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 Territorial cohesion meaning and knowledge

Introduction

This Part of the discourse analysis of the concept of territorial cohesion is concerned with the first sub-question of this research: what is the meaning of territorial cohesion? As came forward in the methodological framework, in a discourse analysis this does not only have to do with its definitions, but also with its knowledge (see §5.3.3).

Territorial cohesion meaning and knowledge then form the “ethereal substance” of the concept’s realm of expertise. Harnessed by reason such positions, intellectual as they are, claim durability beyond the arbitrariness observable in power practices. In contrast to the conceptual history there, it would therefore make no sense to take the time-dimension into account for the proto-concept of territorial cohesion here. Yet, as with Escher’s (1960) impossible figure, in the ivory tower, abstaining from “earthly matter”, meanings and knowledges seem to wander about in circles, continuously referring to each other, not knowing whether they climb (scandere) up or down. When you then set off to map territorial cohesion propositions on your journey towards the concept’s hermeneutic horizon there appears a “fata morgana” of explicit definitions. More often still, implicit definitions accompany the utterance of ‘territorial cohesion’. Despite this confusion the concept is nonetheless used for precise discriminations (e.g. as research topic).
To enable a critique of the expertise depending on the common ground of territorial cohesion meaning, the first chapter of this Part I, Chapter 9 that is, first orders the marks of the involved linguistic and meaning-making practices. The involved expert language, abstract (scientific) objectifications of social reality, and (policy) action-oriented discursive simplifications go further than such signification events though, as they come up with territorial cohesion knowledge claims. Chapter 10 therefore maps these to critique them as well.