

## **EU spatiality under question - Territorial cohesion in danger**

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### **Abstract (214)**

Spatial transformations constitute an important attempt to perpetuate a setting that becomes a stabilizing factor of human consciousness in the course of time. The understanding of spatial transformations becomes directly dependent on the prevailing balance between the unity and the multiplicity of the concepts of space, place, and territory. The paper highlights the importance of spatial transformations with respect to the EU integration undertaking and the fact that the insufficient knowledge of the inherent characteristics of territory poses a threat to the achievement of the territorial cohesion objective. This is so given that both the EU official documents and the EU adopted practices are far from the real meaning – and the achievement – of territorial cohesion. In fact, the conflict of interests and goals, through the demands of hard and soft planning, has an adverse impact on the strength of EU territory. The change of perception and the view of territory through the lens of the specificities of space and place may redefine the way of viewing the EU integration undertaking. In contrast, the social disciplinary, implicitly, contrasts the EU founding values, providing room to national entities to act against the cohesion of the EU territory, thus limiting the desire and willingness to share the common EU vision that is embedded in the EU territory.

**Key-Words:** spatiality, space, place, territory, territoriality, territorial cohesion, sovereignty, EU

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## 1. Introduction

European integration is being built with the aim of a single European public political space or a European *res publica*. The European formed space - open to history - demands the decoding of the status and function of spatial formations, since they are dynamic processes of producing and reproducing social phenomena in relation to space, and vice versa. For this reason, it was considered a prerequisite to place the spatial planning in the wider context of European integration. Different understandings of space and spatiality created actual epistemological gaps over the ontological hypotheses and practices adopted to clarify the codification and behavior of spatial formations. The conceptual problems have bequeathed a great deal of misunderstanding about the conceptualization of the institutional reality that is formed within the European space, thus creating the appropriate conditions for the recantation of its future institutional autonomy.

The paper highlights the importance of spatial transformations with respect to the EU integration undertaking and the fact that the insufficient knowledge of the inherent characteristics of territory poses a threat to the achievement of the territorial cohesion objective. As the use of words depends on the context and intentions of the actors, the EU chose the concept of territorial cohesion in order to break the impasse over its planning stalemate. The need for capitalization, improvement, development, management and exploitation of European territory has made territorial cohesion an integral part of cohesion policy, according to Treaty of Lisbon, with economic and social cohesion, which are functioned as the *keystone* and *prerequisite* for achieving the European Union integration. However, the problematic sense, perception and conception of territoriality, which is an inherent characteristic of the territory, contributes to the emergence of issues related to the exercise and limitation of power in a given space. The test of the concept of *sovereignty* and the paradox of the coexistence of European and national sovereignty threatens the EU, which lacks the primary self-sufficiency and ability to determine the conditions of its existence and operation.

The paper is structured as follows: The next section highlights the importance of spatial formations in human pursuits and points out their importance in the European Masterplan through decoding the concepts of space, place and territory. The third section focuses on the application of spatial thinking through the vision of territorial cohesion that the EU has drawn and introduced. The fourth section underlines that, due to its vague understanding, approximation, implementation and assessment, territorial cohesion cannot be taken as a factor in the evaluation of cohesion policy, although it is the precondition and prerequisite for European integration. The last section offers the conclusions.

## 2. Spatiality and conceptual expression: On the links between space, place, and territory

Space and time are fundamental concepts of human substance; are common to all, not hypothetical and not disconnected from reality, they do not focus on clear definitions but are legalized after experimental confirmation. Space and time are inseparable from each other, separate but also co-assisted, and, together, they support the existence of the world (Massey 2005, 55). Humans, as natural beings, were faced from the very beginning with the primordial instinct of survival. Thus, in order to ensure their survival, they created spatial and temporal units, with boundaries between them, that no one could cross. Spatial units are the places where the actors have common goals, while boundaries are the critical points that establish *us* and exclude the *others* (Paasi 1998, 75). These spatial units are experienced as coherent units and each one acquires its own special significance. Within spatial units, there may be conflicts or disagreements over spatial thinking and perception but not on spatial unity. The need to create the spatial formations that characterize everyday life, the way of understanding the spatial units, the influence of spatial units and the spatial background on (the conceptual approach of) things / events placed inside them, and the general importance of the creation of meaningful spatial units are issues that distort geography, philosophy and all manifestations of the natural and the social sciences.

Different understandings of space and spatiality – that go back as early as Aristotle (Barnes 1984, 51) – justify the existing epistemological gaps over the ontological assumptions and practices that have been adopted in order to clarify the codification and behavior of spatial formations. However, the understanding of spatial transformations is dependent not only on the conceptual identification but also, as Husserl calls, on a *grasping sense* (Husserl 2009, 432). The significance of spatial transformations, in addition to viewing the series of the objects' perceptions, depends, also, on the subjective valid and institutionalized feeling that takes the place of a cultural form that functions as an automatic deposition for the interpretation of the world for all societies. Seeing the world, through instant perception, as an external wider horizon that includes specific spaces, grasping the particular sense of the world is possible through idealization and construction (Viik 2011, 112).

According to Husserl (1970, 26), even the Newtonian's absolute place or geometric space offers an illustrative paradigm in the sense that the geometric space, though abstract, has its own meaning, as it determines the meaning of the objects it contains. Each space has a *grasping sense* and the understanding of spatial transformation depends on the presence of the body and the perspective associated with its position. The difference in perception of everyday and theoretical ideal space is based on physical existence and, in particular, on the ability of physical movement that creates the kinetic feeling and gives the dimension of spatiality to experience. The creation of the objective place and the objective space is marked by the kinetic feeling. It is the movement that separates *it* from *there*, that differentiates the coordinates of the starting point from the dimensions and the distances of the orientation, and that determines the field that surrounds the objects. Hence, the structure of the space is delineated empirically through perception, which generates spatial distributions around a reference point (the reference body) upon which the other objects are placed. In contrast to the abstract (i.e. theoretically ideal) space, where no reference points appear, the everyday experiential space exhibits a strong spatial character. Given that each space has a *grasping sense* the difference between the everyday experiential space and the abstract space lies in the difference of perception between the viewer and the position (Viik 2011, 111).

Spatial planning is, apparently, a basic human pursuit. But why do people (feel the need to) create formally institutionalized spatial formations? Human life must be spatially defined (Heidegger 1962, 143). Human substance is always placed in a space. In this sense, human existence is related to a given place in space. Humans (and all living organisms, in general) create relations, which are constructed and defined on the basis of a reference point. The latter coincides with a spatial formation that provides the necessary stability and uniformity over time, and suggests a harmonious framework of self-assertion and existential interpretation (Viik 2011, 112). Spatial formations provide the shelter that normalizes people within a society, assists in the creation of individual identity and delimits the *insiders* and the *outsiders*. Such spatial formations include spaces that are constructed and produced individually or socially, hierarchically or not, as reference points, and with meanings that are cultivated and / or maintained. It is the primitive process of nesting that points out the instinctual intent of animal species, not only to manifest their behavior but also to defend the place where they reproduce, feed and roam. In accordance, the range of residence is the place where humans realize security, warmth and intimacy, mostly through guaranteed ownership, which gives the control, the access, and a standard behavior within a delimited space. It comes that territorialism is a fundamental principle of spatial organization (Faludi 2016, 74).

Spatial transformations are an important attempt to perpetuate a setting that becomes a stabilizing factor of human consciousness in the course of time. Heidegger supports and enhances the existential spatiality, whereby people – the influential factor for human beings – have the imperative need to give meaning to the place around them by creating a system of concepts that can be achieved through the creation of spatial formations. The understanding of spatial transformations becomes directly dependent on the prevailing balance between the unity and the multiplicity of the concepts of space, place, and territory. Through the apparent resemblance and the unobtrusive diversity of the concepts of space, place, and territory, spatial planning can be understood as a lever of creating and maintaining concepts that, otherwise, they would have disappeared.

## 2.1 Space

For primitive thought, space was a random set of specific orientations, a more or less ordered set of local directions, each of which was associated with specific emotional memories. Primitive space, experienced and shaped subconsciously, obtained a common view for each member of family, group, race. The common view process was not a brief and simple one since lengths, surfaces and volumes were not perceived *in abstracto* as pure spatial expressions. It was shaped by concrete practical interests and through the anthropocentric aspect of work it was concerned. Either anthropogenic or geometric space both derives from the action of the subject in a specific area. Euclidean space presents the obvious and given meaning of space, consists of selected mathematical objects that are treated as points and selected relations between these points (Berlinski 2014, 161). It may be projected as self-evident and, therefore, it is the only authentic meaning of space. The relation between points defines the nature of the space. Through the observation and study of the constituent points vital relations are emerged in order to elaborate human spatiality and, hence, its primacy. Dealing with properties of *triangles* in Plato forms (*ideas*), which are unintelligible but irreplaceable, with the *constructions* in their production, with its *movement* and transformations, substitutes them in the ontological substance of triangles and changes the geometric space from a conceptual tool to the essence of space (Kalkavage 2001, 30).

Newton conceived the sense of space as its own nature, without regard to anything external that remained always similar and immovable. Relative space was some movable dimension or measure of absolute place (Newton 1846, 77). Absolute space remains immovable, receives the successions of things in motion, determines the velocities of their motions, measures the distances of the things themselves, influences things but does not accept any influence. Newton's infinite and absolute space and time, independent of anything external, appears to have been posited as entities existing in their own right that can guarantee clarity and rigor, certainty and the finality of a relation system that tend to touch the limits of perfection in order to natural events. While, Newtonian concept of absolute space was the fundamental prerequisite for natural sciences, according to Einstein the Leibniz's and Huygens' relational conception of space was a real triumph against absolute space concluding that there is no space without a field (Misner, Thorne, Wheeler 1970, 19).

Kant attempted to reconcile Newtonian's absolute space and Leibniz's conception of space as relational and, by accepting the relational view, accepted that spatial relations constitute mutual influences and possible interactions (Guyer, Wood 1998, 7). Later, he embraced the Newtonian view and, recognizing that causal interdependence is a divine product, argued that space can be an independent existence of absolute reality as the Newtonian concept asserts. Between the Newtonian's *real existences* and Leibnizian's *only determinations or relations of things* referring to space Kant concluded that the bond constituting the essential form of a world is regarded as the principle of *possible interactions* of the substances constituting the world. Being in conflict between philosophy and physical research about temporal properties and relations, Kant resorted to the transcendental idealism and concluded on the claim of the transcendental ideality of space (and time). Kant asserts that space and time are not objective, self-subsisting realities, but subjective requirements of human sensory-cognitive faculties to which all things must conform. Space and time serve as indispensable tools that arrange and systemize the images of the objects imported by our sensory organs. Thus, time is a logical space and a logical space is, in general, a mathematical construct used to represent conceptual interconnections among a family of properties and relations—and furthermore this logical space (time) is the real line being used to represent all possible temporal relations among events and the conceptual interconnections among these relations. As a result, space is *a priori* supervision rather than a concept.

According to Leibniz, since time precedes space during the construction of a system, the former is regarded as the antecedent, and the latter as the consequent. Thus, the flow of time is determined by the causative connection of facts. As Leibniz admits the space of relations (*spatium est ordo coexistendi*) is conceived of real spaces as associations orderly relations it establishing between elements taken from the plurality of sensual impressions which are changed (Leibniz 1989, 340).

The reading of space through its conception – mental, abstract and geometric - and its perception – physical, concrete and material- shows that space is not *shrinking* but must rather be perpetually *recast*. An even more significant illustration of this can be obtained from mapping space, a specific, partial and specialised practice. Spaces are suit with societies and reflect their relations. No space can be like another space and that testifies to the *power in space*. While power occupies the space which it generates, as Lefebvre (1991, 282) argues, *there is a politics in space because space is political*.

## 2.2 Place

Place is a uniquely valuable cultural concept. It is not just a reminder of the position of humans in nature's plan and it is not presumed through a specific viewing position. It is a reminder that geography is everywhere; it is a source of understanding space, and a source of *belonging* that tends towards the spatialization of *being*. It is for this reason that place is neither a reminder of solely the *whatness* of the place nor a reminder of solely the *whereness* of the place (Drum 2011, 35). The place is constituted as a center of human meaning. The uniqueness of place is manifested and expressed in everyday experiences and in the consciousness of people. Places are of primary ontological importance as centers of physical activity and emotional connection with other human beings (Tilley 1994, 226). The meaning of place rests on the existential/experienced consciousness and, therefore, the limits of place are founded on the limits of human consciousness. Places are broad and diverse as much as the range of identities and meanings attributed to them. The place is a scene of action, where humans' natural and biological experiences extend, and has an enormous ontological gravity, as within place people live, evolve and transform. Place is flooded with cultural meaning and symbolism, contains individual and social memories, and is created through common experiences and common symbols with meanings. Place has no size constraints as it includes large-scale (i.e. nation-states, empires) territorial boundaries and becomes boxed on a slippery spatial scale (Tilley 1994, 228). Yet, despite the breadth of the spatial scale, place is still useful as it fully becomes a place of action, obtaining its meaning and significance from the anthropological and mythological associations that produces.

Place delimits human behavior, establishes personal and individual identities and it becomes, at the same time, the *inside* and the *outside* of the human subject. It composes a unique center of meanings and is an action scene with metonymical qualities. The degree of the places' density of meanings is directly dependent on both the degree of engagement and the actions of the individuals and the resulting memories that contribute to the preservation of place identity. In this way, places acquire sedimentary layers of meaning, associating with historical events. Memories are particularly important for the understanding of the identity of a place. The change of memories may modify the sense of a place. Place cannot be exactly the same despite the efforts to produce grouped sets of meanings, representations and images for its cognitive and perceptual consolidation (Tilley 1994, 238).

The attribution of a meaning is a focal point for the consolidation and the preservation of the identity of a place as it transforms place from *natural* and *geographical* into *historical* and *experienced*. Place-naming *per se* captures the mnemonic action of individuals and groups and places them in the natural setting. Place is a reality that does not exist outside of the things and the events of the sensible world. In contrast, it should be – and it is – embedded in them. As one of the most puzzling chapters in Aristotle's *Physics*, place of something is the (inner) boundary of the thing that contains or surrounds. If everything that exists is in a place, and if places exist, then it would seem that places must be somewhere too, and so on *ad infinitum*. When Aristotle speaks of the place of something, he means to talk of specific place, one that is proper, and is included in, but does not coincide with, *the innermost motionless boundary of what contains* (Barnes 1984, 361).

On the basis of the Aristotle's initial contributions towards an interpretation of place, Heidegger himself recognized the significance of the Aristotelian, and, more generally, the Greek understanding of place, as that which supports the being of the thing (Malpas 2006, 69). The Heideggerian theory (Heidegger 1962, 134). begins with the aspect that space presupposes place

and place is not located in a pre-given space, after the manner of physical-technological space. Space, which is discovered in circumspective *Being-in-the-world* as the spatiality of the totality of equipment, always belongs to entities themselves as the place of that totality. Space has been split up into places but this spatiality has its own unity through that totality-of-involvements in accordance-with-the-world which belongs to the spatially ready-to-hand. Space, also, is directly involved with the character of Dasein<sup>1</sup>. Heidegger's body of philosophy, Dasein is spatial and Dasein can be spatial only as care in the sense of existing as factually falling. Dasein's spatiality, or place, expresses the bounded and lived spatiality that characterizes Being-in-the-World. So the conceived place in terms of limit makes the boundary, not the limit of the end but the beginning of its being. Dasein always occupies a place. The world, the Dasein and entities within-the-world are the ontologically constitutive states that to be is to be in place, and to be a phenomenon in appearing is similarly to be placed, or, as one might say to take place.

Existence is always a being in place. So, the notion of place is always holistic that includes instead of excludes. Above all, place is a means of conceptual organization that emphasizes relations and attributed a privileged role to difference and uniqueness.

### 2.3 Territory

Undoubtedly, the concept of territory is adjacent to concept of *land* and *terrain*<sup>2</sup>. Yet, it contains much more meanings related to an *area*, a *field*, a *displacement*, a *domain*, a *soil*, a *region*, a *horizon* (Elden 2010a, 808). The concept of territory must be approached through its peculiarities. Territory is a non-historical categorization, without global characteristics, understood and applied differently at different historical moments (Elden 2013, 15). The understanding of territory cannot be accomplished through the detailed recording of individual perceptions. Yet, the conceptual approach of territory is a springboard for understanding its modern boundaries.

Even though the concept of territory occupied Western thought relatively late, gaining recognition in the late Middle Ages, it was incorporated as a basic principle in the political theories of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Its affiliate with the notion of nation – state, it's a postdates notion of nation states and has Roman roots. While in the Middle Ages the genesis of the concept of territory was associated with the mild recognition of the geographical dimension of the exercise of power, the prevailing political theories of the 17<sup>th</sup> century are the ones that managed to amplify its spatial ambiguity. Although legitimate Latin lawyers had already, at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, demonstrated the clear relationship between *territorium* and *jurisdiction*, the incorporation of the concept of territory into political theory occurred just in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Althusius (Carney 1995, IX 4), in particular, demonstrated that territory of the kingdom is a delimited and described place, in which the King's Laws are implemented. Leibniz, also, emphasized that the issue of the King's domination and power derives from territory. Arguing that sovereignty was internal competence with external recognition, Leibniz pointed out the explicitly linking between sovereignty and territory: sovereign or potentate is that Lord or State who is master of a territory (Elden 2013, 16).

Foucault (1991, 252), having a deep belief in the involvement of space in the production and organization of social discipline and pointing to the hesitation between the physical and social space, due to the way that the subject and the object, the representation and the world, and the spirit and the material are connected, has contributed to the understanding of the tergiversation that the concept of territory is suffered. Particularly, Foucault (2007, 176) referring to the issue of political space, emphasized that space is a fundamental principle for every form of life and a fundamental element in the exercise of power. Territory is a concept with geographical, legal, political and jurisdictional implications; an *area* controlled through the exercise of power, a *field*

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<sup>1</sup> In 1921 Heidegger already used the German term Dasein — a term that can be used to mean *existence* in the sense in which one might say *it is there* (Es ist da) in the sense of a site of being. Heidegger drew attention to the way in which existence is indeed a matter of situatedness—to exist, to be *in the world* is to have a concrete *there*.

<sup>2</sup> *Land* is a relation of property, a finite resource that is distributed, allocated and owned, a political-economic question. *Land* is a resource over which there is competition. *Terrain* is a relation of power, with a heritage in geology and the military, the control of which allows the establishment and maintenance of order.

that is identical to economic and jurisdictional relations, a *displacement* with army and population, a *domain* with legal and political implications, a *soil* with historical and geological components, a *region* with fiscal, administrative and military requirements, and an *horizon* enriched with pictorial characteristics and strategic importance.

Even though Elden (2013, 7) considers the combination of economy, strategy, law and technique to be decisive for the decoding of the peculiarities of the territory, Foucault considers this combination to be misleading and equates territory with sovereignty. Sovereignty is exercised within the boundaries of the territory, operates only within a territory, and is originally exercised on the ground and, consequently, on the subjects residing within it. The relationship between sovereignty and territory can be modified and shaped by continuous processes of transformation of regulation and governance. Territory is, also, a political technology that does not remain static and passive amid political developments, and it is, directly interwoven and inherently interrelated with its inhabitants. Inhabitants, as the subject of governance, are transformed into the spatial constraint of the territory. Populations are defined by location, inhabitants, and territory. Both the territory and the populations are the tools for the exploitation, understanding and governance of the people and the land. The control of the territory requires subordination of the people, while the government of the populations requires a command on the earth (Elden 2013, 17). According to Foucault (2008, 77), territory is a process rather than a product; it is not universal and it is not an independent source of power resulting from perpetual territorialization.

Soja (1971, 13) pointed out that, while all societies have spatial dimensions, few have inherent characteristics of territory, making the territory historically and geographically limited. Analyzing closely the evolution of societies, Soja showed that almost all societies had a social definition of territory rather than a territorial definition of society. Territory is the political organization of the area, with the main objective of creating and maintaining solidarity within society, by creating a process of competition, conflict and cooperation. The process of competition is linked to the control over the allocation, distribution and domination of rare resources. The process of conflict is linked to the observance and enforcement of power. The process of cooperation is presumed to be the legitimation of power through social integration. Raffestin (2007, 129) demonstrated that the territory must be understood through representation, appropriation and control, and be recognized as a function of power.

Elden (2013, 18) pointed out that the concept of territory may be misleading because of territoriality. Territoriality follows territory, and it is a phenomenal behavior that links the organization of space with spheres of influence or delimited areas that are transformed into distinct parts of influence and exclusive use of those who define them (Soja 1971, 19). Many scholars consider territoriality as a resultant condition of biological function, which is inherently interwoven with space. Sack (1986), in contrast, considers territoriality as a product of the geopolitical strategy that is used for the delimitation and control of a territory. Territoriality, as a result of strategies that affect, influence and control people, is shaped through interaction and identifies with state territoriality. Therefore, state territoriality of a delimited territory is exercised by the State. Thus, state territoriality is, inevitably, confronted with the objectives of territorial cohesion policy (Faludi 2016, 303).

### **3 Territorial cohesion as shared competence**

#### **4**

Territorial cohesion has been the result of a long-lasting process of intergovernmental cooperation in the spheres of spatial planning and territorial development policy. Reflections on the coherence of spatial planning together with the resulting uncoordinated and contradictory results of the sectoral policies of the EU countries have prompted EU and intergovernmental spatial planning initiatives such as the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) (1999) and the Territorial Agenda of the European Union (TAEU) (2007). With the enactment of the TAEU, territorial cohesion has become a shared competence among the EU and the EU countries. The

enforcement of the Treaty of Lisbon<sup>3</sup> accentuated territorial cohesion as the third pillar of the EU Cohesion Policy, next to the pillars of economic cohesion and social cohesion. Yet, the attempts to find a clear-cut definition for the understanding of territorial cohesion have failed, even though the finding of a territorial response was reinforced by an updated Territorial Agenda for the European Union (TAEU2020) (2011) on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2011 Gödöllő, Hungary. TAEU2020 functioned as the reference point during the preparation of the set of EU policies associated with the 2014-2020 financial perspective. Despite the vague theoretical character of territorial cohesion, the message of the TAEU2020 was clear and compact: *territory matters*. The issue of territorial dimension should now be taken into account *ex ante* in policy design as the scale and scope of spatial data could increase growth opportunities, maximize synergies and avoid the contradictory effects of the one-size-fits-all policies. So, the *ex post*, recognition of the importance of space, place and territory on behalf of the EU institutions is important. In fact, it is equally, if not more, important than the incorporation of the concept of territorial cohesion into the EU documents. The diversity of the definitions which are reflected in the European policy documents concerning territorial cohesion originates from the: (i) Treaty of Lisbon definition - article 174, (ii) TAEU 2020 Definition - I.8, (iii) Green Paper definition - Ch. 1, (iv) 5<sup>th</sup> Cohesion Report definition – Ch. I, p.24. Territorial cohesion is fairly treated as a complex concept. The different way of capturing and perceiving territorial cohesion is found not only in the EU countries but also in the academia. Waterhout (2008, 97-110) is not explicitly concerned about territory but, instead, relates territorial cohesion with the substantive goals of territorial development through the lenses of balance, competitiveness and environment. These storylines are crystalized in Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion and in *ex post* consultations (Faludi 2013b, 1304). Likewise, Barca Report (Barca, 2009) advocated the incorporation of territorial development policies and considered territorial cohesion as a springboard for promoting territorial development, putting territorial cohesion close to spatial planning.

Spatial planning has come to the fore and is characterized by three main development and implementation periods (Medeiros 2014, 206): pre-Torremolinos Charter (... - 1983), from Torremolinos Charter until the ESDP (1983-1999), post-ESDP (1999 - ...). During the first sub-period, the activities relating to spatial planning began with the 1<sup>st</sup> CEMAT (*European Conference of Ministers responsible of Spatial/Regional Planning*) Session (1970). During the second sub-period, in the 6<sup>th</sup> CEMAT Session (1983) a coordinated implementation of various sectoral policies was proposed through the different decision-making levels within the EU. Torremolinos Charter (1983) reiterated the need for more balanced socio-economic development of the EU regions, for improving the quality of life, for responsible resource management and for environmental protection and rational use of land through democratic, integrated, operational and long-term policies. ESDP underlined the spatial planning approach arguing that development projects in different EU countries complement each other best, if they are directed towards common objectives for spatial development. Therefore, national spatial development policies of the EU countries and sectoral policies of the EU require clear spatially transcendent development guidelines. During the third sub-period, the implementation of the ESDP brought to the fore the concepts of polycentricity<sup>4</sup> but failed to give a cohesive spatial vision for EU (Faludi 2013b:1304). Even though the ESPD gave a boost to the support of policies for the establishment of a more polycentric, balanced and sustainable EU territory, it became evident that promoting a balance between competitiveness and equity requires a broad strategic form spatial planning and not just a statutory land use planning (Faludi 2004, 159). Driven by *aménagement du territoire*, which has been the model of the EU Cohesion Policy, and with the Dutch support, the French school of

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<sup>3</sup> The Treaty was signed at the European Council of Lisbon on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2007 and entered into force on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009. The Treaty establishing the European Community is renamed the ‘Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union’ and the term ‘Community’ is replaced by ‘Union’ throughout the text. The Union takes the place of the Community and is its legal successor. It changes the way the Union exercises its existing powers and some new (shared) powers, by enhancing citizens’ participation and protection, creating a new institutional set-up and modifying the decision-making processes for increased efficiency and transparency.

<sup>4</sup> According to ESDP, polycentricity ensures regionally balanced development and helps avoiding economic and demographic concentration by utilizing the economic potential of all regions. Polycentricity is both analytical tool and normative agenda.

planning, being responsible for the ESDP initiation process coined the concept of territorial cohesion so as to promote better the balance between competitiveness and equity. Hence, territorial cohesion can be considered as a broad strategy for spatial planning in the EU (Faludi 2013b, 1304).

EU accepted a very convenient label for its political documents (TAEU, TAEU2020), which prepared the acceptance of territorial cohesion as the new EU vision, while the EU countries were opposed to EU spatial planning and, largely, the same EU countries were against the role of territorial cohesion. (Faludi 2013b, 1304). Territorial cohesion demands presuppose that the EU has to be more clout and more coherent than it actually is. Even if the territorial policy existed, the EU would depend, primarily, on the EU countries for its implementation. This *behavioral deficit* signifies the inception of a series of tergiversations. The EU aims at achieving territorial cohesion, an objective that is purely connected with nation-states, despite the contrary opinion of the EU countries (1<sup>st</sup> tergiversation). Yet, spatial planning, even though it concerns the spatial approach and even though it was included in many EU policies, is included in no EU Treaty (Medeiros 2014, 205) (2<sup>nd</sup> tergiversation). Exception is the Treaty of Lisbon that upgrades territorial cohesion as a shared competence among the EU and the EU countries, despite the substantive objections on behalf of the EU countries (3<sup>rd</sup> tergiversation). Schuster Report (Committee on Qualifications of Planners, 1950) has, already, pointed out that the EU activities depend on land and the limited resources. The exploitation of the latter can thus affect the achievement of the EU objectives. Therefore, political authorities need plans that integrate the full spectrum of policies that apply to their areas of jurisdiction (McLoughlin, 1969).

## **5 When size exceeds the strength of space**

The EU, as a unique example of supranational governance, has been identified with the changing spatial planning and the new spatial paradigms: urban networks, transnational communities, multilevel governance, civil societies, and polycentricity. This is a spatial shift that calls for new policy spaces, distanced from state-centric approaches and oriented towards non-territorial spaces. The new policy space cannot be equated with the policy space of the nation-state and, consequently, the border processes have been modified by adopting spatiality beyond territoriality. The reversal of the State space, the rise of the supra-locality and polycentricity (Rumford 2006, 160) are the obvious consequences of the change as regards the perception and the view of EU space. Following the establishment of the four freedoms (namely, the free movement of goods, services, capital and people), the EU territory is transformed into a single space without frontier constraints. Due to increased mobility, there are spatial formations, with political characteristics, that became subordinate in the EU area. Conducting bilateral agreements with countries laying in the external EU periphery, the EU, consciously, scours its coastlines by adopting soft-planning practices so as to pursue enlargement without accession. Through polycentricity and the implementation of political and social transformation, under conditions of globalization, the reference is about forms of non-territorial policy that come from many locations and which cannot be confined to a single center. The EU strengthens polycentricity by creating multiple development centers so as to achieve territorial cohesion. Therefore, the foundation and the functioning of the EU impose a spatial shift that requires the view of space beyond (national) territory. Such a shift encourages first the view of space and then the view of territory and it is a broad framework of social and political relations, where borders, which are an exclusive characteristic of nation-states rather than supranational formations (Giddens 1985, 50), are meaningless.

Even though Faludi (2013a, 1601) considers soft planning as the future of European planning, the intensity and the characteristics of the emerging spaces contradict older territorial regulations (4<sup>th</sup> tergiversation). Yet, the EU as *quasi* community of law aims at security, common European identity, integrity and spatial cohesion. These aims, however, are identical to some of the conventional aims/features that are inherent to the territory of a nation-state (Elden 2010a, 801). Nonetheless, the nation-states are the backdrop against which European integration is measured (Faludi 2015, 17) (5<sup>th</sup> tergiversation). Of course, the principle of subsidiarity, which is fundamental for the functioning of the EU (Scholte 2000, 59), supports territorialism. Despite the fact that subsidiarity refers to multilevel governance, restrictions on territorial representation,

which is the mean for the expression of democratic legitimacy, make subsidiarity a conservative principle with strong elements of territorialism (Faludi 2013a, 1604) (6<sup>th</sup> tergiversation). It is clear that the EU architecture contains elements of ontological significance that are suited to features of hard planning. The functioning system and the continuous enlargement of the EU are suited to the peculiarities of soft planning. Given that State sovereignty, which is part of hard planning, is the foundation and precondition of the process of EU integration, and given that the EU countries selectively resist to the adoption of EU decisions, following a soft rationale in order to achieve hard objectives, a Gordian knot reality seems to exist.

The way in which the EU is viewed is through the lens of an EU countries sum – a nested hierarchy of bounded spaces – where EU policy is transformed into a policy of scale (Perkmann 2007, 255-256), as regards the profile of governance. The macroscopic space, which is fully organized in administrative units, is inherently interwoven with the control and the exercise of power. The question of power control and exercise within a homogenous territory is the main obstacle preventing the formation of alliances, with apparent implications for spatial planning. Despite the criticism that the *subjective pride of places* receives, static territorialism cannot delimit the jurisdiction of the competent authorities. Yet, the end of territorialism does not spell the end of territoriality (Scholte 2000, 59). Territoriality is inherent to territory and territorialism is the negative concept of territoriality. The point is that when a place is transformed into a territory, the question of power control and exercise is automatically raised. Joint actions are needed in order to understand that territoriality is not only a characteristic of contemporary States but also an ingredient component of the EU entity (Faludi 2013b, 1308). Therefore, the macroscopic view of the EU affects the way in which power is captured and exercised over a particular territory. Thus, territoriality is the starting point for creating misunderstandings when applied as territorialism, with proven implications for spatial planning and territorial cohesion.

There have been many analyses that focus on the treatment of the tergiversations of the EU architecture. They do so by adopting practices that are adjacent to either soft or hard planning. However, the fact that affects the most the strength of the EU space is the misleading perception that national sovereignty is an obstacle to the EU integration undertaking (Díez-Picazo 2002, 39). The paradox that the European and the national sovereignty is considered to compete each other – that is, it is logically impossible for two full sovereigns to coexist and be exercised on the same territory and thus the development of the former presupposes a continuous contraction of the latter – may set the EU project in danger and thus reject any attempt for real unification. It comes that the EU integration takes place through a continuous and inexorable, but at the same time peaceful and rational, confrontation with national sovereignty. Thus, the EU integration, in a process of constant transformation, takes national sovereignty away from its state-owned and totalitarian conception. The transformations of sovereignty are guided by a dynamic that tends to form another form of meta-national sovereignty (Tsatsos 1987, 287). National sovereignties are gradually transformed into autonomous political and cultural communities that retain their identity and capacity for collective self-determination, by communicating with each other through a network of institutions and processes that gradually form a single European public political space. As a result, *European sovereignty* results from a doubling of national sovereignties and originally manifests itself as a collective sovereignty or condominium, as well as, at a later stage, as multiple sovereignties because of the proliferation of power centers. It is apparent, the European sovereignty threatens in no way national sovereignty. It is clear that the way of viewing the EU integration undertaking is the springboard for the full and correct conception of the visions that are embedded in the EU territory. The objective conceptualization of the EU integration undertaking, liberalized from idiosyncratic nationalisms and short-term economic aspirations, may form the basis for a conscious desire on behalf of the EU countries to share their common past, to live their common present, and to plan their common future.

## 6 Conclusions

The perception of the EU as a *sui generis* construct evokes uncertainty and leads to reassertions of its role as the trusted institutional actor. This is particularly so where it comes to spatial transformations (Faludi 2018, 2). European spatiality and spatial planning concerns the

distribution of people and activities in the European space and they have been recruited to contribute to the creation of a model institutional architecture that represents an ideal community, whose durability rests on the EU's ability to demarcate within its physical and symbolic boundaries. The creation of European institutional architecture was being about creating new spatial visions with a mandate to conquer the European integration. Spatial planning was a way of integrating EU policies, while the transition to territorial cohesion was a manifest of demanding coherence. Cohesion Policy began central to the European Masterplan invoking a *European model of society* and through coherence conceiving solidarity. This connoted a holistic view about capturing the European integration but this *Scheme of territorial consistency* has been confronted with many tergiversations based on their misunderstanding about the notion of territory, sovereignty and exercise of power.

The effort to perceive the way space and territory is viewed through conceptual and historical inheritances proved to be neither exemplary nor representative. The conceptual material of thoughts chosen has, convincingly, defended fundamental concepts, concluding that the ideality of space is akin to the perception that puts human at the center of social practice and thought. Space, surrounded by meanings and feelings (place), and, possibly, as a political construction (territory), creates transformations that form ways of spatial and social organization with apparent geographical and historical constraints and dependencies. The EU is a contemporary form of political organization that, on the basis of spatial transformation, highlights the importance of spatial planning. Succeeding in overcoming the territorial trap (Agnew 1994), the EU may manage to approach territorial cohesion. In contrast, lack of knowledge with respect to territorial capital and over-territorialism may have an adverse effect towards achieving territorial cohesion and may sabotage the EU integration undertaking.

Several attempts towards changing (modifying) the perception about the concept of territory, in order to escape from territoriality and erase territorialism, have been recorded. Either treating territory as bounded space and bounded power container or adopting soft planning imperatives, so as to treat boundaries as the primordial spatial points of territorial division, the EU has to deal with the issues of power, sovereignty and political control. Yet, there is – and it has to be exploited – the ruse of the history (*une ruse de l'histoire*), which embraces the optimistic scenario that the EU integration undertaking make use – while opposing – State sovereignty as a catalyst for achieving, at least in the long-run, the goal of overcoming or mutating (and not eliminating) State sovereignty. The objective of territorial cohesion is fundamental for the EU (Medeiros 2014, 209). The concepts of space, place and territory are, also, fundamental for the construction and the viewing of the EU architecture, and this is more than clear in the fields of social and human sciences that allow for the elimination of the geopolitical foundations of territory, governance, and power.

The EU territory is a multidimensional space of interaction. Given the EU heterogeneity, territorial cohesion seems to be a unique opportunity for the EU to achieve the narrative of integration. Undoubtedly, the EU political hegemonic vision has brought peace, stability and prosperity to the EU continent. In order for the EU's constitutional link to acquire its own existence and function, and its self-determination to be confirmed in practice requires a common constituent that underlines its institutional status, be seen as a foundation and precondition for European integration and considered a mortgage and a limit of European sovereignty. The European space embodies this required component and no one is legitimate to ignore it if we are looking to have a real idea of the future of the EU.

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