sustainability and ecological goals (backing or dismissing them) would strongly influence if not determine the regional

⁹⁰ Cp. Weiss et al. (2004); Simmen et al. (2005).

⁹¹ Cp. Siegrist et al. (2006)

⁹² Cp. Siegrist et al. (2004).

development? This of course is a complex field of research and deserves appropriate attention, not just a quick treatment.

Much too ambitious: as it turned out, the questionnaire in this section was much too complicated (if not confusing) and time consuming, and despite the tremendous efforts of the experts dealing with the survey, it finally was not feasible to compile a consistent overview valid for all AC countries. This then is one of the scientific challenges emerging from this survey: to gain a clearer view of the intentions and future tracks of regional policy and development schemes in the different AC states. It is quite difficult to conceive of an AC monitoring system without some knowledge about the relevant development tracks.

4. Conclusions

This final chapter is devoted to some summarizing reflections and critical conclusions. It follows the structure of the report as a whole, dealing first with some methodological considerations, followed by remarks related to the two parts of the inquiry, and finishing with some general conclusions gained from the research results.

Methodological approach: some critical remarks

The aim of this enquiry was to trace the impact of cultural differences on regional development, analysed in the context of the Alpine Convention (AC) states. Considering the fact that the basic terms "culture"/"cultural differences" as well as "regional development" and "sustainability" stand for very fuzzy constructs, complex scientific concepts, and disputed socio-political visions respectively, it was obvious that there was no clean-cut straightforward methodological approach at hand to deal with this task. On the contrary, a firm problem analysis was necessary to develop an adequate research design.

The research design had to be based on two procedural facts:

- The inquiry was to be conducted through the project partner teams in all AC states. Each team was responsible for the information flow from and about its own country. However, to enhance the knowledge base, the project partners were invited to extend their inquiries to all sources they deemed useful, and to then summarize their findings in a consistent way.
- Only very restricted research resources (both in terms of man-power and time) were available; such conditions did not let room for extended empirical research, let alone quantitative approaches.

Furthermore, the research design had to be based on the observation that in an era of increasing global competition and the related value changes, and also on the observation that even in Alpine urban and rural areas the main driving forces of regional development these days (and even more in the future) are investments (private and public), new production modes and consumer behaviour, letting only limited (and quickly diminishing) impact for traditional forms of land use and production modes.

Given these framing conditions, the research design was set up as follows:

- Regional policy was identified as the key research object, because it was considered the linking joint between culture and regional development, and also as an impact downright designed to influence the market conditions into specific directions. So, if there were (cultural) differences in regional development, then they could best be traced down by looking at the manner how regional policy was handled.
- The inquiry was set up in two independent parts: the first one tried to ask about different approaches to regional policy, looking directly for possible cultural reasons and driving forces. The second part served as a "hidden" consistency test: asking plainly about the strategies, tools and implementation of regional policy in the different AC states, it was

intended to check the validity of the first part, and possibly to gain some additional information.

- As an adequate scientific method to achieve these goals we set up a well-structured questionnaire which was to be followed straightforward but letting ample space for open answering and additional information. It should be noted that these questionnaires were the sole and only information sources of the inquiry, to enable a symmetric (i.e. unbiased) knowledge base for the whole AC realm.

Now, what conclusions have to be drawn, looking back and evaluating this research set up? It is fair to state, that through this approach it was possible to assemble a remarkably rich collection of relevant data, and in a very efficient manner at that. Due to the well-structured questionnaire these results were of a very good quality in terms of comparability. In the next paragraphs some comments will follow on such comparative conclusions⁹³ - they were not possible without such a broad information base. Furthermore the evaluation of these data produced even temporal and some quasi-quantitative propositions based on tendency questions and on the ordinal (grading) scale applied to many questions.

On the other hand it became evident that the shortage of research resources and the precipitant start-up of this very first DIAMONT work package had their price.⁹⁴ Some aspects of these shortcomings are as follows:

- There was a certain lack of a common understanding about the research logic and some of the basic notions and concepts involved. It is a known experience with multi-disciplinary research teams that they need quite some time to develop a common perception of their research topics. Consequently some answers reported by the experts may contain systematic deviations based on differing perceptions of some terms, concepts, or questions. This way some transversal conclusions on country-to- country similarities or differences may be ill based.⁹⁵
- Very little concrete information was reported about cultural traits at stake, and also about concrete factual aspects of regional development, in order to illustrate or back some general remarks. The same is true regarding within-country differences, which were addressed only very rarely - obviously this topic was beyond the resources available.

This fact of missing factual evidence backing some general observations by the experts was a serious drawback because without proper evidence there is no way to support a hypothesis, especially if it is not clear what impact really was supposed. Take e.g. the often-mentioned "federalist tradition", or the purported "Latin" approach to development: What is their effect? Does this mean, that in such a context the development is more efficient, just, or sustainable⁹⁶, or quite to the contrary? Or in other words: If there are no

⁹³ I.e. transversal observations in the sense of comparisons between countries.

⁹⁴ It may well be that a different approach based on some detailed case studies in specific regions would have been a valid alternative. Quite a different choice would have been a broad-scaled quantitative analysis - but this one alternative was clearly beyond the resource limits of this project.

⁹⁵ It is even questionable if a transversal study could at all be performed by teamwork, without a quite rigorous standardization of basic concepts, notions, and even perceptions, as is the case with scholars from the same scientific tradition.

⁹⁶ This is an allusion to Daly's brilliant paper about the goals of sustainable development (Daly 1992).

control variables (at best measurable ones like population growth, growing skills and knowledge capacities, social participation and integration across ethnic boundaries, careful land use systems, or economic activities), the mentioning of differences is about worthless, because their effects are not traceable.

- Looking at the time scale it is evident that much more information was collected on past or present conditions than on future prospects. This is very well understandable if you consider the high scientific standard of this inquiry. But it's not too helpful for the task of monitoring the progress towards sustainability in the decades to come, which exactly is the central objective of DIAMONT.

Coming to a final conclusion it can be asserted that the research setup proved to be very fruitful and efficient; this work package was able to produce valuable information about the very difficult basic question of the impact of cultural differences upon regional development - even though about as limited as the resources available. So, given the several restrictions this report is a valid and interesting pilot study, opening the door to in-depth research endeavours yet to follow.

Evaluating the impact of culture: tradition or transformation?

Overall, the predominant alpine-wide trend reported by the project teams is a decreasing influence of traditional cultural factors, such as language, presence of minorities as well as presence of indigenous cultures and traditional value systems, much in the sense of speeding up the processes of transformation. Reversely, the presence of local projects and networks as well as modernization efforts in general (such as increasing urbanization) were judged to be of increasing influence upon regional policy and development. However, it is evident that the perception of such modernization efforts and their importance were very different among the experts involved in this inquiry. We can distinguish two opposite schools of thinking, one still linking regional development to traditional cultural values tied to territories and the people living there, and asserting these traditions still a considerable (although diminishing) influence. The other view is that regional development (and policies supporting it) depends more and more on the urbanization profile and the socio-economic potential of a given location, being rather independent of cultural factors, and thereby generating completely new geometries of progress, which may or may not coincide with the traditional structures. For the lack of sufficient factual evidence, it must be left open, which one of these observations was more plausible than the other. But in any case the original working hypothesis⁹⁷ was firmly corroborated.

As far as values and attitudes are concerned, we can distinguish two trends, as reported by the project teams: Regarding economic attitudes, there was unanimity about the validity of the mainstream economic paradigm. Alpine regions clearly are part of the national, if not global economic system and the keys to development are competitiveness, productivity, innovation and networking. There is not a shadow of a doubt whether this road really can be successful also for disadvantaged, not so well endowed regions; nor was there a hint of a question about what could happen with regions not able to catch up with such competition.

⁹⁷ Importance of modernization and globalization as strong driving forces, gradually overruling traditional procedures.

On the other hand, regarding environmental and social values, the survey showed much more complexity. There was unanimity about the fast growing importance of education, and also public services were valued of importance, but it was disputed among experts as to what degree regional policy should be mandated with ensuring such services, or whether they should be left to the private sector at the risk of inadequate or costly supply. Even more disputed were the traditional values of cultural identities and minority rights: is their significance growing or diminishing? Both assessments were expressed in the survey, on the grounds that they were valuable and helpful in a globalizing world rapidly losing its regional diversities, or contrarily that they were becoming obsolete, by the same token.

It is obvious that these trends - economic and socio-cultural transformations - are the two sides of a single coin. Therefore it is quite interesting to see two opposite modes of handling these transformation processes - either from a traditional-oriented (retarding) or from a future-oriented progressing viewpoint. However, it remains to be validated that these modes are different action plans with different outcomes in terms of regional development, or just differences in perception and intentions, but without significant impact.

The final conclusion about this topic may be disputed, but it makes sense to adopt the opinion of some experts, who state, that facing common challenges at a speedy rate means that also the regional policy responses in such a situation would gradually follow a pattern of convergence (in goals and means) to meet such challenges in the future. In this context, the cases of Austria and Slovenia in connection with their access to the EU and the reported impacts upon regional policy in those countries are very interesting indeed: They show clearly two key elements: the first and basic one is the obvious evidence of the accelerating and converging effects of this quite new situation, which gains much relevance compared to the traditional factors, which in turn lose their importance. The second is the "time-lag"-effect inherent in transformation processes - this means, that regional differences are foremost an expression of time lags between stages of a convergence process, and not fundamental everlasting diversities. Or in other words: the cultural heritage in the Alps is a splendid treasure of cultural differences, but these are not of strategic influence any more, facing the challenges of the decades to come.

Regional policy analysis: convergence of approaches?

In all countries, regional policy has a more or less extended tradition, based on the general political and administrative structures, on the specific view upon the Alps and the perception of their resources, potentials and problems. However, scarcity of public funds, outsourcing strategies, cluster building or the pressure from developing countries to enter the markets of the developed countries, especially in agriculture, are actual trends that urgently call for adaptations. Evaluating regional policy then should provide a second look at possible cultural differences, complementing or qualifying the results of the first part of the inquiry. Therefore, strategies, tools, and implementing institutions were scrutinized. And indeed, all three probes yielded interesting results, the main message being that we could identify two groups of characteristics: one with quite distinct differences between AC states, and the other one with a common situation (or generalized approach) in all states.

Among the latter, the consenting issues are trends such as a growing influence of EU policies and provisions, or a shift towards regional competences (either up from communal level, or down from national level); goals like reducing disparities, or strengthening alpine urban

centres to better fitness for standing increased competition; and tools like master plans or development schemes but with limited enforcing power.

On the other hand, there are three main dimensions of differences between the country-specific approaches to regional policy:

- top-down vs. bottom-up;
- sectoral vs. integrative;
- public vs. private.

As far as the first two dimensions (top-down vs. bottom-up; sectoral vs. integrative) are concerned there we find obvious country-specific differences that are partly rooted in their political and administrative history. However, there are strong tendencies in most AC states to combine their traditional approaches with recent experiences, leading to mixed approaches. So in the countries with mainly top-down procedures and implementation schemes (F, I, SLO) there are e.g. newly developed councils at local/regional levels or rising competences for local government, to draw on their knowledge base and expertise, and to improve the acceptance with the local population. On the other hand, in the countries with mainly bottom-up approaches (A, D, CH) there are increasing efforts of coordinating them at upper levels of governance. And the same phenomenon can be observed for the sectoral-integrative gap: quite efficient ("technocratic") sectoral approaches are being combined with coordinating tools, whereas comprehensive (but not very operational) schemes are being strengthened by more effective implementation tools.

Regarding the dimension "public-administrative sector vs. private sector/civil society" there are less marked country-specific differences. Most institutions in charge of regional policy and to promote regional development are administrative (governmental) entities. However, to some extent there are also private institutions involved, like agencies, business chambers and even NGO's, and there are now considerable efforts to develop more public-private-partnership schemes, e.g. in the form of councils. As a conclusion, one can state that there is a trend that civil society gains more influence, as such stakeholders involved in regional policy are increasing in number and competence. This is especially true if sustainability is at stake: private institutions quite often have clearer visions and better grips of this field of action than traditional administrative bodies.

Concluding, the impression is evident, that such country-specific differences (or "cultural" differences) do not really lead to fundamental deviations of (future) regional development, given the fact that there seems to be a kind of convergence towards common schemes, a shift of formerly specific procedures towards a mix of approaches. This is a plausible, if not mandatory change, given the fact that all approaches have their advantages (like for instance better acceptance of bottom-up tools, or higher efficiency of sectoral tools over broad integrative schemes) as well as their drawbacks. Therefore, improvement of approaches should follow the logic of combining chances and avoiding disadvantages, in the sense of best practices. This then is the rationale behind the observed trend of convergence.

What about sustainability?

In the experts' documents there were only marginal remarks regarding sustainability as a benchmark that could differentiate between truly diverse approaches, or even as a matter of policy about the Alps. In addition, there were no attempts to measure the alleged bias between different types of regional development with some indicators connected with the Alpine

Convention. Even more surprisingly in the context of the AC-discussion, there was no mentioning at all of the environmental burden which the dominating economic paradigm is loading upon the Alps, especially in their function as transit corridor between northern and southern Europe, and as a source of environmental resources for the growing needs of the extra-alpine metropolis regions. Also, there was almost no mentioning of "sustainable development policies" as a strategic advantage for a region⁹⁸ - this is interesting indeed for a survey, which is firmly tied to the Alpine Convention strategy.

Against this background it was quite confusing to learn in the section on attitudes and values about the growing significance of sustainability, especially regarding the ecological dimension. Is this statement valid only in terms of a proclaimed goal, or is ecological sustainability already an implemented policy? As it turned out in the regional policy analysis chapter, the implementation of sustainability was reported to be well on its way, but it was not considered to have already gained much momentum, or impacting decidedly regional development.

It follows that sustainability is still a more or less distant and quite weak goal, proclaimed to be achieved in the end, but not really present as a development issue, and with no high priority on the regional policy agenda. It is tempting to interpret this result as an indirect confirmation of the conclusion already reported, that mainstream economic progress is the road map to regional development, even if (or just because!) it is not sustainable in the strict sense of the term. Furthermore, regarding traditional land use, production modes and consumer behaviour as quite sustainable, this result would be additional evidence for the declining impact of traditional cultural values compared with the modernization impact. This then would be a truly disturbing result, especially in the specific context of AC policy.

Final conclusions & outlook

Therefore, looking once more and slightly closer at the strategies and objectives of alpine regional development as reported by the AC countries' project teams, it is not quite surprising that the main consenting issues⁹⁹ coincide almost perfectly with the general road map for alpine regional development as defined by the European Cohesion Policy, and strongly orientated along the Lisbon strategy. In the documents for the Alpine Space II programme¹⁰⁰ the highest development priority is attributed to "Improving the competitiveness and attractiveness of the Alpine space". To attain these goals the following objectives should be achieved:

- positioning the Alpine space as a competitive region
- supporting the development of networks and clusters
- strengthening innovation capabilities of SMEs
- strengthening urban areas as engines for sustainable growth
- reducing territorial and social imbalances
- fostering the development of peripheral regions and urban-rural networks by capitalizing endogenous potentials as locational factors.

⁹⁸ Or for a "culture" (according to the traditional view linking territory, people and their culture).

⁹⁹ To mention the most important: diminishing disparities, strengthening urban centres, improving networks, supporting sustainable growth while assuring environmental quality.

¹⁰⁰ www.alpinespace.org/173.html.

This then is nothing else but a very ambitious modernizing program for the Alps out of the mainstream toolbox, leaving but little room for cultural differences, let alone Alpine specific orientations or a shift of priorities towards regional identities and environmental qualities. And it seems as if at least the political and administrative authorities of all AC countries were eager to follow this Lisbon road map, as shown by our inquiry into alpine regional policy.

On the other hand, the environmental assessment of this priority goal setting¹⁰¹ clearly showed the medium to high negative impact of the goals identified in the WP5 inquiry as the most important in the national development programmes. So if the Alpine Convention and its pledge for sustainability should be more than a declarative proclamation, but gain truly decisive standing in development policy, than some corrections at this road map would be indispensable.¹⁰²

Coming to a final conclusion we remark that (not quite surprisingly) the results of WP5 as reported in this document qualify considerably the assumed diversification impact of regional policy measures: In all alpine countries there is a general and common endeavour (however different in details) to reduce regional socio-economic disparities by improving the economic competitiveness; general socio-economic factors such as innovation and productivity are increasingly relevant in regional policy. There is also a common tendency to enhance the focus on regional strengths and potentials. Also common is the pledge for a "sustainable development" (whatever this should mean in a specific case), normally connected with efforts to increase the impact of participatory and integrative processes, and to searching for an optimal mix of bottom-up and top-down oriented decision-making in regional policy.

On the other hand, looking closer at the institutional aspects of regional policy, we come across some major differences among the alpine countries: Although most often governmental entities or agencies are in charge of implementing regional policy, there are quite marked differences in terms of the "territorial geometry", i.e. which levels of government are responsible for such measures. Also, in spite of a general tendency at increasing the involvement of civil society, there are relevant differences regarding the degree of participation and the involvement of private partnerships. It must be left to further empirical investigations to detect deviations of implementation of the common objectives, and to trace related differences of their impact upon regional development. It may well be that the resources¹⁰³ available and the efficiency of their deployment will prove to be more important than institutional differences at such.

Summarizing these final remarks, we conclude that the traditional influences of cultural factors on regional development seem to be decreasing (while still intuitively present in our perception), leaving an open trail to a generalized development, which generates its peaks and shallows more from globally determined location qualities (like easy access and urbanization, i.e. along the village- metropolis gradient) than from local or regional culture, which in itself tends to become more uniform. Traditional cultural differences then are more an expression of time lags and bound to diminish on the long run. This in turn is a clear signal to DIAMONT:

¹⁰¹ Cp. the Environmental report of the strategic environmental assessment of the Alpine Space II programme at www.alpinespace.org/173.html.

¹⁰² Cp. Boesch (2006a).

¹⁰³ In terms of funds and investments, knowledge transfer, etc.

For monitoring regional development in the Alpine Convention context we must not spend too much effort on indicators based on traditional cultural differences, but more on indicators measuring sustainable progress in a globalizing world. However, this may well include information on regional identity, provided it means not a mere leftover from times past or folklore, but a conscious profile and strategy to future challenges. Such modifications of the general trail of development according to the Lisbon strategy would really be essential as "good governance" for alpine regions, in the true sense of sustainability, and perfectly matching the Alpine Convention pledge.

Appendix

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Questionnaire

DIAMONT / WP 5

Analysing the Impact of Cultural Differences on Regional Policy in the Alps

Questionnaire for National Research teams

Country *



* Please mark your country

Name and Institution:

Address:

Phone:

eMail:

Instructions to fill out the questionnaire

The main task of WP5 is an analysis of the impact of cultural differences on regional policy in the Alpine countries. The task of this questionnaire is to provide a common platform for gathering the data base by all national research teams in the different partner countries. The questionnaire is based on the WP5 concept paper and we ask the national research teams to read that concept paper in advance of answering the questionnaire.

Upon return of your copy of the questionnaire, complete with your answers, the Swiss research team will prepare a comparative synthesis of all results. Therefore, it is obvious that the quality of the results of WP5 as a whole depends essentially on the quality of the answers in this questionnaire by the national research teams. In addition to rely on your own experience with this topic, and to an extensive use of all kind of formal sources (statistics, legal accounts, scientific papers, expertises etc.), it may be useful to arrange interviews with experts to some of the questions.

We ask you kindly to return the questionnaire in electronic form as a word document not later than by:

June 30th 2005 (preliminary results) August 31st 2005 (final results)

General structure of questionnaire

According to the reasoning reported in the concept paper, the questionnaire is structured into the following eight topics:

- I. Introduction: Cultural differences of regional policy
- II. General structure, tasks, and objectives of regional policy
- III. Measures & tools of regional policy
- IV. Institutions of regional policy implementation
- V. Financial transfers into different sectors of economy or public services
- VI. Influence of cultural factors on regional policy (in general)
- VII. Influence of specific values or attitudes, specific initiatives or goals
- VIII. State and dynamics of regional policy and impacts of regional policy measures

Each topic is organized as follows: There are some general remarks about the topic, followed by a well structured answering section. At some occasions, we propose simple choices like <"high" - "middle" - "low"> for answering. However, you are welcome to give additional information or your unstructured comments referring to the topic. All your informations are welcome!

I. Introduction: Cultural differences of regional policy

The identification of cultural differences in the regional development of alpine countries is central to WP5. The term “cultural differences” is thereby to be understood in an open sense: all kinds of attitudes and behaviour in the different fields of human thought and action may have an influence on the way regional development is performing, partly influenced by well-intended regional policy measures. Thereby a series of driving forces and factors become effective (e.g. administration, culture, value systems, language, norms). In this first paragraph we invite you to give your own interpretation (or working hypothesis) as to the basic question of WP5. In an attempt to get at the core of this task, we ask you to make comparisons between the regional policy of your country with those in other alpine countries.

Please, answer the following questions with a short text.

- How can you describe the different approaches of regional policy for the Alps in the partner countries of DIAMONT?
- What is your opinion regarding the cultural reasons for differences in the regional policy for the Alps in the partner countries of DIAMONT?
- Can you name some of the driving forces and factors (e.g. administration, culture, value systems, language, norms) for a culturally differentiated regional policy in the alpine regions?

If possible, please list some literature to the topic of “cultural differences of regional policy in the alps”:

II. General structure, tasks, and objectives of regional policy

The regional policy of the countries in the alps is marked by distinct differences. To let these differences undergo a comparable analysis, a deep knowledge of the different main approaches in the regional policy of the individual alpine country is necessary. Please, characterize the main approaches of the regional policy referring to the alpine region of your country. Thereby, characterize the following possible orientation (approaches) within the regional policy:

- decentralized, federalized or centralized-federalized orientation?
- bottom up or top down orientation?
- sectoral or integrative orientation: main branches or sectors of regional policy?

Answer in a short text (1 page) the following questions. In case there are relevant regional differences within your country, please, differentiate according to the region:

- What are the structures, tasks and objectives in regional policy in your country in general?
- What are the main approaches of alpine regional policy in your country?
What are the main levels of government for such measures?
- Are there other regional policy measures for regions outside of the Alpine realm? If yes, please give some details.
- What trends concerning the future orientation of the regional policy are there in your country?

If possible, please list some literature to the topic of “general structure, tasks and objectives” in (alpine) regional policy:

III. Measures & tools of regional policy

In a further step of differentiation of regional policies we are interested in their conceptional and legal structures and bases. Please, list the most important measures and tools for your country and place it in order of their importance for the regional policy. Please, continue then with describing and evaluating the goals and measures of each tool separately, using the same form again for each tool.

List of the most important concepts and legal instruments for regional policy

(Order according to their importance for Alpine development)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

etc.

General comments on the question of measures & tools of regional policy:

<p>Tool 1 (please use one separate table for each tool, according to the list above)</p> <p>Official name of legal base:</p> <p>General objectives & goals</p> <p>Short description of measure(s) and/or tool(s):</p>
<p>Main hierarchical level of this tool / these measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ national level ➤ regional level ➤ local level <p>Please give additional comments</p>
<p>Orientation of this measure(s) and/or tool(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ decentralized ➤ federalized ➤ centralized-federalized ➤ bottom up? ➤ top down? ➤ sectoral? ➤ integrative? <p>Please, differentiate in actual state / future dynamics!</p> <p>Please give additional comments</p>
<p>Does a monitoring of this measure(s) and/or tool(s) exist?</p> <p>If yes: which state of achievement has been attributed to this measure(s) and/or tool(s) <„high“ - „middle“ - „low“>?.</p> <p>Please give additional comments</p>
<p>With this instrument, which options exist for the realisation of a sustainable regional development? Please, differentiate between <“good” - “middle” - “poor”> instruments.</p> <p>How can these measures be further developed, in order that a sustainable regional development could be supported?</p> <p>Please, give additional comments</p>

IV. Institutions of regional policy implementation

In all alpine countries there are state and private institutions which are involved in the implementation of the goals and measures of regional policy or accompany these in one or another way. In the following questions the institutions of the alpine regional policies are to be described and evaluated. Please, list first the most important state and private institutions for the alpine regional policy of your country in order of their importance, and then continue with describing and evaluating them separately, using the same form again for each institution.

List of the most important institutions of regional policy implementation

(Order according to their importance for Alpine development)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

etc.

General comments on the question of main institutions of regional policy:

Institution 1 (please use one separate table for each institution, according to the list above)

Official name of institution:

Short description and evaluation (aims, importance and operation methods) of this institution:

Main hierarchical level of the activities:

- national level
- regional level
- local level

Please give additional comments

Most important orientation which this institution supports in the regional policy

- decentralized
- federalized
- centralized-federalized

- bottom up?
- top down?

- sectoral?
- integrative?

Please, differentiate in actual state / future dynamics!

Please give additional comments

Which options does this institution hold for the support of the realisation of a sustainable regional development? Please, differentiate between "good", middle" and "poor" options.

V. Financial transfers into different sectors of economy or public services

With this question we would like to gain an overview of the public transfer payments in the different alpine countries, which are motivated by regional policy. With the term “transfer” we understand payments or equivalent goods and services of the public authorities to a region (to private actors & public corporations), with which no simultaneous economic return service does comply with. Subventions are a form of transfer payments.

We ask you to fill in the columns as good as possible. If no data exists, we ask for estimations. For the alpine wide comparison it is important, to get for this question from all alpine countries at least approximate values. Interesting are also statements to where the transfers come from, that is to say if they come from the EU, the national states or from the regions (Bundesländer, Kantone, etc.). Please, try to convey to us your comments and according hints.

Sector	Annual financial transfer		Comments
	absolute value [millions €]	relative value [% of total transfers]	
Agriculture			
Tourism			
Industry/SME			
Other business			
Road construction and maintenance			
Public transportation			
Other public services			
Nature protection, National parks...			
Regional planning, general promotion			
Other			
Other			

Additional comments to this question:

VI. Influence of cultural factors on regional policy

Regional policy and regional development at large in the alpine countries are supposed to be influenced by specific cultural factors, at national, regional, and even local levels. Cultural factors such as different languages, the existence of minorities, traditional cultural values and characteristics and others, can have a more or less strong effect on regional policy. This paragraph deals with the impact of the different cultural factors on regional policy in different countries and regions. We propose a number of cultural characteristics to deal with, but the list should be understood as an open one, and you are invited to append as many traits as you deem relevant. Furthermore, we propose to classify these impacts quite roughly into four categories (1=very important, 2=important, 3=less important, 4=unimportant), and to consider two temporal states, namely "actual state" and "future dynamics". Please, mark the appropriate boxes, and indicate also the direction of an impact (at least, whether the specific cultural trait is likely to support regional development, or if it is hampering it).

However, if you prefer to deal with this very important question in a more informal manner, please feel free to do so - all information is important for the project.

strength of impact ==>	Actual state				Future dynamics			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Cultural traits / direction of impact ↓								
Language								
Presence of minorities								
Presence of indigenous cultures / presence of traditional value systems)								
Presence of local projects/networks								
other factor								

If required please, add further lines!

General comments on the question of the influence cultural factors have on regional policy and regional development:

VII. Influence of specific values or attitudes, specific initiatives or goals

Regional policy and regional development at large in the alpine countries are further influenced by national and regional specific values, attitudes, specific initiatives or goals. Therefore, this paragraph deals with the impact or importance of different so-called socio-economic cultural factors on regional policy and regional development. As in the section V above we propose a number of characteristics to deal with, but again the list should be understood as an open one, and you are invited to append as many traits as you deem relevant. In the same way, we propose to classify these impacts quite roughly into four categories (1=very important, 2=important, 3=less important, 4=unimportant), and to consider two temporal states, namely "actual state" and "future dynamics". Please, mark the appropriate boxes, and indicate also the direction of an impact (at least, whether the specific socio-economic goal is likely to support regional development, or if it is hampering it).

However, if you prefer to deal with this very important question in a more informal manner, please feel free to do so - all information is important for the project.

	Actual state				Future dynamics			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
<p>strength of impact ==></p> <p>Socio-economic goals /</p> <p>direction of impact</p> <p>↓</p>								
Economic progress at large / extra-alpine growth								
Economic innovation / productivity of single enterprises in the region								
Strengthening the regional economy (networking, co-operation)								
Co-operation with extra-alpine partners								
Ecological sustainability								
Cultural identity & social sustainability								
Minority rights								
Good education of local population								

Good public services for local population								
other factor								
If required please, add further lines!								
General comments on the question of the influence of the socio-economic culture on regional policy and regional development:								

VIII. State and dynamics of regional policy / Impacts of regional policy measures

In the following paragraph our interest is focused on the current state and the expected future dynamics of the regional policy in the alpine regions. Additionally, we try to differentiate the prospects separately for non-sustainable and sustainable tracks of development.

Therefore, please, answer in the following tables the three questions Q1, Q2, Q3

- **Q1:** Actual state: How do you assess the current state of development?
- **Q2:** Non-sustainable future: How do you assess the unbalanced general progress?
- **Q3:** Sustainable future: How do you assess the chances for a sustainable development?

The questions are in each case to be answered with one of the three arrows and the answers should be commented:

- ↑ : increase
- : constant
- ↓ : decrease

Furthermore, we will examine these questions separately (one after the other) for three different types of regions in the Alps: the prosperous regions, the steady regions, and the declining regions.

- The type of "prosperous regions" means urban/peri-urban spaces and tourist regions with large infrastructures (e.g. huge energy consumption)
- The type of "steady regions" means sustainable and ecological agricultural land use and partially traditional communities with extensive tourist use.
- The type of "declining regions" means depleting regions, characterized by declining of agriculture (withdrawal of agriculture and abandonment of settlements/communities, only very extensive or no tourist use at all)

Within a single one type of region there are three sections, one for each pillar of the sustainability model: ecology (with the main goal of "Intact Environment"), society (with the main goal of "Coherent Society"), and economy (with the main goal of "Productive Economy"), and in each section there are several questions aiming at respective sub-goals of sustainability.

1. Prosperous regions: state, dynamics and impacts	Q1	Q2	Q3
	↑→↓	↑→↓	↑→↓
<i>Intact Environment</i>			
Natural landscapes			
Open space (limited urbanisation)			
Diverse cultural landscapes			
Sustainable use of resources			
Sustainable tourism			
Comment on the topic 'intact environment':			

<i>Coherent Society</i>			
Regional ability in problem solving			
Participation of the regional actors			
Balanced demographic structures			
Growth of population			
Low disparity in wealth			
Comments on the topic 'coherent society':			
<i>Productive economy</i>			
Economic efficiency			
High drive of innovation			
High educational level			
Integrated regional productivity chains			
Regional quality products			
Comments on the topic 'productive economy':			
2. Steady regions: state, dynamics and impacts			
	Q1	Q2	Q3
	↑→↓	↑→↓	↑→↓
<i>Intact Environment</i>			
Natural landscapes			
Open space (limited urbanisation)			
Diverse cultural landscapes			
Sustainable use of resources			
Sustainable tourism			
Comment on the topic 'intact environment':			
<i>Coherent Society</i>			
Regional ability in problem solving			
Participation of the regional actors			
Balanced demographic structures			
Growth of population			
Low disparity in wealth			
Comments on the topic 'coherent society':			
<i>Productive economy</i>			
Economic efficiency			
High drive of innovation			
High educational level			
Integrated regional productivity chains			
Regional quality products			

Comments on the topic 'productive economy':			
3. Declining regions: state, dynamics and impacts	Q1	Q2	Q3
	↑→↓	↑→↓	↑→↓
<i>Intact Environment</i>			
Natural landscapes			
Open space (limited urbanisation)			
Diverse cultural landscapes			
Sustainable use of resources			
Sustainable tourism			
Comment on the topic 'intact environment':			
<i>Coherent Society</i>			
Regional ability in problem solving			
Participation of the regional actors			
Balanced demographic structures			
Growth of population			
Low disparity in wealth			
Comments on the topic 'coherent society':			
<i>Productive economy</i>			
Economic efficiency			
High drive of innovation			
High educational level			
Integrated regional productivity chains			
Regional quality products			
Comments on the topic 'productive economy':			

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

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