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### The place where streams seek ground. Towards a new territorial governmentality: the meaning and usage of the concept of territorial cohesion in the European Union

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## Part I Substantive framework: the concept of territorial cohesion in the institutional framework of the European Union

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### Introduction

As the subtitle of this thesis reads, its research is about ‘the meaning and usage of the concept of territorial cohesion in the European Union’. However, it is far from clear what territorial cohesion is about. To get an idea of the research object treated in-depth in this book, we should therefore introduce the concept and its European context.

The Europe in which this concept can be placed is not well-known. Perhaps most people, at least those who watch football, identify Europe more with the Champions League anthem than with the European Union anthem (i.e. Schiller’s and Beethoven’s *Ode an die Freude*). Yet, the latter organisation has more to do with the “territorial cohesion tune”: the European Union is the concept’s European context. You might also think territorial cohesion deals with territory, and that the concept then surely refers to the territorial boundaries of this organisation, such as the border controls resulting from the geographical demarcation of the European Union. Then again, territorial cohesion does not have much to do with the experiences lived on the frontiers “where Fortress Europe ends” either (e.g. van der Linde&Segers, 2004: 425). Still, with the European Union as European context and a shying away from geo-political issues, much is open for what territorial cohesion does deal with.

As one of the main tasks of this research is to get a clearer idea of what the case of territorial cohesion is about, we are confronted with a problem: how to clearly introduce a research-object when the whole research is set up for that purpose alone? Part I cuts this “Gordian knot” by providing an initial substantive framework for what will follow. It namely places territorial cohesion topics in the basic institutional framework of the European Union to point the reader to the substance matter spoken of in this thesis.

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