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Cohesion in the Local Context: Reconciling the Territorial, Economic and Social Dimensions

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Editorial

Cohesion in the Local Context: Reconciling the Territorial, Economic and Social Dimensions

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Abstract
This brief editorial introduces a set of articles dealing with territorial challenges in Europe. The EU and the member states have put attention to a silent, but growing issue of inequality: The spatial disparities are in several member states considered able to provide wider political tensions and challenges. Consequently, the EU has launched a research theme in its framework programme Horizon 2020 to cope with such matter. Most of the papers in this issue have their origin in the Horizon COHSMO project "Inequality, Urbanization and Territorial Cohesion. Developing the European Social Model of Economic Growth and Democratic Capacity." While social or economic inequalities are recognized as a social problem, spatial disparities are forgotten or ignored. However, territorial inequalities do boost social and economic differences and add to growing tensions and contradictions in many cases. Coping with such challenges is a difficult matter; most European countries have had programmes aiming at rebalancing regional inequalities for many years. Despite major investments in public services, infrastructure, education and culture, as well as targeted support for private investors, businesses raising employment opportunities and so on. However, the success in terms of growing population and employment has been limited. Instead, endogenous structures and relations receive more attention; in particularly local capacity to generate solutions and means to promote economic and social development. This ability strongly links to the concept of collective efficacy, i.e., a joint understanding and capability to organize and execute actions of mutual benefit.

Keywords
European regional development; inequality; inter-scalar relations; local development; social cohesion; spatial justice; territorial cohesion; territorial government

Issue
This editorial is part of the issue "Cohesion in the Local Context: Reconciling the Territorial, Economic and Social Dimensions," edited by Anja Jørgensen (Aalborg University, Denmark), Mia Arp Fallov (Aalborg University, Denmark), Rikke Skovgaard Nielsen (Aalborg University, Denmark), Hans Thor Andersen (Aalborg University, Denmark) and Maja de Neergaard (Aalborg University, Denmark).

1. Introduction

It is evident that places differ in terms of qualities and opportunities. Those born in backward regions face more obstacles on average compared to children living on the sunny side. However, life chances for the individual do sometimes differ considerably between neighbourhoods within the same city, just as villages and smaller towns may offer very unequal opportunities despite being located in the same region. The spatial impact is visible as marked differences in employment, education, income, health, living conditions and so on. Social relations and spatial structures influence even the personality of individuals.

Yet, in the best of all worlds, the place of birth or living should have as little impact as possible on socio-economic chances and public policies should be in place to lessen such inequalities. This is obviously not the case; a simple check on life expectancy reveals surprisingly big differences both between countries and regions, but also between neighbourhoods, as well as between social classes. A strong spatial variation is similarly shown concerning health status. Moreover, after a long period of catching-up for most of the disadvantaged regions, inequalities among regions in Europe are now growing again.

The geographies of economic, social and political development change as new industries and technologies, social demands and opportunities, cultural, religious relations and so on replace older structures and relations. Such changes have accelerated over the last decades and produced new lines of division and contradiction; former successful regions have faced decline for half a century now without significant progress while previously-backward regions suddenly appear as new, successful centres for high-tech manufacturing. Whilst some regions experience rising conflicts, rising unemployment and depopulation, others seem to have found a 'magic formula,' a positive relationship between collective efficacy and governance that allows them to benefit from territorial capital.

Several mega-trends have emerged over a short period; globalisation, which has removed or at least reduced barriers for a free flow of capital and commodities, sometimes also for labour, has reframed conditions for local politics and economics and thus for key components of living opportunities at the national, regional or local level. Moreover, globalisation has also reshaped media, culture and education in many cases. Migration has increased in number and made many metropolises truly multi-cultural, which further speeds up processes of globalisation. In parallel to this, the ageing of developed countries is rapidly producing new challenges in terms of growing needs for care and health systems, the search for alternative ways of financing welfare services than via taxation. Many Western countries now require more labour; a need that only migration can solve.

Industrial and economic changes together with social and cultural shifts have recently produced a period of fast urbanisation. Urbanisation has, first of all, fuelled the growth of larger cities. On the other side, rural districts, in many cases suffer from depopulation and consequently of stagnation, sometimes of decline. A key effect is a challenged territorial cohesion.

Most European countries have for decades attempted to better integrate various parts of their territory to benefit from the advantages of a coherent and fairly structured nation-state. A combination of marked territorial disparities and simultaneous social and political dissatisfaction may enhance disintegration and produce new oppositions.

2. Territorial Cohesion—A Contested Concept

Territorial cohesion may simply be understood as a conceptual development of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) by adding a dimension of spatial justice (Davoudi, 2005). This adds a clear normative element to the spatial policies of the European Union. Moreover, territorial cohesion appears as a replacement of the ESDP by connecting a spatial perspective to the European social model. There are numerous definitions of territorial cohesion, but the core issue is that the uncertainty related to the concept permits the concept to allow a wide range of interpretations. Thus, despite very different opinions and priorities, many stakeholders and politicians can see themselves on board. Territorial cohesion is an abstract concept, which does not challenge European agreement: The political disagreement does not arrive before translation into practical policymaking; however, this challenge is transferred to lower levels of government, i.e., national or most often the regional government. Territorial cohesion has a strong positive connotation; it does not include ideological U-turns or seriously challenge actual regional inequalities. It just expresses the wish of fairness between all territories; who would be against the noble aim of spatial justice or coherent territories? The question remains by which means, and at what cost.

Territorial cohesion is a policy term, which has entered policy spheres at almost all scales and concerning several dimensions: The European Union has at times attempted to challenge the hegemonic position of the nation-state and national scale as a default reference for politics, the economy and social and cultural relations. By considering social scales other than the national level, first of all regions, but also local scales as well as cross-national scales as relevant for policy implementation, the European Union has launched new arenas for cooperation and policymaking. Yet, these 'new' or reactivated tiers of government were, and remain, weak compared to national levels. Nevertheless, analysis and facts show substantial similarities between and across member states, in general since national governments formulate or promote the vast majority of policies. Only when the European Union co-finances cross-border initiatives, e.g., the INTERREG-programmes, there have been attempts to solve problems together and across national borders.

While the diagnosis is clear, the correct treatment remains unknown. Various governments have attempted several methods over time: Regional policies have changed from financial support and infrastructure investments, exemption from restrictions concerning building codes, environmental or labour market issues, to job training, transfer of public institutions in order to increase employment, and setting up of educational and cultural institutions. Unfortunately, the overall picture seems quite stable; few depressed regions have managed to catch up or develop into thriving and prosperous regions.

The OECD (2019) delivers an interesting approach in *Rural Policy 3.0*; it concludes that policies based on subsidies and protection are unable to counteract depopulation and the decline of service provision. Instead, a radical shift was launched in 2006 with a focus on the competitiveness of rural areas (OECD, 2006). The new policy includes a shift from only economic objectives to encompassing social and environmental issues, a dismissal of the rural-urban dichotomy in favour of a nuanced view on the relationship between rural and urban areas and finally a shift from government alone to the inclusion of private business as well as civil society. Former emphasis on competitiveness is replaced by well-being in three dimensions: economy, society and environment. The value of local embedded structures and relations may explain the successes or failures of many localities. Consequently, more soft relations, local cultures and traditions, have gained importance in policies for territorial cohesion. This understanding is running through several of the articles in this volume.

3. The Thematic Issue

This thematic issue is generally divided in three parts. The first part delivers an overall understanding of territorial cohesion, its first logical question being what territorial cohesion is and how we should understand it. The second part presents examples of territorial cohesion in different types of areas and related to various scales. The articles here draw on empirical data from the Horizon 2020-funded programme COHSMO. The third part of the issue consists of two articles: one on the methodological challenges when researching territorial cohesion and the other aiming to bridge the gap between academic debate and policymaking.

Part one of this thematic issue presents the substance of an oft-used concept: territorial cohesion. It is, as claimed by many, a concept easy to feel comfortable with since everyone can understand it from their point of view. Yet, in an academic debate, concepts have to be firmer and more stringent. How can we measure degrees of territorial cohesion unless we have a strict definition? Weckroth and Moisio (2020) provides an overview of how the concept is defined, framed and justified in European Union policies. They base their overview on the analysis of official speeches by European Union commissioners responsible for regional policies. The focus is particularly on the meaning of territorial cohesion and its justification. Boczy, Cefalo, Parma, and Skovgaard Nielsen (2020) deliver an analysis of larger cities as places for the global knowledge economy and the challenges that follow rising competitiveness and inequalities. While the narrow perspective in most development strategies is on economic performance, larger cities have to consider social inequality as a potential source for future tension. In practice, strategies that can recognise and balance different concerns have better chances to remain cohesive and competitive. Artelaris and Mavrommatis (2020) examine territorial cohesion as a policy narrative and the diverse narrative structure of the concept. The rhetoric of cohesion links to sub-narratives, perhaps in order to produce a balance between competitiveness and social well-being.

We continue on with four cases of how territorial cohesion is treated in practice at different scales and localities. Boczy and Cordini (2020) focus on cognitive assets in regional or spatial policies and investigate the mixed assets of cognitive relations and material structures concerning planning discourses. They study three types of localities—urban, suburban and rural—in two member states (Austria and Italy) in order to make intra-regional as well as inter-regional comparisons. Jørgensen, Fallov, Corsado-Diaz, and Atkinson (2020) present a comparative analysis of two peripheral and mostly rural localities in Denmark and the United Kingdom. Their aim is to investigate endogenous development and social cohesion in two different, national settings, which face similar challenges of de-population trends and lacking economic growth. The comparison of the two cases highlight the importance of both formal and informal forms of local leadership, and that collective efficacy might be a useful way to analyse the 'soft dimensions' of leadership for rural territorial development. Bucaitė-Vilkė and Krukowska (2020) compare suburban governance in Polish and Lithuanian municipalities: They find that the two governments have a different composition of vertical and horizontal networks, of how local stakeholders perform and in particularly collective action. Aksztejn (2020) aims at downscaling spatial inequalities as well as the concept of territorial cohesion to the municipal level. Her approach is to criticise European understanding; this understanding directs attention and funding towards the regional level, whilst inequalities are present also at the local level and intermunicipal differences are much larger than between regions. Aksztejn does not focus on income, education or employment, but on access to selected public services and perceived inequalities among local stakeholders.

Finally, Atkinson and Pacchi (2020) notice the separate treatment of three forms of cohesion: social, economic and territorial. The missing incorporation of the three dimensions into one coherent policy loses potential gains of relevance for an efficient spatial policy. The authors admit that academic criticism of these concepts has not made life easier for EU policymakers. However, the policymakers have worked with concepts like 'functional area,' which seem clarifying at first glance, but later on, only provide further frustrations whenever attempts are made to delineate a region. de Neergaard, Fallov, Skovgaard Nielsen, and Jørgensen (2020) struggle in their article with a similar problem: If we cannot use administrative delimited regions as the basis for comparisons since they seldom reflect a meaningful entity sharing costs and benefits, responsibility between population and decision-makers, businesses, then comparative analysis become wishful ambitions. Leaning towards an

idea presented by Doreen Massey, the authors suggest using a 'conjunctural approach,' i.e., examine and understand similar dynamics within and between places to compare the incomparable elements. This offers the possibility to dive deeper into an understanding of dimensions of territorial cohesion by investigating how embedded structures, place histories, collective 'imaginaries' of place, and potential coalitions or conflictual relations are articulated together.

Altogether, the nine articles analyse and discuss territorial cohesion from an abstract to a very down-to-earth level that is sure to enlighten the reader. Together they offer insights into how localities matter in relation to a cross-European discussion of territorial cohesion and inequality. However, the last word on territorial cohesion is not yet on paper.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Territorial Cohesion of What and Why? The Challenge of Spatial Justice for EU's Cohesion Policy

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Abstract
Over the past two decades, both academics and policy makers have discussed the meaning of territorial cohesion in the context of the European Union (EU). This debate on the meaning and content of territorial cohesion is becoming increasingly important in a Europe that is facing multiple crises. This article contributes to the literature on EU's territorial cohesion policies by tracing the ways in which territorial cohesion has been defined, framed and justified as an EU policy. We analyse public speeches made by the acting commissioners for Regional Policy and inquire into the Cohesion Reports from 2004 to 2017 produced by the European Commission. In particular, we interrogate both the meaning of the concept of territorial cohesion and the justifications for pursuing territorial cohesion. We conclude with some critical remarks on the relevance of economic production-based definitions and justifications for territorial cohesion policies. Accordingly, we argue that treating macroeconomic production as an indicator of territorial cohesion harmfully consolidates a narrow understanding of societal wellbeing and development and imposes on all regions a one-dimensional economic scale to indicate their level of development.

Keywords
cohesion policy; European Union; inclusion; regional policy; spatial justice; territorial cohesion

Issue
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1. Introduction

Territorial cohesion is a peculiar, elusive and contested policy that has become part of the territorial construction or what authors have conceptualized as the "territory work" of the EU (see Moisio & Luukkonen, 2017), especially since the late 1990s. Unsurprisingly, the concept has also attracted increasing attention in academic circles, particularly since the early 2000s (e.g., Bachtler & Mendez, 2013; Camagni, 2005). As a policy term, territorial cohesion discloses the ways in which EU policies and academic research on those policies are eventually co-constituted: All EU policies are influenced by academic work. The EU cohesion policy has indeed been characterized by increasing interactions between the policy and academic spheres of debate, at least during the past ten years (see, e.g., Bachtler, Berkowitz, Hardy, & Muravska, 2017). The recent EU Cohesion Policy reforms effectively disclose the ways in which scholars from the fields of regional studies, regional science and economic geography in particular have played important roles in shaping the new policy (McCann & Varga, 2018).

Territorial cohesion is closely related to fundamental and perennial questions in human geography, namely the reasons for and consequences of uneven geographical development (Hadjimichalis, 2011; Massey, 1984; Myrdal, 1957). Moreover, despite its origin in the political sphere of the EU, territorial cohesion has a thematically close connection to academic discourses on spatial justice and place-based development (see, e.g., McCann & Varga, 2018). We further address this issue in the final section of this article with particular reference to the concept of spatial justice. Despite having its roots in the North American context and the urban realm the idea of spatial justice has been increasingly discussed with interregional framing over the last few years (see, e.g., Israel & Frenkel, 2018; Jones et al., 2018; Rauhut, 2018).

Rather than examining how the discourses discussed in the analysis translate into specific policy instruments, such as structural funds, we present an analysis of the ways in which territorial cohesion is articulated and rationalized by key EU politicians as a meaningful policy. We therefore understand EU's "territorial cohesion" to be an ongoing policy process within which particular political rationalities, intellectual ideas and techniques of measuring are selected to form the nucleus of this policy at a given historical conjuncture. The elusiveness of territorial cohesion policy does not therefore mean that the selection of certain discursive elements of this policy would be totally haphazard; rather, the nucleus of a territorial cohesion policy always reflects the wider historically contingent systems of political-economic thought. Rather than understanding policy as a mere blueprint or outcome of political processes, we interrogate territorial cohesion policy as a discursive process whereby the content of policy is constantly re-worked among a range of actors operating with different capacities to act. Moreover, policy is a process that brings together different elements, such as ways of reasoning, systems of measuring, and techniques of governing. Even if there is an epistemic link between academic theories and the ways in which policy is rationalized, the focus of our analysis is not on the ways that territorial cohesion has been conceptualized in academic research. By contrast, we examine the ways in which territorial cohesion is defined and justified in EU policy-making. We underline that territorial cohesion has been a manifestation of political debates in the European social model, and the spatial development of the EU. In this sense, the evolution of territorial cohesion inescapably mirrors some of the broader developments in the process of European integration.

The agenda behind the use of territorial cohesion as a political term in EU policies appears to be to find justifications for the use of the Cohesion Fund and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) that aim to rebalance geographically uneven development within the EU. However, the question of whether the observed geographical differences in economic development are considered problematic in the first place, or whether these differences are merely spatial expressions of an efficient market economy, remains contested in academic literature (Martin, 2015). In the academic context this debate circulates around the fundamental question whether there is an efficiency-equity trade-off in regional economy (Martin, 2008). The ideas and arguments from these academic debates are then filtered through to policy making such as the EU's regional policy, which aims to strike a balance between different and sometimes conflicting arguments. This is exactly why we comprehend the EU's regional policy to be a trading zone of ideas and concepts between academics, planners and policymakers. In any case, the official stance of the EU Commission is that it aims to create an EU territory which is spatially balanced, and it is on this principle that the existence of EU funding is often justified. Consequently, the practice of introducing EU-originated spatial policy terms and wider policy discourses such as territorial cohesion can be seen as a strategy for producing and legitimizing the EU territory primarily as a form of governable spatial unit (Luukkonen & Moisio, 2016).

The elusiveness and related political flexibility of territorial cohesion as a policy discourse in a wider set of EU policies is an important aspect: It can be re-formulated and acquire new meanings as current political-economic contexts change. From our perspective, an analysis of the evolution of a policy should also render visible the ways in which a particular political economy as well as academic concepts and theories are built into the policy discourse. This is important given that territorial cohesion is implemented by the channelling of public money across Europe. Hence, the way in which territorial cohesion functions as an investment mechanism is inescapably bound to the ways in which it has been reasoned and justified as an important policy for the further constitution of the EU as a polity. It is obvious that issues of economic growth, economic competitiveness and collective identity have figured prominently in the context of territorial cohesion policies over the past few years. Regrettably, the association and interconnections between cohesion policy and investment and/or redistribution has, however, been largely untouched in academic research so far. Given that territorial cohesion is a political and thus highly contested spatial policy—and under re-working within the EU apparatus—our analysis seeks to render visible some of the ways in which certain political economic reasonings receive a spatial character in the context of territorial cohesion policies over the past fifteen years or so.

2. Analysing Territorial Cohesion Policy

In academic research, territorial cohesion is often associated with regional differences without critically reflecting on its content and varying political meanings in policy practices. Many studies have used it in a descriptive manner—with pre-defined meanings for "territorial cohesion," territory and cohesion—to describe and compare certain economic and social conditions in

and between EU regions. Beyond some notable exceptions (e.g., Davoudi, 2005; Faludi, 2004; van Well, 2012) the ideational and political content of territorial cohesion has not been systematically examined.

In the context of the EU, territorial cohesion is a policy discourse. It is historically contingent and its very meaning is constantly re-defined, re-worked and re-spatialized. Like all policy discourse, it is thus highly elusive. In EU policies, there is hence no single definition for territorial cohesion. On the contrary, the policy discourse of territorial cohesion has been articulated, measured and mapped through different spatial phenomena, such as disparities in economic production, forms of governance, and place-based policies (Camagni, 2005; Faludi, 2004; Medeiros, 2016; Mirwaldt, McMaster, & Bachtler, 2008; Zaucha, 2015). These various spatial articulations of territorial cohesion are analysed in the latter sections of this article in order to disclose a sort of hierarchical structure of territorial cohesion as a policy discourse.

We approach the EU's territorial cohesion policy through scrutinizing public speeches made by the EU Commissioner of Regional Policy between 2005 and 2017 along with the 3rd to 7th Cohesion Reports. First, we examine how territorial cohesion is either implicitly or explicitly defined in the selected research materials. Second, we interrogate the moral, ethical, or economic justifications that are used for pursuing territorial cohesion. Third, we analyse whether any temporal shifts can be observed in the articulation of and justification for cohesion and territorial policies. These shifts are interesting not least given that the economic recession from 2008 onwards has had a significant impact on political developments within the EU.

The following questions structure our analysis:

1) How is territorial cohesion articulated (defined and framed) as a spatial policy in the research material?
2) What are the key spatial and political economic premises through which territorial cohesion is justified as a policy?
3) Have any changes occurred in the articulations (definitions and framings) of territorial cohesion during the period under investigation?

In other words, while interested in both the definition of and justification for territorial cohesion policy, our analysis addresses the questions of *what* and *why*. This way of interrogating territorial cohesion draws from one of the most distinguished authors on inequality and justice, Amartya Sen. In *Inequality Re-examined*, Sen (1992) notes that any analysis of inequality should first begin by asking which metrics or dimensions should be examined when discussing or defining inequality in a given society (what) and only second which moral justifications are used to pursue it (why). Hence, the questions of *what* and *why* are inevitably connected and cannot be evaluated separately. Despite a currently rather rich body of literature on the concept and practice of territorial cohesion as the guiding principle of the EU's spatial policies (Davoudi, 2005; Faludi, 2007; Medeiros, 2016; Mirwaldt et al., 2008), this question does not appear to have been adequately scrutinized. Instead, questions on what "territorial cohesion" is and why it is pursued have been examined in isolation.

Scrutinizing the articulations of European Commissioners for Regional Policy as a form of persuasive communication discloses the implicit meanings of territorial cohesion, which are not necessarily presented in the official policy documents of the EU. Public speeches on territorial cohesion policy include both the ethos and logos typical of any political speech and also the distinctive metaphors that can be used for predicative or ideological purposes in the context of the EU (Charteris-Black, 2014). In our perspective, political speech is a form of language that is prepared by a speaker for a specific audience for a particular event and in a particular geographical locale. Political speech can be understood as a deliberative form of communication aimed at justifying a specific policy. This instrumentalist reading of political communication highlights the fact that building a consensus around a policy requires establishing shared values within the audience. We argue that an analysis of the terms, expressions, and metaphors of "territorial cohesion" used by EU's Regional Commissioners in public speeches effectively disclose the ways in which territorial cohesion of the EU is legitimized, understood, and practised as a form of spatial-political intervention. From this angle, territorial cohesion as a guiding principle of EU territorial policies appears to be a useful target for an analysis of political argumentation and communication.

3. Research Material

The primary data used in our analysis are the speeches made by the European Commissioner responsible for regional policy. These speeches were downloaded from the Rapid database, which contains all the press releases of the Commission. The database is run by the Communication Department of the European Commission, and all the material is freely downloadable. Using Rapid's search engine, those speeches made by the Commissioner for Regional Policy which contained both the words "territorial" and "cohesion" were selected for analysis. This procedure resulted in a dataset of 69 speeches from the years 2004 to 2017.

This period included four different commissioners: Danuta Hübner (Poland, 2004–2009), Paweł Samecki (Poland, 2009–2010), Johannes Hahn (Austria, 2010–2014), and Corina Crețu (Romania, 2014–2019). This period fits well with the research focus of this analysis, as it covers the period of burgeoning academic interest towards territorial cohesion (Jones et al., 2018), as well as the period of economic recession from 2008 onwards. The studies' period also covers three program-

ming periods: 2000 to 2006, 2007 to 2013, and the current period 2014 to 2020.

The primary research material is supported by secondary data from the Cohesion Reports from the period spanning from 2004 to 2017. Cohesion Reports are produced by the European Commission every three years to report on progress towards achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion across the EU. The studied period covered five Cohesion Reports, from the third report (2004) to the seventh report, which was released in 2017.

These two above-mentioned datasets are taken to provide a comprehensive perspective of different articulations, definitions, and justifications of territorial cohesion. These articulations are politically important as they also implicitly legitimize the spatial channelling of Cohesion Funds and the ERDF, which have the strongest spatial or regional focus among the instruments in the European Structural and Investment Funds.

4. The Territorial Cohesion of What? The Change in the Meaning of Territorial Cohesion

The first result of our analysis concerning *what* territorial cohesion is is that the primary meaning attached to the policy concept of "territorial cohesion" during the programming periods 2000 to 2006 and 2007 to 2013 seems to refer to the level of regional disparities in economic production expressed through Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The dominance of this understanding is unsurprising, as the central aim of the EU set out in the Treaty is to promote economic and social progress and a high level of employment and to achieve a balanced and sustainable development.

Taken as a whole, the utilization of "territorial cohesion" as a component in achieving the EU goals of competitiveness and economic growth emphasizes the sheer political-economic dimension of cohesion. Moreover, throughout the programming periods 2000 to 2007 and 2008 to 2013, this dimension has been largely fixed on macro-scale economic production (instead of, for example, purchasing power or household income) and its most commonly used indicator—the GDP. In EU's territorial cohesion policy, the focus on regional disparities in macro-economic production emerges as the most common definition.

The strong emphasis on macroeconomic production during the first two programming periods under investigation is not a great surprise. At that time, cohesion policy was largely understood and articulated as contributing to the EU agenda of economic growth and competitiveness. This mirrors the findings of Mirwaldt et al. (2008) and Zaucha and Szlachta (2017), who noted that since the time of the third Cohesion Report in 2004, the term territorial cohesion was strongly connected with achieving the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda: competitiveness, innovation and employment. In territorial cohesion policy, the EU was understood as a "growth machine," and the very rationale for territorial cohesion was framed as an agenda for narrowing regional disparities. Territorial cohesion was about increasing the performance of the regions in the new member states in particular and in so doing bringing these new members closer to the EU average. Consequently, this convergence would raise the cumulative economic output of the new EU territory as a whole. This understanding of territorial cohesion is articulated in the Third Cohesion Report (Commission of the European Communities [CEC], 2004), for instance:

> If the EU is to realise its economic potential, then all regions wherever they are located, whether in existing Member States or in the new countries to join, need to be involved in the growth effort and all people living in the Union given the chance to contribute. (CEC, 2004)

This and other similar framings of territorial cohesion as an economizing spatial policy through which growth can be achieved received its definition through the broader EU agenda of the time. The justification of territorial cohesion stemmed from its potential contribution to both economic growth and the geopolitical construction of supranational territory.

At around the same time, however, an analysis of our research material discloses another meaning of territorial cohesion. An alternative meaning of territorial cohesion focuses more on an individual perspective rather than relying on indicators of macroeconomic production. This second meaning defines "territorial cohesion" as a spatial condition where '[p]eople should not be disadvantaged by wherever they happen to live or work in the Union' (CEC, 2004).

This individually focused place-based justification for territorial cohesion seems to have gained ground during the past few years. Interestingly, this justification has done so at the expense of the previously dominant focus on macroeconomic disparities between regions. In particular, this definition has its roots in the concept of the "accessibility of services of general economic interest," which was first introduced in Article 7d in the Amsterdam Treaty (CEC, 1997). The emphasis on accessibility adds a new political-economic component to territorial cohesion and reflects a qualitative shift from highlighting the economic performance of regions to underlining the structural strengths and weaknesses of regions. This more individually focused framing of territorial cohesion has been clearly visible during the last few years, particularly throughout the programming period from 2014 onwards. Even though the definition still maintains the emphasis on the instrumental economic and physical dimension it nonetheless switches the focus from macroeconomic indicators of production to the individual-level structural issues. This emphasis on the individual-level effects of changes in the macroeconomic context is evident when Commissioner Crețu reviewed

the 7th Cohesion report in Brussels in October 2017. She noted that 'the [financial] crisis has left deep scars on Europe´s socio-economic fabric…and in too many European Regions, people are poorer that they were before the crisis' (Crețu, 2017d).

The place-based focus stems originally from an emphasis on access to "services of general economic interest" (CEC, 1997) and in its current form it is based on a "universalist" argument that people should not be disadvantaged based on their place of residence in EU member states and regions.

The qualitative transformation of the discourse of territorial cohesion is also visible in the indices and indicators that have been used to render visible and articulate territorial cohesion within the EU policy apparatus. Even though for most of the period under investigation regional levels of macroeconomic production have been the dominant index through which "territorial cohesion" has been assessed, the latest programming period has seen an increasing number of remarks on the limitations of GDP as an indicator of development and well-being. More specifically, this acknowledgement of the limitations of GDP and calls for better indicators appear to have strengthened since 2010. For example, in 2010 Commissioner Hahn noted that there was 'an inherent need to develop more indicators for different thematic approaches. For territorial and social cohesion we could for example look at household income per head, access to health care or education' (Hahn, 2010).

The concern regarding GDP as an optimal indicator for measuring the results of Cohesion Policy was expressed again by Hahn in 2014, when he noted that 'another question we have to reflect upon is whether GDP should remain the main criterion for determining the needs and evaluation of the impact [of Cohesion Policy]' (Hahn, 2014).

The criticism towards the GDP-based understanding of territorial cohesion has gained even more ground during the time of Commissioner Crețu. In 2017 Crețu formulated this position with the remark that 'GDP, alone, does not accurately enough reflect the needs of a region as it leaves out crucial parameters such as quality of life, social inclusion or sustainable development' (Crețu, 2017b).

These remarks pointing to questions of quality of life and household income also highlight the more individually concerned approach to territorial cohesion. In this line of reasoning, territorial cohesion appears more concrete from the individual perspective than when associated with changes in macroeconomic production. However, it is clear that understanding territorial cohesion through an individual lens rather than focusing on changes in the macroeconomic context enables (and requires) the generation of new meanings for territorial cohesion. It is possible that this opens up ways towards a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which different places and regions have been left (and kept) behind (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018) through public and private investment policies and other political-economic issues that have to do with the post-Fordist economy and the associated new spatial division of labour.

5. Why Territorial Cohesion? The Changing Justification for Territorial Cohesion as a Regional Policy

One of the key justifications for territorial cohesion stems from aiming for an EU territory with small interregional differences in terms of economic production. However, the reasons for aiming at this goal can be articulated in different ways. More explicitly, striving for small regional disparities in GDP could essentially be justified on the grounds of either economic efficiency or spatial justice and solidarity. The different type of justifications for territorial cohesion can be teased out from the speeches of Commissioners of Regional Policy. This is the issue we now turn to.

Our research material demonstrates that arguments for practising territorial cohesion—when understood in terms of regional differences in GDP—are based on a rather peculiar mix of calls for economic efficiency (leading to the maximization of EU output throughout the entire EU area) and to idea of solidarity as a fundamental principle of the EU. When these arguments do not easily converge, the argument on economic efficiency usually prevails, whereas references to solidarity remain constantly vague. During the first programming periods (from 2000 to 2013), when the dominant definition of territorial cohesion concerned primarily macroeconomic production, the rationale of economic growth massively overshadowed ideas of solidarity or spatial justice. This is a notable issue: Territorial cohesion was for some time separated from important community and local level issues such as social inclusion, justice, participation, and the environment. During the first programming period, in particular, territorial cohesion acquired its meaning almost solely through economic growth, while one of the founding premises of European integration, solidarity, remained unspecified in the policy discourse of territorial cohesion.

Interestingly, the idea of solidarity was expressed in a speech by Commissioner Hübner at the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Territorial Cohesion and Regional Policy in 2007. She stated: 'I think we all agree that European cohesion is about solidarity and economic progress' (Hübner, 2007c).

This excerpt highlights the broader perennial struggle, both in territorial cohesion policy and within the EU as a whole, to strike a balance between the ideas of growth and redistribution of economic assets: the ongoing struggle between late Keynesian and Ordoliberal political economic reasoning. Moreover, the attempt to circumnavigate between ideas and practices of solidarity and efficiency was also evident in a speech by Commissioner Hübner in 2008. In this speech, she quoted the words of Jacques Delors, the former President of the European Commission, when describing the dynamics driving the European Union (EU) '[it is]

competition that stimulates, co-operation that strengthens and solidary that unites' (Hübner, 2008).

The logic on the stimulating effect of competition is quite straightforward, but when referring to solidarity Hübner defined its complex connection to the EU's economic objectives as follows:

> Last, but not least, [it is] solidarity that unites. Increasing globalisation and a shift towards knowledge based economy could widen the extent of social exclusion in Europe. This is not only a concern of social justice, the unemployed and the excluded are a resource wasted for society. The European Union cannot afford increasing social polarisation. (Hübner, 2008)

This attempt to integrate ideas of social inclusion and justice into the post-Fordist knowledge-based economy rationale is highly interesting. We already know that the process of knowledge-based economization has the capacity to abandon certain populations and to situate them outside political normativity. Indeed, the rise of neoliberal knowledge-based economization in Europe and beyond is clearly associated with the emergence of "places that do not matter" (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018) and "people who do not matter" (Moisio, 2018a). However, in Commissioner Hübner's (2008) line of reasoning, social exclusion, polarization, and unemployment need not be addressed primarily on their own but because they present an economic burden which the EU cannot afford. The similar economizing logic of attempting to incorporate solidarity into arguments of economic efficiency is clearly visible throughout our research material. For example, in a speech at the European Constitution and Solidarity Conference in 2005, Hübner, after stating that solidarity was a 'basic value of the union' and that 'the 10% of the population in the least developed regions contribute[d] only 2% of EU GDP', went on to claim that 'the Commission believes that all regions must participate in the growth process and that the cohesion policy should be available to all of them' (Hübner, 2005).

Furthermore, the pressing need for economic efficiency is reasoned on the premise that as the EU plays a relatively small role in the global economy, Europeans cannot afford to have regions that are "lagging" behind. Hübner, for instance, continues by noting that 'the EU has 254 regions, yet Europe is a small continent. We cannot afford to waste resources. We cannot afford to leave behind even the smallest region. All of them should contribute to raising European growth and competitiveness' (Hübner, 2005).

The assertion that all regions should contribute to economic growth is sometimes turned into claims that they have a responsibility to contribute to growth. In this line of reasoning, the idea of the territorial potential embedded in the poorer regions becomes understandable as a political-economic strategy. Thus, an important line of reasoning of territorial cohesion concerns perceiving regions as if they were characterized by underused or underutilized (economic) potential which could be harnessed for economic growth on an EU scale. Consequently, wording where territorial cohesion aims to unleash the territorial potential of regions has been present throughout the studied period. Hübner (2009), for example, asserts that 'poor regions are underutilized resources that could be contributing to overall EU growth' (Hübner, 2009).

This idea of underutilized potential being the reason for uneven economic distribution within the EU can be seen as an attempt to merge the notion of the spatial redistribution of resources with that of spatially focused investments. Throughout its existence, the territorial cohesion policy, and its manifestation in the channelling of strategic funds, has faced the question of whether it is conceived as a mechanism of redistribution or investment. Again, this brings us back to the tension between Ordoliberal and Keynesian fiscal and economic policies. Before the cohesion funds were explicitly defined as investment policy in the latest programming period of 2014 to 2020, the distinction between cohesion funds as social transfers (which have a spatial or regional nature) and investment method has been repeatedly articulated. The tension between the two ways of rationalizing cohesion funds is omnipresent in the speeches of commissioners during that period:

> The structural funds are not designed as income transfers; they have the objective of funding real economic growth. (Hübner, 2004a)

> Regional policy is not about hand-outs to underdeveloped areas. It is not a question of charity. Rather, it is about raising the long-term growth potential of regions, enabling them to attain a permanently higher level of development. It is about investing in regional competitiveness and jobs—in the endogenous growth potential of regions. (Hübner, 2004b)

In 2007, Hübner aimed to encourage collective self-reflection among the audience at the closing session of the Fourth Cohesion Forum by stating: 'We should ask ourselves why the [regional] policy is still perceived essentially as a simple redistributive instrument' (Hübner, 2007b).

However, in the same year, Hübner (2007a) had argued that a paradigm shift was occurring in the understanding of territorial cohesion:

> New policy paradigm is emerging in the globalised economy where public policies are increasingly geared towards resource allocation rather than redistribution. It is a paradigm in which the "catching-up" on the part of the less developed with the advanced regions is dependent on jointly moving forward. It is a paradigm that stresses opportunities for the future, by mobilising underexploited potential,

> rather than compensating for the problems of the past. (Hübner, 2007a)

Nevertheless, this paradigm shift did not seem to have materialized four years later in 2011, when Commissioner Johannes Hahn articulated the persisting problems of understanding cohesion funds as an instrument of redistribution: '[I] think it is high time to move away from the traditional view of cohesion policy as a redistributive instrument, as a simple transfer of financial resources from rich to poor regions' (Hahn, 2011).

However, a few years after this remark, in the new programming period, cohesion policy was explicitly labelled as investment policy in EU documentation. This was acknowledged by Hahn in the closing speech of the 6th Cohesion Forum:

> Cohesion Policy had to become a real strategic investment policy for the regions contributing to the achievements of EU goals. (Hahn, 2014)

> The mind-set of people has been changed. Nobody thinks anymore of Cohesion Policy as a pot of money to be given to the regions. Nowadays people appreciate and understand the investment philosophy of the new Cohesion Policy. (Hahn, 2014)

The metaphor of a "pot of money" attaches a negative connotation to cohesion funds as the ineffective redistribution of public funds. In this case, the purpose of referring to cohesion policy as a "pot of money" was thus to imply negative evaluations of previous approaches to territorial cohesion policy. In sum, the rhetoric used in the Commissioners' speeches during the programming periods 2000 to 2007 and 2008 to 2013 highlight reasoning whereby redistribution and investment are mutually exclusive ways of organizing and developing political communities. This idea has, however, been highly controversial in terms of the founding principles of the Keynesian welfare statehood model in which redistribution is understood as an investment that generates economic growth. The expressions used in the Commissioners' speeches reveal a tension between ideas of redistribution and investment as well as rhetorical attempts to consolidate these two. We argue that this contradiction and tension is revealed through an analysis of speeches; the more descriptive and neutral cohesion reports do not articulate these dimensions of territorial cohesion policy.

The idea of public investment has been of increasing importance in the EU's articulation of justification for territorial cohesion over the past few years. As noted in the earlier section, the meaning of territorial cohesion has become more individually focused in recent years. Moreover, the more recent individually oriented definition of territorial cohesion territorial is increasingly grounded on the idea of solidarity. Based on the research material it appears that the concept of solidarity is now less associated with macroeconomic performance of regions than was the case during the first programming period. Commissioner Corina Crețu, for instance, argued in 2017 that '[c]ohesion policy brings European solidarity to each and every corner of the Union, ensuring everybody has access to the same opportunities, wherever she or he is' (Crețu, 2017a).

While reviewing the results of the Seventh Cohesion Report, Commissioner Crețu (2017d) further articulated spatially even opportunities by highlighting how:

> More than ever, we must keep fighting disparities, making sure each and every European has access to the same opportunities, wherever she lives…and must keep promoting economic development, social inclusion, and equal opportunities in all EU regions. (Crețu, 2017d)

As these quotations show this new justification for territorial cohesion policies in the programming period from 2014 onwards is increasingly articulated with the notion of social inclusion. Thus, when attempting to establish a justification for territorial cohesion policies within the context of a more individually oriented definition, the Commissioner highlights investments in regional infrastructure, such as broadband connections or physical amenities, as acts of solidarity. Furthermore, it is also important to note that the new justification for territorial cohesions aims to overcome the redistribution/investments contradiction that is persistent in Ordoliberal political-economic reasoning. The justifications for territorial cohesion are now articulated with reference to the "visible" results it produces. In other words, the persistent Ordoliberal condition and the associated binary between investment policies and policies of redistribution does not play a significant role in the articulations of territorial cohesion from 2014 onwards.

The pragmatic rationale that regional policies create visible and positive results was expressed in a speech by Commissioner Crețu (2017b), who notes that '[cohesion policy] works because it fulfils the EU promise of providing access to basic services to all EU citizens, from drinkable water to broadband, from waste management to decent transport connections, from schools to kindergartens to hospitals' (Crețu, 2017b).

The amenity-oriented nature of Cohesion Policy was justified further in a speech by Crețu in the same year, where she remarked:

> I often hear the example of the bicycle path in Bavaria or the swimming pool in Portugal to belittle what the policy does. Beside the fact that it is intellectually dishonest to reduce the policy to these examples, I would argue that if the bicycle path is part of a strategy to promote sustainable urban transport and the swimming pool part of an attempt to improve the quality of life in a deprived neighbourhood, the policy has fulfilled its mission. (Crețu, 2017c)

In summary, it appears that during the latest programming period, the definition of territorial cohesion has become more based on the idea of physical infrastructures and the aim of social inclusion, and the articulations for its legitimacy have changed. During Creţu's tenure, the justification for territorial cohesion, and thus Cohesion Policy, has been built upon positive physical results for individuals, such as improvements in the quality of life and access to different services. However, it should be noted that deeper understandings of social inclusion or spatial justice are still largely absent in the framings of the territorial cohesion of the EU.

6. Concluding Remarks

Our analysis discloses that during the first two programming periods (2000 to 2013), the dominant meaning of territorial cohesion in EU's vocabulary referred to the difference in economic production (in terms of GDP) between the EU regions. During recent years, a shift occurred towards more individually focused definitions: access to services of general economic interest and spatially even distribution of opportunities. Referring to many regions in Europe as cases of underused territorial potential reflects the persistent attempts to label Cohesion and ERDF funding as investments rather than a channel of redistribution or "acts of charity." However, the justifications for territorial cohesion are still made on the basis of economic rationale. At the same time, issues of social inclusion are mentioned but narrowly defined in the framings of territorial cohesion.

Based on these findings we argue that a more contextual and individual-based approach to territorial cohesion, which is gaining more importance within EU terminology, could benefit from academic discourses on spatial justice, capabilities, and human agency. This approach to territorial cohesion would not only emphasize spatially equal access to services and opportunities, but also take into closer scrutiny other issues related also to the subjective quality of social and political life. Good infrastructure and access to services and amenities are important elements of territorial cohesion, and important dimensions to tackle uneven geographical development in the age of knowledge-intensive capitalism. But in order to increase the dimension of social inclusion through EU cohesion funds, notions regarding a broader range of opportunities, accessibilities, and capabilities to participate should be further specified and re-worked.

The recent literature on spatial inequalities and justice has shifted away from the spatial redistribution of goods and services and has begun to emphasize the role of recognition, participation and human agency (Israel & Frenkel, 2018; Rauhut, 2018). For example, the conceptual framework by Israel and Frenkel (2018) for addressing spatial inequality is based on the so-called "capabilities approach" by Amartya Sen (1993), focusing on individual-level capabilities and opportunities. Interestingly, these theoretical notions converge with the two key findings of this analysis: a shift to a more individual-based definition of territorial cohesion and to an emphasis on more subjective measures of wellbeing and development. Even though the link between territorial cohesion policy discourses and the intellectual conceptualization of spatial justice remains loose, we see great potential in building linkages between the principles of individual-based territorial cohesion and academic literature on spatial justice, capabilities and agency. Additionally, there exists empirical evidence showing that measures of economic productivity and active human functioning and capabilities do actually converge in European regional context (e.g., Weckroth, Kemppainen, & Sørensen, 2015). From policy perspective this would mean that shifting focus to more subjective dimensions of wellbeing and development in regions would not have to mean a degrowth in macroeconomic measures.

Territorial cohesion that would take its inspiration from spatial justice highlights that territorial cohesion is more than the maximization of economic efficiency or the visibility of EU-funded physical infrastructures. The principle of solidarity and social inclusion as guiding principles of cohesion policy could enjoy greater success and legitimacy than previous efforts to merge the idea of solidarity with the notion of lagging regions. In short, the idea of European solidarity should also take its motivation from empowering communities, protecting environments and fostering policies that are inclusive rather than exclusive at the level of regions, cities and communities. In this respect, EU policymakers could pay more attention to the ways in which spatial justice has been debated in academic literature.

Spatial justice is a concept which has its roots in theoretical discussions regarding how ideas of social justice and geographical space should be linked together (for an early account, see Harvey, 1973). If space is conceptualized as more than just a container for different kinds of social processes, then 'there is a need to reflect on the impact that defining spatial justice as a regional, as opposed to an urban, goal has on its meaning and operation' (Jones, Goodwin-Hawkins, & Woods, 2020, p. 2). Indeed, despite having its roots in the North American context and the urban realm, the idea of spatial justice has been increasingly discussed with inter-regional framing during the last few years (see, e.g., Israel & Frenkel, 2018; Jones et al., 2018; Rauhut, 2018).

A number of issues and processes can be associated within the notion of spatial justice while reworking EU's future regional policies. First, a diverse set of issues can be understood as key constituents of spatial justice, ranging from the equitable distribution of resources, functioning local and regional mechanisms for participation, individual and collective capacities to act, the existence of a safe and clean environment, and access to various services. In the context of territorial cohesion policy, these issues should not, therefore, be considered technical issues but instead basic human rights (cf. Soja,

2010) and key constituents of spatial justice. Second, spatial injustice, in turn, refers to the political processes of marginalization, oppression, exclusion, exploitation and discrimination. Third, and related to the previous issues, spatial justice refers to the just and/or equal distribution of capital and other resources, functioning infrastructures, good governance, the lack of spatial burdens in society, and access to services and opportunities, to mention but a few structural themes (Barnett, 2011; Dikec, 2001). Fourth, spatial injustice refers not only to the unequal distribution of resources and services but also to an inequality of opportunities; ones that constitute the antithesis of geographies of justice. Finally, it is important to note that the experiencing of spatial injustice discloses structural conditions that limit an individual's or a region's capabilities and liberties 'to be and to do' (cf. Israel & Frenkel, 2018, p. 648). Territorial policies that are predicated on spatial justice should, therefore, take into account the potentially marginalizing political, cultural and economic processes that reproduce spatial injustices in terms of both objective and subjective wellbeing, and in terms of experienced, lived and narrated injustices.

To conclude, the results of our analysis suggest that while the economic and political context within the EU has changed—not least because of the Covid-19 pandemic—a parallel change is also required at the level of policy language and broader discourse. When developing the theoretical and conceptual content for territorial cohesion in the new programming period from 2020 onwards, EU policymakers should give greater recognition to ideas of spatial justice. This approach could spatialize territorial cohesion in new ways that would have the potential to contribute more directly to the wellbeing of people in various parts of Europe (see also Jones et al., 2018). Moreover, this approach could contribute to the reworking of the so called place-based approach to regional development. A narrow reading of the place-based approach to EU's regional development considers it a mere neoliberal governmental technology of minimal political intervention that leaves most of the European regions and places to survive on their own under the imperatives of economic competitiveness and smart specialization. In such a "leaving behind" reading of the place-based development, the transformation of EU's cohesion policy towards "the individualization of regions" (Ahlqvist, & Moisio, 2014) indicates a deepening neoliberalisation of the EU in the age of "strategic urbanization" of political communities and associated discourses of economic agglomeration (Moisio, 2018b). Another reading, however, highlights the fundamental elusiveness of the discourse of place-based development. In this second reading, the place-based development can be redirected towards developing policies that are predicated upon spatial justice and not only in the form of service accessibility or redistribution of funds to places and regions under peripherisation. Merging the discursive elements of place-based development, territorial cohesion and spatial justice can also entail a process whereby different kinds of regional actors are enabled and empowered to assert their various capacities to act and pursue positive visions of regional futures (Jones, Goodwin-Hawkins, & Woods, 2020). This kind of approach to tackle uneven geographical development highlights the place and context specificity of the "good life" which inescapably reflects and is bound to particular regional and local priorities. In this latter respect, the cohesion policy of the EU has remained spatially blind.

As a final note we see that the understanding and evolution of the concept of wellbeing within EU (including regional) policies and documents would be an important area of future research. For example, further research is needed to analyse to what extent the shift in definition and measurement of territorial cohesion over the time period studied in this analysis is connected to a broader discussion on transition from income/GDP to more comprehensive measures of progress and wellbeing (e.g., Stiglitz, Sen, & Fitoussi, 2009).

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Positioning the Urban in the Global Knowledge Economy: Increasing Competitiveness or Inequality

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Abstract
Major cities are increasingly focused on being competitive on an international scale, developing innovative service sectors and investing in human capital. This has contributed to reshaping local socio-economic systems towards a knowledge economy by strategically fostering key business clusters. But what happens in terms of social inequality in this process? The purpose of this article is to analyse whether issues regarding challenges of social inequality and polarisation are considered in the strategies of urban centres positioning themselves in the global knowledge economy. This leads to a discussion about how the cities' strategies address potentially growing inequalities, combining goals of competitiveness, internationalisation and social inclusion. The article builds on case studies from Milan in Italy, Vienna in Austria and Aarhus in Denmark. The three cities are all drivers of growth in their respective regions and countries and are embedded in different national welfare regimes. At the same time, they display internal spatial differentiation in that the municipality covers areas of growth and affluence as well as deprivation. In the article, we combine analysis of policy documents and interviews with governance, business and community actors from the three locations. Our results show that the association between competitiveness and integration is shaped through specific state-city relationships, highlighting both the importance of the welfare framework and the specific urban policy tradition.

Keywords
Austria, Denmark, inequality; internationalisation; Italy; knowledge economy; high skills; social cohesion; social inclusion; urban context; urban policy

Issue
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1. Introduction

Major European cities are increasingly focused on staying competitive on an international scale by becoming service hubs and investing in human capital. Starting in the 70s, after the oil shock, the Fordist economic structure began its decline. In Western Europe, the weight of the industrial sector (especially manufacturing) fell inexorably. While the main large-scale industries were relocated to countries where the workforce was less expensive, led by the United States, the service economy increasingly became the main source of employment in Western countries (Rowthorn & Ramaswamy, 1997). Simultaneously, educational attainment increased and education levels have become strongly linked to the probabilities of employment in the EU countries (Landesmann & Römisch, 2006).

Within this framework, the knowledge economy has gained particular traction (OECD, 1996) and knowledge has become the main asset in wealth creation (DTI, 1998). The knowledge economy not only involves the service sector but also the productive sector, accentuating new production structures that exploit technological advances. This movement towards the service sector and the expanded focus on knowledge economy implies a change in the required skills of the workforce. Individuals who cannot keep up with the new labour market requirements risk social exclusion. However, while the knowledge economy becomes a new source of wealth, it also emphasises differences between territories (Castells, 1996). These differences relate not only to inequality between countries and regions but also to gaps within cities between affluent and deprived areas.

Indeed, economic growth strategies can increase the average level of well-being but, at the same time, they may overlook internal inequalities of cities or even contribute to their increase. This risk is particularly evident for growth strategies based on policies aimed at promoting service centres and knowledge economy hubs. According to Cucca and Ranci (2016), such economic competitiveness policies can impact inequality in two ways. First, the expansion of the knowledge economy is usually matched by a rise in low-qualified jobs needed to support those services. Second, such strategies tend to disproportionately benefit some groups: New well-qualified and well-paid jobs are created but they attract outside people with certain skills and qualifications, such as the creative class and the new urban middle class described by Florida (2002), while leaving a struggling stratum of the local population behind.

In European cities, urban policies that pursue economic competitiveness have generally been successful in attracting foreign investment and new populations to cities (Musterd & Murie, 2010). However, at the same time, they have fostered a rising disconnection between economic growth and social integration. This can lead to both social and spatial polarisation (Cucca & Ranci, 2016).

The rising disconnection between economic growth and social integration is a crucial issue to be investigated in different European urban contexts, to understand if the challenges of growing inequalities are recognised and tackled. The traits and potential drawbacks of the globalised and technology-intensive economy have been widely discussed in the literature (Kenway, Bullen, Fahey, & Robb, 2006; Lundvall, 2016), looking in particular at the national and supranational scale. Less attention has been directed to how cities deal with the polarising effects of the knowledge economy, although the increase of social vulnerabilities and inequalities in European cities has been recognised as a crucial topic for urban and social policy analysis (Ranci, Brandsen, & Sabatinelli, 2014).

In order to promote local growth, urban centres are increasingly seeking to position themselves in the global knowledge economy. The risk is that the distribution of wealth produced by successful growth strategies would disproportionally benefit some sections (intended both as socio-economic groups and geographical portions) within the cities, leading to an increase of the internal inequalities. Policies that can tackle inequalities, such as education and welfare policies, are often designed at the national or regional level rather than the city level. However, the mix of local autonomy, rescaling processes and local social innovation can contribute to combine the development of the knowledge economy with the reduction of inequalities at the city level. Moreover, the unequal spatial distribution of vulnerabilities and the concentration of social problems in big cities suggest that 'locality' profoundly matters in the configuration of the disconnection between economic growth and social integration.

Given these premises, by comparing three European cities (Aarhus, Milan and Vienna) embedded in different welfare regimes, this article aims to analyse if and how local growth strategies address the challenges regarding social inequality. By doing this, we provide novel comparative evidence on the relationship between economic growth and social cohesion, looking at it from the perspective of urban growth strategies. The analysis of main strategy documents is supplemented with interviews of local actors to consider how these issues are shaped in the local debate. The objective is not to analyse the outcomes of the implemented actions, but instead to focus on whether and how local policymakers are considering the potential social criticalities of the growth strategies promoted now that knowledge-based economy strategies are well-established along with their consequences.

2. The Rise of Knowledge and Learning Economy

In post-industrial societies, the massive shift towards internationalisation and tertiarisation of the economy was matched with unprecedented technological advancement, especially in sectors like engineering, information and communication (Esping-Andersen, 1999). Knowledge, skills and innovation are the critical resources for competitive advantage. Accordingly, the knowledge economy has been defined as "production and services based on knowledge-intensive activities that contribute to an accelerated pace of technical and scientific advance, as well as rapid obsolescence" (Powell & Snellman, 2004). Enterprises basing their organisation on the principles of lean production or discretionary learning show higher productivity gains and benefit the most from the opportunities created by the knowledge economy (Arundel, Lorenz, Lundvall, & Valeyre, 2007). Conversely, traditional and Taylorist organisations are more vulnerable to the cycles of international competition. Jobs that entail intensive use of technology and competencies represent the main drivers of economic growth. This is documented by a relative shift in the demand for labour, as employers demand highly qualified and high-skilled workers. Hence, education, training and

skills represent the backbone of this economy on the side of labour-supply. As stated by Lundvall (2016), the success of individuals, firms, regions and countries reflect their ability to learn.

The rise of the knowledge economy entails a high demand for specialised and highly skilled labour, producing spill-over effects for the creation of jobs in related sectors and fostering demand for the 'upskilling' of workers (ESPON, 2017). Large metropolitan areas and their suburbs become centres of agglomeration, specialisation and cumulative advantage that show strong dynamism in terms of income and employment creation (Dijkstra, 2017). Technological developments and regional innovation lead to a growing demand for higher-skilled workers and consequent labour-pooling from other regions and countries.

Research has emphasised the negative impact and the risks associated with the rise of the knowledge economy. Several scholars have analysed the outcomes of uneven economic development in contemporary post-industrial societies by addressing the rise of precarisation and dualisation (Emmenegger, Häusermann, Palier, & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2012), the forms of skill-mismatch between supply and demand of competencies (Autor, 2014) and the socially dividing role of education in the context of market-driven, globalised competition (Brown, Lauder, & Ashton, 2010).

Cities, hit by the closure of traditional factories, invest in sectors based on immaterial values. Development strategies are based on the 'creative city' model (investments in technology-intensive manufacturing, services, cultural industries and neo-artisanal design) in order to promote cities in the new global arena (D'Ovidio, 2016). However, in pursuing such strategies they tend to focus on amenities and the built environment (Vicari, 2010) to attract the new professionals overlooking the historical roots of different places and the social consequences of these strategies.

From a spatial perspective, the dark side of knowledge diffusion and concentration is the generation of territorial polarisation and inequalities (Iammarino, Rodriguez-Pose, & Storper, 2018). The presence of a competitive knowledge economy increases the flow of human and social capital, developing spatial concentration of firms and high population density with high education levels. However, less competitive regions are challenged by brain-drain dynamics of highly skilled people migrating, often becoming dependent on the returning inflow of remittances and knowledge workers (ESPON, 2017).

Besides polarisation between countries and regions, widening gaps between affluent and deprived areas within larger cities arise as a consequence of sharp increases in inequalities and poverty, leading to the intensification of social tensions and vulnerabilities (Glaser, Resseger, & Tobio, 2008). Cities that are increasingly integrated into the global flows of the knowledge economy must cope with significant internal inequalities and social polarisation to the point that "disparities within a given city have largely surpassed disparities between cities" (OECD, 2006, p. 145). During the Fordist period, competition and integration maintained a certain balance, as the search for equity and spatial integration was accompanied by significant economic performances (Bagnasco & Le Galès, 2000). However, the expansion of the knowledge economy, which made these cities more competitive internationally, also contributed to the spread of social tensions within the urban context.

Looking at the dynamics of work-demand, the expansion of the knowledge-intensive service sector with highly productive jobs required the functional support of a parallel growth of low-qualified services (e.g., care work, cashiers, cleaners, etc.). These scarcely productive jobs (Esping-Andersen, 1999) are associated with lower salaries and a high risk of precarity and social exclusion. Concerning the supply of work, a consequence of the skill-based technological change (Berman, Bound, & Machin, 1998) is that many job seekers may lack the qualifications and skills requested by employers. Low-skilled individuals, often with disadvantaged socio-economic or migration background, are faced with the perspective of alternating periods of unemployment and employment in low-qualified service jobs. For these groups, the situation leads to worsening life chances and higher risks of social exclusion (Rodrigues, 2006). The divide between those who benefit from economic development and those who are left behind is often expressed by patterns of spatial segregation. Economic and skill-intensive growth attracts a highly educated and affluent labour force that tends to live in the more attractive areas of the city in stark contrast to deprived areas, where vulnerable groups concentrate.

The unequal spatial distribution of vulnerabilities and the concentration of social problems in big cities suggest that 'locality' profoundly matters in the configuration of the disconnection between economic growth and social integration. Nonetheless, cities are embedded in welfare architectures at the national level. The role of cities in the provision of social policies and services to protect vulnerable groups of the population must therefore be read in the wider context of national welfare states pertaining to different regimes or worlds of welfare (Esping-Andersen, 1990). This state-city dynamic is essential for understanding the capacity of the city to limit the spread of polarisation and inequalities associated with economic development, indicated as a crucial characteristic of the European city model (Häußermann & Haila, 2005). However, this capacity appears now to be fragmented, due to the new challenges associated with the rise of the knowledge economy, as well as with dynamics of expenditure cuts and welfare reorganisation increasing the role of local welfare provision in multi-level governance structures (Kazepov, 2010). As a result of the crisis of the European city model (Häußermann, & Haila, 2005), a growing disconnection between economic growth and social integration is observed (Cucca & Ranci, 2016). Its developments and variations across

European cities represent a crucial topic for urban and social policy analysis. Thus, given the ambiguous impact of the knowledge economy in urban contexts, this study delves deeper into the issue by comparing three European cities, to investigate if inequalities are considered in urban growth strategies.

3. Methods

The article builds on three city cases: Vienna, Milan and Aarhus. Key figures for the three cities are presented in Table 1. Vienna is the capital of Austria and both a municipality and a federal state. It has 1.8 million inhabitants and is the economic and social centre of the country. Milan is a leading Italian industrial city and the main economic and financial centre of Northern Italy. It has 1.4 million inhabitants. Aarhus is by international standards a medium-sized city of approximately 350,000 inhabitants. Nevertheless, it is the second biggest city of Denmark and the growth driver of its region and Jutland more generally. The three cases have been chosen for being economic centres of their respective regions and for being major university cities. The first point makes them key growth drivers of their respective regions, which in turn makes growth policies central for each municipality. The latter point means that they are knowledge centres, not only attracting young people to study but also attracting businesses looking to benefit from the highly skilled workforce. All three cases are characterised by population growth, by being a centre for migration and for having more in-commuters than out-commuters. This all signifies to the cities being national and regional growth centres. At the same time, they all contain internal spatial differentiation in that the municipality covers areas of growth and affluence as well as deprivation. As the three cities share similar key parameters, it is reasonable that comparing them will shed further light on the implications of economic growth strategies for social inequality in different contexts. The differences between the case characteristics indicate that the conclusions are likely to be of wider relevance than if the cases had been very similar (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Most of the empirical basis for the case studies is key documents from each of the three cases, mainly strategy papers, policies and overall strategies related to growth and internationalisation (Table 2). Initially, a policy archive was constructed of documents from each case. All relevant policies since 2012 were gathered within five policy fields: economic growth, active labour market, vocational educational training, childcare and urban regeneration. The latest policy (e.g., the latest business plan) and its predecessor were included. All policies in the archive were mapped, describing, e.g., key characteristics and main points. On this basis, the policies that describe the current local economic, growth and internationalisation strategy were identified and analysed. Qualitative content analysis was conducted based on a thematic coding (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). Such an analysis entails identifying themes in the text, coding them and establishing patterns between the themes. Coding was mainly deductive and the themes in the focus of the coding and subse-

Table 1. Comparative data about the cities considered.

Indicator	Aarhus	Denmark	Vienna	Austria	Milan	Italy
Population, January 2019	345,208	5,806,081	1,897,491	8,858,775	1,378,689	60,359,546
Area (km2)	468	42,933	414.9	83,879	181.67	302,073
Population density, January 2019	738	135	4,573	106	7,589	200
5-year population change (%, 2014–2019)	+6.6%	+3.2%	+7.4%	+4.16%	+1.04%	−0.7%
Tertiary education (aged 25–64)	55.1%	40% (2018)	32.7% (2019)	33.8% (2019)	33.3% (2011)	15.0% (2011)
Total unemployment rate (%)	5.3% (2018)	5.0% (2018)	10.4% (2017)	4.5% (2019)	6.9% (2017)	10.0% (2019)
Share of managers, professionals*	36.5% (2018)	28.0% (2018)	24.0% (2011)	16.6% (2011)	31.7% (2011)	18.9% (2019)
GINI	32.9 (2018)	29.1 (2018)	33.7 (2013)	26.8 (2018)	53.5 (2017)	43.1 (2017)

Note: * Managers and professionals are defined as major groups 1 and 2 of ISCO-08. Aarhus and Danish figures estimated not including self-employed. Sources: Aarhus Kommune (n.d.) and Statistics Denmark (n.d.) for Denmark, last accessed 20 August 2020; Vienna Municipality Statistical Office (n.d., last accessed 12 August 2020), Statistics Austria (n.d., last accessed 24 August 2020), Eurostat (n.d., last accessed 12 August 2020) and OECD Statistics (n.d., last accessed 24 August 2020) for Austria; ISTAT (n.d., last accessed 20 August 2020), Eurostat (n.d., last accessed 12 August 2020), Camera di Commercio di Milano, Monza Brianza e Lodi (2020) for Italy.

Table 2. Documents considered.

Document	Year
Vienna	
Urban Development and Planning 2025	2014
Innovative Vienna 2020	2015
Qualification Plan Vienna 2030	2018
Productive City	2017
Smart City Vienna: Framework Strategy	2014
Smart City Vienna 2019–2050	2019
Aarhus	
Planning Strategy 2015	2015
Municipal Plan 2017	2017
International Strategy for Growth in Aarhus 2017	2017
Business Plan 2018–2019, Overview	2017
Milan	
Documento Unico di Programmazione, Milan Municipality	2017
Programmatic lines related to projects and actions to be carried out during the mandate, Milan Municipality	2016
Manifattura Milano	2017
Milano Smart City, Guidelines	2014
Call for the peripheries 2018, Guidelines	2018
Master Plan (*Piano del Governo del Territorio*)	2019

quent analyses were economic growth, knowledge economy, internationalisation, inequality, spatial differentiation and polarisation.

The documents are supplemented with interviews with governance, business and community actors. These interviews were included to shed further light on the ideas behind and the consequences of the strategies and policies, focusing on the interviewees' perception of the background for the policies and their implication for economic growth, knowledge economy, internationalisation, inequality, spatial differentiation and polarisation. Interviewees were chosen to represent key actors in the policy fields; both governance actors involved in formulating and implementing the policies as well as business and community actors affected by the policies.

For the larger project, of which this work is part, 20 interviews for each case were conducted. In relation to the current theme, the relevance of these interviews varied, which means that, in the analysis for this article, 17 interviews supplement the written material: five for Vienna, six for Aarhus and six for Milan (Table 3). For a further description of the methodological approach, see de Neergaard, Arp Fallov, Skovgaard Nielsen, and Jørgensen (2020).

4. Analysis

In this section, we outline the main growth strategies pursued in the three cities, focusing on whether and how they address issues related to social inclusion and inequalities.

4.1. Vienna

In Vienna, documents and interviews describe the city as the business, educational, research and cultural hub of Austria. Vienna is depicted as the focal point of exciting international developments that opens economic opportunities (Vienna Municipal Department 18, 2014a, p. 9), due to it being the capital city and the geographic location as a "doorway to the East" of Europe. This collective identity is reflected in documents as well as interviews with public and business actors. Both data sources also agree on the importance of developing a dynamic knowledge economy in the city.

4.1.1. Focus on Knowledge Economy Development

In 2007, the city government launches its first RTI strategy focusing on "human resources, thematic focuses [i.e., life sciences/medicine, ICTs and creative industries/media], awareness, enabling developments [and] Vienna as an international hub" (Vienna Municipal Department 23, 2015, p. 11). Even though the knowledge sectors ICT, service, research and pharma industry play an increasingly central role in Vienna's economic development, the city strives for an economic mix by creating land reserves for (returning) classical industry production sites (Vienna Municipal Department 18, 2014b).

The city government lays out several strategies to remain competitive in the global knowledge economy. A comprehensive 10-year development plan is accompanied by specific strategies like *Innovative Vienna*

Table 3. Profile of interviewees quoted.

Interviewees organisation	Code
Vienna	
Chamber of Commerce, Division Economic Policies, Labour Market and Statistics	ATP5
Public Employment Services Vienna	ATP13
Business District Management Vienna	ATB15
Production Company in Vienna	ATB2
Public Company, Division Education Centre and Vocational Training	ATP3
Aarhus	
Business Region Aarhus	DKP5
Business Promotion Aarhus	DKP6
Aarhus Municipality, Citizenship	DKP11
Aarhus Municipality, Employment	DKP12
Agro Food Park (Business cluster)	DKB2
Developer	DKB3
Milan	
Municipality of Milan (City Councillor)	ITP1
Third Sector Organisation (Chairman)	ITC2
Member of administration councils of various companies	ITB3
Municipality of Milan (Civil servant)	ITP4
Business Association (Director at Lombardy branch)	ITB5
Municipality of Milan (Civil servant)	ITP6

(2015), *Qualification Plan Vienna* (2018), *Productive City* (2017) or *Smart City Vienna* (2014, 2019). Even though these documents address different aspects, they all outline strategies and measures for an urban knowledge economy. The comprehensive *Urban Development Plan 2025* defines knowledge economy as economic activities based on knowledge that sparks the development of new knowledge and innovative high-tech products "composed of three interlinked pillars—universities, high-tech production and knowledge-intensive services" (Vienna Municipal Department 18, 2014a, p. 138.

Overall, the strategies outline the development of the knowledge economy as related to population growth and the fight against the re-location of industries outside the city. Consequently, the city government wants to invest in quality education and "ensure skill-building for residents to enable them to meet the employment requirements emerging in the region" (Vienna Municipal Department 18, 2014a, p. 69). Specifically, low-educated youths and adults are the target groups for supporting measures to gain higher than compulsory education (Vienna Municipal Department 23, 2018). To this end, the educational strategy (Vienna Municipal Department 23, 2018) strives to foster collaboration and coordination between social partners, companies and public administration. It also advertises its educational programmes to the target audiences and companies to spark a Life-Long-Learning mind-set (Vienna Municipal Department 23, 2018, p. 46; ATB2). Additionally, strategic land-use and expansion of the public transportation system are seen as vital factors in sparking innovation, creativity and sustainable economic development.

Vienna's strategic documents jump over the national scale by rarely addressing national policies or strategies (Kazepov, Saruis, & Colombo, 2020). Instead, the city's strategies look towards supranational (EU) and international institutions to guide its policy set-up. This institutional scale jumping of legitimation for measures and funding highlights the city's international perspective. This indicates an understanding of embeddedness within the international and, especially, European context. Moreover, a culture of collaboration is fostered with neighbouring areas and countries, for instance with the city of Budapest, as a potential "economic hub, workplace and place of living" (Vienna Municipal Department 18, 2014a, p. 93).

4.1.2. Inclusion and Equity in the Knowledge Economy

In the strategies, descriptions of social inclusion concern ethnic minorities, low-income groups, women, ethnical groups, poor and elderly, unemployed (especially those with low skills or formal education attainment and mature workers) and NEETs (Vienna Municipal Department 18, 2014). Documents refer to social work outsourced to associations and the role of NGOs, which are vital in battling social and democratic exclusion. The documents address gender inequality and difficult access to the labour market for people with low education. Social inclusion is quite often mentioned concern-

ing infrastructure and equal access, e.g., to education and health facilities. The documents present the funding of education and re-training as crucial tools to help NEETs and mature workers (50+ years) back into the labour market and to tackle poverty and low income (Vienna Municipal Department 18, 2017). Access and quality of ECEC and (compulsory) education are identified as central to social mobility.

Education is described as essential in documents and interviews across actor types. However, interviewees mention a lack of resources for tertiary education. One business actor interviewee described this lack of funding as costing the city international reputation, especially within rankings of universities (ATB2). Moreover, interviewees mentioned the struggle to recruit qualified workers and the challenge of higher education including in-company vocational training (ATB2, ATP3, ATP5, ATP13, ATB15). These responses indicate a mismatch between education and labour market demands.

The demand for higher academic qualifications and the recruitment of international labour also means, for those with low formal education, a high risk of unemployment and marginalisation in less affluent areas within the city. Vienna struggles with a higher unemployment rate than other areas in Austria. Similarly, documents mention technological changes and how they affect labour market conditions for low-skilled workers (Vienna Municipal Department 23, 2015). In terms of measures and policies adopted, these concerns are reflected in a wide array of targeted youth and adult training. The city government, social partners and EU funds invest in training programmes to address the consequences of automatisation and global competition and establish a local knowledge economy.

Overall, though, the documents barely address inequality in spatial forms, instead focusing on groups identified as most at risk of exclusion. Thereby, issues of territorial inequality are not considered within as well as beyond the city limits. Instead, challenges accompanied by becoming a knowledge economy are treated as non-structural ills of specific groups and individuals. These ills are presented as treatable through re-training and skill development. Additional pitfalls like the precarisation of knowledge workers, the dualisation of society or skill-mismatch are not addressed. In this way, Vienna seems to start initiatives to become a competitive knowledge economy but insufficiently addresses structural social tensions or negative consequences of its knowledge economy strategies.

4.2. Aarhus

Aarhus is a city of growth in many ways: in population, employment and number of workplaces, but particularly in knowledge and service industries. It is the main growth motor of the novel 12-municipality collaboration Business Region Aarhus (BRAA). Correspondingly, a focus on growth permeates the strategic documents of Aarhus. The overall *Planning Strategy 2015: Clever Growth towards 2050* (the main aims of which are continued in the Planning Strategy 2019, passed in early 2020) and the *Municipal Plan 2017* describe clever growth as developing the city sustainably, socially, economically and environmentally, while creating better city qualities and a higher level of liveability (Aarhus Municipality, 2015, 2017a). Growth is expected to come from education and talent recruitment: "Aarhus shall be a leading knowledge, education and culture city, and the Aarhus region shall be one of Northern Europe's most attractive job and career destinations" (Aarhus Municipality, 2018, p. 4).

4.2.1. Focus on Knowledge Economy Development

Since the late 1990s, Aarhus Municipality has been supporting the built-up of clusters based on international examples; being pioneers in a Danish context (DKP5). Currently, main efforts are focused on clusters on foodstuffs, health and energy, climate and ecology. The municipality supports them through the branding of the region to attract labour, investments and tourism as well as through favourable legal framework for entrepreneurship and business development, effective regulatory processing and political and administrational support for businesses as well as clear strategic plans (DKB2, DKB3, DKP6).

Aarhus is described as "a small big city" (DKP11). Tales of the advantages of being smaller than the country's capital permeate the interviews, e.g., pointing to the advantage of strategic actors knowing each other, which facilitates dialogue, coordination and decision-making (DKP6). At the same time, much emphasis is put on being the biggest city in the region, the region's growth motor and the key actor in BRAA (e.g., DKP12 and Business Plan 2017). The city's population growth comes from all the people moving to the city to study (DKP12, DKP6). Consequently, businesses and organisations have a highly-skilled workforce to pick from which makes the city an attractive home to a range of major companies. Education and the attraction of international talent and labour are returning elements in the strategic documents on economic growth, describing Aarhus as consolidating its position in the knowledge-based global value chain with education as a cornerstone (Aarhus Municipality, 2015). At the same time, the broad economic profile of Aarhus is referred to as an advantage that should be sustained, e.g., through continuing to have industry-heavy businesses in the city in suitable places. The broad profile is seen as future-proofing the city, making it less dependent on specific industries.

The overall vision of *Business Plan 2018–2019* is for Aarhus to develop into "a national growth-centre with international impact" (Aarhus Municipality, 2017c, p. 4); thus, positioning Aarhus in relation to both a national and an international scene. The *International Strategy for Growth in Aarhus* contains recommendations for strengthening the municipality's internationalisation through attracting international talent, businesses

and investment (Aarhus Municipality, 2017b). The strategy underscores the municipality's international ambitions with the returning emphasis on "*international competition*" and "fight for growth" and the role of diversity and community in this interplay: "We want to internationalise Aarhus further in the coming years in order to strengthen the city's openness, diversity and its understanding of the necessity of internationalism (Aarhus Municipality, 2017b, p. 4). Potential downsides of globalisation are not addressed. Globalisation is portrayed as a train on the move that one cannot afford to be late for. One part of this is recruiting and retaining international labour and talent in competition with other cities. The municipality uses its position in both Northern and European regional urban networks to promote its position internationally.

4.2.2. Inclusion and Equity in the Knowledge Economy

Being an inclusive city with 'room for all' is a central narrative in strategic documents from Aarhus. However, like the potential downsides of globalisation, neither inequality nor equal opportunities are addressed in the strategic documents on growth and internationalisation. The foreword to the internationalisation strategy states that increased globalisation and internationalisation requires municipalities to take advantage of the possibilities of globalisation (one of them being growth) while mitigating the worst challenges of globalisation. It is the only place where challenges are mentioned directly, and there is no specification of what these challenges entail.

Growth strategies are seen as the motor for the development of the region and the city but also for the development of the deprived urban areas more specifically. There is a focus on mediating the consequences of uneven growth, both territorially and socially, and an aim to distribute growth spatially to all areas of the city (even while describing specific growth areas and growth axis). Growth is described as beneficial for everyone if planned for in the right way. In making room for all, two main focuses are mentioned: to secure more room for the middle-classes in Aarhus and to ensure that the deprived areas also benefit from growth through a holistic effort to change their situation. The most direct reference to inequality is to the existence of deprived areas that have to take part in the growth to make them no longer stand out from the rest of Aarhus (Aarhus Municipality, 2015). Growth is described as being able to create a greater municipal investment for distribution, leading to new offers and service solutions for the most deprived (DKP6).

Overall, the narrative in Aarhus centres on economic growth as a motor for development for the whole city, including the deprived areas. Growth is to benefit everyone in the city; however, it is not clear how this is to be achieved, i.e., how growth is to be distributed spatially and socially. Likewise, globalisation is described as a train on the move that one cannot afford to be late for. That there might be downsides to growth and globalisation is largely overlooked. At best, they are hinted at, and there are no traceable efforts to mediate the social consequences of growth.

4.3. Milan

Milan's economic structure is that of a knowledge economy with a strong international vocation (Coppola, Daveri, Negri, & Saini, 2018). The city is characterised by a multi-sectorial economy in which the historical manufacturing core, knowledge-intensive services, international companies and small and medium business coexist. The successful organisation of the Expo 2015 fair is seen to have contributed to framing Milan as a bridge between Italy and the world (Comune di Milano, 2017, p. 20), positioning the city as a global city, capable of intercepting knowledge and values present on larger markets, reworking them, and then re-introducing them into international circuits (Comune di Milano, 2019, p. 13). However, some local actors are concerned that the successful ability to attract new investors would increasingly lead towards a "dual-speed" city (ITP1, ITC2).

4.3.1. Focus on Knowledge Economy Development

Economic growth is seen as the main instrument to renovate the status of Milan as a European and global city. The local administration declared that generating work, especially for young people, must be Milan's obsession and in the coming years, the city must invest in new strategic clusters and create innovative entrepreneurship, favouring synergy with the university system, research centres, the cultural world and the Third Sector (Comune di Milano, 2016, p. 7).

"Milan grows: economic development, work, commerce, fashion and design, Smart City" (Comune di Milano, 2017, p. 5) was among the intervention lines declared by the new incoming administration in 2016. Two key actions emerged. First, to support innovative entrepreneurship, the focus is on knowledge-intensive start-ups through calls for tenders, building partnerships with entrepreneurs' organisations and the Chamber of Commerce and supporting incubators and accelerators. Special attention is given to start-ups with a social vocation proposing innovative services for peripheral neighbourhoods. Second, the manufacturing tradition has not been forgotten. Attention is on reforming it towards highly qualified and specialised craft activities with the aim of facilitating the return of manufacturing in the urban area, with a focus on innovative and sustainable manufacturing both environmentally and socially (Comune di Milano, 2017, p. 9). This led to the launch of the *Manifattura Milano* strategy (Direzione Economia Urbana e Lavoro, 2017), which aims not only to recover the manufacturing sector but also to promote a new organisational system to make this sector capable of surviving the new market and being a driver for the rest of the economy.

In parallel with the economic development of the city, attention is paid to investment in human capital with the line of intervention supporting Milan as an educational city that enhances talents through school, university and research, youth policies (Comune di Milano, 2017, p. 5). The competitiveness of the city should be based on the ability to collaborate between public and private entities and to coordinate professional training, university training, and centres of excellence in research and economic sectors with a high content of innovation (Comune di Milano, 2017, p. 9).

As the main service hub of Northern Italy, the public and private offer of tertiary and post-tertiary education is well developed. Internationalisation is also a key strategy pursued in the education system with approximately 12,200 international students.

However, the appeal of the city is not limited to the Italian context. It has an international vocation with some key clusters with a clear international outreach, e.g., creativity, fashion, design, culture and life sciences. Reinforcing this international outlook is a priority, as shown by the Smart City strategy which states that making Milan and its metropolitan area a Smart City is a political priority and a strategic objective to include Milan in the network of major European and international cities (Comune di Milano, 2014, p. 3). However, some limits in the current internationalisation levels have been detected, especially in the ability to attract headquarters of international companies to become the main directional centre of the Mediterranean and Middle East and in the level of global connection (especially with Asia markets; ITB3)

4.3.2. Inclusion and Equity in the Knowledge Economy

The local economic strategies are characterised by a multi-dimensional approach, considering also the social dimension. According to this narrative, economic growth has to be pursued with the related goal of social inclusion.

The use of technologies, innovation and knowledge is not simply linked to economic growth, but it is a tool to improve the supply of welfare services as Milan promotes new forms of community and territorial welfare, through the use of new instruments for the support and promotion of shared services and opportunities for socialising (Comune di Milano, 2014, p. 8). Milan is promoted as a laboratory of social inclusion and diversity where policies have to target different groups (the Smart Cities guidelines provide a quite detailed list of the most fragile groups), eliminating barriers and discriminations (Comune di Milano, 2014).

The *Manifattura Milano* considers enhancing social cohesion as the cornerstone to combine economic growth with innovation, inclusion, sustainability and the re-launch of the peripheries. However, what is not clear is how the two dimensions are connected through actions, apart from the fact that new job opportunities should be generated.

Nevertheless, the attention to the issue of inclusion included in the municipality's strategic programs is translated into a focus on the risk of increasing inequalities. Indeed, some parts of the city are benefitting more from the recent growth developments: "There are areas of the city that are struggling more. Parts of the city are moving at an incredible speed on par with high international levels. The most struggling parts are in the peripheries" (ITP6). The theme emerging both in the rhetoric of local politicians and in some programmatic lines is the risk of a 'two-speed city':

> A city that is unable to reconcile the great development, the internationalisation and the greater attractiveness of the city with those who enjoy less of these benefits because paradoxically the positive moment Milan is currently experimenting risks to increase the resentment and the sense of abandonment of those who enjoy less by comparison and contrast. (ITP1)

A similar concern is also shared outside the political world. A leading figure in one of the main business associations recognises that the main challenges for Milan are the issues of social cohesion and sustainable development in its "triple dimension: economic, social and digital" (ITB5).

As a result, a series of initiatives with a clear territorial approach has been given privilege. In the last four years, the theme of physical, social and economic rehabilitation of the peripheries has been centre-stage in the debate. The municipality created a cross-department unit in charge of planning initiatives addressing peripheral areas. A periphery plan (Comune di Milano, 2018) has been drafted by the Municipality trying to bring together all actions devoted to such areas. Even if the effectiveness and coherence of this plan have been criticised by some actors (ITP1, ITC2), it shows the attempt to address the inequality issue. However, the plan seemed more like a grouping of initiatives carried out by individual city departments rather than a properly coordinated intervention strategy. Furthermore, the task of rebalancing the city clashed with the need of "playing in the background" (ITP4) since the city has only limited regulatory powers on many of the issues involved such as university education and the labour market.

Overall, the economic development strategies are based on the attempt to make Milan a 'smart' city, which is boosted as a global hub (at least by Italian standards) and to renew the traditional industry by considering technological transformations. However, the risk of creating inequalities is grasped by policymakers, third sector actors and the business world. This results in attempts to focus on the most marginal neighbourhoods, with mixed outcomes.

4.4. Comparative Analysis

In sum, we outline the main themes that emerge from the analysis of the growth strategies developed in our

three cities and how they related to the theme of social inequalities.

Vienna has gained a highly international profile in the last decades, displaying its influence as a service and network hub that connects Eastern and Western Europe. In comparison, Aarhus has a more regional scope, extending to the BRAA. Finally, Milan emerges as a clear service hub for Northern Italy, with international outreach in some sectors.

The three cities present a leading profile on different key economic sectors: Vienna prioritises ICTs, creative industries and media; Aarhus' investments are focused on the development of business clusters; Milan puts a high emphasis on design and fashion, due to their highly international outlook. Education is considered a crucial growth factor and fuel for the development of the knowledge economy in all these city strategies. Especially in Vienna and Aarhus, the provision of high-quality education attracts young people and businesses by training an increasingly highly skilled labour force. This focus appears to be less present in Milan, even if it is a university hub. Possibly, the national context could play a role here, as the Italian economy is still characterised by a comparatively low-qualified and scarcely innovative supply of jobs.

While developing a rampant service-oriented knowledge economy, these cities also deal with their industrial and manufacturing past through a combination of relocation, persistence and promotion. In Vienna, the relocation of industries outside the cities coupled with attempts to retain factories and specialised workers in the city, also envisioning new spaces for production sites. Aarhus continues to have industry-heavy businesses located in specific parts of the city. Finally, Milan's strategies explicitly aim at reviving urban manufacturing through a focus on specialised technologically-advanced productions. The rhetoric emphasising the knowledge economy is accompanied by gradual changes in the economic and employment structure. The secondary sector still plays a relevant role in the urban contexts, also providing job positions to medium—and low-skilled labour force that cannot be easily redirected to knowledge-intensive sectors due to age and lack of specific training.

The cities differ as to whether and how inequality is addressed in growth strategies. In the cases of Milan and Aarhus, narratives often combine goals of growth and inclusion in the same documents. In Milan, the approach towards inequalities is spatial, as it implies an explicit focus on territories with a concentration of vulnerabilities. In Aarhus and Vienna, the approach to inequalities seems more related to specific categories and groups at risk, while the spatial dimension is less prominent. For instance, Vienna's strategies see education as the main tool to lever inequalities associated with economic development, providing opportunities to the population. The peculiar role of Vienna in the context of the federal Austrian system might play a role. The city itself is a federal state with a certain autonomy and long-standing tradition in the design and implementation of inclusive interventions in several policy fields. This is not to say that Vienna and Aarhus show no awareness of spatialised inequalities. Both cities show a spatial focus on deprived areas; however, rather than to deal with inequality directly, the aim is to improve infrastructure and access to services in the deprived areas: growth is often seen as a motor for development for the whole city, including the deprived areas that would benefit from the overall economic development.

The link between growth and inclusion appears thematised in all the cases investigated. In the documents, the three cities show an awareness of the main shortcomings of a developing post-industrial knowledge economy, i.e., the parallel growth of a low-service and often precarious sector and the de-industrialisation trends resulting in rising socio-economic inequalities. However, how polarisation is tackled can be described as ambiguous, at best. The strategies recognise the issue but address it in an unsystematic and often rhetorical way.

Local documents often lack in the programming of specific tools for intervention, as they rather tend to assume a beneficial spill-over effect of economic growth. Here, a strong difference is related to the wider welfare and multilevel governance frame. The multilevel framework the cities are embedded in significantly impacts how the local welfare can counteract inequalities and vulnerabilities (Kazepov, 2010), forming specific national-local combinations that go beyond the inclusion within the established welfare states typologies. In the Danish and Viennese case, the national and local welfare, as well as education provision, is seen as the main tool to face the polarisation brought about by knowledge economy trends, thus providing a quite solid safety net to rely upon. However, the specific profile of the state-city relationship differs, when addressing the integration between competitiveness and social inclusion. Aarhus relies highly on the characteristics of the developed Danish welfare system, which provides comparatively wide coverage of protection to people in need, with priority on service provision and human capital development.

The overall approach found in growth strategies presents, therefore, several common traits with knowledge economy and social investment advocates: the underlying assumption is that economic growth would benefit the city overall and thus will also help more deprived areas. In Vienna, the peculiar role of the city as a federal state in combination with its status as Austrian capital and its social-democratic tradition allow for greater autonomy and capacity of urban policies—leading to a pronounced difference with other Austrian cities. The emphasis on education and training builds upon the importance of higher education in the highly international Viennese context, as opposed to the major role played by vocational training and traditional apprenticeships provided within the dual system in most of the other urban contexts in Austria. Moreover, the long-standing tradition in the provision of affordable housing also plays a role in how the city plans to tackle rampant inequal-

ities. In the case of Milan, the weaker and highly fragmented Italian welfare system is not considered as fully reliable support and the local welfare, even if developed by Italian standards (ITP4), does not seem able to overcome such shortage in social protection. Here, the international role played by the city contributes to the main importance of competitiveness, while growth documents attribute to social policies a much less effective and far-reaching scope.

5. Concluding Discussion

This contribution highlights how the association between competitiveness and integration is shaped through specific state-city relationships, creating mixed profiles that cannot be simply reconducted to national-level welfare states typologies. We analysed three urban centres positioning themselves in the global knowledge economy, considering local growth strategies and how they combine goals of competitiveness, internationalisation and social inclusion. The three cities are all drivers of growth and centres of attraction in their respective regions and countries, as indicated by trends of population growth and prevailing in-commuting. They are hubs of knowledge production and deployment in a context of learning economy.

Given these common premises, internationalisation trajectories of the three cities in a globalised network of course differ. This is also related to the role of urban policies within the national welfare framework, in mediating economic trends towards globalisation and internationalisation. Since the three cities are embedded in different national welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990), the attribution of responsibilities in design and implementation of social policies varies among scalar levels, from the national to the local and urban, in the EU countries (Kazepov, 2010). This variation gives Vienna, Aarhus and Milan different room for actions to counteract exclusionary processes.

In the literature, the capacity of welfare states and cities to foster integration and promote competitiveness is frequently debated (Morel, Palier, & Palme, 2012). According to Cucca and Ranci (2016), the dynamics of welfare retrenchment and rescaling recently brought about a loss of synchronisation among these two crucial dimensions. The result is the continuous growth of socio-economic inequalities and socio-spatial segregation in European cities, but also the differentiation of urban trajectories in reacting or limiting such de-synchronisation. In this article, we targeted this nexus through the specific point of view given by urban growth documents on the level of rhetoric, agenda-setting and programming, rather than on policy outputs and outcomes. We looked at how these narratives integrate or show awareness of the two goals of competitiveness and social inclusion.

The association between growth and integration in European cities has long been considered the distinctive trait of European cities. However, the debate on globalisation and the knowledge economy, on welfare retrenchment and rescaling, observed the growth of polarisation and inequalities, with some scholars stating the crisis of the previously established European city model (Häußermann, 2005). This article provided novel comparative evidence on this issue, looking at it from the perspective of urban growth strategies. The results show awareness of the polarising consequences of the knowledge economy, as well as plans and tools to address these shortcomings. Nonetheless, if a complete disconnection between competitiveness and integration is not to be found, how it is addressed shows relevant ambiguities and differences. Rhetorically, the reliance on beneficial spill-over effects of economic growth risks the recalling of neoliberal arguments undermining the role of social policies in protecting disadvantaged groups and areas. The priority attributed to social interventions seems instead to be strongly connected to the state-city relationship, highlighting both the importance of the welfare framework and the specific urban policy tradition. In this regard, the emphasis put on education recalls the role attributed to the public enhancement of human capital within the social investment debate (Hemerijck, 2017). On the negative side, the highly differentiated pattern of state-city relationship, resulting from urban growth strategies but also policy and service provision, could even bring about an increase in spatial disparity across territories within countries.

As a limitation of the study, it should be noted that the analysis of urban growth strategy remains on the level of planning, agenda-setting of goals and priorities. Following contributions should also shed light on how policies are designed following or not following such strategies; on the process of implementation and the outcomes achieved. Moreover, our results call for further research on the crucial state-city nexus when addressing economic and social objectives, adding in-depth comparative evidence through specific case studies, as well as building on previous evidence in order to propose typologies of cities that account for national and local variations in addressing socio-economic challenges.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Territorial Cohesion as a Policy Narrative: From Economic Competitiveness to 'Smart' Growth and Beyond

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Abstract
During the last two decades, a lot of ink has been spent in favour of narrative analysis of policy. According to such approaches, policy processes are influenced by narratives that are spread around specific 'issues' and lead to their solutions. Following a similar vein, this article examines territorial cohesion as a policy narrative and how it can be perceived as a narrative constituted by a diverse narrative structure. Territorial cohesion is a dynamic narrative that changes through time. As time goes by and different politico-economic philosophies get more influential, technological changes also bring along different priorities, broader EU narratives change, and territorial cohesion adapts to such changes. Accordingly, within the post-2014 framework (2014–2020), territorial cohesion's (spatialised) social inclusion perspective was subdued to the economic competitiveness sub-narrative in a globalised world. For the new programming period (2021–2027), the European Cohesion Policy will continue to be increasingly linked to the place-based narrative and most of its funding will be directed towards a 'smarter' and 'greener' Europe within a global space of flows and fast technological changes. The aim of a 'smarter' Europe based on digital transformation and smart growth is a new version of the economic competitiveness sub-narrative, while a 'greener' Europe is the new policy meta-imperative ("European Green Deal"). However, it must be considered how the Coronavirus crisis and the measures to fight its economic effects play out on these policy narratives.

Keywords
European cohesion policy; narrative structure; policy narratives; post-2020 framework; territorial cohesion

Issue
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1. Introduction

The European Cohesion Policy (ECP) was implemented in 1989 and has gone through five consecutive periods of multiannual programs or funding; it can be understood as the EU Regional Policy. Since its inception, it has gone through a series of transformations concerning strategies, management, control and audit. More recently, it had to adjust to broader European strategies like the "Lisbon Strategy," "Europe 2020 Strategy" (Medeiros, 2017) and the "European Green Deal." In its initial conception, the ECP had the twin aims of economic and social cohesion, but these earlier goes have been supplemented with territorial concerns in the ECP's own 'spatial turn.' According to the *Treaty on the Functioning of the EU* (2008), it is the ECP's goal the strengthening of economic, social and territorial cohesion by reducing regional differences, with a special emphasis on the least developed regions as well as areas with special territorial characteristics. More concretely, the ECP attempts to ameliorate such differences through the use of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the

Cohesion Fund and the European Social Fund. For the period 2014–2020, before the revamp of the EU budget because of the Coronavirus pandemic, the ECP had a total budget of 351.8 billion euros.

Territorial cohesion is a shared competence between the European Commission and the various member states. Some writers have argued that territorial cohesion is the goal par excellence of the ECP insofar as equality between EU territories contains the goals of economic and social cohesion (Medeiros, 2017). Nevertheless, according to Dabinett (2011, p. 2), "territorial cohesion is a construct that is not found outside the documents and discourses that constitutes the words of EU spatial planners and spatial policy." Other writers have argued that territorial cohesion is an EU discursive exercise whose meaning is always generated through its linkages to various discursive chains (Servillo, 2010). Subsequently, if territorial cohesion is an EU policy narrative then its semantic field corresponds to the narrative structure it becomes attached to. Accordingly, among the various ways to methodologically approach it is through narrative analysis.

Narrative analysis forms a significant methodology in the social sciences as it is encountered in numerous disciplines from psychology and economics to sociology and education. During the last decades, narrative inquiry had entered into the realm of policy studies, too. Following such lines, a bulk of research has emerged that investigates the role of narratives in policy processes, policy change and policy outcomes (see, for instance, McBeth, Shanahan, Arnel, & Hathaway, 2007; Roe, 1989; Shanahan, Jones, & McBeth, 2011). This body of work has been methodologically based on the position about the social constructive nature of policy realities (Shanahan, Jones, McBeth, & Lane, 2013). Some writers follow a similar approach, but instead of talking about narratives and the social construction of reality, they prefer to talk about policy discourses (Schmidt & Radaelli, 2004) and discursive narratives (Atkinson, 1999, 2000). More recently, the early qualitative and poststructuralist narrative policy analysis has been followed by a quantitative and structural approach known as the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF; see Jones & McBeth, 2010; Shanahan et al., 2011). Nevertheless, some voices claim that the NPF can also be used qualitatively. By all accounts, what is significant is that narrative inquiry is either qualitatively or quantitatively becoming important for the analysis of policy. A few decades after Roe's early suggestion that "storytelling is part of policy analysis, policy analysis should be broadened to include systematic ways of analysing such storytelling" (Roe, 1989, p. 253), narrative inquiry has progressively blended with policy analysis.

There is a wide consensus that policy narratives are stories that policymakers, bureaucrats, interested parties etc. construct to create a plot that leads to specific morals and demands certain solutions (Jones & McBeth, 2010; Mendez, 2013). According to Atkinson (2000), to understand policy formation we have to first comprehend how policy constructs its 'problems' and what becomes defined as a 'problem.' The reason is that by constructing a certain 'problem,' policy brings to the fore a specific solution to it. Following similar lines, this article aims to analyse the policy narrative of territorial cohesion. However, to do so, territorial cohesion has to be analysed in relation to broader EU narratives. In this sense, the ECP and territorial cohesion are viewed as interdependent narratives. More to the point, the ECP becomes conceived as an EU meta-narrative in close relation to other EU narrative strategies, while territorial cohesion is perceived as a policy narrative constituted by a diverse narrative structure (sub-narratives). The main idea is to examine how the 'metamorphosis' of the ECP through the present (2014–2020) and future (2021–2027) multi-annual frameworks affects the narrative structure of territorial cohesion. Methodologically speaking, this article adopts a constructivist perspective by viewing territorial cohesion as a policy narrative in the making (and un-making). The analysis is based on the social constructive nature of policy realities (Shanahan et al., 2013) by approaching territorial cohesion as a particular form of policy storytelling (Roe, 1989). This narrative investigation draws elements from the international bibliography and how it has categorised Territorial Cohesion's diversified narrative structure, but more importantly, from the analysis of relevant EU policy documents, reports etc. referring both to 2014–2020 and post-2020 programming periods.

2. Constructing Territorial Cohesion as an Open-Ended Policy Concept

Territorial Cohesion has its roots in the French tradition of regional policy and planning. More particularly, the roles of Jacques Delors (European Commissioner 1985–1995) and Michel Barnier (former EU Regional Commissioner) are also cited as catalytic for the extension of the ECP from strictly economic and social considerations to territorial ones (Holder & Layard, 2011). Faludi has argued that a spatially-aware cohesion policy is nothing more than "old (French) wine in new bottles" (Faludi, 2004, p. 1349). Allegedly, the roots of territorial cohesion are related to French regional policy (*amenagement des territories*; see Faludi, 2010, 2015) where a decentralised state along with the regions as partners attempt to reduce regional disparities by promoting the French Republic's principle of *egalité* in a territorial way.

The publication of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) is, first and foremost, widely considered as the milestone towards the creation of a unified EU planning philosophy (European Commission, 1999). According to the ESDP, the main problem of EU territory is the concentration of population, activities and economic prosperity in the specific areas of the 'famous' European pentagon—the metropolitan and surrounding areas of London, Paris, Milan, Munich and Hamburg.

As the main goal is the balanced and sustainable development of the entire EU territory, polycentric development, parity of access to infrastructure/knowledge and the wise management of natural and cultural heritage are deemed as remedies to the ills and evils of established forms of EU spatial concentration.

Interestingly, many of these goals (especially polycentric development and parity of access) would emerge again and again in subsequent efforts to define a European spatial philosophy. In short, the ESDP articulated several aims and goals supposedly able to deal with the problems resulting from the spatial concentration of people, economic activities and prosperity in specific EU territories. Many of these priorities were successfully transplanted into Territorial Cohesion once it became the third pillar of the ECP.

Territorial cohesion is part and parcel of the much broader phenomenon of multilevel governance. More concretely, the multi-level governance theory (Bache & Flinders, 2004; Marks, Hooghe, & Blank, 1996) came from research on the ECP to create a general theoretical policy framework to explain the relationships between Brussels, national governments and regional/urban authorities. The multi-level governance thesis was an early recognition that the ECP increased the political role of regional, urban, local players.

One very popular construction of Territorial Cohesion is that of an open-ended policy concept. It has been presented as a 'vague' concept (Atkinson & Zimmerman, 2016) or a 'fashionable term' with "many layers of meaning" (Mirwaldt, McMaster, & Bachter, 2009, p. v). Other scholars have argued about the 'elusive' and 'ambiguous' nature of territorial cohesion that makes it very difficult to be translated into an easily understood and measurable concept (Medeiros, 2016). It has been stated that territorial cohesion is a 'contested,' 'multi-dimensional' and 'dynamic' concept that 'lacks clarity' (Dao, Cantoreggi, Plagnat, & Rousseaux, 2017). It has also been proclaimed that it has an 'amorphous' nature whilst non-consensus exists about its meaning (van Well, 2012). In short, a "strict definition" about its nature appears almost "impossible" (Bohme & Gloersen, 2011, p. 3).

An interesting take comes from Abrahams (2014) that proclaims that instead of defining it through an 'essentialist' approach it might be more useful to approach it through a 'pragmatic' one. Such an effort entails letting territorial cohesion be "fuzzy" and "adaptable" (Abrahams, 2014). Instead of ontologically asking what territorial cohesion is, it might be more insightful to ask what it does, how it gets translated into different national contexts and what kind of uses different actors come up with. Such a 'pragmatic' use of the concept is also proposed by Faludi (2015), who states that "[policy] concepts are like wax in our hands: We shape them to suit our purposes…so to understand the concept, we must ask: Who has invoked it [and who is still invoking it], when and why?" (Faludi, 2015, pp. 1–2)

Some writers have gone as far as to ask whether territorial cohesion has the same meaning in all EU national contexts or whether different national interpretations may exist in different member states (Mirwaldt et al., 2008). In this sense, the ambiguity of the concept renders it almost a 'bridging' (Mirwaldt et al., 2008) or even a 'political' concept (Medeiros, 2016). Van Well (2012) has stated that territorial cohesion can be thought of as a 'moving target' that each member-state or region can appropriate and selectively construct its meaning to promote their territorial priorities.

3. Territorial Cohesion: Tree-Like versus Storyline (Narrative) Approaches

Territorial cohesion has been the subject of numerous efforts to construct its character and meaning. On the one hand, territorial cohesion is considered to be constituted by several different dimensions without any contradiction/competition between them, in fact, they all seem to 'add up' (Abrahams, 2014). This is the idea of the tree-like model of territorial cohesion, where territorial cohesion breaks down into its essential components, each of them successively becoming assigned to a group of relevant indicators (Abrahams, 2014). Following such methodology, several of territorial cohesion's dimensions come to the fore (see Table 1).

Mirwaldt et al. (2008) have argued that territorial cohesion is comprised of the following four dimensions: 1) a form of poly-centricity that can promote economic competitiveness and innovation; 2) balanced development that reduces socioeconomic disparities; 3) accessi-

Table 1. Dimensions of territorial cohesion.

Writers	Dimensions
Mirwaldt et al. (2008)	polycentricity, balanced development, accessibility to services, facilities and knowledge, networking and the creation of physical and interactive connections
Dabinett (2011)	polycentricity, connectivity through infrastructure, equal access to services
Bohme et al. (2011)	accessibility, services of general economic interest, territorial capacities/endowments/assets, city networking, functional regions
Medeiros (2016)	socio-economic cohesion, territorial polycentricity, territorial co-operation and governance, environmental sustainability

bility to services, facilities and knowledge irrespectively to where one lives; 4) networking and the creation of physical and interactive connections between centres and other areas (Mirwaldt et al., 2008).

For Medeiros (2016), territorial cohesion is constituted by the following similar but not identical components: 1) socio-economic cohesion that strengthens economic competitiveness while ensures social integration; 2) territorial polycentricity that promotes a more balanced physical network of areas; 3) territorial cooperation and governance at different levels; 4) environmental sustainability (Medeiros, 2016).

Additionally, Dabinett (2011) has suggested that the dimensions of territorial cohesion can be summarised as 1) polycentricity, 2) connectivity through infrastructure and 3) equal access to services. At the policy level, the *Bohme Report* (Bohme, Doucet, Komornicki, Zaucha, & Swiatek, 2011), by linking the "Europe 2020 Strategy" with the "Territorial Cohesion Agenda 2020" (TCA 2020) proposes the following five dimensions as crucial: 1) accessibility; 2) services of general economic interest; 3) territorial capacities/endowments/assets; 4) city networking; 5) functional regions.

As this article promulgates, territorial cohesion can also be seen through the storyline or narrative perspective (Abrahams, 2014). This perspective is interesting as it acknowledges that policies can have different or even competing meanings by being articulated through various sub-narratives (see Table 2). Abrahams (2014), by citing Maarten Hajer, brings to the fore the possibility that particular policy narratives, like territorial cohesion, can be communicated through a diverse narrative structure that might contain antagonising sub-narratives that do not necessarily 'add up.' Following such lines, the meaning of territorial cohesion is disputed through competing storylines. Similarly, van Well (2012) defines territorial cohesion as a series of different sub-narratives coming from different communities of actors. As she says, there are the ESDP storylines, the ESPON storylines, the TCA 2020 storylines, and the European Commission's storylines in their *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion: Turning Territorial Diversity into Strength* (European Commission, 2008). More importantly, after the publication of the latter, the European Commission proceeded with a narrative exercise that involved various actors at different levels being asked to speak their minds about territorial cohesion concerning meaning, scope, ways of implementation and more. As part of a synthesis report, several policy sub-narratives came out, such as 1) polycentric development, 2) equal access to facilities, services and knowledge, 3) balanced development, 4) regions with specific geographical features and 5) territorial capital (Sarmiento-Mirwaldt, 2013).

Such a narrative approach has also been taken by the ESPON Interco Project (2010–2012), which attempted to capture, through organised workshops with relevant stakeholders, the various non-mutually exclusive territorial cohesion storylines. The project aimed at starting a dialogue between Territorial Cohesion's competing sub-narratives (Dao et al., 2017). Through a participatory approach, the following storylines broke to the fore: 1) smart growth in a polycentric Europe; 2) inclusive and balanced development with fair access to services; 3) local development conditions and geographic specificities; 4) environmental sustainability; 5) coordination of policies and territorial governance. Furthermore, six territorial objectives were created while a group of indicators was assigned to each objective (Dao et al., 2017). This was a clear analytical effort to silence possible antagonisms between competing sub-stories by flattening out the various narratives into straight-forward territorial objectives.

4. Territorial Cohesion and the Place-Based Narrative

The most relevant EU policy document that attempted to construct territorial cohesion was the *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion: Turning Diversity into Strength* (European Commission, 2008). It argued that:

> Territorial cohesion is about ensuring the harmonious development of all these places and about making sure that their citizens are able to make the most of the inherent features of these territories. As such, it is a means of transforming diversity into an asset that contributes to sustainable development of the entire EU. (European Commission, 2008, p. 3)

More importantly, territorial cohesion became linked with taking advantage of territorial diversity as allegedly "increasingly competitiveness and prosperity depend on the capacity of people and businesses located there to make the best use of all territorial assets" (European Commission, 2008, p. 3). A year after this publication, a report came out that became known as the *Barca Report* (Barca, 2009). This policy document further strength-

Table 2. Territorial cohesion's storylines.

Writers	Storylines
Sarmiento-Mirwaldt (2013)	Polycentric development, equal access to facilities, services, knowledge, balanced development, regions with specific geographical features, territorial capital
Dao et al. (2017)	Smart growth, inclusive and balanced development, local development conditions and geographical specificities, environmental sustainability, coordination of policies and territorial governance

ened the link between territorial cohesion and the place-based approach (Mendez, 2013).

The *Barca Report* brought to the policy front the place-based approach: "A place-based policy is a long-term strategy aimed at tackling persistent underutilization of potential by reducing social exclusion in specific places through external interventions and multi-level governance" (Barca, 2009, p. vii). Furthermore, it was argued that public interventions and economic institutions had to be tailored to local conditions and rely on local knowledge, networks and partnerships. The new policy approach aimed "at giving all places the opportunity to make use of their potential (efficiency) and all people the opportunity to be socially included independently of where they live (social inclusion)" (Barca, 2009, p. xii).

On a theoretical level, many of these ideas come from modern political philosophy. According to Rawls' (1971/1999) *Theory of Justice*, the principle of fair equality of opportunity in just and democratic societies translates into the dictum that social and economic differences can only be tolerated if they are associated with offices and positions that are open to everyone. Nevertheless, this Rawlsian principle of justice is a-spatial, as his theory does not examine the distribution of injustices in space (Malý, 2016); it does not take account of the position of the equality of opportunity in space. The spatialisation of this principle would mean that people should not be disadvantaged because of their location; location should not be a hindrance or constraint to the life-chances of individuals.

Many of these ideas of territorialised social inclusion originate from the European social model that was built upon the social-democratic and Christian-democratic canon of European politics and maintained 'appropriate balance' between the individual, the market and the state (Faludi, 2007). The French principle of *egalité* increasingly found its spatial correlation through the core political belief that citizens should not experience spatial disadvantage or be deprived of essential services. Decades later, the *Barca Report* promulgated that an EU "territorialized social agenda" (Barca, 2009, p. 120) should create equality between places as people live their lives and built their human capabilities in specific locales.

In this sense, the life-chances approach of individuals, or the freedom of individuals to live decently according to their potential in their places of residence (very similar to Amartya Sen's (2000) argument about development as freedom in the case of the developing world), becomes part and parcel of territorial cohesion's territorialised social inclusion perspective as location should not be a hindrance. This imperative becomes articulated through the storyline of parity of access or equity to services, facilities, infrastructure and knowledge. It also becomes communicated through the concept of 'general services of economic interest' that cover all fundamental needs of people to lead a decent life (jobs, health, education, security). Through the equal provision of "general services of economic interest" in all places, people are not deprived of public goods because of where they happen to live (Bohme et al. 2011, p. 6).

After the *Barca Report*, several EU policy publications came out that stressed the importance of the place-based narrative. The EU document *Territorial Cohesion: Unleashing the Territorial Potential* (European Commission, 2009, p. 8) argued that a local development methodology "is possibly the only effective way to address questions related to social inclusion and the specific challenges facing inhabitants in disadvantaged areas." According to the *Cohesion Policy Support for Local Development* report, a new emphasis on local development was needed to cope with the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis (European Commission, 2010, p. 6). The *Bohme Report* (Bohme et al., 2011) stressed the role of 'territorial keys' in the promotion of territorial cohesion's goals—among them, 'territory-bound' factors like local milieus were cited. According to such narratives, places have the potential for endogenous development, albeit with external help and as part of multi-level governance systems (Servillo, Atkinson, & Hamdouch, 2016, p. 4). Furthermore, to escape their undeveloped economic structures and their bleak economic futures localities have to take advantage of territorial assets and create new ones (Servillo et al., 2016). Such a place-based narrative takes for granted a bottom-up perspective; local knowledge has to be harnessed while a-spatial theories and policies have to be substituted by place-informed understandings (Atkinson, 2017).

It has been also suggested that a place-based approach may be more suitable than spatially-blind policies for the economic goals of "Europe 2020 Strategy" to be reached. According to CSIL (2015, p. 3): "A place-based approach is a flexible policy choice which can be more successful in delivering the 2020 Europe strategy than traditional approaches, typically sector-based and top-down." In GSC (2017, p. 6) it was stated that:

> In order to achieve the desired impact and added value of Cohesion Policy, a 'one size fits all' approach is not optimal; the policy, its delivery mechanisms, legal framework and interpretations need to take account of different social, territorial and economic realities to address the specific situations on the ground.

From all the above, it becomes apparent that the place-based narrative became progressively mainstreamed into the ECP and territorial cohesion policy narratives within the post-2014 framework (2014–2017; Mendez, 2013).

5. Economic versus Socio-Spatial Sub-Narratives of Territorial Cohesion

As argued, territorial cohesion as a policy narrative is related to a diverse narrative structure that includes various sub-narratives. Some writers have argued that com-

petition or antagonism might exist between the different territorial cohesion storylines. By and large, this competition involves its two most significant sub-narratives: economic competitiveness and territorialised social cohesion; the underlying economic and socio-spatial stories of this policy narrative (Atkinson & Zimmerman, 2016). On the one hand, the economic competitiveness sub-narrative becomes articulated by reference to polycentricity, smart growth and connectivity while the socio-spatial storyline becomes communicated through the themes of accessibility (equal/fair access) to services and balanced development (see, for instance, Bohme et al., 2011; Dabinett, 2011; Medeiros, 2016; Mirwaldt et al., 2009). From all the above, a couple of questions arise: Is territorial cohesion as a policy narrative mostly about promoting economic competitiveness or reducing socio-spatial disparities (territorialised social inclusion), or simply both?

Nevertheless, if we go back to the *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion: Turning Territorial Diversity into Strength* (European Commission, 2008) and the *Barca Report* (Barca, 2009), these two sub-narratives become intertwined as socio-spatial inclusion is merged with economic competitiveness goals. This merging takes place through the concept of territorial capital. More particularly, this notion of different forms of capital originates from the work of Bourdieu and his conceptualisation of capital as economic, symbolic, cultural and social. In this take, capital is extended to include territorial assets. This is the narrative of territorial diversity *as strength* and the place-based approach together, where territorial capital should be exploited to take advantage of endogenous local strengths and promote the economic and socio-spatial aims of territorial cohesion. In other words, territorial capital by taking advantage of local strengths can promote economic competitiveness and territorialised social inclusiveness. Following such lines, territorial capital becomes the new policy instrument for the merging of territorial cohesion's twin sub-narratives in a Europe of spatial specificities (Sarmiento-Mirwaldt, 2013).

However, the narrative conviction of such an argument remains contested. According to some writers, after the signing of the Lisbon Treaty (2009), the two sub-narratives of economic competitiveness and socio-spatial inclusiveness became less compatible with each other (Malý, 2016). Others have suggested that the economic competitiveness sub-narrative has dominated over socio-spatial cohesion's considerations (Atkinson & Zimmerman, 2016; Holder & Layard, 2011). In this sense, the two significant storylines either do not add up or are even in competition with each other.

6. Broader Narrative Changes within the Post-2020 Framework

The ECP within the post-2014 context (2014–2020) has been closely connected with the place-based narrative and has focused more on economic competitiveness rather than redistribution and social cohesion (Avdikos & Chardas, 2016; Medeiros, 2017). More to the point, it has been argued that the ECP is "re-oriented, away from the traditional goal of promoting balanced socio-economic development, towards a regional growth-policy perspective that puts the issue of competitiveness as a prerequisite for regional convergence" (Avdikos & Chardas, 2016, p. 97).

Up until now, the ECP has been funded by the ERDF, the Cohesion Fund and the European Social Fund. Furthermore, the ECP within the post-2014 framework has the following thematic priorities: 1) research, technological development and innovation; 2) information and communication technologies; 3) small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); 4) low carbon economy; 5) climate change; 6) environment and resource efficiency; 7) transport; 8) employment; 9) social inclusion and poverty; 10) education and training; 11) efficient public administration.

More specifically, the ERDF provides financial assistance to all EU regions that are subsequently categorised as less developed, in transition and more developed regions. Although the ERDF finances all 11 thematic objectives, its main focus is on objectives 1–4, namely, research and innovation, information and communication technologies, SMEs and the low carbon economy. From this perspective, the ERDF has as its main objectives the promotion of economic competitiveness through smart growth and the creation of a green economy.

For the multi-annual period of 2014–2020, developed regions have to direct at least 80% of ERDF funding at the national level towards two or more of these four objectives, and at least 20% on environmental priorities. For regions in transition, the proportions of ERDF funding are 60% and 15%, and for less developed 50% and 12% (Widuto, 2018). Additionally, the Cohesion Fund supports infrastructural projects in EU member states with gross national income (GNI) below 90% of the EU average. The Cohesion Fund focuses on priorities 4–7, namely, low carbon economy, climate change, environment and resource efficiency and transport. With this in mind, it can be argued that the Cohesion Fund has an environmental and transport-related focus, but because it contains a technical assistance component, it contributes to the 11th thematic objective, namely efficient public administration.

After this brief description of the ECP for 2014–2020, it is logical to wonder what kind of changes the post-2020 programming period will bring. Are there any broader changes within the metanarrative of ECP for the next funding period? If the current period has been accompanied by the rise of the place-based narrative and the economic competitiveness storyline (Avdikos & Chardas, 2016; Medeiros, 2017; Mendez, 2013), what are the narrative priorities of the next to come? These are the questions that will guide the brief analysis that follows.

According to the European Commission's proposal for the next multiannual financial period (2021–2027),

and before the revamp of the budget because of the Coronavirus pandemic, around 370 billion euros have been assigned to the goals of economic, social and territorial cohesion (European Commission, 2018). The proposal comes with a reduction in funds that will become allocated to ECP. There has been a funding reduction from 34% to 29% of the total EU budget. Of course, such negative budgeting developments have created a lot of steer among interested parties and a hashtag has been created, #CohesionAlliance supporters, backed by several stakeholders and EU leading associations of regions and cities. Discussions have been quite heated around the finalisation of thematic priorities and the allocation of funding to each Member State. According to the proposal, the majority of funding from the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund will be directed towards the twin objectives of a 'smarter' and 'greener' Europe, governed by a single regulation (previously they were covered by two separate regulations). On the other hand, the new European Social Fund for the period 2021–2027 becomes independent and will no longer be part of ECP. It will be named as European Social Fund + and be governed by its own regulation (European Social Fund + Regulation). It will be geared towards implementing the goals of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The European Social Fund + Regulation will merge the former European Social Fund, the Youth Employment Initiative, the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, the Employment and the Social Innovation Programme and the EU Health Programme.

From the 11 thematic priorities of the multiannual framework of 2014–2020, the new financial period (post-2020) has only five: 1) a smarter Europe through innovation, digitisation, economic transformation and support for small and medium-sized businesses; 2) a greener, carbon-free Europe, implementing the Paris Agreement and investing in energy transition, renewables and the fight against climate change; 3) a more connected Europe, with strategic transport and digital networks; 4) a more social Europe, delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights and supporting quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare; 5) a Europe closer to citizens, by supporting locally-led development strategies.

As argued above, the biggest part of funding from the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund will go towards the first two objectives that allegedly have the "highest added value" (Widuto, 2018). At the same time, the role of the place-based narrative remains strong as a tailored (place-based) approach to regional development is being sought after (Margaras, 2018). There is a strong emphasis on cities, as cities are seen not only as the engines of growth and innovation, but also the spaces of accumulated social, economic and environmental problems. For this reason, it is proposed that 6% of the European Regional funding should be directed to sustainable urban development, while a new European Urban Initiative will be created.

The European Commission, in order to proceed with the budget restrictions for the new multi-annual period (from 34% to 29% of the total EU budget), had three options: 1) make cuts across the board; 2) fund developed regions; or 3) keep selectively supporting key thematic areas and further reduce funding in secondary objectives. By deploying the notion of the highest EU 'added value,' which was based on a series of ex-post evaluations of previous cohesion policy periods, the European Commission eventually decided to follow the third option and further boost a budgeting concentration of the European Regional Fund (with a budget more than five times higher than the Cohesion Fund) on the thematic schemes of a 'smarter' and 'greener' Europe (objectives 1–2).

For countries with a GNI lower than 75% of the European average, 35% of the budget has to be spent on 'smart growth' and 30% on the 'green economy' (65% of the total budget). For countries with a GNI between 75–100% of the European average, the percentages that have to be spent are 45% and 30% respectively (75% of the total budget), whereas for countries with a GNI (GNI) above the European average, the percentage for both objectives is a minimum 85% (of the total budget). By comparing the percentages of the ERDF that have to be spent on economic competitiveness and the low carbon economy within the 2014–2020 period with the ones that have to be invested on 'smart' and 'green' Europe within a post-2020 context, it becomes apparent that 'smart' growth and environmental concerns become further strengthened. There seems to be a 'thematic' concentration (Widuto, 2018) of funding in the area of 'smarter' and 'greener' Europe as European Regional Development funding increases from 80% to 85% for developed regions, from 60% to 75% for regions in transition and 50% to 65% for developing regions. Last but not least, the place-based narrative continues to be seen as the most suitable path for the development of EU regions.

As the then European Commissioner for Regional Policy, Corina Cretu, stated, the new multi-annual financial framework has as its main goal "to make Europe *smarter and greener*" (Cretu, 2018, p. 10; emphasis in original). The intention is to 'modernise' the ECP:

> All regions today face the challenge of the digital economy, increasing global competition and economic transformation. This is why we created the new policy objective 'A Smarter Europe—Innovative and Smart Economic Transformation,' which brings together innovation, research and SME support—everything that is needed for regions to thrive and survive in our digital age! We must also not forget that in addition to economic transformation regions must be ready for the transition to the low-carbon economy and circular economy. We brought these two environmental objectives together in the policy objective 'A Greener, Low Carbon Europe.' (Cretu, 2018, p. 10)

7. Conclusion: Territorial Cohesion for the New Funding Period (2021–2027) and the Coronavirus Pandemic

For this article, territorial cohesion is an EU policy narrative constituted by several sub-narratives or a diverse narrative plot. Among others, the narrative structure of territorial cohesion includes the themes of economic competitiveness, territorialised social cohesion, environmental sustainability, etc. However, it is a dynamic narrative that changes over time. As time goes by, and different politico-economic philosophies become more influential, along with technological changes that bring along different priorities, broader EU narratives change and territorial cohesion adapts to such changes as well. More to the point, within the programming period of 2014–2020, territorial cohesion's (spatialised) social inclusion perspective became partly subdued to the economic sub-plot that emphasised economic competitiveness in a globalised world. This narrative change occurred as the ECP had already changed its focus by emphasising growth and employment. For Medeiros (2017), "faced with mounting globalisation processes and neoliberal political agendas, the ECP has gradually shifted its strategic design from the initial goals of achieving socio-economic cohesion to the present [2014–2020] of fermenting growth and jobs" (Medeiros, 2017, p. 1859). Last but not least, both the ECP and territorial cohesion became linked to the place-based narrative to promote locally-led development strategies as 'place' seemed to matter.

For the forthcoming programming period (2021–2027), the ECP will be linked even more strongly to the place-based narrative by increasingly emphasising locally-led development strategies and, by doing so, bringing Europe closer to its citizens. Meanwhile, it will forcefully promote a 'smarter' and 'greener' Europe within a global space of flows and fast technological challenges. Accordingly, territorial cohesion within the post-2020 framework will become more closely linked to economic competitiveness by focusing on 'smart' growth. However, the economic competitiveness sub-narrative was already linked to 'smart' growth within the current programming period (2014–2020). Nevertheless, within the forthcoming framework, the narrative link between economic competitiveness, digitisation and economic transformation becomes more paramount through the notion of 'smart' growth. Similarly, environmental sustainability has also been a territorial cohesion's storyline within the current programming period. however, since the adoption of the "European Green Deal," environmental issues have come to the front of ECP and hence they have become transferred to all related policy narratives. As the New Commissioner, Ursula von der Leyen, has argued: "The 'European Green Deal' and digitization will boost jobs and growth, the resilience of our societies and the health of our environment" (European Commission, 2020a). In short, the twin objectives of a 'smart' and 'green' Europe are the new European policy stories that spread through all policy meta-narratives and narratives and subsequently reach territorial cohesion, too.

And then the Coronavirus pandemic came. As a result, the EU had to reinforce its budget to repair the economic and social damages brought along by the Coronavirus pandemic. The proposed measures include the Next Generation EU initiative with new financing for the 2021–2024 period and a revamped budget for the forthcoming programming period (2021–2027) reaching more than one billion Euros. It is interesting that the pandemic response closely follows the logic of the need for a 'smarter' and 'greener' Europe. As it is argued: "Our generational challenges—the green and digital revolution—are even more important now than before the crisis started. Through the recovery, we will press fast-forward on the twin green and digital revolutions" (European Commission, 2020b). As part of these actions, a new initiative for Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and Territories of Europe (REACT-EU) will provide extra funding of 55 billion euros specifically to cohesion policy. The package includes additional funding that will become available to the ERDF, the European Social Fund and the European Fund for Aid to the Most Deprived. These funds will be provided in 2020 through a revision of the current financial framework (2014–2020) and during 2021–2022 from Next Generation EU. They are additional to the 2014–2020 budget and on top of the forthcoming 2021–2027 budget. REACT-EU will provide financial support to the most important economic sectors for a solid recovery while member states will decide how they will channel them. By all accounts, the focus of the ECP and territorial cohesion for 2021–2027 remains economic competitiveness as smart growth and digital transition and the "European Green Deal" (European Commission, 2020c).

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Narratives of Territorial Cohesion and Economic Growth: A Comparative Study

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Abstract
The ability of regions to develop new productive capacities and to address the needs of inhabitants has become central in the EU agenda to trigger cohesion, sustainable growth and equality. This ability does not derive only from material assets but also from cognitive ones, such as trust, ways of cooperation, governance cultures and sense of belonging. Cognitive aspects are in fact fundamental in making the most of the greater potential of territorial features. Using the concept of territorial capital, we investigate this mix between material and cognitive assets in regional planning discourses. Territorial capital raises issues of spatial diversity and inequality as questions of access. Starting from the theoretical framework suggested by Servillo, Atkinson, and Russo (2011) on attractiveness and mobilization strategies, this article addresses the issue of territorial inequalities on material and cognitive bases by analysing mobilization discourses on territorial capital at a regional scale in Italy and Austria. The investigation of three case studies at different territorial scales (urban, suburban and rural) in each country allows both intra-regional and inter-regional comparison. By mapping the discursive structures of local economic development documents and key-actor interviews, we analyse the different mobilizing strategies in these contexts. Comparing inter-regional mobilization provides an in-depth insight into differences as well as similarities of cohesion strategies in regional planning on multiple levels. This can spark new territorially sensitive schemes for further sustainable socio-economic and equalising development that connects with the social structures on the ground.

Keywords
cognitive capital; cohesion; mobilizing strategies; regional planning; territorial capital

Issue
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1. Introduction

The central role of regions in contributing to growth has been made clear in the EU agenda since the 2000s. At the same time, it has been stated that the ability to generate economic growth is strictly linked to the social cohesion of a territory (European Commission, 2005). Cohesion policies, developed by the EU, were drawn up with the specific goal of helping regions to use their assets and to benefit from all their potentials (Fratesi & Perucca, 2014).

This objective gave rise to the relevance not only of material features of territory but also of cognitive ones. On this, in 2001 the OECD promoted the idea of territorial capital, listing a variety of material and non-material factors (OECD, 2001). The European Commission (2005) resumed the same concept highlighting the role of territorial policies in making territorial capital effective for

growth; in other words, enhancing the mobilization of local capital. The topic of mobilizing territorial capital at regional levels raises issues of territorial inequalities, considering not only the diversity among European regions but also intra-regional diversity. Looking at the mobilization of territorial capital with a focus on inequalities means not only considering the differences in terms of assets, be they material or non-material, but also the governance, institutional arrangements, collaboration culture, identity and networks that characterize each locality. In this sense, the mobilization or the lack of mobilizing of territorial capital is usually legitimized by a public discourse that can support, foster or hinder it.

Moving from the theoretical framework suggested by Servillo, Atkinson, and Russo (2011) on attractiveness and mobilization strategies, this article investigates mobilization in the light of territorial inequalities. We do this by analysing mobilization strategies at regional levels and by adopting a comparative case study approach that makes it possible to both interpret and identify relations (Ragin, 2014, pp. 35–36). Taking into consideration three cases at diverse territorial levels (urban, suburban and rural) in two countries (Austria and Italy), we suggest a comparison in order to see how the mobilization of territorial capital is enhanced or hindered. The methodology is based on secondary data, key-actor interviews and policy discourse analysis (see the Supplementary Material for more details).

The article starts with a first part that describes the theoretical discussion on territorial capital and its mobilization. A second part presents the cases, focusing on the main socio-demographic features and the territorial assets. A third part is devoted to the analysis of the strategy discourse relating to territorial capital mobilization and interviews with key informants for each locality in the two countries. Finally, the last part concludes with an analytical comparison and final remarks.

2. Territorial Assets, Mobilization and Inequality

Stemming from the idea of local milieu (Maillat, 1995), territorial capital entails both material and cognitive assets. While material aspects are easily associated with locally available resources, cognitive aspects are often lost in discussions analysing contextual conditions. A local milieu is defined based on the following characteristics: (1) a group of actors relatively autonomous in taking decisions and formulating strategies, (2) a specific set of material and immaterial elements, (3) institutional elements and cooperation between local actors used as a basis, and (4) internal self-regulating dynamics and the ability of actors to find new solutions as their competitive environment changes.

The milieu is a cognitive concept, which assembles the behaviours of its protagonists and enhances their collective learning. According to the original definition, the milieu is also characterized by a strong propensity towards innovation (Maillat, 1995). As Servillo et al. (2011) observe, he original definition of milieu does not imply any form of local dynamics that risks describing the territory as a simple container of material or immaterial goods. Picking up a more dynamic view, the OECD introduced the comprehensive concept of territorial capital in 2001. It is defined as the system of territorial assets of an economic, cultural, social and environmental nature that ensure the development potential of places.

The potential of this approach resides in the recognition of possible interactions between assets of different kinds: private or public goods interacting with knowledge or innovation capability and cooperation networks. Thereby, the concept of territorial capital introduces a shift from a functional to a cognitive approach. Local competitiveness is identified not only in the presence of skilled labour or the availability of capital but also in creativity, local trust and a sense of belonging. It implies localized externalities, localized production activities, traditions, skills and know-how (Camagni, 2009; Capello, Caragliu, & Nijkamp, 2009). Together, they build a system of proximity relationships that enhance the static and dynamic productivity of local factors. Territorial capital can therefore be conceived as "the set of localized assets that constitute the competitive potential of a given territory" (Camagni & Capello, 2013, p. 1387). The economic role of territorial capital resides in the enhancing efficiency and productivity of local activities. The attempt to measure the territorial capital by Camagni and Capello (2013, p. 1398) shows "an intermediate class of club goods or impure public goods" that imply a relational nature, "and which appear to be of great importance in terms of the governance of the local development process.''

The main difficulty in transposing this framework into empirical applications lies in the complexity of the set of assets that define territorial capital and, consequently, in the resulting measurement problems (Affuso, Camagni, & Capello, 2011; Perucca, 2014). We suggest using discursive approaches to filter this complexity (Atkinson, Held, & Jeffares, 2011). Besides the assets that make up territorial capitals, policies and narratives contribute to representing and evaluating the resources of any single territory, enforcing or hindering their mobilization. Public authorities and stakeholders, who usually hold the central discourse, play a strategic role in triggering mobilization processes in a multilevel governance framework (Servillo et al., 2011). Therefore, this article takes into consideration the public discourse used by these actors to foster economic growth by comparing the results that emerged from the discourse analysis with the data collected from strategy documents and interviews with key informants, which included policymakers, public authorities, business actors and experts of the specific localities. The final aim is then to understand how the narratives conveyed by the public discourses hinder or enforce the mobilization of territorial capital with the objective of economic growth in a context characterized by diverse local features. The article seeks to answer: What local

conditions of cognitive assets hinder or enforce the mobilization of territorial capital?

We arrive at a reflection on diverse localities, by comparing three local contexts in two countries (Austria and Italy). We chose localities within one geographical region that has had socio-economic interventions by relevant development strategies in the last 30 years (after de-industrialization). At the same time, these localities show internal social and economic inequalities in terms of access to vital services and life-chances. The cases have been labelled as rural, suburban and urban to indicate specific features related mostly to demographic differences and the structure of the local economy. Table 1 sums up some of the main characteristics.

3. Case Studies

3.1. Italian Case Studies

Lombardy is the most populated region of Italy. Milan, the regional capital, has been one of the leading industrial centres since 1900. The region shows a high degree of heterogeneity in terms of socio-demographic indicators (such as population change or immigration) and socio-economic ones (unemployment rate, female participation in the labour market). This internal heterogeneity represents a challenge for the design of cohesion policies and the fostering of economic growth. The three local cases discussed here are Milan, as the urban case, Legnano, the suburban, and the rural case of Oltrepo' Pavese.

Milan is the central economic and financial hub of Northern Italy with a population of 1.370 million inhabitants. It features a multi-sectoral economy, generally dominated by the advanced tertiary sector (Cucca, 2010). The city's governance arena is populated by a multiplicity of diverse actors (business actors, tertiary sector, community actors) with the subsequent retrenchment of the local authority from some relevant issues of the local agenda. This also derives from a long history and tradition of Milanese civil society. Milan shows layers of the society engaged in development and solidarity. Moreover, the city displays a significant amount of intangible resources: It is the Italian capital in terms of start-ups, home to public and private universities, research centres, cultural institutions and innovation hubs. These factors have flowed into a flourishing of public-private partnerships that work successfully because of considerable amounts of private resources. Despite a race towards growth and innovation, the city is often described as a two-speed city, indicating the increasing polarization occurring within the urban context. Milan copes with a general impoverishment of the population, spreading inequalities and increasing social polarization. The distribution of the population exemplifies this increasing polarization: a heterogeneous and scattered periphery with a low level of residential segregation, the opposite of a strongly homogenous city centre with a concentration of wealthy members of the population.

Legnano lies in the Metropolitan Area of Milan, about 20 kilometres from the Milan city centre. The town is

Table 1. Main features of the selected cases.

	Italy			Austria		
	Milan (urban)	Legnano (suburban)	Oltrepo' Pavese (rural)	Vienna (urban)	Kleinregion Ebreichsdorf (suburban)	Waldviertler Kernland (rural)
Population (2019)	1,351,562	60,259	13,590	1,867,582	36,601	14,022
5-year population change (2011–2016)	0.08%	0.04%	−0.03%	8.76%	8.43%	−3.13%
Unemployment (2011)		8.4%			4.6%	
Local unemployment (2015)	6.8%	8.3%	5%	13.3%	7.5%	3.4%
Employment primary sector (2015)		3.6%			4%	
Local employment primary sector (2015)	0.8%	0.9%	11.1%	0.1%	4.3%	26.2%

Notes: Legnano and Kleinregion Ebreichsdorf, despite the diverse size in term of population, share some typical features of suburban localities such as being commuter towns. The rural areas are more similar in terms of population size and they both are characterised by depopulation and the dominant role of agriculture. The following section gives context details on each case locality and digs deeper into territorial assets. Unemployment is ratio by active population. Local employment in primary sector by total workforce—own calculation based on official national statistics. Employed by sector of total workforce numbers are based on Statistics Austria municipal data (authors' own calculation). Sources: Statistics Austria (n.d.), Italian National Institute of Statistics (n.d.), Eurostat (n.d.; last accessed 11 August 2020), AMS Austria (2018), Eurostat as cited in Grozea-Helmenstein, Helmenstein, and Neumüller (2016, p. 24).

linked to Milan by a good transportation system that permits commuting. Its dependency on Milan is softened by the fact that Legnano is the biggest and leading municipality of the Alto Milanese area, one of the most industrialized and populated areas of the country. From the end of the 19th century, Legnano has become the main city in a cluster of industrial development centres, occupying a crucial position in the textile and mechanical engineering industries at a national level (Tosi & Vitale, 2011). During the de-industrialization process in the 1980s and 1990s, big firms and industries started to decline and partially or entirely closed in the beginning of the 2000s. This change not only created unemployment but challenged the narrative about the identity of Legnano's long-term inhabitants, strongly linked to the world of industry. The decline in industrial activities has been only partially offset by the growth in the construction and service provision sectors (Tosi & Vitale, 2011). Legnano's main asset is the quality of its local enterprises (SMEs). After the de-industrialization, these enterprises have been trying to re-invent themselves and adapt to the international context. Their quality is linked to a widespread entrepreneurial spirit that is also the leading dimension of the territorial identity.

Oltrepo' Pavese is located in the province of Pavia and includes 18 municipalities, most of which have fewer than 1000 inhabitants. The Northern portion of the region is mainly hilly, while the Southern area is part of the Northern Apennines. Because of natural obstacles in the area, mobility has always been an issue for commuting and service delivery. The territorial capital in Oltrepo' Pavese is connected to the natural features, local history and culture. The main economic opportunities are represented by agri-food, slow-tourism and biodiversity. Oltrepo' Pavese's main challenge is to overcome the economic marginalization caused mainly by two demographic processes: depopulation and ageing. Nevertheless, this challenge is hardly taken up by the local (public) actors. In general, a set of features hindering growth and development is identifiable in the area: low entrepreneurial aspiration, conflicting social attitudes, lack of business vision and clientelism dynamics that characterize local politics.

3.2. Austrian Case Studies

The Austrian case study region is in the north-eastern part of the country. It consists of the *Bundesländer* Lower Austria and Vienna. While Lower Austria is the largest *Bundesland*, Vienna is the smallest in terms of territorial size. Moreover, Vienna is the densest city in the country, while Lower Austria's territory has the most farming land per square kilometre in the country. The three local cases chosen for this research are Vienna, as the urban case, Kleinregion Ebreichsdorf as the suburban, and Kleinregion Waldviertler Kernland as the rural case.

Vienna counts over 1.8 million inhabitants (2019), which is around one-fifth (21%) of Austria's population. Its crucial demographic trend is population growth. Compared to other cities in Austria, Vienna presents itself as a centre for international business in the tertiary sector and international migration. After years of depopulation in Vienna, Austria's accession to the EU in 1995 and the further enlargement of the Union reversed depopulation. The governance arena of the urban case is populated by a multiplicity of diverse actors (interest groups, tertiary sector, business actors) but the local authorities are the main drivers of urban socio-economic development. This derives from a long tradition of the social-democratic rule and the city's status as a *Bundesland*. Accordingly, the city's government forms both the city and *Land* administration and enjoys more autonomy than any other city in the country. Overall, governance is organized collaboratively with a strong influence of the city council and Austrian social partners that represent the institutionalized interests of both workers and employers. The involvement of social partners is not unique to the city of Vienna. However, the city can act almost as a city-state due to its legal status as a *Bundesland* which allows the city to focus almost exclusively on urban topics. Moreover, as the capital, Vienna hosts vital national institutions which enables vital networks. Public-Private Partnerships are somewhat rare but sought after by the city government according to international best-practice discourses.

The Ebreichsdorf Kleinregion is an inter-municipal collaboration of ten municipalities. It is part of the Lower Austria *Bundesland* located within the Functional Urban Area of Vienna, 40 kilometres south of it. Traffic connection opportunities differ between municipalities, but the area is quite well connected. The most important demographic trend is population growth. Between 2007 and 2017, the population in this area grew by 16.5%—slightly more than Vienna. Mostly, this trend is based on domestic migration. Population growth by immigration and high shares of commuting towards Vienna significantly shaped the Ebreichsdorf Kleinregion in the last ten years. The administrative status is that of a voluntary *Kleinregion*, an inter-municipal collaboration of ten municipalities (36,601 residents). This governance instrument aims to foster inter-municipal cooperation and is supported by the *Bundesland* government with extra resources. The Ebreichsdorf Kleinregion was originally founded in 2008 by five municipalities. In 2015, collaboration in the *Kleinregion* was reinstalled and extended by five more municipalities. Based on the recent expansion, we observe a lot of activities and enthusiasm in media accounts, but some municipalities seem to have a more substantial lead than others. There is no one single company that dominates the region. In 2018, however, the opening of a 'Research and Technology Hub' was advertised by the government of Lower Austria as a significant project for improving the local economy and developing the tertiary economic sector.

Waldviertler Kernland is in the north-western part of Lower Austria. The case lies outside of the functional

area of Vienna and consists of 14 municipalities (14,022 residents). The most significant demographic trends are population decrease and aging. The area is considered peripheral due to the bad connection to motorways and public transport. Since de-industrialization in the 1980s, the locality has lost vital industries and businesses. However, in the early 1980s, new regional planning policies and agencies started to counteract the economic downturn. Regional planning focused on the search for new, locally-based identities and territorial capital (e.g., nature for tourism and health resorts) to spark the local economy. Today, forestry, agriculture and tourism are key for the local economy. The economic structure contrasts with national trends of tertiarization—the role of agriculture and forestry is very high (26.2%) due to key farming activities and companies in the area. Still, the share of employment in that sector is also declining slowly. Like the Austrian suburban case, the rural case is a voluntary *Kleinregion*, an inter-municipal collaboration which has been in operation since 2001 and has implemented several regional development projects. Their focus lies on health and social services, like childcare during summer. They also collaborate on a common regional identity and tourism marketing.

4. Method and In-The-Field Activities

Country case selection was based on theoretical sampling (Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2009) for two national cases with different underlying governance logics (Bonoli, 1997; Esping-Andersen, 1990), but similar external conditions (Ragin & Becker, 1992) such as the governance structure within the European Union, global competition and the socio-economic development of Europe. Both Italy and Austria are long-term EU member states that have invested in cohesion policies. Regional disparities exist in both countries between thriving places of knowledge economies and de-industrialized zones. The cases chosen within the countries share some local features in terms of assets but differ in governance modalities and collective participation in the policy-making process (tertiary sectors, private actors, and civil stakeholders). The comparison helps to identify similarities and differences in broadly the same external conditions (i.e., EU membership, 2008 financial crisis in Europe; Rihoux & Grimm, 2006, pp. 43–45). The research investigated in-depth mobilization strategies of territorial capital on a local level by scrutinizing strategies for local development and key-actor discourses. Thereby, a descriptive comparison is achieved that makes it possible to follow up on the mechanism for mobilization in different political economies. A larger country sample would not be able to arrive at such an extensive description of the phenomena.

Our discursive analysis uses 12 strategy documents outlining regional economic development and 12 semi-structured key-actor interviews involved in local economic development as public, business or civic agents (for the description of the interview codes used in this article see the Supplementary Material). These discourses outline territorial capital in descriptions of strengths as well as how to tackle identified challenges. We investigated the documents and interviews collected in three steps: (1) mapping a larger sample of collected documents with background information, (2) analysing central documents and interviews in a structural-agent-cantered manner (Atkinson et al., 2011), and (3) linguistic performance-oriented ways (Kornberger & Clegg, 2011). For the first step, we coded descriptions of goals, economic growth, identity and collaboration mechanisms in each document. For a more in-depth analysis of central documents and interviews, we coded them thematically in a deductive way (Mayring, 2007; Schmidt, 2007) operationalizing concepts of territorial capital as descriptions of local strengths and their mobilization. The analysis included the perspective suggested by Gervais, Morant, and Penn (1999) to detect the silence and absence of specific dimensions and positions. We were thereby able to compare what is addressed, but also what has been left out.

4.1. Urban Mobilization

Since 2014, Milan has been focusing on becoming a Smart City, able to compete on a global scale. This goal constantly resounds in public narratives, coming from both political and business actors. According to the Smart City programme diffused by the Municipality, economic growth must be pursued with the related goal of social inclusion. This can happen through strategic coordination and synergy between actors (Milan Municipal Council, 2014, p. 1). Intangible goods and networks are considered as resources on which the city should count to grow and guarantee social inclusion. To this end, a pivotal role is assigned to technology and innovation as well as social integration and inclusion. Milan is presented as a city already with the capital to be smart, but in need of a new perspective. This positive narrative aims at gathering the actors needed in order to find a way to exploit the existing assets. However, the modalities through which this participation should be implemented are not specified. Other than citizen involvement, public-private partnerships have acquired more relevance. An example of the new role played by business actors is Assolombarda, an association gathering enterprises in the Province of Milan and its surroundings. The last Assolombarda president describes the network as:

> One of the modalities adopted to give shape to this intention has been the constitution of an advisory board for the social responsibility of the enterprise, that is an organism collecting diverse personalities from the Milanese industrial world….This board has started to work lately following three priorities: young, women and culture. (ITUrb1)

Apart from launching events to bring diverse actors together, there is no clear strategy to make these networks work. The risk is the dispersion of the resources and the creation of networks that lack shared contents. Dynamics of inclusion and exclusion are likely to emerge with some civil society organizations contributing to a general improvement of the city and others being excluded from this process. This oversight makes the threat of a two-speed city more real (ITUrb2).

The hybrid nature of actions presented in the documents is evident especially in the *Manifattura* Milano. Alongside economic growth ("increasing economic attractiveness," "developing consolidated sectors"), the social vocation appears consistently, "combining innovation, inclusion and sustainability," "rebirth of peripheries" (Municipality of Milan, 2016). Especially the social vocation goal implies the participation of citizens. However, there is no clear consensus about the mobilization capabilities of citizens. A business interviewee (ITUrb3) highlights that there is a restless race towards innovation, but this hyper-activism risks resulting in dispersion and hiding socio-spatial tensions that will remain unsolved.

In terms of mobilizing territorial capital, Vienna tries to use policy bundles to achieve economic growth and cohesion with five-year strategy frameworks and specialized strategies that range from land-use planning to business plans, and a wide range of topics (Vienna Municipal Department 18, 2005, 2014a, 2014b). Similar to Milan, the city administration initiated the process of becoming a Smart City with a full strategy in 2014 (see Vienna Municipal Department 18, 2014b). The city administration has a thorough approach to city planning that tries to incorporate social, economic and ecological issues. However, this holistic planning style mostly remains on paper. Urban key-actor interviewees from the administration indicated that not only has this holistic planning been around for more than 20 years, but that organizational structures make it prone to institutional hurdles:

> However, they overlooked the fact that the biggest obstacle to implementation is their administration, which cannot understand this from the outset. So, those on the inside, experts from the internal administration, work together, but the actions of the departments are based on their work programmes. This is incredibly difficult, which means that internal PR is one of the biggest challenges to make something like this effective. (ATUrb1)

Ultimately, this limits cross-sectoral coordination, even if it is envisioned in strategy papers. Current strategies at the municipal level indicate a perceived growth potential, particularly in the segment of research, technology and innovation. Documents and interviews highlight the city's status as Austria's hub for higher education and tertiary sector workforce. This status is depicted as territorial capital to create a local knowledge economy and Smart City (Vienna Municipal Department 18, 2014b).

Fostering a culture of collaboration is presented as the solution to many issues. Cross-horizontal collaborations are often presented for solving challenges within the city. The 2014 strategy prominently put regional collaboration forward to create Vienna as a potential "economic hub, workplace and place of living" (Vienna Municipal Department 18, 2014a, p. 93). In the Austrian context, this is not surprising since the institutional social partnership between union, labour and commerce interest groups, is present in every *Bundesland* and on district levels. However, the strategy document (Vienna Municipal Department 18, 2014a) sets out ways to use these connections in urban development issues like developing programs for underused urban areas and ground floors. Herein, the asset of being the political centre of the country shows, as it is much easier for interest groups, including entrepreneurial networks, to connect and work out solutions (informally).

Politically, the city has a long-standing social-democratic rule which includes almost permanent positions of key actors like mayors and town councils. Thereby, strategies form visions that are more risk-avoidant and less dynamic but have a solid base for long-term planning.

4.2. Suburban Mobilization

The identity of Legnano is strongly connected to its glorious industrial past. This rhetoric is vivid in the document issued in the *Strategic Plan of Confindustria Lombardia* (Confindustria, 2015). This plan was prepared to inspire local firms. The territory is represented as homogenous, and it is described as a macro-region that belongs to Europe. The aim of promoting a shared identity and a feeling of attachment is evident.

As in the case of Milan, the territorial capital is already considered well-developed to trigger growth. This already existing capital, according to the document, is fostered by a high-level training tradition and long-term experience in school-to-work transition. The proposed clustering strategy is suitable for exploiting the already existing resources, but a cluster implies a shared identity and vision. The discourse contained in the document emphasizes the similarities among the territories, especially the entrepreneurial spirit, the courage of the inhabitants and the capacity of sharing experiences and abilities. Even if 'territorial cohesion' does not appear in the text, this is the only document, among those selected for the analysis in the Italian case, that shows an orientation towards this concept. The strategy describes the industrial cluster as belonging to and participating in wider territorial dynamics (mostly European). The reality constructed is one of a shared identity that would naturally end up in a cluster. This clashes with the general loss of identity that has characterized the territory since the 1980s, which worsened after the 2008 financial crisis

(Tosi & Vitale, 2011). The closure of several firms, increasing unemployment, and the abandoned and empty factories have undermined the solidity of the 'entrepreneurial culture,' which is still alive in narratives, but emptied in terms of contents. The investment in local firms that the discourse promotes clashes with the delocalizing policies of recent years.

Some of our interviewees highlight that it is the wealthy population that dominates the discourse, trying to push a mobilization of assets that are not there anymore and are sustained only by a rhetorical representation. The lack of services or the lack of coordination is rarely mentioned as a concern:

> This narrative of the Legnano entrepreneurs is conveyed by the same people over time. They are the wealthiest people in Legnano, sharing the same interests. They are a family, not relatives, more a family bound by interests. It has not changed; it has always been like that. (ITSub1)

The Ebreichsdorf Kleinregion focuses mainly on transport and ecological projects. Even though the Ebreichsdorf Kleinregion is an inter-municipal collaboration, its name does not reflect a collective identity; instead, it names just one municipality, mainly the municipality of Ebreichsdorf, which seems to be operating the municipal collaboration strategies. Key agents are that municipality's mayor and the municipal council. As Ebreichsdorf has the most residents within the collaboration, it also harvests more financial resources through taxes. Additionally, its council has good contacts with *Bundesland* agencies, which is vital for funding.

The documents (Kleinregion Ebreichsdorf Management & Emrich Consulting, 2011; Kleinregion Ebreichsdorf Management & NÖ.regional, 2016) describe the high standard of living due to the recreational and rural character of the settlements as its territorial capital. Assets for both residents and businesses are the land available for businesses and the proximity to Vienna. The strategy document from 2015 describes the increase in residents as a strength, but it does not explicitly address how to use this strength in local development. This rhetoric is not always shared by our interviewees and, according to them, especially long-term residents do not share it (ATSub4).

Strategies indicate the wish for stakeholder involvement. However, the documents do not specify anywhere who these are and what their role would be, leading to the assumption that although the Kleinregion management knows that stakeholders and civic society need to be or should be involved, it does not want to or does not know how to activate this collaborative potential: "I think the individual places…have found their identity, but since the Kleinregion is relatively different, I do not know if there is now a common identity" (ATSub3).

Mostly, proposed solutions for local development revolve around identity-building, marketing, transport and digital infrastructure, and environmental protection. The municipalities collaborate to attract businesses. Renewable energy is also on the agenda of municipal collaboration, connecting each municipality (ATSub2).

Although *Bundesland* agencies support their efforts, internal tensions between municipalities and within them are clear from document analyses and interviews. As is evident in the documents, the Kleinregion would like to have an active community life. Nevertheless, the documents never mention the active involvement of residents. Instead, there is a clear top-down understanding with mayors and city council (of one municipality) drafting strategies. Interviewees outline that "there is no actuator, in Ebreichsdorf there is always fragmentation, and one always waits for something to come from outside and the basis [for locally based action] is so to speak still not existent" (ATSub1).

Also, politically, the town councils are fragmented with split political lines of conservative and progressive politics. This is evident in regular changes of political leadership in municipal councils, different alliances and specialized local political factions.

4.3. Rural Mobilization

Oltrepo' Pavese is struggling with isolation and fragmentation issues. The idea of growth is far from being rooted there since not even the idea of a territorial economy is shared by the different communities. The notion of cohesion and economic growth based on territorial assets is usually brought into this context by external actors and is not at all interiorized. These external actors (mostly supra-municipal organizations or foundations from Milan or national programmes) play a vital role in the attempt to mobilize the local, territorial capital. However, their efforts are not successful given the obstacles and the resistance from local actors (mostly mayors). According to interviewees, a cultural shift is needed:

> We are trying to make Oltrepo' known for its territorial bio-diversity, meaning the forest, the variety of agricultural products, the animals, the local history, and tradition. Local authorities seem into it right now, but, at the same time, they are making arrangements to host the Enduro Motorcycle Championship next year that of course clashes with promoting and respecting biodiversity. (ITRur1)

The Inner Areas Strategy, a national project that aims at relaunching marginal territories—usually rural or peripheral, sees the territory as a "production factor," including cultural identity, contextual knowledge, environmental and social features, which represent pull factors for virtuous flows and foster the competitiveness of the local economic fabric (Ministry of Territorial Cohesion, 2012). This strategy for relaunching the territory clashes with the strong fragmentation that isolates the municipalities

from each other. Municipalities are suffocated by the dynamics of clientelism and familism. Local actors are trapped in historical fights and divisions which keep them from participating in collaborative projects: "We organized seminars, meetings, dissemination activities…well, and only one mayor attended them and participated in the project, and it is an anomaly because he is very young and, apparently, he does not care about being voted in again" (Ministry of Territorial Cohesion, 2012). This comment indicates that the only concern among mayors is being re-elected rather than engaging in innovative initiatives. The contrast between the official document glorifying a neglected territorial capital and the interviewees' narrative about disinvestment by local actors is striking.

The Waldviertler Kernland Kleinregion has a long history of bottom-linked regional planning. Well established since 2001, the rural case collaboration's focus is to foster cohesion, the local economy and demographic growth. Local-based development has an even longer history there, as key actors for regional development in Austria started this pursuit in 1982 (Gerhardter & Gruber, 2000). Small businesses and local initiatives play a big role as their impact is more significant on the community. Documents further highlight nature, agricultural products and traditions as assets as well as family life in the countryside (Kleinregion Waldviertler Kernland Management, 2012, 2016; NÖ.regional, 2015). There is no outlined pursuit of large company settlement (Gerhardter & Gruber, 2000). Instead, we found a 'can-do-on-our-own' attitude, which is also part of the perceived territorial capital and proud identity both in documents and interviews (Kleinregion Waldviertler Kernland Management, 2016): "Well, one says of the Waldviertler that he is hard-working…modest, without taking it to extremes….'A Waldviertler is three people'….In truth, our potential is the people and the mentality of the people that come from here" (ATRur1).

Even though the strategies have limited influence on specific sectoral policy elements, there is a rather high mobilization rate when it comes to promoting territorial capital. Key agents and stakeholders are limited to a handful of people who also have intersecting roles within the communities.

Politically, municipal councils have quite a constant political representation with not much diversity or change of the local political leadership. This more fixed conservative rule in most municipalities is not just a political ideology that remains constant; personnel and key actors also stay quite constant. This affects the streamlining of regional development strategies, especially for mobilizing territorial capital:

> There are very many *Kleinregionen* that just do a bit of municipal cooperation. Others, like us, have put it on a completely different level…we are also taking action in other areas….The government of Lower Austria does not always welcome that….The *Kleinregionen* mainly have the task of municipal cooperation…in our case this is far more advanced and much more widely spread than is actually desired by the *Bundesland* government. (ATRur2)

Unlike the Austrian suburban case, the rural case does not incorporate the *Bundesland* discourse well. Local key actors try to improve local development creatively and show a high level of mobilization. These actors are not solely civilian but have intersecting responsibilities, roles and networks across the communities, businesses and public authorities. This allows them to mobilize local assets and effectively influence local development from strategy planning to implementation. Nevertheless, the issues concerning the rural case are not well transferred upwards to the regional or federal level.

5. Intra-Regional and Inter-Regional Comparison

Not surprisingly, the urban cases, Milan and Vienna, are united by a developed local knowledge economy. They have fostered partnerships between public and private sectors (Milan) and between unions and commerce interest groups (Vienna). In general, they display a considerable capacity for getting stakeholders to work towards a common goal. Nevertheless, there is a strong contrast in both cases between the rhetoric describing an inclusive network and the reality that shows, instead, a fragmented and not very inclusive community. There is considerable stress on the role of innovation and technology in the official discourse, but it is hardly embedded in a clear, socially inclusive strategy. In both cases, cohesion is mostly interpreted as being social rather than territorial: 'Territorial cohesion' is almost never referred to in official documents. The two cities differ, instead, in terms of the role of the local authority: In the case of Milan, the municipality plays a detached role, although local authorities are officially in charge of leading alliances. This is linked to the idea of leaving more space and power to non-institutional actors, but it is also due to the high turn-over that characterizes the city's administration. Vienna, on this point, reveals a different pattern, with key actors in administration having almost permanent positions. This leads to long-term, less fragmented and time-constrained planning, increasing the ability to build long-lasting networks. In our urban cases, territorial capital seems to be mobilized and exploited successfully but they still fail to address the matter of inclusion and social cohesion consistently. Especially in Milan, this mobilization fails to promote equality, but rather it fosters polarization and the impoverishment and exclusion of the already marginalized population.

Suburban contexts share a perceived high standard of living. They also have in common the proximity to main regional centres and available land for new business activities. In both cases, strategies for growth are settled by interest groups that use identity-building processes as a tool to mobilize capital. The effects are controversial: In the Italian case, the identity constructed and

spread by interest groups is representative only of the wealthy part of the population. This discourse excludes a large part of the population. In the Austrian case, the internal tension between municipalities has led to a fragmented landscape, and the mobilization of cognitive capital remains low or limited to influential public and business actors.

The two rural cases are significantly different in terms of local-based development. The Austrian case has been engaged in fostering cohesion, local economy and demographic growth since 2001 and even before that as far as local development is concerned. The rural Italian case has been neglected over the last few years, and inhabitants are accustomed to a mentality of out-ward immigration, accepting the demographic decline and marginalization of the territory. In the Austrian case, the identity draws on the self-made rhetoric that is perceived as the territorial capital, more like the Italian suburban case, than the rural one. In the Italian rural case, there is no tradition of entrepreneurial spirit, and this is also one reason for the apparent lack of interest in local growth. Here, attempts to exploit the local assets are made by external actors in the name of regional interests, but they are not meet with enthusiasm or the engagement of local stakeholders. This last point is due to high and historical fragmentation between municipalities and a lack of collaboration, typical of several rural areas in Europe (Copus & de Lima, 2015; Kristensen, Dubois, & Teräs, 2019). Key agents and stakeholders of the Austrian case, instead, have intersecting and quite permanent roles within the communities, which benefits collaborations (similar to the Viennese city administration).

6. Conclusion: Fragmentation, Civic Involvement and Identity in Mobilization

While comparisons between material capital cannot translate into improving cohesion policies, given the diversity in size, natural assets, demographic trends and history, comparing mobilization strategies sheds light on pushing or hindering factors to beneficial uses of endogenous territorial capital. Therefore, identifying these factors in mechanisms of mobilization contributes to developing place-sensitive development strategies.

Narratives contained in public documents considerably stress the idea of a shared identity, regardless of the scale of the localities. If this narrative is shared by all local stakeholders, the mobilization of capital is more likely to be successful. Nevertheless, being an identity discourse conveyed only by specific stakeholders (e.g. business groups) or external actors that push for economic growth, the outcomes hardly foster social and territorial cohesion. This is evident in our urban and suburban cases. There, the dynamic does not include all local cognitive assets. Some of them, alongside with their territories, remain excluded from the overall mobilization efforts. This exclusion might be mitigated by the leading role of the authorities in places that suffer from fragmentation (Milan and Vienna) and high turn-over (Milan). Fragmentation plays a pivotal role in hindering the efforts for mobilizing the capital. The Austrian suburban case and the Italian rural case are clear examples of that.

The lack of a shared identity weakens the efforts made by a single municipality (Ebreichsdorf) and external stakeholders (Oltrepo' Pavese). As highlighted by the interviews, the rhetoric spread by these actors is not shared by most residents, mayors or council representatives. Often, this results in the implementation of strategies and projects that clash with cohesion policy goals. Participation seems a key issue then. While civil society seems much livelier in cities, still it suffers from exclusion dynamics with some actors holding considerably more power and access to key networks, usually linked to economic resources. In smaller areas (suburban and rural), we find very different trends that relate again to fragmentation dynamics. Therefore, it is vital to identify inequality dynamics early on, in order to develop more successful locally-sensitive strategies for regional development. Not only in terms of fruitful mobilization of territorial capital but also in promoting cohesive and sustainable development.

Studies on mobilization strategies should consider the cognitive aspects of territorial capital and its contribution to local development. How policies enhance growth and cohesion, how they are built and conveyed (by which actors) is a relevant piece of the puzzle in understanding why territorial capital is mobilized successfully or not. What and who is excluded by the narratives is an important indicator as well as what is stressed and who the main conveyors of the discourse are. If growth policies are actually exclusive, they leave behind the weakest parts of the community, resulting in hindering cohesion. This exclusion is already built into some narratives that promote local growth policies.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the authors (unedited).

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Article

Rural Cohesion: Collective Efficacy and Leadership in the Territorial Governance of Inclusion

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Abstract
This article is a comparative study of the contextual conditions for collective efficacy and territorial governance of social cohesion in two different rural localities: West Dorset in England and Lemvig in Denmark. The objective is to understand the conditions for and relations between neo-endogenous development and rural social cohesion in two different national contexts. Common to both cases are problems of demographic change, particularly loss of young people, depopulation, economic challenges and their peripheral location vis-à-vis the rest of the country. However, in West Dorset, community identity is fragmented compared to Lemvig, and this has consequences for how well local 'collective efficacy' (Sampson, 2012) transfers to more strategic levels of local development. These include not only variations in welfare settings and governance, but also variations in settlement structure and place identity (Jørgensen, Knudsen, Fallov, & Skov, 2016), collective efficacy, and the role of local leadership (Beer & Clower, 2014), which structure the conditions for rural development. While Lemvig is characterized by close interlocking relations between local government, business and civil society, this is less the case in England where centralization of powers in tandem with a dramatic restructuring of service delivery forms (e.g., contracting out, privatisation) have had damaging effects on these types of interlocking relations. Comparing these cases through the lens of the combined concepts of collective efficacy and place-based leadership contribute to the understanding of rural development as not only relations between intra- and extra-local connections but also formal and informal forms of collective action and leadership.

Keywords
collective efficacy; Denmark; England; local leadership; rural cohesion; territorial cohesion; territorial governance

Issue
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1. Introduction

In this article we argue that the context and cultures for collective action and local leadership sets limitations on the mobilization of territorial capital (Camagni, 2017; Servillo, Atkinson, & Hamdouch, 2017; Servillo, Atkinson, & Russo, 2012) and what local communities can achieve vis-à-vis their interaction with local government, thus generating different learning spaces for addressing social cohesion and inclusion. Using a case study approach of two rural localities, West Dorset in England and Lemvig in Denmark, we examine how place identity reflects both settlement structures and relations to territorial governance at different spatial levels. Understanding place identity as a dimension of 'collective efficacy' (Sampson, 2011) we investigate the role col-

lective efficacy has for social and territorial cohesion in rural areas. Sampson has coined the concept Collective efficacy as a link between mutual trust, shared expectations among residents and willingness to intervene and interact (Sampson & Morenoff, 1997). This means actually lived social relations have an impact on neighbourhood and places (Sampson, 2011). Collective efficacy is a composite measure of activity patterns/routines, organizational infrastructure, social networks, and segregation/resource stratification. In contrast to endogenous notions of local development, which tended to emphasise the dominant role of external actors and powerful local actors and often excluded other local participants, neo-endogenous development emphasises participatory bottom-up development (Ray, 2006). Thus at local level a wider range of actors are involved in identifying and mobilizing local resources. This does not mean excluding the input of extra-local resources, but seeks to reduce dependence on extra-local actors in the form of economic structures and political and administrative networks at different scales. In this article we argue that it is important to understand the specific local dynamics of what communities can achieve vis-à-vis their interaction with local leadership and government as this interaction generates possibilities for addressing issues related to economic, social and territorial cohesion within the framework of neo-endogenous development (Ray, 2006). We show through the two case studies in West Dorset and Lemvig how the interaction between rural cohesion and local leadership vary in the two contexts generating varied conditions for neo-endogenous development.

Our two cases are different in size and population, West Dorset in much bigger than Lemvig. However, despite their differences they share a common set of challenges regarding settlement and economic structures. Thus, the comparative case study in this article illustrates the importance of looking at the character of local social infrastructures and how they are connected to or conditioned by non-local government structures to understand questions of economic growth and quality of life or cohesion (Bosworth et al., 2016).

We begin with a review of existing literature which frames our case studies, outlining the discussion on how to understand the rural, the importance of networks and social capital in neo-endogenous development, collective efficacy and leadership. Secondly, we describe national factors framing rural development in Denmark and England. In section three we outline our methodology before presenting the two cases. This is followed by two sections comparing the cases focusing on collective efficacy and identity, and forms of local leadership.

2. Rural Neo-Endogenous Development, Collective Efficacy and Place-Based Leadership

One of the first issues we are confronted with is what do we mean by rural. Some writers have questioned the relevance of rural as a meaningful category in modern advanced industrial nations (e.g., Pahl, 1968). However, as has become increasingly clear, there are distinct patterns of social and economic relationships that distinguish urban from rural areas, albeit that these categories need to be treated with care as they entail within them a plurality of different relationships between and within the categories of urban and rural. "The rural is—just as the urban—not homogeneous and universal, it is highly socially and culturally differentiated" (Pahl, 1968). Moreover, the very definition of place entails a series of difficult choices (cf. Servillo et al., 2017). However, broadly speaking in this article we agree with the approach adopted by Copus and de Lima (2015, p. 3) who argue: "The concept of rural areas…is inherently socioeconomic and has more to do with settlement patterns, ways of life and culture, than with land use, landscape, environment or particular economic activities" (Copus & de Lima, 2015).

As Ray (2006) has argued, social capital is at the centre of neo-endogenous development, but also calls for critical research into how and in what ways social capital is a driver of territorial development. This is also supported by other studies emphasising variations in bonding and bridging capital and locally anchored place identity (Rivera, Knickel, Díaz-Puente, & Afonso, 2019; Winther & Svendsen, 2012). Similarly, Bosworth et al. (2016) place networks and their social capital at the heart of rural neo-endogenous development. However, most rural areas are not only defined by their territorial characteristics and culture, but by their extra-local contexts, their connections to the vertical politico-administrative planes (Ray, 2006).

The interaction between local culture, place attachment and character of local networks is similarly important to Sampson's concept of collective efficacy (Sampson, 2011). For Sampson, the root of the collective efficacy of an area is "the intersection of practices and social meanings with a spatial context" (Sampson, 2011, p. 230). This aspect of face-to-face interaction is inherently better understood in small units where people recognise others than in large, anonymous units. Networks have to be activated in order to be meaningful and in this sense, collective efficacy can be defined as a link between mutual trust, shared expectations among residents and willingness to intervene and interact (Sampson & Morenoff, 1997).

Organisational density and levels of participation in relation to these organisations are crucial, as organisational density is not an equivalent to coordinated action for local interests (Sampson, 2011). Sampson and Morenoff (1997) have constructed a measure of collective efficacy combining informant ratings of the capacity for informal social control with social cohesion. This means that network-density, attachment to place, civic participation, disorder, organisational density, identity and capacity for collective action are variable and analytically separable from structural variables and possible consequences. In this way, the concept of collective efficacy is an answer to the most dominating critique of

social capital (Woolcock, 1998) as it manages to avoid both being a matter of morality and being per se something good and desirable. The composite (and complex) measure is composed of different dimensions and has to be investigated locally and in relation to a problem or a variable before it can be defined as desirable or not.

The conceptual framework of this article is focused on understanding place-based leadership as a combination of local leadership and collective efficacy. Local leadership has been addressed in different ways. Grillitsch and Sotarauta (2020) distinguish between innovative entrepreneurship, institutional entrepreneurship and place-based leadership as the main drivers of local and regional changes, highlighting that these dimensions might be of relevance in understanding why some regions diverge from what could be expected. Thus, they call for more research on agency, their embeddedness in multi-scalar networks and institutional contexts, which creates regional growth-paths (Grillitsch & Sotarauta, 2020). Potluka, Kalman, Musiałkowska, and Idczak (2017) point out that "successful local leadership must share power, have visions and good communication skills and finally have political support including funding and strategic networks" (Potluka et al., 2017, p. 298). Specifically, the authors point to the need for more research on the long-term impact that local governance mechanisms, and involvement of civil society and non-profit leaders have on economic development and governmental efficiency (Potluka et al., 2017). Beer et al. (2019) identify the features of place leadership as a system that directs but does not determine outcomes. This system guides actors and their behaviour and embraces deeply embedded cultural values, including attitudes to social inclusion, unions, the willingness to provide financial incentives to private enterprises and the perception of political risk (Beer et al., 2019). Leadership is a seen as a matter of relationships and social interaction in the places that people actually live, work and play. Or as Collinge and Gibney (2010) argue building on Agnew (2005), the degree to which local leadership is able to draw on the different dimensions of place as locality, locale and sense of place are crucial dimensions of area development.

A consistent line in these contributions is an approach to leadership of rural development that emphasise it as a collective endeavour and social interaction, local networks, local cultures as soft factors that should be taken into account in combination with structural and institutional factors. Thus, we argue that the soft factors are combined in the concept of collective efficacy (Sampson, 2011), as this concept highlights both the role of place identity, collective organisations, the propensity for collective action and relations to vertical scales.

2.1. National Contexts for Rural Cohesion in Denmark and England

It is important to consider wider national factors as they place important structural limitations on the relative autonomy of places. Both localities have experienced the impacts of varieties of neoliberal planning, while in the UK there has been a sustained period of austerity resulting in a significant reduction in resources from central government. Moreover, in Demark there is a high level of local welfare services whereas the picture is very different in the English case. Furthermore, Denmark is characterized by close interlocking relations between local government, business and civil society, this is less so in England where centralization of powers in tandem with a dramatic restructuring of service delivery forms (e.g., contracting out, privatisation) have had damaging effects on these types of interlocking relations.

2.1.1. National Context for Rural Cohesion in Denmark

The 2007 municipal reform (called the Structural Reform) reduced the number of Danish municipalities, all counties were abolished and the territorial administration went from a three-tier to a two-tier system between state and municipalities. The majority of tasks of territorial governance were transferred to the new and bigger municipalities (Andersen, Maloutas, Raco, & Tasan-Kok, 2008; Olesen, 2012). Five new regions were established to administer a number of remaining regional tasks (mainly health). With the 2015 revision of the Danish Planning Act there was an increased focus on planning for growth (Olesen & Carter, 2018). Regional growth forums were introduced as soft planning spaces (Olesen & Carter, 2018) later turning into business houses with the latest devolvement of growth planning to inter-municipal collaboration. This means that the Ministry of Business oversees rural development, while local authorities retain their autonomy in the implementation of rural development programmes. The existing framework of collaborative and participatory approaches to physical planning was retained. All physical plans are developed through a hearing process that gives the public the possibility to influence local planning. This means that a collaborative and participatory approach to territorial development is a natural framework for territorial governance in Denmark. Municipalities have within nationally-decided frames relative autonomy in setting tax rates and prioritizing between welfare services locally, and a complex inter-municipal reimbursement system ensures good quality welfare services even in more remote areas of the country, such as Lemvig. The consequence of this is that Lemvig, like other Danish municipalities, has a relatively high level of autonomy when it comes to developing territorial development strategies. Lemvig municipality is steeped in a form of national path dependency that favours balanced growth and a welfarist emphasis on equity and social inclusion.

The overall goal of the national rural development programme is to support balanced and smart growth in both economic and employment terms in rural areas. However, these more economic goals are explicitly intertwined with ambitions to generate spatial justice

through more balanced development and fair access to services—what they term framing conditions for living in the rural areas (Miljø-og Fødevare ministeriet, Agency, 2014). The programme draws on EU rural development funds which, together with national funds, aims to improve territorial cohesion between urban and rural areas by making rural areas more attractive to live in and by supporting the development of culture and leisure services. The programme is organized as pools of funds, which stakeholders and local communities have to organize to apply to. Formally organized in the 'local action groups,' which covers several municipalities, Lemvig is part of the Lemvig Ringkøbing Skjern local action groups.

2.1.2. National Context for Rural Development UK

Local governance in England is divided between a unitary system (local government at a single level) and a ´two-tier´ system of counties (upper tier) and districts (lower tier) with each tier responsible for different services. This split is reflected in the budgets and resources managed and controlled at these different spatial levels. Since reorganisation in 2019, when the Dorset County Council was abolished, West Dorset is part of Dorset Council which combines the powers of upper and lower tier authorities. Our case study falls within recent rounds of neoliberalism which is characterized by "a variety of market supportive state forms and modes of governance" (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2013, p. 11). At sub-national level, since 1979, these developments have significantly restructured and reduced the role of local government, entailing changes in the way services are delivered (e.g., through contracting out, developing delivery partnerships with a range of private, community and voluntary sector organisations). Moreover, post-2010 and under an austerity regime, there has been a significant reduction in local authority autonomy and budgets, leaving community/voluntary sector organisations to attempt to pick up the slack (see, for overviews, Gray & Barford, 2018; Laffin, 2016; McGimpsey, 2017).

In England, rural policy falls under the control of Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs and its Rural Development Programme for England provides funds for projects to improve agriculture, the environment and rural life. However, the major emphasis has been on agriculture with some projects on reviving/supporting rural market towns. Since 2011, sub-regional partnership arrangements existed with the establishment of Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs). These bodies were intended to be business led and reflect the functional economic geographies of their localities. Dorset has the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership although its territorial scope incorporates more than one functional economic area. A House of Lords (2019) report argued for a more place-based rural strategy noting that successive governments lacked a coherent strategy on rural areas (see, also, Morris, 2017; Shucksmith, 2019). This is a new turn as the concept of territorial cohesion has been more or less absent from UK policy discourse.

3. Methodological Considerations

The research for this article originates from an ongoing EU project COHSMO investigating the relationship between territorial cohesion, urbanization and inequality in seven countries. In each country case studies were carried out in a rural, suburban and urban area. The challenge of conducting cross-national comparison is that the definition of rural differs between countries, and that the administrative units vary greatly. Thus, in England, the local government districts are vastly greater than in Denmark, for example, and there is no regional government. However, the choice of case areas was made with emphasis on the following criteria:

- Low population density (below median for the considered region);
- Tendency for out-migration (perhaps depopulating character);
- Role of agriculture (measured by employment structure and land use) higher than median in the considered region.

Both case studies are representative of rural localities within their own national contexts. Our comparison is based on the differences and similarities in 'conditions,' 'processes' and 'outputs' that characterize those two localities despite their differences in size and population, with a particular focus on the interaction between place identity, culture for participation, collective efficacy and structures of local leadership.

In each area, we began our research with a desk based review of a range of general documents related to demographic and settlement structure, problems and challenges facing each area, key strategic policy documents and any associated documents. Having done this, we moved to the stage of carrying out interviews with key individuals from a range of public, private and community and voluntary organisations. We employed a snowballing technique to generate additional interviews. A total of 20 interviews were carried out in West Dorset. The sample included six community/voluntary actors, eight public sector actors and 6 business actors, each of whom held a senior position within their organisation (e.g., senior officer, project manager). The Danish case study of Lemvig included a total of 24 interviews. The sample included five business actors, five active citizens and 14 governance actors (spanning policy makers, civil servants and other key governance actors).

The interviews were semi-structured following the same guidelines in all seven countries based around common topics. These topics included exploring the role of territorial capital, how local actors would characterize life chances and possible segregation, the coordination and involvement of both local communities and busi-

ness actors in territorial governance, the adaptive competence of local government to changing conditions, and relations to other scales.

4. Rural Case Studies: Lemvig and West Dorset

Our research focuses on two rural case study areas, Lemvig municipality in Denmark and West Dorset in England, and explores the contextual conditions structuring the development of rural cohesion in these localities. Table 1 summarises the key characteristics of these two rural localities in relation to population, demographic, economic and political structure, territorial governance and territorial strengths and weaknesses.

4.1. Lemvig, Denmark

Lemvig is a rural area in the West Coast of Jutland with the town of Lemvig, the only town in the municipality with more than 2,500 inhabitants, being located at the entry to the fjord named Limfjorden (see Figure 1). Lemvig is surrounded by the North Sea and Limfjorden. By land, Lemvig is peripherally located in terms of connectivity to major roads and airports.

Lemvig is a town struggling with a paradoxical problem of being a very well run municipality with a strong local economy, sufficient jobs and substantial services, on the one hand, and on the other experiencing a decline in population, with the total population expected to decrease by 9% in the next ten years. Young people move from Lemvig to larger cities of Denmark for further education and tend not to return to Lemvig after completing their studies. Environmental capital is high in Lemvig—farm land is of high quality; fish stocks are good; and the wind atlas of Lemvig shows the highest wind speed in the country, which is ideal for wind turbines. Lemvig is characterized by political stability, policy integration and economic cautiousness, and easy engagement of local community and businesses in development strategies. The town also works closely with other municipalities in

Table 1. Key characteristics of Lemvig and West Dorset.

Name	Lemvig (Municipality), Denmark	West Dorset (District Council), UK
Population	20,000 inhabitants	101,382 inhabitants
Density	39.30/km^2	94/km^2
Size	508.80km^2	1083.9 km^2
Geography	Peripheral rural area; low degree of urbanization (30% residents live in rural areas)	Peripheral rural area; low degree of urbanization (31% residents in isolated rural communities); dispersed settlement structure of small towns and villages
Demography	Declining and aging population (25.54% over 65)	Declining and aging population (29.8% over 65)
Economic structure	Good local economy with very high employment and productivity scores; predominance of jobs in the primary sector	Declining economy; large public sector workforce with many private sector SMEs; low GVA and productivity; affordability gap
Local electoral system	Proportional electoral system	Majoritarian electoral system for the council district (not individual towns)
Territorial assets	High levels of environmental capital—high quality farm land and coastal resources with potential for further tourism development; culture of entrepreneurialism	High levels of environmental capital—large areas of protected landscape, outstanding coastal area (Jurassic Coast) and cultural heritage with potential for further tourism development
Territorial weaknesses	Depopulation—loss of young people and labour shortage issues	Very fragmented spatial structure—issues of connectivity and accessibility
Territorial Governance	Strong territorial governance; high level of service and infrastructure; strong tradition of community involvement and partnership working	Weak and fragmented territorial governance; services shared between councils and a range of partnerships; lack of political leadership

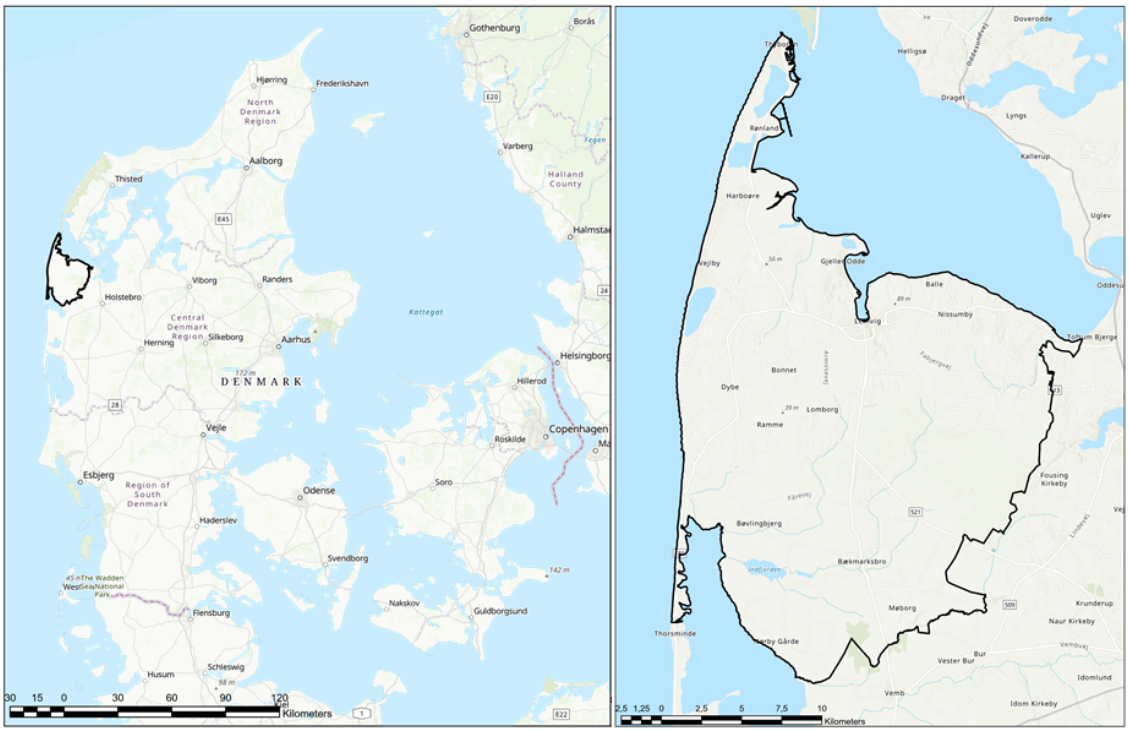

Figure 1. Location of the Municipality of Lemvig, Denmark. Source: The Danish Agency for Data Supply and Efficiency (2020).

Western Jutland as there is an awareness that everyone gains from cooperation rather than competition. This is formalised in the Business Region MidtVest, and in the municipal coordination council, both with advisory competencies rather than decision making power.

4.2. West Dorset

West Dorset is a diverse rural area largely made up of small towns, villages and hamlets. The largest town is Dorchester with a population of almost 20,000 while the remaining towns have populations under 10,000. Overall, the degree of urbanization in West Dorset is low with a highly dispersed settlement structure and a low population density.

As noted in Table 1 in demographic terms West Dorset has an aging population and is also losing qualified young people (a brain drain), it is considered to be a retirement area. In economic terms, West Dorset is characterized by a predominance of public sector jobs and a large proportion of SME's, and although 40% of employed residents in the district are classified as high skill occupations there is a reported shortage of labour with relevant skills or training. Furthermore, productivity and wage levels are lower than the national average.

West Dorset is rich in environmental capital related to its rural and cultural heritage. However, West Dorset faces problems as a result of a declining economy with low levels of pay, connectivity and service accessibility, and a very fragmented spatial structure, which translates into inequalities across the area.

A significant weakness in the area is the lack of political leadership which has inhibited the emergence of effective forms of territorial governance. This is partly a result of a lack of capacity within local government. But it also reflects divisions within the business sector due to its atomized structure that make it difficult for it to collectively represent its interests, the locally organised focus of much of the community and voluntary sector that means they cannot take a strategic view of how they fit into the wider needs of the area, combined with a fragmented settlement structure and the prevalence of local identities. Together, these factors have worked to hinder the strategic development of the area in a way that addresses its collective problems. This has been compounded by the fact that coordination and collaboration within local government and with other stakeholders was/is often limited, intermittent and vertical and horizontal partnerships and joint working is relatively weak.

5. Collective Efficacy, Identity and Leadership in Lemvig and West Dorset

A central element in linkages among groups in rural locations is that they cut across organisations, actor types and differences in power, providing opportunities for crosscutting interaction and coordination. The way this crosscutting interaction takes place in the specific, rural locations are related to the local degree of collective efficacy, local identity and local strategies for addressing issues and problems.

Figure 2. Location of West Dorset, United Kingdom. Source: The Danish Agency for Data Supply and Efficiency (2020).

5.1. Collective Efficacy and Identity

Lemvig ranks among the municipalities with the highest share of locally active residents in Denmark (Jakobsen, Sørensen, & Johansen, 2014). Our research identified a high degree of interlocking and interdependent relations between entrepreneurs, business stakeholders, community stakeholders, NGO's and local public authorities. There is a mentality of taking care of problems in these varied and local webs of social relations—something that is described as built on "the mentality of being self-employed farmers or fishermen located in a remote part of the country where you are not used to getting help" (interview with community actor, 24 August 2018). Another factor is the long history of associational culture. The area is the birthplace of the co-op movement in Denmark, which has not only resulted in benefits for the farmers and many educational facilities along the West Coast but has also been a key condition for the Danish wind industry more recently. This historical identity of the area is presented as a reason for the taking responsibility mentality and for participating in local affairs. This explanation is linked to a certain culture of necessity related to the geographical remoteness of the municipality: They have to manage things themselves as no one will come and help because the municipality is too small and too remote. Many narratives in the interviews centred on a capability to fend for oneself and the local community, and related this to historical path dependencies conditioned by the material surroundings and dependence on natural conditions, which is exacerbated by recent climate challenges. This becomes an incorporated part of habitus in the areas along the West Coast, and result in an attitude of "if we want to get something done then we have to do it ourselves":

> There is sort of a self-enforcing power, which I think is interesting, because where there is will, there is ability. There has to be an institutional foundation, but at the same time this institutional foundation should not be driven, if there are passionate and engaged actors in it. I think this area has succeeded in gathering all the public and private actors in different types of network groups, which there are many of in this area, and where there is a surprisingly good turnout. We are not talking about the exclusive network groups you might see in other locations. (Interview with local business actor, 27 September 2018)

There is a danger these types of networks result either in exclusive old-boys clubs or clientelism. However, the interview material counters both such tendencies. The mind-set of self-reliance and the widespread preferences for an informal and open character of local social life is explained as an outcome of several local circumstances. One explanation is the culture of necessity outlined above. Another is the lack of pronounced social divisions or class differences with only a few very rich people. Everyone seems interested in investing in the local area with rich citizens being no exception. A third explanation is the informal and proactive way the local authority acts towards difficult issues. Authorities reach out to other sectors and central actors, thus contributing to the maintenance of local networks. In Lemvig, there is a strong preference for an informal, open and dynamic character of local networks. The informal way of networking and

the limited size of the population is of vital importance for the development of a wide range of interlocking relations between business, community and public authority actors.

The short distances between central actors and different sectors as well as the informal character of collaboration give local networks a sense of familiarity. Everyone knows everyone, and it is a core value to act for the common good of the locality. The local mind-set is marked by shared expectations and mutual trust, even between individuals that are of different political orientations:

> There are not that many farmers left in the municipality but the old culture of the co-operative movement, non-profit organisations and the whole associational life still plays a role—it is like a generation or just half a generation closer in the memory than in many other places. It also has to do with the low residential density in the sense that you cannot hide or skive. It is a transparent milieu and it is easy to distinguish between the ones that who are doing the hard work and the ones that are not. (Interview with local head of school, 26 September 2018)

A strong tradition for participation in local associations and in non-profit organisations persists and many local attractions and cultural institutions are mainly run by volunteers. For example, the volunteer society around Bovbjerg Lighthouse (with 150 volunteers), which is a thriving cultural centre and beacon for the area. Here the active resident heading Bovbjerg Lighthouse explains how the success depends not only on the amount of volunteers, but that intermediaries (Bosworth et al., 2016) with connections to local decisions makers were able to lobby national and local authorities so that buying and preserving the old lighthouse building became a possibility:

> There are three factors involved in its success from my perspective. That it was locally engaged residents who saw the potential and put things in motion, that there are social relations running all the way through the municipality and which you can mobilize and activate, and the interplay between political authorities, municipality, state, and region. Those three factors: entrepreneurs, the social capital and the interplay with the authorities, were crucial for its success. (Interview active resident, 23 August 2018)

In this way it was not only the entrepreneurial ideas of local residents, but their interlocking networks to decision makers who provided the legal and financial backup that was crucial for its success. Place narratives and place identities become prominent features in explaining the high level of collective efficacy. Moreover, when the narratives of engagement become the dominant cultural narratives of place, people also align themselves with these narratives. Thus the ability to mobilize this form of meaning-making and entrepreneurial peasant culture and broadening this into something that is an identity of the Lemvig community (Kumpulainen & Soini, 2019) is central to why Lemvig has managed to prosper despite depopulation and difficulties in attracting businesses; something they have in common with other coastal regions with the same natural conditions.

While there are large numbers of community organisations and stakeholders in West Dorset, their focus is very local and the lack of a collective West Dorset identity makes it difficult to identify common interests around which more over-arching forms of collective mobilisation can be organised. Thus, the overall levels of collective efficacy are relatively low and this has impacts on the life chances of the more disadvantaged sectors of the area's population and creates inequalities in terms of service access for the more disadvantaged groups in the area. These have been accentuated by the impacts of long-term austerity policies that have seen a dramatic reduction in the budgets of local service providers and a focus by local authorities on statutory service provision. These reductions in support for local government has negatively impacted on collective efficacy, not only in terms of local government's own capacity, but also through reductions in support to community organisations making it difficult for this sector to work with both local government and other community organisations.

There are a few positive examples of local collective action in some towns (e.g., Bridport) where mobilisation has taken place around local forms of development and the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. These local attempts at developing place-based strategies have influenced local government policy resulting in improved partnership working in some towns. However, these initiatives have often been led by resourceful and well connected individuals who might be described as social entrepreneurs (e.g., Bridport) with some Town Council support, but they are the exception rather than the rule.

> In Bridport's case I'd put it down to one particular character who was involved in a number of different groups and was very, very passionate and very driven and, actually, I see his footprint in, not only Bridport, but in a number of other initiatives that happen in the area. (Interview with Local government economic regeneration officer, 9 September 2018)

Generally speaking, the community sector finds it difficult to agree on common issues/problems, develop collective responses to them that transcend particular localities and collectively represent their interests to local government, thus undermining collective efficacy.

Regarding identity, a fragmented settlement structure and the prevalence of local identities have translated into a lack of cohesiveness and collective identity in West Dorset. There are a multitude of community organisations but these tend to be based on towns, villages and hamlets with an overwhelming focus on the issues and

problems of the locality: "If…I had to really characterise Dorset, you've got enormously independent towns with a great sense of self-identity, but not necessarily pulling in the same direction" (interview with community leader, 9 September 2018).

What this implies is that despite the high levels of institutional capital in small places there is a rather inward looking climate that mitigates against wider cooperation and joint working between smaller places as part of the territorial governance of this largely rural area.

The above descriptions of the degree of collective efficacy can be summarized in the table below. Because collective efficacy is a composite measure, West Dorset is characterized as having a low level of collective efficacy. This is because the high number of active organizations is fragmented leading to a lack of collective vision and collective connections to local and regional governance. Reversely, Lemvig is characterized by a high level of collective efficacy as the interlocking relations facilitate collective action for local development. Different compositions of the elements of collective efficacy set different contexts for how forms of local leadership can mobilize territorial capital in order to improve territorial cohesion.

5.2. Forms of Local Leadership

Mobilizing local leadership is, as Beer and Clower (2014) note, a matter of focusing on leadership rather than on leaders. Further, this is connected closely to collaboration, power sharing and trust in the formation of horizontally based leadership coalitions (Beer & Clower, 2014). Nations marked by strong centralized systems of government are more likely to experience local leadership deficits (Beer & Clower, 2014). The latter is very relevant in the case of West Dorset. The centralized system of government focuses on specified outputs and outcomes at the expense of a strategic approach to the challenges and opportunities confronting West Dorset. Places where power is centralized are less likely to accommodate the emergence of local leaders and more likely to follow modes of government that hinder local initiatives (Beer & Clower, 2014). This is critical in relation to West Dorset being subject to the UK New Public Management mode of government preoccupied with rules and regulations because it does not function well in the rapid changing, information rich, knowledge intensive society and economy (Stimson, Stough, & Salazar, 2009)

There is a pragmatic approach to strategic governance in Lemvig focusing on doing things and solving problems rather than producing a lot of policy strategies. Overall, the strategy is related to the refusal to be peripheral. Lemvig wants to use its location and size proactively emphasising the advantages of being small and agile. The municipal council of Lemvig is highly engaged in territorial development of the municipality. For example, the municipality has been the catalyst for generating relations between local businesses and universities in bigger cities. They have invited people from higher education as pathfinders in order to generate common knowledge of the university systems. According to our interview with the local government chief executive, the aim is to attract employees with higher education to the area and to show young local people that there are jobs to return to. Moreover, the municipality has a proactive planning policy when it comes to the attraction of new businesses and securing high quality services for the villages they believe will continue to thrive. Another example is in relation to the climate industry and sustainability. Here, the visionary ideas of the former mayor together with a group of entrepreneurs creating one of the first biogas plants and support from the wind power entrepreneurs has meant that the municipality can brand itself as an important area for the industry and development related to climate change. According to our interview with a local business actor, the proactive stance on these issues has resulted in the municipality being part of the regional EU funded Coast2Coast project and has secured the location of a Klimatorium, a centre for research and development of climate issues, at the Harbour in Lemvig.

Table 2. Outlining characteristics of collective efficacy.

	Lemvig	West Dorset
Place identity	Strong collective	Locally strong but focussed on particular places—thus overall fragmentized and particularised
Activity patterns	High and pragmatic, goal oriented	Highly localized activity based on particular places
Organizational infrastructure	Densely organized but informal	Highly localized and inward looking
% Social networks	Social networks are interlocked	High number of organizations with local focus
Segregation	Limited segregation	Limited segregation with hidden micro-pockets of isolated deprivation
Collective efficacy	High	Low

Based on the studies in Lemvig on the importance of territorial ties and heterogeneous networks, Jørgensen, Fallov and Nielsen (in press) have termed this certain type of local governance that is interwoven with local business life and local civil society in handling territorial challenges as governance efficacy. The interactions between the locally specific culture for participation (collective efficacy), the facilitation of networks and the pragmatic governance attitude are the main ingredients. The term governance efficacy is in this way a concept that focus on the ability of local government to instrumentalize collective efficacy (Sampson, 2011) towards territorial development. This governance efficacy enables the mobilization of territorial capital in the most effective way through changing local networks of central actors within business, civil society and local government. The policy strategy narrative relayed in our interviews with local government officials and business actors is that the municipality can utilize the high degree of efficacy displayed by local public servants and infrastructural investment in key welfare services as a means to maintain a high level of local services, which can then attract new families to the area. Nevertheless, the structural pull of metropole centres and the lack of jobs locally for women still counteract this proactive strategy.

West Dorset lacks bodies that transcend local boundaries. This could facilitate the creation of collective organisations bringing together a range of stakeholders and forming the basis for the creation of mechanisms to support territorial governance. The Dorset LEP seeks to work with employers, private providers, Further Education Colleges and schools, in relation to the organisation of Vocational Training and Labour Market policies and has sought to address these policy fields in its Local Industrial Strategy (LIS; Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership, 2018). A key aim being to improve the opportunities for investment in broad-based and targeted regeneration activity in the southern and western part of the county, to protect local strengths, generate jobs and growth and help to reduce economic deprivation. The plan was organised around four key themes—competitive Dorset, talented Dorset, connected Dorset and responsive Dorset—and it seek to integrate Vocational Training, Labour Market policies and regeneration into the overall strategy.

The LIS builds on the national government's Industrial Strategy document (H.M. Government, 2017), and attempts to identify key industrial sectors to support in order to facilitate the growth in productivity and to enhance the area's competitiveness. However, the LIS has been criticized for the lack of a clear place-based approach to address the diversity of Dorset and for being weak on implementation, making it difficult to identify the particular policy bundles that would be developed and deployed to mobilise the forms of territorial capital present and address perceived weaknesses. Other criticisms included the restricted process of engagement and consultation with stakeholders and the lack of any notions of inclusive growth and thus of social inclusion/cohesion in the strategy document: "It's not joined up and in my humble opinion the LEP is actually the grit in the oyster here because the LEP almost works against all the initiatives that people are trying to get together" (interview with business leader, 13 December 2018). More generally, our interviews revealed a general lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the LEP and both its ability and capacity to provide strategic leadership and action.

6. Conclusion

Lemvig and West Dorset are areas struggling with demographic decline and particularly the loss of young people, due to their remote locations and lack of connectivity. At the same time, they are both places with a potential to develop the tourist industry due to their environmental capital. What the comparison of Lemvig and West Dorset have shown is that the rural varies socially, economically and in terms of government, leadership and territorial cohesion. Variations in rural areas foster different conditions for stimulating both growth and territorial cohesion. Based on the two case studies we argue that the relationship between collective efficacy and local leadership is a crucial factor in neo-endogenous development. Peters (2012, as cited in Beer & Clower, 2014, p. 14) has distinguished between "leading by doing" and "leading by talking," the first is related to bonding social capital and the latter to bridging capital. In relation to how the dimensions of collective efficacy are operationalised in the present study, they refer to the character of the organizational infrastructure and social networks. Lemvig is led by "doing the things that needs to be done" (interview with Mayor, 24 August 2018) and in this sense lead by doing. At the same time, Lemvig is densely organised both with informal (bonding social capital) relations and interlocking connections to local government (bridging capital). Conversely, the organizational activity in West Dorset is particularly hampered/vulnerable by a lack of connections to other scales of government. Local networks become more inward looking, which results in localized and fragmented local development. Low collective efficacy is in the English case of West Dorset coupled with a limited room for manoeuvre for local government, as the national context is structured by centralized strategies emphasizing business partnerships rather than broader efforts regarding civil society engagement and how to bring it closer to the local governance system.

The way Sampson (2011) has defined collective efficacy as a composite measure of activity patterns/routines, organizational infrastructure, social networks and segregation/resource stratification provides a means to specify the soft-aspects of local contexts. In place leadership literature, this soft content is referred to as an important dimension of local leadership for development (Beer & Clower, 2014; Beer et al., 2019; Collinge & Gibney, 2010; Grillitsch & Sotarauta, 2020; Potluka et al., 2017). Our effort through this compara-

tive case study has been to put empirical flesh on the bones of the conditions for neo-endogenous development and its relation to social cohesion. We have shown how rural development and the governance of rural cohesion, understood as a combination of local leadership and collective efficacy, contribute to a clearer understanding of how this soft dimension plays a key role in carving out local variations on the ground.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Rethinking Suburban Governance in the CEE Region: A Comparison of Two Municipalities in Poland and Lithuania

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Abstract
In this article, we seek to analyse and compare the modalities of suburban governance in Polish and Lithuanian municipalities looking at the territorial development trends typical for the Central Eastern Europe region. The theoretical elaborations on suburban governance are evolving towards the analysis of constellations of diverse actors, institutions and processes that define the politics and design of suburban spaces. We assume that there are similarities and differences in suburban governance in the analysed localities compared to Western countries in terms of networks, actors and territorialisation of local politics. Despite both suburban municipalities showing similarities in suburban development patterns (growing middle-class population, economic capital accumulation, suburban sprawl and interconnectedness with the metropolitan zone), the analysis reveals the main differences in terms of composition and importance of horizontal and vertical networks, the role of local stakeholders and collective action. The article concludes that both localities represent a specific approach to suburban governance marked by low stakeholders' participation, dependence on the top-down vertical state and regional networks and the creation of urban-suburban policies within metropolitan areas.

Keywords
local government; social mobilization; suburban governance; suburban municipalities

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1. Introduction

The article takes inspiration from the territorial governance concept established in the broader theoretical discussion on the neo-institutionalism perspective in analysing governance routines, networks, mechanisms and practices (Healey, 1999, 2004; Jessop, 2000, 2002; Lowndes, 2001). Governance institutions underline the character of formal and informal collective action looking at the relations between citizens, stakeholders and other actors (Lowndes, 2001). An extensive research literature indicates that territorial governance is used as a specific term that refers to the interaction between governance networks, practices and routines in urban (or metropolitan) and rural spaces (Davoudi, Evans, Governa, & Santangelo, 2008; Le Galès, 2002).

Our article traces the mechanisms and modalities of suburban governance. The suburbanity and suburbanisation processes manifest the decentralisation of power, redistribution, segregation and inclusiveness, changing the patterns of urban-suburban interactions, forms and contents (Ekers, Hamel, & Keil, 2012). It is important

to discuss the different forces that shape the transformation of suburban governance, considering political, economic and social dynamics. Regional differences are also significant. The existing literature demonstrates that it is a difficult task to trace down the regional socio-economic and political forces shaping suburban governance processes. Our article is oriented towards addressing the literature gap on the Central Eastern Europe (CEE) suburban governance schemes and practices. Can we refer to specific modes of suburban governance in the CEE region? What are the governance practices, policies, actors and networks that lead to the suburban character? What are the similarities and differences of suburban governance compared to Western countries when it comes to how we understand the qualities of suburban places considering the territorial and functional interconnectedness with urban zones? From the urban governance perspective, we elaborate on the understanding of suburban governance considering vertical and horizontal networks, actors and arenas. Our main hypothesis relies on the assumption that the suburban municipalities in the CEE region have their specific 'suburban' approach to governance in terms of actors, roles, strategies, interests, networks and discourses.

The article uses the comparison of two municipal cases in two countries that had experienced similar institutional paths concerning economic growth and territorial cohesion policies since the EU accession process in 2004 as a part of the CEE region: the Kaunas district municipality in Lithuania and the municipality of Pruszcz Gdański in Poland. The selected municipal cases (one municipality in each country) represent suburban characteristics such as urban sprawl, interdependence within metropolitan zones, overlapping public services infrastructures and different horizontal and vertical inter-policy coordination mechanisms. We use the qualitative datasets from the fieldwork in suburban Lithuanian and Polish localities (municipalities) collected in 2019. The interviews were performed with the local authorities, businesses and community stakeholders to deconstruct the territorial understanding and discourse of territorial place-based policies.

The article is organised as follows. First, the theoretical assumptions on territorial governance and suburban spaces are discussed, drawing the contextual background of vertical and horizontal coordination networks, a variety of local actors and collective action. The research outline brings a comparative basis for the methodological framework to analyse both suburban municipalities in Poland and Lithuania. Subsequently, the contextual factors of suburban localities turn to the empirical suburban governance analysis focusing on the local governance actors, arenas, vertical and horizontal coordination modes and collective action in the two case studies. The article provides tentative conclusions explaining the differences and similarities of suburban governance in CEE region compared to Western processes of suburban development.

2. Theoretical Framework: Territorial Governance and Suburban Places

The concept of territorial governance and the shift from government to governance or multi-level governance opens the broader theoretical discussion on collective territorial action, local democracy and mobilisation (Rhodes, 2000). Territorial governance is understood as "the process of territorial organization of the multiplicity of relations that characterize interactions among actors and different, but non-conflictual, interests" (Davoudi et al., 2008, p. 37). Additionally, the ESPON report interprets the concept of territorial governance through the dimensions of coordinating actions of inter-related actors and institutions, integrating policy sectors, mobilising stakeholders, adapting to territorial context and realising territorial specificities (ESPON, 2014). The definition is based on the integration of the decision-making process. The main challenge of urban sociology and spatial planning analysis is to develop a consistent framework for analysing governance mechanisms and practices in areas that promote their specific suburban forms of coexistence.

2.1. How to Integrate Territorial Governance and Suburban Spaces?

If we look at the territorial governance approach, there are different interpretations of how to operationalise the concept (Atkinson, Tallon, & Williams, 2019; Jessop, 2002). In general, four territorial governance issues are essential: vertical coordination, horizontal coordination, the participation and involvement of social stakeholders' interests and territorialised collective actions (Davoudi et al., 2008). Vertical coordination refers to the principle of re-scaling and subsidiary in self-governance systems. It also indicates the allocation of decision-making power to different governmental scales for implementing decentralisation policies in countries (Sellers & Lidström, 2007). The horizontal coordination dimension underlines the networking and collaborative mechanisms among different local-level stakeholders and actors. The integration of different territorial assets and resources and implementation of sectoral, local policies are linked to the vertical subordination as well as involving a variety of central and municipal actors (multi-level governance). The participation dimension is connected to the involvement forms and strategies used by stakeholders and policy actors. Here, the capacities and resources are necessary for the decision-making and implementation processes of local welfare policies. Finally, the aspect of territory as a decision-making arena in linking territorial governance, local assets and collective action is important.

In the contemporary world, the suburban spaces are expanding in territorial and cultural sense (Ekers et al., 2012). The theoretical discussion noticed that suburbanisation leads to economic, political, social and spatial expansion. The suburban sprawl overwhelms the

metropolitan discourse with the fast growth of capital, human resources and changing modes of the relationship between local-region and state. The critical point turns to the lack of consistency in suburban planning processes and decentralisation processes in Eastern Europe (Hirt, 2007; Hirt & Petrovic, 2011).

2.2. Suburban Governance in the CEE Region

It is impossible to formulate a universal framework for the analysis of territorial governance modes in suburban areas. The term 'suburban' seems rather abstract and aggregates extremely different processes and socio-economic contexts. Various authors emphasize that there is more than one universal global definition of 'suburbanity' (Ekers et al., 2012). We can instead do it for the specific groups of regions and countries. Even within the European Union, the suburban context is very different. Some suburban processes are very similar in the CEE region compared to those observed in Western Europe: dynamic immigration and spatial development increase in the share of the urban and sub-urban population within the society. However, there are also significant differences, i.e., up to the beginning of the 21st century, most of the CEE suburbs had not experienced ethical diversity. Besides, unlike most of the EU countries, the CEE after the economic transition has not developed advanced spatial planning instruments of integrated and legally binding agglomeration plans. It results in the relatively spontaneous development of the suburban spaces and urban divisions, for example, gated communities (Blinnikov, Shannin, Sobolev, & Volkova, 2006; Hirt, 2007; Hirt & Petrovic, 2011; Stoyanov & Frantz, 2006) and intensification of urban sprawl. For many years, the CEE metropolises have been functioning rather as a simple aggregation of the core city and neighbouring municipalities with no direct emphasis on strategic and spatial coordination of the policies. Suburban processes in the CEE context are a mixture of metropolisation coordination (where suburban municipalities are instead a supporting actor) and neoliberal thinking.

Thus, when trying to merge different dimensions of territorial governance contexts with the European suburban specificities described in the literature, we should keep in mind several contextual differences between the best-described Western European suburban areas and the CEE context (e.g., Hess, Tammaru, & Leetmaa, 2012; Krisjane & Berzins, 2012):

- relatively low importance of ethnic issues, minority conflicts are rare or absent;
- economic collapse after 1989 and rapid growth after the accession to the EU in 2004;
- weak and unstable spatial planning standards, often resulting in urban sprawl;
- high emigration rate after the 2000s, mostly from rural areas to the big cities or abroad.

2.3. Analytical Perspective for Suburban Governance Analysis

For analytical purposes, we refer to Patsy Healey's (2004) perspective on governance as a collective action mode. The analytical levels demonstrate continuous interactions within governance networks and actors, including local arena specificities, governance processes and governance culture (for an adapted summary, see Table 1.).

The first dimension of the local arena looks at the variety of actors, roles and interests in territorial governance. In suburban cases, the suburban actors are highly

Table 1. Suburban specificities of territorial governance.

Level	Dimension	Suburban context in the literature
Local arena specificities	Actors	High dynamics, urban sprawl, diversification of actors (old versus new inhabitants, ethnic conflicts), diversified territorial identity, high expectations regarding public service delivery
	Arenas	Weak local arenas, social life concentrates in the core city(-ies)
Territorial governance processes	Vertical coordination	Unstable networks, coalitions beneath and above territorial borders, a strong influence of above-local actors (e.g., big companies), the strong influence of above-local policies (e.g., national, sectorial) shaping the local discourse
	Horizontal coordination	Strong metropolitan (urban-suburban interconnectedness) coordination
	Participation and involvement of social stakeholders' interests	Low involvement on local policy co-creation
	Territorialised collective actions	Diverse according to metropolitan governance standards (level of local suburban autonomy, the scope of above-local tasks)

Source: Authors' elaboration, adapted from Davoudi et al. (2008), Ekers et al. (2012), Faludi (2012) and Healey (2004).

diversified and decentralised. Suburban policy actors are municipal inhabitants, business sector, NGO and local administration understood as officials and elected representatives. The literature of suburban governance concentrates mostly on the social contextual specificities of municipalities suffering from fast urban sprawl and immigration and spots light on the potential conflicts between groups of citizens. On the one hand, the 'new metropolitan class' of the suburban society is composed mostly of relatively young, affluent and educated people (Swianiewicz & Lackowska, 2008). However, according to the literature, their territorial identity is above local; they identify with the whole metropolitan area more than their suburban municipality. Sometimes their mobility and openness result in a kind of 'de-localized' identity of a "creative class" (Florida, 2002).

On the other hand, suburban citizens are also those living in the same place for decades, often representing post-rural families. The suburban arenas face the typical problem related to both under-bound (family) and over-bound (above-local) catchment areas (Bennett, 1997). The same problem may concern, e.g., the local business sector: Many locally based enterprises can be oriented on the regional and metropolitan market, thus less interested in local politics.

Secondly, the governance process means access to power and forming governing coalitions in the territory (Healey, 2004, p. 93). The literature on suburban political elite's behaviours and formation is relatively scarce. Acritical aspect specific to suburban governance schemes is the relatively high dependence of above-local actors' policies and decisions made outside the municipal borders. Suburban municipalities are strongly dependent on the national framework for metropolitan/agglomeration coordination and the scope of available spatial policy tools (or a lack of it) is decisive, e.g., urban sprawl control. Besides, the suburban economy relies on the broader socio-economic context of the agglomeration, where the policy conducted by the core city(-ies) plays the leading role. Thus, operation within various vertical and horizontal networks is the crucial importance of suburban areas.

3. The Research Outline

3.1. Comparative Background

As it was suggested in the previous sections, the study aims to confront the processes and specificities of suburban governance suggested by different scholars with the two municipality case studies from the CEE region. We assume that there are suburban governance practices that can be compared in different contexts in terms of governance patterns, networks and actors in different places. From the other point, the national social-economic and demographic factors and circumstances and local political decisions might also bring a different approach to the adaptation of suburban understanding of place. Referring to the dimensions of territorial governance listed in Table 1, we propose the following set of research questions that allow looking at comparative contexts in two suburban localities (Ekers et al., 2012; Healey, 2004):

- What types of local actors and stakeholders can we identify in suburban territories?
- How is the process of governing coalitions and network formation organised in suburban municipalities?
- What are the relations with the metropolitan area and the other upper-level administrative or political actors in two municipal cases (in horizontal and vertical perspective)?
- How does it differ from the patterns and mechanisms described in the suburban governance literature?

3.2. Empirical Dataset and Selection of Cases

To answer the questions on suburban governance modes, we use the empirical dataset based on a research project implemented in seven EU countries (Denmark, Greece, Italy, UK, Austria, Poland and Lithuania). Among the other research activities, the project methodology envisaged qualitative research in suburban, urban and rural municipalities in each participating country (LAU level municipalities). The research was carried out in one large metropolis in each country, one suburban and one rural locality (municipality). Our article focuses on the suburban municipalities in two participating countries, Poland and Lithuania. Selected municipalities represent the diversity of suburban development concerning territorial capital, local stakeholders' involvement and local governance arrangements. In Lithuania, we selected Kaunas district municipality for the suburban case, which represents a sizeable outer ring municipality characterised by the fast-growing population and outward commuting networks via the metropolitan area. In Poland, we have chosen Pruszcz Gdański, one of the leading satellite localities of the Tricity (Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot) metropolitan area in the Pomerania region.

Following project methodology, 33 semi-structured interviews were carried out in total: 20 in Kaunas district municipality, 13 in the municipality of Pruszcz Gdański. In each locality, the interviews were conducted with the community stakeholders (community organisations, NGOs), business stakeholders and public authorities (municipal officials involved in planning, business relations, municipal officials and state institution representatives). In both countries, the interviews were carried out in June-September of 2018. Semi-structured interviews were conducted following the synchronised interview guidelines for all countries dedicated to all three groups of respondents. Our article focuses only on the aspects of territorial governance that permit us to define the similarities and deficiencies of suburban char-

acter in both countries. The other part of the article gives more answers to the theoretical assumptions defined in our comparative framework.

4. Case Studies' Local Context

The article focuses on two different suburban municipalities in Poland (Pruszcz Gdański municipality) and Lithuania (Kaunas district municipality) that turn to a comparison of several suburban characteristics. The research outline presents the justification for the selection of the cases in both countries.

Kaunas district municipality surrounds the metropolitan area of the second largest city of Kaunas in Lithuania. Kaunas district municipality is one of the largest suburban municipalities in the country, with a population of 96,441 thousand inhabitants in 2020. It has strong interrelatedness with the metropolitan area of Kaunas city in terms of urban governance, public services, infrastructure and local population flows. In this sense, both urban and suburban municipalities have a significant potential for investments and the potential for creating polycentric urban districts and functional transportation systems, the programs for the renewal of residential districts and the use of cultural potential and active local communities. It is also an example of significant suburban demographic growth. The most considerable population growth was between 1996 and 2019, which reached 17.42% compared to other municipalities according to the national statistical data. The more significant number of arrivals is explained by the fact that young families started to move to the suburbs because of rapid private housing development projects. In the Kaunas district municipality case, the municipality-led suburbanisation process turned to the problems of deliberate planning of housing and recreation zones, market infrastructure development and effective land use, especially in the zones close to the metropolitan city. The dominant narrative around local territorial assets within Kaunas district municipality are those that one might expect to find in post-soviet conurbations in the CEE region, one that has extensive economic development indicators.

In what concerns the Polish case, Pruszcz Gdański is a suburban municipality of 30 thousand inhabitants located within Tricity metropolitan area in Pomerania region (South Baltic coastline). The municipality neighbours the city of Gdańsk—the core of the TriCity. Pruszcz Gdański is a suburban town and an important node in a regional settlement network—the town is an administrative centre of a county composed of eight municipalities and counting more than 110 thousand inhabitants. It is also a centre of economic activity. It is very well connected to the metropolitan core (via the A1/S6 Highway, National Route 91 and the railway). Both natural population change and net migration rate are positive, with apparent domination of the latter in the overall population growth. Thanks to the suburban location, the population over the last 10–15 years more than doubled. This trend should continue in the following decades as the locality is a part of an intensively suburbanising area and commuting zone of the metropolitan core. Secondly, Pruszcz Gdański is an important centre of economic activity and is characterised by an absorbent labour market. The location near the seaport and main transportation corridors makes it a particularly attractive location for logistics companies and distribution centres. The indicators of the personal income also place Pruszcz Gdański among the most affluent localities in the region. Apart from the private sector, the military air force's base is located there with plans to be developed. Pruszcz has huge and developing investment areas. Pruszcz as a 'southern gate' to Gdańsk City and is taking the benefits of this position. As in the Kaunas district case, the internal migration drives the development of urban infrastructure, creates demand for public services and is beneficial to the labour market. Although most new residents are young people, the locality is no stranger to the problem of ageing. The issue of the elderly is increasing in Pruszcz Gdański. It becomes more important than the 'classical' scope of social service (poverty, etc.). Considering the territorial bottleneck, the most crucial challenge for the locality is roads and public transport. Another challenge is to catch up with the suburbanisation processes with adequate spatial management tools and plans to control it better.

5. Results

5.1. Perception of Local Governance Actors and Arenas

5.1.1. Actors

5.1.1.1. Local Authorities

Referring to local authorities' participation in suburban processes, one could focus on a different interpretation of roles and interests in suburban-driven policies. Local municipal authorities and mayors are those that pay attention to various local actors and their benefits. The modes of coordination and management might vary between both suburban localities.

In Kaunas suburban locality, the municipal administration and the mayor are considered the main actors in territorial development policies. The municipality uses a sectoral approach to meet the territorial needs, focusing mainly on welfare services, education and quality of public infrastructure. The elderships (territorial subunits of municipal administration) that have some autonomy in small-scale decisions, but are mostly dependent on the municipality or central government's programs, funding and plans, still play a critical role in connecting the functions of municipality and locality needs. As interviews indicate, the local authorities are responsible for the inter-organisational collaborations and private-public partnerships in the locality. According to the local strategic development plan, the local insti-

tutional networking is enacted using private initiatives, non-governmental organizations, and promotion of voluntary work for integration of socially vulnerable groups or individuals.

In Pruszcz Gdański, the political leader (mayor) is often mentioned as a critical asset of the commune thanks to his vision, determination and courage in applying for the external funds. He has been re-elected four times since 2002 with very high support (83.5% support in the last election in 2018 with 55.4% turnout). Local politics is perceived as very much mayor centred. Despite local government declarations, our interviewees assess that local administration does not partner from outside the town hall in the policymaking process. Moreover, the local government is not expected to do so. As one local businessman put it: "We all have our job to be done; we work in different areas." Other interviewees clearly express their expectation that local authorities should act on their own in a purely administrative manner. Some of the local politicians (councillors) see themselves as reviewers rather than co-creators of policy, which should be developed by the mayor.

Moreover, the local authorities (mayor and deputy mayors) are not interested in stimulating new public-private initiatives. They declare being afraid of decreasing transparency in consequence of the governance style of policymaking. Despite some financial difficulties in catching-up investment needs, it is much easier to conduct investments independently than in a different kind of partnership.

5.1.1.2. Business Actors

The involvement of business stakeholders and public/private partnerships are also necessary for the design and implementation of the suburbanisation process in terms of capital accumulation and flows (Ekers et al., 2012).

In the Kaunas district municipality case, the main business actors are large industrial companies located in Kaunas Free Economic Zone that operates as the largest employer in the region with more than 5 thousand employees and 24 foreign companies in 2020. Referring to business actors, the main factors that foster suburban entrepreneurialism are related to strong inter-organisational networks within large companies in Kaunas Free Economic Zone and their small and medium-sized subcontractors (Kaunas suburban business actor). Nevertheless, the other business actor—suburban small and medium businesses—are not always actively involved in local policies because the municipality and elderships do not often invite entrepreneurs to the public meetings or discussions on critical local issues. The interviews demonstrate that the lack of a shared understanding of public interests and ineffective negotiations between the municipality and businesses limits entrepreneurs' initiatives from a more active role in territorial development (suburban business actor). Only a small number of local entrepreneurs take a proactive role in suburban development policies.

In Pruszcz Gdański, the leading employers among large companies are LPP (retailing company logistics centre), Poczta Polska (the distribution centre of the national postal operator), Crown Packaging and Smurfit Kappa (international producers of packaging). Many local small-sized enterprises accompany them. The general assessment of the involvement of entrepreneurs in co-creating local policies and management is unclear. Some interviewees see that entrepreneurs are not involved in making the policies. Contacts of local municipalities with local business sectors are incidental, mostly informal, and described as 'responsive'—they occur when the specific problem is to be solved. They only cooperate in consulting the schedule of public investment processes. There is a problem in mobilising broader collective action in the local business environment. The interviewees do not blame local authorities for the low involvement of the local business sector. There are two most frequently indicated reasons for this: on the one hand, local firms are too big (thus, not interested in local politics) or too small (therefore, concentrated on day-to-day operations) to get involved in policymaking. On the other hand, the local administration scope of tasks is not attractive for the business sector; they do not expect much from the public sphere.

5.1.1.3. Role of Local Social Actors and Citizens

Low level of community participation and social stakeholders' involvement is typical for both suburban municipalities. Our interviews demonstrate that civic engagement's bottom-up effects are understood as a matter of minor importance in both localities. The shortage of leadership and expertise of local community activists is treated as the main impediment to the successful implementation of public services.

In Kaunas suburban locality, the main social actors are local community centres (more than 20 organisations) and NGOs' operating in the welfare services. Kaunas district Community Council and NGO Council initiated by local authorities, provide an essential arena in expressing community voice to suburban development. Community stakeholders focus on territorial activation projects, the efficiency of collective mobilisation, the importance of local leadership and improving access to local welfare services. The impact of local communities and activists refers to small-scale interventions related to cultural projects, public infrastructure and the provision of public services (public transport, recreational zones, street maintenance and care for the elderly).

In Pruszcz Gdański municipality, there are more than 70 recognised local associations active in various fields (sports clubs, education, culture, social care, tourism, ecology and sustainable development). Surprisingly, the role of community actors in the provision of local public services is minimal. The only exception in social care, e.g.,

mentally disabled people and seniors. The most active is the local senior citizen community, represented by three organisations and a council advising the mayor. The municipality prepares, adopts and implements yearly plans of cooperation with local NGOs (required by national law). These plans are used mainly to define the basic rules of the bids for public funding distributed by the municipalities to the NGOs. However, many interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with the degree of self-commitment and self-organisation of the inhabitants. The activeness of local leaders and public actors in organising is coupled with a general willingness to participate. Generally, local society is commonly perceived as very integrated with no clear divisions nor conflicts.

5.1.2. Arenas

Local arenas focus on the spaces of collective interactions. In suburban territories, the local arenas might differ in terms of how deliberative efforts are organised. In both cases, the mobilisation of the collective action reflects weak civic resources and traditions.

In the Kaunas district municipality case, the local deliberative arenas are less critical for collective decisions. In dealing with the changing suburban context (the increasing population of young families with kids, industrial zones, growing economic productivity and explosive development of suburban residential areas), Kaunas district municipality uses occasional deliberative practices for local stakeholders, for example, public discussions, deliberations and meetings with citizens. As interviews with local authorities reveal, the elderships are responsible for the formal communication with various stakeholders' groups; for example, they initiate formal meetings and debates with inhabitants to discuss territorial development plans.

In general, in the Polish case, local governance processes are powerfully concentrated within the town hall. There are only several exceptions from this rule. Surprisingly, it seems that the most crucial lobbying group is senior citizens. The Third Age University (run by an NGO) is a thriving organisation with approximately 400 students. The Council of Senior Citizens serves as a consultation body in the town hall. Its role is to represent the needs of senior citizens and their organisations. It puts forward initiatives aimed at integrating the senior community (meetings, events) and providing better health care for them, but it does not seem to play an essential role in policymaking. Apart from that, there are no other institutionalised territorial cooperation arenas. For several years, the mayor has organised a regular (once per year) Christmas meeting for local businessmen, but it does not play a role of a regular consultative platform. It is rather treated as an occasion for building horizontal inter-sectorial business relationships.

Finally, the comparison of both suburban cases (summarized in Table 2) emphasises the challenging context impeding the formulation of inclusive local development strategies. Suburban territories are organised around different spaces within the lack of functional interconnectedness, especially between business and civic actors. Suburban business actors focus on economic capital accumulation and growth coalitions. Local public authorities, including the mayor, face regional and state regulations on different issues (spatial segregation, housing policy, public services delivery, infrastructure development and economic growth).

5.2. Perception of Local Governance Schemes

The main question analysed here involves the mechanisms and arrangements of suburban governance, collaborations and coordination of local networks and relations with the other actors important for suburban policies. What is the level of the above-local binding of local policies and their horizontal coordination? What is the role of local stakeholders involved in territorial governance and policymaking? We look at different perspectives of community, local governance and business stakeholders in Polish and Lithuanian suburban municipalities to reveal the diversity of territorial governance perceptions. First, the suburban mechanism of local networks and coalitions is essential for both localities. The qualitative interview data indicate that it is possible to distinguish between vertical and horizontal suburban coordination modes and decision-making. Secondly, territorialisation

Table 2. Actors and arenas—the main characteristics of the case studies.

Suburban governance dimensions	Lithuanian locality	Polish locality
Actors	High importance of local municipal administration and directly elected mayor, suburban entrepreneurialism, weak NGO, active local communities	Powerful multi-term mayor, entrepreneurs, many NGOs of moderate activity, integrated local society, low involvement in policymaking, strong senior citizen bottom-up activism
Arenas	Concentration on top-down initiated arenas, limited cases of bottom-up deliberative arenas.	Concentration of governance processes, the only formalised cooperation arena is the Senior Citizen Council

Source: Authors' elaboration based on interviews with stakeholders in analysed municipalities.

is an important factor for identifying programs, projects and initiatives that stimulate the territorial approach (Davoudi et al., 2008, p. 38).

5.3. Horizontal Networks

On the horizontal level, formal and informal inter-organisational networking and interconnectedness are important for different issues, for example, economic development and urban regeneration programs. Thereby, the suburban relations with the metropolitan city reflect the functional symbiosis, for example, public services, infrastructure and transport provisions (Ekers et al., 2012; Young & Keil, 2010). The relations with the core city reflect the internal policies of organising point public services provisions and overlapping infrastructures. In Polish and Lithuanian localities, the inter-municipal cooperation is organised autonomously from state policy, creating their suburban narratives of welfare provisions, commuting networks and capital accumulation.

Both suburban localities reveal differences and similarities in organising horizontal networks. In the Lithuanian case, horizontal coordination and collaboration mostly focus on developing area regeneration and public infrastructure projects in cooperation with the metropolitan area. Data from the suburban locality also reveals that the main actors in horizontal networks are urban-suburban municipal administrations, mayors and elderships that tangle between top-down and bottom-up approaches. The municipal administrative sub-divisions (elderships) play a central role in facilitating the process of suburban governance issues. As local authorities notify, Kaunas district municipality and elderships make efforts to reconcile local community needs and public services delivery infrastructures.

In the locality of Pruszcz Gdański, we observe diverse types of horizontal inter-municipal cooperation networks. The best known in the area is the Association Metropolitan Area Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot (MAGGS), gathering three core cities of the conurbation, eight counties and 45 smaller municipalities of the area. A 20-year long history of more or less successful competing and overlapping metropolitan networks ended in 2011 with the establishment of the MAGGS. The actual stimulus for this was the formal requirement to create one coordinated metropolitan structure to get the EU funds available under the Integrated Territorial Investment framework 2014–2020. However, metropolitan coordination of sectoral policies is still at a very early stage.

Pruszcz Gdański also cooperates with neighbouring municipalities. Surprisingly, the relations with the ring rural municipality of Pruszcz Gdański are not intense, not regular, but assessed instead as "proper and correct." Most inter-municipal projects occur within bilateral and multilateral agreements: with Gdańsk (public transportation) and Kolbudy (a project of common metropolitan school).

5.4. Vertical Networks

The vertical dimension of territorial governance refers to the hierarchical arrangements between central authorities and municipalities in implementing different policies (e.g., active labour market, urban regeneration, or economic growth policies). In Lithuanian and Polish cases, the regional context and impact of the state policy on suburban governance are significant in designing policy instruments and territorial discourses. The main difference turns to the configuration of self-governance systems in Poland and Lithuania that produces the suburban governance processes.

In the Lithuanian case, the data from the interviews reflect the recent discussion on the self-government autonomy level in Lithuania. Questions on fiscal autonomy of municipalities, financial self-reliance, policy scope, institutional depth, political discretion and shared-rule factors (Ladner, Keuffer, & Baldersheim, 2016) become the main topics in the interviews with suburban business and local authorities' actors. In Lithuania, the municipalities have relatively low financial self-reliance and fiscal autonomy that limit the implementation of large-scale investment projects. According to interviews, the coordination and supervision between municipality administration and state authorities is crucial. One of the examples of vertical coordination noticed by respondents is municipal fiscal policy and municipal budgeting procedures. Many governance actors (e.g., public authority actors) use the case of the disintegration of strategic visions on sustainable suburban zones development and central government regulations on the construction process and private investments to real estate.

Contrastingly, the vertical division of powers in the Polish three-tier local government system put the most considerable emphasis on the municipal level. Municipalities are the strongest among the three administrative levels in terms of financial resources per capita and the only having any own revenues. However, this does not mean that relations with the county and the region are not necessary. Conversely, thanks to the relatively high position of municipalities, the vertical relations are perceived as balanced and realised, keeping the partnership's good practices. The municipality conducts several investment projects with the county (as it is its capital). Cooperation between the municipality and the office of an elected regional government is very intense, and it concentrates on the implementation of the EU funds projects since the regional government is managing their regional part. Another often and spontaneously indicated contact is national transportation companies, notably the National Railway. As the mayor of Pruszcz Gdański, the county governor and the regional government are rather associated with the national opposition party; most of the unfavourable decisions made at the national level (concerning, e.g., railway transportation) are explained by the political conflict.

5.5. Participation and Involvement of Social Stakeholders' Interests within Territorialised Collective Actions

The participation and involvement of social stakeholders represent the scope and number of different interests involved in suburban governance. If the agreements between stakeholders are formal, it might lead to greater accountability and satisfy the needs of a wider community (Davoudi et al., 2008). It is essential to consider how local stakeholders define and prioritise actions that benefit suburban territories. Finally, the aspect of territory as a decision-making arena in linking territorial governance, local assets and collective action is essential. Both localities demonstrate the importance of bottom-up initiatives to identify the specificity of suburban territory.

Kaunas district case demonstrates that collective engagement is very active in fostering the small-scale projects on environmental issues or public services provision. Local actors can increase the quality of life by small-scale projects, donations and initiatives but cannot mobilise as a political force with a higher impact on strategic planning. A part of suburban residents is middle-class professionals with capacities for collective mobilisation, especially in the areas of urban-suburban public services availability (e.g., public transportation, preschool system). The collective efforts are concentrated on a territorial level and mostly focus on the increasing living quality standards, such as the renovation of recreational zones in elderships (community representative). The social stakeholders underline the limited impact of collective mobilisation and cannot implement large-scale projects or use formal channels of collective actions.

The interview analysis results that in the suburban locality in Lithuania, the attachment to the specific geographical territory is essential. The collective actions of local stakeholders emphasize particular territories within the municipality geographical boundaries that require more specific economic investments. For example, urban regeneration and economic growth policies are based on the distinction between more urban and rural elderships that need different policy coordination approaches to tackle social exclusion. Another aspect that fosters territorialised collective actions is the functional autonomy of the elderships. Most of the locality stakeholders argue that the municipality needs to reconsider the public services implementation and provide more responsibility to the elderships that recognise the local needs (community representative).

In what concerns the Polish case and territorially adapted policies, there are only several cases of a truly territorialised and individualised local policies. Most local societal initiatives are micro-scale events aimed at building local identity. The town hall initiates most of them, but there are also examples of bottom-up initiatives undertaken by local leaders, such as documenting the history of the area, the stories of post-war settlers, lobbying for school patrons of domestic origin, or organising cultural and leisure activities. Apart from that, the interviewees declare a rather low and superficial role of public participation of consultation. The most vivid participatory process has been organised for the preparation of the local regeneration plan. In addition, as the municipality failed to acquire financial support (because it is too wealthy to meet the regional financial support criteria), the future of the local regeneration plan is unsure. As it is now, the program is focused on improving public space in the centre with hard investments in infrastructure. It is mostly a local government program, which is implemented by local government administration. A similar concentration of the planning processes within the town hall can be observed in the case of regular spatial planning procedures. A new form of including and frame citizens' needs are the opinion polls among the residents.

Table 3 summarises the vertical and horizontal networks and governance processes in Polish and Lithuanian

Table 3. Networks and governance processes—main characteristics of the case studies.

Suburban governance dimensions	Lithuanian locality	Polish locality
Horizontal networks	Strong metropolitan cooperation in public services and infrastructure provision, emerging conflict zones, high importance of municipal administrative sub-divisions (elderships) in horizontal ties	Weak and incidental metropolitan cooperation, metropolitan school with neighbouring municipalities, weak horizontal contacts
Vertical networks	High importance of state authorities, low autonomy level in organising territorial policies	High significance of the region and the county, the key decisive role of the national railway company (conflicts)
Participation and involvement of social stakeholders' interests and territorialised collective actions	Low capacity of local activism, territorial identity.	Incidental actions, failure of the Local Renewal Plan initiative, territorial initiatives are sporadic

Source: Authors' elaboration based on interviews with stakeholders in analysed municipalities.

localities. The cases reveal strong inter-municipal cooperation in terms of public infrastructure, economic capital flow and service delivery approaches. In both countries, the state authorities do not regulate specifically the modes and mechanisms of urban-suburban cooperation.

6. Conclusions: Suburban Understanding of the Governance and Territory

Summing up the theoretical debates of territorial governance, the dimensions of the participation and consensus-building among public and private actors, the devolution of powers and resources to lower levels of decision-making and territorial cohesion implementation could be identified (Stead, 2014). The article focuses on the relational approach of territorial governance that refers to the hierarchical and/or vertical arrangements between suburban actors in defying 'suburban character.' Our assumption relies on identifying parameters of suburban governance in the CEE region compared to the experience in Western countries.

The article analyses two suburban localities reflecting the trend of intensive suburban sprawl and an increasing number of middle-class families, economic capital accumulation and inter-connectedness with metropolitan areas. Summarising the main dimensions of suburban governance cases in Polish and Lithuanian localities, we could distinguish a few main conclusions in terms of local authorities, business and social actors' participation, horizontal and vertical network coordination and territorialised collective actions (Davoudi et al., 2008; Healey, 2004). Compared to similar research in Western countries, the parameters we find in Polish and Lithuanian cases can refer to the regional specificity of suburban governance mechanisms. However, we keep in mind that the conclusions based on the analysis of only two case studies can only be tentative.

Among suburban governance characteristics, we can highlight the similarities in the low inclusiveness of social and business actors in territorial agenda. Both Polish and Lithuanian cases demonstrate the limited importance of civic and business actors in suburban policymaking but relatively high importance of local authorities. The local authorities tackle the ongoing tensions between the interests of different stakeholders. Although civic organisations are active in small-scale interventions, their voice in developing the territorial strategies remains almost unarticulated. Nevertheless, the problems of a shared definition of public interests, negotiations and business leadership create detached clusters within different suburban development visions. Besides, the interviewees seem not to expect the immense impact of actors who do not have an electoral mandate. The government (instead of governance) approach seems broadly accepted.

Secondly, the administrative self-governance design, decentralisation traditions and low level of institutional trust in the CEE region reflect the importance of vertical governance networks rather than horizontal. In both suburban localities, vertical and horizontal coordination networks are important as an interest's negotiation and decision-making mechanisms. However, the significance of vertical top-down networks (local-regional-state) seems to have more power than horizontal ones. We expect that horizontal networks provide a formal basis for negotiations, consultancy and deliberations. The second problem is the diffusion of the different interest' groups and stakeholders with a diverse practice, understanding of the territorial needs and common good.

Thirdly, we consider the growing importance of designing territorialised agenda for urban-suburban relations. Our analysis confirms the low significance of state/regional authorities in designing and implementing urban-suburban interrelations policies. The orientation of local suburban authorities towards the metropolitan area is based on willingness, informal cooperation and territories' functional interconnectedness. The Lithuanian case reveals the dynamic nature of urban-suburban relations in terms of ongoing competition in attracting resources. In the Polish case, the municipality cooperates with the county and the region on a partnership basis. The explanation lies in the generally high institutional position of the municipal government in the national three-tier territorial governance system. The cooperation with the metropolitan area needs more compromise. The partisan context of inter-municipal cooperation is significant; for example, the authorities and mayors of the locality are associated with the leading national opposition party—the Civic Platform. The role of informal contacts and friendly relationships within a similar political environment enables the urban-suburban relations.

Finally, we must reconsider the nature of suburban governance and politics in the CEE region. There are consistent issues that differ in terms of the multiplicity of actors, institutions and interests. Intensive suburbanisation processes such as capital accumulation, decentralisation and the growing power of suburban political agendas allow re-imagining of local municipalities, regional authorities and states. Different suburban governance conceptions will enable us to discuss how to put into practice territory, collective action, networks and actors.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Local Territorial Cohesion: Perception of Spatial Inequalities in Access to Public Services in Polish Case-Study Municipalities

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Abstract
The aim of this article is to investigate a research area situated off the mainstream of social inequality considerations: territorial inequalities at the local (municipality) level. The marginalisation of this aspect can be seen both in EU cohesion policies and in academic discourse. The European policies focus their attention (and funding) on the regional level, and researchers who study more local contexts tend to be interested in spatial inequalities in the urban environment with an emphasis on metropolises. This article downscales territorial inequalities to the level of municipalities that are varied in terms of size, location and function. The perspective I take on in the study concentrates on accessibility of selected public services such as public transportation and childcare within the locality, and the perception of spatial inequalities in the eyes of local actors from the public, civic and business sectors. The research indicates that a subjective view on local inequalities does not necessarily match the actual level of service provision. In the article I reflect on the reasons for this disparity and potential consequences for local policies and bridging the gaps.

Keywords
accessibility to public services; childcare; public transport; spatial inequalities; territorial cohesion

Issue
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1. Introduction

The objective of this article is to downscale the phenomenon of spatial inequalities and the concept of territorial cohesion to the level of municipalities and to investigate perceptions of intra-municipal differences. Territorial cohesion and inclusive growth are an important question in EU policies and discourse (see, e.g., European Commission, 2010; Treaty of Lisbon, 2007). However, it is *regions* that are the main focus of interest. The allocation of funds has been aimed at supporting development in NUTS2 and NUTS3 entities that lag behind the European average. Inequalities at a more local level are overlooked both in EU policies and in statistics. In the last decade, the European cohesion policy succeeded in shrinking the distance in economic development between EU countries; however, the differences between regions are still on the rise (Bachtler, Martins, Wostner, & Żuber, 2017). This seems to pose a serious problem for the Community for at least two reasons. First, according to spatial disequilibrium hypothesis the inequalities are likely to deepen due to path dependencies being triggered or exacerbated, encouraging agglomeration economies and thereby contributing to a backwash effect and the creation of growth poles (Kaldor, 1970; Krugman, 1991; Myrdal, 1957; Thirlwall, 2014). Furthermore, perceived inequality in wealth gives rise to euroscepticism and populist movements by undermining trust in the fairness of European policies (Dijkstra, Poelman, & Rodríguez-Pose, 2020; OECD, 2019).

Although equalisation between the regions is still cited as the chief challenge for the years to come, the subregional level has gained recognition as an important agent of the implementation of policies and execution of structural change. To embrace fast-moving technological, economic and social changes "[p]olicy packages need to be integrated and coordinated, delivered at a national, regional and local levels, while being adapted to the needs of different territories" (Bachtler et al., 2017, p. 1).

The first step in attaining this objective is obviously to understand territorial capital and inequalities at a more detailed level than the inter—or intra-regional. Cities became the primary object of these in-depth inquiries, which is noticeable in the analyses of international organisations and in scientific publications. The reporting of OECD pays attention to the problem of inequalities in urban environment, as big cities are claimed to be the most affected by socio-economic segregation (OECD, 2018a, 2018b). Furthermore, cities and urban areas are recognised as "some of the most appropriate 'units' or scales to measure and assess multi-dimensional inequality, as well as propose effective policy responses" (OECD, 2018b, p. 11), which strengthens the argument in favour of special interest in metropolises. Scientific investigation of intra-urban inequalities has a long tradition (Castels, 1977; Duncan & Duncan, 1955; Harvey, 1973). Also, more contemporary research on spatial disparities has been focused on metropolitan areas (Glaeser, Resseger, & Tobio, 2009; Musterd, Tammaru, van Ham, & Marcińczak, 2016; van Kempen & Murie, 2009). Inequalities in rural areas are usually studied from the point of view of the paradigm of centre–periphery cleavages, demonstrating the gap between levels of wealth in main urban centres and the countryside. I argue, however, that the micro-scale spatial inequalities within rural communities are also an important and at the same time markedly under-researched issue. Also, economic parameters such as income dominate as measures of inequalities. Accessibility of public services is a less common subject of investigation, with research focused on transport, education and health services. However, understanding of inequalities needs to go beyond the spatial distribution of wealth or economic growth. Territorial cohesion—understood as fair access to services of general interest (SeGIs)—inclines us to investigate disparities in distribution of public service facilities at a very local level, where inequalities are actually experienced. In the Polish literature we find examples of comprehensive research into sub-regional differences in access to SeGIs: at inter-county (Komornicki & Ciołek, 2017) or even inter-municipal level (Stanny, Rosner, & Komorowski, 2018; Świątek, Czapiewski, & Komornicki, 2013). The intra-municipal approach is, however, scarce and restricted mostly to metropolises. Thus, the article binds together two less popular strands of research. First, it shifts the attention from income inequalities to unequal access to SeGIs. Second, it extends the field of interest from urban (metropolitan) municipalities to more diversified sample of municipalities in order to obtain more comprehensive insight into intra-municipal disparities. The focus of the research is on the perception of spatial inequalities in order to analyse local expectations, capacity to act and potential patterns of interventions.

The phenomenon of intra-municipal inequalities is studied using the example of Polish municipalities selected as case-study localities in the project "Inequality, Urbanization and Territorial Cohesion: Developing the European Social Model of Economic Growth and Democratic Capacity" (COHSMO). The choice of localities was guided by ESPON classification of metropolises (ESPON, 2007), national delimitations of functional urban areas (Śleszyński, 2013), functional classification of municipalities (Śleszyński & Komornicki, 2016) and official statistics with the objective of identifying cross-nationally comparable exemplifications of metropolitan, suburban and rural environments.

The article is intended to translate the notion of territorial cohesion—understood as fair access to SeGIs—into the micro-level of municipalities, and to go beyond the prevalent urban context. First, I analyse various meanings and storylines behind the concept of territorial cohesion in order to set the theoretical framework for the research into perception of spatial differences in access to selected public services delivered at the municipality level and the importance of spatial exclusion in the local agenda. Second, I describe the empirical approach: methods of analysis, case localities and data sources. Next, I present the results of the study based on qualitative interviews and a standardised questionnaire, and discuss the findings against the background of local organisational structures and strategic documents to assess the salience of intra-municipal inequalities. Finally, some conclusions are offered regarding local territorial cohesion in various settlement contexts.

2. Theoretical Underpinnings

As remarked by Dabinett (2011) territorial cohesion is a construct very much embedded in European policies and spatial planning, and difficult to find anywhere else. It is the third pillar of European 'cohesion agendas.' While the *Maastricht Treaty* (1992) already formulated postulates of economic and social cohesion of the European territory, the spatial aspect trickled in via the *Treaty of Amsterdam* (1997), the *European Spatial Development Perspective* (CEC, 1999) and the 2000 Lisbon Agenda (to be later explicitly addressed by the 2007 Leipzig Territorial Agenda and embraced in the Europe 2020 Strategy; see European Commission, 2010). The term itself is an interdisciplinary concept, encompassing economy, demography, political and urban studies. The ambiguity in which it entered the European debate has ever since troubled researchers, spatial planners and policy makers trying to figure out how to understand, operationalise and finally measure it. The attitudes towards the vague character of territorial cohesion vary

from outright criticism to hopeful acceptance that the pluralism in how it is understood and implemented by Member States is an opportunity rather than a critical flaw. The opponents would put it under the label coined by Ann Markusen (1999), "fuzzy concepts, scanty evidence, policy distance," while others term it "a catalytic concept around which several (spatial and non-spatial) discourses and policy practices have been generated" (Servillo, 2010). However, simultaneously, a lot of effort has been made to resolve the disputed lack of clarity in terms of scope and indicators (Abrahams, 2014; Dao, Plagnat Cantoreggi, & Rousseaux, 2017; CEC, 2008; ESPON, 2013; Faludi, 2004; Medeiros, 2016; Mirwaldt, Mcmaster, & Bachtler, 2009)—shortcomings that hinder a coherent scientific approach. Scholars and practitioners put forward various methods of pinning down the elusive concept—and not merely by formulating definitions and measures. For example, Mirwaldt et al. (2009) proposed to define territorial cohesion by examining the suggested ways of achieving it and focused on related postulates of territorial cooperation and horizontal coordination. Meanwhile, van Well (2012) concludes that there are different storylines revolving around territorial cohesion present in EU documents and reports: normative storylines, ESPON storylines, the Territorial Agenda storylines, the Green Paper storylines, etc. By contrast, Abrahams (2014)—in the face of the multitude of often incompatible definitions and storylines—advocates a pragmatic rather than essentialist approach to understanding the concept: instead of asking what territorial cohesion is, he advises to assess what it does or might do.

From this variety of approaches to giving precision to the disputed notion, we can, however, derive some commonalities and recurrent themes. They pertain to two aspects of territorial cohesion: its objectives and the procedural means to achieve them. Faludi (2004) describes these two facets of territorial cohesion as the logic of regional development and the co-ordination of policies with an impact on one and the same territory.

As regards the objectives, at the heart of territorial cohesion is an attempt to counter the unyielding logic of economic growth and competitiveness in order to make room for polices aimed at reducing inequalities in their spatial dimension, social inclusion and sustainable development. Depending on the storyline or country's tradition, values or interest (Doucet, 2006; Mirwaldt et al., 2009) the emphasis can be laid on territorially balanced growth or spatial justice and fair distribution of life chances. The repeating postulates of territorial cohesion include: (i) polycentricity (CEC, 2008; Dabinett, 2011; Dao et al., 2017; Medeiros, 2016; Mirwaldt et al., 2009), (ii) balanced development (Dao et al., 2017; CEC, 2008; ESPON, 2013; Medeiros, 2016; Mirwaldt et al., 2009), (iii) accessibility of SeGIs (Böhme & Gløersen, 2011; CEC, 2008; Dabinett, 2011; Dao et al., 2017; Mirwaldt et al., 2009) and (iv) connectivity between the centre and peripheries (Dabinett, 2011; Mirwaldt et al., 2009).

In terms of means of arriving at the desired outcomes, territorial cohesion's interpreters accentuate the need for territorial governance and coordination of policies (Dao et al., 2017; Faludi, 2004; Mirwaldt et al., 2009). The *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion* (2008) and the *Barca Report* (Barca, 2009) lay the emphasis on the strength of the local context. Place-informed policies and place-based interventions gained recognition as 'territorial keys' (Böhme, Doucet, Komornicki, Zaucha, & Swiatek, 2011) to unleashing growth potential. Also, in the face of neoliberal policies resulting from state rescaling (Brenner, 2009) local communities are perceived as a resistance factor that brings a socio-spatial dimension to the political agenda. Thus, multi-level governance including both vertical and horizontal collaboration constitutes a vehicle for achieving objectives of cohesion policy.

This article takes as a point of departure the 'spatial justice' strand of territorial cohesion, which states that "people should neither be advantaged nor disadvantaged because they happen to reside within the boundaries of a particular locality" (Dabinett, 2011, p. 2). The focus is on the provision of public services considered to be SeGIs, whose importance for social cohesion is recognised in the European Model of Society. I decided to investigate the accessibility of services at a local level, where their deficiency is actually experienced and can result in unequal opportunities and life chances.

Guided by the focus of the research (i.e., the micro-level) I take special interest in selected SeGIs from among those that are at least partially under municipal jurisdiction in Poland: childcare services (nurseries and kindergartens) and public transportation. Simultaneously, the chosen services play an important role in equalisation of life chances. The provision of institutionalised childcare supports the Social Investment Strategy (Morel, Palier, & Palme, 2012)—an approach that seeks to provide social and economic wellbeing by increasing participation in the labour market. It perceives some welfare state policies as long-term investments in human capital—a stock that facilitates attaining high-quality jobs and provides resilience in the face of social risks. Childcare services specifically not only reinforce cognitive development and early education, but they also enable re-entrance into the labour market (especially for women) and the reconciliation of family life and a professional career. In this context, access to public services can be considered not only equality of opportunity and conditions, but also of outcome (Turner, 1986). Public transportation, on the other hand, is responsible for connectivity and accessibility of services, especially second-tier ones. It is vital for providing better education and job opportunities. The European Commission promotes multi-mode transport and accentuates the need to restrict the use of conventional private transport to the "final miles" of the journey or stretches where providing collective transport is costly (CEC, 2011). However, we need to be aware that individual means of transport, even over short distances, may not be an option for members of a number of vulnerable

groups: the young, seniors or the poor. Analyses cited by Komornicki (2019) illustrate the gap between the number of healthcare facilities and secondary schools accessible within 30 minutes by car as opposed to by public transport. The allocation of public transport to the specific tier of local government in Poland is not very straightforward, though. City public transport is the clear responsibility of the municipal government. Regional railway transport is under regional government jurisdiction. But local and subregional bus services are not clearly allocated to any of the tiers, and in practice both municipal and county governments play a role in organising this service. In general, bus services are to a large extent deregulated in Poland, and provided in insufficient quality and quantity. Several experts call for a more active role of local governments.

Following Servillo's (2010) observation that research into territorial cohesion involves defining policy principles, territorial dimension (scale), strategic policy options and territorial governance, I ask the following research questions:

1. How is access to SeGIs assessed in different settlement contexts (urban, suburban and rural). Is the subjective view reflected in more objective measures?
2. Is accessibility of SeGIs viewed as an important local issue?
3. Is territoriality, and in particular spatial disparities in access to SeGIs, a salient theme of the local agenda?

The research explores perception of inequalities, treating it as a precondition for intervention. The mere existence of disparities is not enough to take action against them. As demonstrated in previous studies the presence of differences concerning life situation (e.g., income or access to societal goods) can be tolerated if these are based on a socially accepted explanatory factor (Han, Janmaat, Hoskins, & Green, 2012); otherwise, the sense of breach of justice norms (Domański, 2013) or deviation from a desired model of social development incites social tension and/or political reaction. Thus, the reasons for deeming spatial inequalities tolerable can lie both in objectively existing circumstances (H1) and in subjective expectations and aspirations (H2).

The place-related hypothesis says:

> H1: The more difficult it is to equalise access to public services due to factors or circumstances considered objective hindrances, the greater the acceptance of spatial inequality regardless of the actual level of service provision.

The expectations-related hypothesis claims:

> H2: Past experiences, habits and expectations shape the level of acceptance of spatial inequalities. They can work either way—either increasing or decreasing tolerance, regardless of current circumstances.

The selected localities, which vary in general level and territorial distribution of public services provision, provide diversified contexts for testing the hypotheses. H1 suggests that in sparsely populated rural areas local actors are more lenient with regard to spatial inequalities and give them lower priority on the local agenda. On the other hand, H2 claims that people's expectations matter most in the perception of spatial disparities. Those accustomed to accessibility of public services (from urban and suburban localities) will be more demanding and more critical of the current level of service provision. These two effects predicted by H1 and H2 can strengthen one another or be in opposition. From the perspective of cohesion policy and territorial governance it is also interesting to investigate who is more aspirational: local politicians or local communities?

3. Empirical Strategy

3.1. Research Method

The study represents a mixed-methods research strategy (Venkatesh, Brown, & Sullivan, 2016). The analysis of the selected case studies was based on a combination of methods including (1) desk research and analysis of available official statistics, (2) analysis of local development strategies, (3) in-depth interviews with local actors based on a semi-structured research scenario, and (4) a standardised questionnaire administered at the end of the interview aiming to summarise the respondent's opinion on spatial inequalities. This article focuses on the results of the survey, but it utilises findings of the remaining techniques to provide the context for analyses and enable better understanding of the collected data.

Official statistics were used to describe the investigated localities and illuminate the general level of public services provision and their territorial distribution in each of the municipalities. The data used for comparisons between the case-study locations at LAU-2 level was acquired from Statistics Poland [*Główny Urząd Statystyczny*] and Local Data Bank. The availability of data at sub-municipal level is generally very limited, whereas it is vital to access the differentiation of the access to public services. This difficulty was partly resolved with the means of desk research covering the websites and strategic documents of the investigated municipalities and some ad-hoc external reports (Komornicki, 2019; Stanny et al., 2018).

The recruitment for in-depth interviews was guided by the objective to investigate the local development from the perspective of territorial cohesion and to explore the intensity and forms of cooperation between public and private sectors. Therefore, the sample consisted of:

1. Public actors: local politicians (mayors, councillors), local officials (from departments responsible for local development, provision of public services or social care).
2. Community actors: representatives of non-governmental organisations (involved in supporting local development, counteracting social exclusion or providing public services) and local communities (village heads, members of village councils). Their opinions were treated as the closest approximation of the voice of the citizens.
3. Business actors: local entrepreneurs and representatives of local business associations.

It is important to accentuate that the respondents were local leaders and activists. This of course introduces a specific context into the analysis. First of all, interviewees had above-average knowledge about local policies and the socio-economic situation of the municipality. They were able to formulate more general, fact-based opinions. On the other hand, their everyday life experience and attitudes as representatives of the local elite may not fully reflect those of ordinary members of the local community, not to mention the socially or spatially excluded. However, taking into consideration the objectives of the study, the interviewees provided the desired insight into the mindset of influential local stakeholders who tend to dominate local discourse and formulated policies (Swyngedouw, 2005).

In each locality there were at least 20 interviews. Table 1 provides details of sample size and structure.

3.2. Selected Localities

The case-study localities represent three different settlement types: urban (metropolitan), suburban and rural, all situated in one Polish region—Pomerania. In terms of structures of territorial organisation, the localities were defined as municipalities (LAU-2 entities) in order to combine the local-level character with the political scale responsible for the provision of the public services under investigation. Otherwise the case localities exemplify very different environments in terms of size, population density, function and economic standing. The objective was to select localities that provided an illustration of typical urbanisation-related phenomena (urban migration, suburbanisation, depopulation of rural areas) and could reveal issues connected with territorial cohesion at different scales. The key dimensions were function and location in settlement grid, prevalent demographic trends and, consequently, condition of the local economy (affluence, labour market situation, etc.). Table 2 provides basic background data concerning the size, distance to local and regional centres, and economic standing. In addition, the selected localities were expected to be internally diversified, in order to provide the opportunity to investigate intra-municipal inequalities.

Gdańsk (the urban case) is the sixth-largest city in Poland population-wise, the capital of Pomerania Region and the core city of so called Tricity agglomeration, with administrative powers combining municipal (LAU-2) and county level (LAU-1). Having territorial assets in abundance—from environmental, through economic to cultural and anthropic capital (Servillo, Atkinson, & Russo, 2012)—Gdańsk drives the local and regional development. Despite suburbanisation processes in the neighbouring municipalities, the city's population has been growing steadily. Urban plans lay emphasis on 'inner growth' and 'controlled sprawl.' However, dynamic development of the city's southern and south-western outskirts has posed a challenge for the provision of infrastructure and SeGIs. In this study Gdańsk exemplifies a vibrant, affluent metropolis, aspiring to providing good quality of life while making the best of its economic potential.

Pruszcz Gdański—the suburban case—is a compound entity representing high-density settlement in the north-western part adjacent to Gdańsk and the sparsely

Table 1. Size and structure of the sample.

	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Public actors	12	11	11
Community actors	7	7	5
Business actors	5	5	5
In total	**24**	**23**	**21**

Table 2. Basic background data on case localities.

	Population 2018 (↓↑—trend in 10 years)	Area (km^2)	Distance to county's/region's capital (km)	Revenues from PIT per tax-payer 2016 (euro)	Unemployment rate 2018 (%)
Urban	466 631 ↑	262	0/0	7813	2,9
Suburban	61 110 ↑	160	0/10	7812	2,8
Rural	9 078 ↓	224	20/160	4272	10,5

populated, rural area in the estuary of the Vistula River. Its location within the Tricity agglomeration is its greatest territorial asset impacting its economic and demographic development. Beneficially situated next to Gdańsk and transportation corridors, the locality is a particularly attractive location for logistics companies and distribution centres. Due to suburbanisation processes its population has increased by 33% in the last decade. In this study Pruszcz Gdański represents a suburban locality owing its economic success to its mighty neighbour, and coping with the demographic consequences. The dual character of the suburban case—comprised of both urbanised and rural areas—provides the opportunity to analyse attitudes and policy responses to spatial inequalities in two very different territorial settings.

Debrzno—the rural case—encapsulates characteristics of inner peripheries: remotely located at the junction of three regions, it is facing infrastructure deficiencies, demographic decline and economic difficulties. Its economic and social situation were dramatically aggravated in the nineties as a result of the post-communist transformation that swept away its economic pillars: state-owned farms and the garrison (the unemployment rate peaked at 37%). Without its main employers and social care providers, the community had to find its way in the new socio-economic reality. Although the situation has improved thanks to a local development plan prepared and implemented with substantial participation of the Third Sector and financed with external (mainly EU) funds, the municipality is still troubled with out-migration, long-term unemployment and uncertain bases of its further growth. In the study, Debrzno illuminates the problem of spatial inequalities in remote, rural areas with weak economic potential. In terms of population distribution, approximately 60% of its residents dwell in the central town and the rest are dispersed in the surrounding villages that vary in size (population from 50 to 700 people), affluence (post state-owned farms vs. villages of wealthy farmers and orchard owners) and accessibility (situated along main roads vs. devoid of paved roads).

3.3. Selected Policy Areas

In the study, territorial cohesion was operationalised as access to SeGIs. In the empirical part, the term 'spatial inequalities' was translated into more natural language as "unequal access to public services (such as public transportation, childcare and education facilities) for inhabitants from different parts of municipality/city." In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to assess local accessibility of public services in general. During in-depth interviews, public transport and childcare were explored in more detail—through a map-aided exercise aimed at identifying excluded areas and consequences of territorial inequalities.

Grey literature research was focused on the significance attributed to childcare and public transport provision in strategic documents. Special attention was also paid to territorialisation of local policies: do policy-makers treat their municipality as a point on the map—as a homogeneous entity—or are they sensitive to its internal diversification and specific needs of different parts of the locality?

4. Results

4.1. Statistics and Grey Literature

Before analysing the results of the survey it is important to provide a brief socio-historical introduction to public service provision in Poland, which impacts the present status quo. In 1989 Poland underwent a political and economic transition—from an authoritarian state with a centrally planned economy to a democratic, free-market country. Along with economic shock the transition was accompanied by a reorganisation of public services provision. Local governments and the private sector took over SeGIs such as childcare and public transportation. In the nineties this resulted in a significant decrease in service coverage, especially in rural areas: the number of kindergartens dropped by 38% and preschool enrolment among children aged 3–5 decreased from 17.8% to 15.7% (Levitas & Herczyński, 2002). Whereas availability and accessibility of childcare improved with time, the transition marked the beginning of a more enduring collapse in public transport outside functional urban areas. Having said that, it is necessary to emphasise that, before 1989, provision of public services—although motivated by the ideal of equalisation of access—was troubled by numerous malfunctions and deficiencies of the system. Resourceful solutions that bypassed the absurdities of central planning by seeking community—or family-based alternatives to the inefficient state-offered solutions were a common experience for the society of the time.

The investigated localities differ in terms of general level of provision and intra-municipal accessibility of SeGIs. The urban locality offers a dense bus and tram network, Rapid Municipal Train and Metropolitan Train, which provide connectivity within the agglomeration. In Gdańsk alone there are 4.5 public transport stops per square kilometre. The coverage of children in childcare is 13% for 0–2-year-olds and 92% for 3–5-year-olds (which is above the national average). Mostly newly constructed residential areas on the outskirts of the city suffer from under-developed networks of public services. In the suburban locality the situation is territorially diverse: in the urbanised area there are frequent bus connections (within the town, public communication is free), whereas in the rural commune there are villages with three return connections daily. The coverage of children in childcare is similar to the urban location, but, again, lower in the rural part. In the peripheral locality—Debrzno—there is no public transport organised by the municipality. Collective transport and school bussing are provided

by county public transport and a private company. On average there are 0.3 bus stops per square kilometre and 90% of villages remain without public transportation on non-school days. Childcare institutions are concentrated in the central town (nursery and kindergarten) with only small pre-primary sections at primary schools in three other villages.

In all three localities there is some form of administrative territorialisation. Sub-municipal units representing city districts or villages in rural areas have at least an advisory role to play, and bring local issues to the municipal agenda. However, their financial resources and discretion are limited. The most developed system—with district councils—can be found in the urban locality. Territorial thinking can, however, be even more embedded in the principles of municipal management. In its social development policies Gdańsk uses advanced territorialisation. Apart from districts, two other types of entities are taken into consideration in planning. On the one hand there are macro-areas comprising groups of districts used to plan network of ambulatories and schools (synchronised with their zoning); on the other hand, there are neighbourhoods, with 'neighbourhood' defined as an area within a 15-minute walk (bases for planning centres of local activeness, public libraries).

Intra-municipal differentiation is to various degrees reflected in strategic documents and the political agenda. The size and polymorphic character of the municipality makes policy-makers more mindful of the territorial dimension. However, although both intra-municipal differentiation and public services are present in local development strategies, they do not necessarily form one joint objective of social development policy. This transforms the postulated accessibility into availability of services.

4.2. Empirical Data

The issue of spatial inequalities in access to public services was investigated as a political postulate, as the experienced status quo and as a field of public intervention. The interviewees assessed their attitudes on a seven-point scale, where 1 meant strong disagreement with the statement, and 7 meant strong agreement. In terms of principles, very few respondents were inclined to treat spatial inequalities as a fact of life that—as unavoidable—can be ignored in local polices (see Figure 1). On the contrary, the majority was strongly convinced that spatial inequalities should be actively counteracted. Therefore, we may contend that the normative level spatial exclusion within the municipality is not approved of. However, the accepting of inequalities is most strongly opposed in suburban and urban localities.

But what about the perception of the real situation? Respondents were asked a series of questions probing their perception of (1) the intensity of spatial exclusion with regard to public services, (2) the importance of spatial inequalities as a challenge for the municipality against the background of other problems, (3) the local authorities' engagement in equalising spatial inequalities (Figure 2).

The answers to these three questions provide some interesting results. First, the existence of spatial inequalities in the rural locality is acknowledged far less frequently than could be anticipated judging by the limited offer of public transportation and childcare in the municipality and its territorial concentration in the central town. Second, spatial inequalities are most often emphasised by the respondents from Gdańsk—i.e., the locality with the most extensive public transport and childcare institution network of all locations under scrutiny. Furthermore, the survey respondents are even less inclined to place spatial inequalities among challenges for their municipality than they are to consider them to be substantial. This is especially noteworthy in the case of Debrzno, where the answers suggest that the problem of inequalities is perceived as limited and, furthermore, that there are more important issues the municipality has to deal with. Third, no matter how insignificant the

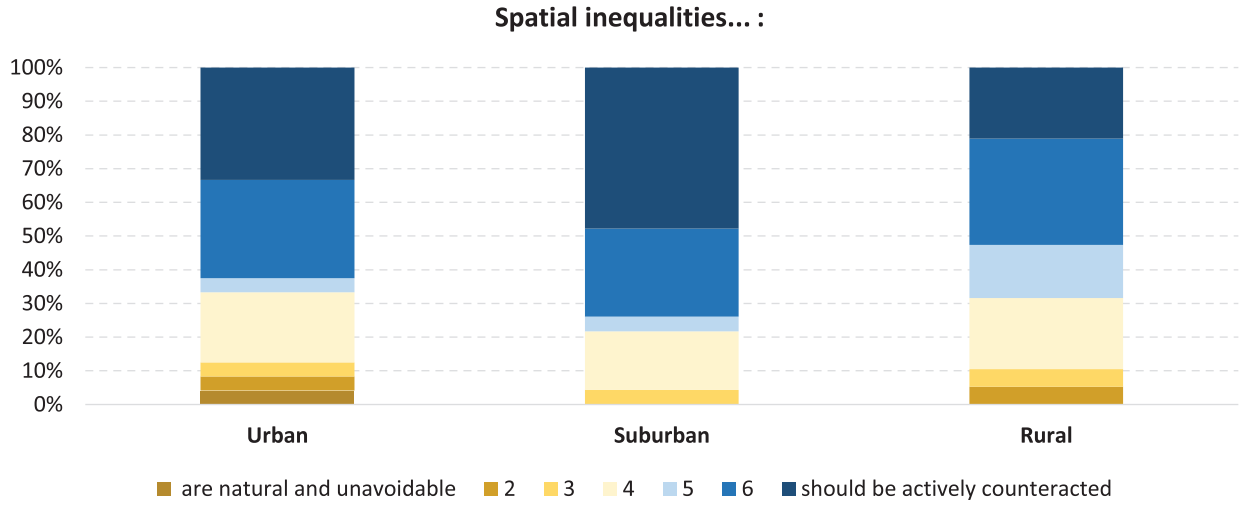

Figure 1. Opinions on spatial inequalities.

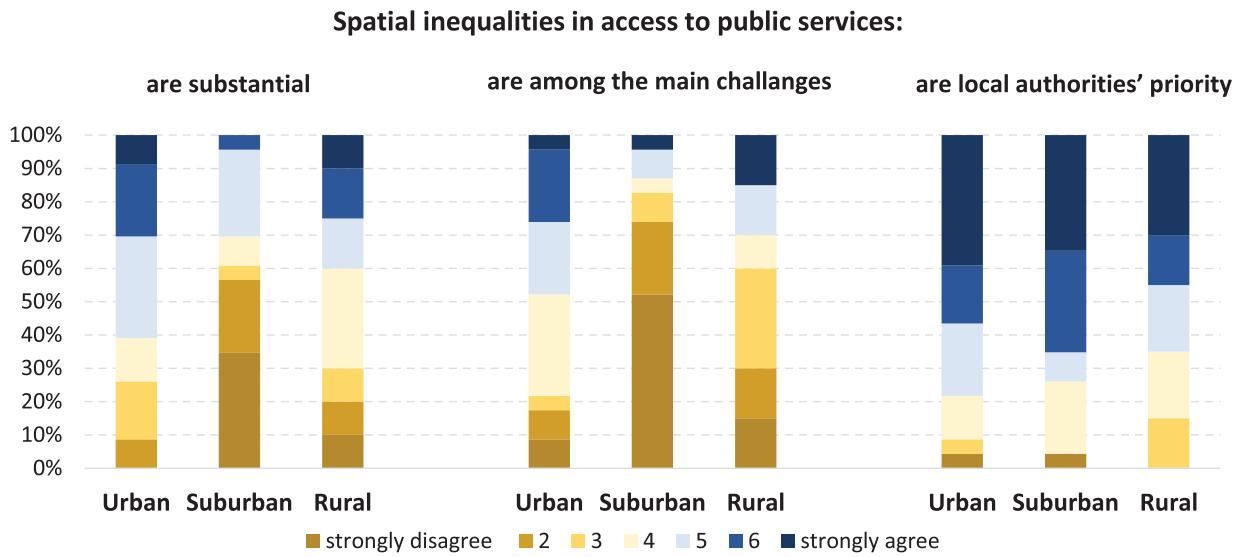

Figure 2. Perception of spatial inequalities at the local level.

inequalities are presented to be, local authorities are considered to be committed to counteracting spatial exclusion. This discrepancy is particularly sizeable in the case of Pruszcz Gdański—a locality in which inequalities are perceived to be almost non-existent but still the authorities' priority.

5. Discussion

The results of the survey prove that the perception of spatial inequalities—in both the normative and the empirical sense—is varied in the investigated localities and often defies expectations based on the level of service provision in the municipality. Context factors such as settlement type, level of affluence, and the experiences and expectations of inhabitants and local authorities help understand some unobvious findings.

In Gdańsk, the relatively high level of dissatisfaction with accessibility of public services becomes more understandable if we take into consideration the logic of the city's spatial and social policies on the one hand and the attitudes of residents on the other. Nurturing local communities, planning local centres at the level of neighbourhoods also increases the awareness of local deficiencies in access to SeGIs. In some sense it could be viewed as downscaling Magnusson's postulate to "see like a city" (Magnusson, 2010) to an even more granular level. Active, demanding citizens close the feedback loop by putting pressure on local authorities. As framed by a representative of a non-governmental organisation involved in childcare provision in several municipalities in the region:

> It's about local awareness. We know that every willing child should have a guaranteed place in a municipal kindergarten, but the average parent who has placed their child in a non-public institution and is not well-informed can have no clue. It has always been like this, so it's ok. Some local governments take advantage of this….In Gdańsk, especially in some districts, citizens are more aware, and if their children don't get admitted there is a furious row….The city does its job, but such a grass-roots movement provides extra stimulation.

At the other end of the spectrum, Debrzno showcases the pattern of low expectations. The lack of accessible public services has accustomed residents to their absence, converting it into a fact of life—a part of their reality. Many inconveniences have long been responded to with high spirits, internalised beyond recognition, treated like something humorous. As described by one interviewee:

> I commuted to work for many years, in summer and in winter, and I managed. There are of course moments when roads are impassable due to snow or snowmelt. Sometimes one might just sit and cry because you don't know what to do: walk across or swim?

5.1. Community Actor, Rural Locality

The long-lasting deficiency of public services forced the development of individual strategies to 'make do with what you have' and undermined the significance of spatial inequalities. In many instances, cars filled the gap created by the lack of collective means of transport and remotely situated public care facilities, making a driver licence a must. Some interviewees reflect on the consequences of the lack of public transportation for senior citizens and the unemployed, though the modernisation of the road network is given a higher priority. Secondly, in rural areas the traditional model of family life is more popular than in cities, making maternity leave longer and making the help of relatives in childrearing an alternative to public services. The third factor that weakens the

attention paid to accessibility of public services is the economic situation of the municipality. The uncertain future of the local labour market and unfavourable demographic trends outscore intra-municipal inequalities on the list of priorities.

Due to its dual nature, the suburban locality combines characteristics present in Gdańsk and Debrzno. The influx of inhabitants from the metropolis made spatial inequalities less acceptable. The newcomers are described as 'demanding' with regard to accessibility and quality of services, relating their expectations to experiences they had in the city. Their pressure is one of the reasons why spatial inequalities are so high on local authorities' priority list. This is especially true in the rural part, where catching up with infrastructure without neglecting any part of a territorially diversified municipality is a part of the political commitment. At the same time, the territorially concise town of Pruszcz Gdański aspires to be a compact city providing high quality of life—thus, driven by slightly different motives, the authorities also feel strongly about accessibility of SeGIs. Thanks to its good economic standing, the municipality can quite efficiently deal with the provision of key services to its growing population. This may be why at the general level the disparities are considered of little importance.

We can conclude that the research gives some support for the place-related hypothesis (H1). Indeed, interviewees from the rural locality were least strongly convinced that inequalities should be actively counteracted, and somewhat played down the level of intra-municipal differences in the access to public services. Disapproval of spatial inequalities is stronger in the densely populated urban municipality, and even more so in the suburban locality. This brings us to the other hypothesis referring to experiences and expectations (H2), which seems to be even better anchored in the data, taking into consideration the contrasting attitudes of respondents from Debrzno versus those from Gdańsk and Pruszcz Gdański.

To summarise, it is important to reflect on the agents that bring about an equalisation of access to SeGIs. The survey revealed that almost regardless of the perception of the magnitude of spatial inequalities, local authorities are considered to be committed to counteracting spatial exclusion. Of course, to some extent this can be attributed to the fact that public actors account for half of the sample and indeed assess their own involvement more favourably than other interviewees. On the other hand, there is also evidence supporting the thesis that aspirations of local policy-makers drive the development of public services. In rural, sparsely populated areas the need for more accessible public services is more often expressed by the local authorities, who introduce improved public services without political pressure from the citizens. Table 3 presents some telling statements of community and public actors.

It can be concluded that both bottom-up and top-down impulses can drive the equalisation of spatial disparities at the local level. The former result from the expectations of citizens, while the latter derive from the aspirations of local authorities. Also, the local election process encourages sensitivity to the needs of various groups of voters. Symmetry in investments and equalised development of different parts of the municipality were an explicit political commitment in the suburban locality.

Table 3. Comparison of views on significance of access to public services.

	Community actors	Public actors
Rural locality	"[on public transport in sparsely populated areas] Elderly people prefer to pay a neighbour or someone from the family to give them a lift, wait for them an hour or two, and drive them home rather than use public transport, because they would lose a whole day" (Community actor, town).	"Perhaps today Mr Smith doesn't feel a need to use a bus but tomorrow he might. Therefore we fight so that he has access to public transport" (Local politician).
	"[on access to childcare] If someone wants to work, they work. A sister or a granny will take care of their child. There is a woman whose child is slightly disabled. She takes her child to a specialised childcare institution in Człuchów [over 20 km one-way] by car" (Community actor, village).	"Now we can't imagine our town without a nursery. But at the beginning it was difficult to recruit 10 children. People's attitudes are changing" (Local official).
Suburban locality	"[on public transport in sparsely populated areas] I often wonder why the municipality pays such a lot of money to transport the air" (Community actor, rural part).	"We are the only municipality in the county and one of few in the region to organise public transport at such a scale" (Local politician, rural part).

6. Conclusion

Although both hypotheses gain some support in the results of the survey, it is the hypothesis of expectations that seems to better explain the perception and acceptance of intra-municipal inequalities in access to public services. As expected, in the urban context, expectations exceed the current level of provision, whereas in rural areas some inherited, long-lasting forms of territorial exclusion have grown to be considered the norm. 'Settling for less' is often accompanied by an array of individualistic or community-based strategies developed to substitute public services (multiple car ownership, car-pooling, neighbour taxi service, relying on family members for help in child-rearing). However, the inefficiency of such services as public transport in rural areas leaves some vulnerable groups adrift: minors, seniors, the ill and handicapped, and the unemployed. The process of equalising spatial disparities can be driven by both bottom-up and top-down interventions. In the urban environment, public transport is incorporated into the spatial planning vision, while childcare forms part of the social agenda. Grassroots initiatives exert pressure to fix local deficiencies. In suburban localities the approach varies depending on local development strategies and population density. Influxes of urban migrants further increase the pressure to invest in public services. In rural areas, however, the initiative to develop childcare or public transport networks seems to be a top-down vision of social development.

Thus, this study shows the importance of how local stakeholders perceive the role that public services play. We can also conclude that the municipality is an interesting and relevant scale for territorial cohesion. This micro-level is the very one where inequalities are actually experienced and that has the political resources to alleviate spatial disparities or at least bring them to the fore.

Of course these place-based interventions are at their best when they are part of a wider, multi-level and cross-sectoral cooperation. The national level plays an important role in hindering the growth of inequality by setting basic standards of public service provision. In 2011 the central government obliged municipalities to make kindergarten available for all willing children. This regulation largely accelerated the achievement of high coverage rates. Nevertheless, as a regulation addressed to municipalities as a whole, it does not guarantee adequate spatial distribution of facilities. Finally, European programmes and funds largely contributed to the development of infrastructure in Poland—including to the provision of SeGIs. Furthermore, many EU procedural requirements incentivised public consultations. Even if primarily handled instrumentally, they encouraged more territorial and communitarian practices in local politics.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

In Search of Territorial Cohesion: An Elusive and Imagined Notion

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Abstract
Territorial cohesion has figured in the lexicon of the European Union for some years. However, there has never been a clear definition of the notion, not even after its inclusion in the Lisbon Treaty. Moreover, within the European Union Cohesion Reports and, more generally, within European Union documents, along with the other two dimensions of cohesion (economic and social) it has been treated separately without any serious attempts to reconcile them and develop a coherent interpretation of cohesion—the result being the creation of a contested and ill-defined understanding of territorial cohesion and its relationship to the other two dimensions of Cohesion Policy. Given that the approach advocated by Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy aims to embed the different dimensions and how they interact in specific spatial configurations (created by the confluence of a range of different 'flows' that can create multiple overlapping assemblages with 'fuzzy' boundaries), this raises important questions about how we understand these relationships. Moreover, the policy discourses in which each dimension of cohesion is situated create their own frameworks that are conducive to developing the conditions, including appropriate policy strategies, to supporting these individual cohesion formations. The rather arbitrary separation of these approaches in 'official discourse' impedes addressing cohesion in a coherent and integrated manner. Thus, after reviewing the relevant key policy literature, the article will seek to consider how territorial cohesion relates to the other two dimensions of cohesion taking into account the role of the place-based approach. However, it is argued that the search for territorial (social and economic) cohesion has been subordinated to neoliberal notions such as competitiveness and economic growth.

Keywords
place-based policy; social cohesion; spatial planning; territorial cohesion

Issue
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1. Introduction

A number of key notions have played a key role in the official discourse of and debates around cohesion in the European Union over the last three decades. Initially the main focus was on economic and social cohesion which were incorporated into the Treaty Establishing the European Community by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992. More informally territorial cohesion was frequently linked to economic and social cohesion, in a sense they formed a 'triumvirate' representing the multiple, interlinked, dimensions of cohesion. However, territorial cohesion remained the 'poor relation' of the three in the sense that it lay outside the competence of the European Union because it was not included in the Treaty Establishing the European Community. Thus, whilst present in the debate it was simultaneously officially 'absent.' This 'absence' was finally rectified when it

was included alongside economic and social cohesion in Article 174 of the 2009 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Article 174 states: "In order to promote its overall harmonious development, the Union shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion" (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, 2012). Thus, in the official discourse of the European Union the three are presented together, not in isolation, the clear implication being that they are indivisible. Cohesion Policy and the associated structural funds have been the main vehicle through which the three have been pursued. However, in policy terms, the three have tended to be treated in isolation with economic cohesion tending to dominate through the use of metaphors such as competitiveness and smart growth. In a sense there has been an unwillingness, or perhaps an inability, to develop policies that integrate the three dimensions of cohesion.

This is not just a problem related to Cohesion Policy but also to the wider range of European Union policies developed by the different Directorate Generals of the European Commission. These have tended to be 'blind' vis-à-vis their territorial implications and impacts (cf. Colomb & Santinha, 2014)—they are 'space blind.' Although it is also fair to say they do not consider the wider social implications of these policies. Arguably this assemblage of disaggregated policies has equally, if not greater, territorial (social and economic) impacts than Cohesion Policy. The overall point being that there has been a persistent inability, or lack of will, to develop policy approaches that simultaneously address economic, social and territorial cohesion as an indivisible trinity. Thus, there is an inherent ambiguity/dissonance in the official discourse of the European Union both specifically in relation to Cohesion Policy and more generally. In part this derives from the political/normative nature of territorial cohesion and its association with the other two dimensions of cohesion. This entails a particular programmatic understanding of 'what the European Union and its constituent space' should be like in terms of its organisational and relational structure. One that is not necessarily shared widely within either the European Commission or European Union in general or by member states.

Whilst it is relatively easy to criticise politicians and policy makers for failing to bring together the three dimensions the academic debate has not been any more successful in attempts to understand their interrelationship and how to develop a coherent understanding of the three dimensions in toto. Arguably one cannot even find a coherent and widely shared understanding of what territorial cohesion means in a conceptual sense in the academic literature. The academic discourse abounds with attempts to define the concept and the relationship between the three dimensions of cohesion (cf. Medeiros, 2016; Mirwaldt, McMaster, & Bachtler, 2009; Zaucha, 2015). In part this has its origins in different disciplinary approaches to the issue which tend to stress particular aspects whether it be space, policy integration, governance, etc. However, it is also a product of the fact that territorial cohesion is irrevocably entangled with a series of other concepts such as polycentricity, balanced development and (territorial) governance. As we will discuss below each of these concepts and their implications are contested in theoretical, policy and political terms. Thus, it is not simply a matter of coming to a common understanding of territorial cohesion but also of these other concepts and their interrelationships. Moreover, it has often proved difficult to disentangle the theoretical and policy discourses and the normative aspects associated with the political ambitions of the European Integration Project. Cohesion Policy, and the associated structural funds, is perhaps the best example of this. The ultimate aim being to bring all parts of the European Union up to the same level of territorial, economic and social development and provide the framework with which ever closer political integration can take place.

The issues outlined above are further complicated by how they all relate to spatial planning (or spatial development as it is now called; cf. Atkinson & Zimmermann, 2018), for which the European Union has no legal competence, but which has come to occupy an increasingly prominent position in debates about Cohesion Policy since the publication of the *European Spatial Development Perspective* in 1999 (Committee on Spatial Development, 1999). The document has influenced the development of structural funds—particularly the European Regional Development Fund—and is a key structuring factor vis-à-vis territorial cohesion.

In the remainder of this article we first of all discuss the evolution of discourse on the different dimensions of territorial cohesion through an analysis of European Union policy documents and academic literature. We then go on to consider the role of spatial configurations at different scales including issues such as polycentricity, urban-rural relations and infrastructure networks. This also entails a reflection on the spatial consequences of economic and social cohesion at different scales. In Section 4 we seek to bring together the intersections/overlaps between the three dimensions of cohesion and the uncertainties and indeterminacy this creates for policy makers and those implementing policy, discussing the case of the Inner Areas Strategy in Italy to highlight the trade-offs between the dimensions and to illustrate the attendant choices and dilemmas. Finally, in the conclusion we will reflect on the on the implications of these developments for territorial cohesion and its relationship to competitiveness and economic growth.

2. The Evolution of Discourse on the Different Dimensions of Territorial Cohesion

In order to develop this analysis of the relevant discourse(s) we focus on a series of key documents related to our chosen object of analysis. Here we broadly draw on the work of Atkinson (1999, 2000), which is based

primarily on a Foucauldian approach. Essentially we use discourse here to refer to "a group of statements which provide a language for talking about a way of representing the knowledge about a particular topic at a particular historical moment. Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language" (Hall, 1997, p. 44). It operates as a 'framing device' seeking to set the terms and limits of the debate. Moreover, like Radaelli (2004) we recognise that discourses are not simply about ideas and language but that they are embedded in institutional contexts and involve interaction and that these interactions in turn shape and reshape the discourse.

In terms of the policy discourse territorial cohesion has implicitly featured in the debate for some years. In part this goes back to the *European Spatial Development Perspective* (1999), although the term territorial cohesion is only used once in the document. Nevertheless, the terms territory and spatial figure frequently and the ways in which they are deployed can reasonably be interpreted as proxies for territorial cohesion, particularly given their articulation with notions such as polycentricity and balanced development across the European space. The clear implication is that the European space should achieve economic, social and territorial cohesion. Moreover, the argument is that this state of affairs should also be achieved within countries. In many ways the *European Spatial Development Perspective* established the parameters for the subsequent policy and academic discourses, it identifies three key objectives: 1) economic and social cohesion; 2) conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage (i.e., sustainable development); and 3) more balanced competitiveness of the European territory (Committee on Spatial Development, 1999, p. 10) which are to be pursued in an integrated manner with consideration of how they interact. The attendant modus operandi is one of balanced and polycentric development within a framework of competition and cooperation.

The problem with the *European Spatial Development Perspective* was its intergovernmental status, this means that it was not an official European Union document (see Atkinson, 2001). Nevertheless, it did exercise considerable influence over the allocation of the structural funds and Cohesion Policy. Moreover, one can find explicit reference to it in the *Third Progress Report on Cohesion* (Commission of the European Communities, 2005) where in relation to the use of structural funds in new member states it is stated: "Rural policies pursue territorial cohesion objectives and the Lisbon goals" (Commission of the European Communities, 2005, p. 9). The reference here is to the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, which is one of the European Union's structural investment funds that collectively contribute to Cohesion Policy in a variety ways. However, no definition of the term is provided.

Its inclusion in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2009) changed the terms of the discourse in that it was now an official object of policy along with economic and social cohesion. A 'policy definition' of territorial cohesion can be found in the *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion* (Commission of the European Communities, 2008):

> Territorial cohesion is about ensuring the harmonious development of all these places and about making sure that their citizens are able to make the most of inherent features of these territories. As such, it is a means of transforming diversity into an asset that contributes to sustainable development of the entire European Union. (p. 4)

Here the term is linked to a particular notion of development and in particular what was to become known as the 'place-based approach' (Barca, 2009).

The *Green Paper* (Commission of the European Communities, 2008) and the associated place-based approach represented a significant step forward in the development of an approach that sought to bring together the territorial, social and economic dimensions, arguing that they cannot be considered in isolation and that, as a result, policies must be developed in an integrated manner and directed at 'meaningful places of intervention' (i.e., not limited by administrative boundaries/borders). This approach has become central to territorial Cohesion Policy as articulated through European Union Cohesion Policy, presenting a way of bringing together economic, social and territorial cohesion in specific places and building a more territorially cohesive and economically balanced European space.

Nevertheless, more recent Cohesion Reports have shied away from an explicit discussion of the notion and its relationship with economic and social cohesion. For instance the *Seventh Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion* (Commission of the European Communities, 2017) treats the three separately and the chapter on territorial cohesion "covers the major environmental challenges affecting the development of European Union regions, on the one hand, and a number of major issues addressed by various territorial cooperation schemes, on the other" (Commission of the European Communities, 2017, p. 96).

The Territorial Agenda of the European Union (2007) is more explicit in the way in which it addresses the issue arguing "We see the future task 'Territorial Cohesion' as a permanent and cooperative process involving the various actors and stakeholders of territorial development at political, administrative and technical levels." (Territorial Agenda of the European Union, 2007, p. 1). However, this largely reduces it to an issue of governance. The *Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020* (Territorial Agenda of the European Union, 2011) treats it in a similar manner. While the more recent *Territorial Agenda 2020 Put in Practice* (2015) argues:

> The objective of the TA2020 [Territorial Agenda 2020] is to provide strategic orientations for territorial devel-

> opment, promoting place-based policy making within different policies at all government levels and to ensure implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy according to territorial cohesion principles which call for a harmonious, balanced, efficient, sustainable territorial development. (p. 5)

It is articulated with notions such as polycentric and balanced territorial development, integrated development in cities, rural and specific regions, global competitiveness of the regions based on strong local economies, etc. But once again there is no clear definition of the notion in policy terms. Furthermore, the Territorial Agenda in its various iterations is once again an *intergovernmental* document with no official status within the European Union.

If the policy discourse has not provided a clear definition of the term the academic discourse has had no more success. For instance, if we take two examples provided by Mirwaldt et al. (2009) and Medeiros (2016) they note there are numerous understandings of what it is. Mirwaldt et al. (2009) argue at a minimum there are four different definitions or components: 1) polycentric and endogenous development seeking to support the development of numerous competitive innovatory clusters across the European Union; 2) balanced development that reduces socioeconomic inequalities and imbalances across the European Union; 3) accessibility, in the sense that all European Union citizens should have access to the same basic level of services across the European Union where ever they live; and 4) a form of networking and connectivity between key centres across the European Union and between them and their hinterlands. Medeiros (2016, p. 7) also argues for the need "to concentrate the analysis on identifying the main dimensions and components of this concept." Thus, after an extensive review of different definitions, he argues for four key dimensions to the concept (Medeiros, 2016, pp, 10, 15, where he further elaborates on the 'component parts' of each dimension):

> Territorial Cohesion is the process of promoting a more cohesive and balanced territory, by: (i) supporting the reduction of socioeconomic territorial imbalances; (ii) promoting environmental sustainability; (iii) reinforcing and improving the territorial cooperation/governance processes; and (iv) reinforcing and establishing a more polycentric urban system.

Whilst one can see some general characteristics that typify territorial cohesion the relationships and degree of primacy accorded to each is unclear and amounts to a 'list' of 'key issues.' As a result, there is considerable debate over what is/are the primary structuring factor(s) in these relationships and how they interact.

As Servillo (2010) argues the crux of the issue is the tension between competitiveness and the achievement of cohesion in its broadest sense. He notes:

> The pursuit of economic growth through competition between territories and solidaristic attention to disparities between them are the two main oppositional positions against cohesive definitions of the European Union's institutional role, and both significantly affect the TC [Territorial Cohesion] concept. (p. 404)

The argument is that the competition discourse has becoming increasingly dominant in European Union discourse, particularly since the financial crash of 2007/2008. Thus, the notion of territorial cohesion 'glosses over' the tensions between cohesion and competitiveness implying that the two can be reconciled through the place-based approach. While the turn to endogenous development and the argument that all places have strengths they can build on has obvious attractions, this ignores the fact the problems facing many places are deep seated and cannot be resolved at the local level or even with external support—many places are simply condemned by their past and cannot break out of it (i.e., a form of path dependency). This means there will inevitably be 'winners' and 'losers' and that this process runs the risk of intensifying territorial inequalities at pan-European, national and regional levels (cf. Atkinson, 2017, 2019).

3. The Role of Spatial Configurations at Different Scales

The European Union debate has tried to bring together the different dimensions of territorial cohesion and to internalise the spatial consequences of economic and social cohesion through different discursive constructs: One of those is the identification of specific spatial configurations, which can create the conditions for their integration in practice. This entails a focus on areas, places and spatial organisation patterns, rather than on sectors or policy domains, such as cohesion, agriculture, transport, environment, etc., in all the phases of policy design and implementation. The emphasis on place-based policies explicitly entered into the European debate following the *Barca Report* placing it at the centre of the discussion (Barca, 2009), but, as is well known, elements of the significance of the spatial dimension have been present in the debate since the mid-1990s.

Much of the European discourse on the role of space in European Union policy making from the late 1990s/beginning of the 2000s was focussed on spatial planning, and the attendant emphasis on how different policy domains and sectors could be integrated to support the objective of balanced and sustainable development across the European Union (see Atkinson & Zimmermann, 2018). This perspective was/is controversial, both because the European Union does not have specific competences in the domain, and because it is derived from the very different traditions of spatial planning which historically characterise the different member states (Mirwaldt et al., 2009), and which have not exhibited any significant degree of convergence since

the European Union approach emerged (Atkinson & Zimmermann, 2018; Newman & Thornley, 1996).

In order to better understand how certain influential spatial concepts contributed to frame the debate before and after the emergence and consolidation of the place-based approach, it is important to consider how the *European Spatial Development Perspective* introduced, defined and legitimised many concepts and discursive constructs that remain crucial to this day. This document highlights three 'complimentary' key objectives of European policy (as noted earlier): economic and social cohesion; conservation and management of natural resources and the cultural heritage; and a more balanced competitiveness of the European territory (Committee on Spatial Development, 1999), thus presenting itself as a "suitable policy framework for the sectoral policies of the Community and the member states that have spatial impacts" (Committee on Spatial Development, 1999).

The objective of the informal agreement between member states that led to the *European Spatial Development Perspective* was clearly to assess the possible spatial effects (in terms of adaptations of land use patterns and landscapes) of different sectoral policies and internalise them in policy design and policy making at different scales, understanding their potential overlaps, and to integrate spatial considerations into traditionally 'spatially-blind' policies, in order to better take into account geographical differences and a wide range of territorial disparities. The *European Spatial Development Perspective*, moreover, proposes to move one step ahead: There are a number of specific spatial configurations which are cited in the document that may potentially contribute to possible pathways towards the integration of the economic, social, and territorial dimensions of cohesion. These are recurring elements both in the debates that shaped the *European Spatial Development Perspective* (1999) and in the discourses that followed the delineation present in the document, e.g., in the Cohesion Reports and in some operational decisions, such as the creation of the European Spatial Planning Observation Network.

As the *European Spatial Development Perspective* states:

> As early as 1994, the Ministers responsible for spatial planning agreed on three policy guidelines for the spatial development of the EU10: development of a balanced and polycentric urban system and a new urban-rural relationship; securing parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge; and sustainable development, prudent management and protection of nature and cultural heritage. (Committee on Spatial Development, 1991, p. 11)

The underlying assumption being that the general goal was to contribute to the definition of spatial development policies capable of promoting sustainable development of the European Union through the achievement of a balanced spatial structure. The first element is polycentricity, which in the European Union policy discourse is both a descriptive device and a normative notion; the European space it is argued has been (traditionally) polycentric, because it is based on a spatial and urban framework whose foundation has deep historical roots in the urbanisation of Europe. The argument is that in the face of the emergence of new spatial configurations, that in part reflect urbanisation in other parts of the world (North America, East Asia, the Global South), this space should continue to be polycentric, it should seek to maintain balanced polycentricity as these 'new spatial configurations' emerge (e.g., megacities and metropolitan regions). In this sense, polycentricity is understood as a pre-condition to fully utilise the economic potential of all European regions (an objective that became even more pressing after the enlargement of the European Union). The ultimate aim being to establish a 'virtuous circle' between the economic, social and territorial dimensions of cohesion: "The economic potential of all regions of the European Union can only be utilised through the further development of a more polycentric European settlement structure" (Committee on Spatial Development, 1999, p. 20). Yet even here we see that the emphasis is on the 'economic potential' rather than addressing social and territorial inequalities per se.

Secondly, in the *European Spatial Development Perspective* considerable attention is given to the urban-rural nexus, this should be strengthened with the aim to overcome the "outdated dualism between city and countryside" (Committee on Spatial Development, 1999, p. 19), through enhanced urban-rural relations. To an even greater extent than with polycentricity the approach is essentially a governance one, based on forms of cooperation across regions and administrative boundaries that include both urban and rural areas. It is argued there is a strong interdependence between them, even if this is not discussed in depth or really justified. Here the trans-scalar dimension, which is one of the crucial tenets of the European discourse on space, plays a key role, because the relations should be fostered at "a regional, supra-regional, interregional and transnational" level (Committee on Spatial Development, 1999, p. 26). The policy interventions proposed entail forms of integrated spatial planning, able to configure dense and complex urban/rural regions.

The third crucial element of spatial configuration, potentially able to link the different dimensions of cohesion, is the need to ensure accessibility to all European cities and regions, through the careful design of infrastructure networks able to structure territorial relations and to play a role in avoiding, or mitigating, the concentration of economies and opportunities in the most developed area at the centre of the European Union (i.e., the European Pentagon): "Promotion of integrated transport and communication concepts, which support the polycentric development of the European

Union territory and are an important pre-condition for enabling European cities and regions to pursue their integration….Regionally adapted solutions must be found for this" (Committee on Spatial Development, 1999, p. 20).

Finally, the *European Spatial Development Perspective*, and the ensuing debate, address the need to go beyond spatially-sensitive forms of policy coordination through experimentation with area-based programmes, or 'integrated spatial development approaches,' as they are called (Committee on Spatial Development, 1999, p. 19), such as INTERREG (Mirwaldt et al., 2009) or LEADER, pilot programmes, aimed at spatially defined areas (rural, trans-boundary, etc.). These programmes have played a double role in the European Union spatial planning discourse: They have been simultaneously considered test-beds, characterised by a certain degree of uniqueness, but, at the same time, they have been regarded as opportunities for mainstreaming some principles, policy elements and implementation tools, and are still considered in this way.

In addition to the above as noted earlier the place-based approach (Barca, 2009) has been closely associated with spatial planning and cohesion, as articulated in the *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion* (Commission of the European Communities, 2008) and neo-endogenous development. This is part of more general approach often now referred to as territorial development (Cotella, Adams, & Nunes, 2012; Faludi, 2015). However, it is important to bear in mind that the prevailing hegemonic discourse is one of neoliberalism, the aim being to improve Europe's competitiveness (see Olesen, 2014) particularly in the current period of economic crisis and fiscal austerity that exists across Europe (see Hermann, 2007, 2014). This is clearly expressed in the *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion* (Commission of the European Communities, 2008), which argues:

> Increasingly, competitiveness and prosperity depend on the capacity of the people and businesses located there to make the best use of all of territorial assets. In a globalising and interrelated world economy, however, competitiveness also depends on building links with other territories to ensure that common assets are used in a coordinated and sustainable way. Cooperation along with the flow of technology and ideas as well as goods, services and capital is becoming an ever more vital aspect of territorial development and a key factor underpinning the long-term and sustainable growth performance of the European Union as a whole. (p. 3)

This assumption is also embedded at the heart of Europe 2020 (Commission of the European Communities, 2010) in which the notions of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth are framed by the imperative to regain Europe's competitiveness or experience continued relative decline (Commission of the European Communities, 2010, pp. 8–9). Thus, there is a dissonance and tension between the competitiveness and cohesion dimensions of European Union policies, which is reflected in the approach to territorial development (see Servillo, 2010).

From this short overview, it emerges that even when discussing specifically spatial or territorial perspectives, there is an inherent circularity, because in the end they appear to be aimed at fostering and strengthening economic development and competitiveness. Thus, ultimately they function to support the competiveness of the European Union in the face of other regions of the world, thereby enabling governments, at different scales, to more effectively and fully mobilise diverse territorial assets in pursuit of enhanced competitiveness in the context of intensifying global competition. One final point needs to be reiterated: The *European Spatial Development Perspective* remains an intergovernmental document, which has no official status within the European Union.

4. Intersections between Different Dimensions: The Italian Inner Areas Strategy

As can be seen from the previous section, the intersections between the three dimensions of cohesion create uncertainties: Policy-wise there are trade-offs between the dimensions, nevertheless the economic one dominates. This approach assumes the territorial dimension (with the related concept of balanced development in the face of diversity) functions as a form of pre-requisite for the maximum deployment of the European Union's economic potential. Moreover, even if territorial cohesion is, in theory, a shared competence between the European Union and the member states, in fact it is a theoretical and strategic construct closely linked to the intervention of the European Commission, that finds little conceptualisation and application beyond the policy documents promoted by the Commission. Servillo recalls, in fact, how it is essentially a European discursive construct, which takes on meaning only if read with reference to other discursive chains of meaning, produced by the same actor and within the same decision-making networks (Servillo, 2010).

This aspect is particularly important when trying to understand the actual influence of this policy paradigm with respect to choices made at national or regional level. Individual member states understand and utilise this concept in different ways, and therefore the strategies they use to try and operationalise it are diverse and context specific. One interesting and debated policy experiment, that can be examined to better understand how different dimensions of cohesion interact to reframe the territorial cohesion concept, is the policy experimentation underway in Italy about inner areas. This policy is relevant to our argumentation because it provides a general framework for the spatialisation of Cohesion Policy, as it channels both European Union structural funds and national funding, following principles that attempt to overcome

the longstanding North–South geographical divide which has been the main driver for territorial rebalancing policies in the country since the mid-20th century (Cotella & Bovarone, 2020).

From the late 1990s, Cohesion Policy in Italy entered a phase called New Programming (*Nuova Programmazione*), an ambitious programme of extraordinary intervention in regions lagging behind, relying both on European Union structural funds (European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, and others) and on targeted domestic resources. This complex stream of interventions, based on innovative assumptions elaborated in the literature on local development over the previous twenty years, as well as on the tenets of New Public Management, emphasised the definition of bottom-up development strategies as a pre-requisite for accessing European Union funding channelled through regional programmes (Ministero del Tesoro, Bilancio e Programmazione Economica, 1998).

One widely diffused critique of this phase of policy experimentations has been about the ability to concentrate spending and investment in terms of both a territorial and thematic focus. This emerged throughout the different phases of Cohesion Policy, and it concerned both domestic and European Union resources (Palermo, 2009). Many initiatives and measures, such as Territorial Development Pacts or Territorial Integrated Projects, were originally devised as being focussed on crucial areas that could spark development in the wider region. The objective was to strategically target resources on more promising and complex projects, and/or territories in particular need, following Hirschman's idea of 'unbalanced growth' (Hirschman, 1958). However, in practice they were diffused over larger territories and populations, for reasons related to political clientelism.

One of the main results of the critical appraisal of the (mixed) outcomes of this phase can be found in the most recent developments of Italian national territorial cohesion policy, which led to a strong focus on Inner Areas: mountain areas, mainly located along the central axis of the country, and characterised by long standing processes of marginalisation. They are the object of a specific programme, launched by the Agency for Territorial Cohesion in 2012: The National Strategy for Inner Areas (*Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne*, *SNAI*; Agenzia per la Coesione Territoriale, 2013). Inner areas are characterised by the presence of a number of potentially generative elements that can make a relevant contribution to the development of the country, such as the presence of valuable landscapes, culture and local traditions. They require additional support for the construction of appropriate development policies, in order to fully develop their potential. Following the post-2007/2008 downturn they have exhibited increasingly visible evidence of abandonment, depopulation, presence of an ageing population and fragility of their agricultural production patterns (Pacchi, 2014). The recent earthquakes in Marche and Abruzzo intensified the need for such a strategy that could also offer a way to facilitate the reconstruction and re-development of the devastated areas. Given that the strategy provides a very clear attempt to rebalance and reduce the gaps with the most developed areas of the country (both metropolitan regions and medium density suburban areas), it can be seen to represent an interesting example of a policy aimed at territorial cohesion.

This policy strategy defines inner areas using two basic criteria, one explicitly spatial, which is accessibility, the other linked to the supply of public services. Areas that are characterised by both a low accessibility level and scarce supply of public services qualify as inner areas. Using these criteria, the relevant areas cover around 60% of the national territory, include 53% of municipalities and around 23% of the total Italian population.

The policy supports area-based projects working in selected development fields: land management and forests; local food products; renewable energy; natural and cultural heritage; traditional handicraft and SMEs. The explicit goal is territorial re-balancing through place-based projects. Inner areas are targeted because they potentially represent a significant asset for the country. However, at the moment, their resources are largely latent and underused, due to problems of abandonment, accessibility and to the fact that territorial and economic development policies have been concentrated on other parts of the country.

The policy area is the responsibility of the Agency for Territorial Cohesion (*Agenzia per la Coesione Territoriale*), a public body directly controlled by the Prime Ministers' Office, in charge of supporting national and European Union programming, but it is then based on a multilevel governance structure, that involves different institutional actors working strictly with local territories (this also includes the European Union, since the policy is also a vehicle used to implement European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funding, to municipalities). At local level the policy requires the construction of articulated, solid and durable partnerships, involving public and private actors, municipalities, local development agencies, service providers, firms and their representation bodies, and civil society organisations. The latter, in many cases, have a long (albeit not always successful) history of local cooperation, mainly in LEADER programmes. In this sense, there is a strong focus on territorial governance and forms of vertical and horizontal coordination, traditional tenets of territorial cohesion as expressed in European Union discourses, while, at the same time, there is an emphasis on the definition of place-specific policy measures. Such measures vary between areas, depending on the content of the agreements, which are defined at regional level with the representatives of each Inner Area, the concerned Region, and the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion.

While the Strategy is still on-going, there has been considerable debate about its effectiveness in tackling long standing problems in marginalised areas (Cotella &

Bovarone, 2020; Lucatelli & Storti, 2019), as well as on the focus on this part of the country, rather than on other ones. There is a quite widespread agreement that, in general terms, the huge effort at tackling territorial imbalances through an explicitly territorialised policy strategy is an interesting one, which may take a considerable time to fully demonstrate its effects, since it is based on the pooling of dispersed knowledge and the use of external resources as incentives to trigger cooperation at local level. At the same time, more than in other areas, the risk of opportunistic behaviour on the part of local coalitions of rent-seeking interests, ultimately perpetuating forms of clientelism, is visible in many contexts.

If we look at the attempts to integrate the different dimensions of cohesion this approach requires, it is clear that governance arrangements play a crucial role in shaping the territorial dimension, while other, more substantive issues do not appear to be so relevant. Moreover, given the fragility and marginality of the areas under consideration, the integration of the three dimensions of cohesion appears to be an objective that can be achieved, if at all, in the long-term. In many local strategies the territorial and the social dimensions coincide to define local policies aiming, at best, to avoid the most negative consequences of on-going demographic and social infrastructure trends, rather than fully exploiting the potentials of a different economic development model. Thus, local inner areas policies tend to be limited to mitigation measures, rather than enhancing local competitiveness, which is one of the declared aims of the Inner Areas Strategy at national level. While we can see some evidence of an attempt to strive for 'balance' in terms of territorial development, there is little evidence of the deployment of polycentricity as an approach that might allow relevant centres to work together (or 'borrow size'; see Meijers & Burger, 2015) to overcome their disadvantaged situation. Moreover, there is no clear identification of the relevant 'functional places' required by a place-based approach. Nor, at least to date, does the territorial governance dimension, required to 'knit' everything together, appear to have been fully realised.

5. Conclusion: Territorial Cohesion: An Illusion Sacrificed on the Altar of Competitiveness

As we have seen one of the few things those involved in the debate about territorial cohesion agree on is that it is closely tied to the notion of spatial planning/development (e.g., Davoudi, 2005; Faludi, 2009; Mirwaldt et al., 2009). More specifically the *European Spatial Development Perspective* has provided several of the key notions that constitute territorial cohesion. However, use of the term 'perspective' in its title implies a view (or an opinion) rather than a definitive statement. Thus, as with territorial cohesion, there is no clear, statement of what the *European Spatial Development Perspective* is. This means it is 'open to interpretation' and this is most clearly visible in relation to key concepts such as polycentricity and balanced and harmonious development. As a result, there is an inherent instability at the heart of the approach that has never been resolved and arguably cannot be resolved. This has implications for territorial cohesion and its relationship with economic and social cohesion. Without a clear and shared understanding of what the key notions mean there will be an endless process of debate and fuzziness over meanings and interrelations. This has been exacerbated by the increasing primacy of economic growth and competiveness particularly since the 2007/2008 crash. Indeed, as we noted in Section 2 at European level the attempt to integrate territorial, economic and social cohesion has largely been abandoned.

Following the *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion* (Commission of the European Communities, 2008) and the *Barca Report* of 2009, in many ways the resolution of this conundrum was displaced to the national and subnational levels of member states. Here, by utilising a place-based approached focused on 'meaningful functional areas' pursuing a form of neo-endogenous local development based on the strengths of each area and addressing their problems, it was hoped a 'practical integration' could be achieved. Central to this 'practical integration' is the issue of developing new forms of (territorial) governance able to bring together a diverse range of stakeholders and resources and thereby to develop a long-term strategic and integrated approach.

In general terms this sounds eminently sensible. However, when we begin to interrogate key elements in these formulations, things become less clear. For instance, if we consider what is meant by integration this notion is open to dispute and uncertainty. In many cases integration rarely means more than 'sharing information.' Stead and Meijers (2009, p. 319) provide an insightful discussion of these issues, they highlight the confusion surrounding the notion of integration noting that "behind the rhetoric, a range of diverse meanings and manifestations of the concept can be found in policy documents." In terms of territorial cohesion clarity about the nature of integration is vital because, in policy terms, it is a central part of developing a holistic approach, including an appropriate governance framework, to the issue at whatever scale it is addressed. Unless we know what it is, we are seeking to integrate and why then the relationship to territorial cohesion becomes at best blurred and more realistically merely rhetoric. The result will be a continuation of the old fragmented sectoral approach dominated by local interests. This was amply illustrated in Section 4 where the (re)assertion of clientelism led to both the definition of 'target areas' and 'capture' of the policy. In this sense, we see here a possible trade-off between proximity and focus: When cohesion policies are decided at the European Union or Member State level, there is the risk that the economic dimension overrides the others; on the other hand, when policies are defined at local level, the issues taken into account lead to more balanced outcomes, as in many cases within the

Italian Inner Areas Strategy, but there is a higher risk of capture on the part of local interests.

Furthermore, the place-based approach itself is open to question. This notion of 'functional geography,' while somewhat vaguely defined, is to be understood in a multi-dimensional economic, social and cultural sense. However, defining 'functional places' is by no means a simple process. Servillo, Atkinson, and Hamdouch (2017) note there are considerable ontological problems when attempting to define what counts as a town and these apply to defining a 'functional place.' There are no easy and uncontested methods to identify the relevant spatial boundaries of these 'functional spaces' and the associated populations in a context constituted by variable 'spaces and flows' that create what Allmendinger and Haughton (2014, p. 20) call 'soft spaces' and fuzzy boundaries. Inevitably this requires 'choices' to be made concerning what constitutes the relevant 'functional places': Which flows should be included? Flows of people commuting for work (as measured by travel to work areas) or flows of goods and services? The selection of flows, or combination of flows, produces different 'functional places.' Furthermore, such places are supposed to be meaningful, this immediately raises the issue of 'meaningful in what sense' and to whom? Again Section 4 illustrates these issues in terms of how the relevant areas were defined. Here the definition was strongly influenced by political forces seeking to shape the direct policy to benefit their areas.

In addition to these general, some might argue abstract questions, there are more practical issues. In particular how to develop effective working and coordination relations that cross administrative boundaries. The *Barca Report* is aware of this issue and highlights the need to engage in institutional change if this approach is to be successful.

Moreover, if the multifaceted problems are to be addressed:

> The intervention needed to tackle these problems should take the form of the provision of integrated bundles of public goods and services aimed at triggering institutional change, improving the well-being of people and the productivity of businesses and promoting innovation. The goods and services concerned need to be tailored to places by eliciting and aggregating local preferences and knowledge and by taking account of linkages with other places. (Barca, 2009, p. XI)

If such changes take place arrangements for citizen/community participation will need to be developed that bring together spatially and socially disparate groups to create 'deliberative fora' that can adequately represent their interests in policy development and implementation. Also, the long standing dilemma facing all such approaches remains: that the causes of many of the problems in a chosen space of intervention will not necessarily all be found within that space and are, at least in part, to be found in the wider regional, national and even supra-national context. It is not unreasonable to argue that no matter how well designed, integrated and coordinated these policies are they alone are unlikely to be able to resolve the problems facing a locality. Of course, the counter argument would be that this is precisely why integrated multilevel governance arrangements and actions are so important in order to combine exogenous and endogenous actions. Unfortunately, this has been inadequately followed through at European, national and subnational levels leaving the dissonance between territory and administrative unit largely intact (Commission of the European Communities, 2014, pp. 13–14; see also Atkinson, 2012; Servillo, 2010).

As we have seen there is no clear or definitive definition of territorial cohesion, it is both a theoretical concept and a political/normative programme. Indeed, it might be argued that the latter preceded the former and that the latter has in part sought to justify and amplify the former. It remains an inherently contested notion entwined with normative aspirations about the way in which the European space should be organised and experienced by its citizens. It is also intimately bound up with notions of European spatial planning/development, which is a way of achieving those aspirations. However, the problems associated with a notion that the European Union lacks a competence to engage in leaves a great deal in the hands of member states, some have sought to engage with this issue although by adapting it to complement their own national and regional agendas, which has produced a diverse range of responses.

Finally, and arguably most importantly, the dominance of the economic dimension and the overwhelming focus on improving the competitiveness and economic growth of the European Union and national economies means that the significance of territorial (and social) cohesion has been downgraded. In many instances even in terms of economic cohesion this has created intensified interregional inequalities, particularly in some member states in East Central Europe where the growth of national capitals and regional centres has intensified these inequalities. The ongoing impact of the Crash of 2007/2008 has taken the form of fiscal austerity which has been framed by the neoliberal assumption that market failure did not cause these problems but, rather, that the economic crisis resulted from state intervention in market processes and excessive fiscal expenditure by the state—thus the need for fiscal austerity. The result has been a hegemonic consensus that has internalised neoliberal articles of faith, thus as Olesen (2014, p. 8) argued ideas such as "economic growth and competitiveness are being normalised as commonsense policy objectives." These assumptions are seen as 'unquestionable'—they are presented as the only 'solutions' to the crisis. In this context it is little wonder that the search for territorial (and social and economic) cohesion has, in effect, been abandoned.

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Article

Contexts and Interconnections: A Conjunctural Approach to Territorial Cohesion

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Abstract
This article contributes to current debates around EU policy on territorial cohesion and its place-based approaches. Based on substantial empirical research in seven member countries in an on-going EU Horizon 2020 project, the article develops a conjunctural approach based on Doreen Massey's conceptualisation of place to provide insight into how local development functions in spatial and temporal dimensions. One of the main objectives of the case studies is to compare policy programmes and practices that seek to alleviate territorial inequality and generate economic growth and territorial cohesion. In such a comparison, the issue of conflating and rescaling administrative territorial units and boundaries demands particular attention. Administrative boundaries do not necessarily reflect the complexity and interconnections between policy actors, businesses, and local communities. Local specificities make it difficult to compare the local political room for manoeuvre due to different administrative principles, unequal degrees of devolution of competences or differences in constitutions, e.g., federal states versus unity states. In this article, we argue that, faced with an analysis of highly diverse cases, a conjunctural analytical approach can help to capture and unpack some of the places' complexities and regional interconnections and be a useful supplement to more conventional comparisons of more similar places. Through two examples, the article discusses what the application of this conjunctural approach means in practice, how it helped shape our understanding of how differently and how it can be further developed to accommodate place-based approaches to researching territorial cohesion.

Keywords
conjunctures; place-based approach; territorial cohesion; territorial inequality

Issue
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1. Introduction

During the past decade, EU cohesion policy has experienced the development of what has been called a 'place-based approach' in its efforts to bridge economic, social and territorial cohesion (Abrahams, 2014; Atkinson & Zimmermann, 2018; Faludi, 2006). The place-based approach seeks to grapple with the overlapping, sometimes conflating and, in any case, enmeshed flows of initiatives and actors, policies and finance at different administrative and governance levels. In analysing variations between very different EU countries, the article addresses the need for an analytical perspective which can encompass the multiple variations

between places. The article draws on examples from the analysis and evaluation of local cohesion policy initiatives in selected case studies from the ongoing Horizon 2020 project "Inequality, Urbanization and Territorial Cohesion: Developing the European Social Model of Economic Growth and Democratic Capacity" (COHSMO). While not in any straightforward manner, these initiatives have developed within the framework of EU cohesion policy and the place-based approach. However, in assessing and analysing their composition and impact there are interesting similarities and differences between the individual places that are easily overlooked. The project represents seven very different member countries—the UK (the grant was given ahead of Brexit), Austria, Italy, Greece, Poland, Lithuania and Denmark. Within each country, three case studies have been done in small, middle-sized and large cities (see Section 4 below). Meanwhile, as the project developed some interesting parallels, contrasts between some of the individual cases were observed but not easily addressed within the established research design. In stretching over very diverse cases, focusing the analysis on what we might call 'conventional similarities' is easily favoured. But in some instances between the very diverse cases—like the examples taken up here—we discover manifestations of places that are interesting to compare because of how they correspond to the same developmental dynamics (and challenges) on the one hand, while on the other hand comprising of context-specific territorial differences and similarities that are not meaningfully unified or put into a singular explanation. To better capture and unpack these complex and interconnected relations, the article revisits Doreen Massey's (1991, 2005) notion of place as 'throwntogetherness,' and picks up some of the literature that follows her relational approach to place and continues the conversation of conjunctures. The shift in cohesion policy towards the place-based approach can be said to represent an understanding of places as multiple and overlapping, and therefore as corresponding with the relational view. As an analytical approach, tracing the conjuncture(s) will supplement the analysis of possible mechanisms and explanations drawn from comparing administratively defined geographical units by giving greater emphasis on the importance and constitutive role of geographical, historical and political interconnections.

While the article draws on Massey's work, we want to acknowledge that there are other bodies of literature that have taken similar grips with theorising key territorial concepts and shown interest in relational thinking. For instance, at about the same time as the interest in place gained momentum in the 1980s, a similar development took place around the notion of 'locality.' At a time of de-industrialisation and economic restructuring, there was a need for new ways of understanding regional development. In many ways, the discussion revolved around the same overall questions of the impact and nature of 'spatial' vis-à-vis 'social' forces, the recognition of the global in the local and vice versa, and the relationships between spatial scales (Cooke, 1990; Savage & Duncan, 1990; for a relatively recent contribution with a summary of earlier literature see Jones & Woods, 2013).

The article begins by outlining the recent emphasis in the EU on a place-based approach to understanding territorial cohesion emphasising the proclaimed need stated in the literature for more focus on contextual conditions. The article then re-visits some of the literature that accommodated the above-mentioned 'turn' towards a relational understanding of place. Following this, we try to develop this analytical framework through two examples from the COHSMO project. In the final section of the article, we discuss the implications of the suggested analytical framework; focusing on the knowledge gained from conjunctural analysis.

2. Territorial Cohesion and the Place-Based Approach

Over the past decade, EU cohesion policy has increasingly moved towards a place-based approach to improve the quality of regional development strategies (Barca, 2009). The core idea is that each region has a (sometimes not fully-developed) potential that can be realised through a mix of endogenous and exogenous resources. As argued by Barca, McCann, and Rodríguez-Pose (2012, p. 140), "the place-based approach assumes that geographical context really matters, whereby context here is understood in terms of its social, cultural, and institutional characteristics" (p. 140). The Barca Report also argues that "apparently, space-neutral policies will always have explicit spatial effects, many of which will undermine the aims of the policy itself unless its spatial effects are explicitly taken into consideration" (Barca, 2009, p. 140). As far as the endogenous dimension is concerned, Barca (2009, p. 22) clearly acknowledges that among the relevant preconditions for effective local development policies "both formal and informal institutions are a prerequisite for a place to make full use of its potential." Among such institutions, Barca lists the agency of individuals, social capital, trust, democratic participation in decision-making and institutional capacity while at the same time warns that "the problem with all these prerequisites is that they do not arise easily and are highly path-dependent" (Barca, 2009, p. 22).

In 2011, after the publication of *Europe 2020* (EU's ten-year strategy from 2010), another key publication emerged that was prepared on request of the European Council for advice on how to strengthen the territorial dimension of EU cohesion policy and the Europe 2020-strategy: the known Böhme Report. The report contains a review of the most important initiatives and publications made in the field of territorial cohesion under the auspices of the EU (Böhme, Doucet, Komornicki, Zaucha, & Świątek, 2011). The review shows that few attempts have been made to integrate territorial perspectives within developmental policies and argues that the territorial approach of the Europe 2020-strategy is

"blurred" and "territorially blind" (Böhme et al., 2011, p. 17). The lack of territorial focus is ascribed to a more general "mental and institutional" lack of contact between the fields of territorial development and socio-economic growth (Böhme et al., 2011, p. 21) and the report proposes to connect place-based policies within the framework of EU cohesion policy.

The reason for this territorial blindness, the report argues, is that the strategy operates with a much too narrow understanding of territoriality as this impact is primarily dealt with as a matter of transport and infrastructure. In the Territorial Agenda 2020 (which is part of the Europe 2020 strategy), which focuses on smart, inclusive and sustainable growth, there is no description or analysis of the impacts of the territorial factors. The Böhme Report emphasises that the proper 'territorial keys' enabling the desired development are missing. Among these keys are territorial capacities/endowments/assets and city networking. Territory-bound factors and local milieus are mentioned, but it is only sparsely clarified what these factors consist of and how they are conceptualised. Especially concerning territorial capacities/endowments/assets, the Böhme Report mentions alternative indicators such as civic society (NGO active share of the population, election turnout), social capital, regionalised educational attainment and cultural networks/routes as factors that can be used as a preliminary platform to comprehend places as socially and culturally different. These place-bound social and cultural differences have to be taken into account for territorial policies to be effective. A general point is that the different keys will act in different ways in different countries and that the scales and levels in which these keys are used are decisive for the outcomes. Indeed, once applied at different scales, in some cases the outcomes can even be contradictory (Böhme et al., 2011).

While the notion of territorial cohesion has become mobilised in several policy documents during the past decade, there remains little consensus in the academic literature on what it actually means. Also, the understandings of place and geographic scale concerning the questions of territorial cohesion are unclear (Atkinson & Zimmermann, 2018). Moreover, despite several rounds of EU cohesion policies, and a range of spatial planning reports from the ESPON-projects, there is a lack of understanding of what territorial cohesion 'does' and how it relates to what goes on in particular, diverse places (Abrahams, 2014). As Faludi (2016) argues, one of the reasons why territorial cohesion remains a fuzzy and unclear concept is that our understanding of territorialism is stuck in a tradition of spatial order and linearity:

> Territorialism—painting the image of a well-ordered world of boxes stacked into boxes, presumably until the globe, too, is safely cocooned in one super-box—is an illusion and an inhumane one to boot. It puts the box, in particular, that of the nation-state, above the human being. (Faludi, 2016, p. 80)

Instead of territorialism, Faludi argues for a different set of spatial metaphors viewing Europe as an archipelago in a sea of malleable functional regions in which the different spatial units change in interaction with the context of the sea. His arguments point to the importance of operating with a diverse conceptualisation of place, and of adjusting conventional thinking of fixed scales and clear boundaries to adjust analysis and policy implementation to human life in and through places. Accordingly, we must strengthen our understanding of the highly contextual place-dynamics that influence the formations of territorial inequality and cohesion. Certainly, political, economic and governmental relations are part of the reason behind these differences, but local, social interaction and historical, symbolic and traditional attachment to local communities and places play an important, but often ignored, role in causing these differences.

3. Revisiting Place as 'Throwntogetherness' and the Notion of 'Conjunctures'

Having outlined, in brief, the development around territoriality and place in EU cohesion policy, and the call in the literature for greater context-sensitivity to deepen our analysis of the drivers in regional development, this section turns to the theoretical backdrop for the analytic approach (or lens, one might say) that we argue for here. In geography, the notion of place has come to represent a thoroughly theorised (and complex) concept that engages convincingly with relationality and structural power while upholding a sense of particularity and open-endedness. It addresses the way different territorial 'layers,' in lack of a better expression, are mutually constitutive and not, as pointed out by Faludi above, nicely ordered boxed stacked upon boxes. The theorisation of place started to gain momentum during the 1980s when it became apparent how exclusionist communities (and even nationalist rhetoric) could be coupled with the common-sense understanding of places as representative of uniform and singular identities—spaces of coherent and rooted communities with legacies stretching far back in history. Meanwhile, with the increase in urbanisation, globalisation and international migration, scholars began to critically address the underlying assumptions of such common sense place-imaginaries and to work through the notion with concern for greater socio-spatial variation, especially including marginalised and impoverished voices. One particularly prominent figure in these debates was Massey and it is her work that we shall draw on here because it fits well with the call for both context-sensitivity as well as structuring forces of power.

Massey argues how any identity of place is often contested, and any uniqueness of a place is not (necessarily) the result of some long internalised history. Rather, it is the momentary conjuncture of several identities and relations stretching across the individual place and being continually produced and reproduced (Massey, 1991). Second, a place is not easily defined by any administra-

tive boundaries, as these are often arbitrary to the meanings and dynamics involved in its constitution, and third, and perhaps most challenging; a place is a *process* rather than a demarcated location on a map (Massey, 1991). Instead of imagining places as areas with boundaries, "they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings" (Massey, 1991, p. 28). When understood as a specific conjunction of relations, a specific combination of circumstances, she argues, it is also possible to comprehend how the global is present in the local and the local is present in the global, and how the instance we call place is constituted in the interaction between both. Finally, in further theorising the notion of process and instability she writes how places are spatio-temporal events (Massey, 2005). They are characterised by the simultaneity of process, flow and change together with the particularity and specificity of the 'here and now'—a "throwntogetherness," she calls it (Massey, 2005, p. 140). Indeed, it is the very coming together of the here and now, and the inevitable *negotiation* they cause, that exactly characterises the nature of places:

> What is special about place is precisely that throwntogetherness, the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here-and-now (itself drawing on a history and geography of thens and theres); and a negotiation which must take place within and between both human and non-human. (Massey, 2005, p. 140)

This way of understanding place represents not only a change in how we see the role and influences of administrative boundaries, social communities and negotiations in the constitution of places; it also gives great importance to the aspect of temporality. Understood as conjunctures of relations being negotiated here and now, places are the result of overlapping relations at a certain moment in time. Thinking in these lines, we argue, it is possible to complement the discussion of the place-based approach above.

In aiming for more context and greater variation, the question, however, is where to begin and where to end. We argue that thinking in lines of conjunctures gives some points of orientation and that these are found within the notions of negotiation, articulation and legitimisation. As Massey emphasises the role temporality for the constitution of places we are provided with some directions as our analysis becomes sensitive both to the moment of study (the conjuncture could look different in the future) and to the nodes of negotiation. This orients our analytic lens towards points of negotiation either in the present and/or historically. The way we have worked with this is to search for the empirical testimonies of how the identified conjunctures are negotiated and contested, and what have been the driving forces in their being upheld. Secondly, our question echoes that of Clarke (2018, p. 201) as he asks of where the conjuncture takes place. As Clarke expresses it, the insistence on articulations is the key. In a short essay reflecting on earlier discussions with Massey, Clarke discusses the implications of multiple spatial relations when approached through conjunctural analysis. The conjuncture, he writes:

> Articulates multiple spatial relations, such that politics come to play out on a terrain that combines and condenses multiple sites—the local (the deindustrialised city or region); the national, the regional (embodied in the EU, for example) and the global, whilst recognising that all of these are folded into one another. (Clarke, 2018, p. 205)

The recognition of how multiple sites, or territorial layers as we called them before, are interrelated and "folded into one another" is not new (e.g., Brenner, 2001, theorising scale). Many "dynamics are shared with other places" and "many lived experiences are common" (Clarke, 2018, p. 206) but it is through the specific forms of political articulation, as we read him, that the conjuncture takes distinctive spatial shapes. Adopting a conjunctural approach, therefore, does not erase the particular geography (returning to spatial blindness or 'placelessness') but it does prescribe that any spatial site that forms part of the articulation gets included in the analysis.

Finally, both Massey's and Clarke's thinking around conjunctural analysis is linked to economic geographies of neoliberalism. The reason this is relevant in this context is that it serves to show the third node of orientation that we find in the conjunctural approach—namely that of legitimisation. While conjunctures may be similar in different places, what contributes to making it locally specific is its interrelation to a political imaginary that act to legitimise the articulation of (particular) spatial interconnections (and not others). In our reading, this can be exemplified by the claim from Brenner and Theodore (2002) of how neoliberal policies are spatially selective and that we need to approach current neoliberal restructuring not as a homogenous tendency but as locally specific articulations of strategies and interconnections (see also Brenner & Theodore, 2005). To the conjunctural approach, this means that the dominant economic-political backdrop forms part in sorting out and providing legitimisation of the particular articulation of the conjuncture. In order to approach how challenges to territorial cohesion unfold and are answered in the seven countries included in this cross-national research project, we need to look at how neoliberal localisation strategies become embedded within particular contexts characterised with institutional and regulatory path dependencies. In summary, we argue that a conjunctural analysis of territorial cohesion is concerned with conjunctures that form across neoliberal variegation and their resulting differentiation. Such conjunctures contain both answers to economic restructuring and the creation of locally specific strategies establishing interconnections between e.g., local development plans and their regional counterparts, networks between business clusters and

local governments promoting corporate social responsibility, and community-led area-based programmes to fight localised expressions of social exclusion. Moreover, that both historically and context-dependent place identities and locally specific political imaginaries play crucial parts in how such strategies become articulated as moments of conjunctures. It is through the insistence on 'local' or 'place-based' articulations that we try to sort out how local cases both express local variegation and form part of particular conjunctures. All in all, the approach tries to work with this multiplicity to explore how the selected places provide reciprocal learnings among them and to deepen our understanding of their contextual influences.

4. Case Study Methods

As mentioned earlier, the case studies that are used as examples in this article are based on an on-going research project involving seven member countries of very different sizes and national characteristics. Selecting the three cases in each country was subject to much attention. Obviously, while cases might be similar concerning some parameters, they would differ on others, and instead of striving for the similarity of cases, a similar approach of two stages for selecting cases was adopted. First, a region was selected for each country, and as the research focuses on multi-level governance policies, it was central that the local cases were selected with a focus on their interaction with the surrounding region. Second, within the region, three case-areas were selected at an urban, a suburban and a rural locality. In some partner countries, these localities constitute their own municipal and local government unit, while in others the localities refer to a conglomerate of municipalities. The research aims to analyse the approach to territorial cohesion, inequality and urbanisation in each of the different cases, and to understand how and why approaches differ, what they share and what the consequences of these differences and similarities in approaches might be.

The cases were selected based on common criteria. The urban cases were to be centres of a mono-centric agglomeration; classified as metropolis or, for the smaller countries of Denmark and Lithuania, a large city in the ESPON 2007 study. Huge metropolitan cities were avoided, as they would not have similar counterparts in some of the other countries. The suburban cases were to be characterised, as far as possible, by a recent experience of population growth related to suburbanisation and/or urban sprawl, significant commuting to the core city of the agglomeration, the domination of non-agriculture functions, internal diversification and a presence of social challenges. Finally, the rural cases were to be characterised by low population density, a tendency for outmigration and a central role of agriculture.

The methods employed were policy analysis and key-informant interviews. In each case, key policy documents reflecting the policy areas of economic growth, urban regeneration, childcare, active labour market policy and vocational educational training were identified and analysed with regard for their main discourses. Secondly, in each case, interviews with approx. 25 key-informants reflecting a spread between community, governance and business actors were conducted. In supplement, another 5 key-informant interviews per country were conducted with actors at regional and national levels to explore the links between different governance levels further.

The selection of cases can be called 'information-oriented' (Flyvbjerg, 2006) aiming for maximum variation between rural, suburban and urban cases within the region/or functional region. The case study methodology follows Yin (2003), where it is defined as an empirical inquiry that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life-context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2003, p. 13). To this end, a case study will "have to cover both the phenomenon of interest and its context, yielding a large number of potentially relevant variables" (Yin, 2003, p. 48). Through this type of case study, it is possible to explore the influence and significance of the variables as contextualised rather than isolated in the analytical framework—what the variable means, so to speak, in its situated and specific context.

5. Conjunctures of Knowledge-Economy, Economic Growth and Inequality in Aarhus, Milano and Vienna

In the first example, the empirical cases compared are Vienna, Milan and Aarhus (for in-depth analysis, see Boczy, Cefalo, Parma, & Nielsen, 2020). In terms of, for example, population size as well as position and importance in a national and a European context, these three urban cases differ substantially. However, the dynamics of their interplay between economic growth and inequality in the context of the knowledge economy shows interesting and relevant characteristics between them.

Vienna is the business, educational, research and cultural hub of Austria. It is the capital city and a 'doorway to the East' of Europe. The city has 1.8 million inhabitants and is both a municipality and a federal state. Milan is located in the Northern part of Italy and has 1.4 million inhabitants. It is the leading Italian industrial city and the main economic and financial centre of Northern Italy. The city is colloquially described as the "bridge' between Italy and the world" and it is associated with fashion, design and culture. Aarhus is the second biggest city in Denmark with a population of 350,000 inhabitants. It is the centre and growth motor of its region. For all three cities, internationalisation and the development of the knowledge economy are cornerstones in their strategies for economic growth. However, the position for realising this and the approach for doing so differ.

All three cities strive to support the development of the knowledge economy. However, they differ as to the approach to their industrial and manufacturing past.

In Vienna, the focus is on the development of new knowledge and innovative high-tech products based on three interlinked pillars: universities, high-tech production and knowledge-intensive services (Municipal Department 18, 2014). Industries have, to some extent, relocated to outside the cities; even if efforts are now made to reserve land for returning industry. In Aarhus, the knowledge economy is to be supported through the development of strategic business clusters but coupled with an explicit aim to retain industry-heavy businesses as part of the business landscape; located in suitable places in an attempt to future-proof the city through a broad economic profile. In Milan, the focus is on developing strategic clusters and supporting innovative entrepreneurship, in particular, knowledge-intensive start-ups; both of which are to be in "synergy with the university system, research centres, the cultural world and the Third Sector" (Commune di Milano, 2016, p. 7). At the same time, however, the manufacturing tradition is still strong and the political aim is to sustain and develop it further. The manufacturing sector is to be reformed to become highly specialised, highly qualified, innovative and environmentally and socially sustainable. The sector is to be a driver for the economy as a whole and to link with, build on and support the knowledge economy. Thus, while the cities have a focus on the knowledge economy in common, their approach to industry differs.

In all of the cities, education is described as the backbone of the knowledge economy. Thus, in Vienna, a key focus is ensuring that residents can meet the educational requirements of a city centred on the knowledge economy. However, while tertiary education is needed for the knowledge economy, there is a lack of resources for this and a lack of qualified workers, which points to a mismatch between the supply and demand of the knowledge-intensive labour market. Turning to Aarhus, the aim is for the city to consolidate its position in the knowledge-based part of the global value chain with education as a cornerstone (Aarhus Municipality, 2015); offering a highly-skilled workforce to businesses located in Aarhus. This latter goal seems to be realised as Aarhus educates more highly-educated individuals than they have workplaces for. In Milan, the focus on university education is less strong; possibly due to a national Italian context, still marked by comparatively low-qualified and less-innovative supply of jobs. All three cities are educational hubs in a national context and thus contribute to the development of the knowledge economy at a national level by providing the education necessary for a highly-skilled workforce. Along with their national importance, the cities strive to position themselves in an international context. Their positions differ, however. As described, Vienna has a clear international position already, Milan to some extent as well, while Aarhus, as the smallest of the three, holds a less-prominent position internationally. Nevertheless, the aim is for Aarhus to develop into "a national growth-centre with international impact" (Aarhus Municipality, 2017, p. 4). For all three cities, it seems that being a national centre is not sufficient to thrive in the knowledge economy.

The rise of the knowledge economy entails a risk of growing-inequality (Cucca & Ranci, 2016) as some groups and some areas can adapt to the knowledge economy and benefit from it while others are not. This is addressed to a varying extent in the three cities. It is most explicitly addressed in Milan where there is a focus on aiding the peripheral areas in benefitting from economic development. Economic growth is described as supporting social cohesion through creating new job opportunities within manufacturing but at the same time, it is acknowledged that there is a potential risk of Milan developing as a 'two-speed city' were certain parts profit from economic growth, the knowledge economy and internationalisation while other parts, the disadvantaged, peripheral areas, get left behind. In Vienna, social inclusion efforts centre on infrastructure and equal access, for example, to education and health facilities focusing on education and re-training to help low-educated youths and adults enter the labour market. Provision of childcare is presented as important for social mobility and for reducing gender inequality. Territorial inequality is not addressed. Finally, in Aarhus, the potential downsides of globalisation, internationalisation and economic growth are not in focus. Economic growth is described as a motor for the development of the city and the region and globalisation as 'a train on the move' that one cannot afford to be late for. There is a focus on distributing growth spatially to secure that all areas of the city benefit from it, not least the disadvantaged areas. However, growth is described as beneficial for everyone if planned for in the right way, as a tool for changing the situation of the deprived areas and as the basis for increasing municipal investments, leading to new offers and service solutions for the most deprived. Territorial inequality is thus addressed, but economic growth is seen as a solution to rather than a potential cause for inequality.

Through these analyses, it was possible to gain further insight into how the mutual conjuncture around articulations of taking part in the knowledge economy has been shaped in the three cases, how it is intermeshed with considerations of how consequences of economic growth impact social inequality and the different ways in which these consequences are, or are not, addressed. The variegated transition to the knowledge economy (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore, 2010) in the three cases form around local articulations of the conjuncture's interrelations with culture, tradition, industrial patterns and territorial concentrations of social inequality. Milan's history as a manufacturing city, and to some extent Aarhus's as well, is still present and have become part of a dual strategy to combine the knowledge economy with the local industries to broaden the city's profile. In all three cities, education is a cornerstone. However, the ambition of being an educational hub seems to be best realised in Aarhus, while Vienna is challenged in resources for higher education and a mismatch between

demand and supply. The risks entailed in economic growth in terms of rising territorial inequality are explicitly addressed in Milan. In Vienna, territorial inequality is not addressed at all. In Aarhus, it is addressed, but not as a consequence of economic growth. To the contrary, in Aarhus, economic growth is seen as a solution to territorial inequality. Whether Aarhus succeeds in distributing growth across the city, remains to be seen.

6. Conjunctures of Identity, Entrepreneurialism and Government Relations in Legnano and Horsens

The second example focuses on two suburban cases from the COHSMO project, namely Legnano, in Italy (Cordini, Pacchi, & Parma, in press), and Horsens, in Denmark (Fallov, Jørgensen, Nielsen, & de Neergaard, in press). In both cases, a widespread sense of place-identity plays a significant role in sustaining their local development and economic restructuring. This makes them good examples of the need to analyse particular conjunctions of changing identity, entrepreneurial spirit and connections to formal, local government. Both cities are adjusting to deindustrialisation and changing economic structures. In both places, there are strong alliances among businesses, which play a significant role in local development and in securing labour market inclusion in some very particular place-specific versions of corporate social responsibility. Thus, as pointed with Clarke above, economic restructuring and development are closely interwoven with political imaginaries and particular historical and place-specific identities.

Horsens Municipality has about 90.000 inhabitants and is located centrally in Jutland, along the East coast, near other big cities such as Aarhus, Vejle and Silkeborg. It is easy to live in Horsens and work in any of the nearby big cities. As housing prices are low and commuting is easy, this has led to current population growth. Meanwhile, Horsens is struggling with its history as a rough blue-collar town that used to house one of the largest prisons in Denmark. The municipality is relatively poor and lacks the big family industries that traditionally have brought in the substantial tax revenues to a city this size. The main narrative of Horsens is thus centred on attempting to change the image of Horsens from being primarily an industrial town with low educational attainment to an educational and cultural town that benefits not only from its infrastructural location near major motorways, but also from its lively cultural life supported by voluntary activity. The Horsens Alliance, formed in 2013, holds a central position in the development of Horsens. The alliance consists of members of municipal departments within the labour market, education and social services, union representatives and local business actors. The alliance is a key factor in the territorial development of Horsens as it unites different interests, pools local resources and makes it possible to drive the development of Horsens forward despite a tight economic budget. The alliance has played a crucial part in the rebranding of Horsens during the last 20 years and works, amongst other things, for job creation and raising educational attainment (Fallov et al., in press).

Legnano has around 60.000 inhabitants and is strategically located 20 kilometres North-West of Milan between the metropolitan core and an important axis that connects it with Switzerland and Northern Europe. Legnano has long been an industrial city and is trying to recover from deindustrialisation. Besides the consequent loss of jobs, it has also had substantial effects on mobility with increased commuting to the main city, Milan, and long-term outmigration. Also, the qualification level of the workforce has decreased. Presently, there seems to be a relocation of high-skilled workers and the most qualified young people towards Milan, while those migrating into the city tend to be low-skilled workers. The main strengths of Legnano are its entrepreneurial potential, rooted in its industrial tradition, the overall wealth and good quality of life. Despite the substantial deindustrialisation process and the economic crisis in 2008, there are still productive specialisations relating to the textile industry (shoemaking among others). Based on its history, Legnano appears to have a stable and long-standing sense of industrial identity. Although deindustrialisation and the financial crisis have changed the local industrial fabric, there is an entrepreneurial spirit to Legnano and its inhabitants (Cordini et al., in press).

Both places have a strong and lively civil society based on a long-standing collaboration with local municipal actors. Moreover, in both places, business networks have a key role in supporting civil society organisations—especially sports organisations. In Horsens, the business network has been instrumental in turning the historical centre, shaped by the old prison, into a cultural event centre. Similarly, in Legnano, business networks play a key role in sustaining a historical tournament, which is a focal point for the general sense of local, place identity. What appears to be different between the two is the degree of formality and coordination involved in the collaboration between business networks and local public actors. The Horsens Alliance is formalised with economic interdependent relations to the local municipality. Thus, the Horsens Alliance is closely involved in developing labour market strategies (formalised CSR and social investment strategies). In contrast, while the business networks in Legnano have a long historical tradition, they seem to be more directed towards establishing industrial clusters than they do towards public services and the level of formalisation appears to be significantly lower.

A critical similarity between the two places is how the close interdependent relations between business alliances and local government (however formalised or not) represent a possible democratic gap. As the coalitions are serving the interest of economic growth while also being the key drivers in the discourse of a strong local place identity, they leave little room for any alternative voices. Meanwhile, there are also signs of how

the coalitions will take on social and democratic responsibilities. Indeed, in Horsens, the dominating discourse of the local place identity is coupled with the notion of 'lifting together.' This denotes the importance of corporate responsibility for equity and inclusion in development strategies. Potentially, some similar tendencies may be witnessed in Legnano, even if the discourse is presently more reactive than proactive:

> As it always happens when some historical, symbolic event is put at the centre of public discourses around identity, there is a risk of over-representation of its importance of identity, and that such identity discourse shows, in fact, a picture of Legnano that lies mainly in the past and looks backwards, with a risk of a regressive, rather than a progressive attitude towards identity discourses. (Cordini et al., in press, p. 80)

With a conjunctural analysis, we focus on the dynamics that Legnano and Horsens have in common, despite differences in their particular history, national and regional contexts. By taking this perspective, other dynamics emerge. In this example, it is the particular articulations of entrepreneurial culture, networks of businesses and local government and their interactions with local, place identity. While discourses of place-identity drawing on the particular history of place become a nodal point for the networks in both cities, they vary in character and reactiveness. These articulations have different effects on territorial cohesion and patterns of inequality; thus, the conjunctures vary in their capacity to shield against uneven development and their concern with future equity of the cities. This shielding capacity of particular cities and neighbourhoods is conceptualised by Sampson as 'collective efficacy' (Sampson, 2001, 2011, 2012). As Sampson argues, the concept of collective efficacy can be a composite measure of the interaction between location, place attachment, social infrastructures, and degree of networks to local decision-makers. Even though both Horsens and Legnano can be characterised as having dense social infrastructures and place identities and entrepreneurial cultures that can be mobilised in legitimising local development strategies, these elements are articulated differently in the two places. The two localities have different types of collective efficacy which have variegated results for territorial cohesion.

7. Concluding Discussion

In this article, we have begun the work of developing a conjunctural analytical framework for researching the complex dynamics of territorial cohesion and territorial inequality in a way that takes the place-based approach in EU development policies seriously. As outlined in the introduction, a place-based approach was needed for EU cohesion policy to better handle territorial inequality and to consider the specific ways social and economic dimensions interact and the role multi-level governance plays in promoting change, securing services and mobilising assets. Although the place-based approach to territorial cohesion has spread (Faludi, 2016), there remains a need for providing systematic accounts on how the interaction between the territorial mobilisation of capital and multi-level governance processes generate possibilities for development. The policy discourse on territorial cohesion thus highlights the relevance of developing the conceptual understanding of how relations between inequality, urbanisation and territorial cohesion play out in their place-bound and contextual variation.

Thinking in terms of conjunctural analysis is a way to operationalise a research method in a way that takes the complexity of these interactions into account. We suggest that with such a perspective, it is possible to draw out dynamics from the empirical material representing diverse voices from varied places that would otherwise remain hidden. As outlined above, we have operationalised conjunctures as the present time formation of articulations of place-identities, political strategies, networks, organisations and forms of collective action, which arrived from the analysis of policy documents and key-informant interviews. In the analysis of the empirical examples, we have paid particular attention to the interplay between local discourses and their formation in and through their particular contexts. We have paraphrased Massey in a way where we have taken the 'throwntogetherness' at face value and let different variables enter the analysis of what we consider present conjunctures of the places in question (and with regard for the scope of our research). The first example outlines how complex conjunctures of interacting dynamics of discourses of economic growth through the development of the knowledge economy, coupled with particular interactions between public and private sectors, and industrial patterns shape different paths in the cities of Milan, Aarhus and Vienna. The second example, the comparison of Legnano and Horsens, shows that the collective organisation of business interests and their independent relation to the local government take varying paths in the two cities. In Horsens and Legnano, historical place identity defines varied path dependencies for new development shaped by the context-dependent balancing, interaction and formalisation of public and private interests and responsibilities.

A conjunctural analysis, we suggest, is a supplement to conventional methods of comparing cases. We have argued that much conventional comparison is mainly based on 'similar' cases (e.g., on cases that can be predefined with respect to key characteristics). A conjunctural analysis, in contrast, allows for analysis of more diverse cases, allowing the analysis to involve more variables or seeming differences, e.g., the 'throwntogetherness,' and comparing them through a more thematic shared theme (or shared similarities in key dynamics concerning the research focus) to learn about the given

theme as it unfolds in the different case contexts. As such, a conjunctural analysis aims to gain a deeper understanding of articulations of dynamics and how they generate learning about common themes and tendencies and their unfolding in different settings, which again might tell us more about the general processes behind them. With this approach, we can understand more about how such processes unfold and affect different localities than if we had selected similar cases within and across countries. We simply get a wider understanding through more examples from different cases, and we get more suggestions for possible room for manoeuvre of policy in supporting, generating and underscoring development from above and below.

A conjunctural analysis, we would argue, provides insights into the forces, factors and interplay of different actors that become significant in the particular context. By focusing on the interplay of forces and factors in the three cities of Milan, Aarhus and Vienna we learn more about the particular patterns of territorial inequality than if we had focused solely on economic growth strategies or similarities in labour shortage. Similarly, when considering the differences and similarities between the conjunctures in Horsens and Legnano, we gain a promising insight into the multiple ways that organisational structures and policy discourses interact with place identities that form in response to history and through relations to other places and other scales. However, the present outline is merely the beginning of developing the conjunctural analysis as an approach to better understand the dynamics involved when researching cohesion policy and what cohesion 'does' (Abrahams, 2014; Atkinson & Zimmermann, 2018) and for whom.

Conjunctural analysis helps to understand how different territorial layers become interlocked with economic and political strategies for economic restructuring and local development, whether it be to support a position in the knowledge economy or sustain post-industrial development and entrepreneurial culture.

The central argument of this article is that places are multiple and diverse and that we need an analytical perspective which is better attuned to grapple with similar articulations across a diverse variety. The conjuncture is a differentiated and context-sensitive construct, a variable factor, but one that is tied to locally-defined and—experienced social relatedness to place. Thinking through conjunctures is a contribution to the European debate on territorial cohesion as it highlights the complex interconnections and articulations of political imaginaries, regulatory path dependencies, local responses to forces of urbanisation and local mobilisation of place-based assets. Interconnections and articulations which exist between formal and informal networks and between scalar relations of governments and local stakeholders, and in response to which it is necessary to theorise and reflect on one's analytic approach in order to understand contemporary challenges to and local strategies to develop territorial cohesion.

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Conflict of Interests

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