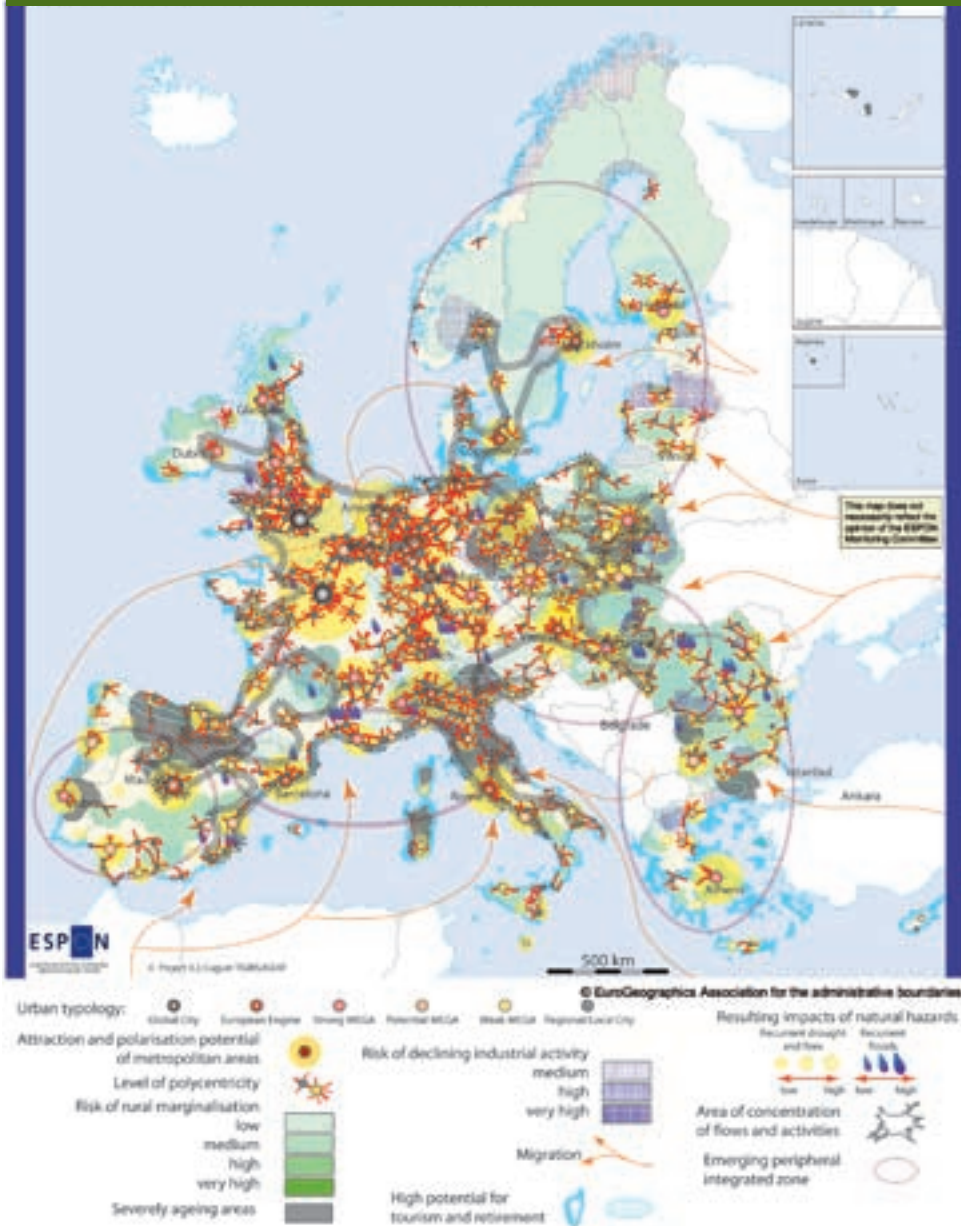


Gathering the Evidence for European Planning

Andreas Faludi

FIGURE 1
Cohesion-Oriented Scenario. Final image 2030.



In its short history, European spatial planning has been through several iterations, and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy has supported many related activities that document that process, as well as the participating individuals and entities. Following a course held in Cambridge in 2001, the Institute published the book *European Spatial Planning* (Faludi 2002) on the movement's early years when the European Union (EU) had no particular planning mandate. Rather, the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) was an initiative of the member states, supported by the European Commission.

INTERREG, a so-called Community Initiative, set up a related program specifically to elaborate on the ESDP. Under INTERREG many thousands of collaborative, hands-on exercises have been cofinanced by the EU, involving tens of thousands of practitioners throughout Europe. A diffuse but noticeable effect of this learning exercise has been the Europeanization of national, regional, and local planning—one of the objectives of the ESDP. The ESDP has also been a source of inspiration for exploratory thinking on American spatial development (Carbonell and Yaro 2005).

The European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) is another key organization set up to produce the analytical base for follow-up on the ESDP. During the first round of its operation (2002–2006), ESPON pursued many relevant themes and brought together hundreds of researchers doing innovative work in both universities and consultancies. Like the

ESDP and INTERREG, ESPON has been a remarkable learning exercise, with projects undertaken by Transnational Project Groups involving consortia from across Europe, although they are dominated by North-West European partners.

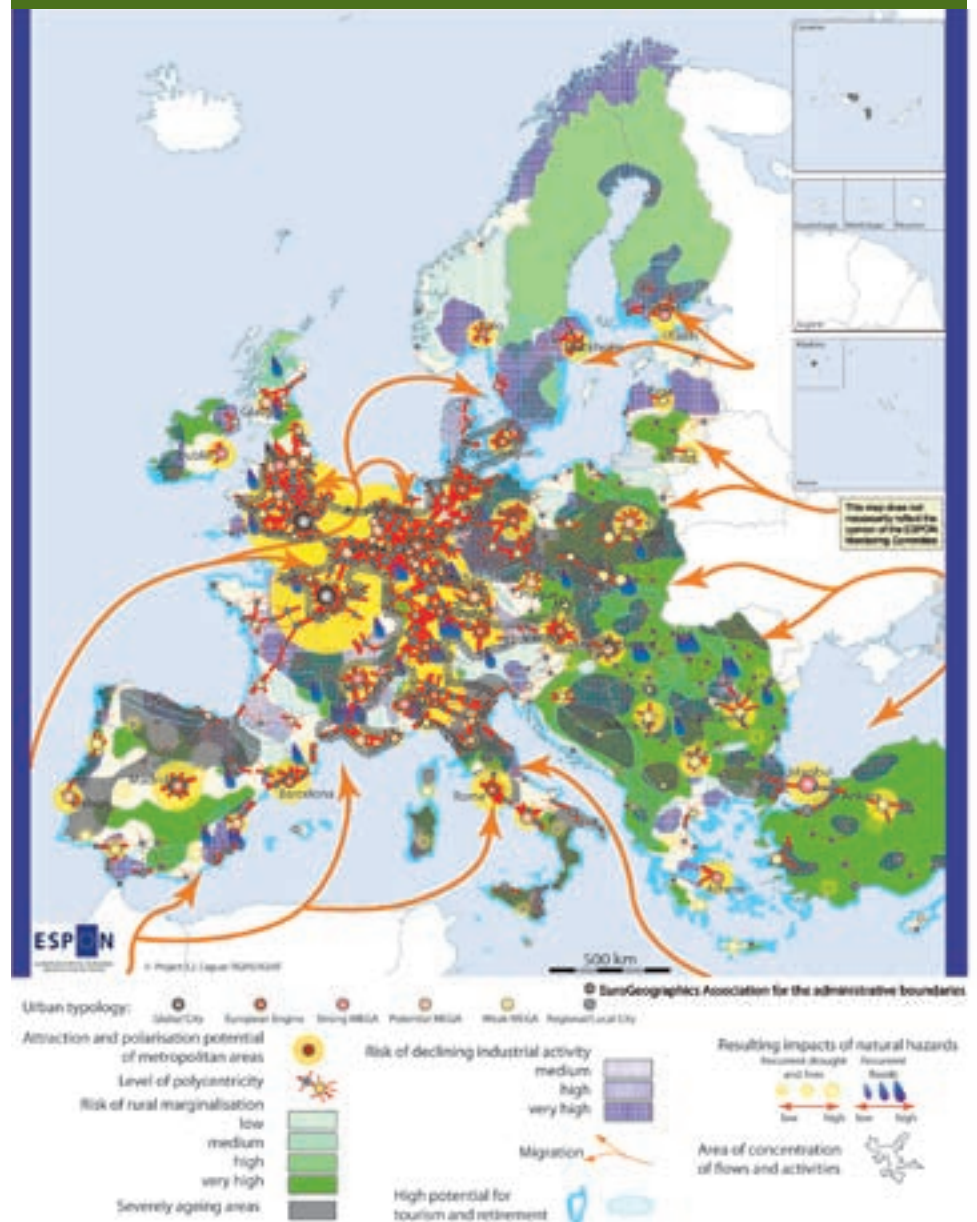
In Vienna in 2005, a second Lincoln-sponsored seminar discussed topics now collected in the book *Territorial Cohesion and the European Model of Society* (Faludi 2007). Meanwhile, developments have overtaken the ESDP, and territorial cohesion policy, too, is a somewhat uncertain proposition, simply because ratification of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe—which would have given the EU a mandate for this kind of policy—has been stalled. Instead, territorial cohesion is now being pursued indirectly (see figure 1).

Europe's New Territorial Agenda

European planners are now drawing on recent evidence generated from ESPON's research work. In fact, the newly defined *Territorial Agenda* (European Union 2007a) is but the tip of the iceberg; that is, a set of political conclusions drawn from a document called *The Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union* (European Union 2007b), based on data and insights compiled by ESPON. There are some methodological and practical problems, however. ESPON has generated hundreds of research reports (available at www.espon.eu) which require selectivity and political choices. Drawing on similar experiences of promoting "evidence-based policy" in the United Kingdom and inspired by examples from the United States, Davoudi (2006) surmises that "evidence-informed" is all that one can realistically aspire to for policy development and policy formulation on this issue.

This notion of evidence-based planning was the topic of the third in the series of Lincoln-sponsored seminars, held in early May 2007 in Luxembourg, the location of a small but effective Coordination Unit of ESPON. The program was hosted jointly by the Ministère de l'Intérieur et de Aménagement du Territoire of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Université du Luxembourg. The seminar focused in more detail on the generation and use of evidence in the ESPON framework, which in

FIGURE 2
Competitiveness-Oriented Scenario. Final image 2030.



the fullness of time may provide a stimulus for similar exercises elsewhere. Topics at the seminar included the organization and achievements of ESPON itself, key themes explored in more than 30 completed ESPON projects, and the *Territorial Agenda* formulated as a result of that research.

Context and Challenges of Evidence-based Planning

As the convener of the Lincoln seminar, I set the scene by analyzing the context within which the *Territorial Agenda* and its background document, *The Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union*,

An American's View from Luxembourg

At a Lincoln Institute seminar in Luxembourg recently, I experienced again the value of face-to-face meeting with our European colleagues. A free-flowing discussion of papers commissioned by the Institute to review research that had been conducted under the auspices of the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) began to reveal the policy and political debates that lie behind what constitutes European spatial planning today. In addition to learning more about the “facts on the ground” (for example, the relatively small effects of large EU investments in transport on regional economic performance compared to macro trends), we were able to pick up the thread of a colloquy on territorial cohesion policy where we had left it in 2005 (see Faludi 2007). Then, we found Europe at the point of rejection of the European Constitution by voters in France and the Netherlands. Today, Europe is perceived by some to be in the throes of a greater crisis, marked by climate change, energy insecurity, and potential demographic collapse.

From the perspective of an American planner, interesting developments in European thinking are evolving constantly. In addition to a “new empiricism,” reflected in the title of the accompanying article, there is an increasing recognition that attractive-sounding goals (“sustainable economic growth,” “territorial cohesion”) can mask important tradeoffs among specific objectives. For example, EU policies favoring higher GDP will likely increase greenhouse gas emissions, but a cohesion-oriented redistributive strategy, while resulting in lower European GDP, would favor meeting emissions reductions goals. Looking more closely at cohesion policy, we find that its consequences for spatial equity play out differently at different scales. EU cohesion policies may decrease inequality between countries, but result in increased intra-country spatial inequality, as capital cities prosper while smaller centers perish.

As Andreas Faludi notes, perhaps the greatest difference facing large-scale planners working in Europe and in the United States has to do with demography. Europe is facing a population deficit by mid-century of the same order as the expected U.S. population growth for that period. This trend, of course, leads to the difficult topic of immigration policy, which forms part of the tension between a continental vision for Europe and one that places it within a greater regional “neighborhood” and the wider world.

— Armando Carbonell
Senior Fellow and Chair
Department of Planning and Urban Form

are being debated. The *Territorial Agenda* includes the work program that the ministers of the now 27 member states of the EU responsible for spatial planning and development discussed at a May meeting in Leipzig in the Federal Republic of Germany. That meeting adopted the document whose full title is *The Territorial Agenda of the European Union: Towards a More Competitive Europe of Diverse Regions*. Its purpose is to address Europe’s competitiveness, a topic that alludes to the Lisbon Strategy, under which the EU wants to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The diversity of Europe’s regions may be conducive to achieving this goal (see figure 2).

The other participants at the Lincoln seminar have all been directly involved in ESPON. Cliff Hague and Verena Hachmann addressed the organization, achievements, and future of the ESPON program itself, including the concerns raised by critics within the network about pressures of time, political interference, and the sheer availability of data. Kai Böhme and Thiemo Eser—both closely involved in the work of the ESPON Coordination Unit—focused on an important substantive issue, Territorial Impact Assessment, in the context of various other assessment procedures to which new EU legislation is routinely being submitted. They also related the results of various impact studies conducted in the ESPON framework.

Janne Antikainen of Finland put polycentricity under the looking glass, relating it to the Lisbon Strategy and its pursuit of Europe’s competitiveness. Finland, home to Nokia, is seen as a model in the pursuit of competitiveness and innovation. The author differentiated between polycentricity as it pertains to urban systems and as a strategic policy concept regarding the promotion of knowledge and innovation.

Diogo de Abreu from the University of Lisbon discussed the perennial issue of planning for demographic decline in Europe, which is likely to condition spatial and social policies. This widely accepted prognosis is the exact opposite of the situation in the United States, where the expectation of massive population growth and the attendant urban expansion has occasioned concern for the shape of America in 2050. In Europe, replacing the diminishing labor force with immigrants to meet the needs of an aging population presents a possible solution. De Abreu discussed varied

levels of immigration that might be needed, as well as a variety of demographic indicators associated with numerous plausible scenarios.

Three other sets of authors draw on one or more ESPON projects that emphasize sustainability, a theme of great concern to Europeans and one in which the EU has a leading role. Michael Wegener and Klaus Spiekermann from Germany focused on accessibility, competitiveness, and cohesion as the European territory is being transformed by the accelerated speed of movement, including high speed trains. (A French train on the new Paris to Strasbourg route recently set a world record.) Accessibility at the global and European scale is seen as a core determinant of competitiveness. However, there are implications for two other major EU goals—balanced development and sustainability. Growing mobility is one of the reasons for the failure to meet the Kyoto greenhouse gas emission targets underwritten by the EU, and for the growing vulnerability to energy price shocks.


Philipp Schmidt-Thomé and Stefan Greiving discussed the implications for spatial development of natural hazards and climate change, pointing out that risk patterns are site-specific. Spatial planning can play an important role in a strategy to reduce such vulnerability. Jacques Robert and Moritz Lennert reported on the spatial scenario project, one of the integrative studies under ESPON, which explores spatial consequences of political choices considered fundamental in today's policy context in Europe. The main message is that issues seen as fundamental now may not be the ones with the greatest impact in the future. Climate change, accelerating globalization, the aging of the population, and a new energy paradigm urgently need to be taken into account. Once again it should be noted that the *Territorial Agenda* reflects these growing European concerns.

Claude Grasland and Pierre Beckouche of France discussed another challenge arising from Europe's position in the wider world. Countries like China, India, Japan, and the United States are considered competitors of Europe. One way of facing this competition would be to strengthen existing links with Europe's neighbors, in particular those on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. The population of the so-called Maghreb—Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco—is young, has high levels of educational achievement, and represents a great resource for a Europe eager for new residents. The lure of migrating from Central and

Eastern Europe to the “old” member states of the EU is already leading to shortages of qualified labor in those transition economies.

Kai Böhme and Bas Waterhout focused on the Europeanization of planning, one of the stated aims of the ESDP and an outcome of other policies that, almost unintentionally, influence territorial development in Europe.

Thiemo Eser and Peter Schmeitz, both centrally involved in the process of preparing the documents under discussion and the research material on which they are based, presented a thematic, an institutional, and a political-strategic perspective. They also developed story lines based on each of these views that revealed both strengths and weaknesses and hidden agendas in *The Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union*.

In summary, this seminar explored how the search for evidence to support the ESDP agenda—now going under the flag of *The Territorial Agenda of the European Union*—had taken place, and what the evidence in some key areas had been. It also demonstrated that a learning exercise like that of ESPON may contribute to shaping such a political agenda that may also serve as a source of inspiration for fellow planners across the Atlantic Ocean. 

▶ ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ANDREAS FALUDI is chair of spatial policy systems in Europe at Delft University of Technology, OTB Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies, The Netherlands. He has been the seminar coordinator and editor of the books in the Lincoln Institute's series on European spatial planning. Contact: A.K.F.Faludi@tudelft.nl.

▶ REFERENCES

- Carbonell, Armando, and Robert D. Yaro. 2005. American spatial development and the new megalopolis. *Land Lines* 17(2): 1–4.
- Davoudi, Simin. 2006. Evidence-based planning: Rhetoric and reality, in Andreas Faludi, editor, *Evidence-based Planning* (Special Issue), disP 165, 42(2): 14–24.
- European Union. 2007a. The territorial agenda of the European Union (http://www.bmvbs.de/Anlage/original_996736/Territorial-Agenda-of-the-EU.pdf)
- . 2007b. The territorial state and perspectives of the European Union (http://www.bmvbs.de/Anlage/original_988203/The-Territorial-State-and-Perspectives-of-the-European-Union.pdf)
- Faludi, Andreas, ed. 2002. *European spatial planning*. Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
- . 2007. *Territorial cohesion and the European model of society*. Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.