

## Integrative Mechanisms for Addressing Spatial Justice and Territorial Inequalities in Europe

### D8.1 Synthesis report on social equality, service delivery and regional autonomy.

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARDECO	Annual Regional Database of the European Commission Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
CLLD	Community Led Local Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MLG	Multi-level Governance
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
TAEU	Territorial Agenda of the European Union

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## 1. Introduction

This synthesis policy report explores and identifies relationships between social equality, public service delivery and regional autonomy in Europe. Each of these issues has been addressed separately by individual work packages of the IMAJINE project. In each case, the concept of spatial justice has provided an overarching conceptual framing.

Spatial justice is understood to refer to the geographical dimension of inequality of resources and opportunities. It is a normative policy goal open to a plurality of interpretations (D1.1, Jones et al. 2019, 99). Within the European Union policy context it is associated with the premise that no-one should be disadvantaged by where they live (e.g. TAEU 2030). This implies a commitment to actively work against existing disparities that have been characteristic of relations between core and peripheral regions, to ensure universal access to public services such as education, healthcare and transportation. As analysed in detail in D 3.3, and discussed below, socio-economic inequality in Europe continues to have a strong spatial component. Spatial justice is, however, more than simply 'social justice in space' (Dabinett 2010, 2391, D8.2). Relations across space must be considered integral to any understanding of spatial justice. Attention to spatial justice requires recognising that contemporary social, economic, political and cultural relations in Europe are characterised by dynamic and contingent relations across space, which transcend the boundaries of nation-states and belie any idea of a neat hierarchy between local, regional and national and international spheres (e.g. Massey 2005). In a world of diverse, pluralist societies, distinctions between national and international, domestic and foreign spaces and dynamics become less relevant, and governance systems founded on vertically integrated hierarchies located firmly within a fixed mosaic of territorially-bounded nation-states seem increasingly out of place (e.g. Guerot 2017; Faludi 2018). As set out in previous IMAJINE reports, perceptions of spatial injustice and structural inequality often manifest themselves in dissatisfaction with the existing political settlement and struggles for territorial empowerment at sub-state / regional scales (D 7.1, 7.2). Questions of spatial justice are clearly bound up and inseparable from questions of governance, politics and power. Indeed, addressing socio-spatial inequalities across Europe in a fundamental manner may require new, alternative forms of innovative territorial governance, more fitting for the contemporary post-national world.

The purpose of this policy report is to identify and critically discuss relationships between social equality, public service delivery and regional autonomy in Europe. This discussion is intended to inform the development of scenarios concerning possible and plausible future trajectories of spatial justice in Europe and associated policy responses. In Section 2 below, we further contextualise our discussion with respect to key societal mega-trends and the transition to a post-national Europe.

## 2. Beyond the Nation-State: Spatial justice in the context of societal mega-trends

In recent decades, a number of societal mega-trends have come together which present a fundamental challenge to the modernist centrality of the nation-state in the provision of public services and social security. It is no longer possible to speak of a congruence of society, citizenship, cultural identity at the level of the nation-state (e.g. Beck 2004; Fraser 2005, 2007). The idealised vision or imaginary of a homogenous national society, held together by common cultural ties, a

shared history and a collective identity, mapped on to clearly-defined and uncontested political territorial boundaries bears little resemblance to the reality of contemporary multicultural and pluralist societies (see also Anderson 1983). Yet, nation-state territoriality continues to exert a powerful influence on decision-making and politics at all spatial scales. Territoriality shapes our perceptions of the world – ‘we act within territorial frames’ (Faludi, 2018, 33; Walsh 2014, 2019).

***Accelerated economic globalisation:*** The transnational reach of economic activity and the organisation of product supply chains and business services have created relations of interdependence, which limit the capacity of state governments to regulate market economies and labour standards. Patterns of highly uneven development are the outcome of economic globalisation processes - often characterised by large-scale metropolitan regions competing for attention from globally mobile investors and other regions becoming marginalised (IMAJINE D3.3). Cycles of economic growth and recession are increasingly determined by events on the world rather than national stage. As the 2008-2009 economic financial crisis has demonstrated, however, the degree of vulnerability to ‘external’ shocks varies significantly between countries within Europe, indicative of persistent socio-economic inequalities and spatial injustice at a structural level. Indeed, this period of economic crisis and recession led to increased regional inequality (Brakman et al. 2015, Capello et al. 2015).

***Privatisation, marketisation and individualisation:*** It is possible to identify a tendency towards the privatisation, marketisation and individualisation of public service provision and social security more generally. Privatisation and marketisation are associated with the dismantling of the welfare state and a shift in ownership of public infrastructure and services in areas such as education, healthcare, housing transport and energy production from the state to private market actors. Individualisation translates to a transfer of responsibility from the state (and other collective actors) to the individual in areas such as welfare and employment. Austerity measures introduced in a number of European states in the aftermath of the 2008-2009 financial crisis, at the behest of supranational institutions, have served to accentuate these tendencies. Countervailing tendencies may, however also be noted, in the form of collective wage agreements, for example, or instances of city or regional governments buying back privatised public infrastructures and utilities.

***Migration, diversity and multiculturalism:*** European societies have become increasingly diverse and multicultural - associated with increased movement of people within Europe, the enlargement of the European Union and an increase in in-migration from outside of Europe, primarily asylum seekers and refugees. These developments are, however, contested and marked by contradictions. In particular, a binary division is increasingly evident between those who call for equal rights for all citizens (or residents) and those who claim greater entitlements for those belonging to their own social group (whether cultural, ethnic, religious or national) (see Foroutan 2019). For some, societal integration requires adaptation on the part of migrants to the cultural norms and values of the recipient society, for others, societal integration implies a transition to a more pluralist, inter-cultural society – assimilationist versus inter-cultural tendencies. In-migration and societal integration, and perhaps more importantly their recognition in official public discourse, present challenges to any notion a homogenous national society or culture and the automatic association of socio-cultural identity with an individual’s place of origin. The reality of increasingly multicultural societies accentuates the scope for, and visibility of, social inequality within and beyond nation-state

boundaries, and this shifts the parameters of debate on questions of social cohesion and societal participation (D 5.2).

***Resurgent Nationalist and Regionalist Politics:*** In part in response to the trends outlined above, a resurgence of nationalist and regionalist movements is evident in various parts of Europe. The influence of populist, nationalist politics is currently particularly evident in Hungary and Poland and increasingly the UK, political rhetoric of a ‘global Britain’, notwithstanding (Auer 2017; Keating 2018). Prominent examples of regionalist movements include those in Catalonia, Lombardy & Veneto and Scotland. Regionalist movements vary considerably in their motivations and objectives, but have in common the desire to increase decision-making capacity, if not autonomy, at a sub-national regional scale. Regionalist movements, furthermore, are often born or derive their popularity from a sense of injustice and dissatisfaction with central government (D7.1, D7.2).

It is against this multi-factorial background that social inequalities and spatial justice in Europe must be understood (Jones et al 2019). It is evident that the production of social inequalities is substantially influenced by global economic flows and patterns of inherently uneven economic development. Within the European context, the transnational divisions of labour have become accentuated and increasingly visible with the Eastern expansion of the EU. The financial and economic crisis of 2008-2009 placed structural inequalities in Europe in sharp relief and served to support the emergence of a nascent transnational European rather than state-centric perspective on social equality, solidarity and cohesion (Hadjimichaelis 2011; Habermas 2013). Influential sociologists such as Ulrich Beck and John Urry have further argued that the transition to a reflexive modernity, exemplified by the trends above, requires a paradigmatic shift in the conduct of social science (e.g. Beck & Sznaider 2006; Urry 2000). Addressing the contemporary realities of post- and transnational societies requires: recognition of the pitfalls of state-centric thinking; alternative modes of data-gathering and interpretation; and the reformulation of core concepts such as social (and territorial) cohesion, equality and solidarity (Taylor 2000, Fraser 2007). In the following, we further elaborate on the implications of the above developments for the meaning and analysis of social inequality, public service provision and regional autonomy in contemporary Europe. In doing so, we draw (among other sources) on empirical and conceptual material produced within the IMAJINE project.

### 3. Social Equality, Multi-level Governance and Service Provision

#### 3.1 Social Equality

Social equality, as a normative principle, lies at the heart of the European project. European citizens enjoy comparatively high levels of protection of social and economic rights, as well as access to healthcare and social security. The notion of a social Europe which features strongly in EU policy rhetoric may be interpreted as a commitment to upholding the principles of a European social model, and it implies the existence of shared European social values. Under this model of society, the nation-state played a central role in the provision of services of general interest with social welfare, healthcare, and education understood as public goods. Commentators, however, point to a widening gap between the rhetoric of a social Europe and the reality of a shift towards a neoliberal ‘hollowing-out’ of state, accompanied by an increased emphasis on fiscal discipline and a politics of austerity (e.g. O’ Cinneide 2014). In practice, it is possible to point to a plurality of welfare state

models and forms of public service provision in Europe, reflecting differing ideas of social solidarity and social justice, belying the notion of a singular European social model (di Napoli & Russo 2018).

Social equality, as a concept, is rooted in understandings of fairness, justice and equitability in the distribution of, and access to, resources that are needed to sustain social life. Unsurprisingly, given its inherently normative content, scientific conceptualisations of social equality vary in their empirical, theoretical and normative orientations. Broadly speaking, it is possible to distinguish between egalitarian and distribution-oriented interpretations. From an egalitarian perspective, primary emphasis is placed on the equal treatment of individuals in society and the universal application of provisions. Equal treatment may be understood in terms of civil and political rights and the absence of discrimination of individuals or social groups on the basis of socio-cultural characteristics or status. Discrimination may be institutionalised and/or found in everyday practices and discourses. The question of equality of all citizens is addressed differently across European Member States. For example, in France, a strong adherence to principles of freedom and equality of religious expression manifests itself in the absence of any religious symbolism or teachings in public buildings. Other countries, such as the UK and Greece, are characterised by a closer relationship between the institutions of church and state. How individuals understand citizenship and their role with respect to institutions of the state is strongly shaped by education policy and practice (e.g. Welply, 2019) among other processes of socio-cultural formation.

A distributive perspective on social equality, on the other hand, focuses primarily on the distribution of resources and opportunities within society. Key indicators may thus include relative measures of income, wealth, and educational attainment. Studies of social inequality, and in particular those from a critical political economy tradition have tended to focus on class relations within a society. In recent years, such perspectives have been augmented, and to an extent superseded, by a focus on a wider range of variables and greater attention to transnational relations. The analysis conducted under the IMAJINE project places particular emphasis on the spatial dimension of social equality and the development and application of spatially explicit measures of inequality following econometric methods. Regional economic inequality (measured according to the Gini coefficient at NUTS 3 level) was found to have declined between 1995 and 2019, indicating an overall process of convergence (Figure 1). Perhaps surprisingly, the analysis found that during periods of crisis lowest income regions in Europe continued to converge towards richer regions, while higher income regions experienced a general income decline (D3.3, p. 44). At the same, it may be noted that the process of recovery to pre-crisis levels of GDP took considerably longer in some regions compared to others (Figure 2).

The IMAJINE research also found that the spatial dependence of GDP values decreased over the same period. This may be interpreted as an indication that the importance of geographical location with respect to economic performance has declined between 1995 and 2019. It does not, however, necessarily follow that this is also the case at lower spatial scales. An exploratory composite indicator of local economic development is proposed with the aim of capturing the multidimensionality of social inequality at a fine geographical scale, and applied empirically with respect to selected EU Member States (D3.3).



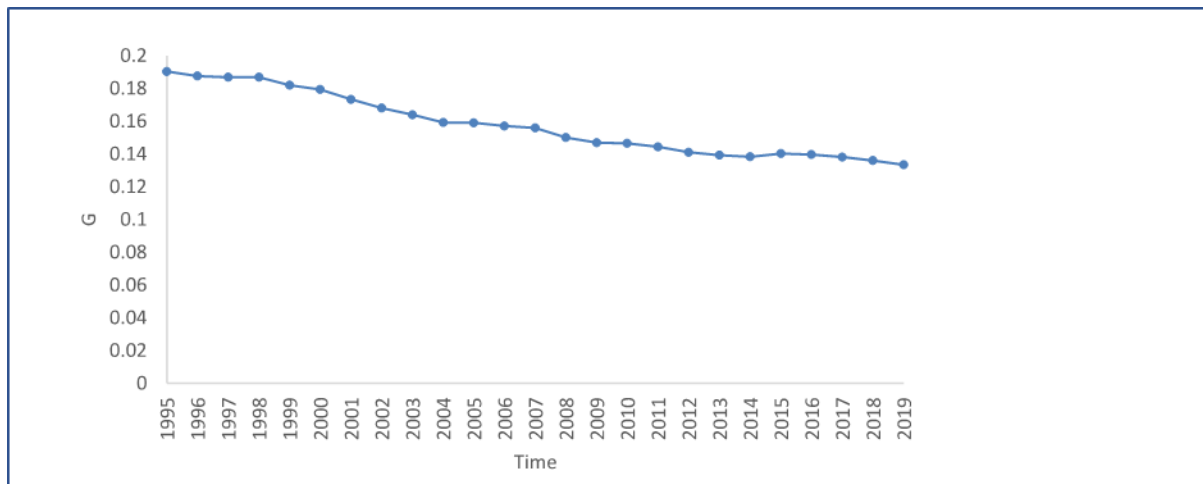


Figure 1: Gini index of inequality calculated for GDP per worker, NUTS 3 regions 1995-2019. (D 3.3, p. 44, elaborated from ARDECO database).

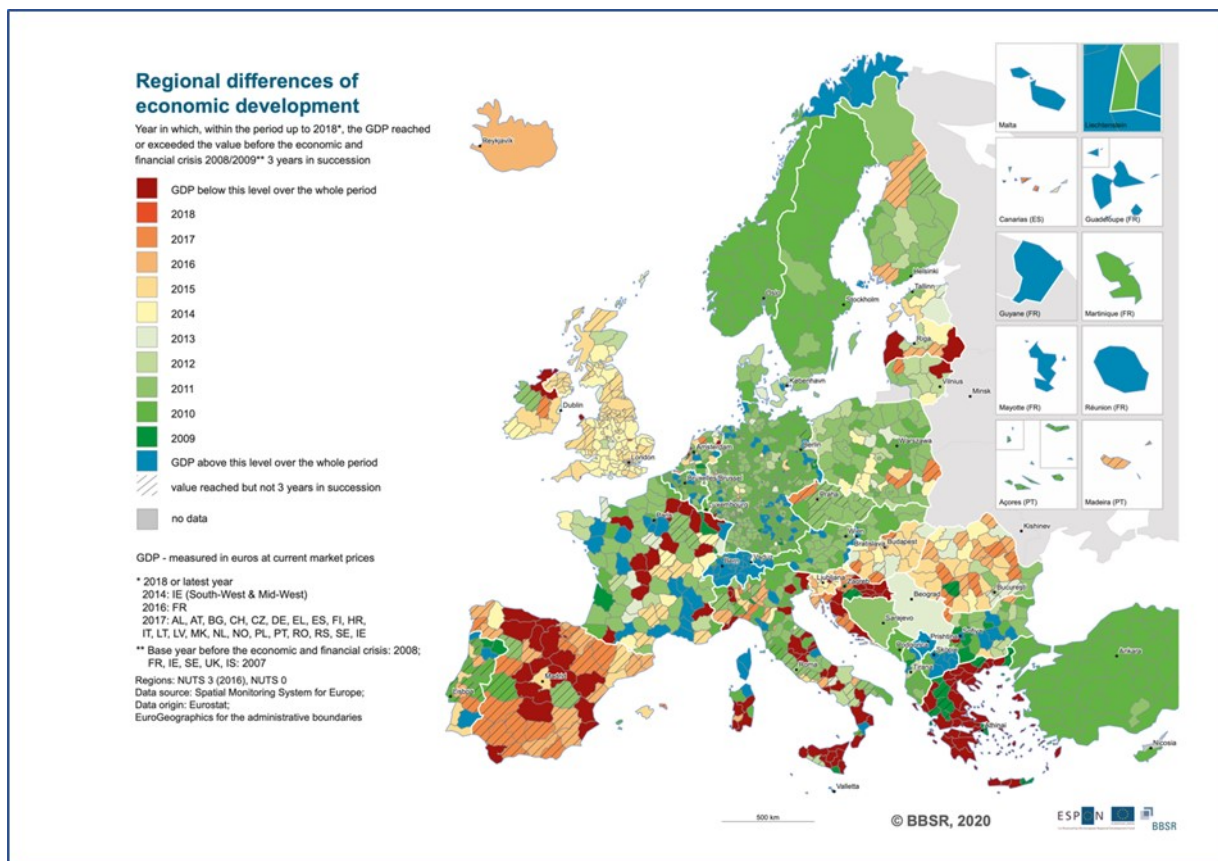


Figure 2: Regional Differences in Economic Development (© BBSR, source: BBSR & ESPON 2020).

### 3.2 Multi-level Governance and Public Service Provision

The relationship between the scales of governance within the European Union from the supranational to the local level may be understood in terms multi-level governance. This concept was introduced to move beyond the false dichotomy of ‘domestic and international’ in previous studies of politics and governance (Marks et al 1996, 346-7). Multi-level governance (MLG) refers to both the relationships between fixed levels in a nested decision-making hierarchy (e.g. local/municipal, regional, national, European) and more complex arrangements whereby governance actors at different scales interact in a more dynamic and flexible manner. The first form, characterised by nested hierarchies is known as Type I MLG, the second, Type II MLG (Hooghe and Marks 2010). Under Type I MLG, each level in the hierarchy typically displays a wide range of competencies, whereas Type II MLG more commonly applies to specific sectoral policy areas, such as transport, education, and healthcare. Type II sector-specific institutional arrangements often deploy functional boundaries, which are not necessarily coterminous with formal local or regional jurisdictional boundaries (e.g. school districts, or regional health boards or public transport networks). This may create challenges in respect of cross-sectoral coordination, coherence and accountability, with implications for addressing social and spatial inequalities. Type II MLG can, in some cases, however, enhance actors’ capacity for achieving a greater ‘spatial fit’ between governance arrangements and functional areas. A classic example of the latter are river basin catchment areas. Achieving spatial fit in one field may, however, lead to misfits in other related policy fields, where the relevant geographical boundaries diverge (e.g. surface water compared to groundwater boundaries) (Moss 2004, 2012).

Furthermore, it is possible to identify a range of more complex innovative governance arrangements, which, in some cases, combine both types (I and II MLG). Examples include metropolitan and cross-border regions, such as Métropole Européenne de Lille. In some cases of metropolitan governance, municipalities and regional districts are formal members of an associative governance structure at the regional scale, including European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs), and are simultaneously engaged in horizontal networks with other municipalities on a flexible or voluntary basis. Indeed, through principles of ‘variable geometry’, the spatial extent of the metropolitan region may vary, depending on the governance issue in question, opening up additional possibilities for urban-rural partnership (Walsh & Williams 2013; Jacuniak-Suda et al 2015). Innovative forms of territorial governance have considerable potential to increase the capacity for place-based policy-making and, cross-sectoral integration and coordinated service delivery at sub-national regional scales. Processes of strategic spatial planning can play a key role in facilitating such processes (Faludi 2012). To be successful, however, such governance arrangements and strategic planning processes must challenge established modes of working and the power of local level ‘territorialism’ which can otherwise constrain the capacity for collaboration across boundaries (Walsh 2014, 2015).

Despite the trends towards privatisation and marketisation outlined in 3.1 above, the state continues to play a significant role in the provision of core services of public interest such as education and healthcare. WP6 (D6.2) sought to investigate how policymakers at different levels of government share responsibility for the reduction of social inequalities. Case studies indicate considerable variation in the distribution of specific competencies across levels of government and relevance and influence of distinct nationally and regionally specific governance cultures. Firm

results and conclusions on this issue remain outstanding, but it is possible, nevertheless, to elaborate on a number of key dimensions here of wider relevance to our discussion of social inequality, spatial justice and regional autonomy. In the following we focus on education and (to a lesser extent) healthcare. Universal access to education is guaranteed under Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights. A commitment to respect the rights of parents to an education for their children “in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions” follows. There is, thus, a legal requirement for education provision to cater for the cultural and religious diversity, characteristic of modern European societies. In European countries, with a legacy of Church-owned schools such as is the case in Ireland the State faces significant challenges in meeting this requirement, particularly in rural areas. Consequently, families are, in some cases, disadvantaged due to their religious beliefs (or non-beliefs), and place of residence. Access to suitable education for children with disabilities is also an issue of significant contention in some Member States, where, again, access may be more limited in rural or peripheral areas than in urban regions. In both cases, social exclusion and injustice have a strong spatial dimension (Bock et al 2015; D5.2). Significantly, the right to both education and emergency healthcare, which are set out in the European Convention on Human Rights, applies to all, irrespective of their citizenship or residency status. In the case of Hamburg, it was established that the school authorities are not required to report children or the families of children without legal residency status to the relevant authorities. Similarly, it was clarified that hospitals can provide emergency treatment for people ‘without papers’. Nevertheless, obstacles remain in practice, as many persons without residency status (or unclear residency status) fear that accessing public services might result in deportation (Diakonie Hamburg, 2009). Although data are limited, it can be expected that vulnerable and marginalised groups, notably some migrant communities, face obstacles to accessing basic public services across Europe. In many cases, the rights of those seeking asylum are also significantly curtailed during the application process, which may take a number of years.

Education, more generally, is a critical driver in reducing social inequality and social exclusion, and can be an enabler of integration and inter-culturalism. Educational attainment increases earning potential and life chances. This is the core focus of many quantitative analyses of social inequality and exclusion. The content of school curricula, however, is also highly influential in communicating a particular image of society which may or may not be inclusive of all social and cultural groups. History and geography curricula, for example, are of necessity highly selective and may centre on particular national historical narratives, with limited reference to other European (and non-European) countries. Similarly, the literature taught in schools often reflects a national canon, and in some federal states, such as Germany and Belgium, curricula reflect regional identities. School education may thus contribute significantly to producing state-centric, or in some cases ethno-centric views of the world, characterised by sharp division between ‘national’ and ‘international’, ‘us’ and ‘them’. Families with a Turkish migration background living in Germany, for example, have found that Turkish history and culture does not feature in the German school curriculum, despite the large size of the Turkish community in the country (Bota et al. 2012). Exclusion and the representation of otherness are even more acute in many of the school curricula among countries in the Balkans (Ognjenović and Jozelić, 2020). School education influences the formation of collective identity in society (Foroutan, 2019). This is particularly relevant for migrant and other minority groups who may feel that their history, culture, beliefs and values are not adequately represented. It

is also highly relevant in the case of regions where questions of identity, history and belonging and are politically contested, as discussed below.

## 4. Regionalist Movements and Spatial Justice

IMAJINE WP7 examines movements towards territorial empowerment or autonomy across twelve case studies located in eight European countries. Regionalist movements comprise political and civil society actors who seek to challenge the existing territorial settlement and/or associated governance arrangements and exert some form of ‘territorial empowerment’ at a sub-state regional scale. Such actors are influential players in regional-, and at times, state-level politics. Concepts and perceptions of injustice and inequality are often central to the political claims of regionalist movements and key to explaining their capacity to mobilise support for challenging the status quo. Theoretical explanations of regionalism in Europe have attributed the evolution of regionalist politics to structural differences between core and peripheral areas, found across three dimensions: economic, political and cultural (Rokkan and Unwin, 1983). Territorial challenges to the state may thus be understood as a response from the periphery to shifting economic, cultural and political circumstances (D7.1). The spatial converse is the case in respect of Catalonia and Lombardy, which are core economic regions in their respective states, and in which several citizens resent what they perceive to be a subsidisation of laggard regions. It is increasingly recognised, however that it is necessary to go beyond rationalist and structuralist explanations of the emergence and evolution of regionalist movements, and to focus more on the ways in which regionalist actors strategically mobilise political support. Following Keating (1998, 9), it may be argued that regionalist actors exercise a key role in making sense of structural inequalities and translating these into political arguments (D7.1). From this perspective, regionalist movements are one aspect of territorial politics within contested plurinational states. They may be interpreted as one element of an unsettling or disruption of the Westphalian model of nation-states as the primary locus of territorial governance. Within this context, questions of identity, inclusion and exclusion are bound up with perceptions of material inequality and injustice.

As such, the development of perceptions of territorial inequalities and spatial justice in territorial autonomy movements can be summarised as (adapted from IMAJINE D7.1):

1. In general, regionalist actors’ perceptions of territorial inequalities have focused on political and socio-economic realities, with much less attention paid to cultural and environmental considerations.
2. In particular, perceptions of political unfairness and socio-economic injustice have underpinned regionalist actors’ demands for the empowerment of ‘their’ territory in order to create a fairer, more just set of territorial relationships.
3. In practice, these calls for territorial empowerment have assumed a range of forms, with the nature and scope of territorial change claimed varying across cases and actors, as well as over time.
4. More specifically, regionalist actors have shifted from pursuing ‘moderate’ strategies of territorial empowerment during the 2000s, to more ‘radical’ strategies in the last decade; they are often, however, also highly pragmatic and pursue long- and short-term territorial goals simultaneously in order to change (and improve) their territorial reality.

5. What nevertheless unites regionalists is the belief that ‘their’ territory is the appropriate scale for addressing territorial inequalities and achieving a fairer, more just future for their citizens.

Although cultural considerations may play a secondary role in the perception of territorial inequalities, questions of identity, heritage, landscape and language may play an important symbolic role in the articulation of territorial claims and the construction of alternative territorial imaginaries. Indeed, in some cases, regionalist politics may draw on a selective or mythological interpretation of past events.

The case studies, furthermore, demonstrate the relevance and role of plural understandings of normative concepts such as development, justice, well-being and the ‘good life’ and the need for attention to the different ways in which these concepts are manifested and articulated in diverse spatial and temporal contexts. The researchers conclude that a nuanced approach to addressing questions of spatial justice requires an in-depth, situated understanding of local contexts, attuned to the experiences and perceptions of specific actors in specific places of territorial disparities and inequalities (D7.2, v). It may be noted, however, that territorial contestation at the regional level can lead to an increased marginalization of minority groups, such as more recent immigrant communities, which do fit neatly within political narratives of identity-building. Such narratives tend to emphasise cultural homogeneity and simplified categories of ‘us and ‘them’ which poorly reflect the more complex realities of social-cultural relations and identity construction in contemporary European societies (e.g. Geoghegan 2008; Hart 2020).

Regional movements’ pursuit of territorial empowerment, in the majority of cases, concerns a desire for some form of decentralization of policy competencies and public service provision to the regional scale. This may be associated with a dissatisfaction with current institutional arrangements and a concern to increase the democratic accountability and efficiency of decision-making. In both Scotland and Wales, for example, the devolution of powers and responsibilities to the Scottish and Welsh governments has been accompanied by moves to increase cross-sectoral policy coordination and integration through strategic spatial planning (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger 2006; Haughton et al 2010; see also Colomb & Tomaney 2020). Regionalist political actors work from the assumption that the territory they represent is the appropriate one to address perceived inequalities and injustices. The case studies further indicate the strategic nature of regionalist politics, involving the negotiation of short-term policy objectives and long-term political objectives and exploiting windows of opportunity as they arise. Within the European context, regionalist movements may be embedded within transnational networks of solidarity, with, for example Scottish and Flemish nationalists expressing sympathy for and closely following political developments in Catalonia (Geoghegan 2015; Cetrà 2019).

## 5. Relationships between Social Equality, Public Service Provision and Regional Autonomy

In the following, we outline key conclusions pertaining to identified relationships between social equality, public service provision and regional autonomy. Conclusions specific to contested territories and regionalist movements are listed separately:

- **Decentralisation** of public service provision or decision-making autonomy to a sub-national regional scale **does not represent a panacea** for addressing issues of perceived or actual regional inequality or spatial injustice. The principle of **subsidiarity** nevertheless provides a key guiding principle for the allocation of competencies and decision-making capacities within a multi-level governance system.
- Public service provision and policy-making in the EU occurs within **a complex multi-level governance context**. Policy-making capacities for a particular set of competencies rarely rest at one particular level within a governance hierarchy. Neat distinctions between policy development at higher spatial scales and implementation at local or regional scales are not always found in practice. This also applies to policy responsibilities for addressing social inequalities and spatial justice.
- The extent to which institutional arrangements for multi-level governance are strictly hierarchical varies according to **governance culture, legal tradition and constitutional imperatives**, with considerable **diversity across Europe**.
- The experience of large federal states, such as Germany and quasi-federal states such as Spain, indicates that a **high degree of financial autonomy** at both the municipal and federal state (i.e. Länder) scales can **compound socio-spatial inequalities** as the scope for the progressive redistribution of public finances is more limited.
- It is necessary to distinguish clearly between **local and regional governance arrangements** and their respective roles which may be overlapping, contradictory or complementary – depending on socio-political factors - in addressing social inequality. **Community-led local development** (CLLD) initiatives can play a useful role in addressing social disparities and development challenges, irrespective of the operation of regional governance structures.
- Increased decision-making capacity and autonomy in the provision of public services at sub-state regional scales may allow for greater scope for the development of **innovative forms of integrated territorial governance and place-based policies**. Such policies may be more readily adapted to the specificities of **local and regional circumstances** and more responsive to issues of **cultural diversity and identity**.
- Public service provision is instrumental in the creation (and distribution) of **regional public goods**, improving **regional accessibility**, reducing social and territorial inequalities and promoting **social, economic and territorial cohesion**.

Conclusions specific to contested territories and regionalist movements:

- Despite the **prevalence of contested territories** (sub-state regions with active regionalist movements) in Europe and their relevance with respect to territorial cohesion and spatial justice, they **rarely feature in the official policy discourse**. The TAEU 2030 makes reference to the comparatively **high level of territorial diversity** in Europe as well as to regions with

geographical specificities, and it makes a strong case for the adoption of place-based policies, but does not acknowledge that **existing territorial relations** may themselves be contested and a **source of actual or perceived socio-spatial injustice**.

- A **radicalisation of regionalist movements** has occurred in last decade and transboundary linkages between these movements have intensified. Further empirical research and analysis is required to determine the **possible future implications** of these developments. **Scenario-development exercises** should incorporate the possibility of **increased territorial fragmentation** and **regional autonomy** in future decades, among a range of alternative scenarios.
- **Experimentation** with innovative forms of **multi-level territorial and functional governance** may provide opportunities to address some of the key concerns of regionalist movements within the **parameters of existing state structures**. Existing cases of cross-border and metropolitan governance provide good practice examples of **innovative, transboundary governance arrangements** with the potential to increase efficiency and accountability and in decision-making and public service delivery.
- The focus of regionalist movements on **promoting or safeguarding a particular regional identity may risk excluding minority groups** who do not fit within chosen **regionalist narrative framings**, and serve to increase the sense of marginalisation or exclusion experienced by such groups.

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