European Spatial Planning for the Twenty-first Century

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Whether, as the European Commission is proposing in the 'Fifth Cohesion Report' (European Commission 2010a) and the draft regulations (European Commission 2011) territorial cohesion will be more central to Cohesion policy and to the pursuit of 'Europe 2020' (European Commission 2010b) is important. However, there are deeper issues concerning the direction which the European Union (EU) should be taking, for which Faludi and Peyrony (2011) have outlined scenarios, and also and in particular what space or territory is: Is the habit of dealing with it as if it was like a property, with the government representing the people the owner correct? Here it is argued that viewing territory as more diffuse and negotiable leads to a better understanding, both of European spatial planning and of European integration:

> Awareness that the terms we use so casually are rooted not in 'nature,' but in the poetic imagination, has the effect of freeing deliberation and debate from a vocabulary of obfuscation and reveals ... the contours of a Europe that is … about deconstructing frontiers so as to bring to light a civilizational space that is … intensely urban, cosmopolitan, multilingual, and less hierarchical than in the past. (Loriaux 2008, 2)

In this light, the paper addresses three issues:

(1) the relations, in terms of spatial planning, of the EU and its Member;
(2) the meaning of territory under conditions of European integration and, indeed, globalisation;
(3) the implications for spatial planning of challenging the conventional meaning.

Section 1 discusses territorial cohesion. Section 2 criticises 'territorialism.' Section 3 focusses on 'territoriality.' Section 4 discusses 'soft spaces,' a concept that eschews the assumption of territory being a box and of territoriality a government monopoly. The Conclusions temper any expectation of a break with existing practices. Such practices will continue, but be embedded in new ones.

Territorial Cohesion and European Spatial Planning

There is a lively debate on territorial cohesion, with the consultations on the 'Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion' (European Commission 2008) its high point so far. (Faludi 2010a, 162-167; Sykes 2011; for a review of official positions see Janin Rivolin 2010) One can discern two views:

(1) Territorial cohesion must be measured, invoking indicators that stand for desirable or undesirable, as the case may be, qualities of territories. This 'substantive' view highlights the need for research of the kind which ESPON engages in. Indeed, the very concept has emerged in response to a substantive

issue, the future of 'Services of General Economic Interest' challenged by EU liberalisation policies where provisions are difficult to justify on purely economic grounds. Avoiding their marginalisation is an element in one territorial cohesion 'storyline,' 'Europe in Balance.' (Waterhout 2008) Relevant indicators are the object of the ESPON project 'Indicators and Perspectives for Services of General Interests in Territorial Cohesion and Development.' Two more storylines, 'Competitive Europe' and 'Clean and Green Europe,' are likewise substantive.

(2) Territorial cohesion is about the packaging of policies with territorial impact into cohesive wholes; in terms invoked by the Barca Report (2009) about territorial development policies being integrated, Waterhout's 'Coherent EU Policy' storyline. This 'procedural' view insists on coordination between sectors. The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) calls this the 'spatial approach' representing a new dimension of European policy, saying that projects in different Member States '…complement each other best, if they are directed towards common objectives for spatial development. Therefore, national spatial development policies of the Member States and sectoral policies of the EU require clear spatially transcendent development guidelines.' (European Commission 1999, 7)

The ESDP thus sees planning in an umpire role, but argues also for attention to 'spatial factors' because '…it will no longer be possible to compensate for regional productivity disparities by consequently adjusting exchange rates.' Invoking this 'Europe in Balance' storyline and merging it with the 'Clean Europe' one, the ESDP attaches itself to EU regional policy, specifying 'balanced and sustainable spatial development' as its goal. 'Coherent European Policy' thus stands next to substantive storylines, but the prime movers as regards those are the EU sectors. Pursuing the Convergence and the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objectives, regional policy is one such sector. The unique selling point of European spatial planning is the coordination of regional, environmental, agricultural, transport and so forth policies, ensuring that such policies acquire added value by forming coherent packages, taking account of where they take effect, the opportunities and constraints there, now and in the future. (Faludi 2010a, 170)

This is not to deny the interrelations between a procedural and substantive view. The withdrawal of services, due to liberalisation, from sparsely populated areas runs counter to the express wish '…that people should not be disadvantaged by where they happen to live or work in the Union.' (European Commission 2004, 27) Flagging this inconsistency is what the EU policy on such services – invoking as the first one the concept of territorial cohesion – is about.

Coordination between policies impacting upon territory raises the question of the scale at which this should happen and whether statutory spatial plans are the vehicles. At national level, statutory plans are, however, problematic, and even more so at that of the EU. Since it does not work with statutory plans but rather by promoting development, French *aménagement du territoire* has been the EU model. The *Délegation interministérielle à l'aménagement du territoire at à l'atractivité*

régionale (Datar) responsible operates from a position between ministries using seed money to engender their cooperation. It also administers the multi-annual so-called *contrats de projets État-région (CPER)* similar to the contractual approach in EU Cohesion policy.

The intention behind the ESDP was strengthening the spatial dimension of EU policies, but because there was no EU competence, the Member States kept it to themselves (Faludi, Waterhout 2002) and the Commission in the end ceased supporting it. The term spatial planning or spatial development was replaced by that of territorial cohesion. French experts sometimes confide to each other that this means *aménagement du territoire*. Although criticised for eschewing a national spatial development perspective à la ESDP (Geppert 2009, 264), this does work with spatial scenarios, for instance the '*France* 2020' study (Guigou ed. 2000), with '*France 2040*' presently in the works. This represents a form of strategic spatial planning, a concept that has been hailed in the UK as signalling a broader, more deliberative approach than 'town and country planning.' (Allmendinger, Haughton 2009, 620; Haughton, Allmendinger, Counsell, Vigar 2010, 32; Sykes 2011, 382) The upshot is that, for as long as one does not equated spatial with statutory planning, to invoke 'European spatial planning' and the pursuit of 'territorial cohesion' interchangeably is justified. Indeed, ever since the Informal Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Territorial Cohesion at Rotterdam in 2004 kick-started the making of the Territorial Agenda (see Faludi 2009) largely the same planning experts and ministries as before are now working under the territorial cohesion flag.

Territorialism

The message here is that the relations of the EU with its members should be looked at in conjunction with the meaning of territory. If that meaning is challenged, then so are the relations of Member States and the EU and *vice versa*.

There relations are normally for political scientists to consider. The latter often take assumptions about territory as read. Baudelle, Guy and Mérenne-Schoumaker (2011, 16) point out that in the modern era territory signifies a stretch of land that has been appropriated by a prince, with its limits taking the form of material frontiers. According to Loriaux (2008) the French revolution changed this relation of princes with their – often dispersed – territories. The people were implicated by means of Romantic constructs, the invention of nations and their birth rights to ancient homelands, with identities and languages of their own which were literally beaten into children by newly established national educational systems. Modern territory is thus a container holding a nation, with fixed boundaries and the distinction between inside and outside basic to the notion of the state: The inside is subject to sovereign rule and the outside a matter of international relations.

Under globalisation, Scholte (2000, 3) signals, however, the '…advent and spread of what are alternately called 'global', 'supraterritorial', 'transworld' or 'transborder social spaces.' In terms discussed by Murphy (2008), Scholte discusses a new metageography. Metageographies generally, Murphy (2008, 9) says, shape common views and also policies and actions. As regards the EU, '…a metageography clearly

persists that casts states as the … most important internal spaces and that treats political-territorial developments at other levels in terms of the ideological norms that underpin the modern state system.' Gatawis (2000, 5-6) discusses views that deny the EU a territory beyond the sum of the territories of its members but this view has been challenged, even in the German literature (Ritter 2009, 14) where it has been put forward in the first instance. The story of European spatial planning is an example of the influence of norms of the modern state system demanding the maintenance of territorial control.

As indicated, Scholte (2000, 47) challenges this metageography calling it 'territorialism' under which '…macro social space is wholly organized in terms of units such as districts, towns, provinces, countries and regions. In times of statist territorialism more particularly, countries have held pride of place above the other kinds of territorial realms…' In reality, connections are at least partly detached from this territorial logic. In global transactions, 'place' is not territorially fixed, territorial distance is covered in effectively no time, and territorial boundaries present no particular impediment. In the terms of Castells (1996), the 'space of flows' overgrows the 'space of places.' Social space cannot, therefore, be understood in terms of territorial geography alone, and thus not in terms of administrative districts, towns, provinces and so forth, circumscribed by borders marking the limits of the jurisdiction of responsible authorities.

According to Murphy the current 'cartography of social life' – Scholte's territorialism – is the outcome of historic choices, '…of efforts to achieve particular ends with concrete implications for how things are organized and how people think about the world around them.' Invoking a concept to be discussed, Murphy points out that the '…territoriality of the European state system helped to produce a geographical imagination that privileges the "nation-states" over river basins, vegetation zones, population concentrations, or other possible regionalizations…' Other metageographies are possible and, in view of globalisation and European integration, necessary. In terms of Loriaux (2008, 2) territorialism is up for 'deconstruction,' by which he means '…interrogating myths of self and others, and through that interrogation, the discovery of new possibilities that are more powerfully mobilizing and legimitizing.' Scholte (2000, 57) concurs: 'If contemporary human circumstances have gained a substantial global dimension, then we need to develop an alternative, nonterritorialist cartography of social life.'

Rather than about metageography, Loriaux (2008, 13) speaks about 'ontopology,' a conceptual organisation, or mental map, of space. Ultimately, this is based on a myth created through a 'speech act.' It thus comes '…not from culture, language, or physical geography, but from the commitment to transcendent purpose, a *telos*.' (Loriaux 2008, 14) However, '…we need not be prisoners of *just any* myth.' (Op cit., 15) Culture and language are constructs. So are frontiers, the containers of populations and states forged into nations, allegedly so as to defend them, thus ignoring the fact that nations, too, are inventions. Loriaux thus shows that the boundary between France and Germany is the outcome of a series of specific acts, from Julius Caesar's distinction, ignoring the situation on the ground, between Gallia

and Germania – Tacitus and also Ptolemy report small German groups all over the place (Heather (2009, 36) – to the forced assimilation of regional variety by parcelling the Rhineland into competing national entities.

This may be seen as an argument for empowering regions as being closer to citizens (Faludi 2012), but a more fine-grained territorialism does not meet the criticism of space being seen as parcelled out into boxes. In this respect it is worth quoting the paper introducing the, now omnipresent concept of multi-level governance, saying that the '…polar conceptions of a Europe of the regions versus a state-dominated Europe are unsatisfactory … [E]lements of both may coexist in a conceptually untidy, multilatered polity. (Marks 1992, 223) As against the view of someone who has introduced the very concept of multi-level governance, its more common interpretation, for instance in the 'White Paper on Multilevel Governance' by the Committee of the Regions (2009) is clearly 'territorialist.' It '…considers multilevel governance to mean coordinated action by the European Union, the Member States and local and regional authorities, based on partnership… It leads to responsibility being shared between the different tiers of government concerned...'

With his partner, Marks now identifies this hugely popular territorialist interpretation of multi-level governance as but one of two types. (Hooghe, Marks 2001, 2003, 2010; Marks, Hooghe 2004) Thus Type I:

> … conceives of dispersion of authority to jurisdictions at a limited number of levels. These jurisdictions – international, national, regional, meso, local – are general purpose. … The membership boundaries … do not intersect. … In this form of governance, every citizen is located in a Russian Doll set of nested jurisdictions, where there is one and only one relevant jurisdiction at any particular territorial scale. Territorial jurisdictions are intended to be, and usually are, stable for several decades or more, though the allocation of policy competencies across levels is flexible. (Hooghe, Marks 2010, 17-18)

Type II is more like the untidy arrangements which Marks has signalled when coining the term of multi-level governance. The 'Russian Doll' figure of speech for nested jurisdictions '…where each doll/scale is understood as largely capable of being considered on its own, even while located in its (fixed) position within a preordained hierarchy' (Mahon, Keil 2009, 14) embodies territorialism. The figure is often invoked. Thus, Hajer (2009, 24) says about the increasingly redundant 'classical-modernist order' as based on the assumption of territorial, democratic institutions being conceived of as a series of matrouchkas. Levels of government are thus look-alikes that fit inside one another.

Amin identifies 'new regionalism' as being based on the same territorialism. Accordingly, the mainstream view of cities and regions '…is one which continues to conceptualise them as territorial entities.' Here comes the Russian Doll: 'The resulting image is that of a world of nested or jostling territorial configurations, of territorial attack and defence, of scalar differences, of container spaces.' (Amin 2004, 33) However, cosmopolitan forces produce a world of '…cities and regions without prescribed or proscribed boundaries.' (Op cit., 34) Criticising the idea that a new

regionalism might boost democracy, Amin denies that '…there is a defined geographical territory out there over which local actors can have effective control and can manage as a social and political space.' (Op cit., 36) A relational reading offers a different reading '…where the local brings together different scales of practice/social action.' (Op cit., 38)

Already early on, Harvey (1969, 208) criticised the absolute view of space as a neutral container, a filing system or abstract-frame-of-reference underlying absolute space, contrasting it with a view of space as a positional, 'relational' quality of the world of material objects. He gave location theory, conceptualising cities as influencing the properties of the spaces around them as an example. The distinction is filters through to planning thought.

Territoriality

Like Murphy and Hajer, Scholte (2000, 59) invokes territoriality where he says that the end of territorialism does not spell the end of territoriality, according to Sack '…a spatial strategy to affect, influence, or control resources and people, by controlling area.' Territoriality is often equated with state territoriality, but as the ESDP has already said in a statement that these days represents nothing but accepted wisdom: 'With growing economic and social integration, internal borders are increasingly losing their separating character and more intensive relationships and inter-dependencies are emerging between cities and regions of the Member States.' (European Commission 1999, 7)

Hajer (2009, 27) diagnoses the result as 'territorial synchrony' waning. Thus the '…unity of political centre, public, and problem is lost.' This makes it difficult to find the potential for reasoned elaboration. Indeed, states often lack the power to solve policy problems resulting in '…discrepancies between the geographical reach of political institutions and the scale of public problems.' (Op cit., 29) The response is network governance, with much policy work taking place next to or across established orders. 'Policy-making nowadays is most often a complex negotiation among actors with disparate backgrounds and divergent goals. The weakening of the state goes hand in hand with the growth of a civic politics and the emergence of new citizen-actors and new forms of mobilization..." (Op cit., 33) This shifts policy-making to an 'institutional void,' which chimes well with Marks' diagnosis of an untidy multilateral polity emerging.

If, as the critique of territorialism implies, states no longer have a monopoly on territoriality, does this mean that territoriality is no longer a useful concept? Echoing Hajer on the state being no longer able to provide physical security, welfare and effective socio-economic management, Brugess and Vollaard (2006, 1) ask whether the state is the appropriate problem-solving unit to deal with issues of environment, economic prosperity, finance, migration and terrorism. They point out that expert functional networks transcend the territorial limits of jurisdictions and raise the question of whether European integration and globalisation herald the end of citizens' attachment to national territories and whether mobile citizens look for better performance from non-state providers regardless of borders. In view of one of the

characteristics of the Westphalian state being the territorial demarcation of its supreme authority, they formulate the fundamental issue: Is state territoriality '...an image of the past?' Replying, they say that territoriality is a fluid and dynamic concept. 'The process of unbundling territoriality on one level might imply that a simultaneous process will occur at another level, as for example in the case of the continuous ceding of competences from the national to the EU level. However, the unbundling of territoriality may also entail non-territorial forms of organisation. (Op cit., 7-8)

Where it is being unbundled, there this means that territoriality must be negotiated, which is no revolutionary finding. 'Governing' turning into 'governance' is accepted wisdom. In planning, state territoriality working through statutory planning and publicly financed territorial development thus becomes territorial governance. The problems this raises for territorial representation – the privileged source of democratic legitimation (Faludi 2012) – are not discussed here.

Soft European Spatial Planning?

Previous sections have cast light on territorialism and territoriality, rejecting spatially distinct territories and constituencies as the exclusive framework. The problem of European spatial planning is to deal with the mismatch between conventional views and reality on the ground. Dealing with emergent soft or, as the academic literature also has it, relational spaces, planning itself must be soft.

Planning has been subject to criticism for its rigidity. Challenging 'Euclidean' planning, Friedmann (1993) pointed out that planning is located in a world of stable entities which is being superseded by multiple space-time geographies. Challenging planning for assuming a Euclidean world is to the point. In its statutory form, spatial planning relies on state territoriality, but Burgess (2006, 102) proposes '…a complex combination of territorial and non-territorial functional principles.' Much geographic thinking addresses such issues. Harrison (2012) and Harrison and Growe (forthcoming) as well as Olesen and Richardson (2011) give overviews. Haughton, Allmendinger, Counsell and Vigar (2010) on soft spaces is also relevant. 'Soft planning for soft spaces' (Faludi 2010a) going beyond the territorialism characteristic of the metageographical thinking underlying much of planning – in fact of thinking about European integration as such – helps in contemplating its future.

Asking for a new politics of space, Amin has been quoted as denying that there is a defined geographical territory over which local actors can have effective control. Globalism has become the everyday filter through which sense of place is being developed and expressed. 'The result is ... a heterotopic sense of place ... made up of influences that fold together the culturally plural and the geographically proximate and distant.' (Amin 2004, 37) Cities and regions no longer offer territorially defined public spheres. Any '…particular geographical site can only be a nodal connection in a hydra-like network space that never coheres into a local public sphere. Cities and regions are nodes in many public spheres ... An obvious implication is that there is no pre-given place for a politics of regionalism.' (Op cit., 38)

Working with varied geographies is a response to the plural public sphere involved in the making of a region as '…spatially diffuse and geographically mobile. It calls for a politics of place that has to work through this constitutive condition, not one that fakes, as does the new regionalism, a minor national politics of assumed territorial insides and outsides and an imagined regional identity.' (Op cit., 40) Referring to other work questioning the assumptions underlying UK regional policy: that London is the fount of all things 'political;' that the solution to this state of affairs is localism; that politics has to be territorially bounded (Amin, Massey, Thrift 2003, 2), Amin advocates a 'cosmopolitan regionalism.' Cosmopolitanism is a concept discussed, amongst others, by Beck (2006). Delanty and Rumford (2005) see it as a hopeful perspective for Europe.

Summarising, Amin (2004, 42) says that he is seeking to articulate '…a relationally imagined regionalism that is freed from the constraints of territorial jurisdiction.' An early planning example picking this up is by Graham and Healey (1999) criticising the bedrock-concept of the 'object-centred Euclidean conception of space.' They review notions of space under which places become complex arenas. Graham and Marvin (2001) take this further: Cities depend on infrastructure provisions. There is change from systems being run as state monopolies oriented towards equitable provisions for all to providing them through the market. This makes for a 'relational' geography: cities becoming fragmented, with relations with distant places sometimes being more important than with contiguous ones, and with a tendency of walling off nodal points from their surroundings, thus spelling the end of the 'integrated ideal' of comprehensive urban planning.

Davoudi and Strange view space, not as a set of nested containers, but as something that depends on the processes and substances making it up. In this relational view, 'place formation' becomes a process of carving out 'permanences' from the flow of processes creating spaces. 'The organising spatial principle … would be one of multiple overlapping networks with continuous flows of people, resources and knowledge. Such networks and flows would be represented and visualised through the use of 'scenarios' and 'fuzzy maps' showing untidy and complicated flows...' (Davoudi, Strange 2009, 38)

Like others, these authors refer to Healey. Re-affirmed more recently, Healey's concern is with place governance 'with a planning orientation.' She points out that '…those with a 'stake' in what happens in a place are not only local residents, or citizens, of a specific administrative-political jurisdiction. "Stakeholders" may come from other places...' (Healey 2010, 32) Place not only refers to material objects, nor is it coterminous with any jurisdiction. So a jurisdiction '…may not be coterminous with the key relations that need to be mobilised to address particular place-management and development problems and potentialities.' (Op cit., 69) In the concluding chapter, Healey summarises what place-based governance with a planning orientation is about: improving the conditions of life for people in terms of their relations. In so doing, '…it is important to move away from conceiving such relations as a kind of nested hierarchy of systems… Instead, systems are better imagined as overlapping, loosely bounded and 'loosely coupled' sets of relations.'

(Op cit., 226) Without mentioning the terms, it is clear that Healey rejects territorialism and a narrow focus on state territoriality.

Based on a case study of Thames Gateway, Allmendinger and Haughton expose similar views. Thames Gateway shares its boundaries with no other statutory body, but there is a strategy team and a Strategic Partnership. The emphasis is on scales other than those of statutory planning and on planners cooperating with other actors. 'The clear geographical and professional boundaries of planning, plus the hierarchical and silo ways of behaving are already planning history.' (Allmendinger, Haughton 2009, 618) The authors review the literature on rescaling – one of the branches of literature articulating spatial issues – arguing that rescaling involves

> …not simply a shifting of emphasis across existing scales of the statutory planning system, but the insertion of new scales for planning intervention, plus an apparent predilection for promoting new policy scales, initially at least through the device of fuzzy boundaries. ... The emergence of these 'soft spaces' is an important trend...
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> So whilst planning still needs its clear legal 'fix' around set boundaries for formal plans, if it is to reflect the more complex relational world of associational relationships …, planning also needs to operate through other spaces, and it is these we think of as 'soft spaces'. ... The resulting relational geography of planning requires attention to a variety of associational networks across a wide mix of administrative/political spaces, 'soft' spaces, and other scales. (Op cit., 3)

The concept of soft spaces appears also in the title of the book which followed this article. (Haughton, Allmendinger, Counsell, Vigar 2010) Without couching his analysis in terms of soft spaces, Harrison (2012) analyses practice, in this case regional planning in North West England. Referring to key maps illustrating three subsequent strategies, Harrison shows how relational thinking is waxing and waning under the staying power of territorialism. In a parallel paper, with Growe, in which there is reference also to the work on soft spaces discussed above, Harrison discusses the Concepts and Strategies for Spatial Development in Germany adopted by the Federal Government and the governments of the *Länder* in 2006. The focus there is on 'European Metropolitan Regions,' soft spaces with no equivalent politico-administrative bodies. In the face of pressure to safeguard equality of opportunities, a constitutional goal and a concern that territorial authorities are keen to be seen to promote, the ensuing policy was made '…spatially inclusive by identifying "areas of influence" which are inclusive of the rural areas located beyond the metropolitan region but are to varying degrees functionally connected…' (Harrison, Grove forthcoming, 7/8) According to this study territorial and relational viewpoints are not mutually exclusive and state and territorial politics still matter in that new regional spaces are mediated through existing institutions.

Harrison and Growe also discuss cross-border region as examples of 'unusual solutions' (see also Deas, Lord 2006) to problems created by formal territorial structures. Indeed, cross-border and transnational planning puts such issues into

focus. Amongst other examples, Herschel analyses the Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa – Tri-Country Border Region sitting astride the borders between Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic. This Euroregion

> …seeks to use its multi-nationality to its advantage… Rather than representing 'edgeness' and 'end of territory', borderness is re-interpreted and projected as a strength, a sign of connectedness and international reach. The emphasis on an inherently more dynamic quality of governance, compared with more institutionalised, bureaucratic notions of government, suggests a concern with maximising indigenous capacity to overcome geo-political and geo-economic disadvantages … This involves developing a clear regional profile as a 'border bridging region' that recognises the importance of forming a sense of regional image and identity … (Herschel 2010, 163)

These were case studies of soft planning of the type of which Faludi (2010, 172ff) says that it is pointing the way for European spatial planning. They exhibit inventiveness as regards conceptualising new territories criss-crossing existing jurisdictions leading to an 'unusual regionalism,' the concept coined by authors who also applaud the '…admonitions to develop imaginative configurations that straddle national and regional boundaries in line with spatial planning imperatives' by the Commission. (Deas, Lord 2006, 1850) In this way, they contribute to deconstructing established spaces by which, as indicated, Lariaux means '…interrogating myths of self and others, and … the discovery of new possibilities that are more powerfully mobilizing and legimitizing.'

As far as European spatial planning as such is concerned, its practice so far has been couched in terms of Member States *versus* the EU, as if there were only two spatially bounded scales. This has been the basis for the positioning game around the ESDP and territorial cohesion. At the same time, there is much 'soft' planning at the cross-border and transnational scales going on. Always keen on transcending borders, the Commission promotes this. Spatial visions for each of the INTERREG transnational cooperation areas, cross-cutting national boundaries as they are, have been only a partial success. Macro-regional strategies are of a different alloy in that, on request of the Member States concerned, the European Council has asked the Commission to get involved. Complying, the Commission brokers agreement on concrete actions. As Stead (2011, 163) points out, they represent examples of the 'spatial rescaling' which Allmendinger and Haughton and others see as responsible for the emergence of soft spaces. Faludi (2010b,c) sees macro-regional strategies as portending a future form of soft spatial planning.

The soft approach and the refusal of contemplating new funding mechanisms for macro regions have not always been understood. The question is whether, without the prospect of funding soft planning has a future. In this respect it is significant that Commission proposals for after 2013 foresee, not only a larger share of available funding going to INTERREG, but also macro-regional strategies playing an, albeit unspecified role in fund allocation. That is, of course, how it should be: the spending

of taxpayers' money being influenced by – amongst others, because there are always multiple concerns – exploratory strategies that 'shape the minds.' (Faludi 2006).

Conclusions

The paper has criticised territorialism and territoriality. However, none of the authors anticipate wholesale replacement of existing systems. Deconstructing them does not mean destroying, but opening up future avenues. As regards the three issues identified at the beginning of this paper, the conclusions are:

(1) Concerning relations, in terms of spatial planning, of the EU and its Member States one must surpass 'Russian-Doll' thinking and the territorialism underlying, accepting that territoriality is not a monopoly of the state but must be shared;
(2) Territory is not a fixed entity enveloping all aspects of social and political life but the object of negotiation and compromise, and thus open to multiple and contested interpretations;
(3) Spatial planning is about inserting imaginative visions into the on-going reconstruction of the fabric of life, including the plurality of territories which this implies.

This means deconstructing frontiers. This can hardly count as novel, given the quest for a borderless Europe which implies, as Deas and Lord have been reported calling it, new configurations straddling borders. Loriaux has been quoted in the introduction as holding out the prospect of such border deconstruction bringing to light '…a civilizational space that is … intensely urban, cosmopolitan, multilingual, and less hierarchical than in the past.' This seems as appealing a perspective for European spatial planning in the twenty-first century as one can get.

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