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ID 1453 | INTRODUCING BUSINESS REGIONS IN DENMARK: TOWARDS A NEW PLANNING CULTURE?

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1 INRODUCTION

Significant attention has recently been paid to the new forms of territorial governance emerging at the scale of urban regions in Western Europe (Allmendinger et al., 2015; Janssen-Jansen and Hutton, 2011). In the planning literature, these new spaces of governance have been conceptualised as 'soft spaces' with 'fuzzy boundaries', as they are often located in between formal levels of governance, and are not necessarily univocally bounded (Haughton et al., 2010). It is claimed, that the new spaces of territorial governance do not as much replace formal levels of governance, as they seek to supplement existing

governance structures in strategic ways, e.g. around specific policy agendas, thus adding extra layers to an increasingly complex and fragmented governance landscape (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009a).

As in many other European countries, Denmark has experienced an explosion in the number of informal governance networks working across formal boundaries in recent years. As part of this general trend, a number of city region networks have emerged around the biggest Danish cities. Drawing on experiences mainly from other Nordic countries, several of the networks identify themselves as 'business regions', and have formulated goals and visions revolving primarily around attracting businesses and a highly educated workforce to the region. In the Danish debate the concepts of 'business regions' and 'city regions' are often used interchangeably, as the networks, regardless of the self-proclaimed label, seek to address similar challenges. For convenience, we adopt the terminology of 'business regions' in this paper to describe the new governance networks at the scale of city regions.

In this paper, we explore the rationalities behind the emergence of business regions in and around the four biggest cities in Denmark. In order to get a sense of the nature of the strategic spatial planning that is practised in such spaces, we examine the spatial strategy-making initiatives that takes place in the auspices of those regions. We built our analysis on document analysis of strategies, visions, policy documents, official webpages etc., together with semi-structured interviews carried out with the key actors involved in the business regions.

2 SOFT SPACES AND A NEW PLANNING CULTURE

In this section, we discuss the driving forces behind the proliferation of new soft spaces in Western Europe, and elaborate our understanding of soft spaces as spaces of neoliberal experimentation promoting a new planning culture rooted in neoliberal ideology.

2.1 THE DRIVING FORCES BEHIND SOFT SPACES

The driving forces behind experimentation with soft spaces of territorial governance are many (Allmendinger et al., 2015). We can understand soft spaces as i) new state spaces emerging from continuous processes of state restructuring in the face of economic globalisation (Brenner, 2004a, 2004b); ii) spaces for experimentation with new approaches to strategic spatial planning in the context of urban entrepreneurialism (Olesen, 2012); iii) functional planning spaces reflecting a need to move beyond an absolute understanding of space inspired by relational geography (Davoudi and Strange, 2009; Haughton et al., 2010); and iv) networked forms of governance seeking to work outside the rigidities of statutory planning as a response to neoliberal policy agendas of policy delivery and effectiveness (Haughton et al., 2010).

According to state theorists, the production of new spaces of governance can be understood as the result of nation states searching for new 'scalar fixes' (Brenner, 2004a) or 'spatiotemporal fixes' (Jessop, 2000) in the face of economic globalisation. Since the 1960s, Western European nation states have experienced multiple rounds of spatial restructuring (Brenner, 2004a). Each round is characterised by reterritorialisations and rescalings of statehood, in which new scales and spaces are targeted for concentration of economic activity and experimentation with new forms of urban governance (Brenner, 1999, 2004b). In the most recent rounds of spatial restructuring, what Brenner (2004b) identifies as the rounds of glocalisation strategies, the experimentations with new forms of urban governance are customised to a few privileged 'new state spaces'. These spaces are argued to constitute the new key scales on which nation states compete.

As part of these processes of state restructuring, the form of urban governance changed from urban managerialism rooted in Spatial Keynesianism to urban entrepreneurialism rooted in a neoliberal ideology (Brenner, 2004a, 2004b; Harvey, 1989). Major European cities and urban regions regained the interest in strategic spatial planning and prepared spatial strategies, positioning cities and regions strategically within the global and European circuits of capital (Albrechts et al., 2003; Brenner, 2004a). Many of these (glocalisation) strategies were also concerned with developing new spatial imaginaries and identities for the new state spaces emerging in Western Europe at the time, such as the Flemish Diamond (Albrechts, 1998; Olesen and Albrechts, 2017) and the Øresund Region (Olesen and Metzger, 2017). We can thus

also understand soft spaces as “exercises 2 of re-branding, of shifting perceptions of a struggling economy for instance with a new, more positive imaginary” (Allmendinger et al., 2015: 219). The turn towards urban entrepreneurialism can in this context be understood as having paved the way for experimentations with strategic spatial planning in new soft planning spaces (Olesen, 2012, 2014).

The proliferation of experiments with soft spaces should also be understood as a result of an increasing concern with mismatches between administrative boundaries and the ‘realities’ of functional urban regions (Davoudi and Strange, 2009; Haughton et al., 2010). In many cases these mismatches have been deepened as a consequence of planning reforms driven by policy agendas of devolution and decentralisation, leaving behind gaps to be filled in by informal forms of governance (Haughton et al., 2010; Olesen, 2012). Soft spaces have also been conceptualised as more pragmatic approaches to spatial planning, focusing on ‘what works’ in terms of implementation and policy delivery (Allmendinger, 2011; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009b). Here, soft spaces constitute deliberate neoliberal strategies to short-circuit formal planning requirements and move beyond the rigidities of statutory planning, in order to facilitate development and create a competitive advantage (Haughton et al., 2010). It has been noted that soft spaces are often constructed around highly selective policy agendas (Allmendinger et al., 2015), and that strategy-making in soft spaces tends to prioritise policy agendas of promoting economic development, whilst sidestepping formal planning responsibilities related to social justice and environmental sustainability (Haughton et al., 2010; Olesen, 2012). Furthermore, Olesen (2012) has suggested that soft spaces add to the increasing pressure on statutory spatial planning, and can act as vehicles for a neoliberal transformation of spatial planning.

2.2 THE POLITICS OF SOFT SPACES

As indicated above, soft spaces should not only be understood as functional planning spaces, but also as expressions of politics in the context of neoliberalisation and postpolitics (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2012; Haughton et al., 2013). We argue that soft spaces should not only be understood as products of the continuous neoliberalisation of spatial planning, but also as key spaces for “destabilising existing governance practices and planning cultures” (Olesen, 2012: 911).

Recent theorisations on neoliberalism suggest that processes of neoliberalisation have moved beyond the phase of ‘roll-out neoliberalisation’, in which the state supports market logics and competition through strategic investments in urban development and infrastructure projects (Peck and Tickell, 2002). According to Keil (2009), we have now entered the phase of ‘roll-with-it neoliberalisation’, characterised by an increasing normalisation of neoliberal practices and concepts. Several authors have suggested that contemporary strategic spatial planning experiments are struggling to live up to progressive planning aims in the face of roll-with-it neoliberalisation (Cerreta et al., 2010, Haughton et al., 2010; Olesen, 2014). Olesen (2012) has illustrated how soft spaces in Denmark were turned into spaces for promotion of economic growth and transport infrastructure lobbying, whilst discrediting traditional regulatory planning approaches. This suggests that soft spaces have become important political spaces for promoting neoliberal agendas of stimulating competitiveness, generating economic growth and attracting investments in transport infrastructures.

In fact, soft spaces seem to constitute important strategic spaces for promoting particular neoliberal versions of strategic spatial planning (Olesen, 2012), rooted in what Peck and Tickell (2002) have labelled ‘the growth-first-principle’. Olesen (2014: 296) highlights how strategic spatial planning processes rarely allow for “a critique of economic growth and competitiveness as the prime virtues of strategic spatial planning”. Along the same lines, Haughton et al. (2013: 22) have noted how soft spaces only seem to allow for demands to be voiced, which “do not question and disrupt the overarching framework of marketled development”. Spatial planning in soft spaces become depoliticised strategy-making processes, in which conflicting or political sensitive issues are removed or superficially glanced over in the name of promoting economic development (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2012). In this way, soft spaces are governed by a strong neoliberal governmentality of what is considered ‘relevant’ and ‘possible’ policy agendas. This post-political planning condition is nicely captured by Haughton et al. (2013: 232) stressing that “this new form of neoliberal governmentality has reworked the nature of planning itself”. Allmendinger and Haughton (2009a) argue that soft spaces have contributed to an opening up of the professional boundaries of spatial planning, which in term have become more fuzzy. Spatial planning has developed into a discipline of (much) more than merely land use regulation and managerial approaches. However, at

the same time the policy repertoire of spatial planning has become more narrow, focused primarily on promoting economic growth.

Contemporary reworkings of the planning cultures in Western Europe seem to be characterised by two dialectic processes of opening up and blurring the professional boundaries of spatial planning, whilst spatial planning at same the time is subjected to neoliberal governmentalities promoting a narrow set of policy agendas. It is these dialectic processes, we explore in the case of the Danish business regions, in order to develop an understanding of how these spaces contribute to transforming the Danish planning culture.

3 THE EMERGENCE OF SOFT SPACES AND A NEW PLANNING CULTURE IN DENMARK

In this section, we outline the context within which the emergence of business regions in Denmark must be understood. Adopting the terminology from Brenner (2004a, 2004b), we argue that Denmark has experienced three rounds of spatial restructuring in the last three decades, and that the emergence of business regions can be understood as a result of the most recent process of spatial restructuring, in which third generation glocalisation strategies have been prepared at the scale of city regions.

The emergence of urban entrepreneurialism in Danish spatial planning is often associated with the implementation of the Danish Planning Act in 1992, in which the aim of spatial planning was changed from promoting equal development to 'appropriate' development. In Harvey's (1989) terms, the 1992 Planning Act marked a shift from urban managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism. As part of the shift, the national government began to promote the capital city of Copenhagen and the Øresund Region as the new privileged spaces for urban development, investments in infrastructures, and concentration of economic activities. This reterritorialisation became the government's answer to the economic challenges that Copenhagen (and south Sweden) was facing at the time (Olesen and Metzger, 2017). We interpret the Øresund Region as a product of what Brenner (2004a) identifies as glocalisation strategies round I, and the first soft space in Denmark rooted in policies of promoting economic development and competitiveness.

The second round of spatial restructuring in Denmark rooted in glocalisation strategies, we associate with the implementation of the Governance Reform in 2007, and the wide range of spatial strategies that emerged as a consequence of the reform. The reform was implemented to introduce a more efficient governance structure, in particular within the public healthcare sector. However, the reform also led to significant reterritorialisations in terms of spatial planning, as the middle-tier of the planning system was abandoned and regional statutory land use planning decentralised to the municipalities (Galland, 2012; Hansen, 2009, forthcoming). In order to support regional development, various governance networks (public and private) were established at the regional scale, including regional growth forums and cross-municipal platforms for representation of municipal interests (Hansen, forthcoming). The explosion in the number of networks and platforms for representation of regional interests has in a Danish context been interpreted as a turn towards a pluricentric governance model (Pedersen et al., 2011; Sørensen, 2014). Many of the new networks were constructed with a point of departure in the formal regional administrative boundaries established in 2007. They were therefore not always considered appropriate platforms for strategic spatial planning. This led to a national interest, already from the initial phases of the implementation of the 2007 reform, in promoting functional urban regions for strategic spatial planning, in an attempt to 'fill-in' gaps in the Danish governance landscape (Olesen, 2011, 2012). The Danish government was in particular keen to promote Eastern Jutland as Denmark's second metropolitan area. This was partly a response to the rather one-sided focus of promoting growth in Copenhagen for more than a decade, and partly as a result of the realisation that the newly formed regional boundaries did not correspond well to the 'functional urban region' in this part of Denmark. As regional planning was under strong attack at the time, the process of preparing a spatial strategy for the Eastern Jutland urban region developed into a contested affair, played out between conflicting planning rationalities rooted in regulation and growth promotion, respectively Introducing Business Regions in Denmark: Towards a new Planning Culture? 5 (Olesen and Richardson, 2011, 2012). At the time, it was already evident that strategic planning in the soft space of Eastern Jutland was driven by a strong neoliberal agenda, actively seeking to redefine what it meant to prepare spatial strategies at the regional scale (Olesen, 2011, 2012).

We argue that Danish spatial planning has recently entered a third round of glocalisation strategies, which include city regions around second-tier Danish cities. This round of spatial restructuring is not the result of reterritorialisations promoted through planning reforms or in other ways inspired by the national level. We interpret the current round of reterritorialisation as the manifestation of a wider growth-oriented planning culture, which has been underway since the early 1990s. Danish spatial planning has now entered the phase of roll-with-it neoliberalisation (Keil, 2009), in which the promotion of growth, competitiveness and economic development have developed into taken-for-granted (if in practice not the only) goals of regional planning in Denmark. As a result, the second, third and fourth biggest cities in Denmark have upscaled their strategies to the city region scale, and created 'business regions' in collaboration with surrounding municipalities. Copenhagen has followed suit and rebranded the Øresund Region as Greater Copenhagen. On the contrary to earlier rounds of spatial restructuring, the promotion of business regions is primarily a municipal project, with limited national and regional interference, although the regional level has been accepted as a member of the business region in several cases. Table 1 summarises the three rounds of spatial restructurings rooted in glocalisation strategies in Danish spatial planning.

	Time	Soft space	Rationality
Glocalisation strategies round I	Early 1990s	The Øresund Region	Promoting the competitiveness of Copenhagen and the Øresund Region in the context of increasing European competition
Glocalisation strategies round II	Mid-2000s	Eastern Jutland	Promoting a second growth area in Denmark and functional urban region for strategic spatial planning.
Glocalisation strategies round III	Mid-2010s	Aarhus Business Region, Business Region North Denmark, City Region Funen, Greater Copenhagen	Promoting competitiveness and economic growth in and around the four biggest Danish cities.

Table 1: Spatial restructurings in Denmark from 1990-2016

4 THE EMERGENCE OF BUSINESS REGIONS IN DENMARK

In the third round of glocalisation strategies, a number of cross-municipal networks have emerged at the scale of city regions in Denmark. These networks identify themselves as 'business regions' or 'city regions', inspired by similar regional networks in the other European cities. The label of 'business regions' (in English) has specifically been adopted with inspiration from city-regional governance networks in other Nordic countries. In the general, the processes of constructing the Danish business regions seem to have been driven by an outward looking perspective, where inspiration has been taken from a range of city regions, including Amsterdam, Gothenburg, Hamburg, Manchester, Stavanger, Stockholm and Tampara. In this section, we examine the driving forces behind the construction of business regions around the four biggest cities in Denmark, as well as the nature of the strategy-making that take place in the auspices of these regions.

4.1 BUSINESS REGION AARHUS

Cross-municipal collaboration in the Aarhus city region has a longer genealogy. Since 1994, several municipalities, with the second largest Danish city Aarhus at the centre, have formally cooperated on business development activities. In 2010 Business Region Aarhus was formed, as it was recognised that there was limited local political support for the national government's initiative to facilitate cross-municipal cooperation at the scale of the larger urban region of Eastern Jutland (Olesen, 2011, Olesen and Richardson, 2011, 2012). Hence, the creation of Business Region Aarhus marked a significant shift in Danish spatial politics, in the sense that the new region was constructed from below with a point of departure in local political agendas (rather than national spatial strategies). Since, the business region has expanded significantly. Today, it is made up of 12 municipalities, amounting to a population of around 960,000 inhabitants (Business Region Aarhus, 2016b).

Business Region Aarhus defines itself as "a political community of interests" (Business Region Aarhus, 2016a: 3), and is perhaps best understood as a cross-municipal network organisation working for

promoting growth and economic development in the Aarhus city region. More specific the aim of the organisation is to improve the conditions for business development in the region, and increase the region's competitiveness and visibility in a national and international context. This is also the focal point in the region's most recent strategy from 2016, entitled 'Eastern Jutland is working for Denmark' (Business Region Aarhus, 2016a). In the strategy, the business region outlines a number of goals that it seeks to realise towards 2018. First and foremost, the region wants to strengthen its position as the main growth area in Denmark outside Greater Copenhagen. One of the key issues addressed in the strategy is the need to expand the region's existing motorway corridor from four to six lanes. The business region has in recent years acted as the main lobby platform for attracting national investments in transport infrastructure to the city region.

Furthermore, a substantial part of the strategy is dedicated to marketing and branding efforts in order to attract businesses, residents and tourists to the region. In addition, an English webpage (www.businessregionaarhus.com) has been set up, targeting international businesses, expats and a highly educated workforce seeking to relocate to the region.

4.2 BUSINESS REGION NORTH DENMARK

Business Region North Denmark was formally launched in 2015 and is made up of 11 municipalities and the North Denmark Region. The region has a total population of around 600,000 inhabitants and is based around the city of Aalborg, the fourth largest city in Denmark. A key motivation for establishing the business region was an analysis in 2014, by all municipalities in the region, showing that municipal expenses would increase significantly until 2020. This led the mayors and heads of municipal administrations, as well as the North Denmark Region, to agree that joint action had to be taken to increase the income of municipalities, primarily through attention to business life, attracting investments and talents, and job creation.

The main goal for Business Region North Denmark is to stimulate economic growth and attract jobs to the region. The region has identified five focus areas: tourism, infrastructure, international collaboration, business development and job creation, and qualified workforce. In comparison to the other business regions, greater emphasis is put on the tourism industry, as the region is more rural and its economy more dependent on tourism than the other business regions. Strategy-making in Business Region North Denmark has materialised in the document 'Strategy – and action plan 2015-2016' (Business Region North Denmark, 2015). The strategy sets out the main goals for the business region within the five focus areas outlined above. In addition, the document highlights the importance of promoting synergies between the municipalities' independent growth strategies and Region North Denmark's Growth and Development Strategy (the RGDS). The business region considers it to be of significant importance to function as a shared political platform for the public authorities in North Denmark, the municipalities and the region, and to attempt to lobby and influence national level policy-making with a unified voice, in particular concerning transport and IT infrastructures.

An important aspect related directly to spatial planning is the up-front attention to coordination between the business region, the region and its RGDS activity, and municipal spatial strategies. This was initiated in 2014, even before the official opening of the business region, and has already resulted in a first effort to produce a shared chapter on development in North Denmark, in both the first RGDS proposal and in all municipal spatial strategies (Hansen, forthcoming).

4.3 CITY REGION FUNEN

City Region Funen has a population of around 450,000 inhabitants and was established in 2013. It consists of 9 municipalities, including Odense, the third largest city in Denmark. Geographically, the region consists of the island of Funen, except the municipality of Middelfart, which for 8 historical reasons have been part of the cross-municipal organisation the Triangle Area for many years. City Region Funen was established on the background of Project Funen (2011-12) with the ambition to strengthen the position of the region in national spatial planning. Funen, and especially the city of Odense, claimed that it was largely ignored in national spatial policies, in particular in the 2006 and 2010 national planning reports. The aim of creating City Region Funen was to articulate Funen as a functional city region and to articulate Funen's

strategic position on Denmark's 'growthmap'. City Region Funen has therefore not adopted the business region label.

In City Region Funen's 'Strategy Funen 2014-2017', the overall focus is to create and strengthen the spatial frameworks necessary for growth (City Region Funen, 2014). Furthermore, the strategy explicitly mentions an ambition to create a coherent urban region, which has to be developed as an active part of the Greater Copenhagen region as well as becoming more tightly connected with West Denmark. More specifically, the region focusses on transport and digital infrastructures and on becoming a test laboratory for new green technologies and solutions for future global challenges (City Region Funen, 2014).

As was partly the case in North Denmark and Aarhus, City Region Funen has the objective to produce a shared plan strategy. However, the region is more ambitious and intends to let this strategy function above the municipal strategies. This special attention to spatial strategies is also made clear through the intention to focus on "principles for interaction and development between cities. Including development of a common strategy for a coherent development of the cities" (City Region Funen, 2014: 3). This is remarkable in a Danish context of business and city regions, as it seems to reinvoke, into regional policy, some of the planning mechanisms that were removed from the formal regions in 2007.

4.4 GREATER COPENHAGEN

'Greater Copenhagen' is perhaps best understood as the new marketing brand for the Øresund Region. Greater Copenhagen was launched in 2014 as a marketing platform for municipalities and regions on the Danish side of the Øresund Strait, who increasingly had become disappointed with the stagnating development of the Øresund Region. The brand of the Øresund Region was no longer perceived as adequate for promoting the region internationally (Olesen and Metzger, 2017). The Swedish partners were included in January 2016 and the organisation was formally renamed as 'the Greater Copenhagen and Skåne Committee' - in everyday speech 'Greater Copenhagen'.

In many ways, Greater Copenhagen has adopted the Øresund Region's vision of creating a friction-less cross-border region, in particular in terms of overcoming institutional and national borders. In comparison to the Øresund Region, less emphasis is put on region building and cultural integration. Instead, Greater Copenhagen has developed a more narrow policy agenda, focusing on generation of economic growth and attracting international businesses and talents to the region. In the first years of its existence, a particular effort has been dedicated to building up the brand of 9 'Greater Copenhagen'. The marketing efforts have been highly professional and streamlined both internally and externally. The Greater Copenhagen's webpage features for example a 'tool box' (in Danish only), where municipalities can download the logo, a design manual, photos and templates for marketing purposes. In terms of strategy-making, Greater Copenhagen is still in an early phase. Its vision towards 2020 'We are Greater Copenhagen' is a two-page flyer setting out the region's overall goal of being "an international node for investments and knowledge on the level as the most successful metropoles in Europe" in 2020 (Greater Copenhagen, 2016a: 1). Furthermore, the vision identifies internationalisation, attracting international businesses, investments, tourists and highly educated workforce as its main goals, alongside creating a coherent labour market and an attractive business climate. As part of its aspiration of becoming an international node, Greater Copenhagen has also prepared a transport charter, a policy document advocating for the need for substantial investments in transport infrastructure in the region, including the ongoing expansion of Copenhagen International Airport, high speed train connections via the future Fehmarn Belt link, and additional links across the Øresund Strait (Greater Copenhagen, 2016b). Table 2 summarises the main characteristcs of the four business and city regions.

	Business Region Aarhus	Business Region North Denmark	City Region Funen	Greater Copenhagen
Established	2010	2015	2013	2014
Number of municipalities	12	11 + Region North Jutland	9	46 (DK) and 33 (SE) + the Capital Region, Region Zealand and Region Skåne
Population	960,000	600,000	450,000	3,900,000
Key priorities / goals	- Main growth area outside Greater Copenhagen - Attracting businesses and residents in knowledge based industries - Investments in transport infrastructure - Tourism	- Tourism - Infrastructure - International collaboration - Business development and job creation - Qualified workforce	- Economic development and growth creation - Attracting residents - Transport infrastructure - Digital infrastructure - Green technologies and energy planning	- Marketing and branding - International node for investments and knowledge - Attracting investors, tourists, businesses and talents - Integrated labour market - Creating an attractive business environment
Strategic documents	Strategy 2016-2018	Strategy and action plan 2015-2016	Strategy Funen 2014-2017	'We are Greater Copenhagen' (vision 2020)

Table 2: The main characteristics of the four business and city regions

5 CONCLUSIONS

We interpret the emergence of business regions and city regions as the result of recent spatial restructurings and reterritorialisations associated with the institutionalisation of roll-with-it neoliberalisation in Danish spatial planning. The business regions can be understood as third generation glocalisation strategies involving rescalings of local-regional growth ambitions. The business regions are perhaps best understood as hybrids or assemblages, fusing municipal practices of business development and job creation, branding and marketing, transport infrastructure lobbying, and spatial development, and upscaling these practices to new regional soft spaces, with the aim of adding more political weight to local-regional growth agendas.

At the same time, we interpret the new business regions as important political spaces for representation of municipal interests in the continuous scalar struggle with the state and the formal regions about who has the power (and authority) to dictate regional development agendas. In this sense, the business regions represent municipal glocalisation strategies aiming at filling-in gaps at the regional scale, resulting from the Governance Reform in 2007. The business regions' cry for recognition in national spatial policy-making represent in this context an important symbolic milestone for the municipalities in the process of region building.

Following Allmendinger and Haughton (2009a), we interpret the business regions as important spaces for reworking the nature of Danish spatial planning. We understand these reworkings as being shaped by two dialectic processes of opening up and blurring the professional boundaries of planning, whilst at the same time narrowing the scope of planning to a few policy agendas centred around the creation of economic growth. The business regions constitute in many ways the institutionalisation of growth-oriented regional spatial planning, which has been in the making since the 2007 Governance Reform. In this sense, the business regions are symptomatic of a new Danish planning culture at the regional scale, centred around policy agendas of economic growth, job creation and business development (Hansen, forthcoming).

However, at the same time, the business regions also constitute important political spaces for transforming the Danish planning culture more widely, as spatial policy-making at the auspices of the business regions is intended to influence and structure spatial strategy-making at both national and local scales. In this sense, we can understand the business regions as vehicles for a neoliberalisation of strategic spatial planning across scales of governance (Olesen, 2012).

The struggles between contested planning rationalities reported from previous strategymaking experiments in soft spaces in Denmark (Olesen and Richardson, 2012) have been superseded by a new market based logic installing business development and job creation as 'sensible' and the 'necessary'

policy agendas (Haughton et al., 2013). We interpret this 'businessification' of spatial planning in Denmark as part of a wider development trend in society, in which spatial planning increasingly is being streamlined in the context of neoliberalisation and post-politics (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2012; Haughton et al., 2013).

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ID 1478 | THE ECONOMIC CRISIS MODELLING THE TERRITORIAL COHESION. THE FRENCH CASE

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1 INTRODUCTION

The economic and financial crisis since 2007 was a brake on economic growth, accompanied by a reduction in public and private investment. In addition, the European Union lost weight in a globalized economy. The development and application of the principle of competitiveness seeks to counteract the negative effects of the crisis. To this end, it moves not only to the economic and business sphere, but also to the territorial context. Competitive and synergistic territories are now the focus of numerous development and investment policies. However, other territories with characteristics that do not favour investment run the risk of falling behind in a process marked, above all, by innovation.

The Eighth Progress Report on economic, social, and territorial cohesion. The regional and urban dimension of the crisis was published in 2013, although it offers information only up to 2011. Its analysis covers aspects such as poverty, social exclusion, the labour market, migration, and regional convergence. From the main conclusions drawn from the study, we will highlight the following. First, the increase in regional divergence after a long period of convergence. They re-emphasize the central pentagon in front of the peripheries, and the urban versus the rural areas. Secondly, the cities present heterogeneous situations, better resisting the large capital cities, even though poverty and social exclusion rates increase within them. About EU Member States, between 2007 and 2011 the countries most affected by the crisis in terms of GDP and the labour market were Latvia, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Estonia, and Spain. Portugal, Denmark, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, and Slovenia also suffered a high impact of the crisis.

The crisis exacerbated some existing problems such as aging, unemployment or obsolete economies. The result has been the appearance of territories with little chance of being competitive. Nor should we forget