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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

Hissink Muller, B.M.

Publication date
2013

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Hissink Muller, B. M. (2013). *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 14 The European Funds usage area

Introduction

The analytical quadrangle made above shows that not only strategic positions in the Intergovernmental Conferences (IGCs), the (post-)ESDP process, and Regional/Cohesion policy demarcate the practices of territorial cohesion, also those in the European funds do. While a treatment of the European Funds usage area also simply completes the presentation of how the concept's whole usage field is demarcated, the concerned practices thereby resonate the three other usage areas too. The concept's usage in these funding practices should namely concord with the official limits set for it by the IGCs, the Structural and Cohesion Funds are main ways to implement Regional/Cohesion policy as territorial cohesion's formal policy haven, and also the informal (post-)ESDP process, which promotes the concept, links to the funds. The European funds thus portray the practices in which territorial cohesion is used most concretely – i.e. if territorial cohesion has any real (financial) punching power, it should be on display here.

Yet, these funds should not only be seen as a main way to realise European Union policies, but also a major issue in itself – one that leads to fierce debates between the Member States and European Institutions on who gets how much money. This makes the political bargaining, administrative negotiations, and informal lobbying which result in the European Union's budget, the re/distribution of it, what is actually paid for, and under which conditions of interest for territorial cohesion. The European funds' area of action could for instance expand and various interest more or less benefit from that depending on what is additionally funded. Therefore, although this chapter again treats the concept substantively, whilst skimming the countless details it should be kept in mind that these matters are only superficially significant, that it will be able to make it, they are only noteworthy insofar they label where the money goes. In the European Funds usage area (at least) these two sides thus play a role: funding in itself (e.g. for whom?) and for in/formal policies (e.g. for what?).

When you overview the order of the stories of the European Funds usage area (§14.1), you can place the wide bundle of the concept's aggregated strategic positions on both of these sides (§14.2) with its in/formal usage in the European Funds (§14.3) and masses of positions (§14.4). Also here the departure-point of this research (i.e. European spatial planning; see Chapter 3) then only indirectly returns in our main interest. Ways in which territorial cohesion channels European funds (§14.5), again a legitimate interest for every territorial cohesion research, could namely come from and/or affect the (post-)ESDP process usage area. From this order, aggregation, and channeling three main conclusions can be drawn (§14.6).

14.1 Overviewing *paxfull* and entangled squabbels in the European Funds usage area

The rough order of the wide-ranging masses of stories told in the European Funds usage area (see Appendix F) gives an overview of the emerging strategic positions concerning territorial cohesion in the in/formal practices of European funding. Hereby the general stories sketch the frame of promotions in which entangled discussions – not on major funding issues, but – about territorial cohesion and the European funds themselves structure the as ball of wool emerging metanarratives and the *qua* order and substance alike but even messier jungle of narratives. Yet, the events in the fierce disputes on the funding streams thereby fundamentally form this most concrete part of the whole territorial cohesion usage field though.

In the European Funds usage area neither the European funds nor territorial cohesion themselves are defied – what could characterise the usage area's status even more though, is that a major funding stream, agricultural funding that is, only has a marginal role. The structuring stories instead trace many squabbels on funding and the concept. These are on the one hand on how to decide on the European funds, the Structural Funds' cause and reforms, and the allocation(s) for official policy directions and on the other hand on the

un/definedness, existence/possibility, and in/formality of the concept's usage. More important though, they contest the relationship between these funds and the concept. How territorial cohesion fits in which funds for instance (e.g. the effects on both, the concept's location in the Community Strategic Guidelines). These squabbles are expressed within the *paxful* frame of marches for European finances, economics, politics, and in/formal policies. The only hindrances that the general stories suggest are a friction between the official Cohesion policy and Lisbon Strategy and some resistance to the idea of the European Union as a business.

These squabbles and marches take place on a ground that is moulded by the financial events with three tracks: i) agricultural funding, ii) the Structural Funds, and iii) the Interreg (and URBAN) Community Initiative. Agricultural funding thereby relatively decreased in size but still predominates. The Structural Funds meanwhile increased in strength under pressure, changed directions, and also shows many details for their operationalisation (what is almost a separate track). The Interreg (and URBAN) Community Initiative in its turn progressed into the mainstream as territorial cooperation. Battles in the European Funds usage area therefore play themselves out at the fringes of the financial dealings. They thus do not so much influence the funding streams but *vice versa*. The relationship between the European funds and territorial cohesion themselves and the location of this usage area then already question whether territorial cohesion channels funding. That is to say, this relationship is contested and the concept can have no effect when it does not even participate in skirmishes on the fringes of the European funds.

14.2 The snarled labyrinth of aggregated positions for the concept's disputes in the European Funds usage area

What also points towards an ineffectual usage of territorial cohesion in the European funds is that the concept only just pops-up for (possible) formations in struggles all over the place (i.e. lacking stability and focus). It is thereby seldom opposed, but hardly develops either. A bundle of three wide metanarratives then groups these spots. Then again, these do not clarify: i) with which of the loosely grouped substantive objectives territorial cohesion affiliates, ii) for which of the myriad of territorial specificities the concept stands, or iii) which from the interrelated organisational interests it presses. The 'substantive objectives' metanarrative namely shows pairs of confronted balance and/or competitiveness, reluctantly posing infrastructure and services, economic and more often social cohesion, and the not-paired polycentrism and minor environmental objective of sustainability. The 'territorial specificities' metanarrative then even brings more to the fore: a clash between Member States, an erupting horde of region types, factions of urban and rural areas, multipurposive equipment in the passive territorial capital, territorial cohesion indicator, European Territorial Cohesion Index, and Territorial Impact Assessment, and an ignored lone war-trumpet which sounds allocation criteria. What the 'governal organisation of the territory' metanarrative in its turn shows ranges from the territorial to the processual: ordering the territory in un-State-like manners, instituting the territorial dimension in funding, undecidedly congregating the confused situation through a concern with vertical and mostly horizontal substantive coordination, sticking to (decentralised) State-like or other ways of governing, just listing processual coordination, and/or promoting their challenged crown of territorial cooperation. It thus would be an understatement to say that it is disputed in which concerns territorial cohesion is interested in the European funds.

A more thorough plot of this labyrinth does not come from the ways in which all these strategic positions interlink, as these connections merely expose unstable networks. The associated territorial cohesion positions thereby do leave territorial cooperation as a vanguard, give it an urban bias with the legacy of URBAN, and use State aid (for specific territories) as a well-known site against the march of the Single European Market. Also a contested push of the concept for a Cohesion policy for all regions appears, as it is gnawed at by specific territories (i.e. peripheral regions, urban areas, Central and Eastern European Countries), and that territorial cohesion might give heed to the war-trumpet nonetheless, as a contest opens over the concept's allocation of funds (e.g. by associating sustainability and the territorial dimension). Still, even despite the territorial

cohesion claims over substantive coordination of sectoral policies with spatial impacts, the concept's interests in coordination does not lead to an organisation of this chaos. Hence, the network of the strategic positions of territorial cohesion in the European Funds usage area increases the complexity by snarling the combats in lots of ways. The concept's lack of focus and stability thus also puts its channeling of European funding into doubt – i.e. even if the channels are delta-shaped, towards what do they channel?

14.3 The fuzzy line of in/formality through the European Funds usage area

Also the formality of territorial cohesion is contested in the European Funds. Yet, it thereby is not always clear whether a usage of the concept is either formal or informal. Although practices in the European funds should concord with official limits, they namely also seem to harbour informal practices and positions on possible usages of the concept which are not formal (yet). A way this returns in the European Funds usage area is how it resonates the (post-)ESDP process usage area. Moreover, the Structural Funds were for European spatial planning identified as the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, DATAR^a was said to have heavily influenced Cohesion policy in the structure of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and the political conclusions of the ESDP would have been encouraged to be applied in implementing action that is financed through the Structural Funds and noticed in the 2000-2006 funding guidelines later on.^b While European spatial planning is concerned with informal practices, here some of its positions thus appear formally too (also see Appendix F; §F.1.5). A fuzzy line of in/formality thus runs through the elusive European Union usage area, thereby creating a formal and informal side. This has particular consequences for territorial cohesion, as consecutively shown below with the uncertain status of positions, consequences of existing formal positions, ways in which the concept's context influences this, and ways in which European spatial planning and territorial cooperation might breach the line.

With substantive objectives the concept for instance mostly fiddles with this fuzzy line of in/formality by clinging on to economic and social cohesion for formalisation and marking an uncontested path towards formality with the minor issue of sustainability, a path which a connection with the territorial dimension could broaden. Some formal usages of territorial cohesion in this usage area appear to exist though. However, these risk an overstretching of the concept. Territorial cohesion namely disregards services, even though these are the official limits set by the IGCs, but engages in the margin of agricultural funding besides the more familiar Structural Funds. This extension towards the predominating funding stream for rural areas demonstrates the territorial cohesion interests of competitiveness and (territorial) balance inside formality, and relates this balance to interests of the environment and the territorial dimension. Yet, these strategic positions do not offer a solidifying formal usage. Besides that the concept's double edged place in agricultural funding (i.e. both on the edge of this usage area and this type of funding) restricts territorial cohesion to improving the environment and the countryside, the marginality of this funding stream for the European Funds usage area creates the threat for territorial cohesion of overextension, a threat which paradoxically increases the stronger the concept fits in both funds.

The dynamics of the narratives here show how territorial cohesion's context mostly decreases the chances for a solidifying formal usage of the concept. They namely only uphold the concept's narrow path towards formality *via* sustainability (in connection with the territorial dimension) and lay out a role for services, also if associated with specific territories – awkwardly enough territorial cohesion does not use this possibility. On the other hand, this context places economic and social cohesion largely outside the usage area and, insofar

^a As mentioned in Appendix D on the (post-)ESDP process, the Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale (DATAR) is part of the French spatial planning way of doing that influences the European Union.

^b See: Balme&Jouve, 1996; Williams, 1996: 114; CEC, 2000a: 12; Bailly, 2001; Faludi&Waterhout, 2002; Faludi, 2003a; Faludi, 2004b: 4f; Janin Rivolin, in Faludi, 2005a: 95; Husar, 2006: 15.

they are inside, challenges their relationships to the 2007-2013 Structural Funds objectives of convergence and (regional) competitiveness and employment.

What stands out though is that the narratives turn the risk of overstretching the concept into the risks of schisming and complexing instead. The danger of schisming approaches due to an isolated agricultural refuge for territorial cohesion to extend to in its context. That is, while the watershed between the (urban) Structural Funds and agricultural funding widens, agricultural funding does more than offer gateways for the concept, as it provides an own separate but fertile field where territorial cohesion can for instance mix with specificities of rural areas. The danger of complexing the concept in its turn results from that its context for agricultural funding stresses tense substantive horizontal coordination and leaves many choices open that have to be made on lower governmental levels (e.g. with territorial impacts, variance in (decentral) governance, the approach of the Leader Community Initiative). Besides, even when territorial cohesion is placed on the formal side of the European Funds usage area, this does not automatically grant the concept much influence.

Nevertheless, European spatial planning could be a remarkable example for a crossing of the fuzzy line of in/formality which can increase territorial cohesion's influence due to formalisation. Then again, European spatial planning hesitates to march from the informal side into the European Funds *via* territorial cohesion. Furthest advanced in this is a stationing of European spatial planning inside formality when the Structural Funds are concerned with processual coordination and at the European funds' margin when both European spatial planning and territorial cohesion are narrowed down to substantive integration. Less advanced positions are more characteristic though. Three instances of this are: i) a bad-established formal usage of territorial cohesion with polycentrism, ii) that the concept spotlights occasions for the territorial dimension to position territorial development and challenges inside the Structural Funds, and iii) that territorial cohesion's border-path towards an informal organisation of the territory could also be free for European spatial planning. The concept thus seems to place European spatial planning both inside and outside the Structural Funds.

An inference of this situation with more consequences could be that territorial cohesion forms a crossing on this border of in/formality. The links between the concept's organisational issues could thereby even dissolve the line. Governing as territorial cohesion interest namely handles the informal and formal conduct of the Structural Funds. Moreover, territorial cooperation breaches the fuzzy line with a disputed formal room to debate territorial cohesion and this could also open up ways to expand through the other two 2007-2013 Structural Funds objectives (i.e. convergence and (regional) competitiveness and employment). Note though, that this territorial cooperation merely gives a challenged room for European spatial planning, amongst others, and that this governing interest (also) appears without territorial cohesion. European spatial planning therefore is not the territorial cohesion crossing on the fuzzy line of in/formality in the European Funds usage area. Matters are more complex in this usage area instead.

Still, insofar it concerns territorial cohesion's channeling of funds due to a formal usage of the concept, clearly some passages and mostly obstacles thus appear. Besides a narrow path towards formality *via* sustainability (in connection with the territorial dimension), European spatial planning could namely cross the fuzzy line of in/formality with processual coordination and substantive integration and, related to this, territorial cooperation and governing could form a crossing on it. What certainly does not help a channeling though, is that the few existing formal usages of the concept in the Structural Funds and agricultural funding risk a schisming and complexing of it.

14.4 The guerrilla of territorial cohesion and expansion in the European Funds usage area

The complexity of this usage area also comes forward in drives to expand the European funds' area of action with and without territorial cohesion. This namely shows two ungathered masses of positions: those of the concept and its context. Because of this double, these masses order this usage area as a guerrilla-like situation instead of merely representing an ungathered mass of different positions. The ways in which the three metanarratives group

the mass of territorial cohesion positions thereby do not gather a network for combat though. Yet, struggles do appear, in the gap between policy and reality as framed by the marches for official policy directions for instance (e.g. problematic evidence-based targeting). The role of knowledge thereby increases, especially when it concerns territorial specificities (e.g. Territorial Impact Assessment), that is, the many different descriptions of territorial reality with territorial cohesion then clutter the policy-reality gap. Hence, as the whole battlefield for territorial cohesion is muddled, only in-battle positions might perspectively clarify the concept's mass.

The reign of territorial cohesion over these strategic positions is contested too, for they are also taken by the identical order of narratives with an own dynamic. These harbour a since longer fought over jungle of same (coupled) positions for other struggles (e.g. petty-fights) and too much to mention more. The asymmetry in the guerrilla-conflict then favours the prevailing funding streams over the cloud of territorial cohesion positions. Yet, besides obstructing, this intricate context of territorial cohesion also leaves some ways open for the concept for influence and buttresses them to follow others (e.g. sustainable development on lower governmental levels). The European Funds usage area thus hardly has any clear frontlines for large open confrontations about territorial cohesion, but does present camouflaged opportunities for countless small stealthy manoeuvres for the concept: many spots for hit-and-run tactics, endless issues for new recruits and to feed (conceptual) mobilisations, and the propaganda of slanted territorial cohesion promotions.

However, the overlap of strategic positions with/out territorial cohesion might less imply a drive for a territorial cohesion expansion of the European funds' area of action than an opportunistic and instrumental commandeering of the concept. To be precise, many positions thereby more fortify themselves within the already in/formally established European funds' area of action than expanding it (see Appendix F, §F.5). Still, some positions distinguish territorial cohesion from its context. Besides the connection between sustainability and the territorial dimension, these thrust descriptions of territorial reality. They directly describe the geographical concentrations of deprivation or the territorial model of a region and especially emphasise territorial capital and polycentrism; territorial capital thereby fits the framing idea of the European Union as a business, as a clear-cut assumed reality that is, and polycentrism, also in the form of substantive objective, could be used as a corridor to get European spatial planning interests in the European funds. Distinctive territorial cohesion positions also further open up the debate on indirect descriptions of territorial reality, this with a territorial cohesion indicator and/or European Territorial Cohesion Index, which brings a focus in the (cluttered) gap between policy and reality and adds own marks as well (e.g. polycentrism). Such strategic positions would certainly annex an expansion of the European funds area of action, and might even have an effect when they are practical enough (e.g. easy to understand indicators which are selected for policy). Notwithstanding such in/direct descriptions of territorial reality, the guerrilla-like situation all in all does not favour a channeling of funds through territorial cohesion, not even if the concept's positions are merely used opportunistically and instrumentally.

14.5 Territorial cohesion's fivefold contested channeling of European funds up- and downstream

Although debated, much thus goes against a channeling of European funds through territorial cohesion: i) the contesting existent and/or wished for usages of the concept, ii) their in/formality, iii) their guerrilla-like situation, iv) the uncertainty of the concept's influence, and v) the European Funds usage area's non-participation in financial dealings. Sometimes the widespread mass of contesting usages comes close. Still, for instance neither the coordination of certain policies based on whether already spend funds had territorial impacts, nor a less uniform application of the European Union's provisions for State aid for some territories directly channels European funding. Hence, the concept's substantive, territorial, and organisational positions seem more to hinder than enable territorial cohesion channels for European funding.

A formal usage of the concept on the other hand could channel European funding more plainly. Yet, the formal usages of the concept for services and in agricultural funding do not endow explicitly. Moreover, its existing place in agricultural funding might even inhibit this by grounding a channelling on the watershed of the divergent currents of the agricultural funding and Structural Funds mainstreams. The Structural Funds could finance debate on the concept and its channelling though, for which much usable knowledge is available (e.g. ESPON). This debate would take place in a disputed and isolated formal room crowned by territorial cooperation. When the concept can be used officially (e.g. due to the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty), probably many more of such formal positions appear, as then the European funds' area of action would expand with territorial cohesion. Then again, if so, the concept's widespread mass still cannot give a clear direction for a channelling, and a (partly) in/formal incorporation of them would complex this even more.

Still, when territorial cohesion can be used officially, the balance in the guerrilla could turn around due to the concept's appropriation of the strategic positions in the European Funds usage area. Without this the concept's context still bolsters and blockades channellings of European funds through territorial cohesion though. Moreover, this channelling would chiefly depend on this context, as it electrifies nearby options for territorial criteria for funds and funnels them towards competitiveness and related substantive objectives. Important mobilisations for territorial cohesion could then be to go with the upsurge of the all-region approach (for competitiveness) on national and European levels and to overcome the vigorous struggle in which Territorial Impact Assessment is attacked on all sides. Yet, because such battles are undecided on the European level, they also transfer downstream. This is reinforced by that both territorial cohesion and its context have multifocal spotlights in horizontal substantive coordination. The multidirectedness of European funds that results makes their drainage area the more influential.

Territorial cohesion might mostly channel European funding downstream by rearranging practices. The concept could mainly do so with territorial cooperation. Although its organisational context presents some detailed difficulties for territorial cooperation, it also backs territorial cohesion's urban bias and expansion through the other two 2007-2013 Structural Funds objectives in this. Moreover, this organisational context even throws up a lifeline for the then enforced schmising and complexing of the concept, this in the form of a managing of urban-rural relationships. Territorial cohesion and its context are not only concerned with the multi-level management structure for funding streams though.

They are also concerned with reorganisations of this multi-level management structure, even if these run counter to it (e.g. top-down supporting decentralisation). The hostilities between substantive and territorial in/formal ways of doing thereby leave many undemarcated in-between or hybrid options for territorial cohesion. Insofar they are territorially tainted, they suit the concept particularly well. Hereby (French) territorial ways of managing funds advance, whereby territorial cooperation could assist in improving territorial governance. Territorial ways of doing more downstream also rally to deal with the tension of vertical substantive coordination. Even the in/formal way of doing of European spatial planning can be used through (trans)national coordination for funds or transnational territorial cooperation.

However, processual concerns are more pronounced in the organisational context of territorial cohesion. This does not form an unconquerable impediment for the concept, as it follows business-like ways as outlet too, just not totally. Still, its context mostly disregards the territorial or space-based approach on which territorial concepts would rely to be translated into the European funds (e.g. through information and dialogue). Because of this, the concept's role could vanish if it is locked in a territorial way of doing with which, for instance, "un-State-like" territorial divisions are made more downstream. What further diminishes its role is that the Member States seek flexibility for a general rather than territorial cohesion implementation approach and that the concept is not needed to support decentralisation. Hence, the concept's contextual mixing mash could both suit and hinder the practices in which territorial cohesion could channel funding streams more downstream. It thereby just depends on what the concept's and its context's ways of doing will be.

In the European Funds usage area the context of territorial cohesion therefore presents two conclusions: it tremendously cuts the concept down to size *qua* substantive objectives, territorial specificities, and share in

the governal organisation of the territory and/or portrays how territorial cohesion practices could develop as an amalgam of parts from its context. Either way, this guerrilla has not (yet) decided upon how territorial cohesion might channel European funds. Besides, the financial events are fundamental for this, as the concept's context does not re/direct European funds and therefore distances territorial cohesion even further from decision-making and major reshufflings. The widespread masses of nebulous and thorny in/formal conflicts left for territorial cohesion could nonetheless offer room for a (small) step towards evidence-based targeting.

14.6 The three main conclusions of the concept's usage in the European Funds usage area

From these usages of the concept in the European Funds usage area three main conclusions can therefore be drawn: the formal usage of territorial cohesion risks the concept's schisming and complexing, many positions can instrumentally use territorial cohesion opportunistically for the reinforcement in or drive to expand the European funds' area of action, and a channelling of European funds through territorial cohesion is contested in fivefold.

Insofar the complex and elusive European Funds usage area wraps up the whole territorial cohesion usage field by resonating the other three usage areas in financial concretisation, the concept's financial punching power thus appears questionable, even when the Intergovernmental Conferences will broaden and solidify the formal base for its usage. Much thus remains undecided (e.g. the role for European spatial planning) and the financial sphere might give no political way out for this. Hence, even the European funds area of action does not concretise territorial cohesion (yet), but points to the concept as a complex of castles in the sky.