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## PLACE IS A NO-MAN'S LAND

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### Abstract

A recent survey concerns the use of the place-based approach to territorial development throughout Europe. Places, according to the Barca Report, are drawn as frames which are irrespective of political boundaries for integrating policies with spatial impacts. For this very reason, they are also a no-man's land each in the sense of no one government being responsible. Where does this leave the democratic legitimacy of place governance? The question may also be asked whether territorial representation is the only way of producing legitimacy in a network society. Raising the issue is certain to meet with opposition, especially since alternatives are anything but clear. The epilogue discusses Europe as a place and reflects on European governance.

### Key words

democratic legitimacy • place based approach • place governance • territorial representation • Barca report • Leader programme

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### Introduction

Discussing the LEADER programme in Lower Austria, Dillinger (2014) shows that politicians and bureaucrats are not pursuing its stated objectives of mobilising stakeholders in rural development. Instead, these politicians and bureaucrats are eying the LEADER programme for new sources of funding and patronage. This built-in tension also exists in other EU programmes which are referring to diffuse, what the current literature calls 'places'. Places are different from administrative territories. Territories have clearly

defined constituencies to whom politicians are accountable. Researching the emerging English practice of 'localism', Davoudi and Cowie (2013) highlight concerns arising when *ad hoc* boundaries drawn around places called 'community planning areas' neglect issues relevant to the entire jurisdiction.

Some places also cut across jurisdictional boundaries. They, too, as 'ambiguous' lands, throw the democratic legitimacy of their governance into sharp relief. Concerning legitimacy, the assumption is that voting in territorial constituencies is the way of producing legitimacy. However, this is hardly ever

questioned, nor is the further assumption that society can be neatly divided into boxes. This 'container view' I criticise in Faludi (2010) as unsuitable in a networked world. Territorial and functional areas overlap, forming places of many shapes and sizes in a networked world. Identifying such an ambiguous place as a no-man's land leads to apprehension, though, because of the lawlessness that may lurk beneath the surface.

This paper discusses the 'place-based approach' in European planning. The immediate reason for discussing this approach in European planning is the 'Road Map' to be used for the implementation of the "Territorial Agenda 2020" (Zaucha & Świątek 2013). The Barca Report (2009) is however to be taken into consideration first as it advocates what it describes as integrated place-based policies. The arguments of Mendez (2012), that EU Cohesion Policy has always embraced a place-based approach, are also noted. As Doucet et al. (2014) and Faludi (2010) claim, the, now defunct, discourse on European spatial planning has done the same, invoking the place-based approach.

From here, my paper discusses relevant planning and human geography literature. With this in mind the Zaucha and Świątek study is included in the context of the ongoing European spatial planning discourse. Constructive criticism is offered because the study is not fully exploring the critical potential of the concept of place. This is followed by questioning the territorial bases of the production of legitimacy. There is also an Epilogue looking at Europe as a place. This part serves as a departure from the perhaps sterile debate in terms of a supra-national or intergovernmental EU.

## **The Barca Report on the place-based approach**

In the discourse on European spatial planning, a new source of inspiration has been regional-economic thinking. It is the Barca Report (2009) which highlights the importance of local endowments and synergies for

development. This independent report was made to the then Commissioner for regional policy, Danuta Hübner, on the subject of the future of the Cohesion Policy. At that time, the Director General of the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance, Fabrizio Barca was chairing the group. He was one of a number of Italians completely at home in international academic discourse. Inspired by the wish to jolt the Italian Mezzogiorno out of its state of underdevelopment and political counter culture, these Italians were critical of existing institutions. The Integrated Mediterranean Programme, experimental forerunner of Cohesion Policy under an Italian Commissioner for regional policy, is an example of the Italian input into relevant EU policy.

The group working with Barca held hearings and seminars with experts and policy makers. This group produced working papers also reviewing relevant literature and evidence. The Barca Report resulting from this discusses the economic rationale and motivation of an EU place-based development policy and provides an assessment of EU Cohesion Policy, identifying core priorities and making recommendations. My paper focuses mainly on Barca's critiques of the fixation on political-administrative boundaries. In this context, Barca invokes the concept of subsidiarity and makes reference to multi-level governance, both also important in European spatial planning. Based on a Background Report by Farole, Rodríguez-Pose and Storper (2009), Barca draws on New Regional Economics and identifies a 'place-based paradigm' on this basis. It should be noted that Barca also refers interchangeably to region, agglomeration, local areas and so forth, none of which are necessarily jurisdictions.

The above-mentioned Background Report insists that institutions are decisive for economic growth. Lagging areas are noted as beset by institutional sclerosis, clientelism, corruption, and pervasive rent seeking by local elites blocking innovation. Not only formal, but also informal institutions are to blame. They "(...) are often similarly dysfunctional, resulting in low levels of trust and declining

associative capacity, and restricting the potential for effective collective action. In such an environment where institutions are 'inappropriate' (...), a region is likely to fail to break out of low-growth and low productivity traps (...)" (Farole et al. 2009: 10).

In this light, the Background Report identifies two challenges for the EU Cohesion Policy: 'unevenness' and endogenously caused 'persistent underdevelopment'. However, rectifying the former by providing external funding which is what the policy does, incurs the danger of "(...) entrenching existing elites by propping up ineffective, clientelistic institutions and fuelling rent extracting machines" (Farole et al. 2009: 12). Necessary reforms, though, do "(...) require the involvement of regional and local scales" (Farole et al. 2009: 14).

On the basis of this and other inputs, Barca points out that on grounds of both efficiency and equity, policies need to be tailor-made. With Farole et al., he argues, however, that attempts to create proper economic institutions are often hurt by the self-interest of 'rent-seeking' local elites. Thus, the mould of supposedly benevolent but often self-regarding local policy makers must be broken. For this reason, exogenous intervention is needed to bring about 'agglomerations'. (Note that the term 'agglomerations' is often used interchangeably with 'places'). Agglomerations should be assessed in the context of a comprehensive policy covering all areas, which may count as a plea for strategic EU policy on the matter, but this is not the point discussed here. Like Farole et al., Barca emphasises the need for local knowledge. This leads him to advocate the place-based concept, with strong interdependencies between different public goods and services. The point is, for exploiting such interdependencies, the involvement of local actors is essential. After all, a top-down policy of merely redistributing funds often only benefits existing rent-seekers. The funds should benefit the real stakeholders in places. The negative effects of capture by rent-seekers are: inappropriate investments, a dependency culture and the

entrenching of elites, and the propping up of ineffective institutions.

Reasons for government failure can be that government does not care or that it lacks the capacity and/or the means to be effective. This leads to the possibility of multi-level governance. In the context of the EU, this is usually discussed in terms of the distribution of competences between levels of government. For instance, spatial planning is always said to be a national rather than an EU competence (Faludi 2012). Cross-border and transnational spatial issues, and issues that apply to the EU as a whole, are disregarded. Barca extends the discussion of multi-level governance into considerations of subsidiarity. This concept is yet another which is much discussed in relation to European spatial planning (Faludi 2013a). Subsidiarity should not be interpreted as referring to whole 'sectors' of government, which in EU jargon is called competences, but to tasks. The top level of government should merely set guidelines and standards and enforce the rules of the game. Lower levels of government should be free to pursue them in whichever way they see fit. Special-purpose institutions made up of private and public actors must also be able to define relevant places. Multi-level governance might otherwise degenerate into negotiations between bureaucracies dealing with fixed jurisdictions, which is in fact what usually happens. Jurisdictions cannot be the only or even the primary units of intervention. Neither local government boundaries nor their governments are coherent with the specific and changing policy objectives, which correlates well with the planning and human geography literature to be discussed.

Looking back later, Barca (2012) positions the place-based approach in relation to others. He reiterates what it is about: the innovation to spring open the underdevelopment trap caused by local elites incapable of, and unwilling to, deliver appropriate institutions and/or investments. This means, changing the balance of power within places (Barca 2012: 220). Underdevelopment is, after all,

produced by "(...) the failure on the part of local elites, even when democratically elected, and their tendency to seek rents from public interventions (...)" (Barca 2012: 223). The point about democratic legitimacy will be taken up at the end of this paper.

Barca does not draw on human geography nor is he focussing on territorial cohesion, let alone spatial planning. He articulates his concerns in terms of 'place' and other similar concepts, hence his being associated with the place-based approach. Interestingly, Mendez argues that Cohesion Policy has always been place-based. He claims that the proposals for 2014-2020, which are now on the books, but at the time of his writing were still in the making, even represent a return to the founding ethos of the 1988 reform of the Cohesion Policy regarding "(...) territorial and integrated principles and the reassertion of Commission control over programming" (Mendez 2012: 2). Mendez traces the development of this place-based approach in Commission policy, suggesting that it resonated well "(...) with multi-level governance and territorial cohesion concepts, which had gained increased attention through the EU's constitutional reform initiatives" (Mendez 2012: 10). Nonetheless, the proposals for the Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 as they existed at the time were still marked by tensions, he says. Indeed, "(...) long-standing tensions have been exacerbated by the increasing dominance of a master narrative on Europe 2020, reinforced economic governance, and the realpolitik of the Budgetary Review in the context of the crisis" (Mendez 2012: 16). This is made worse by the sector bias of Europe 2020 (European Commission 2010) which is the new master strategy of the EU focusing on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Mendez concludes with an observation shared by those concerned with spatial planning, particularly those at the European level; that sector policies present challenges to the formulation of common visions for places.

Discussing an 'experimentalist governance architecture' in EU Cohesion Policy, reaching from: the joint setting of objectives to the

(semi-)autonomous implementation by the member states and regions as well as performance reporting, peer review, and periodic revision of objectives, Mendez (2011) complements his other paper just discussed. This set of procedures represents a hybrid of hard and soft modes of governance, which so far, unfortunately have only weak learning effects. There are similarities with the so-called Open Method of Coordination (OMC; for OMC in EU territorial Cohesion Policy see Faludi 2007) and new modes of governance emerging in other EU policies with implications for place governance.

This second paper by Mendez is based on reviewing scholarship on EU governance, including Sabel and Zeitlin (2010; see also Faludi 2013a). This leads him to talk about an 'experimentalist turn'. Relevant conditions for such a turn do apply in the EU Cohesion Policy. They are: strategic uncertainty about how to achieve set goals, and a 'polyarchic' distribution of power. Such an architecture is more likely to succeed when accompanied by incentives and it is better suited to operating in the 'shadow of hierarchy' enabling the hybridisation of soft and hard methods (Mendez 2011: 522). Drawing on Bachtler and Mendez (2007), Mendez (2011) revisits the development of Cohesion Policy in reference to experimentalist architecture and certifies for it "(...) the potential to steer policy implementation towards EU goals, to enhance accountability and policy learning through EU-level strategic debate and to support recursive revision of goals" (Mendez 2011: 523). None of this is spelled out in terms of the place-based approach, but inferring that place governance will be experimentalist, makes the relevance evident.

My paper so far, holds two messages: places are not the same as jurisdictions, so they cannot be managed by governments alone. They are a no-man's land. The second message is that place governance requires rethinking democratic legitimacy. Before discussing the second message, the paper reviews relevant planning and human geography literature which Barca and Mendez ignored.

## Planning and human geography on place

That planning transcends boundaries has long been recognised. This concept can be found in an early report of a Working Party set up by the Council of Europe entitled *Regional Planning a European Problem* (1968). The frontiers of administrative regions, it says, stride across the great natural regions or main communication routes. So there are 'generic regions' – places – but the Working Party refrains from challenging the position of administrative regions. In fact, it is generally the case that while recognising the interrelatedness of issues, planners tend to accept formal institutions of government and administration as the dominant players. After all, such institutions are often their employers. As an added bit of information, the Working Party did not invoke the current terminology of place and place governance.

Presently, the Royal Town Planning Institute in the UK does embrace these terms, claiming that planning is about 'creating better places'. No other author has contributed more to planning being discussed in such terms than Patsy Healey. Her work will be discussed first, followed by a short discussion of the human geography literature on the matter.

In an early paper on *Relational concepts of space and place*, Graham and Healey (1999) already look at human geography and criticise the bedrock-concept of what they call the "object-centred Euclidean conception of space". The term came from Friedmann diagnosing "(...) the collapse of the Euclidean world order of stable entities and common sense assumptions that have governed our understanding of the world for the past two hundred years". For emphasis Friedmann (1993: 482) added, "We are moving into a non-Euclidian world of many space-time geographies, and it is the recognition of this change that obliges us to think of new and more appropriate models".

On this basis, Graham and Healey argue for a better understanding of 'multiplex'

socially constructed time-space experiences implying multiple perspectives on space. Places are the complex, performative arenas within which agents operate. Graham and Healey continue discussing practical planning issues. Referring to UK planning practice, they argue that development control needs to find ways of conceptualising projects and their multiple impacts. The treatment of space in development plans, once again as they exist in the UK, as Euclidean, and of time as linear, should be criticised. Graham and Healey also refer to the Lille Teleport project as an example where the 'warping' effects of infrastructure networks cannot be understood by invoking two-dimensional Euclidean notions. A subsequent co-authored work by Graham goes under the telling title of *Splintering Urbanism* (Graham & Marvin 2001).

In her further work, Healey continues to pursue the critique of the Euclidean notions of space, arguing that traditional planning concepts reflect "(...) a view of geography which assumes that objects and things exist objectively in contiguous space and that the dimensions of this space can be discovered by analysis, that physical proximity is a primary social ordering principle and that place qualities exist objectively (...). This so-called essentialist, 'Euclidean' geography is under heavy challenge from an alternative, relational conception which sees space as an inherent spatiality in all relations (...) and which understands place as a social construct, generated as meanings are given in particular social contexts to particular sites (...)" (Healey 2004: 47).

Space being socially constructed, relates to her work on institutionalism, "(...) the embedding of specific practices in a wider context of social relations that cut across the landscape of formal organizations, and to the active process by which individuals in social contexts construct their ways of thinking and acting". An institution is not an organisation but "(...) an established way of addressing certain social issues (...)" (Healey 2000: 112-113).

In *Urban Complexity and Spatial Strategies: Towards a Relational Planning for Our Times*, Healey expands on the twin theme

of institutionalism and place. She discusses strategies that treat territory not as a container but "(...) as a complex mixture of nodes and networks, places and flows, in which multiple relations, activities and values coexist, interact, combine, oppress, and generate creative synergy. It centres around collective action, both in formal government arenas and in informal mobilisation efforts (...)" (Healey 2007: 1). Before the recognition of places as fluid, it was assumed that networks were somehow contained in a coherent entity called a 'city'. However, "(...) cities and urban areas cannot be understood as integrated unities with a singular driving dynamic, contained within clearly defined boundaries" (Healey 2007: 2). Obviously, this has implications for planning.

Her recent work, *Making Better Places* is about what she calls place-management 'with a planning orientation'. She emphasises issues arising from mobility, its consequence being "(...) 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, then, is not coterminous with any particular administrative jurisdiction. She follows this by considering governance arrangements; the activities undertaken to promote collective concerns. So, place governance needs to consider a broad public. This public she says has multiple stakes in a place, both now and in the future. Healey (2010: 50) portrays place governance as promoting a specific way of doing collective work, oriented to the future as well as the present, taking account of the concerns of many, not just the few and encourages paying attention to how people are connected to each other. In this way, place governance promotes informed and transparent discussion about collective concerns, matters on with there is an enormous literature.

Recalling concerns central to spatial planning discussed in an earlier paper (Healey 2006), she points out also that "(...) attention to place qualities inherently cuts across sectors" (Healey 2010: 53). It cuts across levels, too, leading her to discuss multi-level

governance. In this context, Healey raises the issue of democratic legitimacy, to be discussed further below. Formally, she says, networks are "(...) held in check by the accountability of each body to its elected politicians and its legal specification of powers and duties. But many governance activities these days involve joint action (...). Arrangements that are outside formal government, or that involve some combination across government boundaries, raise difficult questions about accountability" (Healey 2010: 69).

In the concluding chapter, Healey describes place-based governance 'with a planning orientation' as a complex mixture of political activity, technical expertise, and moral sensibility, "It is important to move away from conceiving such relations as a kind of nested hierarchy of systems, each one tiered above the other... Instead, systems are better imagined as overlapping, loosely bounded and 'loosely coupled' sets of relations (...). So those who engage in place-governance with a planning orientation need to think of a plurality of wholes in which people in particular places may participate, while the 'wholes' we value may link together people with a plurality of identities. This demands a pluralistic sensibility and the encouragement of pluralistic forms of political community" (Healey 2010: 226-227).

Surely, all this poses huge challenges. The rich human geography literature enforces this impression. That literature is discussed only in regard to two aspects: the notion of place, and where it touches upon place governance. In a review paper, Jessop, Brenner, and Jones (2008) recall that the view of place "(...) as a fixed, areal, self-contained, and more or less unique unit of sociospatial organization" has been rejected and replaced by the view of places understood as "relationally constituted". Attention has turned to the assumption that, according to Jessop et al. (2008: 390) "(...) the territorialisation of political power was established around national boundaries by national states and also served to define societies as nationally bounded. This was reflected in growing interest (...) in the now familiar claim that the Westphalian

nexus between national territory and sovereignty has been subject to 'unbundling'".

This 'turn' has been conceptualised variously, leading to four 'socio-spatial lexicons' in terms of territory, place, scale, and networks (Jessop et al. 2008: 391). The authors propose a framework embracing all four. Territory, place, and their intersections will be singled out, with side-glances only to where they relate to scale and networks.

Jessop et al. (2008: 395) portray territory as being defined by past, present, and emergent frontiers. Any one territory may contain distinct places and be located at different scales. Territory may also be embedded in networks formed by interstate systems, state alliances, and multi-area government. Place refers to locales, milieux, cities, sites, regions, localities, and 'globalities', presumably the likes of Trans-Atlantic space, Eurasia or the Mediterranean world. Jessop et al. also point to core-periphery distinctions within and borderlands across frontiers, and they also mention 'empires', a term sometimes invoked in current discussions about the EU. The notion of neo-medievalism as a possible new organising principle beyond territories is also included. Finally, scale relates to the division of labour between places, and networks relate to local/urban governance partnerships around places of various types and shapes.

Jessop et al. bring order into a vast literature. Other authors, like Harrison (2013) also look at planning. Harrison focuses on North West England where a series of regional strategies have been developed, initially taking a lead from 'relational' geography. (Harrison and Growe (2014) perform the same analysis of the German federal spatial strategy of 2006). Varró and Legendijk (2013: 21) come to the same conclusion, however, as Harrison, which is that 'relational' geography as such is insufficient to explain what is happening in practice. Rather 'territorially embedded' and 'relational and unbounded' conceptions of regions are complementary. Indeed, Harrison provides a detailed analysis of the way the two are articulated in the statutory 'key diagrams' accompanying

the regional strategies for the North West. Thus, after voters had rejected regional devolution which would have created a new territorial administration, the draft strategy for the North West was couched in terms of networks. Lines on the map illustrated connectivity and city-regions were portrayed as pivotal points. Above all, the diagram disregarded political or administrative boundaries. The next version, instead, drew hard boundaries around political and administrative units. Networks had thus been "(...) unable to escape the existing territorial mosaic of politico-administrative units (...)" (Harrison 2013: 68). The final Integrated Regional Strategy of 2010 was a kind of hotchpotch mixture. This is Harrison's way of showing where territory, space, scale and the network concept have been dominant, emerging or residual as concepts in the process. What emerges are "(...) ever-more-complex configurations in order to make emergent strategies compatible with inherited landscapes of sociopolitical organization, and for new conceptual frameworks capable of theorizing the 'inherently polymorphic and multidimensional' nature of social relations" (Harrison 2013:, 71-72).

This of course fits well with Healey's observation that place governance is complex. Political representatives and the bureaucracies, including the planners, are embedded in this 'territorial mosaic'. Nonetheless, they often cling to the fiction that they are responsible for territory. Those with stakes in places have to bow to the authority of politicians who, as the elected representatives, are democratically legitimated. The issue will be discussed at the end of this paper. The next section discusses the place-based approach in European planning including the latest Polish study on the matter.

## **The place-based approach in European spatial planning**

European planning is about spatial integration which takes place within, across, and beyond national jurisdictions. Where such spatial integration is concerned, should national

authorities with formal jurisdiction have a privileged position? In the EU context, this issue is most pertinent with respect to nation-states. Should they have the final say?

Healey has shown that those with a stake in an area can come from outside, and this is also true on a European scale. For example, the Alpine crossings are essential north-south links, making emission controls on heavy-goods vehicles a matter, not only for the Alpine valleys experiencing pollution, but also for a much wider range of stakeholders. The expansion of port facilities at Rotterdam, a European gateway, has impacts way beyond the Dutch border, stretching in a wide basin to the Rhine-Main-Danube waterway, and to the Black Sea. The North Stream and, if and when completed, the South Stream gas pipelines also have, or will have, far reaching effects. Out-of-town shopping centres can attract busloads of foreign shoppers with negative effects back home. Different national hunting regimes may affect the management of cross-border nature areas. All these cases require place governance beyond territorial jurisdictions, but generally national mandates prevail.

Faludi and Waterhout (2002) consider the role of member states in the making of the European Spatial Development Perspective (European Commission 1999). They report on these member states insisting in the 1990s, that European planning is not for the EU. Eventually, the Commission sidestepped such objections. Territorial cohesion, seemingly a logical complement to economic and social cohesion, was launched as a competence shared between the EU and the member states. The prospect of territorial cohesion coming onto the books jolted member states into reconsidering their positions. They came up with the "Territorial Agenda" (TA 2007) eventually followed by the "Territorial Agenda 2020" (TA 2011). By that time "Europe 2020" (European Commission 2010), the new master strategy for the decade to come already mentioned, had been published. The Commission's priorities had shifted to promoting sector policies that were the keys to achieving

smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. As a result, the Commission seemed less keen on rendering the shared competence for territorial cohesion under the Lisbon Treaty as operational. The European Commission (2008) published a *Green Paper* only on the subject. There were reverberations in the Cohesion Policy for 2014-2020 but no immediate follow-ups, let alone legislative proposals on territorial cohesion.

Concerning this Territorial Agenda process, in Faludi (2009) I diagnosed a sea change. This was a transformation caused by the unintentional cumulative impact of pragmatic steps taken by the member states which had set up, amongst others, a network of National Territorial Cohesion Contact Points (NTCCP). The initiators of the whole process, the Netherlands, France, and Germany (Faludi 2004) were bowing out to various degrees at this time, but new players came onto the scene. Thus, Doucet et al. (2014) discuss the successive Swedish, Spanish, Belgian, Hungarian, and Polish Presidencies, while paying attention also to the Barca Report discussed above. Doucet et al. draw on the Background Report (Böhme et al. 2011) in which they have also been involved as co-authors. That previous Background Report goes under the title of *How to strengthen the territorial dimension of Europe 2020 in the EU Cohesion Policy*. Doucet et al. report on a low-key but workman-like Swedish Presidency having commissioned an earlier report by Böhme (2009) arguing for a user-friendly and understandable 'territorial language', and comprehensive action, proposals which the Spanish Presidency of 2010 endorsed. The next Belgian Presidency assumed three tasks: spreading the Territorial Agenda message by convening a "Territorial Agenda Annual Conference", clarifying responsibilities for territorial governance, and assisting the forthcoming Hungarian Presidency which had assumed responsibility for the follow-up of the Territorial Agenda.

The Hungarian Presidency put the work into the hands of a consultancy, the former state agency called VÁTI. This agency



diagnosed that there was insufficient coordination and integration between spatial and economic policies. The resulting "Territorial Agenda 2020" (TA 2011) made recommendations to rectify this situation. Commissioning its subsequent Background Report already mentioned (Böhme et al. 2011), the ambitious Polish Presidency sought to clarify how Europe 2020, and in particular Cohesion Policy 2014-2020, might be rendered more effective by strengthening their territorial dimensions. The intention of strengthening the territorial dimension of the Cohesion Policy has led to the identification of a series of 'territorial keys' (Zauch a et al. 2014). These keys are meant to bridge the gap between territorial thinking and the common concern (already evident in the Barca Report) of promoting regional competitiveness. The keys are: accessibility, services of general economic interests, territorial capacities/endowments/assets, city networking, and functional regions.

With its Background Report, the Polish Presidency created a splash. Old hands from the ESDP (European Spatial Development Perspective) process were included in the group of experts producing it. The Polish Presidency organised also an informal meeting of ministers for Cohesion Policy. There is little to report from the Presidencies of the Council of Ministers since the Polish one. However, under the Road Map relating to the Territorial Agenda 2011, the Poles themselves produced the report on the place-based approach (Zauch a & Świątek 2013) to be discussed next.

Formally speaking, this report under the title *Place-based territorially sensitive, and integrated approach* was produced at the request of the NTCCP asking for a survey of how member states integrated the 'place-based approach' at various levels. Like in the Barca Report, the intention was to improve EU and national policy by stimulating endogenous potential and taking account of fixed assets. The idea was to counteract a 'sectorial' approach neglecting synergies, and in doing so, reducing the chances of integration at the regional and local levels. The survey concerned EU members, and Norway and

Switzerland which were both also represented on the NTCCP. Profusely illustrated with examples from case studies, this Polish report by Zaucha and Świątek on the place-based approach looked like ESPON studies and Commission documents. The latter appear always keen on providing concrete examples from all around Europe, and so do the two authors of the Polish report.

As the title *Place-based territorially sensitive, and integrated approach* suggests, Zaucha and Świątek seeks to demonstrate the benefits of the place-based approach, also described as the territorial approach, for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. These forms of growth are of course the themes of "Europe 2020", and likewise of the "Territorial Agenda 2020". The purpose is to influence the priorities, conditionalities, and financial provisions of Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 by spreading the message of the place-based approach beyond the spatial planning and development domain.

Territorial diversity notwithstanding, Zaucha and Świątek identify general conditions which the institutions involved must meet, differentiating between 'supra-place' and 'place-specific' actors. Supra-place actors, they say, must have a mandate to coordinate the development of different places. Place-specific actors must have such a mandate for specific places. However, by invoking the concept of mandates, Zaucha and Świątek lapse into thinking in terms of jurisdictions rather than places as defined by Healey, Barca, and the other authors discussed. Indeed, the recommendations mostly address national and regional governments.

The impression of inconsistency with the place-based approach as discussed in my paper is enforced by Zaucha and Świątek's account of the key findings of the study. Where they summarise those findings, they refer mostly to governmental bodies and their relations. The same is true where they identify the need for strengthening the 'place-based approach'. This may be achieved, they say, by means of "(...) strengthening of contractual relations between different levels

of governments”, adding without much in the way of explanation, the possibility of a “(...) more serious use of an open method of coordination within countries” (Zaucha & Świątek 2013: 37).

The above illustrates the shift from a focus on places proper to jurisdictions particularly well. This may be a reflection of the practices observed. Indeed, in the cases studied, “(...) administrative units were most frequently used as a geographic unit for policy territorialisation administration” (Zaucha & Świątek 2013: 41). Further down, Zaucha and Świątek (2013: 43) do mention that local and regional governments focus on local and regional problems; the ‘not-in-my-backyard’ attitude. Attention to places overlapping jurisdictions seems uncommon.

The three German metropolitan case studies reported on by Zaucha and Świątek were all supported by German federal policy to improve urban-rural relations. The two authors commend the policy for encouraging core cities to assume responsibility for their hinterlands. Yet, Zaucha and Świątek (2013: 93) still reported administrative structures being at odds with place-governance. The only other metropolitan case, the Brussels Capital Region, revealed the same issue prevailing, ascribing the tension to the fact that the ‘morphologic agglomeration’ – the ‘place’ – reaches way beyond the administrative territory (Zaucha & Świątek 2013: 108).

In the conclusion the two authors commend the German government for supporting the place-based approach by helping to cover the high initial costs of starting place-based dialogues in the Federal Republic. Beyond recommending the wider adoption of this practice, the conclusions offer encouragement but refrain from criticising the cases. Still, the cases are far more about inter-governmental coordination than about a proper place-based approach. Nor do Zaucha and Świątek cast a critical eye on the role which Barca has criticised of rent-seeking politicians. The set-up, with representatives of governments on the NTCCP in the driving seat surely did not allow anything but positive comments to be made.

The message of my paper, of course, is that governments are a problem because their responsibility is towards their constituencies and not to places. The defence governments mount is couched in terms of democratic legitimacy, so the next section finally turns to this issue.

## Reflections on democratic legitimacy

Surely, it is possible to critically examine ways in which democratic legitimacy comes about without leaving oneself open to the accusation of being undemocratic. In fact, such a critical discussion takes place all the time when electoral systems, the selection of candidates for party lists, and the methods for converting votes into seats on the legislature, are being examined. In fact, none of the procedures for arriving at democratically legitimate decisions that seem self-evident now, like voting, general suffrage, and the formation of parties are anything like that. Like democracy itself, all these have developed over time and are being developed further by addressing new concerns and adding new dimensions to the process (Rossanvalon 2008). This section particularly examines whether the unquestioning belief: that democratic legitimacy results from majority voting in territorial constituencies, ‘the container view’, is inescapable.

In her classic on representation, Pitkin (1976) says that representation has been introduced to further what she calls ‘local interests’. The rallying cry of the American Revolution then evolved that taxation without representation is tyranny (Pitkin 1976: 3). It was in this context that representation became popular representation and identified with self-government of the thirteen states rebelling against British rule. Perhaps because this is evident, Pitkin does not elaborate on the fact that such self-government has been, and is, territorially bounded. However, she does ask whether representatives are bound by what constituents want or whether the representatives have a duty to pursue the interest of the

nation as a whole. Her answer is that the (...) representative is, typically, both special pleader and judge, an agent of the locality as well as a governor of the nation. His duty is to pursue both local and national interests, the one because he is a representative, the other because his job as representative is governing the nation" (Pitkin 1976: 218). So the representative may ignore or even override the opinion of the constituency. If so, however, the representative may offer justifications for doing so (Pitkin 1976: 222). She argues further that the representative "(...) must look after the public interest and be responsive to public opinion, except insofar as non-responsiveness can be justified in terms of the public interest" (Pitkin 1976: 224).

This is a noble principle but the reality is that following it may reduce the representative's chances of re-election. This is the crux of territorial representation. Failure to respond to specific, and inevitably partial, articulations of the public interest may be labelled as unpatriotic, a sign of disloyalty or worse. It seems relevant therefore to critically examine the situation created by territorial constituencies forming the exclusive frames of reference. In general terms, but not with respect to the territorially bounded nature of representative government, Pitkin encourages such critical discussion, "The concept of representation (...) is a continuing tension between ideal and achievement. This tension should (...) present a continuing but not hopeless challenge: to construct institutions (...) in such a way that they engage in the pursuit of the public interest, the genuine representation of the public; and, at the same time, to remain critical of those institutions (...), so that they are always open to further interpretation and reform" (Pitkin 1976: 240).

In the spirit of pursuing 'the genuine representation of the public', and in view of that public presenting itself in many shapes, from territorial containers to the no-man's land of places within or at the interstices of territorial administrations, this section of my paper offers reflections on the production of democratic legitimacy. The 'public' in a world that

no longer fits into boxes; a world where territorial and functional areas overlap, forming places of many shapes and sizes within and beyond jurisdictions is diffuse. So must be the systems for producing legitimacy. Fuzzy arrangements, what the literature calls 'soft planning' (Faludi 2010; Haughton et al. 2010) are ways to deal with the soft, rather than hard spaces. The issue, though, is whether there is 'soft' democratic legitimacy.

On territorial representation, in Faludi (2013b) I quote the eminent constitutional thinker Schmitter (2009), agreeing that there is little discussion of where territorial representation originated, and whether it is justified. An exception is Rehfeld asking: "Why do democratic governments define political representation in this way? Are territorial electoral constituencies commensurate with basic principles of democratic legitimacy?" (Rehfeld 2008: 11). Referring, like Pitkin, to the US, Rehfeld claims that "(...) the use of territory for representation has never been explained or justified (...). In never having been contested (...) territorial constituencies qualify as an arbitrary institution (...)" (Rehfeld 2008: XV). Discussing elections to the US congress, he argues for random constituencies as an alternative.

Urbanati and Warren (2008: 396) concur that "(...) the idea that constituencies should be defined by territorial districts has been all but unquestioned until very recently". They also say that "(...) when represented geographically, the people are only a 'demos' insofar as their primary interests and identities are geographical in nature. Nongeographical constituencies (...) are represented only insofar as they intersect with the circumstances of location, producing only an accidental relationship between democratic autonomy (...) and forms of representation" (Urbanati & Warren 2008: 396-397). Examples of constituencies that are insufficiently represented are racial, class, and gender groups. The conclusion is that the "(...) geography-based constituency definition introduces an arbitrary criterion (...). Exclusion works not on people (...) but rather on issues, since residence-based constituencies define

residency-based interests as most worthy of political conversation and decision (...) (Urbanati & Warren 2008: 397). In the terms of my paper, it can be said that amongst excluded issues, there are those relating to places within, or cross-cutting the boundaries of territorial constituencies.

There are, of course, action groups and NGOs articulating the interests of under-represented constituencies and of issues not dealt with adequately, including those relating to places. The default condition remains, however, that territorial representation prevails. Apparently being unfamiliar with alternative understandings of space, none of the authors above consider any configurations other than territorial containers.

All this does not mean to say that Rehfeld's scenario of a different US politics resulting from randomly assigned rather than territorial constituencies has been accepted. Agreeing with Rehfeld and also with Urbanati and Warren that the "(...) territorial base of representation has become so habitual that it is almost never questioned", Schmitter (2009: 487-488) also concurs with Rehfeld in asking why, unless citizens "(...) are choosing within collective units that are meaningful to them, should the winning representatives be regarded as legitimate (...)". Schmitter adds a sentence that articulates the concern of my paper particularly well, "Territory may have seemed the 'natural' and logistically effective solution in the past, but why continue to rely so exclusively upon it in the present?" (Schmitter 2009: 488). However Schmitter thinks, firstly, Rehfeld's inferences concerning US congressional elections by random constituencies implausible and, secondly, and after due consideration of all arguments, he still comes down on the side of retaining territorial constituencies. They "(...) are still considered the most appropriate and reliable political units within which interests and passions should be aggregated, despite evidence that these units have changed considerably due to greater mobility and that citizens identify strongly with functional or ideational constituencies" (Schmitter 2009: 489).

Maybe there is no alternative. The discussed planning and human geography authors offer none. Rehfeld himself, as indicated, does not even discuss the planning and human geography literature on place. He merely points out a radical, non-spatial alternative to territorial representation. The least that can be concluded from all this is that the unequivocal claim that the production of democratic legitimacy is an exclusive matter for territorial jurisdictions can be challenged. Merely bemoaning the short-sightedness of politicians and their constituencies, maybe even questioning the virtues of representative democracy for failure to deal with a complex reality and recommending more influence for experts, is not the only way.

What the reader might at least take from this is the necessity to, first of all, be circumspect about conventional arguments extolling the dominance of territorial government on grounds of democratic legitimacy. Secondly, one must be open to change. Sabel and Zeitlin (2010), for instance, have been quoted by Mendez (2011) for recommending 'experimentalist governance'. That reforming place governance will lead to more complex arrangements is no cogent counter-argument. Ashby puts forward the 'Law of Requisite Variety' suggesting that an untidy reality requires complex management arrangements. Looking to yet another systems theorist, Stafford Beer, to explain, Chadwick (1978: 71) invokes the metaphor of a football game. Accordingly, the way of preventing players from getting the ball between two posts, is to field the equivalent number of players. Surely, one need not subscribe to, nor indeed understand systems theory in all its complexity to find this an intuitively appealing argument.

## Epilogue: Europe a no-man's land?

Places are unlike jurisdictions; there is no one administration responsible. Places are considered a no-man's land, making their governance a complex affair. My paper started with

the example of LEADER, an EU programme. Generally in such programmes, relations with territorial administrations are tense. From there, my paper further explored the governance of places as being socially constructed, leading to the questioning of the exclusive claim on the production of democratic legitimacy by elected representatives of territories. It is tantalising to ask for the implications, if any, for the EU as such.

As the recent elections to the European Parliament have demonstrated yet again, EU discourse takes the EU itself to be an incomplete or, as the case may be, way-too-ambitious territorial administration. The nation-state is thus the model against which European integration is measured. Whether this has been Jean Monnet's view is a moot question. Yes, he did talk in terms of a United States of Europe, but whether he really meant something like a federal or super-state is doubtful. After all, one can read in his *Mémoires* (Monnet 1976) that he was aware of the problems of representative government. More to the point, his biographer Duchêne (1994) describes him as the first 'statesman of interdependence'. This description seems much closer to place governance as conceived in my paper than to the management of territories as containers.

Nonetheless, the container view and attendant notions of how to govern remain strong. The European Parliament thinks of itself for instance as a proper parliament-in-the-making, claiming the right to appoint the President of the European Commission, a claim which the European Council of heads of state and government resents. The latter consider themselves as proper legitimate representatives of the people within their national jurisdictions. The geographic expression of this is a European Union of, at present, twenty-eight states forming a territorial block.

Alternative ways exist of looking at the EU as a 'sui-generis' construct and even a neo-medieval empire. When considering other authors like Zielonka (2006) writing on the EU as an empire, Roche (2012: 40) came up with a summary of views of Europe

as a 'socio-political complex, "The image of the EU (...) as a puzzling socio-political UFO has guided the discussion towards models which visualise Europe and the EU in socio-spatial terms as a network society and as a neo-imperial system". Roche points to discussions of the distinctive character of the EU. There it is said to be "(...) both an international and supra-state organisation, an organisation which has multinational and multicultural characteristics, and in which the governance system is multi-level and multi-form". He reviews the range of perspectives, not only on the EU, but also on a 'EU-orchestrated Europe'. On this basis, he notes "(...) the inadequacy of the 'super-state' and nation-state analogies" (Roche 2012: 40-41). If true, then maybe the EU is more like a place without fixed boundaries than a territorial block.

Certainly, a wider 'EU-orchestrated Europe' reaching beyond the external borders comes close to what has been described as a 'place'; more complex and fluid than a jurisdiction. Also, EU policies often address spatial configurations cross-cutting local, regional, and national boundaries, encouraging the areas and the stakeholders concerned to conceive of new identities. All this suggests that the above-mentioned considerations of the governance of places as a no-man's land, including the reflections on the production of democratic legitimacy, may be of broader relevance. It suggests that Europe as a place deserves better than always being forced into the straightjacket of a container view of space. As I suggest in Faludi (2014), if and when broad and searching discussions along such lines about the nature of the EU project take place, then, with its experience in place governance, spatial planning properly conceived may even have a contribution to make.

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