

Antoni Kukliński

Gordian Knots – A new Trajectory of the Regio Futures Programme. The Triple European Mezzogiorno

The Regio Futures Programme is a living reality developed by open minded and innovative approaches (see two volumes published by the Ministry for Regional Development)¹.

In this spirit I would like to propose the idea of Gordian Knots as new trajectory extending the scope and quality of the Programme.

This paper will discuss, the theoretical and empirical dimensions of this new trajectory.

A) The new theoretical dimension

A new hypothesis is introduced into the Programme expressed in the interaction of a set of four concepts:

- long duration
- barriers for development
- Gordian Knots²
- Alexandrian Solutions

This interaction is outlined in the following way -

Primo - in the process of long duration of a given region, a set of developmental barriers is emerging. The economic, social, political and cultural structures of the region are not able to reverse this process, so the barriers are stronger and stronger in the consecutive chapters of the historical experiences of the given region.

Secundo - the conventional decision making reality is not able to outline and implement a set of strategic choices which would create a turning point liquidating the historical barriers.

Tertio - This situation of cumulation of unborn, not formulated and not designed and implemented strategic decisions overcoming the developmental barriers is defined as a Gordian Knot.

¹ P. Jakubowska, A. Kukliński, P. Żuber (eds), The Futures of European Regions, Warsaw 2007, Problematyka Przyszłości Regionów. W poszukiwaniu nowego paradygmatu. Warszawa 2008

² K. Rybiński, P. Opala, M. Hołda, Gordian Knots of the 21st century, Ministry of Regional Development, Warsaw 2008

Quatro - Following the failure of the conventional decision making process the Alexandrian Solutions are the only way to cut the Gordian Knots of the given Region.

The theoretical dimension of this new trajectory of the Programme – will continue and develop the content of the study of Krzysztof Rybiński, Paweł Opala and Marcin Hołda sponsored by the Polish Ministry for Regional Development. The Ministry will publish this study in June 2008³.

As a follow up of my study Gordian Knots – a new trajectory of the Regio Futures Programme – Anna Gąsior-Niemiec will prepare a study – *The Gordian Knots in the European Scene. The experiences and prospects of Southern Italy, Eastern Germany and Eastern Poland*. The Gordian Knots team in the framework of the Regio Future Programme should be expanded. I would like to propose to invite to join the team the two eminent Italian personalities Bruno Amoroso and Simone Arnaldi. We should consider also the invitation of two eminent German social science personalities. Jochem Röpke and Jorg Assman.

Naturally these names are only examples of personalities who could prepare non conventional contributions concerning the triple European Mezzogiorno Southern Italy, Eastern Germany and East Poland.

This line of thinking is indicating that is possible to imagine a team of 25 personalities which would be able to try to propose an intellectual and pragmatic breakthrough in the analysis of the Gordian Knots of the Triple European Mezzogiorno. The members of this team should be not paralyzed by the conventional wisdom and political correctness of the well established field of regional studies. We understand however that eminent personalities of the mainstream of European regional studies should join the team to expose the *classical point of view*.

In this way this paper could be seen as the beginning of a team of 25 personalities involved in a set of studies.

The Gordian Knots in the European Scene The Experiences and Prospects of Southern Italy, Eastern German and Eastern Poland.

This set of studies should get a tolerant and open minded support of the political and academic domain of Germany, Poland and Italy. The regional establishment in these three countries should be interested in non conventional approaches to the triple European Mezzogiorno.

³ See foot note two

We hope that the proposed team will be supported also by the European Union and by OECD. The process to incorporate the Gordian Knots idea into the Regio Futures Programme will be started already in June 2008 (The Bristol Conference June 9-10 2008) in the framework of an international conference organized by the Polish Ministry of Regional Development „*The Future of Regions in the perspective of global change*”. The conference will be a sequence of six panels:

Panel One – The Regio Future Programme experiences and prospects.

Panel two, three, four and five – The Regio Futures Programme, The case studies of Regions A B C D.

Panel six – Gordian Knots, Alexandrian Solutions, Corporations, Regions. In autumn the Polish Ministry of Regional Development will publish the Post Conference volume – *The Future of Regions in the perspective of global change* including already some contributions related to the Triple European Mezzogiorno. If panel six of the June Conference will be a great success and if the perspective of Gordian Knots team will be very bright then the Polish Ministry of Regional Development might consider to organize a grand or a small conference an The Triple European Mezzogiorno. Depending on the attitude of the most important institutions involved in the Triple European Mezzogiorno – this could be a grand conference involving the interested political actors or a working shop involving a group of 25 experts discussing the non conventional observations and proposals related the studies of the triple European Mezzogiorno.

B) The case of Eastern Poland

Eastern Poland is the least developed region in Poland and at the same time the frontier region of the European Union. This is probably the deep motivation of the Polish Ministry of Regional Development and the European Commission to sponsor and publish a set of comprehensive studies analyzing the structures and functions of territorial units representing the differentiated reality of Eastern Poland. In 2007 the Polish Ministry of Regional Development has published an impressive volume of 600 pages⁴.

⁴ Ekspertyzy do Strategii Rozwoju Społeczno – Gospodarczego Polski Wschodniej Tom 1 - Rozwój Polski Wschodniej, Narodowa Strategia Spójności, Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego, Warszawa 2007

Expert studies – contributions to the strategies of socio-economic development of Eastern Poland in the perspective of the year 2020. The 15 contribution published in this volume are written in a spirit of analytical diagnosis of the state of Eastern Poland at the beginning of the XXI century. The strategic spirit of the volume is weaker than the diagnostic spirit. Each contribution published in this volume is a valuable document of good academic and pragmatic performance. The volume is however not an example of an integrated effort testing jointly a leading hypotheses of the volume. The leading hypotheses was formulated in the introduction by J. Szlachta⁵.

These regions have the features of the enchanted circle of backwardness created by the low level of human capital, low level of territorial accessibility, low level of infrastructural development, low level of incomes produced in this area and a very high dependence on agriculture.

This is a very courageous formulation introducing the classical term „backwardness” which for reasons of academic diplomacy in the last twenty years was replaced by milder concepts of *less favored* or *less developed regions*. Unfortunately this leading hypotheses was introduced not *ex ante* but *ex post* into the processes of the preparation of the volume. In other words in the individual contributions published in the volume we are not able to find a sequence of interpretations of the *enchanted circle of backwardness* of Eastern Poland. The interpretations of this type would create an intellectual and pragmatic enrichment of the Polish scene of regional policy and regional studies. In this context I would like to formulate the following proposal for the consideration of the Polish Ministry of Regional Development and of the European Commission. Let us publish as volume three of the REDEF0 Forum, a synthetic volume in English analyzing the *enchanted circle of backwardness of Eastern Poland*.

We could use also another title *The Gordian Knots of Eastern Poland*. The essence of this proposal is to create for the authors of the grand polish volume an new inducement to prepare short papers in English facing the leading hypothesis in the interpretation of the drama of Eastern Poland.

⁵ Ekspertyzy op. cit. Str. 5

C) The case of Eastern Germany. The approaches of the main stream of the German Raumforschung.

Historically the German mind has created the foundations of the theory of location as an outstanding stream in the global scene of social sciences⁶.

At the beginning of the XXI century Germany is the best example of a country having a strong network of spatial research institutions representing the highest level of academic perfection and conventional wisdom. This academic perfection and conventional wisdom is well documented by a new volume sponsored by five best Ramforschung Institutes in Germany. This volume⁷ *Restructuring Eastern Germany* is a set of 15 papers prepared by a group of very eminent authors.

Each paper is a valuable contribution in the field of Ramforschung. The papers are in most cases assuming that the spatial analysis is a highly autonomous field which can be discussed outside the grand fundamental problems of the reality. In this case the grand, fundamental problem is the drama of the Eastern Germany, The Gordian Knots of Eastern Germany, the question who is responsible for the creation of the German Mezzogiorno? The analysis of the spatial problems of Eastern Germany without the substantial and methodological reflexion related to the deep political, economic and social roots of these spatial problems is reducing the dimensions and validity of this analysis to de facto Schein probleme. I understand that this critical evaluation of the fundamental assumptions and performance of the German Ramforschung may be wrong. May be that this Ramforschung is reflected in regional studies which have an outstanding academic and pragmatic validity. There is no doubt however that an international conference exposing the weakness of the German Ramforschung in the interpretation of the East German Experiences – would be fascinating academic and pragmatic experience.

* * *

My critical attitude is firmly stressing that the volume *Restructuring Eastern Germany* is a very important publication as a testing field for the power and weakness of the substance and methodology of the German Ramforschung. This test has not only a significance from the point of view of German regional studies, this test is valuable also from the point of view of

⁶ Compare. U. Blume, R. Funck, S. Kowalski, A. Kukliński (eds) *Space, Structure, Economy. A tribute to August Losch, Nomos, Baden-Baden 2007*

⁷ S. Lentz (ed) *German Annual of Spatial Research and Policy. Restructuring Eastern Germany*, Springer, Berlin 2007

the broad European scene: for the discussions related to the process of the emergence of the European doctrine of regional development.

D) The case of Eastern Germany – The approaches of non conventional wisdom

It is a great intellectual satisfaction to read the brainstorming paper „*East Germany in the development trap or the Münchhausen Chance*”⁸. This is a paper which is trying to understand the grand historical drama of Eastern Germany. The mindset proposed in this paper will be useful not only in the interpretation of the experiences of Eastern Germany but also the experiences of Southern Italy and Eastern Poland.

This paper is a contribution in the discussion of the Triple European Mezzogiorno. I will not try to outline the content of the paper in a systematic way. I will try only to present five observations which are my interpretations of this paper important for the discussion related to the Triple European Mezzogiorno.

One – The East German drama and the East German Gordian Knots were created by the strategy of the unification of Germany including the wrong idea of the parity of the West and East German Mark⁹. This strategy was leading to deindustrialization and deinnovation of eastern Germany. This strategy has de facto introduced the passive model of adaptation leading to the south Italian pattern of social transfers.

Two¹⁰ – It is impossible to create development using as the only way to pump the external resources in to the machine of the economy

Three¹¹ – the input logic was a wrong approach to the strategies of the development of Eastern Germany. According to J. Röpke this wrong approach was embedded in the mainstream neoclassical model¹²

Four – the input logic should be replaced by the innovation logic of reconfiguration of the production factors following the approaches of J. Schumpeter¹³

Five – we should consider the following metaphor related to the adventures of Karl Friedrich baron von Münchhausen¹⁴. In a desperate situation the strong arm of baron von Münchhausen grabbed his hair and pulled himself and his horse out of the bog. Can also the region pull itself

⁸ J. Röpke, Ost -Deutschland in der Entwicklunges Falle. Oder die Münchhausen chance, Perspective 21, Issue 21-22, p. 19-40

⁹ compare J. Röpke p. 24

¹⁰ compare J. Röpke p. 21

¹¹ compare J. Röpke p. 21

¹² compare J. Röpke p. 20

¹³ compare J. Röpke p. 21

¹⁴ compare J. Röpke p. 19

out of the economic bog using the move of baron von Münchhausen? According to J. Röpke the regions have no alternative in relation to this Münchhausen process¹⁵.

* * *

Maybe it is already too late to invite J. Röpke to participate in our Conference The Future of Regions in the perspective of global change. But we can invite J. Röpke to prepare a contribution to the post conference volume and to participate in our Programme and our next conferences. The same solution can be proposed to dr. J. Assman author of the brainstorming paper The spectre of Mezzogiorno¹⁶. In this paper we find the opinion that Germany in the next decades can be confronted with a danger of a second Mezzogiorno. This point of view is directly supporting my idea that the metaphor of Mezzogiorno could be successfully applied in the interpretation of the regional scene in Italy, Germany and Poland.

E) The case of the Italian Mezzogiorno

There are very few regions in the global scale, which have a better coverage in comprehensive studies of social sciences geography and history than the Italian Mezzogiorno¹⁷. In this context also the relative cognitive power of social science and the imagination of the artist should be mentioned. In this framework of this paper let us concentrate attention on the sequence long duration, barriers for development, Gordian Knots. The experience of the Italian Mezzogiorno is a classical example of the power of long duration, which could be seen in the perspective of centuries or even millennia. This long duration has created the unique cultural landscape of the Italian Mezzogiorno. This landscape is a great resource for the future. This long duration has created also barriers for development embedded in the history of social and political structures and in the patterns of personalized mind sets and behaviors. The cumulation of those barriers has created the Gordian Knots of the Italian Mezzogiorno. No Alexandrian Solution to untangle this knot was found in the policies of the Italian government or in the policies of the European Union. We must have the courage to formulate the question *why* even if we are not able to find a satisfactory answer.

¹⁵ compare J. Röpke p. 19

¹⁶ J. Assman, Das Gespenst des Mezzogiorno. Welches Entwicklung scenario erwartet Ost-Deutschland, Perspective, op. cit. p. 41-70

¹⁷ Compare OECD, Territorial Review Italy, OECD Paris 2001, T.G. Grosse, Polityka regionalna Unii Europejskiej – Przykład Grecji, Włoch, Irlandii i Polski, Warszawa 2004 A. Gašior-Niemiec, Mezzogiorno – Próba reinterpretacji, Studia Regionalne i Lokalne nr 1/2003

F) The Gordian Knots of the Triple European Mezzogiorno

This paper is just an introduction, to discuss the question, how to incorporate a new trajectory into the Regio Futures Programme. I am convinced that the Triple European Mezzogiorno is an excellent new field for the expansion and success of the Regio Futures Programme. In this new field we have an innovative opportunity to challenge and compare three schools of regional studies: the Italian, the German and the Polish school¹⁸. At the same time this new field of Triple European Mezzogiorno will be an encounter of strong currents of conventional and not conventional wisdom very deeply demonstrated in the case of Eastern Germany but also in the Polish and Italian cases.

The Regio Futures Programme is a living innovative reality. This assumptions should be confronted by the high quality of all our activities leading to the continuous development of the Programme.

Warsaw
May 2 2008

¹⁸ Compare A. Kukliński, K. Pawłowski (eds) Europe – the strategic choices p. 245-297, Reopus series, Nowy Sącz 2005

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**The Triple European Mezzogiorno. Post Scriptum One.
The holistic methodology**

The classical approach of comparative studies would accept three basic units of analysis: Southern Italy, Eastern Germany and Eastern Poland. These three macro regions would be the framework for interregional comparative analysis, observations and value judgments. The second level of comparative analysis would be related to the intraregional differentiation of Southern Italy, Eastern Germany and Eastern Poland following the conventional regional analysis in these three countries – the German book and the Polish book are good examples of this approach. In our Programme we are planning to go beyond this classical framework and propose an integrated, holistic analysis of the community of Nuts 2 and Nuts 3 regions. In this way an integrated and statistically documented vision of the Triple European Mezzogiorno will emerge. The next step is to prepare a comprehensive and dynamic typology of the Nuts 2 and Nuts 3 Regions of the Triple European Mezzogiorno¹⁹. This integrated vision of the Multilevel Regional Community of The Triple European Mezzogiorno will create a new comparative perception and new analytical and pragmatic inspiration to see the case of Southern Italy, Eastern Germany and Eastern Poland not only in the framework of Italy, Germany and Poland, but also as an European problem of long duration, barriers for development and Gordian Knots. The Triple European Mezzogiorno seen in the perspective of a holistic methodology would be also a creative inspiration for the Regio Futures Programme, introducing into this Programme macro regional units having their roots in the experiences of different European Countries.

We see in this context a fascinating question – why different long durations have created similar barriers and Gordian Knots in Southern Italy, Eastern Germany and Eastern Poland. The test of this hypothesis is a great challenge for social sciences and regional studies in Europe.

¹⁹ Compare : P. Jakubowska, A. Kukliński, P. Żuber (eds) *The Future of European Regions*, Warsaw 2007

The Triple European Mezzogiorno. Post scriptum two.

The dynamic network of structures and processes.

There is a second holistic dimension in our studies related to the Triple European Mezzogiorno. This dimension is to see this Mezzogiorno as a dynamic network of structures and processes deeply rooted in history and strongly represented in present performances. Let us consider the following matrix of holistic interdependencies.

Table 1

The matrix of holistic interdependencies

Structures	Processes			
	political	economical	social	Cultural
Political				
Economic				
Social				
Cultural				

In the explanation of the drama of the European Mezzogiorno only holistic interpretations have an analytical and prospective validity. The drama of the European Mezzogiorno is a holistic drama of long duration where the political, economic, social and cultural processes are creating the structures which in turn reinforce the processes leading to the emergence of barriers for development and of Gordian Knots. In this paper we have the tormenting attitude to try to formulate the central hypothesis for the studies of the European Mezzogiorno. To our mind the most advanced thinking in this field is represented by two authors (J. Röpke and J. Assman) quoted already in this papers.

The Triple European Mezzogiorno. Post scriptum three.

The inspiration of Robert Putnam.

In 1993 the path breaking book of R. Putnam was published²⁰. In a very short time the competent Polish translations was also available²¹ This book is presenting a theoretical and empirical model – how to design and implement innovative comparative studies, analyzing the efficiency of regional government. This model should be tested now in the comparative

²⁰ R. Putnam, Making democracy work: civic traditions in modern Italy. Princeton University Press, 1993.

²¹ R. Putnam, Demokracja w działaniu, Znak, Kraków 1995

analysis of the efficiency of regional government in Southern Italy, Eastern Germany and Eastern Poland. This is a very complicated and challenging task facing difficulties not experienced by R. Putman. We must however have the intellectual and moral courage to face this task as a Programme of well organized research activities for the years 2009-2011. In this context we see that the studies related to the Triple European Mezzogiorno cannot be reduced to a set off publications and conferences organized only in short term perspective. The drama of the Triple European Mezzogiorno must be seen in the climate of immediate urgency. In this climate we must find a new paradigm a new set of questions and answers to find Alexandrian Solutions for the Gordian Knots of the European Mezzogiorno. This is however a long term process which must be started now to achieve results in the not too distant future.

The Triple European Mezzogiorno. Post scriptum four.

The cultural landscapes as resources for the future.

The processes of long duration have created in the Triple European Mezzogiorno a splendid set of cultural landscapes as extremely valuable resources for the future. In the context of the proposed research Programme we should try to reinvent the theory of the cultural landscape and prepare set of publications and other mass media presentations incorporating into the global perception the cultural landscapes of the Triple European Mezzogiorno. This is field of potential effective cooperation of the domain of science, art and business.

The Triple European Mezzogiorno. Post scriptum five.

The set of 20 regions and the mosaic of 500 localities.

In both theoretical and pragmatic perspective the thesis that the Triple European Mezzogiorno is „*a monolithic sea of backwardness*” is just wrong. The Triple Mezzogiorno is a set of 20 differentiated regions and a mosaic of 500 localities. The mosaic hypothesis²² has not only a cognitive dimension, it has also a pragmatic dimension in the mosaic, if it is easier to find the dimensions of hope.

²² D. Ietri, F. Rota, The Italian Mosaic Facing competitiveness and innovation [in:] A. Kukliński, K. Pawłowski (eds) Europe – the strategic choices, Nowy Sącz 2005

The Triple European Mezzogiorno. Post scriptum six.

Benchmarking and the Münchhausen Chance.

The Programme of the Triple European Mezzogiorno should envisage the creation
primo – of a comprehensive data bank
secundo – a efficient system of monitoring and benchmarking.

If we would like to apply a more dramatic terminology used in this paper we can propose the idea of an observatory of the emerging Münchhausen chances.

The Triple European Mezzogiorno. Post scriptum seven.

The Regio Futures Programme

We assume that the majority of the regions of the Triple European Mezzogiorno in the next decades of the XXI century will be able to use the Münchhausen chance. The Regio Future Programme and its main mission to develop the self programming capacity of the region is a direct invitation extended to the Triple Mezzogiorno. The will and ability to accept this invitation and prepare a set of studies analyzing there own experiences and prospects – is an important test opening good perspectives for the future of the XXI century. The Regio Futures Programme could be seen as a common the dominator for future oriented activities of the Regions of The Triple Mezzogiorno.

The Triple European Mezzogiorno. Post Scriptum eight.

The drama of Italian Mezzogiorno.

The developmental failure of The Italian Mezzogiorno is the *causa celebra* of social sciences of the XX century. We are in a fortunate position to read the synthetic study of Anna Gąsior-Niemiec²³ which to my mind is one of the best contributions trying to explain the mystery of Mezzogiorno in a holistic perspective analyzing jointly the transformations in the fields of reality ideology, arts and social sciences. An extended English version of this study will be available very soon in the internet shape and later in the Gutenberg Version.

In this context I would like to present a different approach and concentrate attention on the fundamental question who is responsible for the historical developmental failure of The Mezzogiorno. I would like to outline three domains of this responsibility:

²³ A. Gąsior-Niemiec, Mezzogiorno. Próba reinterpretacji, Studia Regionalne i Lokalne, 1/2003

- 1) the endogenous internal responsibility of the social, economic, political and cultural structures prevailing in the historical experiences of Mezzogiorno
- 2) The exogenous responsibility of the consecutive Italian Governments designing and implementing wrong social, economic, policies in relation to Mezzogiorno.
- 3) The exogenous responsibility of the European Commission, which was not able to find an effective and innovative approach to be applied in the „*Hopeless case*” of Mezzogiorno.

One

The social, economic, political and cultural structures are a pronounced phenomenon of long duration where the emergence of developmental barriers and Gordian Knots changed it self in to an *objective* historical reality. This process has a strong psychological dimension meaning that the elites of Mezzogiorno have developed a psychology of satisfaction in the framework of a *lagging behind* mentality – lagging behind is keeping open the external flows of financing coming from the Italian Government and The European Union. In these conditions the inducements to apply the baron von Münchhausen operation are very limited if existing at all.

Two

We need a grand comprehensive study analyzing the performance of the consecutive Italian Governments in the domain of Italian Mezzogiorno. There is a paradox in these experiences: there was a very high rate of almost permanent governmental change. At the same time the structures of the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno were extremely stiff designing and implementing more or less the same set of wrong policies totally disregarding the miserable results those policies.

Three

The experience of the European Commission in the domain of the Italian Mezzogiorno is also a failure. It is very interesting to note that the huge and highly competent apparatus of the European Commission was not able to discover that „*something is going wrong in the Italian Mezzogiorno*”, that the structural funds of the European Union are not used efficiently in The Italian Mezzogiorno. This is an example of the weakness of the monitoring institutions of the Commission. These monitoring institutions were concentrating attention on the formal process related to the absorption of the structural funds. The substantial monitoring, the answer to the questions related to the reality of development processes in the Italian Mezzogiorno, were recognized as matters practically outside the attention of the European Commission.

* * *

Reading this pessimistic review of the experiences of the XX century we are formulating a question, if there is any substantial hope that the XXI century will create an Alexandrian Solution for the Gordian Knots of the Italian Mezzogiorno. Can we say that inside the political, economic, social and cultural structures of the Italian Mezzogiorno new forces are emerging creating processes leading to the renaissance of Mezzogiorno. Can we say that the Italian Government and The European Union will discover a set of solutions driving positive change in the reality of the Italian Mezzogiorno.

The Triple European Mezzogiorno. Post Scriptum nine.

The challenge of The Gordian Knots.

In this paper we are trying to prove that the concept of the Gordian Knots and Alexandrian Solutions can be tested in the reality of the Triple European Mezzogiorno. Can we really say that there are strong common denominators in the realities of Southern Italy, Eastern Germany and Eastern Poland. These common denominators must be very strong to support the concept of the Triple European Mezzogiorno, which was used in this paper I hope in an analytically convincing way. If we reject this point of view, we can say that we need to design three separate monographic studies of the experiences of Southern Italy, Eastern Germany and Eastern Poland. If each study not the genus proximum, but the differentia specifica of each region is most important. In both cases a comparative European reflexion is a challenging task for social sciences trying to use the metaphor of Gordian Knots in the exploration of the changing scene of European Regions.

* * *

This paper is not a conventional academic contribution. It is rather a set of notes, observations and suggestions trying to convince the interested readers to join the intellectual and pragmatic effort trying to answer the question to what extend the concepts of Gordian Knots is an effective metaphor in our Regio Futures Programme.

Warsaw

May 12-2008

Antoni Kukliński

A prospective Review.

K. Rybiński, P. Opała, M. Hołda Gordian Knots of the 21st century volume 2, Regional Development Forum, Ministry of Regional Development, Warsaw 2008, 160 pages.

The Mission of the volume.

The rich and innovative content of this concise volume, can be seen as a triple contribution.

Primo – a contribution to develop our knowledge and imagination related to the great drama of the XXI century. The metaphor of Gordian Knots and Alexandrian Solutions is a very efficient intellectual and pragmatic instrument supporting our perception of realities and ideologies shaping the XXI century. The volume is respecting all criteria of an academic contribution. But this is not a hermetic professional volume. It is written in a spirit of open minded presentation, which can be seen as a useful contribution for the very broad circles of educated public opinion which is sometimes interested in concise volumes analyzing the experiences and prospects of the XXI century

Secundo – a contribution to the Regio Futures Programme designed and implemented under the auspices of the Polish Ministry of Regional Development. The III Warsaw Conference will demonstrate that the Regio Future Programme is a global Programme. The Gordian Knots volume is an integral part of the III Warsaw Conference (June 9 – 10 2008) via two channels of analysis

one – supplying a general global background to all considerations related to the Future of Regions

Two – supplying specific arguments opening the way to introduce the Gordian Knots as a concept which could and should be applied in regional analysis (see chapter four)

Tertio – in ambitious interpretation the volume may be seen as a modest, but valuable contribution supporting the process of the design and implementation of the grand new Programme of the Club of Rome – New Path for World Development. In this context the volume will be presented at the International Conference – The Gordian Knots and Alexandrian Solutions, The Perspectives of the XXI century. This conference will be organized by the Polish Economic Society under the auspices of the Club of Rome, of the Polish Ministry for Regional Development and of the Ernst and Young Corporation (Poland). The Conference will take place in Warsaw October 23-26 2008.

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The K. Rybiński volume will be introduced by the Author to the Aurelio Peccei Conference of the Club of Rome: Strategies for a Sustainable Planet Rome 16-17 June 2008.

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The volume Gordian Knots will have different interpretations and different applications. It is just the beginning of a long way to develop a holistic Programme – The Gordian Knots of the XXI century.

The scope of the volume

The scope of the volume is very broad and comprehensive. It is not however a holistic volume. The whole domain of culture is beyond the scope of the attention of the volume. The scope of the volume is dominated by six global fields important as scenes of the emergence of the Gordian Knots:

The global finances

The global economy

The global governance and geopolitical transformations

The global demography

The global environment

The global science and technology

This is a very broad panorama of realities structures and processes of long duration which create the Gordian Knots. The volume is accepting the silent assumption, that the Gordian Knot is preponderantly a global phenomenon. The volume is however – not excluding interpretation that the Gordian Knots, can be seen in a full set of spatial scales including the global scale, the continental scale, the subcontinental scale, the national scale, the regional scale and the local scale. The spatial scale is especially important in the interpretation of the dramatic interaction of Gordian Knots and Alexandrian Solutions seen as a feasible reality or as an utopian dream. In this spirit let us present the Panorama of six substantial fields and six spatial scales.

Table 1

Gordian knots – The Panorama of six substantial fields and six spatial scales

Global fields	The spatial scales					
	Global	Continental	subcontinent	national	Regional	local
Finances	X				X	
Economy	X				X	
Governance	X				X	
Demography	X				X	
Environment	X				X	
Science and technology	X				X	

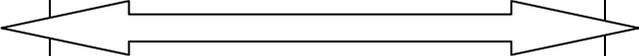
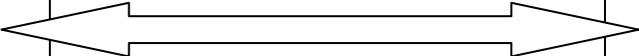
In the context of the Regio Futures Programme two columns of Table 1 are most important, the column of the glob and the column of the Region. The Regional Interpretation of the Gordian Knots will be outlined in the parallel studies of A. Kukliński and A. Gąsior-Niemiec

The intellectual and the pragmatic axis of the volume.

The axis Gordian Knots – Alexandrian Solutions is the critical strategic element of the volume and of the International Research Programme in toto.

Table 2

The axis of the volume

The Gordian Knots	The fields of transformation of Knots into Solutions	The Alexandrian Solutions
A	The discovery and analyze of the Gordian Knots	A
B		B
C	The recognition of the existence of the Gordian Knots by the grand decision making elites	C
D		D
E		E
F	The decisions to apply the Alexandrian solutions and the implementation of these decisions	F
Ect.		Ect.

The discovery and analysis of the Gordian Knots is a comprehensive intellectual and cultural challenge. But it is a challenge inside our mental and moral capacities. Our Conferences, Publications and Research Programmes, have the full capacities to respond to this demand of the global scene. The volume *Gordian Knots of the XXI century* is an excellent starting point for this cognitive and pragmatic process.

The second field or stage in much more difficult may be even impossible to achieve. The greatest tragedy of the XXI century is the total strategic blindness of the grand global elites. The authors of the volume Gordian Knots are less pessimistic in their judgment. In the volume we find indications that the global financial elites are starting to recognize that there are Gordian Knots in the global financial system. But even in this optimistic interpretation we have a long way to go to get the decision to apply the Alexandrian Solutions which can be seen as a feasible reality and non only an utopian dream.

Conclusion

The volume *Gordian Knots of the 21st century* is published just in time to have a set multidimensional applications

Primo – as a contribution interesting for the relative broad public opinion

Secundo – as a contribution to the Regio Future Programme and especially to the III Warsaw Conference June 9-10

Tertio- as a potential contribution to the New Programme of the Club Rome – New path for World Development . In these spirit the volume will be introduced to the Club of Rome Conference – Rome June 16-17 2008

Quarto – as a contribution to the October Warsaw Conference, The Gordian Knots and Alexandrian Solutions. The Perspectives of the XXI century.

Warsaw

May 10 2008

Antoni Kukliński

Triple Mezzogiorno Programme

T.M.P.

The main mission of the T.M.P. is to create a field of encounter and controversial discussion testing the approaches of conventional and non conventional wisdom in the European regional studies. We accept the following thematic outline of this paper.

- I. Conventional versus non conventional wisdom.**
- II. Regional studies in Europe some diagnostic observations.**
- III. Regional studies in Germany, Italy and Poland – the power of conventional wisdom.**
- IV. The weakness of conventional wisdom facing the Triple Mezzogiorno of Southern Italy, Eastern Germany and Eastern Poland.**
- V. The Triple Mezzogiorno as a chance for the approaches of non conventional wisdom.**
- VI. The new methodological architecture of non conventional wisdom**
 - Long duration
 - barriers for development
 - Gordian Knots
 - Alexandrian Solutions
- VII. The baron von Münchhausen metaphor .**
- VIII. The initial stage of the T.M.P.**
- IX. The T.M.P. as a big push for the Regio Futures Programme.**

I. Conventional versus non conventional wisdom

The concept of conventional wisdom was invented and used very frequently by John Kenneth Galbraith one of the most prominent social scientists and personalities of the XX century. Indirectly in the opera omnia of J.K. Galbraith we find the thesis that conventional wisdom is blocking our ability to understand and explain new phenomena which are outside the knowledge and imagination of the contemporary social sciences. The dilemma

conventional versus non conventional wisdom should be interpreted in the context of two other dilemmas most frequently associated with the great names of Gunnar Myrdal and Thomas Kuhn. The Myrdalian dilemma is the dilemma mainstream versus non mainstream approaches. The Kuhnian dilemma is the dilemma of old versus new paradigm. These three dilemmas could be seen as different faces of the transformation of social sciences. We may be tempted to accept **two sequences**:

one

Conventional wisdom – mainstream approaches – old paradigm

two

non conventional wisdom
non mainstream approaches
new paradigm

The reality of the development of social sciences is much more complicated than these simple sequences one and two. In this paper we will concentrate our attention on the first dilemma leaving the Myrdalian and Kuhnian case to another occasion.

II. Regional studies in Europe some diagnostic observations

Regional studies in Europe are a strong interdisciplinary field driven by the dynamic triangle of science – national and regional government – European Commission. Regional studies are an academic field represented by a great galaxy of institutions and personalities. Regional studies are supported by national and regional governments. The European Commission is performing a special role in the promotion of regional studies in Europe.

In this context we can formulate three questions:

- 1) is it possible to outline the emergence of a new model of European regional studies having its own face different for example in relation to the faces of American regional studies
- 2) in the development of European studies can we see the prevailing model incorporated in the sequence
conventional wisdom
mainstream approaches
old paradigm
- 3) to what extent the European regional studies are an open innovative stream able to absorb non conventional wisdom and non conventional approaches. This open

minded innovative attitude is leading to the creation of new paradigm in the field of regional studies.

We need a general reflexion related to the power and misery of European Regional studies. We should test and reject the thesis that the European Commission is a stronghold of conventional wisdom in the field of regional studies.

III. Regional studies in Germany, Italy and Poland – the power of conventional wisdom.

The emergence of European regional studies – as a mega field of social sciences – is not excluding the classical developmental trajectory of regional studies as a field functioning in the framework of national experiences. In this sense we continue the well established historical traditions of regional studies in Germany, Italy and in Poland. We can probably define the special intellectual and institutional features of the academic and pragmatic schools of regional studies in Germany, Italy and Poland. To my mind these three schools of regional studies are *hinc and nunc* very firmly dominated by conventional wisdom. Naturally we need a whole set off diagnostic comparative studies in order to confirm or reject this hypothesis.

IV. The weakness of conventional wisdom facing the Triple Mezzogiorno of Southern Italy, Eastern Germany and Eastern Poland

In the earlier parts of this paper we have presented an observation that the conventional wisdom of European regional studies and of the German, Italian and Polish schools of regional studies was not able to answer the fundamental question – why in three European regions developed in the framework of different historical processes a similar galaxy of phenomena has emerged? The conventional wisdom is not able to explain the roots and the main features of these grand question of the Triple European Mezzogiorno.

V. The Triple Mezzogiorno as a chance for non conventional wisdom

We must find new resources of knowledge and imagination to reinvent the Triple Mezzogiorno. This is a chance for non conventional wisdom which probably will be discovered outside the classical limits of regional studies.

The already quoted paper of Jochen Röpke is an excellent example of this line of thinking. The classical, intellectual and pragmatic equipment of regional studies is too weak to face the problem of the Triple Mezzogiorno. We need a holistic social science approach to analyze the

dynamic network of structures and processes shaping the past and the future of the Triple Mezzogiorno.

VI. The new methodological architecture of non conventional wisdom

The power of non conventional wisdom is expressed inter alia in the construction of a new conceptual framework. In the earlier parts of this paper we have proposed four concepts to be applied in this context:

Long duration
Barriers for development
Gordian Knots
Alexandrian Solutions

This is naturally not a comprehensive vision of a new conceptual framework. It is only a suggestion of an opening reflexion in this field.

VII. The baron von Münchhausen metaphor

Sometimes a paradox is a creative and innovative inducement for the trajectories of our thinking. I think that the Münchhausen paradox is indicating that the crucial choice shaping the future of the Triple Mezzogiorno is the endogenous will to dismantle the barriers for development.

VIII. The initial stage of The Triple Mezzogiorno Programme

T.M.P.

The initial stage of T.M.P. is to find twenty personalities willing to see the Triple Mezzogiorno as a fascinating laboratory for the development of non conventional wisdom in the field of social sciences and broad policy oriented approaches.

A brainstorming Meeting of this Team 20, will answer five questions:

1. Is the Triple Mezzogiorno a real European Problem ?
2. Is the Triple Mezzogiorno a case for the development and application of non conventional wisdom and really holistic approaches and solutions?
3. Is the Triple Mezzogiorno a potential field of large scale holistic comparative studies of 1000 enterprises, 50 local governments, 20 regional governments, 20 universities, 50 R and D Institutes, 20 Institutions of Culture ect. We need to develop a deep comparative empirical Knowledge related to the reality of Triple Mezzogiorno.

4. Is the Triple Mezzogiorno a field of dynamic cooperation linking persons, enterprises and institutions located in the Triple Mezzogiorno?
5. Is the experience of the Triple Mezzogiorno, an inspiration for the new patterns in the activities of the European Commission.

* * *

The success if the initial stage of T.M.P. would open the way for an advanced stage of T.M.P. In this stage the T.M.P. would be not only an intellectual venture but also a grand political and economic Programme designed and implemented in the framework of European Commission *in toto*. This „*in toto*” means, that the DG Regio is too weak to create a turning point in the development of the Triple Mezzogiorno. We need a large scale, highly integrated Programme of a „*consortium*” of let us say 10 DG (Enterprise, Research, Education ect) to create a really holistic Programme of the transformation of the Triple Mezzogiorno

IX. The Triple Mezzogiorno Programme as a big push for the Regio Futures Programme

The T.M.P. would be a great inducement for the 20 Regions of the Triple Mezzogiorno, to join the Regio Futures Programme. This move will put the T.M.P. into a global context outlined so well by this III Warsaw Conference.

Conclusion

This is not an elegant and comprehensive academic paper. It is only a trajectory to see the Regio Futures Programme as a field of the eternal conflict of conventional and non conventional wisdom following the skeptical and critical spirit of John Kenneth Galbraith.

Warsaw

May 25 2008