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TERRITORIAL COHESION; FROM THE EUROPEAN TO THE REGIONAL AGENDA: CONCEPTUAL TRANSPOSITION OR CONCEPTUAL REDEFINITION?

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ABSTRACT: Since the 1990s, the debate around Europeanization has been continuous in planning and political discourses. But if economic and social cohesion were already deeply rooted in European policies, only after the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (2008) and the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon (2009), was a third dimension added: Territorial Cohesion. However, this is still not a consensual term. The ambiguity in defining and achieving it represents a challenge to various national and regional actors, intent in articulating with EU guidelines. This paper thus wishes to understand how, and in what terms, Territorial Cohesion is being transposed from the EU policy agenda to domestic policies. Using Portugal as a test-bed, the paper compares European with national documents discussing 'Territorial Cohesion', by means of a Qualitative Content Analysis. From this analysis contributions to the debate on Europeanization are made, thus assisting public policy making and territorial planning in Portugal and other European countries.

KEYWORDS: territorial cohesion; Europeanization; european agenda; public policies; Europe2020.

INTRODUCTION

For the last 30 years, the influence of the European Union (EU) policy guidelines in the planning practices of its member states – the 'Europe Effect', or Europeanization (Börzel & Risse, 2000; Cowles & Caporaso, 2001; Dühr, Stead, & Zonneveld, 2007; Featherstone & Radaelli, 2003; Ladrech, 1994, 2010; Radaelli, 2004; Vink, 2003) – has been steadily increasing. This influence, however, has not been uniform, neither geographically nor in terms of sectorial policies (Bulmer & Radaelli, 2004; Dühr et al., 2007). As the European Commission (CE) does not possess, formally, the instruments to regulate territorial planning at national level (Evers, 2008; Ferrão, 2011), Europeanization has mostly been achieved through the dissemination and transformation of processes and practices, the

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development of integrated discourses with common vocabulary and frameworks, and the design of transnational cooperation projects (Ferrão, 2011; Radaelli, 2004).

In this context, for the past two decades the EU has gradually moved towards instituting spatial planning as an intrinsic part of their agenda (Evers, 2008; Faludi, 2007) and consequently the term 'Territorial Cohesion' became a buzzword for a new paradigm of development. Described as a means to achieve the harmonious development of member states, by promoting diversity, complementarity and endogenous resources (Santinha & Marques, 2012), the term gained further institutional relevance with the publication of the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (CEC, 2008) and the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon (EU, 2009), and became an assiduous presence in official EU documents and strategic guidelines since (e.g. Böhme, Doucet, Komornicki, Zaucha, & Świątek, 2011). For Davoudi (2007) the concept of Territorial Cohesion "re-conceptualized European spatial policy by adding to it a spatial justice dimension".

Even so, several authors debate that the concept of Territorial Cohesion, still in its infancy, is purposely wide and unprecise (e.g. Davoudi, 2007; Evers, 2008; Faludi, 2005). If some may argue that this ambiguity facilitates the consensus between member states, thus avoiding tensions in the distribution of European funds (see Faludi, 2005), in effect, Territorial Cohesion may become a "moving target" (Drevet, 2007; Van Well, 2012), hard to hit and hard to grasp, thus conditioning how it is interpreted, transposed and implemented at national level.

The debate around the concept of Territorial Cohesion itself has been wide and thus is out of the range of this paper. Instead, this research is more concerned with addressing the spatial and planning implications of the concept's ambiguity. Has the concept been subjected to a faithful conceptual transposition from the macro (European) to the local (national) scale, leading to a somewhat common vision in national/regional policies around Europe? Or rather has it suffered a conceptual redefinition, subject to the political and planning backgrounds of each member state? Using Portugal as a test-bed, this question is answered by applying a Qualitative Content Analysis, using NVivo software, to a selection of relevant policy documents concerning 'Territorial Cohesion', both at the European and regional scales. Through a comparative analysis in which the focus is to understand how local agents interpret and reproduce European guidelines on their planning agendas, the importance 'Territorial Cohesion' has been granted in territorial-based instruments and regional policy documents can be determined, and thus the implications that this process can have in the common European Agenda can be debated.

EUROPEANIZATION AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

The expressions 'Europe Effect' and 'Europeanization' have been used since the 1990s in planning and political discourses to describe a set of processes of change in "domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies" (Radaelli, 2004) as a direct consequence of the influence exerted by the EU, through the publication of directives, regulations or standards which provide contextual cognitive and normative framework, and conceptual and operational guidelines to be incorporated by the member states.

However, the exact definition of Europeanization has not been unanimous in the literature (Börzel & Risse, 2000; Cowles & Caporaso, 2001; Dühr et al., 2007; Featherstone & Radaelli, 2003; Ladrech, 1994, 2010; Radaelli, 2004; Vink, 2003). What appears to be non-controversial is the general proposition that Europeanization is indeed taking place and affects the member states, and the fact that Europeanization is no longer described as a simple process of uni-direction reaction to Europe, but as a mutual co-evolution process between the EU and the national contexts (Börzel & Risse, 2000; Cotella & Janin Rivolin, 2010; Radaelli, 2004; Salgado & Woll, 2004). This reinforces the notion of Europeanization as the main drive belt for the process of European integration (Börzel & Risse, 2000), but it does not mean, necessarily, that the degree of Europeanization is homogenous across member states. On the contrary, authors have shown that it varies from country to country, a consequence of different territorial conditions, governance systems and, to put it simply, divergent interpretations of EU policies (Böhme, 2003; Böhme & Waterhout, 2008; Buunk, 2003; Cowles & Caporaso, 2001; Ravesteijn & Evers, 2004). In the particular case of Portugal, according to Ferrão and Mourato (2010), territorial planning policies result from a "mixture of several Europeanization variables, with distinct degrees of influence, that have the tendency to reinforce each other", such as the cumulative effect of the different European-funded INTERREG and ESPON projects, and the strategic vision of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) report (EC, 1999).

According to Lenschow (2006) the Europeanization process is developed around three complementary models. The first, more common, is top-down (EU->MS), where the EU exerts its influence on member states at three different levels (Dühr et al., 2007; Lenschow, 2006): (i) direct, in which EU guidelines are implemented through the national institute mechanisms; (ii) less direct, in which the institutional context is changed to accommodate new strategic interaction processes; and iii) indirect, in which the beliefs and expectations of the national actors are slowly, but consistently, altered. The second model is horizontal (MS->MS), where member states interact and influence each other without the direct influence of the EU, even though these processes can be facilitated by European institutions

or funding programs, such as INTERREG or ESPON (Dühr & Nadin, 2007; Dühr et al., 2007). The third model has a round shape, where national actors seek to integrate their ideas at the European level but in doing so are, at the same time, influenced by the EU itself (MS->EU->MS). The core document of the common European Spatial Development Perspective (EC, 1999), for example, was created by a committee comprised of elements from all member states (Dühr et al., 2007; EC, 1999; Faludi, 2004), that later had to revert the concepts and strategic guidelines defined by the document to their own national realities (Davoudi & Wishardt, 2005; Dühr et al., 2007; Shaw & Sykes, 2003).

Because of the complexity of these processes, and because the EU does not directly regulate national territorial planning, it is at the indirect level that the process of Europeanization is most likely to take place, particularly through inter-governmental action (Böhme & Waterhout, 2008). A relevant example is the publication of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union (EC, 2007), updated in 2011 (EC, 2011), an evidence based document collectively produced by the member states and that, some argue, was the turning point in the development of European spatial planning (Faludi, 2009). More precisely, the indirect influence of the EU has been steadily moving towards the support of the territorial dimension of public policies and more specifically the paradigm of Territorial Cohesion (Santinha, 2014). The publication, every three years, of the European Commission Cohesion reports, determines the agenda for regional development and for the cohesion policy, and this translates into sectorial policies with territorial impact or regional policies (Santinha, 2014). Unsurprisingly, the EU cohesion policy now accounts for over one-third of the total EU-spending (Bache, 2015). By distributing a large slice of this budget through EU structural funds, today the main instruments of regional policy, a clear influence is being made on the cognitive European agenda, and, consequently, on the European territorial planning agenda and the development of regions, especially those "lagging behind" (Objective 1) (Becker, Egger, & von Ehrlich, 2010; Mohl & Hagen, 2010).

In this context, a clear advantage regarding the dissemination of 'Territorial Cohesion' is in the fact that the concept has been institutionalized. With the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon (EU, 2009), the publication of the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (CEC, 2008), and its appearance as a key policy aim of the Europe 2020 strategy (Walsh, 2012) the notion and the status of Territorial Cohesion has been significantly strengthened in planning discourses. According to the Green paper (CEC, 2008) domestic and international communities should be mobilized to an inter-sectorial discussion, but at the same time the cohesion policy should be "more flexible, more capable of adapting to the most appropriate territorial scale, more responsive to local preferences and needs and better coordinated with other policies, at all levels" (CEC, 2008). Therefore, if before authors were already discussing how national public policies and different territorial planning traditions were transposing several concepts and practices emerging at European level (e.g. Knieling & Othengrafen, 2009; Rivolin & Faludi, 2005), the literature now also debates how the concept of Territorial Cohesion itself can be transposed, i.e. how it can be 'Europeanized'. However, because major documents like the TA2020 (EC, 2011) refer to Territorial Cohesion as 'set of principles' and a 'qualitative approach' (Walsh, 2012), and because the connections between the TA2020 strategy and other policies, including cohesion policy, remain at a general abstract level (Böhme et al., 2011), this transposition becomes more difficult. This has led Faludi to remark that the principle of Territorial Cohesion still has an unsettled future (Faludi, 2009, 2010),

Even so, several studies in the recent years have started to evaluate this transposition. Sykes (2011) investigates the "sub-state interpretations of European Territorial Cohesion" in the UK context through an analysis of the documents officially submitted as a response to the Green Paper (CEC, 2008). Luukkonen and Moilanen (2012) use the Bothnian Arc as a case study to evaluate how the new soft planning spaces are visible in the conceptualizations and regional-level practices of the Territorial Cohesion policy, emphasizing the importance of collaborative processes yet arriving at the conclusion that these conceptualizations still lean on traditional understandings of territoriality. In a more comprehensive analysis, Van Well (2012) "conceptualizes the logics of territorial cohesion" by comparing the community guidelines with those of the 246 Operational Programs under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment, and Convergence Objectives 2007–2013. The author analysis two sets of logics, following March and Olsen (1998); a logic of consequences (the bottom-up process) and a logic of appropriateness (a top-down process) in order to create a European storyline on Territorial Cohesion. For instance, regions that conceptualize the role of Territorial Cohesion in the Cohesion Policy in terms of the future opportunities for sustainable development, coordination and cooperation, tend to refer more to 'logics of appropriateness' (Van Well, 2012). But the author herself is the first to question how well this can help researchers and policy makers make sense of the numerous texts and discourses surrounding Territorial Cohesion. It can further be questioned how a more straightforward evaluation of the appropriation of the term in national contexts has been devised. The main research question of this paper returns; is it a conceptual transposition or a conceptual redefinition?

In the Portuguese context, Santinha and Marques (2012) made an exploratory analysis of several strategic policy instruments, to evaluate the appearance of the principle of Territorial Cohesion in national political public agendas. The authors conclude that not all national interpretations are convergent, and that no explicit political measures are presented to operationalize this principle. They do recognize, however, that the debate on the clarification and

operationalization of the concept has been scarce, particularly in Portugal, and that further work is needed in order to systematize it, as well as to better understand national documents, intervention methods and main indicators used to address Territorial Cohesion (see Dao et al., 2012). Consequently, the present paper stems from previous research, aiming to respond to this set of question by becoming more focused on the appropriation and meaning of the term 'Territorial Cohesion' itself. For that, a Qualitative Content Analysis is developed, to compare the most relevant policy documents at the European scale (TA2020, the Green Paper and the 5th Report on Cohesion) with the Portuguese regional operational programs.

METHODOLOGY

To define and execute public policies with sufficient durability and longevity, a fundamental stage must be the organization and writing of the document itself. Such construct must have a discourse that is socially significant, evidence-based and meaningful (Guerra, 2006); a meaning that should cross all levels of social action. In this paper, the debate is centered on the notion of meaning; in this case the meaning behind the concept of Territorial Cohesion. The fundamental question is how Territorial Cohesion, as defined by the European strategic documents (regardless of the debate around the definition of the concept itself) is being transposed to the national realities, and what are the consequent implications for the national planning agendas.

For each scale of analysis (the European and the national), a set of relevant documents were selected. For the European scale these were: the Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 (EC, 2011), the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (CEC, 2008) and the Fifth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion (CEC, 2010). A choice has been made to use these documents related to the previous Community Framework (2007-2013), instead of their updated versions because the current regional plans in Portugal have been approved during this period, and therefore, any interpretation (or misinterpretation) of the concept of Territorial Cohesion must stem from them, thus reflecting the degree of willingness of local actors to articulate with European policy guidelines.

For the national scale, the focus has been on the Regional Operational Programs (POR), instruments of public policy that stem directly from the financial and strategic support of the Community Support Framework and the European Regional Development Fund. The regional level of analysis has been chosen as this seems to be the most adequate and flexible to respond to the European policy guidance documents, that continuously reiterate the importance of this level in the context of Territorial Cohesion. Five POR have been analyzed, corresponding to each of the major Portuguese regions (North, Centre, Lisbon, Alentejo and Algarve).

Qualitative Content Analysis was used to interpret each document; a systematic and objective technique for analyzing and quantifying the content of quantitative data (Cole, 1988; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), often used in applied research and case study development in several areas of knowledge (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Kohlbacher, 2006), and for long deemed quick, flexible and effective when applied to direct discourses and text data (Bardin, Reto, & Pinheiro, 1979; Cavanagh, 1997). It consists of a family of analytical approaches (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) that enhance the understanding of data by grouping words, expressions or phrases into fewer, content related categories that share the same meaning (Cavanagh, 1997; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). This analysis was performed using NVivo, a computer software package produced by QSR International (QSR, 2016), designed specifically for Qualitative Data Analysis (see for example Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). In recent urban planning related research (more particularly collaborative planning, e.g. Faehnle & Tyrväinen, 2013) this package has been mostly used to analyze responses to interviews, debates in stakeholder meetings or evaluations of new polices in areas such as climate change (Measham et al., 2011), public health (Allender, Cavill, Parker, & Foster, 2009), planning of urban green infrastructure (Faehnle, Bäcklund, Tyrväinen, Niemelä, & Yli-Pelkonen, 2014) or analyzing travel/movement patterns (Wridt, 2010).

Document analysis contained two main tasks. The first task was the collection of the most frequent found words, done in three stages. The first stage was a free 'word search' of the most frequently found words in the documents. In the second stage, only the selected words related to the research topic (Territorial Cohesion) were maintained for further analysis. In the third stage, a new 'word search' was made for these terms and their derivatives (e.g. access, accessibility, accessible). The second task was a collection of the expressions or phrases associated, within the documents, to the terms 'Cohesion' and 'Territorial Cohesion', and consisted of three stages. The first stage was a 'text search', highlighting the sentences or paragraphs where the two concepts were incorporated. The second stage was a 'word search' within these selected paragraphs, to catalogue the most frequently found words associated with 'Cohesion' and 'Territorial cohesion'. The third stage was the creation of a 'tree of words', with the purpose of associating used words with defined concepts.

These two tasks were made for each of the policy instruments above described, and resulted in an individual (document by document), and collective (national vs. European) analysis. Because the European document have already been subject to closer scrutiny in other reviews (see previous sections), the analysis of these will be more

succinct. The national document analysis discusses therefore the methodological steps described in the previous paragraph in greater detail.

THE EUROPEAN DISCOURSE

The inclusion of the term 'Territorial Cohesion' in the Treaty of Lisbon (EU, 2009), the publication of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 (EC, 2011) and of the Fifth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion (CEC, 2010), and the extensive public discussion following the publication of the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (CEC, 2008) have definitely shifted the focus of public policies towards the cohesion goal. Consequently, the term 'Territorial Cohesion' itself appears as central in these, and subsequent discourses. The goal of the following analysis is thus to determine what is meant by the term 'Territorial Cohesion' in each of these major European documents, and whether this meaning is convergent or not between them. Each document is analyzed in turn in the following sub-sections. Table I presents a summary of the most frequent founds words related to 'Territorial Cohesion' in each document.

Document	Green Paper (2008)	5th Report on Cohesion (2010)	Territorial Agenda (2011)
Most frequent words related to 'Territorial Cohesion'	policies; regions; development economic; access; social; cities; rural; activities; resources; cooperation	policies; regions; development; economic; access; social; services	policies; regions; development; strategy; coordination; integration; local; difference

Table I – Word analysis of three European documents concerning the term 'Territorial Cohesion'

THE GREEN PAPER ON TERRITORIAL COHESION

The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (CEC, 2008) is, among the documents analyzed in this research, the one that attempts the most to clarify the concept of 'Territorial Cohesion'. This is obviously a consequence of its raison d'être, namely to support the need for a better understanding of the scope of Territorial Cohesion and of its implications to the current and future EU regional policy. The Green paper is thus a willful, very specific EU document that constitutes a political approach based on a circular planning model, and which generated an extensive public consultation phase, with local and regional authorities, stakeholders and organizations.

The second paragraph of the Green Book states that "Territorial cohesion is about ensuring the harmonious development of all these places and about making sure that their citizens are able to make the most of inherent features of these territories. As such, it is a means of transforming diversity into an asset that contributes to sustainable development of the entire EU" (CEC, 2008). This definition, albeit somewhat unprecise, is based upon the principles of Cooperation/articulation between actors and policies; Clustering (creation of critical mass through the establishment of networks between urban areas); and Connection (access to infrastructure and services of general interest). These, we might call them, three C's, are unsurprisingly similar to the three D's that the World Bank Report of 2009 identifies as the key elements that influence the level of development of territories: Division, Density and Distance (Scott, 2009; World Bank, 2009).

The first word search revealed the most frequently used words associated with the term 'Territorial Cohesion' to be: policies, cooperation, regions, cities, rural, access, development, economic, activities, resources and social (see Table I). This confirms a clear association of the 'Territorial Cohesion' concept with the principles of clustering ('regions', 'resources'), connection ('access') and cooperation ('cooperation', 'policies', 'development', 'cities'-'rural').

The subsequent 'text search' and the detailed analysis of the paragraphs where 'Cohesion' or 'Territorial Cohesion' are present, revealed four major guidelines related to this concept, according to the Green Paper.

First, 'cooperation' is paramount. Territorial Cohesion should be achieved through the promotion of the coordination between sectoral policies and territorial-based policies; of the political coordination between great geographical areas; of the cooperation between different governmental levels (vertical cooperation) and between these and the organizations (horizontal cooperation); and a more flexible and adaptable institutional articulation, able to be molded to the most proper territorial scale.

Second, Territorial Cohesion should be achieved though the promotion of sustainable, globally competitive cities. This entails focusing on the development of rural areas in close articulation with urban areas; providing proper access to services of general interest in an integrated development logic between urban areas and rural areas; and developing transport services and infrastructure that can strengthen the connection between urban areas and the creation of a critical mass supportive of competitive gains.

Third, Territorial Cohesion should promote the endogenous wealth of each territory. This is more pressing for less developed territories, which should convert their differences into advantages, by exploring and promoting their endogenous resources as distinctive features.

Fourth, Territorial Cohesion should solve problems of social and territorial exclusion. A more equitable and balanced development should be promoted between more central and developed areas, and more peripheral and weaker areas.

THE TERRITORIAL AGENDA OF THE EUROPEAN UNION 2020

The Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 (EC, 2011) – TA20202 – is a document with the double intention of reinforcing the role of Territorial Cohesion as a new paradigm of development in Europe, and promoting the resilience of territories, in the context of a wide range of emerging or otherwise still relevant concerns common to most European countries, such as the deep economic and financial crises, economic vulnerability, depopulation of rural areas, ageing population, migration, climate change or energy efficiency. The document focuses on the importance of the 'place' and of adopting a diversity paradigm, through the stimuli of experimental approaches in the development and implementation of policies. It is structured around six main priority axes (EC, 2011): (i) promotion of polycentric and balanced territorial development; (ii) encouragement of integrated development in cities, rural and specific regions; (iii) territorial integration in cross- border and transnational functional regions; (iv) ensuring global competitiveness of the regions based on strong local economies; (v) improvement of territorial connectivity for individuals, communities and enterprises; and (vi) management and connection of ecological, landscape and cultural values of regions.

Thus, it can be considered that TA2020 constitutes a good example of promotion of the 'Europe Effect' by intergovernmental action, and through a horizontal policy model. Yet, unlike the Green Paper, TA2020 does not seek to clarify the meaning of the concept of 'Territorial Concept' itself, but rather reinforce its importance as a principle to adopt in the general planning of the European space, and in order to achieve a greater coherence between sectorial and territorial policies. Even so, the 'word search' reveals that there is still, to some extent, a similarity between the ideas of TA2020 and the Green Paper. The most frequently found words associated with Territorial Cohesion were found to be: policies, strategy, coordination, regions, integration, local, development and difference (see Table I). The words 'policies', 'regions' and 'development' appear at the top of the search in both documents, and further affinity can be found between the word 'coordination' (TA2020) and 'cooperation' (Green Paper); between 'local' (TA2020) and both 'cities' and 'rural' (Green Paper); or between 'difference' (TA2020) and 'resources' (Green Paper). These affinities appear more clearly with the 'text search' and the detailed analysis of the paragraphs where 'Cohesion' or 'Territorial Cohesion' are present. The four main strategies of the Green paper (see previous section) regarding Territorial Cohesion tackle exactly the same issues as the four main strategies of TA2020, that can be described as follows:

First, 'coordination' of different sectorial policies is paramount. This coordination should optimize the territorial impact of the policies adopted and maximize their coherence and consistency, as well as synergies of territorial cooperation and horizontal and vertical coordination.

Second, territorial development should be promoted. This is achieved through the development of integrated functional areas and a polycentric and balanced territory, and the creation of synergy networks between different urban areas in order to gain critical mass, improve access to services of general interest and increase mobility.

Third, endogenous resources should be promoted. Opportunities should be created in accordance with territorial specificities, exploring endogenous resources and other elements that may contribute to make each territory more competitive.

Fourth, every citizen and every company should have equal opportunities and rights, regardless of where they reside. Therefore, mechanisms of solidarity between more and less developed areas should be developed and promoted, in order to make the territorial differences more balanced.

THE FIFTH REPORT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

Finally, the Fifth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion (CEC, 2010) – the fifth installment of a triennial EU report concerning the contributions and progresses of EU and national governments to the subject of cohesion – was adopted in the aftermath of the worst financial and economic crisis in recent European history and it was essentially designed to support the subsequent long-term recovery strategy; Europe 2020. Thus, following Europe 2020's objectives of smart, inclusive and sustainable growth, and the pressing need for innovation, employment, social inclusion and a strong response to environmental challenges (Walsh, 2012), the Fifth Report underlines how

regions and the European and national cohesion policies can respond to these objectives. Most notably, the Fifth Report focuses on the analysis of regional disparities and how the cohesion policy can have a strong impact in overcoming them. Thus, it represents a top-down 'europeanization' policy model.

Another milestone of the Fifth Report is that it is the first of its kind to explicitly include the dimension of 'Territorial Cohesion', most prominently in its title. Even so, the contribution of this report to clarify the meaning of the term can be considered to be somewhat less perceptive than that of the Green Book and TA2020. A 'word search' displays as most frequently used words in association to Territorial Cohesion to be policies, regions, economic, development, services, social and access (see Table I). Actually, all words with the exception of 'services' are found in the frequent word search of the Green Paper, and 'policies', 'regions' and 'development' are found in the TA2020 search as well. Nevertheless, although there appears to be a lack of a certain specificity ('local', 'integration', 'cooperation', 'resources') found in the other two documents, the remainder of the terms found in the Fifth Report point to a similar vision as to the way to achieve 'Territorial Cohesion' at the European level. This suspicion becomes substantiated by the 'text search' and the detailed analysis of the paragraphs where 'Cohesion' or 'Territorial Cohesion' are present. Again, the main points are grouped into four categories, fairly similar to those of the two previous sub-sections.

First, there is a need for territorial cooperation and the coordination of policies with territorial impact. This should be achieved through the coherence between regional development and the national and European policies.

Second, emphasize the role of cities. A functional and flexible geography should be developed, so that synergies between different territorial areas (either between urban areas, or between urban and rural areas) can be exacerbated, thus gaining critical mass, increasing the access to services of general interest and improving infrastructures.

Third, consider the specificities of each territory, regarding them as elements of development and differentiation.

Lastly, fourth, reduce the social and geographical disparities.

SUMMARIZING THE EUROPEAN DISCOURSE

Although there isn't exactly a common straightforward definition of the concept of 'Territorial Cohesion' between the three main European documents tackling this subject, produced within the context of the previous Community Support Framework (2007-2013), there is indeed a common logic between them. In fact, there are some key words that are common to all three documents, when a most frequent 'word search' is performed; namely the words 'policies', 'regions' and 'development'. As well, this search reveals that the Green Paper and the 5th Report also have in common as most frequently found words 'economic', 'access' and 'social'. And even if TA2020 is more dissimilar in terms of most frequently found words, the results of the 'text search' reveal that all three documents share the same four major guidelines for achieving and implementing Territorial Cohesion, even if they are expressed in slightly different ways. These guidelines can be summarized as thus:

- The importance of territorial governance as a motor for institutional cooperation; be it through vertical cooperation between different governmental levels, horizontal cooperation of actors based on a holistic and shared view of the territory, or the coherence between policies and regions;
- The importance of identifying means for managing the territory capable of overcoming differences in size, density and distances to services and amenities, thus developing a polycentric, balanced and competitive territory;
- The need to focus on specific yet diverse interventions, taking into account the potentialities, specificities and the endogenous wealth of each territory, thus promoting territorially diverse policies;
- The need to add to the previous guidelines the idea of solidarity and equity, thus promoting social and territorial positive discrimination and reducing geographical and social disparities.

THE NATIONAL DISCOURSE (AND HOW IT RELATES TO THE EUROPEAN ONE)

By assuming that the four major guidelines uncovered in the previous section constitute the best possible interpretation of the concept of Territorial Cohesion as presented at European level, this section makes a similar, yet more profound approach of national (Portuguese) regional documents. The same methodology is used (albeit described in more detail), to analyze the five Regional Operational Programs (POR).

THE REGIONAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAMS (POR)

The Regional Operational Programs (POR) stemmed from the previous National Community Support Framework (QREN) for the period between 2007 and 2013. This framework defined the strategic orientations for the national transposition of the economic and social European policy guidelines, namely through the national application of

European structural funds for that six-year period, financed exclusively through the European Regional Development Fund. To operationalize this application, several transversal thematic and regional operational programs (the POR) were developed. The analysis in this section focuses on the five POR that cover the regions of continental Portugal; POR North, POR Centre, POR Lisbon, POR Alentejo and POR Algarve. The POR for the period of 2007-2013 were used, instead of the most recent documents (e.g. POR North 2020), to be coherent with the time frame of the analysis of this research.

As described in the Methodology section, the first stage of the analysis consists of a 'word search', to count the frequency of the expressions 'Cohesion' and 'Territorial Cohesion' within the documents, and to unveil the most frequently found words associated to them (see Table II).

Instrument of Regional Planning	Number of times the term 'Cohesion' appears	Main terms associated with 'Cohesion'	Number of times the term 'Territorial Cohesion' appears	Main terms associated with 'Territorial Cohesion'
POR The New North	101	Social, Competitiveness, Policies	6	Centre, Local, Policies, Urban
POR Plus Centre	43	Policies, Competitiveness, Evaluation	2	Facilities, Local, Mobility, Transports, Urban, Accessibility, Articulation, Networks
POR Lisbon	129	Social, Policy	14	Social, Inclusion, Strategy, Urban, Quality
POR InAlentejo	146	Social, Competitiveness, Facilities, Policy	7	Competitiveness, Positioning, Economy
POR Algarve21	66	Social, Policy, Employment, Appreciation, Evaluation	12	Appreciation, Network, Urban, Economic, Accessibility, Growth, Endogenous, Resources, System Competitiveness, Density, Facilities

Table II – Word analysis of the five Regional Operational Programs (POR), according to the frequency of the terms 'Cohesion' and 'Territorial Cohesion', and the main terms associated to them

What is immediately perceptible is that the frequency of the term 'Cohesion' is much greater than the frequency of the term 'Territorial Cohesion'. Or, in other words, the use of the term 'Territorial Cohesion' in the POR for the period 2007-2013 is surprisingly small, considering that these documents stem directly from the European Cohesion Policy guidelines. This is more evident in the POR of the northern and central regions.

Out of five documents, all five use 'Cohesion' in relation to 'Policy/Policies', four with 'Social' (POR Centre is amiss), three with 'Competitiveness' (POR Lisbon and POR Algarve are amiss), and two with 'Evaluation'. On the other hand, there is less coherence between documents in the words associated to the term 'Territorial Cohesion'. Out of five documents, four associate it with 'Urban' (POR Alentejo is amiss), two with 'Local' (PROT North and Centre), two with 'Accessibility', 'Facilities' and 'Network' (PROT Algarve and Centre) and two with 'Economy/Economic' and 'Competitiveness' (POR Alentejo and Algarve). This can indicate that for the regional actors responsible for writing the POR the conceptual differentiation between the two terms is somewhat clear. 'Cohesion', in itself, is much more related to social policy and competitiveness, and appears to be less related to the territorial dimension, where each region has made its own interpretation. In this case, the North and Lisbon POR seem to associate 'Territorial Cohesion' to local and urban social strategies, whereas the Alentejo and Algarve POR associate it with economic competitiveness and self-promotion and growth, and PROT Centre to a network logic between urban areas.

The second stage of analysis consisted of a 'text analysis' of the paragraphs where the expressions 'Cohesion' and 'Territorial Cohesion' appear. This is synthesized in Table III.

Principle\ Plan	Acknowledgment of the terms 'Cohesion' and 'Territorial Cohesion' in the plan	Level of relevance between Territorial Cohesion and Economic and Social Cohesion	Main usage and meaning of the term 'Territorial Cohesion'
POR The New North	'Cohesion' is amply mentioned; 'Territorial Cohesion' is hardly mentioned	Less relevant. Although the POR promotes all three, it focuses more on Social Cohesion and the notion of equity	As a strategic orientation in the fields of, for example, environmental systems or urban conurbations
POR Plus Centre	'Cohesion' is moderately mentioned in relation to cohesion policy or funds; 'Territorial Cohesion' is hardly mentioned	Less relevant. Focuses more on Social Cohesion	As a strategic orientation principle in sectorial domains (mobility, facilities)
POR Lisbon	'Cohesion' is amply mentioned, used in relation to cohesion policy or funds; 'Territorial Cohesion' is moderately mentioned	Less relevant. Focuses more on Social Cohesion	Associated mainly to 'social inclusion' and as one of the dimensions of Social Cohesion.

POR InAlentejo	'Cohesion' is amply mentioned, used in relation to cohesion policy or funds, or as a counterpoint to 'competitiveness'; 'Territorial Cohesion' is hardly mentioned	Less relevant. Focuses more on Social Cohesion. 'Territorial Cohesion' rarely appears as a standalone expression, replaced by 'Social and Territorial Cohesion'	As a strategic orientation principle in sectorial domains (mobility, facilities)
POR Algarve21	'Cohesion' is moderately mentioned in relation to cohesion policy or funds; 'Territorial Cohesion' is moderately mentioned	Less relevant. Focuses more on 'Social Cohesion' or 'Social and Economic Cohesion'.	As a strategic orientation principle in sectorial domains (urban network, socio-economic infrastructures); as a goal in the Territorial Appreciation and Urban Development plan

Table III – Text analysis of the five Regional Operational Programs (POR), according to the content of the text sections featuring the terms 'Cohesion' and 'Territorial Cohesion'.

The 'text analysis' further strengthens the conclusions of the preceding paragraphs, although it helps to uncover more similarities between the acknowledgment and usage of the terms 'Cohesion' and 'Territorial Cohesion' that before were less perceptible. For these documents, the term 'Cohesion' is mostly associated to 'Cohesion Policy', 'Cohesion Funds' and primarily 'Social Cohesion'. It is perceptible then that 'Territorial Cohesion' is less relevant, within these documents, than Social and Economic Cohesion, or rather that it is considered to be a dimension of those, particularly of 'Social Cohesion', something which may justify the lack of acknowledgment the term has and the short number of times it is mentioned, as displayed in Table II. Even so, in all POR with the exception of Lisbon's, 'Territorial Cohesion' is seen as a strategic orientation principle in sectorial domains, most notably those related to urban networks, mobility and facilities, responding to the need for a more equitable social cohesion policy that most of these five documents lean on.

Lastly, a more comprehensive word analysis was performed to see if, and how, the use of the terms 'Cohesion' and 'Territorial Cohesion' in these documents has responded to the four major guidelines of the European discourse, as presented in the previous Section, namely; (i) the importance of territorial governance; (ii) the importance of a proper territorial organization; (iii) the importance of promoting territorially specific, yet diverse policies; and (iv) the importance of social and territorial solidarity and equity. This analysis is synthesized in Table IV.

	Territorial Governance	Territorial Organization	Diversity and specificity of Territorial policies	Social and Territorial solidarity and equity
POR The New North	Creation of partnerships and inclusion of actors	Improvement of the road networks and of the public transports	-	-
POR Plus Centre	-	Relevance of sub-regional urban systems and centres	-	Equity in the access to public facilities and services
POR Lisbon	Adoption of models of governance	Polycentric development of territories, reinforcement of the infrastructures supporting territorial integration, relevance of urban centres	-	Creation of positive discrimination measures in the access to urban comforts
POR InAlentejo	Adoption of models of governance	Reinforcement of the competitiveness and attractiveness of cities, articulation of urban with rural areas, consolidation of the network of public services, implementation of systems of public transports	Promotion of the cultural identity of the region	Equity in the access to public services
POR Algarve21	Articulation with the instruments of territorial planning	Promotion of a polycentric urban system, integration of cities and the country in supra-national spaces, assertion of a balanced regional urban network, consolidation of the network of public services	Economic appreciation of endogenous resources, promotion of a more sustainable use of natural resources, reduction of environmental impacts, economical-cultural assertion of the rural Algarve	-

Table IV – Text analysis of the five Regional Operational Programs (POR), according to how they feature the terms 'Cohesion' and 'Territorial Cohesion' in relation to the four major guidelines of the European discourse

It is clear that, overall, the five POR have been more keen to respond to the first two guiding European principles, than the remaining two. All documents contain some measure of the role of 'Cohesion' and 'Territorial Cohesion' associated to the goal of Territorial Organization, and all documents with the exception of POR Centre, associate the terms to the goal of Territorial Governance. In this sense, 'Cohesion' and 'Territorial Cohesion' are strongly associated to the importance of creating a polycentric urban system, where the role of the cities themselves is promoted, as well as their networks of facilities, infrastructures, services and transports. Three of the five POR (North and Algarve are amiss) also stress that there should be equity in this access to urban comforts as public facilities and services, thus promoting greater interaction of urban with rural areas. Even so, only the POR of the southern regions of Alentejo and Algarve relate these issues with the promotion of the diversity and specificity of their territories, having in mind their touristic-oriented development policies. Furthermore, 'Cohesion' and 'Territorial Cohesion' are related to the idea of adopting models of governance, focusing on the articulation of different actors to achieve a more integrated allocation of funding, and of different instruments and policies of territorial planning. It should also be added that the southern and Lisbon POR have tried to respond to all or most of the four dimensions of the European discourse, unlike the North and Centre POR, which only respond to two dimensions.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: CONCEPTUAL TRANSPOSITION OR CONCEPTUAL REDEFINITION?

National and regional actors face various theoretical and empirical challenges when they attempt to operationalize the concept of 'Territorial Cohesion' from the European to their national regional agendas. Primarily, this is due to the fact that European guidelines on the subject are not entirely clear as to what exactly means to have a 'cohesive territory', choosing instead to promote more comprehensive concepts of 'why' and 'what for' of the adoption of a Territorial Cohesion Policy. Through a Qualitative Content Analysis of main European documents addressing the subject of Territorial Cohesion this research established four major priorities of the European discourse, that constitute the primary references for local actors; succinctly, (i) the importance of territorial governance; (ii) the importance of a proper territorial organization; (iii) the importance of promoting territorially specific, yet diverse policies; and (iv) the importance of social and territorial solidarity and equity. Secondly, in the Portuguese case in particular, the first official attempts to reproduce these guidelines, such as the 'Contribute of the Portuguese Authorities for the Public Consultation of the Green Book' (MNE, 2008) have followed a similar discourse (see Santinha & Marques, 2012). Consequently, facing this reality, the major research question of this paper was to determine whether regional instruments effectively transpose, or rather redefine, the concept of 'Territorial Cohesion' as proposed by the European documents.

The documents of the five Regional Operational Programs (POR) have been analyzed. What is clear in a general sense is that the concept of 'Territorial Cohesion' has indeed become part of the vocabulary of these documents, even though only moderately and without a straightforward definition of the term. Indeed, 'Territorial Cohesion' is deemed to be less important than, or rather a component of, Economic and particularly Social Cohesion. This may stem from the definition of instrument itself, as it follows closely the orientations of the Cohesion Policy as defined by the Lisbon Strategy (now Europe 2020), i.e. a strategy focusing on intervention areas such as innovation, competitiveness and knowledge to ensure growth and employment, in favor of focusing on the territorial dimension.

Even so, looking at how the POR relate to the four major priorities of the European discourse (Table IV) it is more than clear that, for them, the notion of 'Territorial Cohesion' is consensually linked to the second priority axis, that of a proper territorial organization, as this is stated in all the five documents. Namely, this should be achieved through the strengthening of polycentric urban systems and their proximity networks of facilities, infrastructures, services and transports, to promote complementarity, competitiveness, development and the role of the cities themselves. As well, the POR are extensively concerned with the fist axis; the importance of territorial governance, dwelling on the articulation of different actors to achieve a more integrated allocation of funding, and of different instruments and policies of territorial planning. Yet lesser overall importance is given to the third and fourth axis, the former more prominent in the southern POR and the latter in the central/northern POR. Indeed, if the POR analyzed as a whole can reveal a somewhat coherent stance on the transposition of the concept of 'Territorial Cohesion' from the European to the Portuguese local regional dimension, it is evident that there are clear geographical disparities in the transposition of the concept and its priority axes between regions.

The POR of the northern and central regions mention 'Territorial Cohesion' much less frequently, unlike their southern counterparts. In fact, the southern and Lisbon POR respond to all or most of the four dimensions of the European discourse, unlike the North and Centre POR. In most POR 'Territorial Cohesion' is seen as a strategic orientation principle in sectorial domains, most notably those related to urban networks, mobility and facilities, and as a catalyst for the promotion of equity. Yet strategic priorities differ between regions. The North and Lisbon POR seem to associate 'Territorial Cohesion' to local and urban social strategies, the Alentejo and Algarve POR associate it with economic competitiveness, self-promotion and growth, and PROT Centre clearly relate the term to a network logic between urban areas.

Therefore, the answer to the main question of this paper appears to be that, as a whole, the Portuguese Regional Operational Programs have made a shy, yet to some extent successful conceptual transposition of the term 'Territorial Cohesion' from the European discourse to their local regional realities, albeit it is used moderately and is still considered less relevant than Social and Economic Cohesion. However, in particular, a larger gap has been found between discourses, as local actors have strived to make their own conceptual redefinitions, or reinterpretations, of the concept, to better suit the main strategic priorities of their respective regions, thus not responding to all the guidelines of the European discourse. There is therefore a long way to go to create a coherent and homogenous discourse at local level.

The methodology proposed and followed in this paper should be regarded as a first contribute to the debate of the specific consequences of the 'Europe Effect' within public policies and urban planning in Portugal. In a wider sense, it can also be regarded as a justification to better clarify, not only in the literature but also in official national and international documents, the concept of Territorial Cohesion. This is as more relevant as the findings of this research have proved that there is a lack of a homogenous interpretation of the concept's meaning and of its strategic priorities between the country's regions. To overcome this, at least internally, a more intense debate needs to happen, focusing around the analytical and normative transposition and application of the concept of 'Territorial Cohesion'; a debate that should include a vast array of local and regional actors.

The findings of this research also point towards a greater interest in widening the scope of these questions, at national scale (include other regional planning documents, such as the PROT - The Regional Land Management Plans), but most notably on the European sphere. To what extent are the guidelines of European documents being correctly interpreted by regional actors? Are suitable conditions being created within each country to promote debate and exchange of knowledge and information between regional actors, in order to generate processes of collective learning and thus a national harmonization of concepts and strategic priorities? In the quest for a successful Europeanization process, these are the two main questions we need positively to answer to.

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