

# Mind the Gap – The Peri-Urban within Territorial and Cohesion Policy: The Missing Imperative

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## *RSA WORKSHOP* *EU Cohesion Policy: Focus on the Territorial Dimension*

Lisboa, 05 e 06 de Novembro de 2015

# The Territorial in Cohesion Policy

## A word about peri-urban and PURPLE:

- Peri-urban territory is widespread and growing

- It describes territory where urban and rural characteristics co-exist. Typically they are attractive places to live, work and visit

- Peri-urban is distinctive and every bit as real and valid as „urban“ and „rural“

- It is typified by complex interdependencies between large urban centres and surrounding areas

- It is increasingly recognised at the policy level but very often not at the practice one in ESIF Operational Programmes and similar

- PURPLE brings together peri-urban actors from across Europe – see website at final slide

# The Territorial in Cohesion Policy

## A word about TA 2020

- Serves as a useful and valuable reminder of the importance of recognising territorial types and their differences
- Is valuable in its emphasis on polycentrism
- It correctly identifies the centrality of place-based policy and practice
- The CoR Opinion May 2015 highlights areas for strengthening, and the need to return to points and principles set out in papers produced under PL presidency 2011

# The Territorial in Cohesion Policy

## Interdependencies and polycentrism

- There are complex and long-standing relationships between major urban centres and their surrounds
- development patterns reflect complicated interactions and interdependencies between places of different sizes within larger functional geographies
- They impact strongly one on the other and lend character to each other

# The Territorial in Cohesion Policy

## From policy to practice – via OPs etc

- Frustratingly - one doesn't transfer to the other
- ESIF OPs very often ignore peri-urban at MS level or below
- Interreg Europe may offer a solution!
- So may the outcome of the Informal Ministers meeting on November 27 2015

# Recognising Place

- Place-blind policy remains too prevalent
- The territorial dimension continues to be missing
- Different territories need different combinations of different measures
- What works in a peri-urban area cannot simply be mirrored or replicated in other sorts of territory and expected to work
- Other territories can learn valuable lessons from the peri-urban
- Place specific/relevant instruments are often lacking – despite opportunities to make use of ESIF 2014-20

# Recognising Place

- To superimpose an urban – or a rural – understanding of place on a peri-urban area is to set up policy and practice that will fail from the outset
- It serves to render the peri-urban invisible as opposed to recognising how the urban and the peri-urban and rural relay on each other and inter-relate
- Put simply - different types of places need to be treated differently in both policy and practice terms
- And the language we use often doesn't help .....

# The Urban-Rural myth



The „urban-rural“  
dualism is outdated  
since the demolition  
of town walls.

■ Langen – German Air Traffic Control

■ Haarlemmermeer – Schiphol Airport

■ Sindelfingen – Mercedes-Benz Factory

Between the two is  
„peri-urban“ – towns  
and cities mistaken  
as suburbs but often  
home to high class  
infrastructure

# Urban, Rural, and ?

- Far from academic or anecdotal:
- The new „degree of urbanisation“ classification
- Being applied by the EU Commission
- Europe broken down into 3 categories:
  - Densely populated area (“cities”)
  - Intermediate density area (“towns and suburbs”)
  - Thinly populated area (“rural area”)



# The Gap: Ignoring territories

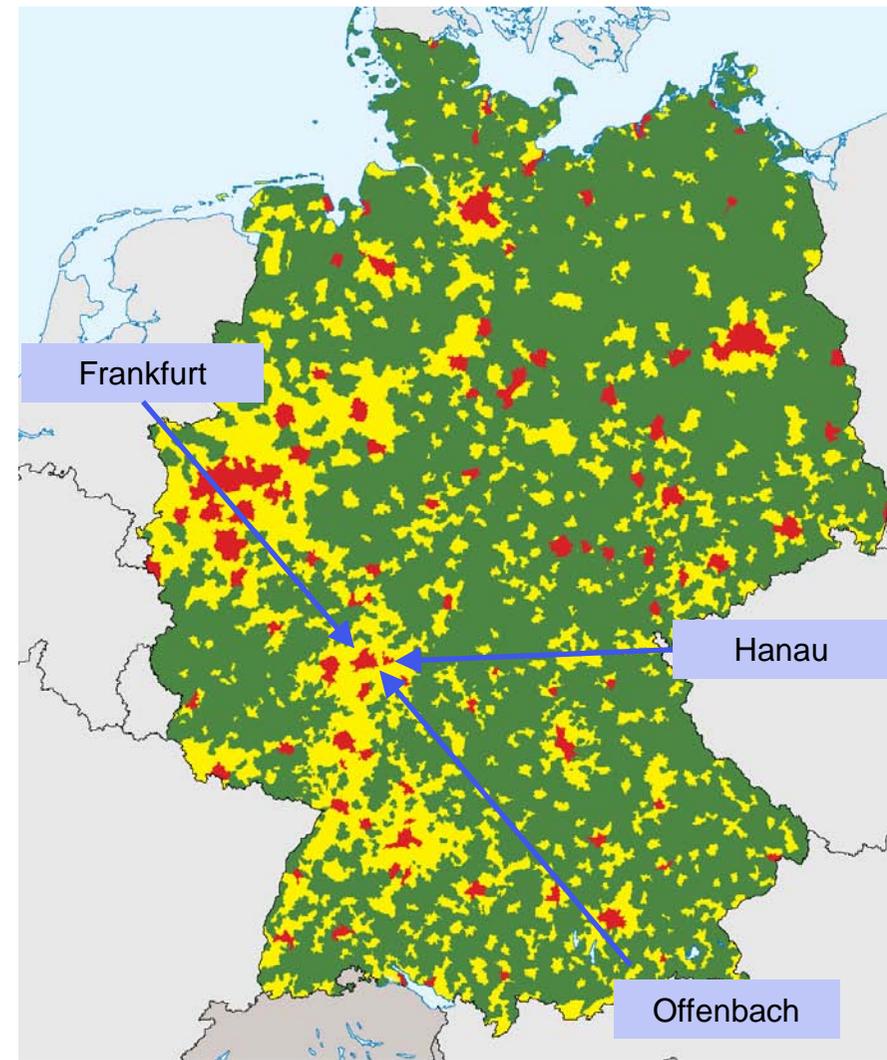
Germany is mostly rural

Lots of cities; Frankfurt Region  
has 3 cities only

Red is „cities“ is „urban“, green is  
„rural“

The „urban-rural“ dualism ignores  
the yellow territories...

...where people live *and* work *and*  
generate Europe's prosperity



Germany  
Degree of Urbanization 2011

- Densely populated area
- Intermediate
- Thinly populated area

# Nothing new since 1994

- ESDP 1999: “Urban-rural *relationship*”, “urban-rural *partnership*”, “*partnerships* between towns and the countryside”
- TA2020: “Urban-rural *interdependence*”
- Who brought “Urban-rural *linkages*” into the debate?
- Even worse: “*Interactions* between urban and rural areas“ – people interact, areas can’t
- ...and what *are* “urban areas”?
- The debate failed to provide clarity about the concepts

# Conclusion

- The scientific debate is systematically ignoring large parts of the European territory
- There is no progress in this respect since the mid 1990ies
- There is real life evidence that the urban-rural dualism is outdated
- The extent of the gap depends on the policy in question, but the gap is there, in EU and national policies
- The scientific debate will stay meaningless when it fails to define its basic concepts: “urban”, “rural”, “relationship”, “partnership”, “interdependence”, “linkages”, “interactions” and so on

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