

Beyond the spatiality of injustice and the injustice of spatiality: the expanding territorial governance

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This paper aims to discuss the theoretical and methodological relationship between territorial justice and territorial governance. In accordance to Mustafa Dikeç, in the dialectical formulation of the spatiality of injustice and the injustice of spatiality, the former notion implies that justice has a spatial dimension to it, and therefore, that a spatial perspective might be used to discern injustice in space. The latter, on the other hand, implies existing structures in their capacities to produce and reproduce injustice through space. In this sense, the notion of territorial (in)justice sets the parameters by which the territorial governance may be oriented. How, then, do these two notions – territorial justice and territorial governance – come together as part of an emancipatory territorial politics? Although territorial justice can be understood as a liberal notion - as governance too - we intent to reconvey it towards a critical perspective. In this sense, governance must be placed in the frame of understanding the state as a contested socio-territorial ensemble, and, pushing this argument further, the socio-territorial restructuring of the state is associated with the emergence of new spaces and scales of governance and new forms of state territoriality. In general terms, territorial governance could be defined as the process of the coordination of actors in order to develop social, intellectual, political and material capital, and of territorial development based on the creation of sustainable territorial cohesion at different levels. In our standpoint, it's pressing to place and face territorial governance as an ethical issue. The defining orientations given by the *European Spatial Planning Observation Network* (ESPON) make it clear that territorial governance focuses on the achievement of sustainable social and territorial cohesion. This idea of cohesion is defined by its resistance to the territorial dismantling, related to the overcoming of territorial inequalities and injustices. In the ESPON report and here it is to be seen not

only as a governance process applied to urban and territorial policies, but as a process that has a specific character deriving from its object, the territory, helping to achieve the broad objective of territorial cohesion. This focus extends the meaning and understanding of the governance concept itself, and places spatial policies as a very appropriate field for the development of governance practices and principles. Then, both of them, territorial justice and territorial governance need to be recast. Along with Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, it seems right that “justice cannot afford not to be spatial. At its most basal, the adjective refers to the emplaced, geographically specific conditions in which justice is to be considered, planned for, constructed, imagined”. But it seems also right that the difference between spatial and territorial justice is not straightforward considering when coupled with the adjective territorial the notion of justice becomes less abstract and more differentiated. It’s necessary the careful scrutiny of powerful human strategies called territorialities, as conceptualized by Robert David Sack, to decode the range of territorial governance as a critical analytical tool. Based on what has been presented, we regard territorial governance as a strategic process of political actions coordinated among actors and social agents, aiming at shared solutions to common issues, and to promoting territorial justice. It is a specific process of territorialization, integrated, in turn, to the broader process of territorial development – in different geographic scales. Therefore, the process of territorial governance should result in a fair territorial governance. We envision the possible (re)design of territorial pacts that, at least, i) revitalize territorial development, and ii) promote and consolidate spaces of engagement. When we refer to fair territories, we are implicitly referring to legitimate territories. Based on the considerations made in this discussion, we consider, first of all, that territorial governance is constituent part, thus inseparable, of a territorial development that intends to be inclusive, that is, ethically sustainable. Secondly, we understand that territorial cohesion, once redefined in its social and political aspects, and not only in terms of spatial interactions, manifests itself strategically as a synthesis of that process, and empirically by means of specific territorial configurations, such as productive arrangements, associations, consortiums, and committees. Finally, we understand that territorial governance can only be considered legitimate insofar its

rules, its institutions and practices are based on ethical principles that will, eventually, guide it to territorial justice. We face, therefore, an ethical challenge of utmost relevance in present times: the contextualization of social political territorial practices within the limits of justice and governance.