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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Chapter 9  The common ground of territorial cohesion meaning

Introduction

To attribute a *prima facie* reading to the concept of territorial cohesion, one can combine what 'territorial' and 'cohesion' both signify. 'Cohesion' then has to do with how things relate to each other, and 'territorial' with the demarcation of space (see Chapter 1). Every territorial cohesion meaning would thus have to deal with the tension between relating and demarcating. Putting 'territorial' and 'cohesion' together could then amount to how things territorially relate to each other. Already such an abstract in-filling of the concept raises many questions essential for what it actually means (e.g. which things relate, when is something territorial). The concept thus leaves much room for interpretation. This chapter therefore gathers the meanings put under the label of 'territorial cohesion'. It does so by first presenting them in taxonomy (§9.1) and then explaining how the triangle of signification groups territorial cohesion definitions in different kinds (§9.2) and helps to delineate the concept's common ground of meaning (§9.3). The reason for this rather dry exercise is that it enables a critique of the system of territorial cohesion meaning insofar it harbours arbitrary significations and is inherently inconsistent (§9.4), what finally points towards the concept's knowledge too (§9.5).

9.1 The taxonomy of territorial cohesion meaning

9.1.1 Taxonomising for clarity

To shed some light in the (conceptual) dark, this chapter's taxonomic exercise unpacks territorial cohesion by decomposing the concept's 'mental components into orderly and manageable sets of component units' (Sartori, 1970: 1038; Radaelli, 2000: 5). Seen through the triangle of signification this implies looking at how different territorial cohesion meanings group around specific *Sinn* (i.e. signified ideas). That is, you group statements of *Bedeutung* (i.e. referred to facts), which explicitly or through assumption or logical implication demarcate meaning in what experts say, under kinds of meaning. This research separates and maps out seven groups for the concept of territorial cohesion: i) descriptive, ii) normative, iii) policy objective, and iv) instrumental, and, less substantive and more technical, v) policy coherence, vi) spatial planning, and vii) territorial governmentality meanings. Table 1 and 2 below then display the mapped out taxonomy of territorial cohesion *Sinn* above *Bedeutung* by showing the concept's more substantive and more technical meanings respectively.

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4 Note that the European Union has no criteria for ‘cohesion’ (GaR, 2002a), nor is there an official definition of it (BBR, 2000c: 118-119).

5 I thank Eric Warmerdam (well-known trainer and owner of Seconds Out Kickboxing Gym in Almere) for pointing this out to me.
9.1.2 The taxonomy of territorial cohesion *Sinn* above *Bedeutung*

Table 1 The territorial cohesion taxonomy: more substantive meanings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Sinn</th>
<th>Bedeutung</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>territorial cohesion</td>
<td></td>
<td>ethical/political/economic/social/cultural cohesions in or between (people of) territories¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(territorial dimension of) disparities/sustainable development/(balanced) competitiveness²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>access to SG(E)²³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>territorial identity or worth of specific (geographical) territorial features (as endogenous potential)²⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>complex web of spatial, social, economic, environmental structures in or between territories over several scales (and their potential, position, and integration through time)²⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptive</td>
<td></td>
<td>- territorial effect of Cohesion/Community policies³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- equal SG(E)²⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- territorialisation of European Social Model/there is more (for policies) than free economic competition³⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Rawls' concept of social justice (and equity with a spatial dimension)²⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- solidarity for the whole (European) territory or equality between territories (by helping geographically handicapped regions)²⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>normative</td>
<td></td>
<td>- equality between citizens wherever they live/work (in the European Union) or a compensatory equity at certain levels and a certain diversity²⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- will to be together (in an ordered, resource-efficient, and/or environmental-friendly spatial distribution of human activities across the European Union)²⁸</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- territorial effect of regional policies/(economic and social) cohesion/planning for Europe²⁹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- balanced (regional/social/economic) development or balanced/sustainable development (and competitiveness) in territorial/polycentric terms²⁹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- improve Europe’s/regions’ (endogenous) territorial potentials (for competitiveness) or national ecological networks³⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- access to SG(E)²³ (for the European Union’s inhabitants/in rural and peripheral areas)³⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- mitigate effects of the (single) market/globalisation/liberalisation or balance people/human activities/competitiveness over (geographic/demographic divers) territories³⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- regional integration for economic and social cohesion/European integration³¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- balanced development³¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- competitiveness of a region/Europe³¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- fit in foci of Cohesion policy/the ESDP, CEMAT, Lisbon Strategy, and the Gothenburg European Council³¹</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

¹ ESDP: European Spatial Development Perspective.
² CEMAT: European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning.
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Table 2 The territorial cohesion taxonomy: more technical meanings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Sinn</th>
<th>Bedeutung</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>policy coherence</td>
<td>bundle of (European) sector policies/actions</td>
<td>– horizontal coherence of (European Union) policies/interventions with a territorial impact (for efficiency) and/with regional policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spatial planning</td>
<td>functioning as/replacing (European Union) spatial planning</td>
<td>– horizontal and vertical coherence of European Union policies with a territorial impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>territorial governance mentality</td>
<td>new territorial way of thinking of the European Union</td>
<td>– spatial policy objective (to reorganise Community territory) or substantive spatial vision as framework for interventions (to overcome institutional differences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fine-grained (territorial/biographical) oversight</td>
<td>– regional/national territorial development (to exploit territorial capital) or everything of spatial development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>basis for focusing individual/regional, national, and European (development) action or territorial governance issues (for effective European Structural Funds)</td>
<td>– combining spatial thinking and governance/assessment action or holistic, territorial, and dynamic approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>territorial dimension/integration of (effective and efficient) European Union policy/regions</td>
<td>– territorial dimension/integration of (effective and efficient) European Union policy/regions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.1.3 Focus on the system of territorial cohesion meaning

Tables 1 and 2 show how this research combines territorial cohesion definitions with similar ones to construct hues of Bedeutung in every Sinn. Because we are here more concerned with the system the kinds of territorial cohesion meanings form than the particular meanings defined, an oversimplification of the concept’s propositions will suffice to present its semantic structure. The variety in meanings appearing in the intertextual territorial cohesion text is thus much larger than the ones presented in the territorial cohesion taxonomy. Although justified for clarity, it should be stressed that such an interpretation of the actual complexities of territorial cohesion propositions in the data implies choosing the most general definition, the largest common denominator, or the weakest proposition. It is important to keep this “violence done to reality” in the back of our minds, both for its consequences for understanding the territorial cohesion taxonomy and constructing the concept’s common ground of meaning from it.

9.2 The different kinds of territorial cohesion meaning

9.2.1 The essential differences of territorial cohesion Sinn

To complicate things further, in the interpretation of territorial cohesion definitions above the same wordings of territorial cohesion readings regularly return in different kinds of meaning (e.g. access to SG(E)I). Although this might seem artificial, it makes an essential difference whether the same (simplified) definition is proposed with a different idea behind it. Hence, the structuration of territorial cohesion meanings in seven Sinn to order how

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* To give a few examples of semantic simplification: i) the meanings of territorial cohesion as taking care of spatial effects or taking care of territorial effects differ, but the former is here put under the label of the latter; ii) territorial cohesion as cohesion ‘between cities and surrounding regions’ is more specific than territorial cohesion as cohesion between territories, but here only the latter is shown; and iii) although territorial cohesion as a balanced spatial distribution of human activities could entail spatial fragmentation, the statement that territorial cohesion goes against the latter can be put under the former and both return with the label ‘balance human activities over territories’. 

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different but also similar territorial cohesion definitions differ in Bedeutung. To distinguish these Sinn, the kinds of territorial cohesion meaning are defined by how they fit in the act of governing, as the concept plays a role in European power practices, especially those of policy-making (see Chapter 2 on governmentality and power). The descriptive, normative, policy objective, and instrumental kinds of territorial cohesion meaning are thereby more concerned with (for) what there is governed (i.e. substance). The policy coherence, spatial planning, and territorial governmentality kinds of territorial cohesion meaning differ from these other four in that they form a set which is more concerned with how there is governed (i.e. techniques). The next two sections consecutively explain these two spheres of meaning.

9.2.2 Distinguishing the more substantive kinds of territorial cohesion meaning

The descriptive kind of territorial cohesion meaning is concerned with what it is that is governed and therefore defines territorial cohesion. The normative kind of territorial cohesion meaning is therefore concerned with the ideal towards which is governed and lays down a European Union-shared value or norm as imperative. This ideal, whether latent or as something which should be aspired, does not exist in tangible reality, and might thus be considered as real in the sense of ideational, discursive, and/or insofar it affects the tangible world. However, as ideals are more flexible than facts, the meanings within this normative kind can denote a wider array of wishes for states of affairs than the descriptive ones. Hence, various and even opposed ideals can be adhered to in action as shown in, for example, aims, rules, and "unnegotiables". Still, because territorial cohesion also refers to spatial entities, the concept's normative kind of meaning always implies a tension between the ideational and tangible spheres.

Although the policy objective and instrumental kinds of territorial cohesion meaning can be seen as combining realis and value statements (e.g. changing what is towards an ideal), both deal more with irrealis statements. The policy objective kind of territorial cohesion meaning is namely concerned with the realisable objective for government and thus states what is aimed for as (public) policy objective to bring about in the concrete reality of territories. This entails the hypothesis of feasibility, something an ideal per definition does not have. Besides that policy objectives can be based on non-idealistic causes as well (e.g. Realpolitik), they also differ from ideals in that they exclude. Various territorial cohesion ideals can exist simultaneously in thought (e.g. contradict), but every policy objective implies the selection of a target. This also sets policy objective meanings of territorial cohesion apart from the concept's descriptive meanings, because territorial cohesion as a target cannot, arguably, be an elaborate description of the (future) state of affairs. The instrumental kind of territorial cohesion meaning is also concerned with realisable objectives of government, but other ones, and for this defines the concept to fit into another signification with more worth. While instrumental territorial cohesion meanings can resemble policy objective ones (e.g. as objective to reach other targets), definitions which cannot be pictured as an arrow are possible too. That is, the concept can put forward dimensional, bonding, or conditional meanings that still fit into for what territorial cohesion is instrumental – the signification of more worth might thereby even fashion the concept by transposing assumptions, conceptual choices, and ideals.

9.2.3 Distinguishing the more technical kinds of territorial cohesion meaning

As the policy coherence, spatial planning, and territorial governmentality kinds of meaning are concerned with how to govern, each can include realis, value, and irrealis statements (e.g. territorial cohesion was, should, or will be spatial planning). The policy coherence kind of territorial cohesion meaning is then concerned with

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* Explicitly stated to have such a meaning by Healey (2001a) and Murray (in DCRGA, 2004: 172). These references, just as the similar ones in this section, should be put in the main text itself, properly speaking. However, they are here in the footnotes, because due to their number they would decrease the readability of the text.

* Explicitly stated to have such a meaning by Healey (2001a), Murray (in DCRGA, 2004: 172), and Nazar (2006: 82).

how to govern effectively or efficiently and for this defines coordination through interrelations of policies and/or policy effects in a territory to reach coherence in implementation. The entities that (cohesively) relate to each other are then reduced to policies. As can be expected from a governing technique, coordination for effectiveness or efficiency serves the cause(s) that should be reached thus. The policy coherence kind of territorial cohesion meaning could therefore be seen as a specific instrumental meaning of the concept (especially in the dimensional, bonding, or conditional form), but then with a pure procedural instrumentality and without qua meaning being defined by a policy objective.

Although the spatial planning kind of territorial cohesion meaning fits in the more technical sphere of meaning, it actually entails more. It is namely concerned with government techniques that are simultaneously concrete and more or less holistic and for this shapes (thinking) space with its own substance and rationality (see Chapter 2 on political technologies); note that this research does not attempt to answer the question ‘What is spatial planning?’ here, but only uses ‘spatial planning’ as the label appropriate for a group of territorial cohesion meanings (e.g. as they deal with this question). The policy coherence and spatial planning kinds of territorial cohesion meaning then have something in common. When a spatial area is planned, the same space can only be reshaped in one single way (e.g. open, multifunctional), this due to the nature of tangible space (i.e. there is only one). The plans can therefore only point to one direction, for which one (overarching) vision is needed, which implies coherence. However, this same nature of tangible space gives spatial planning meanings their own policy substance and rationality instead of merely (territorially) coordinating other policies.

This section ends by distinguishing the territorial governmentality kind of territorial cohesion meaning. This is the most general kind, as it is concerned with the practice and rationality of government and for this portrays a way of thinking about and doing in territorial governance that emphasises existing and/or desired territorial diversity and contextuality. Besides the different ways of seeing a territory, governing one namely entails that this is done with a way of thinking and doing things, with certain techniques and a mentality (e.g. a savoir-faire). In so doing the territorial governmentality kind of meaning expresses the notion of ‘governmentality’ (see Part II in Book I: the analytical framework of power and governmentality), this in a territorial way specific to territorial cohesion. Hence, the concept’s territorial governmentality meanings could function as a frame for all and each of the other kinds of territorial cohesion meaning distinguished above (i.e. descriptive, normative, policy objective, instrumental, policy coherence, and spatial planning).

9.3 Starting to draw the common ground of territorial cohesion meaning

9.3.1 From arbitrary choices to characteristics and leftovers

This research’s methodological framework already noted that no arguments appear to be made for or against readings of territorial cohesion (e.g. see Chapter 5). Nonetheless, one can assume that a territorial cohesion definition is valid as long as it is proposed within the bounds set by the prima facie meaning presented in the introduction above (i.e. how things territorially relate to each other). Logically seen no proposition from the intertextual territorial cohesion text is thus invalid. On what grounds should one denounce a territorial cohesion meaning? Put otherwise, the taxonomy above shows that every choice for a particular territorial cohesion reading, whether Sinn or Bedeutung, is semantically arbitrary. Why should you prefer one idea or fact under the words ‘territorial cohesion’ over another? The range of these choices might not to be arbitrary though, as it can limit and structure the concept’s expertise (i.e. a bounded arbitrariness).
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The order that the triangle of signification provides can be used here, as it goes beyond taxonomising the different kinds of territorial cohesion meaning. With it you can delineate the concept's common ground of meaning more precisely than a *prima facie* meaning does. Besides characterising each group of proposed definitions with their tensions, each territorial cohesion *Sinn* namely opens up a wider range of thinkable *Bedeutung* than the ones the territorial cohesion taxonomy represents. The questions which come up logically when filling-in a territorial cohesion *Sinn* thus point out with which types of issues the territorial cohesion propositions do and do not come to terms with. This enables section 9.3.9 to draw the line around the common ground of territorial cohesion meaning by joining those outlining the kinds of meanings as shown in sections 9.3.2 to 9.3.8 below.

9.3.2 Outlining the descriptive territorial cohesion meanings

When you look at the descriptive territorial cohesion definitions in Table 1, you can extract some features in which these meanings vary. Often they contain or relate a selection of social, economic, spatial, ecological, *et cetera* issues (e.g. socio-economic disparities) or denote another group of cohesion facts (e.g. its potential, position, situation), but they just once do not omit political issues; if the territorial always implies politics, then these definitions thus leave political issues rather untreated. This undertreatment seems to return when the definitions propose reality more as a harmony instead of a struggle (e.g. balanced competitiveness), even though most are quite neutral (e.g. a congregation of "cohesions"). Two other related features are the territorial and abstraction level. Understood roughly, these descriptive propositions mostly do not define a particular level (e.g. territorial identity) or include all (e.g. micro, meso, macro scales). However, even if the level to describe would be clear (e.g. cohesion between regions), the question still remains from which viewpoint to look at this territorial cohesion. As the Committee of the Regions (CoR, 2002a) put it: which level observes a lack of cohesion? Furthermore, to describe territorial cohesion in reality, a specific *Bedeutung* (e.g. access to Services of General Economic Interest) would give more focus than an abstract one (e.g. cohesion in a territory). Specific territorial cohesion definitions also decrease the clarity though. Proposing territorial capital as territorial cohesion meaning, represented in the taxonomy by 'territorial (endogenous) potential', for instance puts another black box (Zonneveld\&Waterhout, in Faludi, 2005a: 19) under territorial cohesion as matryoshka doll. It thus seems that the unresolved questions of for which territorial level the concept's descriptive meanings hold and how specifically they describe positively lines them out. The exclusion of politics and struggle and the question of how to deal with multiple levels, especially the viewpoint to describe territorial cohesion from, do so negatively (i.e. as holes in cheese).

9.3.3 Outlining the normative territorial cohesion meanings

The normative territorial cohesion definitions immediately show that they do not fully use the space for ideals as distinguished by their *Sinn*. They namely do not have the expected wider array of wished for states of affairs than those of the descriptive meanings (see §9.2.1 and Table 1). What also characterises these definitions is that they often entail a totalising choice by adding the territorial: going beyond a condition for members of a group towards an inclusion of everyone based on geographical grounds. The variation then lies, as with the descriptive territorial cohesion meanings, in what is totalised territorially: a social, economic, and/or ecological ideal for instance (e.g. the European Social Model, equal Services of General Economic Interest, and/or environmental friendliness respectively). Although not with a political ideal, the concept's normative *Bedeutung* does include politics between issues. This comes through clearly in contradictions between harmonic and agonistic ideals (e.g. maximally develop each territory or go beyond free economic competition). The exclusion the territorial per definition implies also shows such politics in the form of a tension between the total and specific (e.g. equality between all citizens of the European Union wherever they live or helping geographically handicapped regions). What is characteristic though, is that none of these normative propositions states how to deal with multiple territorial levels (e.g. with a compensatory equity at "certain" levels and a "certain" diversity). This might thus be something that – is not, but semantically wise – should be constructed by normative meanings.
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of the concept; Rawls’ social justice for instance ‘does not take space into consideration’ (Peyrony, in Faludi, 2007). Note thereby, that if procedures themselves are not territorial in nature, no territorial cohesion ideal can be proposed which is procedural instead of (statically) substantive as they are now. This also points to a tension the normative territorial cohesion definitions scarcely deal with: the one between tangibility and ideality to spatially ground normative meaning (e.g. an ordered spatial distribution of human activities). The narrowness of the variation in, the implicit totalising tendency of, and the political choice between harmonic or agonistic ideals thus seems to positively line out the concept’s normative meanings, as does the tension between a total of territories or specific ones. Besides (again) the question of how to deal with multiple territorial levels, what also negatively lines out the normative meanings is the one of how to spatially ground ideals.

9.3.4 Outlining the policy objective territorial cohesion meanings

Mainly the Sinn of all the policy objective kind of territorial cohesion meanings structures the variety of definitions, since each proposes to change what is towards an ideal. Hence, although some add Bedeutung (e.g. balanced development in polycentric terms), most have the same features as the descriptive and normative ones in Table 1 (e.g. economic development, cohesion, balancing human activities, access to Services of General (Economic) Interest, improving territorial potential). The characteristics of the policy objective meanings then result from that they enter the policy sphere in the form of an aim. An also by the concept’s descriptive and normative kinds of meaning unresolved question thereby becomes the more pressing: to what entities does territorial cohesion apply (e.g. first countries and regions second or all levels simultaneously) (CoR, 2002a; BBR, 2003a; Nordregio, 2003; Peyrony, in Faludi, 2007)? It also matters whether the policy objective is a self-assigned one (e.g. mitigate effects of the single market) or comes from a higher territorial level (e.g. regional policies for Europe). As the latter entails subjection, one can for instance wonder to which extent territorial cohesion is a question of European interest (e.g. with what support or financial intensity) (Peyrony, in Faludi, 2007). Adding these questions to the high variety of territorial cohesion meanings, the central tension becomes ‘with what objectives defined by whom’ territorial cohesion is to become a policy objective (Peyrony, in Faludi, 2007). How does it for instance differ from the established policy objectives of social and economic cohesion (Davoudi, 2005a: 435; Peyrony, in Faludi, 2007)? Moreover, as aims exclude, the tension between harmonic and agonistic meanings returns. Here, the territorial cohesion definitions often propose harmonic combinations of objectives (e.g. balanced and sustainable development in territorial terms), but one can ask whether this just points to an inherent conflict of goals with territorial cohesion (BBR, 2005a: 53-55).

Still, no matter which objective(s) territorial cohesion meanings aim for at what level, to be able to proof their feasibility, a feature of them is that they are more or less measurable (e.g. balancing development or improving national ecological networks). The question of when there is enough territorial cohesion is therefore yet another one these meanings leave open (e.g. what is the threshold or fine-grained gradually classified continuum); convergence for instance can mean a “levelling down” as well as a “levelling up” (Ulied&Turro, in Nordregio, 2003). However, something might make the policy objective meanings unable to elucidate this. That is, not only are these definitions often vague – as when they include polycentricity as a concept that is in itself not clear (Davoudi, 2003: 988; Faludi, in Faludi, 2005a: 109) –, but with territorial cohesion there might be no way to strive toward total homogeneity when taking territory into account (BBR, 2003a). When what is actually reached with the same policy objective definition of territorial cohesion might differ per territory, then the tension between abstract and specific meaning would be put inside the concept as inherent tension between clarification and opaqueness too. What thus seems to positively line out the policy objective meanings are the engraining of the issue of to what entities territorial cohesion applies to in the concept and both the tension between various objectives and their measurability. Again, the question of how to deal with multiple territorial levels does so negatively, here in the form of whether territorial cohesion is a self-assigned policy objective or implies subjection.
9.3.5 Outlining the instrumental territorial cohesion meanings

Although every policy objective could be posed to serve another (higher) goal, Table 1 shows that the instrumental territorial cohesion meanings vary the least of all kinds. This thus characterises the concept's meaning in general: it is hardly instrumental – not overtly at least. What further characterises every single *Bedeutung* with an instrumental Sinn is that each of course harmonises with its goal. These meanings are plagued by internal struggles however, if proposed in a definition harbouring several goals without grasping them together (e.g. fit in the foci of Cohesion Policy, the ESDP, CEMAT, the Lisbon Strategy, and the Gothenburg European Council). This tension between harmony and agonism could therefore relate to having a selective or all-encompassing meaning. The latter tension returns here in that the concept's instrumental meanings can be pointed, towards one objective for instance (e.g. competitiveness of a region), or more planed, such as a territorial expression for several objectives (e.g. regional integration for economic and social cohesion). The former territorial cohesion meanings are then more coloured by their narrower focus on a signification with more worth. Note though, that for instrumental meanings selective definitions do not have to be specific, because they could serve an abstract *telos* of government too (e.g. regional integration for European integration). Besides the unresolved tension of, yet again, for/on which territorial level the concept is instrumental, what thus positively lines out these few territorial cohesion meanings is the tension between pointed selectivity and planed harmony. Negatively seen the question of how to deal with multiple territorial levels does so for the instrumental meanings as it does for the policy objective ones.

9.3.6 Outlining the policy coherence territorial cohesion meanings

What characterises the policy coherence kind of territorial cohesion meanings in Table 2 is that most define the concept as coordination of policies on a single territorial level (i.e. horizontal policy coherence) instead of policies through territorial levels (i.e. vertical policy coherence). Either way, a tension hereby revolves around which policies to coordinate (e.g. only spatial ones or those with a territorial impact). Besides selectivity, how tangible this *Bedeutung* is forms another tension (e.g. coordination of interventions or effects). Although the Sinn of policy coherence does not distinguish substantive meanings as the four above, a question which also these technical territorial cohesion propositions leave open is on which territorial level this coherence is meant. Now, however, they barely treat it (e.g. the coherence of European policies on which level). The concept's policy coherence definitions neither specify how coordination comes about *via* the territorial (e.g. coherence of policies within one territory), nor whether the selected policies harmonise in the sense of unification (e.g. serving a most valued cause) or more loosely in non-contradiction (e.g. with/out a holistic perspective). The questions on the territorial level, the harmonic type of coordination, and their relation thus seem to line out the policy coherence meanings negatively, as does the tension of which policies to coordinate positively. What sets them apart as much as the dominating horizontal policy coherence does though, is that they centre on government proper instead of different organisational bodies as territorial total (e.g. hierarchies in multinational companies or the Roman Catholic Church).

9.3.7 Outlining the spatial planning territorial cohesion meanings

The same issues that characterise the concept's policy meanings (i.e. as objective, instrumental, or coherence) also apply to the spatial planning kind of territorial cohesion meanings, but then modified for this Sinn. Note thereby that Table 2 shows that a main issue seems to revolve around what a spatial planning substance and rationality actually entails (e.g. the French or German tradition). In addition, the propositions range in level of precision from policy to plan (e.g. everything of spatial development, a substantive spatial vision). Besides these tensions of specificity, the issue of which single or multiple levels are entailed returns too (e.g. replacement of European Union spatial planning, regional/national development to exploit territorial capital), as does the one of how selective these meanings are (e.g. planning-as-spatial-coordination encompasses more than a spatial policy objective). However, what none of these territorial cohesion definitions denote, is the hierarchy such
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Territorial cohesion as planning areas imply (i.e. through space indirectly influencing people). Nor does the Bedeutung deal with the tension of tangibility and ideality, even though spatial planning might bring territorial cohesion to the ground or concreteness into the concept’s meaning. Hence, what appears to positively outline these meanings are the tensions of what spatial planning entails and how precise and selective territorial cohesion fills this meaning on which territorial level(s). But the negative outlining of them, through the non-treatment of both territorial politics (again) and a tangible spatial planning, does this more clearly.

9.3.8 Outlining the territorial governmentality territorial cohesion meanings

What seems to be a main characteristic of the territorial governmentality kind of territorial cohesion meanings is that none explicitly defines such a governmentality, but that together their features can form just that, even in various combinations. As might be expected for a Sinn that sets up a framing of the other territorial cohesion meanings, most of their tensions in Bedeutung return here too. That is to say, also these propositions vary in their selectivity (e.g. just a territorial dimension of European policy or even a new territorial way of thinking), abstraction (e.g. a spatial thinking or a holistic, territorial, and dynamic approach), specificity (e.g. fine-grained territorial or biographical oversight), and for which territorial level(s) these hold (e.g. territorial integration of regions or a basis for regional, national, and European action). Then again, what mostly characterises these territorial cohesion meanings is that they do not deal with questions which are central to any territorial governmentality: i) how is a territory demarcated (e.g. ownership of land established) and subdivided in parts and levels (e.g. defined via its cohesion or vice versa), ii) how are borders dealt with, and iii) how are all of them controlled. As no explicit territorial governmentality appears to provide a fundament for these, arguably, political issues (e.g. that the concept means combining spatial thinking and governance comes closest), a tension implicitly arises between knowing and administrating territorial specificities and flexibly governing the constant re-/demarcation of territories. The concept’s territorial governmentality meanings thus always entail an existing and/or aimed for territorial diversity and contextuality, but that they do not define a basis to deal herewith mainly lines them out. As they neither resolve the tensions around how encompassing, tangible, precise, and for which territorial level their territorial governmentality features are, the positive outlining of these most general propositions scarcely frames the other territorial cohesion meanings.

9.3.9 THE common ground of territorial cohesion meaning

Territorial cohesion thus forms an obvious example of a concept that leads to confusion and elusive language because it is not well defined (Sartori 1970:1042; Radaelli, 2000: 1). Without negation it becomes a universal pointing to everything: a conception ‘without specified termination or boundaries’ (Sartori 1970: 1042; Radaelli, 2000: 1). Although the meanings stuffed under the concept are also regularly stated to be something else than territorial cohesion itself (e.g. as that relating to it), only Peyrony (in Faludi, 2007) explicitly negated territorial cohesion with ‘territorial fracture’ as its exact antonym. Other rare statements merely contradict proposed territorial cohesion definitions (i.e. ‘the concept does not mean X’ instead of ‘Y means the opposite of territorial cohesion’). No wonder then that the concept’s propositions are under influence of degreeism, that is, ‘differences in kind are replaced by differences in degrees’ (Sartori, 1970; 1991; Radaelli, 2000: 5). To define territorial cohesion it would therefore seem more effective to ask ‘What is not territorial cohesion?’ instead of ‘What of all these proposed definitions is the most “territorial cohesion-like”?’ (Radaelli, 2005: 5). One can nevertheless outline a common ground of territorial cohesion meaning, even if only an unsteady one fabricated from the common threads of readings. What is helpful for drawing this common ground from the lines defining the more substantive (i.e. descriptive, normative, policy objective, instrumental) and the more technical (i.e. policy coherence, spatial planning, territorial governmentality) kinds of territorial cohesion meanings, is that they have some features in common. To begin with, almost all harbour the same range of possibilities for filling the concept with meaning
(e.g. tensions of abstract/specific, all-encompassing/selective, single/multi level, harmony/agonism). However, only the unresolved issue of for which territorial entities this holds positively outlines all territorial cohesion meanings except for the policy coherence kind. What for instance characterises the descriptive and normative readings is that they substantively vary in whether the concept means an own cohesive collection of territorial objects or a territorial collection of cohesive social, spatial, and economic objects. The more technical set of territorial cohesion meanings similarly characterises the concept by not deciding on the territorial and cohesive total. With related territorial and abstraction levels this generates mistakes in the "ladder of abstraction"; when the concept does not point down the level of analysis it obfuscates 'the relations between genus and species' (Sartori 1970:1042; Radaelli, 2000: 1) – e.g. between the European and regional will to be together.

The issue of territorial entities leads to another which territorial cohesion meanings could logically wise entail but characteristically do not. Only the not-treated issue of how to deal with multiple territorial levels namedly negatively outlines all but the policy coherence and spatial planning kinds. That the absence of politics negatively outlines the descriptive and spatial planning readings conforms to the non-treatment of this multiple level issue insofar multiple territorial levels imply hierarchy in its turn politics. What comes closest to politics in territorial cohesion meanings is namely the narrow variation in ideals. The more striking then, that even the former issue on territorial entities negatively lines out the policy coherence readings, as it is they who could through coordination deal with multiple levels too. Yet, the horizontal instead of vertical policy coherence meanings dominate here, even though they leave open how to coordinate harmonically through the territorial. Neither the spatial planning readings seem to provide a rational ground, as they neither make these three centrally missing issues, nor the not-treated spatial grounding of territorial cohesion ideals, any more tangible. That the common ground of territorial cohesion meaning lacks such firmness makes it less surprising that the spatial planning and policy readings do not address how to relate multiple objectives. Moreover, it is probably save to say that the lack of a basis to deal with all these issues in the territorial governmentality Sinn thus rightly characterises the meaning of territorial cohesion.

To make this semantic characterising and outlining of the concept more concrete, you could for instance state that territorial cohesion means: a loose territorial governmentality, with a vague call for equity between peoples in regions, from a territorial description of the socio-economic diverse present, towards a totalising footloose ideality, by means of a regional policy with the hardly measurable objective of a nationally balanced spatial development, to prevent European Union sector policies with a territorial impact from contradicting. However, many other Bedeutung possibilities are just as valid. That the unsolved tensions and negative outlines mostly uncover the common threads of meaning increases this arbitrariness, as together they underline the many choices for a particular meaning within the concept's common ground and the illogically leftover issues outside its demarcation. Semantically wise both a particular territorial cohesion meaning and the concept's common ground of meaning thus seem to be pretty arbitrary. Perhaps the (vague) boundaries of this hermeneutic arbitrariness therefore solely come from somewhere else (see Part II on the concept's usage and Part III on the territorial cohesion discourse).

9.4 An in/consist system of territorial cohesion meaning

9.4.1 The system within the concept's hermeneutic horizon: territorial cohesion meaning-networks

With an arbitrary common ground of meaning, it should come as no surprise that some consider territorial cohesion as nonsense – or, put diplomatically: as an ambiguous concept. Hence, notwithstanding official attempts, many note that the concept has no agreed upon definition yet – not even speaking of an operational

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\(^1\) Note that these tensions might of course hold for other – perhaps not even territorial – concepts too. This would however merely support the main point made here: the concept of territorial cohesion lacks an own identity.

\(^2\) See: Faludi, in Faludi, 2005a: 3; Husar, 2006: 1; Officer from DG Agriculture, personal interview in Brussels, 29th of March 2006. Also these references, just as the similar ones in this section, should be put in the main text itself properly speaking. However, they are here in the footnotes for the same reasons as above (i.e. readability).
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Although recognitions of multiple interpretations might help to penetrate such a "metaphysical substance," territorial cohesion's diffuse contours are said to have an appeal though, with its meaning lying in the eye of the beholder (e.g. to emphasise its richness, its primitive sense, to catch all, be flexible). What is more, one sees that territorial cohesion's multidimensionality allows to cumulate the varied manifestations within its hermeneutic horizon, or even to structure them into a federating or umbrella concept. Since also the choices for a particular Bedeutung within the concept's common ground are semantically arbitrary, the question then becomes how to systemise territorial cohesion meaning.

The taxonomy of Sinn above Bedeutung of course provides a foundation to systemise the concept's proposed meaning. With it one can argue that in a meaning-network the relations between territorial cohesion propositions should be between one Bedeutung per Sinn only. The concept namely cannot mean two descriptions of reality simultaneously, but could constellation a meaning-network of a descriptive and a policy objective meaning for example. Such small networks are easily formed. The BBR (2003b) holds for instance that territorial cohesion should consider the three sustainability dimensions (i.e. economy, society and environment) with a specifically territorial point of view and thereby pay attention to territorial potential, situation and integration. Hereby merely implying a policy objective, territorial governmentality, and descriptive kind of territorial cohesion meaning respectively. Another territorial cohesion meaning-network comes from Nordregio (2003) and focuses on the with the concept advocated territorial dimension while at the same time a suitable way is found to deal with the cohesion aspect within policy. As federating concept it then mainly aims to take account of the diversity of European territories when implementing policies, focuses in territorial governance at the territorial dimensions and relates that to new European policies and new ways of putting these policies into operation. This example of a territorial cohesion meaning-network refers to a descriptive structure, makes reference to the idea of territorial cohesion as policy coherence possible, and touches upon the territorial governmentality kind of meaning. But, again, it therefore does not pay tribute to, here, differences in the normative, policy objective, instrumental, and spatial planning kinds of meaning of the concept of territorial cohesion. The taxonomy of territorial cohesion meaning thus leaves room for many different interpretations and meaning-constellations. We are however not so much concerned with these proposed networks itself, but with their system, for which they thus depend on the relations between the kinds of meaning.

9.4.2 Contradictory kinds of territorial cohesion meanings

When the concept's meaning-networks or even its common ground of meaning depends upon the relations between the different territorial cohesion Sinn, it surely becomes problematic when the latter contradict. Based upon some logical assumptions it then almost seems as if not even two of the concept's kinds of meaning are compatible enough to simultaneously mean territorial cohesion (e.g. by together forming the concept's meaning). These logical assumptions are that: i) an ideal state of affairs cannot exist in actual fact, ii) an objective is a point, iii) an ideal harbours no instrumental meaning in itself (as then for what it is instrumental would be the ideal), iv) substance is not form, and v) a part is not the whole. Assumed, that is, that these assumptions can be applied to territorial cohesion meaning.

The first assumption leads straight to the logical contradiction between the descriptive and normative kinds of territorial cohesion meaning (e.g. the promotion of a community type that is said to already exist). Arguably, concepts which refer to a tangible reality, as territorial cohesion could do, suffer more from such a contradiction, if you see that intangible social realities differ less from ideals that is (as comes forth from

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1. Although recognitions of multiple interpretations might help to penetrate such a “metaphysical substance,” territorial cohesion’s diffuse contours are said to have an appeal though, with its meaning lying in the eye of the beholder (e.g. to emphasise its richness, its primitive sense, to catch all, be flexible).

2. What is more, one sees that territorial cohesion’s multidimensionality allows to cumulate the varied manifestations within its hermeneutic horizon, or even to structure them into a federating or umbrella concept. Since also the choices for a particular Bedeutung within the concept’s common ground are semantically arbitrary, the question then becomes how to systemise territorial cohesion meaning.

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4. The taxonomy of Sinn above Bedeutung of course provides a foundation to systemise the concept’s proposed meaning. With it one can argue that in a meaning-network the relations between territorial cohesion propositions should be between one Bedeutung per Sinn only. The concept namely cannot mean two descriptions of reality simultaneously, but could constellation a meaning-network of a descriptive and a policy objective meaning for example. Such small networks are easily formed. The BBR (2003b) holds for instance that territorial cohesion should consider the three sustainability dimensions (i.e. economy, society and environment) with a specifically territorial point of view and thereby pay attention to territorial potential, situation and integration. Hereby merely implying a policy objective, territorial governmentality, and descriptive kind of territorial cohesion meaning respectively. Another territorial cohesion meaning-network comes from Nordregio (2003) and focuses on the with the concept advocated territorial dimension while at the same time a suitable way is found to deal with the cohesion aspect within policy. As federating concept it then mainly aims to take account of the diversity of European territories when implementing policies, focuses in territorial governance at the territorial dimensions and relates that to new European policies and new ways of putting these policies into operation. This example of a territorial cohesion meaning-network refers to a descriptive structure, makes reference to the idea of territorial cohesion as policy coherence possible, and touches upon the territorial governmentality kind of meaning. But, again, it therefore does not pay tribute to, here, differences in the normative, policy objective, instrumental, and spatial planning kinds of meaning of the concept of territorial cohesion. The taxonomy of territorial cohesion meaning thus leaves room for many different interpretations and meaning-constellations. We are however not so much concerned with these proposed networks itself, but with their system, for which they thus depend on the relations between the kinds of meaning.

5. The first assumption leads straight to the logical contradiction between the descriptive and normative kinds of territorial cohesion meaning (e.g. the promotion of a community type that is said to already exist). Arguably, concepts which refer to a tangible reality, as territorial cohesion could do, suffer more from such a contradiction, if you see that intangible social realities differ less from ideals that is (as comes forth from
this research’s methodological framework; e.g. see Chapter 3). Adding the second assumption brings us to the contradiction between the descriptive and policy objective kinds. That is, besides that it is hard to picture a wide-array of territorial cohesion facts as a point to aim for, something cannot simultaneously exist and be the target for what should be changed in what exists either. Moreover, since instrumental ideals appear oxymoron, the third assumption indicates that a policy objective kind of territorial cohesion meaning can only be instrumental if it is not directed by a normative Bedeutung. The set of the more substantive kinds of territorial cohesion meaning thus appears ramshackle.

To start the more technical kinds of territorial cohesion meaning with the fourth assumption: the two sets logically contradict each other. Of course territorial cohesion could mean something which has form and substance. However, the concept cannot at the same time mean a government technique and to what this is applied to. What is more, as already suggested above, as techniques, the policy coherence and spatial planning kinds of territorial cohesion meanings contradict. Even if spatial planning would need the coherence of policies and policy coherence could have a spatial planning goal for direction, this in itself already implies that territorial cohesion as spatial planning means more than policy coherence (i.e. no need to consider what this “more” actually entails here). The fifth logical assumption comes into play with the territorial governmentality kind. Even if it might (as base) entail policy coherence and/or spatial planning as governing techniques, as kind of territorial cohesion meaning it logically contradicts both as the whole to its parts. The categorical flaw would be that territorial cohesion cannot solely mean one of the parts anymore (e.g. policy coherence) when it means the whole (i.e. territorial governmentality). The set of the more technical kinds of territorial cohesion meaning therefore appears ramshackle too.

The only kinds of meaning that do not logically contradict each other are when territorial cohesion is proposed as an ideal or instrumental policy objective (i.e. is in itself infeasible or amoral). All these contradictions between kinds of meaning do not solely appear with territorial cohesion of course. However, the point is that this concept brings these contradictions into its own confines, making the meaning-networks that depend upon these relations instable. That is to say, the system of territorial cohesion meaning which semantically forms the concept’s common ground is rather inconsistent and inherently so.

9.4.3 Synthesising tensions between kinds of territorial cohesion meaning: incomplete, back where we started

A less severe approach to the system of territorial cohesion meaning would be to show that its kinds of meaning do not contradict but that their relations are just tensions which can be decreased. Such a synthesising pulls kinds together and involves a bending of the strictness of logic and the making of consequential choices. To begin with the tension between the descriptive and policy objective kinds of territorial cohesion meaning. This one can be solved somewhat by focussing on a wide-range. Territorial cohesion would then as policy objective not so much portray a point but a vision of a certain state of affairs (e.g. a combination entailing many targets). However, a consequence hereof is that this makes it harder to keep the concept’s instrumental meanings, as these are not that self-directed. Still, such a policy objective meaning can also direct the coordination of policies for territorial cohesion as policy coherence, at least when it as wide-ranging policy objective matches the span of the concept in the coordination of policies. Hence, when instrumental meanings are not considered as a secondary objective, the substance/form-divide which contradicts them with policy coherence meanings can be bridged with a perfect fit: territorial cohesion means being instrumental by substantively coordinating policies (e.g. with a vision). Yet, when synthesising the concept’s meanings thus, the question becomes what to do with the normative, spatial planning, and territorial governmentality kinds of territorial cohesion meanings.

With the concept’s spatial planning Sinn of governing technique with an own substance, crossing the substance/form-divide is easier. A spatial planning kind of territorial cohesion meaning could namely implicate both a spatial planning vision as a spatial planning way to get there for example (e.g. subsuming policy coherence under planning-as-coordination). When territorial cohesion for instance embodies a global ambition rooted in a concern for unity of a territorial level (e.g. governmental entity) as in the French spatial planning tradition of
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aménagement du territoire, this might be tied to the substantive linkage between the concept’s policy coherence and spatial planning kinds of meaning and thereby to the involved strategy and spatial vision. However, all the territorial cohesion meanings synthesised as in this example should then fit in spatial planning or vice versa (to stay with French examples: un aménagement et développement durable et intégré du territoire). Besides that the description of an in/tangible state of affairs is not spatial planning in itself, this attempt to catch most territorial cohesion meanings thus also leads to the territorial governmentality kind.

The territorial governmentality Sinn could give a territorial cohesion way of thinking and/about doing as framework for all the other kinds of meanings. Then the parts would represent a part of instead of the whole territorial cohesion meaning. This would first of all still disallow the concept to solely have one kind of meaning. Hence, not all of the contradictions can be solved and a complete reconciliation thus seems to be one step too far: every attempt to synthesise some contradicting kinds of territorial cohesion meanings leaves the others the more on their own. Although synthesising makes a part of the system consistent, the whole remains systematically inconsistent nevertheless. Moreover, even if territorial cohesion means a territorial governmentality capturing each of the concept’s meanings instead of solely one kind, caching all of them is more than just difficult (e.g. how to relate different meanings). You then namely still have to answer the question what the concept distinguishes and contains first. That is, we are back where we started: what does ‘territorial cohesion’ mean – or how does one want to read it (see Part II on the concept’s usage and Part III on the territorial cohesion discourse).

9.5 Concluding towards territorial cohesion knowledge

9.5.1 The semantic order of territorial cohesion

This chapter ordered territorial cohesion propositions as marks of the concept’s linguistic and meaning-making practices. An order it presented with two simplified Sinn above Bedeutung tables of the more substantive and more technical kinds of meanings. The territorial governmentality kind of territorial cohesion meanings could thereby frame the descriptive, normative, policy objective, instrumental, policy coherence, and spatial planning ones. Although the way in which the concept’s definitions fit in the act of governing distinguishes them, what characterises all is that the hues of territorial cohesion meaning in every kind harbour the same tensions of abstraction, selectivity, territorial levels, and harmony. Compared to the concept’s prima facie meaning (i.e. how things territorially relate to each other), four features further outline the common ground of territorial cohesion meaning: i) the unresolved issue of for which territorial entities it holds positively outlines all but the policy coherence kind of meanings; ii) the not-treated issue of how to deal with multiple territorial levels negatively outlines all but the policy coherence and spatial planning kinds of meanings; iii) the narrow variation in ideals comes closest to the meanings’ inclusion of politics; and iv) neither does the spatial planning kind provide a rational ground, nor does the normative kind spatially ground ideals to tangibilise the concept. These indecisions show that the common ground of territorial cohesion meaning lacks semantic firmness. The main lesson to learn from this taxonomic exercise is thus that semantically seen every territorial cohesion reading proposed within the concept’s hermeneutic horizon of “loose threads” is as valid as another.

9.5.2 Reinforcing critique: heading from the concept’s meaning to knowledge with an eye on the territorial cohesion discourse

As the concept’s common ground of meaning demarcates what can be proposed as territorial cohesion statement, it validates knowledge as being territorial cohesion knowledge. The most drastic conclusion deducible from the semantic order of territorial cohesion might be, however, to retreat from the search for a single true meaning or even a strict and clear meaning-network altogether: this proto-concept does not have such a meaning (yet). On the contrary, it is a universal under influence of degreism and mistakes in the ‘ladder of abstraction’. Therefore, even though its Sinn and Bedeutung stay within the confines set by the prima facie meaning of the words ‘territorial cohesion’, the concept can be critiqued for the consequential arbitrariness of every choice for a
particular meaning. The unsolved tensions and illogical leftovers uncovering the common ground of territorial cohesion meaning increase this arbitrariness, as they underline the diversity of choices and their arbitrary limitation. The many possibilities to constellate meaning-networks do even more than that by bringing the system of kinds of meaning inside the concept. That is, its semantic system is inherently inconsistent because the instability of territorial cohesion meanings has consequences for the concept's knowledge validity though, as it determines what counts as territorial cohesion knowledge. Hence, after ordering the common ground of territorial cohesion meaning, the next chapter maps the concept's epistemic system framed by its semantic arbitrariness and inconsistency.
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Faludi, 2003a; Officer from the CPMR, personal interview by telephone, 13th of April 2006; Official from DG Employment and Social Affairs, personal interview in Brussels, 15th of March 2006.

28 Faludi, 2003a; Officer from the CPMR, personal interview by telephone, 13th of April 2006; Official from DG Employment and Social Affairs, personal interview in Brussels, 15th of March 2006.

29 Faludi, 2003a; Officer from the CPMR, personal interview by telephone, 13th of April 2006; Official from DG Employment and Social Affairs, personal interview in Brussels, 15th of March 2006.


33 André & Moreira, 2002; Faludi, 2003a; Waterhout & Zonneveld, 2003: 8; Dutch Presidency, 2004: 9; Luxembourg Presidency, 2005a; Camagni; Peyrony, in Faludi, 2007; Officer of the CEMR, personal interview in Brussels, 14th of March 2006.
