

Regionalization in European Economic Area

Ihor LISHCHYNSKYY

**TERRITORIAL COHESION POLICY
IN THE CONTEXT
OF EU REGIONAL SECURITY**

Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of the implementation of territorial cohesion policy in the European Union in order to achieve a secure regional coexistence. In particular, the regulatory and institutional origins of territorial cohesion policy in the EU are considered. The evolution of ontological models of cohesion policy has been outlined. Specifically, the emphasis is placed on the key objective of political geography – effectively combining the need for "territorialization" and the growing importance of networking. The role of urbanization processes in the context of cohesion policy is highlighted. Cross-border dimensions of cohesion policy in the context of interregional cooperation are explored. Particular emphasis is placed on the features of integrated sustainable development strategies.

Key words:

Cohesion policy, territorial cohesion, urbanization, functional urban areas, cross-border functional areas, integrated sustainable development strategy.

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Relevance of the Research Topic

In the last forty years, the leitmotif of European territorial development policy (no matter what its slogan was at the time: «Europe of the Regions» (1980s), «Europe with the Regions» (1990s), «Europe for the Regions» (2000s) or «Place-Based Approach» (2010s) was to achieve the distinctiveness and competitiveness of individual regions. However, such a political vector neglected or even aggravated the problem of over-autonomous regions and their desire for separation from central pan-European structures. This has affected the security of the European Union's continuous existence and manifests itself at macro level (Brexit, permanent threats of Greek and Polish exists), as well as at the meso-level (Catalonia, Basque Country, Flanders, Bavaria, etc.). Not surprisingly, the achievement of territorial cohesion is one of the key principles of modern European policy. When achieving local uniqueness in the context of globalization (that is glocalization), heterogeneity is dominant over homogeneity [14]. On the other hand, in cohesion ontology, the focus is on the aspect of interaction and bridging the gaps between diversified locations (and thus homogeneity becomes a priority over heterogeneity).

1. The Origins of Territorial Cohesion Policy in the EU

Over the last two decades, EU cohesion policy has been a key European policy and an important financial instrument for helping the backward EU regions. The origins of cohesion policy can be traced back to 1986 (ratification of the Single European Act [23]), when the issues of cooperation and economic and social unity of EU countries became the leitmotif of the regulation-making process. Nevertheless, it should be noted that at these early stages, although territorial dimension manifested in a number of elements (such as determination of specific conditions for backward regions), the main focus was on economic and social cohesion. Territorial cohesion has been considered an autonomous integrated target since 2009 following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty [30]. One of its strategic guidelines was the achievement of overall harmonization and balanced development of the EU territory through reduction of inequalities between individual regions and involvement of the most economically and socially depressed regions. Achieving a polycentric and balanced development of European regions has become a fundamental principle of territorial cohesion since then.

A year before the Lisbon Treaty (2008), the European Commission published the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion – Turning Territorial Diversity into Strength [12]. However, neither document gives a clear definition of the policy concept of territorial cohesion. The Green Paper, however, outlines the main policy guidelines for balanced and harmonious development:

1. Concentration: overcoming differences in density.
2. Connecting territories: overcoming distance.
3. Cooperation: overcoming division [12].

Considering the implementation of cohesion policy, we should also mention the earlier (2001) Second Report on Economic and Social Cohesion [22], which sparked a debate on the feasibility of introducing autonomous territorial cohesion. The main idea of the Report was to highlight the importance of stimulating polycentric development as a guarantee of a more balanced distribution of economic activity in the EU. In this, the benchmarks laid down in the European Spatial Development Perspective (1999) [9] were taken as a point of reference for comparison. It is believed that territorial cohesion policy acquired the status of a political paradigm for «EU territorial development» after the publication of this Report [5]. Researchers and practitioners also note that it is at this time that the interpretation of the categorical field of territorial cohesion begins to expand, incorporating such socio-economic elements as the environment [25], «soft spaces» of spatial development [16], valorisation (indexation) of territorial capital [33] and, finally, outlining the need for a more spatially balanced and sustainable growth [11].

2. The Evolution of Ontological Models of Cohesion Policy

One of the first ontological models of territorial cohesion was proposed by R. Camagni [3] (also included in the ESPON 3.3 project [4]) and became known as «tequila model» or «economic-social-environmental triad». The model includes three components of territorial cohesion:

1. Territorial efficiency – resource efficiency (taking into account the limited energy, land and natural resources); competitiveness and attractiveness of local territories; internal and external accessibility;
2. Territorial quality – quality of living and working environment; comparative living standards in terms of territories; similar access to public services and knowledge;
3. Territorial identity – the presence of social capital; cultural heritage; the ability to develop a shared vision of the future; creativity; competitive advantages of each territory [3].

The «tequila model» of territorial cohesion is shown in Fig. 1. Within the framework of 3 coordinates and intersection of 3 sectoral planes of the model, 26 indicators of quantitative assessment of territorial cohesion were proposed. The tequila model became the basis of a new interpretation of the territorial cohesion concept compared to the postulates of earlier strategic and regulatory documents.

Significant additions to the model are:

- awareness of the key role of the territory in economic growth by making an emphasis on territorial aspects of competitiveness, efficiency of using territorial resources, etc.;
- emphasis on the importance of territorial factors for achieving eco-development;
- illustration of the «territoriality» of many social factors, such as culture or social capital, which play an important role in both sustainable growth and the direct satisfaction of human needs [2].

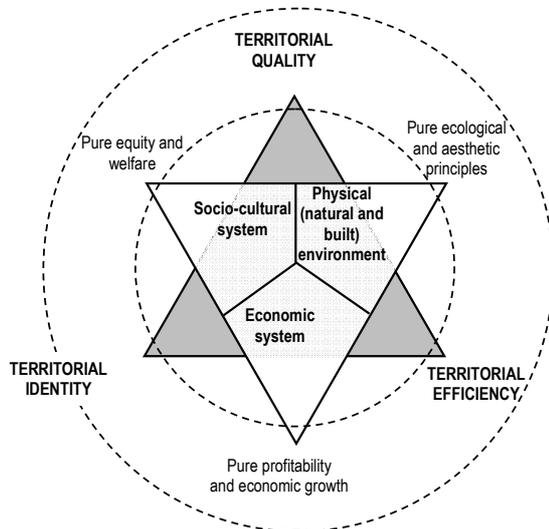
Another approach proposed by E. Medeiros (dubbed the «star» of territorial cohesion) developed on the basis of a critical analysis of the Tequila Model [18]. In particular, the author noted that the «tequila model» did not emphasize the defining role of polycentric development and territorial governance enough. He also criticized the notion that territorial efficiency is determined solely by the intersection of economic and environmental indicators, without taking into account social and institutional dimensions. In the «star model», E. Medeiros distinguished four components: polycentrism, territorial cooperation (later supplemented by territorial governance [17]), socio-economic cohesion and environmental sustainability (Fig. 2). According to this model, the author views the concept of territorial cohesion as «...the process of promoting a more cohesive and balanced territory by: (1) stimulating the reduction of socio-economic imbalances; (2) promoting environmental sustainability; (3) strengthening and improving territorial cooperation / governance processes; (4) creating a more polycentric urban system» [17].

All of these models discuss the key objective of political geography, i.e. effectively combining the need for «territorialization» and the growing importance of networking (which may ultimately lead to «de-territorialization»). Interpretation of the territorialization phenomenon can encompass a wide range of meanings: from physical attachment to a particular place, local sovereignty to social commitment to location [34], that is, self-identification with a certain territory. Accordingly, when considering territorialization in the context of the qualitative characteristics of a particular strategic objective, its effects on territorial development and / or for achieving territorial cohesion should be taken into account.

In addition, the target territorial scope and areas of strategy implementation must also be taken into account. As a result, we can talk about three stages of developing a territorial development strategy: high, medium and low territorialization capacity (Fig. 3).

Fig. 1

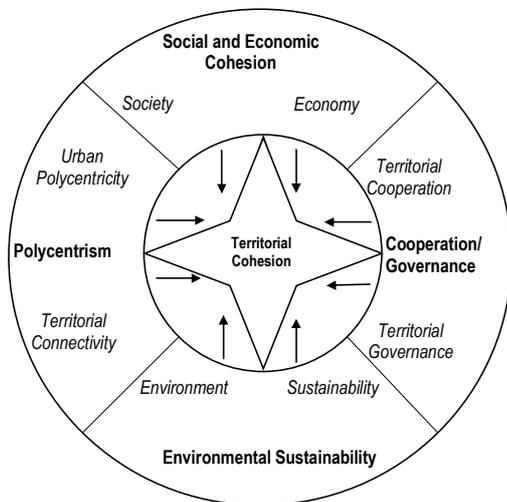
Tequila Model of territorial cohesion



Source: own elaboration based on [3].

Fig. 2

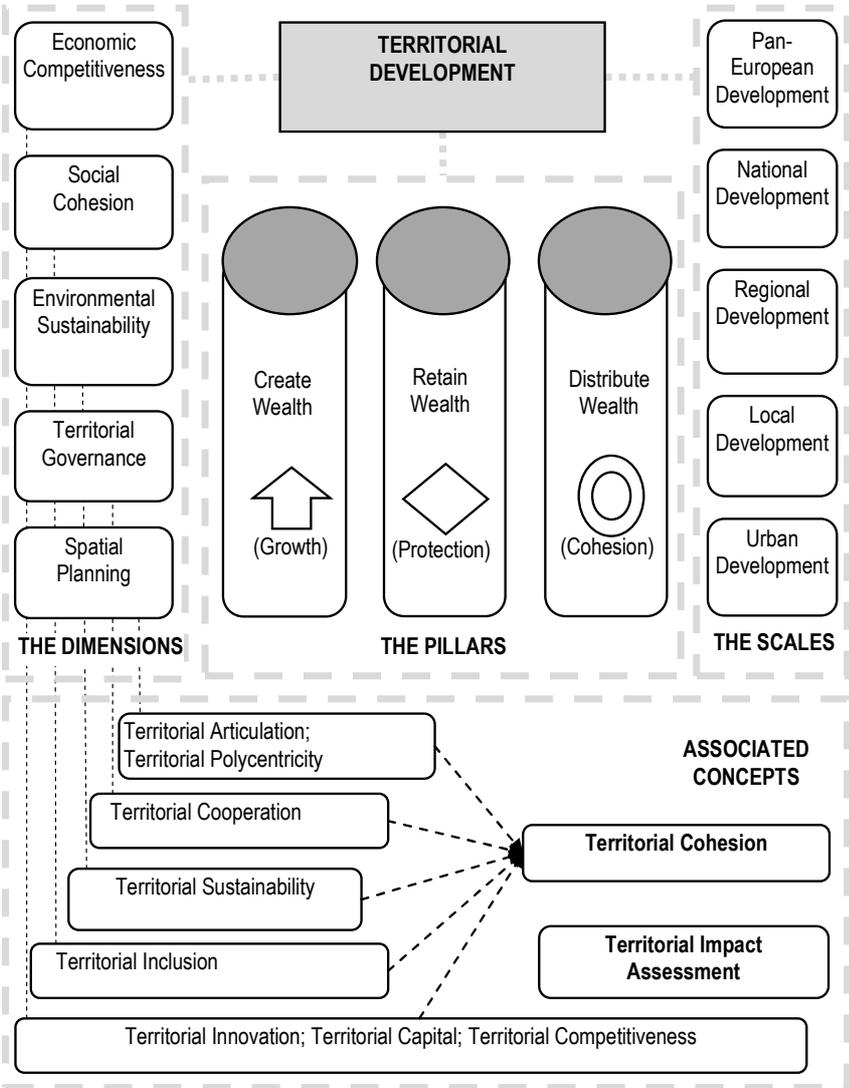
The star of territorial cohesion



Source: [17].

Fig. 3

Analytical model of dimensions of territorial development strategy [19]



3. Urbanization Processes in the Context of Cohesion Policy

Summarizing the conceptual overview of territorial cohesion, we can conclude that it was originally a kind of «superstructure» for economic and social cohesion. However, urban development and regeneration policies are gradually coming to the forefront of territorial cohesion policy programmes. These urbanization issues are primarily related to aspects of more balanced and harmonious urban sprawl in a given area. We must take notice of the strong connotation between this aspect and the «polycentricity» parameter, which «...encourages regions and cities that are cooperating with neighbouring territories to develop common strengths and to identify potential complications in order to create added value that cannot be achieved by individual regions and cities» [6].

In general, the role of cities in promoting territorial cohesion is quite significant and diverse in highly urban areas, such as the EU. Large cities are traditional hubs of innovation and centres of global challenges. For example, cities have the potential to increase the use of renewable and clean energy, increase energy savings and reduce CO₂ emissions, as urban areas allow for more energy efficient housing and transport. Cities are the functional areas where population and economic activity are concentrated, and flows of goods and people are organized around them. They are nodes of urban networks of various sizes – both global and regional – and cities are drivers of territorial development and cohesion in both cases. Generally, at least eight manifestations of the role of cities for the implementation of territorial cohesion can be distinguished with explicit interconnections (Table 1).

Europe is characterized by a less concentrated and more polycentric urban structure (Fig. 4) compared to other regions of the world (primarily the US and Southeast Asia), as well as a dense network of small and medium-sized cities [27]. However, territories with much higher than average concentration of economic activity are still present in the EU (the above mentioned «bananas», «belts» and «pentagrams») and are typically characterized by higher levels of socio-economic development. Therefore, urban development policy should stimulate the territorial competitiveness of territories outside these areas, since, as stated in the EU's Territorial Agenda «...polycentric and balanced territorial development of the EU is a key element in achieving territorial cohesion» [24].

It should be noted that the implementation of territorial cohesion policy, as a tool for expanding the role of cities, resonates with the practical implementation of the concept of functional urban areas. Functional urban areas can be considered as «... a kind of labour market pool or suburban mobility structure that includes the urbanization system of neighbouring cities and villages that are economically and socially dependent on the urban centre» [31, p. 13].

Table 1

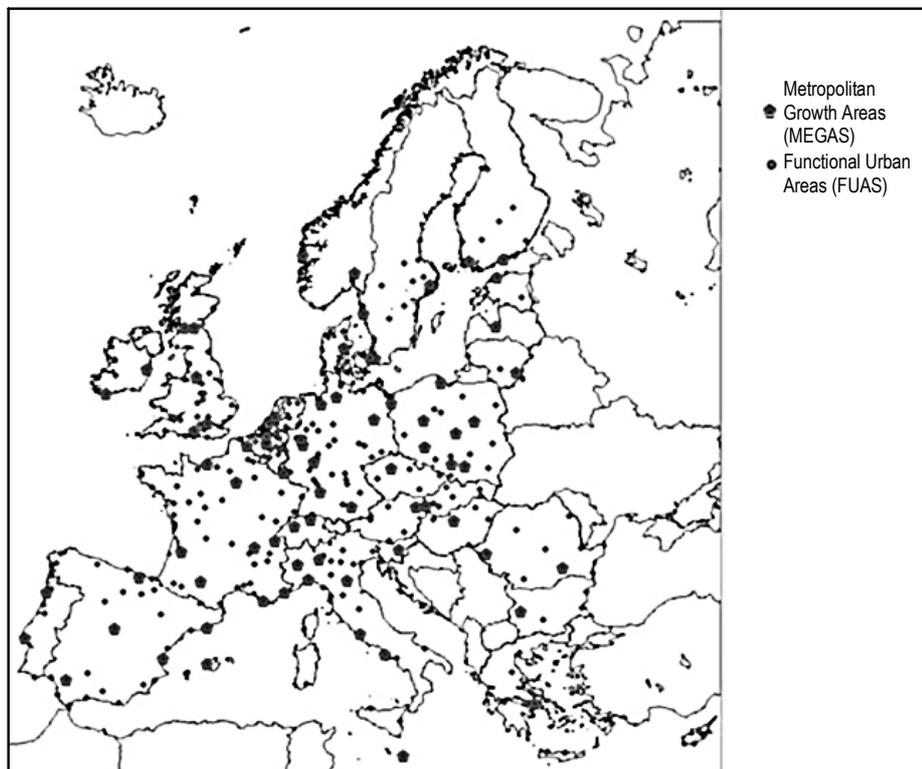
Urban development in territorial cohesion strategies

Component	Main goal	Importance for Territorial Cohesion
1. Polycentric and balanced urban development	Promote a more balanced population distribution across the territory	– Increased ability to use the territorial potential of regions; – Reduced negative effects of overpopulation (pollution, crime, excessive traffic, stress, etc.).
2. Functional urban areas	Promote territorial complementarity	– Increased territorial efficiency
3. Integrated urban development	Promote territorial efficiency and sustainability	– Increased environmental sustainability – Increased territorial efficiency; – Improved territorial governance;
4. Social cohesive urban development	Promote socio-economic cohesion	– Reduced poverty; – Reduced social imbalances
5. Urban connectivity	Promoting territorial accessibility	– Increased urban mobility; – Increased environmental sustainability
6. Urban morphology – compact vs urban sprawl	Promote urban compactness or urban sprawl	– Increased territorial efficiency; – Increased territorial connectivity; – Increased territorial sustainability
7. Urban resilience	Promote the urban capacity to overcome challenges	– Increased territorial resilience; – Increased territorial sustainability
8. Urban planning	Promote predictability of future scenarios	– Increased territorial modernization; – Increased territorial organization

Source: compiled by the author based on [17].

Today, such functional urban areas often outgrow national boundaries, creating the need to create cross-border administration. As we can see, the empirical determination of the boundaries of existing functional urban areas differs depending on the methodology of the study, but their common criterion is the association with large urban agglomerations.

Fig. 4

The EU Urban System

Source: own elaboration based on *ESPON* data.

4. Cross-Border Dimensions of Cohesion Policy

When considering cross-border functional areas, aspects of functional distance come to the forefront, apart from the commuting distance. The concept of functional distance is primarily concerned with regional differences in innovation and is linked to the creation of cross-border regional innovation systems [15]. There are three types of cross-border regional innovation systems that are evolutionary stages of each other's development. At the highest third stage, a symmetric innovation-driven system is formed, typically characterized by relative diversity

and functional closeness in a wide range of business sectors (except functional areas with a dominant rural profile). At the second stage, the economic structure is characterized by the appearance of synergy and functional closeness in several business sectors (which is not observed in the first stage). The mechanism for coordinating the innovation policy emerges at this stage as well; the infrastructure of accessing and exchanging knowledge is created, institutional support of the innovation process is formed too. The first and second stages can also be observed for functional areas with a rural profile.

The empirical case studies on the application of cross-border functional urban areas were expertly described by B. Sæther and co-authors [21]. They used the example of intra-Scandinavian associations of different levels of innovation (tourist municipal alliance, ecosystem of the music industry, high-tech network of renewable energy and circular economy). The Norwegian-Swedish example of creating cross-border functional urban areas can be useful for Ukraine, given the fact that Norway, not being a member of the EU, still managed to use common financial instruments for territorial development.

When implementing the territorial development strategy, it is important to identify certain instruments for promoting territorial cohesion at the city level. Such tools include the means for correction of urban sprawl processes, which is often regarded as an important factor in excessive and wasteful energy use nowadays [24]. This aspect is closely linked to wider regional planning strategies in line with the 2016 Urban Agenda for the EU [26]. Again, urban development policy should also focus on socio-economic cohesion, environmental sustainability, sound governance, include urban regeneration, etc.

5. Integrated Sustainable Development Strategies

In addition to the aforementioned measures, it is necessary to highlight the importance of the so-called Integrated Sustainable Urban Development Strategies in the implementation of EU territorial cohesion policy. Firstly, such strategies increase the potential for environmental sustainability; secondly, according to the justification of EU Integrated Territorial Investment programmes, such strategies help to improve territorial governance processes by allowing local governments to initiate wider partnerships with other local economic and policy actors [10]. In this context, one can cite the example of Poland, where the Integrated Territorial Investment Programme is reserved exclusively for regional administrative centres and their functional areas [13].

In general, Integrated Sustainable Development Strategies were implemented at the pan-European level within the framework of the 2014–2020 Cohe-

sion Policy as part of a general transformation of political ideology and practice in favour of a place-based approach. [32]. As noted earlier, after the publication of the F. Barca Report [1], the place-based approach began to dominate the European territorial policy, including cohesion policy. It is believed that an integrated place-based approach should be built on local knowledge, capital and control over resources, as well as locally developed strategic programmes, which together will allow for endogenous growth. A major reform of the European Structural and Innovation Funds with a focus on urban development in 2013 was the first notable step in this direction [28]. Although financial support for the integrated development of agglomerations and surrounding territories has not been as significant throughout the whole period of EU Cohesion Policy implementation, it was present nonetheless. The Urban Community Initiative is among the earlier instruments in this area. It was first launched during 1994–99, continued in 2000–06, and eventually integrated with a suite of Investment for Growth and Jobs programmes in 2007–13. In addition, the URBACT platform was established in 2003 under the Investment for Growth and Jobs programmes. It focused mainly on sharing knowledge about sustainable integrated urban development, benchmarking best practices and initiating networking between cities in Europe. It is also worth mentioning the LEADER approach, which has existed since 1991 and has been an important instrument for rural development, and since 2007 has also become a part of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund to support the sustainable development of fishing communities. Community-Led Local Development programme (CLLD) was initiated in 2014–20 on the basis of the LEADER approach.

The implementation of the Integrated Urban Sustainable Development Strategies over the 2014–20 programming period was marked by significant changes compared to the earlier instruments mentioned above. First, overall funding allocated to the implementation of an integrated local approach has increased substantially, accounting for about 9% of the total cohesion policy budget (€ 31 billion). Second, there is a regulatory requirement to implement an integrated local approach in cities. Third, the integrated approach has received widespread public acceptance. Fourth, much more information needs to be analysed to implement an integrated local approach at the programme level. Fifth, more attention is paid to the diffusion of innovation (e.g. guidance, scripting, urban networking, peer-to-peer review, etc.).

It was recently announced [8] that the sustainable and integrated development of urban areas will remain one of the priorities for the next long-term period (2021–2027) of EU Cohesion Policy. In this case, «sustainability» will mean efforts to address climate change and environmental protection (such aspects as the development of green infrastructure, the reduction of emissions into the atmosphere, etc.). Integrity will be reflected in the continued use of tools that have proven effective throughout 2014–2020 – Integrated Territorial Investment and Community-Led Local Development programmes. One of the future trends was summarised as the need to reduce the administrative burden, namely to simplify the implementation of EU Funds programmes that will be executed within the framework of the Better Regulation guidelines [7].

Conclusions

Over the last 20 years, the EU has been able to develop its «Acquis Urbain» model of urban development policy based on a suite of tools and areas of action with high levels of complementarity and systemic effects. The manner in which the EU has come to understand and design its political regulations for urban life is increasingly multi-sectoral, trans-political and aimed at harmonizing interventions in such diverse areas as infrastructure and mobility, culture and heritage, economy and employment, energy and technology, aging and poverty, social inclusion and more. Thus, together with the financial and other instruments that support it, efforts to promote territorial cohesion in the EU should continue to focus on the implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU and, above all, be aimed at the functioning of cities and urban systems in order to build on the basis of regional development of territories.

In summary, it can be concluded that the implementation of multifarious territorial instruments can contribute to the generation of added value in various ways (more detailed analysis of this is offered in the work of Ferry and co-authors [20]). There is confirmation of the implementation of innovation policy at different levels of administration, which manifests in three main forms: delegation of political tasks to the local level, creation of new governance structures and strengthening of territorial cooperation. However, the effectiveness of territorial cohesion tools is largely restricted by the capacity of internal human and creative resources, which are often quite limited (especially true for locations that have only recently launched territorial cohesion programmes).

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