Interpretations and applications of the EU objective of Territorial Cohesion: An analysis of EU Cohesion Policy Programmes in 2014-20

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ABBREVIATIONS

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<tr>
<td>BBSR</td>
<td>Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung</td>
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<td>CE</td>
<td>Central Europe</td>
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<td>CF</td>
<td>Cohesion Fund</td>
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<td>EAFRD</td>
<td>European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>EMFF</td>
<td>European Maritime and Fisheries Fund</td>
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<td>ERDF</td>
<td>European Regional Development Fund</td>
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<td>ESDP</td>
<td>European Spatial Development Perspective</td>
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<td>ESF</td>
<td>European Social Fund</td>
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<td>ESIF</td>
<td>European Structural &amp; Investment Funds</td>
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<td>ESPON</td>
<td>European Spatial Planning Observation Network</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>IP</td>
<td>Internet Protocol</td>
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<td>JTS</td>
<td>Joint Technical Secretariat</td>
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<td>NSRP</td>
<td>North Sea Region Programme</td>
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<td>NUTS</td>
<td>Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics</td>
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<td>SME</td>
<td>Small and Medium Enterprise</td>
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<td>SWOT</td>
<td>Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat</td>
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<td>TA</td>
<td>Territorial Agenda</td>
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<td>TC</td>
<td>Territorial Cohesion</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEFU</td>
<td>Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEN-T</td>
<td>Trans European Transport Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEU</td>
<td>Treaty on European Union</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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Summary

“Territorial Cohesion” has been a topic of intense debate within the EU Policy lexicon. This has been partly because it’s still in cycles of interpretations and is in a quest for an acceptable and a discreet operational framework. However, parallel to ongoing discourses, Cohesion Policy for the period 2014-20 has been rolled out. The thesis is an attempt to examine and suggest, as to what extent, the current architecture of Cohesion Policy is contributing to achieve “Territorial Cohesion”, a Treaty objective, in its programmes, particularly the transnational programmes under the European Territorial Co-operation objective. “Territorial Cohesion” has been analyzed in specific Cohesion Policy regulations, programmes and validated by stakeholder inputs. A suitable theoretical outline, i.e. “conformance” and “performance” framework and a qualitative research approach have been employed to arrive at the conclusions. Cohesion Policy in its current cycle is focused on delivering Europe 2020 strategy’s priorities of “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”. The articulation of “Territorial Cohesion” objectives therefore is inadequately done in the scope and theme as well as in “programming” of Cohesion Policy. Interventions are proposed in its architecture to finesse Cohesion Policy-Territorial Cohesion interface, key to meeting Cohesion Policy goals.
1. INTRODUCTION

In this section, a summary of various terminology and policy discourses dominating “Territorial Cohesion” and Cohesion Policy are introduced in order to set the foundation for undertaking the present research. The evolution of “Territorial Cohesion” is woven around introduction of various interchangeable terminologies (yet substantially different in meaning) in the EU Policy discourse over a period of time (Faludi & Peyrony, 2011). “Territorial Cohesion” has progressed from the status of ambivalence to a Treaty objective. A discussion on the current status of the literature and academic predisposition towards “Territorial Cohesion” and related themes will provide a starting point, to figure out the research aims and goals, objectives as well as relevance of the research. Finally, a summary on structure of thesis is explained.

1.1 Background

At the very outset, three key words are dwelled all along the thesis and at the same time extensively found in the EU policy discourse, are explained in terms of their causal relationship. This would also reflect upon the title of the thesis. The three key terms are “territory or space”, “Territorial Cohesion” and “Cohesion Policy”.

“Territory or space” as well as its related terms (adjectives) i.e. “territorial or spatial” aren’t same but the former is a subset of the latter, “space” is a more abstract term, not limited to the “territory” but subsumes along with territory other socioeconomic, political and cultural dynamics over a larger extent including the intangibles (Schön, 2005). Territories are “defined spatial units”, forming “political and administrative” divisions. Spatial themes extend beyond specific territories such as “spatial organization of society, relationships between territories, flows of people and goods, networks, corridors, and settlement structures”. Schön (2005) characterizes that most of the European policies including Cohesion Policy are focused on territories.

Apart from these definitions, the particular aspect of “space” which affects the “territory” and paramount here is the alteration in its scale which Gualini (2006) interprets as “scalar structuration”. It affects the “organization of space” as well as polity in EU. This “scalar structuration” also interpreted as a “process of regionalization” has mobilized territories as new units in the national and supranational policy making. The delineation of newer territorial units for Regional Policy such as NUTS classification is an example of this phenomenon (Gualini, 2006). Cohesion Policy has been the precursor in the process of regionalization or “scalar structuration” of EU since early 1970’s and gained ever more traction after its reform in 1988 under Jacques Delores, as a key instrument of EU integration and generating “additionality”. Introduced as an instrument to “reduce regional and social imbalance”, EU Cohesion Policy derives its inspiration from the French model of “aménagement du territoire”. The French model emphasizes a coherent relationship between sectoral and spatial policies to achieve greater “economic integration” and “distribution of the resulting rewards in both geographical and social terms” (Barnier et al., 2003). It is in this French social and egalitarian model that is now regarded as “European Social Model” that roots of “Territorial Cohesion” are ingrained. This causal relationship of Cohesion Policy, “Territorial Cohesion” and European social model is explained by Davoudi (2005) and interpreted here under as:

Cohesion Policy embodies and reflects envisioning a European “social model”, which aims for a “regulated market economy with a comprehensive system of social security” in order to offer a “protection against economic insecurity and inequality”. On the other hand, “Territorial Cohesion” embodies that, “people should not be disadvantaged by wherever they happen to live or work in the Union” and have non-discriminatory access to general services.
of economic interest. The location of people and services therefore, one can conclude influences “access to economic and social opportunities” which the prevalent social model envisions for its citizens.

Apart from the spatial justice dimension, the notion of economic capital being linked to the “social, symbolic and cultural dimensions” and its productivity consequent on the location of actors or “agents”, “territory” has become a key element in the policy discourse [(such as OECD-(Camagni, 2001)) including that of Cohesion Policy (Faludi & Peyrony, 2011). Where Cohesion Policy is linked to “European integration”, “Territorial Cohesion” exemplifies “territorial interdependence and solidarity”

The articulation of Cohesion Policy to be “place based” (Barca, 2009) or undertaking “territorial dimension” in policymaking has been making its plea much before the formal adoption of “Territorial Cohesion” in the Lisbon Treaty. The very first pronouncements, which led the introduction of “Territorial Cohesion” acronyms were made in ESDP (EC, 1999), where it was outlined the need for a framework for integrated and comprehensive “territorial governance” in EU (Faludi & Peyrony, 2011). Post inclusion of “notion” of “Territorial Cohesion” in Treaty of Amsterdam, “Territorial Cohesion” has been a regular feature in successive Cohesion Policy reports as “to describe the uneven development of the EU territory and particularly the concentration of population and economic activity in the core area of Europe”, or what ESDP called it, the “pentagon” (Davoudi, 2005). The role of “Territorial Cohesion” in facilitating the European social model as Davoudi (2005) explains, is further endorsed by its introduction in the Lisbon Treaty making it explicit that “space or territory” promotes competitiveness and to addresses “regional and social inequities”(Faludi & Peyrony, 2011).

The legal basis of the Cohesion Policy is governed by the Lisbon Treaty where “Territorial Cohesion” is introduced as the “fundamental tenet” along with social and economic cohesion (McCann, Ortega-Arjiles, 2012). This is complemented by set of regulations and frameworks to realize Treaty objectives and coherent implementation of various EU funds. “Reinforcing territorial cohesion” is one among the six key aims outlined in the legislative proposals for the Cohesion Policy period 2014-20 (EC, 2011).

“Territorial cohesion” therefore as a concept, emerged in EU policy discourse to render EU polices more “effective and efficient” (Waterhout & Zonneveld, 2005). EU policies are directed take place in “territories (cities and regions)”, the success or failure is dependent upon the “right configuration of assets in specific spaces” i.e. “integrated bundles of public goods”, term coined by Barca (2009). It is argued that “existing discontinuities and development gaps” can be understood in a more coherent manner through the “territorial” lens and add to the effectiveness of the EU polices (Waterhout & Zonneveld, 2005). It became a new terminology used by Commission, rather a more “convenient label” subsuming “place, space and territory” (Faludi, 2013).

1.2 Rational for the Research

Before, inclusion in the Lisbon Treaty, the fate or trajectory of the “Territorial Cohesion” in Cohesion Policy discourse has been guided by assertion of successive presidencies, for e.g. it did not find any mention during UK’s presidency in 2005. Therefore, it might suggest that after adoption of Lisbon treaty, “Territorial Cohesion” should have emerged as key concept in Cohesion Policy discourse and its programmes. The recent studies done by the Böhme et al., (2011) under Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, however, cites a near disconnect between Cohesion Policy and “Territorial Cohesion” objectives, which extends to other EU polices too. Further articulated, it
suggests absence of any “serious attempt” in the recent times to effectively link “Territorial Cohesion” into Cohesion Policy making processes. The costs of “non-coordination” are high in view of little efforts to “explore synergies” between Cohesion Policy and “Territorial Cohesion”. These costs of non-coordination range from over concentration of urban areas, exclusion of peripheral areas to inefficient processes of managing multi-level governance structures. Böhme et al., (2011) attempts to elucidate the reasons for near absence of territorial kindling in Cohesion and other EU polices, which offers evidences of policy indifference towards “Territorial Cohesion”, proposing some clues to structure research questions of the present thesis. The factors include:

- “the lack of mutual understanding on policy grounds” (e.g. the failure to translate provisions of Territorial cohesion into “policy provisions or regulations”),
- “the complexity of the territorial approach, exacerbated by its technical jargon, which may appear somewhat esoteric to outsiders”,
- “the low profile of EU authorities in the territorial debate due to a lack of formal competences to make policy decisions on territorial development”,
- “The lack of convincing evidence on the added value of the territorial approach for policy effectiveness”.

Böhme et al., (2011)

The EU Cohesion Policy from the perspective of a Treaty statute and its budgetary expanse, suggests that as a matter of policy discourse, it is imperative to undertake and investigate how expansive or elaborate “Territorial Cohesion is spelled, and to what extent it is preset in Cohesion Policy programmes. Lately, there has been sufficient echo among the policy and academic circles that “Territorial Cohesion” should influence the EU policy-making process both “content-wise and process-wise” (Böhme, et al., 2011). The recent efforts in articulating “Territorial Cohesion” objectives with Cohesion Policy goal such as in in TA-2007, TA-2020, as well as in Community Strategic Guidelines (EC, 2006), ESPON Synthesis Report (EC, 2007), warrant an analysis of territorial dimension of “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” (Faludi & Peyrony, 2011).The latter being the key focus of the Cohesion Policy during the period 2014-20.

The present research therefore attempts to comprehend the understating as well as interpretations of “Territorial Cohesion”, which have evolved over a course of time. It also attempts to analyze to what extent it is explicit as policy objective in the EU policy realm, particularly the EU Cohesion Policy and its programmes. “Territorial Cohesion” which is has now a “formal status” and shared responsibility between the Commission and the Member States, in every likelihood should have altered the “content and nature” of decisions and decision making processes which these policies embody. Böhme et al. (2011) argues that “Territorial Cohesion” is no longer a “distinct” or a separate policy tool but the Treaty provision imply that it should “feed” into the existing EU policies.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study

Various concepts which led to recognition and adoption of “Territorial Cohesion” and its objectives have appeared post second report on social and economic cohesion such as “spatial balance” (second report), “balanced development”(third report) and so on (EC,2001; EC,2004). Othengrafen and Cornett (2013) suggests that even though “Territorial Cohesion” has been adopted as a treaty objective it remains a somewhat loose “collection of self-contradictory concepts” evolved over period of time and to an extent “relatively unelaborated”. This have resulted in an a condition of uncertainty as how to use the “Territorial Cohesion” by various stakeholders and policymakers in fulfilling the Treaty objectives while they attempt to implement or frame various polices, programme
or projects within the Cohesion Policy gambit. Therefore a coherent “Territorial Cohesion” storyline eludes policy makers.

The architecture of Cohesion Policy which guides operationalization of its programmes is laid in its legislative architecture i.e. regulations laying down the “provisions (common, general and fund specific)” for various ESI funds including ERDF. The regulations are key in defining the process and content of the programmes. The regulations are framed by Commission whereas member states and other stakeholders structure the programmes within the ambit of these regulations. Framing regulations and laying down provisions are exclusivity of the Commission where Treaty objectives and Union Strategy delineate the structure of the fund driven programmes. However, Cohesion Policy programmes are substantiated for deliverables adapted to the needs of the region and aligned to the overall objectives of the Cohesion Policy. The outcomes of the Cohesion Policy programmes to echo a positive co-relation between the needs of the region and Cohesion Policy objectives/Treaty Objectives would depend upon the capacity of member states to articulate, what we call the generative capacity or efficacy.

The research study aims to analyze the legislative and generative capacity of policy makers and actors in explicitly introducing “Territorial Cohesion” objectives into Cohesion Policy architecture. It attempts to analyze the extent of rhetoric surrounding “Territorial Cohesion”, is introduced and referred in Cohesion Policy and its programmes. Therefore, the aim of the present thesis is to “To investigate how the objectives of “Territorial Cohesion” are achieved through Cohesion Policy and how efficaciously they are structured in its programmes”. To translate the research aim into tangible outcomes, it has two pronged objectives which it intends to undertake:

- How has Cohesion Policy articulated and interpreted the Lisbon Treaty objective of “Territorial Cohesion”?
- To analyze how “Territorial Cohesion” objectives have been adapted, articulated and interpreted in the Cohesion Policy programmes?

1.4 Research Problem

“Territorial Cohesion” has joined the “ranks of the key policy aims” of social and economic cohesion recognized in TEU and TEFU for various EU developmental polices, including Cohesion Policy. However the tradition of “intergovernmental territorial planning” among the member states on one hand and “multiannual programming” with respect to EU Cohesion Policy on the other hand, have been two independent and disjointed processes till the publication of Barca report (EC, 2009).

Subsequently, Green paper on “Territorial Cohesion” (CEC, 2008) and Territorial Agenda -2020 (Territorial Agenda, 2011) have been instrumental in disseminating the understanding of “Territorial Cohesion” and its linkage with the other EU developmental policies, including Cohesion Policy. The inadequate co-ordination between “Territorial Cohesion” and Cohesion Policy find sufficient evidence in reporting of Swedish presidencies in later half of 2009 (SPEU, 2010). It suggested that there are evidences of “increasing tendency towards sectorisation” which Cohesion Policy should curtail by making use of Lisbon Treaty objective of “Territorial Cohesion”.

Lately, there has been an opportunity to assess how far this recommendation has been adhered while we analyze the Cohesion Policy for the current cycle (2104-20) in finalization of ESIF guidelines (EC, 2013; EC, 2013a) and Common Strategic Framework or CSF (EC, 2012a; EC,2012b). Examining this relationship, which would shape the desired outcomes of Cohesion Policy and co-operation programmes, would offer answers how far “Territorial Cohesion” and Cohesion Policy has been
synergized. The action of various public bodies, private enterprises and other stakeholders taking place in different territories of EU is influenced by the Cohesion Policy. Consequently the generation of “flows of goods, people and ideas, economies of scale and scope (or de-concentration, diseconomies)” is all impacted (Böhme et al., 2011).

Emanating from the above discussions, the thesis undertakes the research problem as to analyze; “How the concept of ‘Territorial cohesion’ is appropriated in the Cohesion Policy and to what extent it is articulated in its programmes for desired outcomes?” The “desired outcomes” refer to the treaty objective of Territorial cohesion

1.5 Research Questions
As evident the research study dwells “Territorial Cohesion” at two tiers, firstly at the Cohesion Policy (regulations & provisions) and secondly at a tier where Cohesion Policy programmes are structured for content and operationalization of various projects. Therefore, the research questions can be distinguished at their discerning focus whether at the policy level or at the programme level, as explained in Table 1

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<th>Research Question (RQ)</th>
<th>Sub-question (SQ)</th>
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<tr>
<td>RQ1: How the Lisbon Treaty objective of “Territorial Cohesion” has been articulated and interpreted in the Cohesion Policy and elucidate various factors that affect its (“Territorial Cohesion”) discourse in the Cohesion Policy.</td>
<td>SQ1. To analyzes how “Territorial Cohesion” discourse (storylines) has evolved and subsequently translated in Cohesion Policy.</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Cohesion Policy Level</td>
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<td>SQ2. To comprehend the role of various EU discourses such as budgetary debates or Europeanization debates effect in orienting the discourse of “Territorial Cohesion” in “Cohesion Policy”.</td>
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<td>RQ2: How efficaciously “Territorial Cohesion” objectives are structured in Cohesion Policy programmes for their desired outcomes.</td>
<td>SQ1. To analyze how “Territorial Cohesion” is interpreted and articulated in the co-operation Programmes.</td>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Cohesion Policy at Programme Level</td>
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<td>SQ2. To comprehend structural changes introduced in the Cohesion Policy for delivery of co-operation programs vis-à-vis territorial focus.</td>
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1.6 Scientific and Societal Relevance of the Research

1.6.1 Scientific Relevance:
A look into various academic literatures on Cohesion Policy and “Territorial Cohesion” suggests that while the former dwells improving or critiquing upon ways of fostering “European Integration” (Faludi & Peyrony, 2011) in order to reduce “regional disparities”, the latter focuses on in its interpretation cycles and ways of introducing it in “EU Policy discourses”. In a way a silo approach, which is further corroborated in the sixth report on “Social Economic and Territorial Cohesion” that modes of articulation of Territorial Cohesion in Cohesion Policy (i.e. requisite responses in Cohesion Policy) is a still to pass beyond the annals of debates (EC, 2014 pp-211). Further, “Territorial Cohesion” finds very scant mention in EU-2020 policy document, except a mention for facilitation of general services of economic interest (EC, 2012). Also, the EU debates (budgetary debates for fund allocation) till recently have mostly been confined to objective Convergence, Regional
Competitiveness and Employment objectives i.e. “Growth and Jobs agenda” in the current cycle of cohesion Policy. Davoudi (2005) has emphasized that the European social model which Cohesion Policy foresee to achieve is impossible without integrating spatial justice (or “Territorial Cohesion”) into Cohesion Policy. “Territorial Cohesion” as a Treaty objective reinforced a consensus in the EU polity that it is perquisite for growth and development but evidences of it in shaping “policy processes” (in content, partnership principles, “performance indicators” or “ex-ante conditionality”) or as a decision making process is still farfetched (Böhme, et. al., 2011).

The present research would aid the scientific and academic literature in articulating “Territorial Cohesion” and Cohesion Policy interface. The researchers in academic and scientific circles would be aided by this study in a comprehensive understanding of this interface both as an element of “co-ordination” and as a means of policy “integration”. It would also aid to develop as well improve various tools to measure “Territorial Cohesion” in the Cohesion Policy, which is set as perspective goal by 2020 in the 6th Cohesion report (EC,2014). It is a set case of a laboratory exercise for developing appropriate and relevant indicators for assessing/evaluating “Territorial Cohesion” in EU policy discourses. An exercise which has so far focused on selected projects or programmes.

1.6.2 Societal Relevance

The introduction of “Territorial Cohesion” in Lisbon Treaty in 2009 put a near end to the epistemological discourse by suggesting that “space or territory” is relevant to promoting “competitiveness and to addressing regional and social inequities” along with social and economic cohesion as addressed by EU Cohesion Policy. Barca Report (2009) further outlined for “the right configuration of assets” in specific spaces i.e. “integrated bundles of public goods” or in other words horizontal and vertical policy co-ordination in a given “territory” as precursor for “success or failure” for Delorian model of EU society.

Cohesion Policy is a public policy aimed to “promote wellbeing of people”. A budgetary provision of spending Euro 50 billion annually to offset internal market aberrations and aid development of least favored regions, a key outcome linked to the very realism of idea of EU. A clear articulation of “Territorial Cohesion” in Cohesion Policy is imperative for its success when sufficient evidence of added value of “territorial polices” has been theorized in “agglomeration”, regional and creative economics, further reinforced after its adoption as a Treaty objective.

The present research study attempts to embody “Territorial Cohesion” as key element in structuring of Cohesion Policy by articulating a clear cut interface between the two. The effectiveness of EU Cohesion Policy aims and goals is incomplete unless a due equity to “Territorial Cohesion” is provided while it is structured for its programmes. The dissemination of the present research would aid in improving the effectiveness of the Cohesion Policy resulting in the overall societal good. The outcomes of it can offer encouraging takeaways for integrating “Territorial Cohesion” in other EU policies as well.

1.7 Structure of Thesis

The thesis unfolds by presenting a short summary or abstract of the thesis. Chapter 1 which is an introductory chapter provides summary of the background of the research, rational and its societal and scientific relevance. Key research questions undertaken are also outlined.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of academic literature and critical discussions relating to different aspects of the proposed study focusing on “Territorial cohesion” and “Cohesion Policy”. Requisite theoretical framework in order to carry out the empirical analysis of the study is explained in this
Chapter 3 explains the ontological and epistemological basis of the proposed research. The research design as well as measures to address validity and reliability issues, ethical issues and other considerations is explained. Apart various documents, programmes for analysis and the basis of their selection are described in this chapter.

Chapter 4 explains the findings of the research, based on empirical analysis guided by a theoretical framework. It also includes analysis of results from stakeholder surveys. Cohesion Policy and its programmes are analyzed in this chapter. The key findings are useful in arriving at the conclusions and recommendations, as well as direction of future strands of similar research topics, included as a separate chapter 5 of the thesis.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the following section the evolution of “Territorial Cohesion” as concept and its articulation in the Cohesion Policy is explained. The developments in “Territorial Cohesion” discourse are looked through the lens of developments in Cohesion Policy rather as standalone concept. It also describes various discourses and key time lines which have impacted the introduction of “Territorial Cohesion”, a concept (CEC, 2008), into a policy discourse.

2.1 Territorial Cohesion: Summary

“Territorial Cohesion” discourse has now spanned near two decades, initiated as early as 1989 during “first informal ministerial meeting of ministers responsible for territorial planning (Nantes-France)” under Jacques Delors. It made its appearance in the EU policy discourse before the more elaborative concept of “Territorial Cohesion” appeared and later became part of the Treaty objective. This started with efforts to define territorial dimension of EU policymaking, undertaken while drafting a Europe wide “spatial framework”, “articulated by Dutch & French experts” (and other stakeholders) called European Spatial Development Perspective or ESDP (EC, 1999), a non-binding policy document. It outlined framework for integrated and comprehensive “territorial governance” in EU (Faludi, 2010; Faludi & Peyrony, 2011). It laid the emphasis for horizontal and vertical co-operation i.e. between “European Union, member states, regions” as well as between “spatial development policy and sectoral policy”. It offered three “interventions” i.e. “polycentric urban-rural development, balanced accessibility to networks(transport) and prudent management of the natural and cultural heritage of Europe” in addition numerous policy options closely linked in envisioning of EU territory and overall visions of EU” (Schön, 2005). However, ESDP soon specifically fell into the spatial planning lexicon and was muddled into the debates of subsidiarity. To overcome this disadvantage, the “European spatial policy” was reconceptualised by adding “spatial justice dimension” and coined into a new term called “Territorial Cohesion” (Dvaoudi, 2005). “Territorial Cohesion” is translated from “Cohesion territoire”, the French word, therefore has French rootings. Davoudi (2005) suggest that addition of spatial justice dimension was bargaining or a negotiating element which brought all the EU member states to accept “Territorial Cohesion”. Suddenly it subsumed the “ambiguities, interpretations” of all the member states and rather became an open source for various interpretations.

“Territorial Cohesion” has appeared in successive Cohesion Policy reports since 2001 as an objective for various goals. For e.g. Second Report on Economic and Social Cohesion (EC, 2001) to counter “uneven development of the EU territory” and “concentration of population and economic activity in the core area of Europe” i.e. Pentagon (EC, 1999). The third report on economic and social cohesion (EC, 2004) to counter increasing disparities in the enlarged EU. It defined “Territorial Cohesion” as:

“to help achieve a more balanced development by reducing existing disparities, preventing territorial imbalances and by making both sectoral policies which have a spatial impact and regional policy more coherent. The concern is also to improve territorial integration and encourage cooperation between regions”.

(EC, 2004)

A summary of key milestones, to illustrate the intensity of discourses is presented in Table 2.

Schön (2005) interprets “Territorial Cohesion” as concept which aims to “strengthen endogenous potential in territories” in order to “overcome imbalances” between them. It is linked to the “political” aim of equity i.e. “supporting weak, lagging or handicapped regions in order to diminish inequalities and disparities between the different parts of the European territory”. It also vouched for addressing the qualitative aspects of living conditions by encapsulating the idea of a “balanced”
territory. It aims for increasing “territorial capital” and development potential where the former refers to “Place-based” comparative advantages, a key asset for “endogenous development”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU Treaties and discourses</th>
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<tr>
<td>ESDP</td>
<td>(1999)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion</td>
<td>(2006)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Territorial Agenda-2020</td>
<td>(2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisbon Treaty</td>
<td>(signed, 2007, Approved 2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion</td>
<td>(2008)</td>
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<td>Barca Report</td>
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<td>Fifth Cohesion Report on Cohesion</td>
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<td>Territorial Agenda-2020</td>
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Meanwhile “Territorial Cohesion” found its way to be included both in “Commission driven” and “Member States driven”, “Community Strategic Guidelines (EC, 2006)” and Territorial Agenda-2007 respectively. At the same time the launch of new round of structural funds in the period 2007-13 again renewed the role of “territory” in EU policy making. Following the European council meetings at Lisbon and Gothenburg, a common consensus emerged that “territorially more integrated approach” would be key to achieve goals of “structural innovation” and “sustainable economic growth” in EU (Schön,2006). Among all these developments, a key event which shifted the goalpost of discussion from the need of “Territorial Cohesion” to content and use of it in EU polices, was Lisbon Treaty. Böhme, et.al (2011) interprets “Territorial Cohesion” as an element to address four key themes namely;

- **Concentration and density**: Through an efficient use of the “territorial assets or capital”;
- **Economic diversity**: By “connecting territories” i.e. a “uniform access to services of general economic interest” ;
- **Geographical diversity**: Adopting a “differentiated policy approach” to accommodate “specific” geographical challenges imposed upon a particular territory, and finally;
- **Cost of non-coordination**: By adopting an integrated policy approach and including territorial dimension in policy formulation.

However, even after deliberations with various stakeholders during the consultative process on “Territorial Cohesion”, initiated through Green paper on “Territorial Cohesion” (explained later), no consensus could be achieved on its operationalization or discreet definition. Dühr, Colomb et.al, 2010 further adds that it is difficult to have a “clear and politically agreed definition of the objective of “Territorial Cohesion”, but specifies three components which are sufficiently acknowledged in the various “academic and policy debates” i.e.

- **“Territorial quality”**: equitable and qualitative access to general services of economic interest;
- **“Territorial efficiency”**: judicious use of territorial capital, and;
- **“Territorial identity”**: “social capital” as an addendum to territorial capital.

To sum up, “Territorial Cohesion” has traversed a two decade long journey from tool to manage “concentration” and “disparity” towards a net enabler of Cohesion Policy goals.
2.2 Territorial Cohesion and Cohesion Policy Making

The introduction of “Territorial Cohesion” in the Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007 was a breakthrough event. It formalized fulfilling “Territorial Cohesion” along with social and economic cohesion as one of the objectives of EU policymaking. Schön (2005), Böhme et al., (2011), summarized the new treaty architecture introduced in Lisbon treaty as:

Lisbon Treaty, Article 2(3) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) reads: “[the Union] shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among Member States”. Article 2C (2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) further provides that “Shared competence between the Union and the Member States applies in (...) economic, social and territorial cohesion”.

However, post inclusions of “Territorial Cohesion” in the Lisbon Treaty, the efforts were largely confined to interpreting and simplifying “Territorial Cohesion” and align it with Cohesion Policy goals for tangible outcomes. The efforts can be grouped into three categories, firstly Commission driven standalone initiatives such as Green paper on “Territorial Cohesion” (CEC, 2008) and Braca Report (Barca, 2009), secondly Commission driven Cohesion Policy reports, reviewing practices and actions of past Policy cycles and lastly intergovernmental consultations. These initiatives although started at different timelines but had overlapping periods of deliberations. Also the EU-2020 objectives had fairly been disseminated while the discussion on these initiatives was undertaken.

The Green Paper on “Territorial Cohesion” (CEC, 2008) was launched by the Commission to have a “better and shared understanding of territorial cohesion and its implications for policy making”. Comments and inputs from various stakeholders such as “national government, local and regional authorities, EU institutions, economic and social partners, civil society organizations, academics and citizens” were sought. The findings suggest a convergence with the views expressed in the consultation paper i.e.

Territorial Cohesion “is a concept for ‘ensuring harmonious development’ of a diverse EU territory by an efficient use of ‘territorial assets’ in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner. The ‘territorial assets’ could range from its ‘physical, human’ or social capital’ as well as its ‘natural resources’, more appropriately the inherent features of the territory (CEC, 2008).

The two additional findings which enlarged the “Territorial Cohesion” sphere of influence were (EC, 2011b);

- It is an enabler for “sustainable development” and “complements and reinforces economic and social cohesion”.
- It adds to the “solidarity dimension” of Cohesion Policy, since it argues for lessening “territorial disparities” and enabling “fair access to opportunities” as well. To put it more explicitly, it contributes to the efficient functioning of Single European Market, a key rational for introduction of Cohesion Policy.

“Territorial Cohesion” also identified itself with Delors principle of capacity building rather compensation i.e., it does not vouch for “automatic compensation” based on geographical specificities but implies that “public policies” should be more “responsive” to the varied needs of European territories. A case for introducing “Territorial Cohesion” objectives in various levels of “policy design and implementation” is mooted by the stakeholders (EC, 2011b).

Barca Report (Barca, 2009) was another Commission driven initiative after a near failed Lisbon Strategy, asking Fabrizio Barca to prepare an “independent” report, analyze the recent Cohesion
Policies and propose steps for better functioning of the Cohesion Policy in the period 2014-20 (Böhme et al., 2011). Barca (2009) in his report suggested for a “place based approach” in “EU regional policy programmes and operations”. More explicitly a policy aimed at utilizing the material, social and knowledge capital of the place and its people. It aimed at producing “integrated bundles of public goods and services” with policy assistance and a framework (such as “grant, conditionality provisions, and multilevel governance structures”) that promotes such actions. Barca (2009) report was a stepping stone towards Cohesion Policy reform and contributed to reinforcing “Territorial Cohesion” objectives in it.

However, apart from these independent Commission driven initiatives, the role of regular exercises of Cohesion Policy reports is also assessed. The third and fourth Cohesion Reports were interventionists in proposing Cohesion Policy objectives in bits and pieces, till a substantive elaboration of “Territorial Cohesion” was spelled in the fifth Cohesion Policy Report. The fifth Cohesion Report (EC, 2010) is a strategic document to guide the overall architecture of Cohesion Policy in the period 2014-20. The key contribution of this document in advancing the role of “Territorial Cohesion”, is for two aspects, firstly it defines where it should be applied and secondly how it should be applied. The report adds significantly to both the content and process. As Böhme & Eser, (2011) commented that that fifth Cohesion Policy report drew a “basic line” on how to address “Territorial Cohesion”, explained below:

- “Territorial Cohesion” as a policy objective should address “urban-rural linkages in terms of access to affordable and quality infrastructures and services” as well as regions facing “high concentration of socially marginalized communities”.
- Fifth Cohesion Report identified “Territorial Cohesion” as key policy tool in defining the structure and way forward for spatial units and territories such as “cities, functional geographies, areas facing specific geographical or demographic problems and macro-regional strategies”.
- Areas with disadvantaged “geographical and demographic features” which hinder the developmental paradigms, such as “low population density and island, cross-border and mountain regions, as explicitly recognized by the Lisbon Treaty” should be targeted with specific policy actions.

As far as the addition to content of the “Territorial Cohesion” discourse, the Cohesion Report emphasized on linking sustainability agenda with the “Territorial Cohesion” objective i.e. endogenous potential or territorial assets/endowments should recognize ecological and cultural values.

However, the debate on weaving “Territorial Cohesion” objectives in the Policy design and implementation is taking another parallel route in form of deliberations at inter-ministerial and inter-governmental levels. Territorial Agenda-2020 (TA 2020) is one such initiative (Territorial Agenda, 2011). It emerged as key policy discourse for facilitating “Territorial Cohesion” in EU visions and development agendas. It emerged out of intergovernmental process, a key facilitator of “policy actions” for implementing “Territorial Cohesion”, updated in series of meetings at Leipzig (May, 2007) “TA 2007”, its “Action Plan“(Ponta Delgada, November 2007) and TA 2020 (Gödöllő, May 2011). It’s a continuation of inter-governmental actions post-ESDP (Böhme et. al., 2011). TA 2020 needs special mention in light of the policy actions it fosters i.e. integration of “territorial dimension” with other policies at all “governance levels”.

TA 2020 identifies six priorities for integrating “Territorial Cohesion” objectives with EU polices. These include;
“Polycentric development” for “territorial competitiveness”; “integrated development in cities, rural and specific regions” to make best use of territorial assets; “Territorial integration in cross-border and transnational functional regions”; “Global competitiveness of the regions based on strong local economies” to prevent brain drain and external shock vulnerabilities; “improve territorial connectivity for individuals, communities and enterprises” to ensure spatial justice and finally “manage and connect ecological, landscape and cultural values of regions” for long term sustainable development (Territorial Agenda, 2011).

To conclude, “Territorial Cohesion” has become a flexible and transformative concept that aligns and echo with the dominating political narrative and goals of EU. It exemplifies in nutshell five storylines, not mutually exclusive but highlighting different facets of it. These include, ensure “balanced development”, minimize risks due to “geographical imperfections”, exploit “endogenous potential” for good, ensure “co-ordination of policies” and lastly to propel a “Competitive Europe” by developing a “Polycentric Europe”.

2.3 Operationalization of “Territorial Cohesion” in Cohesion Policy

The “Cohesion Policy” in the current period (2014-20) has been spelled out with an explicit goal of stimulating EU-2020 goals of “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” (EC, 2012) into “investment priorities”. “Smart” i.e. “more investments in education, research and innovation”; “sustainable” i.e. “towards low-carbon economy”; and “inclusive” i.e. “emphasis on job creation and poverty reduction”. The EU-2020 goals are stated to be attained through fulfilling “five goals or headline targets” in areas of “employment, innovation, education, poverty reduction and climate/energy” (Annex-4). Further, the conclusions on fifth report on social economic and territorial cohesion (EC, 2010) guided the overall architecture of the Cohesion Policy in the current period. It suggested for a more flexible, strategic and performance oriented Cohesion Policy and linked to the EU 2020 goals.

Cohesion Policy specifically looked at facilitating “Territorial Cohesion” under European Territorial Co-operation goal through joint and co-operative actions at various territorial levels i.e. “cross-border, transnational and inter-regional”.

2.3.1 Cohesion Policy Architecture

The Cohesion Policy architecture is essentially composed for four key elements these are Regulations, Common Strategic Framework (part of regulations), National Partnership agreements and Programmes (Co-operation Programmes and operational programmes).

The first element i.e. regulations can be sub-divided into three parts:

- **“Common and General” regulations**: An overarching regulation setting out common rules for the ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD, EMFF and further general rules for the ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund;
- **Specific regulations**: Specific regulations for the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund; and;
- **Other Regulations**: Two regulations on the “European Territorial Cooperation goal” and the “European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)”.

The regulations are key in guiding and setting the flow of funds i.e. rules, geographic coverage, conditionality, management structures to name a few. The regulations which are analyzed in the present thesis are “common and general” provisions (EC, 2013a) and “specific provisions for the support from the ERDF to the European Territorial Co-operation goal (EC, 2013).

The second element is Common strategic framework or CSF, which co-ordinates all the funds. The CSF is the pivot for all five EU policy funds i.e. ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD and EMFF, included in the
“common provisions” for regulations of various ESI funds. This is in pursuit of the “Lisbon-Gothenburg Strategy” and efforts to set out a “Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion” (Dühr, Colomb et.al, 2010) for better co-ordination and efficient delivery of funds. The commission therefore came up with a “Common Strategic Framework” (EC, 2012a; EC, 2012b) to guide the funneling of structural funds.

The third component is the **partnership agreements** between the European Commission and individual EU countries, designed for disbursement of ESI funds. They “outline each country’s strategic goals and investment priorities”, linked to the overall aims of the “Cohesion Policy” which in the current period are to fulfill EU-2020 goals.

The final component is the **programmes** (co-operation programmes and operational programmes), the programmes are designed to set out the “priorities for each country, region or policy area”. The content of the Co-operation programme also called “programming” is guided by the “general provision” for funds. It is sub-architecture within the Cohesion Policy architecture and comprises of “Priority Axis” corresponding to a “thematic objective” and investment priority(s), the latter guides the choice of fund type. The Priority Axis is the element or goal of the programme for undertaking co-operation, and is further elaborated for “specific objectives” as per the need of the programme. Apart it comprises of actions to be undertaken for “Integrated territorial development strategies” such as Community Led Local Development (CLLDs) and Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI’s) and provides for a framework of financial and management plan. The provisions under “programming” guide the content of the co-operation programme.

In terms of the geographical support, Cohesion Policy extends to every region of EU and has been categorized as less developed (less than 75 % of the average EU-27 GDP), transitions regions (between 75 % and 90 % of the EU-27 average) and more developed region (regions whose GDP per capita is above 90 % of the average GDP of the EU-27). The departure of the cohesion policy form its preceding cycle is its focus on all the regions and strengthening of funding regulations with a strategic focus. The Cohesion Policy objectives of “Convergence and Regional Competitiveness and Employment” have been replaced with goal of “Investment in Growth and Jobs”, which now fund all the EU territory with ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund. The architecture for European Territorial Co-operation remains the same except for the set of new basket of “thematic objectives”.

European Territorial Co-operation (ETC) objective of Cohesion Policy fosters Lisbon treaty objective of “Territorial Cohesion”. It fosters “a framework for the exchanges of experience between national, regional and local actors from different Member States” and also joint actions for shared problems with common solution set out under this objective. The co-operation entains to solve various “challenges” encountered by Member States cutting across national/regional boundaries, through “joint, cooperative action at the appropriate territorial levels” (Dühr, Colomb et al., 2010). In the current cycle, the redundancy encountered due to overlap of ETC programmes and “macro-regions, sea-basins programme areas” has been addressed recommending Transnational Programmes as enablers for macro region strategies. In terms of funding, the provisions recommend 73.24 % for cross-border cooperation; 20.78 % for transnational cooperation; and 5.98 % for interregional cooperation.

**2.4 Enabler of “Territorial Cohesion” in Cohesion Policy: INTERREG B Strand**

“Territorial Cohesion” and Cohesion Policy can no longer be looked as two distinct blueprints. Territorial solidarity is enabler of social and economic solidarity, the conclusion of Green paper on “Territorial Cohesion” (CEC, 2008; EC, 2011b) and outcomes of TA-2020 reinforce this positive co-
relation between the two. Therefore, these two are interrelated as well as share a causal relationship; while the former addresses issues concerning “territorial interdependency” or “spatial justice”, the latter relates to “core issues” of “European integration” by reducing “regional and social imbalances”. Faludi & Peyrony, (2011) tried to sum up this relationship by introducing Cohesion Policy goals and reinterpreting “Territorial Cohesion” as:

“Territorial cohesion is about enabling citizens and enterprises, wherever they happen to live or operate, to benefit from and contribute to European integration and the functioning of the Single Market and, with respect to sustainability, to make the most of the territorial capital of places.”

The primary objectives of Cohesion Policy in the 2007-13 cycle had been “Convergence” (objective 1), “Regional Competitiveness and Employment” (objective 2), now both these objectives combined as “Investments in Growth and Jobs agenda” in the 2014-20 cycle, and “European Territorial Cooperation” (objective 3). The key aim was to “reduce regional and social imbalances”. Apart, Cohesion Policy has been the key instrument for facilitating various “evolving visions” of EU territory, for e.g. currently in stimulating EU-2020 goals of “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” into “investment priorities”. Amongst its three objectives “European Territorial Co-operation” objective is dubbed as the “software” of the Cohesion Policy programme to implement the other objectives (Faludi & Peyrony, 2011). It is the only objective which has been retained in the current Cohesion Policy cycle, while the other two have been merged. European Territorial Co-operation is instrumental for “capacity building for coordination and cooperation” and “learning”, among different EU territories, funded under the structural funds category of ERDF.

INTERREG is referred as mainstream objective of “European Territorial Co-operation” (Dühr, Colomb, et.al, 2010). It “builds upon the success and the experiences of the INTERREG Community Initiative” in the previous Cohesion Policy cycles which funded cooperation at different levels amongst the member states i.e. at territorial and administrative levels (Hachmann, V, 2011). INTERREG started as a community initiative to tackle issues and disseminate “benefits and challenges” of co-operation across national borders in the early 1990’s started as INTERREG I. ESDP identifies “INTERREG” initiative as one of the means through which territorial issues are co-ordinated and therefore is a best exhibit for assessing translation of concept (“Territorial Cohesion”) in a policy treatise (Waterhout & Stead, 2007).

INTERREG initiative has undergone a series of changes since its inception in terms of the geographical coverage and co-operation areas as well as undergone a transformation from community initiative to being integrated in the mainstream objective of European Territorial Co-operation objective of the Cohesion Policy (Dühr, Colomb, et.al, 2010). In terms of the strands i.e. co-operation areas, INTERREG I (1990-93) had a single strand of cross border co-operation, INTERREG II (1994-99) had cross-border co-operation, transnational co-operation and energy networks. In case of INTERREG III (2000-06) and IV (2007-13), the strand of interregional co-operation replaced the strand of energy networks. INTERREG therefore has three explicit roles, post its third phase or version i.e. INTERREG III, namely:

- Cross-border cooperation - INTERREG A
- Transnational cooperation - INTERREG B
- Interregional cooperation - INTERREG C

Strand A (Cross-border cooperation) was confined to co-operation among member states along borders directed more towards “social cohesion”, Strand C (Interregional cooperation) focused on learning through “networking”, and Strand B (Transnational cooperation) was entrusted to implement ESDP policy priorities such as “polycentric development and urban-rural partnerships,
sustainable transport and promote “integrated spatial approach” in the EU territory (Dühr, Colomb, et al., 2010). In the subsequent Cohesion Policy cycles (IV and V series), the priorities have been blurred and the emphasis has been on delivering the EU-2020 “headlines” guided by a “Common Strategic Framework”. However, the operationalization of these strands is still along the stated areas i.e. cross- border areas for strand A and larger regions involving national, regional and local authorities for Strand B. (EC, 2011b)

Strand B of INTERREG is of special significance among all the three as it is a better representation of policy integration across European regions, involving different member states by virtue of its stated goals. It adds “European dimension to regional development” by facilitating a “coordinated, strategic and common” approach. It is a key facilitator in obtaining “concrete outputs” vis-a-vis “strategic themes” relevant to the co-operation area, either innovation or sustainable transport or poverty reduction to name a few. It is wide consensus that strands B of “European Territorial Co-operation” is the frontal “Territorial Cohesion” wielding objective of the Cohesion Policy. It not only adds to the “comprehensiveness” of the Cohesion Policy but also paramount in delivering the ‘European model of society’, what Delors had argued. However, there are criticisms of usefulness of this strand. Dühr, Colomb et al., (2010) suggests a trend of “spatial” hollowness in this strand by arguing that “many proposed activities” are not even “spatial” in character which is even more probable with EU-2020 objectives.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The research attempts to investigate how the concept of “Territorial cohesion” is interpreted to be achieved through Cohesion Policy and its programmes. Böhme (2005), quoting works of Gregory Hamez and Peter Schmeitz suggest that the tardy translation of “Territorial Cohesion” into policy realm arises because of the difficulty to elucidate it into a “numerical form” or a theory. Partly, the inability to get “sufficiently detailed” geographical indicators, before elaborate attempts through ESPON programmes were undertaken, and also lack of sufficient intergovernmental co-operation. Various commentators such as Waterhout & Stead (2007) suggest it to be in a phase of “interpretive cycle”, following a “discursive” or “zeitgeist” path into Cohesion Policy.

Notwithstanding the various interpretations of “Territorial Cohesion” discussed in the previous sections, it is increasingly argued in various quarters that it is neither a concept with a distinct definition nor a theory with a defined operational framework. But, it is a doctrine complemented by a robust public policy of EU and its institutions. The analysis of “Territorial Cohesion” in previous sections clearly points out that there is no “means-ends” scheme for implementing “Territorial Cohesion” but it serves the function of “signposts” for various policymakers (Mastop & Faludi, 1997).

In case of the present research where “Territorial Cohesion” is the unit of analysis, the results are not measurable conclusions with a numerical value but outcomes which are suggestive of understanding of “Territorial Cohesion” concept, in order to interpret and articulate in Cohesion Policy and its programmes.

Mastop & Faludi, (1997) and Faludi (2000) carried out studies to analyze as how “strategic plans “or statutory provisions relate to “intervention and of judging their usefulness”. Also Waterhout & Stead (2007) analysed how the ESDP’s Concepts were applied in INTERREG IIIB Programmes. Unique to both these studies was use of an elaborate “conformance and performance” framework. The “conformance and performance” framework are suitable for evaluation studies where there is not a “technical process of producing material things” but a process where different stakeholders interact, evolve and negotiate for outcomes in lines with a “frame of reference” indicated either in a strategic
plan or in a statutory provision (Faludi, 2000). A process very similar to “learning by doing” exercise which has been key in broadening the scope and understanding of European Territorial Co-operation in the Cohesion Policy (Dühr, Colomb et al, 2010). Where “conformance” outlines congruence between a “plan” and “final outcome” (Waterhout & Stead, 2007; Mastop & Faludi, 1997), “performance” explicitly measures how concepts or provisions “improve the understanding of decision makers of present and future problems they face”.

Waterhout & Stead (2007), used “conformance” and “performance” frameworks to evaluate ESDP concepts and Mastop & Faludi (1997), Faludi (2000) used it to evaluate strategic spatial plans Waterhout & Stead (2007) work was built upon evaluation studies done by various authors, notably Böhme (2002, 2003), Faludi (2001, 2003, 2004, 2006), Shaw & Sykes (2003, 2005), Sykes (2007). However, most of these works focused either on influence cast on domestic polices (Böhme 2002, 2003) or in generation of follow up activities (Faludi, 2001; Sykes 2007) or “extent of correspondence between a concept and domestic policies”. Waterhout & Stead (2007) suggest all these studies were related to “conformance” i.e. “correspondence between goals and the desired objectives” or “follow-up activities” (Faludi, 2001).

The key drawback of these studies was inability to capture the “performance”. In other words it doesn’t not indicate that “actors” used concept (ESDP here) to “assist their task” i.e. “try to make sense of a particular situation, justify a certain choice or solve a specific problem”, called “performance”. Faludi (2001) defines “performance” as “concerned with shaping action” i.e. its use to assist a task. Mastop and Faludi (2007) suggest that “performance” measures “policies working through by diffusion into the deliberations which follow their adoption”. In other words “performance” implies measures “indicated by acceptance of, and commitment to, intentions underlying, solutions propagated by, and principles enunciated in” strategic documents under review.

“Conformance” is a sub-set of “performance”, and in conventional evaluation and implementation research implies outcomes defined by an operational framework. The actions in most cases are “prescriptive” rather than conditional. If the actions are explicit outcomes of the measures specified in a concept or provisions, there is “conformance” and there is no need of “performance” evaluation. However these situations are rare while the provisions and concepts are evaluated for their implementation through programmes or plans.

The application of “conformance performance” framework is a three step process, applied in this study (Mastop and Faludi (1997); Falud (2000); Waterhout & Stead (2007)), explained herewith:

**Step 1: Elucidation of unit of analysis**

The unit of analysis for the present research is “Territorial Cohesion”

**Step 2: Necessary and sufficient conditions for applying “conformance and performance” framework:**

There are two conditions. Firstly, the recipients and decision makers are “aware” of the frame of reference (or statements of intent, policy objectives) relevant to them, a necessary condition. Secondly, the frame of reference (or statements of intent, policy objectives) is bound upon recipients and decisions makers as a “context of their operation” or “policy systems” under which they operate, a sufficient condition.

Territorial cohesion, the unit of analysis being a Treaty Objective and goal of mainstream objective of Cohesion Policy under European Territorial Co-operation, aptly satisfies both these conditions;
therefore the framework fits for analysis.

**Step 3: Conformance and performance analysis**

It is a two-step process

(3a) Test for “conformance” and “performance”

To determine “conformance” or not, any of the three conditions should be satisfied i.e. “formal conformance” (if “declared intentions of the recipients of a policy statement conform to that statement”), “behavioral conformance” (if “recipients behave in accordance with their declared intentions”) and “conventional” conformance (if outcomes and initial intentions perfectly match)

(3b) “Performance” is applied in case of non-conformance: Again to evaluate performance or not, any of the three set of conditions should be satisfied. Firstly, if the policy statement under investigation have a bearing on the decision situation at hand”, secondly, if “the statement is in broad agreement with other current policies of the decision makers concerned” and thirdly, if the final outcomes are divergent from the initial plan, than “What are the arguments for and against compliance with the plan”?

2.6 **Theoretical Framework: Application for the thesis**

The conditions for application of “conformance-performance” framework for the present thesis have been satisfied (Step2). However, Step 1 and Step 3 are further elaborated for undertaking the empirical analysis:

**Step 1: Elaborating “Unit of Analysis” i.e. “Territorial cohesion”**

The unit of analysis can either be a set of policy statements “intentional (statements expressing intentions)”, “operational (commitments to concrete action)” or “hybrid” (mixture of intent and action) Mastop & Faludi, (1997). “Territorial Cohesion” is a shared competence as per Lisbon Treaty but lacks defined operational framework, a statutory safeguard intending actions with a flexible area of influence. Therefore, it would be apt to put it in category of “hybrid” i.e. a mixture of intent and action. The extent of operationalization of a concept by various actors co-relates with the compulsory or obligatory nature of regulations and provisions and also by the comprehensiveness of its definition and its objectives. While the former can be assessed once the regulations are analyzed, in case of the latter, “Territorial Cohesion” is elaborated in a condensed yet all-encompassing version. It is done by while drawing from works of various researchers and policy makers (Davoudi, S. 2005, Dühr,S. (2010,2011), Böhme, K.,(2011), Faludi A. (2013), Schön,P (2005) Faludi & Peyrony (2011), definitions in various EU policy documents (Green Paper on “Territorial Cohesion” (CEC, 2008), TA-2020 (Territorial Agenda, 2011) etc.).

“Territorial Cohesion” can be condensed into four story lines and one territorial vision which largely confines it in various EU discourses. The spatial vision of “Territorial Cohesion” is “Polycentricity” or “Polycentric Europe” and the four storylines associated with are explained herewith. An elaboration of it with goals and objectives is illustrated in Table 3.

1) Balanced development implying inclusive growth, equality, fair access to services, spatial justice;

2) Competitiveness built on territorial specificities, endowments, assets or its integration with other territories. A rational derived from “economies of agglomeration”, “new economic geography and growth pole theory” (Böhme, 2014);

3) Policy coordination i.e. horizontal and vertical co-ordination; and

4) Sustainable territorial development i.e. equal weightage to environmental characteristics and
recognize them as a territorial assets.

Table 3: Territorial Cohesion discourse in different EU debates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU discourse</th>
<th>Storyline or Spatial vision</th>
<th>Goals &amp; Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ESDP (EC, 1999)                     | Balanced development i.e. “inclusive growth” | - Impart “spatial justice” i.e. fair access to infrastructure.  
|                                     | Polycentric Spatial Development | - “Recognize the territorial diversity” i.e. acknowledges specific comparative advantages and disadvantages.  
| EU’s Jobs and Growth agenda         | Competitiveness              | - Minimize impact of “concentration of economic activity”.  
|                                     | Local development or endogenous potentials | - Aim towards increasing “global competitiveness of Europe” by employing full potential of “territorial capital”.  
|                                     | Policy coordination          | - Identify potentials vis-a-vis integrated development strategies.”  
| Territorial Agenda of the EU (Territorial Agenda, 2011) | Sustainable territorial development | - Build on “territorial specificities” and features, as a base for a “functional division of labour” i.e. “place-based policy making”  
| Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (CEC, 2008) | - Achieve “policy coordination” by integrating the spatial impacts into “EU sector policies”.  
|                                     |                            | - “Refine governance processes”, to address “territorial diversity”. In policy making  
|                                     |                            | - Recognize environmental characteristics as a key territorial asset  


However, one of the interpretations of “Territorial Cohesion” i.e. spatial vision of Polycentric Europe of EU needs explanation, explained herewith;

[Polycentricity is a policy option introduced in ESDP to address the objective of “balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the EU”. It is key enabler of spatial justice, “competitiveness” and non-discriminatory access. It exemplifies for “economic integration in the EU”, and strengthening of peripheral areas, through “transnational spatial development strategies”. The key aspects associated with polycentrism interpreted by Davoudi (2003), Faludi (2005, pp-108) and Schön (2005) includes such as decongestion of the core i.e. “avoid further excessive economic and demographic concentration in the core area of the EU” (EC, 1999); build complementary strengths between the core and the periphery; Connect territories i.e. “developing better and more balanced accessibility”; Utilize economic potential of the entire Europe; and, strengthen regional competitiveness and contribute to the overall competitiveness of Europe, by achieving above objectives]

The next question is how to use this table to interpret or identify “Territorial Cohesion” which is illustrated in different policy documents in numerous ways. Each territorial storyline or vision has a goal or objectives for e.g. spatial justice implies “fair access to infrastructure and services” and “general services of economic interest”. However Table 3 stops at defining “spatial justice”, without suggesting how “spatial justice” can be identified or adopted or improved in a EU policy. Similarly there are other terms such as “territorial capital”, “accessibility”, “functional regions”, “endogenous potential” which are used in EU policy parlance. Böhme et al., (2011), interprets these terms to explain their relevant usage, particularly in EU Cohesion Policy documents by calling them as “territorial keys” and related policy actions as “linking issues”. The “territorial keys” are referred as “mutual links between the different linking issues (territorial concepts) researched in the context of ESPON and other projects”. The list can be expanded by adding more “territorial keys” and “linking issues”, but in its present form also serves a useful reference.
Therefore “Territorial Cohesion” objectives exemplified in its storylines or spatial visions can be explained for their postulation in EU policy documents more succinctly with the help of “territorial keys” or linking issue as illustrated here, in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Charting “Territorial Cohesion” for actionable outcomes in various EU Policies

The unit of analysis therefore now has a framework of reference, with traceable policy action in Cohesion Policy programmes, prepared with combination of the Table 3 and Table 4
Table 5: Territorial Cohesion: From vision to policy action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storyline or Spatial vision</th>
<th>Goals &amp; Objectives</th>
<th>Territorial keys</th>
<th>Linking issues or Policy actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “Polycentric Spatial Development” | - Balanced accessibility  
- Connect territories to minimize impact of “concentration of economic activity”  
- Decongestion of the core  
- Build complementary strengths between the core and the periphery. | Accessibility | - “European and trans-border accessibility”  
- “Accessibility of the main, and secondary, centers (regional accessibility including services of general economic interest)”  
- “Access to energy networks” |
| Balanced development i.e. “inclusive growth” | - Impart “spatial justice” i.e. fair access to infrastructure  
- “Recognize territorial diversity” i.e. acknowledge specific comparative advantage and disadvantages | Spatial Justice | - “Services of general economic interest (sparsely populated areas, outermost areas)” |
| “Competitiveness” i.e. “Smart Growth” | - Aim towards increasing “global competitiveness of Europe” by employing full potential of “territorial capital”.  
- Identify potentials vis-à-vis “integrated development strategies” | Territorial Capacities, Endowments, Assets, Endogenous Potential | - “Territory-bound factors (local milieus etc.)”  
- “Local innovation systems & networks”  
- “Wise management of cultural and natural assets”  
- “Renewable and local energy production”  
- “Territorially-related characteristics for energy production”  
- “Revitalization of cities” |
| Policy coordination | - Achieve “policy coordination” by integrating the spatial impacts into “EU sector policies”. | Policy coordination | - “Enlargement of local labour markets”  
- “Critical mass of means through territorial cooperation”  
- “Accessibility of secondary growth poles and regional centers”  
- “Public transport connections to regional centers” |
| Sustainable territorial development | - Territorial cohesion as enabler for sustainability | - | - “Refine governance processes”, to address “territorial diversity” in policy making  
- Recognize environmental characteristics as a key territorial asset |


“Territorial Cohesion” a unit of analysis for “conformance” and “performance” framework has been elucidated for tasks shaping specific actions i.e. Policy actions. If a storyline is analyzed for “performance” in a policy document these tasks are actions can suggest its affirmation or otherwise.

**Step 3: Elaborating “conformance” and “performance” analysis for undertaking empirical analysis**

(3a) Conformance of Territorial Cohesion:

The Cohesion Policy architecture explained in the previous sections is reproduced in form of a Venn
diagram to illustrate the interplay of its various components in Figure 2

Figure 2 : Venn diagram for Cohesion Policy architecture

Here, an important element of “conformance” and “performance” framework is “recipients” or decision makers. In the analysis of Cohesion Policy and its programmes, there are two types of recipients which are subjected to two different external conditions. Recipient 1, are at the Commissions which draft guidelines, regulations and provisions for Cohesion Policy. The Recipient 2 are actors at the member states level which draft co-operation programmes based on these regulations. Whereas at the Commission level(Recipient 1), the external conditions are “Union Strategy” of EU-2020 and legal basis is Lisbon Treaty and other EU Treaties, for the actors (Recipient 2) drafting co-operation programme, the frame of reference are Cohesion Policy and funding regulations and external conditions are regional priorities and other region specific conditionality.

Therefore or the purpose of analysis, “Territorial Cohesion” in statutory provisions and regulations is indicative of “conformance” i.e. Treaty objective is invoked while framing in regulations. There is an indicative means-ends scheme, the regulations are framed “in accordance with their declared intentions” (fulfills “formal conformance” test) in the Treaty for fulfilling social, economic and “Territorial Cohesion”. More over the regulations and provisions are generic applicable for all the member states, there is limited scope of “performance”, but “conformance” only. Therefore, Cohesion Policy regulations are analyzed for “Conformance” test.

The regulations (common, general and specific) and Common Strategic Framework (CSF) run into numerous volumes of text. Therefore, in order to simplify the analysis, the work of Böhme et. al., (2011) suggest relevant sections where “conformance” test for “Territorial Cohesion” is appropriate. This helps to emphasize on key sections of the Policy architecture for focused results (Table 6 and Table 7)

Table 6 : Framework for assessing “conformance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in Cohesion Policy regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohesion Policy Regulations</th>
<th>1) If “Territorial Cohesion” is mainstreamed (i.e. it’s a key component of “principles of union support or principal of assistance”) in the Cohesion Policy?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Whether there is an “inclusion” of “Territorial Cohesion” in “ex-ante conditionality”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) “Territorial Cohesion” is explicit in “Scope and Themes” of Cohesion Policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) “Territorial Cohesion” as an important criterion related to the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30
partnership principle (i.e. instructs multi-level governance).
5) Provision for progress on “Territorial Cohesion” objectives in reporting by Member States and Commission to EU.
6) Other specific measures for strengthening “Territorial Cohesion”.

Source: Böhme et al., (2011)

Table 7: Framework for assessing “conformance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in CSF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Strategic Framework (CSF)</th>
<th>1) If there is “specific guideline on territorial cohesion”.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Extent of “cross-sector dimension of the framework” and provision of “multi-fund programming”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Extent of “territorial dimension” in the thematic objectives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Böhme et al., (2011)

(3b) Performance of Territorial Cohesion:

The co-operation programme is indicative of the “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in Cohesion Policy. The actors are challenged to frame responses to problems and situations under specific transnational issues, use “Territorial Cohesion” where appropriate and fulfill desired goals, guided by regulations and provisions. The entire set of activities also referred as “programming”. Interpreting “performance” implies whether “actors” used “Territorial Cohesion” to “assist their task or make decisions”. Therefore, “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in the Co-operation Programme can be evaluated in its relevant sections. Here again the work of Böhme et. al (2011) and the content of “programming” has provided guidance for selecting specific sections where “performance” test can be applied (Table 8).

Table 8: Framework for assessing of “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in Co-operation Programmes

| Co-operation Programme | “Territorial Cohesion” in Co-operation programmes with regard to:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. SWOT of the region for identification of its priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Justification for the choice of “Priority Axis”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Justification for choice of “Thematic objectives” against the selected “Priority Axis”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Böhme et al., (2011)
3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

As explained, the present research analyses how interpretations and applications of the EU objective of “Territorial Cohesion” has “conformed and performed” in the Cohesion Policy and its programmes, i.e. INTERREG B transnational Programmes. It reflects upon the understanding of “Territorial Cohesion” among policy makers/actors and their generative capacity in applying it within the Cohesion Policy doctrine. The research attempts to contribute in delivering an explicit and seamless relationship between “Territorial Cohesion” and Cohesion Policy.

3.1 Content of the Research

As evident from the literature review, the interface between “Territorial Cohesion” and Cohesion Policy rests upon the guiding behavior of various actors, institutions and governments woven around Public Policy framework of EU. The research study is therefore epistemologically “interpretivist” (Bryman, 2008), drawing form the understanding of the concept from different sources. In terms of ontological considerations i.e. nature of social entities, actors or recipients involved in this exercise, it is constructivist. “Territorial Cohesion” concept has evolved over a period of time in an institutional architecture with divergent set of actors. There are simultaneous process of negotiations and interpretation of the concept over a period of time. The actors understanding of concept have not only been shaped by these negotiations and interpretations but also the policy responses to conditions in the European territory for e.g. “polycentricity” in response to “blue banana” (Davoudi, 2003). This consideration of societal entities to draw upon from a continuing discourse is therefore ontologically “constructivist” (Bryman, 2008).

3.2 Research Design: Method

The next step in the research design is to select the criterion for undertaking the research i.e. qualitative or quantitative. Creswell (2003) opines that:

“If a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research has been done on it, then it merits a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is exploratory and is useful when the researcher does not know the important variable to examine”.

Although considerable research has been done on “Territorial Cohesion” but the “variable” to examine it still eludes and therefore a “qualitative approach” with “constructivist” and “interpretivist” knowledge claims over a time period is undertaken to find answers for various research questions.

3.3 Research Design: Analysis and Data Collection

The analysis undertaken for the research is a mix of descriptive, explanatory and analytical studies which are undertaken along with the selection of a theoretical framework. An initial literature review of various topics guided for selection of it. As explained, due to the lack of clarity on “means-ends” scheme and “interpretivist” nature of knowledge it was difficult to arrive at a discreet “plan-outcome” framework but adopt a continuous “conformance-performance” framework for analysis. Comprehension of a unit of analysis i.e. “Territorial Cohesion” followed by triangulated approach of analyzing Commission driven policy documents, actors/recipient driven Co-operation Programmes and validation of findings by undertaking surveys, is done to arrive at final conclusions.

The survey are undertaken to articulate the epistemological (“constructivist” knowledge dimension into the qualitative research) and ontological (actor’s behavior) claims. Findings from policy documents and co-operation programmes are matched with “observation” of behavior of various stakeholders to examine their “performance” while they participate in policy making activities. This
strengthens the validity of the research design what Cresewell (2003) calls to examine “evidence from the source” and use it to build a “coherent justification”.

3.4 Research Design: Questionnaire

The main purpose of the undertaking a survey based on a questionnaire is to capture the gap between the “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in the Cohesion Policy programmes and actors knowledge of “Territorial Cohesion” concept. This would spell out what constraints “Territorial Cohesion” “performance” in Cohesion Policy programmes. Is it Cohesion Policy architecture or lack of understanding of it? The content of the questionnaire is structured to specifically ask for input regarding “Territorial Cohesion” understanding, its articulation in the co-operation programme, as a factor for selection of various programme components (Annex-1).

In terms of the design of the questionnaire, among the possible options such as “orthodox interview, the mailed questionnaire, self-administered or group-administered questionnaire”, the “mailed questionnaire” method is adopted. The key advantage of this particular type is “absence of interviewer bias” (Fagence, 1974). However robustness of such as a method of survey have been addressed as Fagence (1974), Cresewell (2003) suggests; Making it simple, Sequential, avoiding to put “ideas into the respondent’s mind” and moving from “data-absence “to “data full” stage, “funnel and filter” approach i.e.“it consists of a broad opening question, from which the questions become increasingly detailed and specific”. Apart minimum jargons and avoidance of “staccato” questions. The question types are “closed”, since they are easy and quick to answer and are hassle free for respondents. However, due care has been taken while providing “options” to avoid “bias” and “stimulation” of thought-processes and "guidance" of those processes”. In case of the present qualitative research the reliability has been maintained in the three step process (Cresewell, 2003, Merriam, 1988.) by

- Full disclosure of the “focus of the study, the researcher’s role, the informant’s position and basis for selection, and the context from which data will be gathered”, complied while undertaking the surveys.
- Secondly using “multiple methods of data collection and data analysis” i.e. from multiple sources and stakeholders (Joint Technical Secretariats and Federal Institutions)
- Full description of steps/methods employed in carrying out the research ensures reliability components of the research, as explained in different parts of the research

3.5 Selection of Co-operation Programme

In the current Cohesion Policy Cycle (2014-20), fifteen co-operation (Transnational – INTERREG VB) programmes will take place (Figure 3). These programme cover large areas such as the “Baltic Sea Region, Alpine Space, Mediterranean and South East Europe” (EC, 2011a), with different member states involved in drafting the programme.
It would be difficult to undertake evaluation of all the programmes for the current research. However this limitation can be overcome by evaluating co-operation programmes which operates in a diverse territorial space and polity, where the Cohesion Policy and “Common Strategic Framework” are tested in complex situations. This draws our particular attention to the areas, included after the fall of the iron curtain and the expansion of EU to EU-27, in the east. The enlargement to the east also coincides when INTERREG ceased to be a community initiative but becomes a mainstream objective of European Territorial Co-operation goal of Cohesion Policy in 2007 (Dühr, Colomb et al., 2010), when new cycle of INTERREG IV was launched. It would also provide an opportunity to assess how “Territorial Cohesion” is applied by actors in two different traditions.

The author also had an opportunity to work as an intern in the organization i.e. BBSR, Bonn, which dealt with the translational programmes where Germany was a member country, and therefore had an opportunity to access documents, people and stakeholders working on it.

Taking into consideration the above cited criterion, two co-operation programmes have been selected for analysis i.e.

**North Sea Region Programme** (constituent countries-Norway, Denmark, East UK, Belgium, North West Germany, Netherlands and Sweden) and;

**Central Europe Programme** (constituent countries-Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, Germany, Italy).

### 3.6 Selection of Interviewees

The interviews selection was based on the role they perform vis-à-vis Cohesion Policy and the programme. A list of fifteen interviewees was compiled based upon such roles (Annex-2). Half of the interviews were conducted with the heads of Joint Technical Secretariats, heads of evaluation and monitoring units and other members in these secretariats, for selected two programmes. Another half was conducted with the similar group but for other programmes in order to capture the gap
between the “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in the Cohesion Policy programmes and actors knowledge of “Territorial Cohesion” concept. The initial analysis of two co-operation programmes yielded (as explained in the forthcoming sections) tendencies focused on Union Strategy of “smart, sustainable and inclusive” growth, therefore stakeholder inputs were expanded to other programmes to capture the gap between discourse analysis of the documents and the perfection of “Territorial Cohesion” amongst respondents in the survey i.e. actors.

3.7 Documents Analyzed

The Cohesion Policy architecture as explained in section 2.3 surrounds around four major components. In total five policy documents, including programmes are analyzed for the purpose of the research i.e.

- Fund regulations, ERDF and other funds, (containing “common and general” provisions) which guide structuring of Co-operation programmes, content of partnership contracts and monitoring and evaluations systems (EC,2013a). It also includes regulations for EU Common Strategic Framework (CSF) to “facilitate the sectoral and territorial coordination”. CSF is substantiated in two documents separately (2012, 2012a).
- “Specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal” (EC, 2013b).
- Two Co-operation programmes (North Sea Region,2014; Central Europe, 2014)

3.8 Ethical Issues and Considerations

The proposed research takes due care of ethical issues and related considerations. The research in no way lowers the role of policy makers or any of the stakeholders from its findings. This particular notion was observed while undertaking the structured surveys, where such observations were expressed by interviewees as results of the study would cast a shadow on their articulation of “Territorial Cohesion” objectives in the programmes. Due deliberations are undertaken when interviewing the stakeholders by clearly outlining the proposed research, aims and objectives and its end users, viz. for the use of scientific community. Other considerations such as to maintain “anonymity” of the participants in the research, safety of research material is taken due care of. The anonymity, if desired, is maintained as the respondents would fill the survey through an online questionnaire, which records the responses by recording only the IP addresses of the computer from which they respond. However digital signatures of IP addresses of the respondents are recorded and provided for repository. In case of others, the responses are collected by official e-mail addresses. Further the final results are based on collective responses rather than individual biases.

The research doesn’t biases against persons because of gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic group, disability, or age as well as nationality by refraining from asking any such question in the questionnaire (Annex-1). It would also intend not “suppressing, falsifying, or inventing findings” to purely meet the needs of undertaking the research by submitting all survey responses in the repository for any cross-checking. The necessary disclosures, such as advantageous opportunity for “access” of research material or interview process have been done in relevant sections so that the reader can interpret biased or non-biased situations.
4. **EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS**

The empirical analysis is undertaken as per the theoretical framework and the research design outlined in the preceding sections.

4.1 **Cohesion Policy: Regulations**

This headline statement of the Cohesion Policy for 2014-20 i.e. “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” (EC, 2011), is pre-emptive for various regulations or guidelines or provisions to focus on Union Strategy rather than “Treaty Objectives” as a priority. The regulations and guidelines are fundamental in setting the tone and tenor of the trajectory of “Territorial Cohesion” in its programmes. Analysis to evaluate “conformance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in EU Cohesion Policy architecture is done at two levels “Regulations” (EC, 2013, 2013a) and “EU Common Strategic Framework (CSF)” (EC, 2012a; EC, 2012b). The results of the analysis would answer if “Territorial Cohesion” is “conformed” in Cohesion Policy. The “conformance” analysis is done for specific components of regulations as illustrated by the theoretical framework in Table 6.

4.1.1 **Common Provisions and General Provisions:**

Two of the five elements of Cohesion Policy regulation governing ESI funds (EC, 2013a) are “common provisions” and “general provisions”. The other three being related to definitions, provisions for other funds and other rules and regulations (e.g. delegation of power etc.). While the “common provisions” are related to content part, the “general provisions” were more related to organizational part. “Territorial Cohesion” for “conformance” relates more specifically to the common provisions. This is evident from the content and structure of “common provisions” which specifically guide key elements of the co-operation programme such as “elements on strategic planning and programming; the thematic objectives linked to Europe 2020, provisions on the Common Strategic Framework” to name a few. The “general provisions” define the “organizational” part such as cognets of “programming”, “geographical coverage”, financial management and control to name a few.

The “conformance” analysis for “Territorial Cohesion” is explained below:

1) **Mainstreaming of Territorial Cohesion:**

Mainstreaming i.e. “Territorial Cohesion” is a key component of “principles of union support or principal of assistance” in the “common provisions”. “Territorial Cohesion” finds explicit mention as one of the “Treaty Objective” along with social and economic cohesion. There is a departure in “principles of assistance” which was limited to three objectives (convergence, regional competitiveness and European territorial co-operation) in the previous cycle, now explicitly defined to funnel ESI funds, including ERDF, for delivery of “Union strategy”, “Treaty objectives” and country “specific recommendations”. The order of priority itself exemplifies that “Union Strategy” is bed rock support for Cohesion funds.

“*The ESI Funds shall provide support....... to deliver the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, as well as the Fund-specific missions pursuant to their Treaty-based objectives, including economic, social and territorial cohesion taking account of the relevant Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines and the relevant country-specific recommendations adopted........*” (EC, 2013a)

However, references in the “common provisions” specify at various sections in the regulation that “Treaty Objectives” be synergized with the “Union Strategy” of “Smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” for desired results. For e.g. the content of partnership agreements “shall set out”:

“*arrangements to ensure alignment with the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as well as the Fund-specific missions pursuant to their Treaty-based objectives, including economic, social and*
“territorial cohesion” (EC, 2013a)

Further the provisions are explicit to suggest how “Territorial Cohesion” is to be applied and used. The provisions suggest it to be a tool for initiating a “place based” and endogenous growth which can counteract specific “geographic and demographic problems”. This finds explicit mention as:

“Territorial cohesion has been added to the goals of economic and social cohesion by the TFEU, and it is necessary to address the role of cities, functional geographies and sub-regional areas facing specific geographical or demographic problems.” Article 31 (EC, 2013a)

To conclude, there is sufficient evidence that “Territorial Cohesion” has mainstreamed than its predecessor in 2007-13 cycle. Clarity on use of “Territorial Cohesion” as enabler of “place based growth” to address unique geographic and demographic characteristics has been provided.

2) “Territorial Cohesion” as ex-ante Conditionality:

In the current provisions there is no such “ex-ante conditionality” in the “general rules” specified for various ESI funds (EC, 2013a pp-438). Bhöme et al., (2011) identifies “ex-ante conditionality” for “Territorial Cohesion” as actions that could showcase integration of spatial and sectoral policies. The “thematic ex-ante conditionality” for eleven “thematic objectives” as well as “general ex-ante conditionality” does not have any such actions/provisions.

3) “Territorial Cohesion” in scope and themes:

A critical component which directs the content of the cooperation program are its “scope and themes” In the current Cohesion Policy period eleven thematic strands (EC, 2013a; Annex-3) have been identified which ESI funds will support (Table 9). These “thematic objectives” are to be identified by a “priority axis” around which the co-operation programme is woven. However their contribution to “Union strategy” i.e. EU-2020 goals remain paramount. This is corroborated by what “common provisions” suggest that their key role is to;

“....contribute to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as well as the Fund-specific missions pursuant to their Treaty-based objectives, including economic, social and territorial cohesion” (Article 15, 1(a), (EC, 2013a)

The guidelines for preparing “partnership agreements” vis-à-vis “thematic objectives” also reflect the same echo:

“...on interventions that bring the greatest added value in relation to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth taking into account the key territorial challenges of the various types of territories in line with the CSF, ...... Article 121(2) TFEU ...... recommendations adopted under Article 148(4) TFEU” Article 18 (EC, 2013a)

Also, on analysing the headlines of various “thematic objectives”, it does not suggest any “integrated territorial issues” addressed but explicitly related to categories of innovation, sustainability or inclusive growth (Table 9). Böhme et al. (2011) suggested a list of various “thematic objectives” which reflect the territorial issues at the same time fulfil EU-2020 objectives for e.g. “thematic objective” for competitiveness could be rephrased as “Global competitiveness of the regions based on strong local economies”.

A list of suggested territorially integrated thematic objectives and thematic objectives for ESI funds are illustrated hereunder:
Table 9: Territorially integrated Thematic Objectives v/s Thematic Objectives for ESI funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example : List of themes with integrated territorial issues, (Bohme et al. 2011)</th>
<th>Thematic objectives for the ESI Funds and Common Strategic Framework (EC, 2013a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Therefore one can conclude that “conformance” of “Territorial Cohesion” or its objectives is poor in framing of “scope and theme” of Cohesion Policy.

4) **Territorial cohesion as criterion related to the partnership principle:**

The partnership framework suggests that programmes “organise partnership” with different stakeholders. “Territorial Cohesion” is a tool to organize multi-level governance for increased sectoral co-ordination. The regulations in the current cycle have “conformed” to this principle by explicit suggestion that partnerships in the programmes shall constitute “competent urban and other public authorities”, “economic and social partners” and “relevant bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, non-governmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination” (EC, 2013a).

5) **“Territorial Cohesion” reporting by Member States and Commission to EU:**

One of the measures which could add to “formal conformance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in Cohesion Policy is that the regulation provisions should mandate member states and other stakeholders taking part in various co-operation and operational programmes, is to explicitly include progress of “Territorial Cohesion” objectives as a key component of “strategic reporting” i.e. to include “territorial cohesion and relevant territorial issue” (Bohme et al., 2011) in various progress reports submitted to the commission or parliament.

While analysing the provisions, two different situations are observed. “Territorial Cohesion” is part of formal communiqué from Commission to Parliament, but in case of reporting from Member State
to the Commission; it takes shape as recording of “integrated territorial development strategies” and not “Territorial Cohesion” per se. These two cases are illustrated herein as:

As per Article 175 of TEFU and article 113 of ERDF regulations (EC, 2013a) mandates Commission to submit “Cohesion report” to the EU Parliament, which shall include “a record of progress made towards achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion, including the socio- economic situation and development of the regions, as well as the integration of the Union's priorities”.

As per article 52 (2) of regulations (EC, 2013a), regarding progress report to Commission, the member state as per “partnership agreement” shall set out:

“Implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development, or a summary of the implementation of the integrated approaches that are based on the programmes, including progress towards achievement of priority areas established for cooperation;”

There is no specific mention of progress reporting specifically of “Territorial Cohesion” therefore.

6) **Specific measures for strengthening “Territorial Cohesion”:**

The regulations have proposed two separate tools called CLLD (Community Led Local Development) and ITI’s (Integrated Territorial Investments) under “Integrated territorial Investments”, for multi-fund programming. It forms part of “programming” under the headline of “integrated approach to territorial development”. This is done in order to cater the diverse and complex needs of the region. The rational of these instruments it to utilize the “territorial capital” and promote “place based” interventions to overcome specific transnational territorial challenges.

4.1.2 **Specific Provisions**

“Specific provisions” for the “support from the ERDF to the European Territorial Cooperation goal” (EC, 2013) have been proposed. They have been construed with an aim to add the “value of the Union's Cohesion Policy”. ERDF goals towards Territorial Co-operation entails support for “cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation” under the ETC goal. Here, we analyse if “Territorial Cohesion” finds explicit “conformance” in these regulations i.e. if policy actors have sufficiently incorporated “Territorial Cohesion” in “specific provisions”. The focus is on “Transnational Co-operation” objective only.

With regard to the Transnational Co-operation, the “specific provisions” guides it to undertake activities to:

“*strengthen cooperation by means of actions conducive to integrated territorial development linked to the Union’s cohesion policy priorities, and should also include maritime cross-border cooperation not covered by cross-border cooperation programmes*”. (EC,2013)

The specific regulation therefore fails to offer any “formal conformance” for “Territorial Cohesion”. The “Territorial Cohesion” objectives have been left to kindness of jugglery of such actions that “synergize” it with the Union Strategy. The “thematic objective” as explained lacked any territorial focus. Further, in terms of the content, the thematic objectives and its related investment priorities specified in regulation for funds should add up at least 80% of fund allocation (EC, 2013a).

If we analyses “programming” of co-operation programmes for transnational co-operation, the main objective is to achieve goals of “Union strategy”. The selection of thematic objectives should be done:
“....to pursuing the objectives of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, a priority axis may, in duly justified cases, combine one or more complementary investment priorities from different thematic objectives in order to achieve the maximum contribution to that priority axis”. (Article 8, EC, 2013)

To sum up, a weak “conformance” of “Territorial Cohesion” objectives in “specific” provisions of European Territorial Co-operation goals could be observed.

4.1.3 Common Strategic Framework

It has been noted by the Commission that the five funds EU funds i.e. ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD have “complementary policy objectives” at the same time as they are managed between the Commission and Member States, the co-ordination has been inefficient. The CSF intends to facilitate maximum contribution of the ESI funds by better co-ordination, integration and synergy between Union Strategy, Treaty objectives and fund specific missions (EC, 2012a; EC, 2012b). CSF specifies “key actions” that could be carried out under the eleven “thematic objectives”, outlined in the ESI fund regulations (EC, 2013a).

Bhôme et al., (2011) analysing Community Strategic Guidelines for 2007-13 periods suggested some actions that are illustrative of “conformance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in CSF (Table 7). First among them is that “CSF should strengthen the integrative nature of multi-fund programming”. This has been addressed in the current period by introduction of mechanisms that “encourage integrated approaches to programming, to achieve coordination and synergies during implementation”. Key to these are mechanisms such as “Integrated territorial investments” (ITI) and “Community Led Local Development” (CLLD) which offer flexibility to draw funds from various ESI funds and involve “regional and local actors and local communities”.

Secondly, CSF should include a “specific guideline” on “Territorial Cohesion”. In the CSF, specific section on “meeting the territorial challenges of Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth” has been introduced. The section broadly identifies territorial characteristics as “specific development potential” of the region to be measured in terms of the “assets” encompassing “human, physical and natural capital, knowledge, institutions and networks”.

Thirdly the requirement that Territorial dimension of thematic objectives be incorporated, it is however missing in the content (“targets, objectives, implementation principles” etc. – (EC, 2012b)) of the thematic objectives.

4.1.4 Conclusions

The Cohesion Policy regulatory architecture therefore presents a mixed bag, on a scale, a slide towards weak conformance. The outcomes can be summarized as:

- A poor “conformance” of “Territorial Cohesion” objectives in “common” and “general” provisions for various ESI funds, including ERDF. Three out of six components conform weakly, more so notably in the “scope and themes”.
- Similar is the case with “specific” provisions of European Territorial Co-operation goal”, absence of explicit “formal conformance”.
- In case of CSF, “Territorial Cohesion” finds conformance in two out of three conditions i.e. case of multi-fund programming and inclusion of “specific guideline” on “Territorial Cohesion”.

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4.2 Cohesion Policy: Co-operation Programmes

Two transnational co-operation programmes, i.e. INTERREG VB are analysed for “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion”. These are evaluated as per the framework outlined in Table 8. The generative capacity of actors participating in process of development of co-operation programme is assessed, where regulations offer them opportunity to integrate Union Strategy, Treaty Objectives and country specific recommendations. Two transnational programmes North Sea Region programme and Central Europe are assessed for “performance” of Territorial Cohesion

4.2.1 North Sea Region Programme

The North Sea Region programme or NSRP (North Sea Region, 2014) transnational co-operation is a continuation of earlier cycles from IIIIB and IVB transnational cycles. It comprises of Norway and Denmark, in addition small areas of Germany,, Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden.

A. SWOT Analysis for the Programme

The SWOT analysis for NSRP has been done in response to the eleven “thematic objectives” and EU 2020 targets of “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”. It is clustered around three key themes namely “Economic situation and innovation”, “Environmental situation and sustainable growth” and “Transport situation” (North Sea Region, 2014). Analysis of each of these themes to assess the “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in SWOT analysis is done.

Economic situation and innovation: North Sea Region has been described as an “innovation core” of Europe (NSRP, 2014). The key weakness identified in the programme is lack of innovation amongst SME’s. However, there is no indication which suggests if the innovation clusters or innovation capital is territorially spread or clustered at one place or evaluated in terms of transnational integration or comparative advantage/disadvantage, linked to “Territorial Cohesion” objective of competitiveness. The analysis of this SWOT theme suggest that only “opportunity” envisaged in order to orient it with objectives of “Territorial Cohesion”, is to seek innovation as to improve public delivery services in “remote and rural areas” i.e. catering to general services of economic interest.

Environmental situation and sustainable growth: Regions are susceptible to environment fragility
which can arise out of inefficiency of the governance processes or lack of horizontal and vertical coordination. However, the SWOT analysis does not indicate on any of these aspects. Technological preparedness is assessed in SWOT analysis for this theme.

Transport situation: North Sea Region’s transport network has been assessed to be “integrated into both national and international transport systems” to the extent a few routes are “heavily congested” (North Sea Region, 2014). While undertaking the SWOT, attention to the current spatial structure, which is described as an “extensive sprawl”, is taken into account. An assessment of “multi-modal” interface that would improve the mobility, a key opportunity envisaged.

To sum up, SWOT analysis doesn’t not offer any explicit evidence to conclude that “Territorial Cohesion” has “performed”, i.e. used in shaping action (Faludi, 2000). Opportunities envisaged for improvements in innovation and sustainable growth sectors were analyzed from standpoint of technological interventions rather than measures such as enlargement in “governance processes” or use of “endogenous potentials” or “capital” to improve “competitiveness”. Also “polycentric spatial development” as response to encounter sprawl is missed. Although the responses from the various stakeholders have suggested “Territorial Cohesion” as a “significant” parameter (>60 %), the analysis of the SWOT proves otherwise.

B. Justification for Priority Axis

As explained in the Cohesion Policy architecture, each co-operation programmes identifies “Priority Axis” which is supported by specific “thematic objectives” as per ESI regulations (EC, 2013a) including ERDF. Further, each “Priority Axis” has set of “specific objectives” in order to fulfil “Union Strategy and Treaty Objectives”. Finally, requisite “Investment priorities” (identification of ESI funds) are selected for each “Priority Axis”, amongst the set of investment priorities for a particular thematic objective, for purpose of funding.

The entire cycle is illustrated herewith:

Identification of “Priority Axis” > Identification of “Specific Objective (s)” for this priority axis > Selection of “Thematic Objective” as per regulations (EC, 2013a) > Selection of “Investment Priority” (s) as per regulations (EC, 2013a)

We analyse how far “Territorial Cohesion” is used as policy tool in improving transnational co-operation while “Priority Axis” are identified for region specific goals in the programme. In case of the first “Priority Axis” titled “Thinking Growth: Supporting growth in North Sea Region economies”, three “specific objectives” have been identified. These include “develop new or improved knowledge partnerships”, “Enhance regional innovation support” and “stimulate public sector” (North Sea Region, 2014). While the first objective specifically focussed on improving knowledge partnerships by employing triple helix model, the focus of the other two is territorially oriented activities. The “specific objective” “regional innovation support” focussed on improving “regional innovation capacity” as well as identifying and developing innovation clusters i.e. “hotspot” outside the “existing innovation hotspots”. A more polycentric innovation model, rather than mono-centric model:

“This innovation should be place based: firmly rooted in the capacities and realistic potentials of each region. Transnational cooperation should be used to address disadvantages of location, scale and resources by pooling knowledge and facilities to address common challenges.” (North Sea Region, 2014, pp-19)

Innovation in public sector under this “Priority Axis” is focussed towards improving the capacity of
public institutions to improve service delivery as well as supporting institutions/businesses which reduce the “burden” of public delivery agencies. Innovation as a means to reduce costs and improve efficiency to provide better delivery of “general services of economic interest” is therefore can be observed.

The second “Priority Axis” is linked to innovation i.e. “Eco-Innovation: Stimulating the green economy”, it has two “specific objectives” one for “accelerating the greening the North Sea Region” and the other to decrease “environmental footprint” (North Sea Region, 2014).

The stated goal is to promote as well as stimulate adoption of green technology, products and services. Use of “locally sourced material” and “newer uses of renewables” is proposed to be piloted under this Priority Axis. In nutshell, the strand focussed on larger penetration of renewables, across sectors and levels, as well as innovation of newer product and service technology. Apart territorial characteristics in energy production through transnational co-operation (such as “additional renewable infrastructure, wave power and blue energy etc.”) has been sought in this Priority Axis. Therefore it can be inferred that use of endogenous potentials, territorial capacities to stimulate green economy is sought as justification for this Priority Axis.

The justification of Priority Axis “Sustainable North Sea Region”, as with the previous is upon improving existing environmental protection strategies. “Exchange of knowledge, practices and identification of new vulnerabilities”, are sought under it. Improvement in horizontal and vertical co-ordination as well as improvement in governance processes and institutional strengthening is surprisingly missing in this Priority Axis. A hint on orientation of this axis can be assessed from the headline of two “specific objectives” under this priority axis i.e. demonstration and development of newer methods/ techniques for environment protection.

The last priority axis sought is “Promoting green transport and mobility”. It aims for integration of transport routes with the larger EU routes and corridors (TEN-T) for better mobility of freight and people. Better efficiency of “transport investments” with improved usages and multi modal systems of transport are sought in this priority axis. Two specific objectives, one linked with improvement in accessibility of freight traffic and the other for promotion of “green transport solutions” have been identified. The services of general economic interest are bound to improve by better mobility of freight, sought by variety of measures such as “re-routing, new transport hubs” to name a few.

To sum up, three out of four “Priority Axis” has performed for “Territorial Cohesion” objectives. Priority axis focussed on “growth” seeks to develop “polycentric innovation model” while on supporting green economy has emphasized to develop endogenous potential of renewable energy in specific areas of the region. Mobility as means to improve general services of economic interest in last Priority Axis, offers evidence of “Territorial Cohesion” “performance”. However, emphasis on improving horizontal and vertical co-ordination is not elaborated sufficiently in the schemes of the co-operation programme.

C. Justification for selection of thematic objectives

Corresponding to each Priority Axis, a thematic objective and investment priorities (s) in lines with the “common provisions for use of ESI funds “(EC, 2013) as well as CSF are identified in the co-operation programme. Justifications are sought and the actors in the member states present arguments for justifying their choice as they seek to fulfil Union Strategy and Treaty Objectives. This instance is again a case of the “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in the transnational programme, illustrated herewith:
The Priority Axis-1 on growth aligns with the thematic objective of “*Strengthening research, technological development and innovation*”. Amongst the justifications sought, the “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” can be observed in the following accounts:

- “Innovation in public service delivery” to improve its efficiency i.e. improvement in services of general economic interest; and
- Requirement for different parts in the region to develop their “Innovation potential based on their own positions of strength” i.e. Place based development strategy

The Priority Axis-2 and Priority Axis-3 are focussed on sustainable growth of the region as they align with thematic objective of “*Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency*”. Amongst the justifications sought, one can clearly perceive the “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” objectives again, on following accounts:

- Internalization of renewable energy production i.e. Reduction in carbon foot print and increase resource efficiency and energy efficiency at different territorial levels
- Efforts to improve co-ordination amongst various stakeholders

Lastly, “Territorial Cohesion” has performed, when “improved accessibility” of general service of economic interest is accounted for Priority Axis on transport and mobility with a “Thematic Objective” of “*Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures*”.

D. Conclusions

“Territorial Cohesion” has performed in various sections of the co-operation programme. An elaboration of various “performance” actions i.e. related policy actions towards fulfilment of “Territorial Cohesion”, with respect to the “frame of reference” are illustrated herewith:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storyline or Spatial visions</th>
<th>Territorial keys</th>
<th>Linking issues or Policy actions</th>
<th>Addressed (x=Yes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Polycentric Spatial Development ”</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>European and trans-border accessibility</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accessibility of the main, and secondary, centers (regional accessibility including services of general economic interest)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Access to energy networks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City networking</td>
<td>Interactions between metropolises at the EU scale, main and national growth poles, metropolises and between metropolises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced development i.e. “inclusive growth”</td>
<td>Spatial Justice</td>
<td>Services of general economic interest (sparsely populated areas, outermost areas)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Competitiveness” i.e. “Smart Growth”</td>
<td>Territorial Capacities, Endowments, Assets, Endogenous Potential</td>
<td>Territory-bound factors (local milieus etc.)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Local innovation systems &amp; networks</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wise management of cultural and natural assets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Renewable and local energy production</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Territorially-related characteristics for energy production</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Revitalization of cities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional regions</td>
<td>Enlargement of local labour markets,</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Public transport connections to regional centers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accessibility of secondary growth poles and regional centers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy coordination</td>
<td>Critical mass of means through territorial cooperation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable territorial development</td>
<td>Recognize environmental characteristics as a key territorial asset</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prima-facie “Territorial Cohesion” has “performed” most in a narrow band of “competitiveness” storyline of it. One of the reasons for it is that the co-operation programme is governed by a robust regulatory architecture, which reins to an extent its content i.e. to say the “performance” here is correlated to “conformance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in the regulations. Cohesion Policy regulatory framework has put priority on delivering EU-2020 objectives. Therefore, the actors have a limited opportunity to “perform” within the basket of specified “Thematic objectives” (Annex-3). The EU-2020 objectives of delivering growth and jobs along with “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” are devoid of any territorial vision and primarily focussed on discreet time bound and actionable socio-economic-environmental targets i.e. five headline targets for EU (Annex-4). Therefore, there is a little scope of manoeuvring for actors.

However, in spite of these limitations, actors in the “programming process” have demonstrated adept understanding of “Territorial Cohesion” objectives by successfully linking Union Strategy with territorial milieus (assets, capacities potentials, advantages/disadvantages etc.). Improvement in governance processes under the ambit of “innovation in public service delivery” is one such example where the “thematic objective” of innovation has been dovetailed with the “Territorial Cohesion” objective of “territorial equity”.

### 4.2.2 Central Europe Programme

The Central Europe transnational programme, also known as Central Europe 2020 programme, includes nine EU states east of Germany, namely Austria, Italy, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. The latter six being the newer EU member states post eastern enlargement.

A. **SWOT analysis for the programme**

The SWOT analysis for the Central Europe programme is based on the situational analysis i.e. “internal and external conditions”. Again as in case of previous programme, it is primarily structured to evaluate itself in response to the “thematic objectives” of ESI regulations (Central Europe, 2014; EC, 2013a). Broadly the themes of the SWOT analysis can be categorized around four, assessed for performance of “Territorial Cohesion” herewith:

![Central Europe C-operation area](http://www.interreg.de/) [Accessed: March, 2015]
**Competitiveness:** Territorial mapping of economic indicators such as “GDP, spending on R&D, broadband and ICT infrastructure”, to measure comparative advantages or disadvantages arising out these factors. Core-periphery dualities, inequality, regional disparities across the region are captured. The opportunity is sought in improving delivery of services of general economic interest to “thinly” populated areas and regions (Central Europe, 2014)

**Green Economy:** Apart from the usual intentions of sustainability and promotion of green economy, the SWOT has dwelt to capture institutional efficiency in dealing with energy consumption in the region. Mapping of renewable energy usage across the region to identify fragile areas in term of lesser usages of such means and “high energy dependency” is done. Accessibility to “energy corridors” of the region is also done. Improvement in institutional mechanisms for “integrated management of natural and resources” has been identified as a key opportunity for the region

In terms of sustainability and transport infrastructure, the SWOT analysis has tried to capture indicators key for improving “Territorial Cohesion” in the region such as, “Core-periphery disparities in accessibility”, “regional and local accessibility” and “cross border accessibility”. Accessibility with the EU corridors such as TEN-T networks and an efficient multi-modal split has been the key opportunities envisaged (Central Europe, 2014)

**Social Inclusion:** The SWOT analysis for social inclusion pitches for parity in services of general economic interest in “small villages and sparsely populated areas”. Social indicators such as “income, education, and healthcare” are mapped to understand the trend across the region to identify “divides” and emerging “polarisation trends” across different directions in the region.

**Institutional capacity:** Lastly, the SWOT analysis also looked into institutional frameworks for horizontal and vertical co-ordination of sectoral polices. Integration with macro-regional strategies is seen as key opportunity in achieving the goals of the co-operation programme.

To sum up, analysis of SWOT analysis provides ample references for “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion”, exercised by actors in member states. The generative capacity exhibited for “Territorial Cohesion” by the actors while undertaking the same is exceedingly better than the previous programme.

**B. Justification for Priority Axis**

The design of the “Central Europe” co-operation programme identifies itself to be different from the programme discussed in the previous section as it entails to integrate not only Union Strategy, CSF provisions, Treaty objectives, but also TA-2020 provisions (Central Europe, 2014). How far these efforts are successful in improving the “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in design of the co-operation programme is analysed herewith:

The first Priority Axis, “Cooperating on innovation to make Central Europe more competitive”, is related to innovation and smart growth objective of EU-2020 goal. Apart from similar measures such as funnelling investments in R&D, education to name a few, this particular Priority Axis focuses on addressing “regional disparity in knowledge and education”. A territorial mapping of innovation capacities is suggested as precursor in fulfilment of this Priority Axis. It suggests that “local innovation systems and networks” would get a flip following the envisaged road map.

The second Priority Axis, “Cooperating on low-carbon strategies in Central Europe” is aimed at “strengthening the usage of renewable energies, improving energy efficiency, and at boosting the economic growth potential of this sector” in the region. Apart from usual technological interventions the programme aims to implement “territorial based low carbon strategies” and “low-carbon
mobility of functional urban areas”. The “Priority Axis” would add to the “Territorial Cohesion” objective of “competitiveness and smart growth” by undertaking a territorially characterized energy production (Central Europe, 2014).

This Priority Axis “Cooperating on natural and cultural resources for sustainable growth in Central Europe” aims at resolution of “usage conflicts” for energy consumption between “industry, intensive agriculture, climate change, transport, urbanisation and sub-urbanisation as well as tourism” and improvement in “environment quality” of “functional urban areas” (Central Europe, 2014). The anticipated objectives from this “Priority Axis” suggests improvement in management of cultural and natural assets of the region, a key ingredient for improving competitiveness based on use of territorial assets. Apart, most of the measures are management techniques rather than an institutional or an integrated strategy, as the programme specifies.

The last Priority Axis i.e. “Cooperating on transport to better connect Central Europe” focuses on addressing “core-periphery” dichotomy and improving accessibility of areas across the region. Improving accessibility of urban centres, poorly navigable areas, congested corridors are key areas of focus of this “Priority Axis”. Addressing transport issues of such regions would support for better reach of services of general economic interest. Linkage to EU transport corridors and improvement in multi-modal transport strategies are other areas priorities in this axis.

To sum up, all the four “Priority Axis” have performed for some “Territorial Cohesion” objectives. Priority Axis focussed on “innovation” seeks to capture “regional disparity in knowledge and education” and develop “local innovation systems and networks” while the other seeks to implement territorially based “low Carbon strategies”. Envisioning natural and cultural resources as key territorial assets reflects apt understanding of “Territorial Cohesion” objectives as disseminated in the Green Paper on “Territorial Cohesion” (EC, 2008). Linking transport and mobility priority axis in improving general services of economic interest, as seen in case of North Sea Region programme too, reflects “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” objectives among actors while they exercise to fulfil Union objectives.

C. Justification for selection of thematic objectives

Justifications are sought as per regulations (EC, 2013; EC 2013a; EC 2012a, EC 2012b) and the actors in the member states present arguments for selection of the “thematic objectives” as they sought to fulfil Union Strategy and Treaty Objectives. The justifications are apt indication of how actors have sought to fulfil “Territorial Cohesion” objectives while they “try to make sense of a particular situation, justify a certain choice or solve a specific problem” (Faludi 2001; Mastop & Faludi 1997).

The Priority Axis on innovation seeks to even out regional distribution of R&D activities i.e. “between western and eastern regions and peripheral areas”. It seeks to strengthen “transnational and regional clusters” of innovation to justify thematic objective of “Strengthening research, technological development and innovation”.

The Priority Axis on low-carbon strategies in Central Europe performs significantly well for “Territorial Cohesion” objectives while seeking thematic objective of “Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors” on account of:

- Mapping of Renewable energy at territorial levels to develop requisite strategies
- Seeking to promote usage of “endogenous resources” to lessen carbon footprint; and
- Seeking to develop “low carbon mobility” on territorial scales.

A similar “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” can be found in the priority axis on transport
where improvements in “regional and local accessibility” and linkage to EU corridors (TEN-T) has been argued while thematic objective of “Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures” has been sought.

However, the best case of performance becomes apparent when natural and cultural resources for sustainable growth are treated as territorial assets while “thematic objective” of “Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency” has been sought. The “performance” is illustrated, as co-operation programme seek to develop “integrated approaches” for planning and management of “natural and cultural resources” and “environment”. Similarly integrated strategies for managing “brownfields”, “agglomeration spill-overs” are to be pursued (Central Europe, 2014)

D. Conclusion

“Territorial Cohesion” has performed in this Co-operation programme over larger band of its storylines. However, “Territorial Cohesion” again has performed in a fragmented manner limited to Territorial milieus (capacities, endowments, assets, endogenous potential) under competitiveness band, six out of ten policy actions. The exemplary but fragmented “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” point towards a heavy investment of Cohesion Policy towards fulfilling EU-2020 targets (Annex-4). The actors have performed within the ambit of headlines of “thematic objectives”, which offered limited opportunity to synergize Union Strategy with “Territorial Cohesion” other than linked to “competitiveness” objectives.

Table 11: Performance of Territorial cohesion objectives in Central Europe Programme

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Territorially-related characteristics for energy production</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revitalization of cities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional regions</td>
<td>Enlargement of local labour markets,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Public transport connections to regional centers</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accessibility of secondary growth poles and regional centers</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Critical mass of means through territorial cooperation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy coordination</td>
<td>Improvement in governance processes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable territorial development</td>
<td>Recognize environmental characteristics as a key territorial asset</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Results of the Survey

The results of structured feedback survey in order to validate the analysis undertaken in articulating “Territorial Cohesion” in Cohesion Policy and programmes is presented. As reiterated, the purpose is to capture the gap between the “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in the Cohesion Policy programmes and actors knowledge of “Territorial Cohesion” concept. Total of fifteen interviewees were contacted (Annex-2) and the response was recorded for eight, as others declined to respond.

The first three questions dealt with the personal antecedents and work profile of the respondents. Out of the eight surveyed, three worked as unit heads, one deputy head, two were in positions of senior managers and the other two worked in managerial and administrative profiles. Out of the eight, six of the respondents were involved both in preparation as well as in monitoring and evaluation of the Cohesion Policy programme (Figure 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1. What best describes your organization?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Technical Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*answered question: 8  
skipped question: 0*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2. What is your position in the organizational hierarchy?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director / Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*answered question: 8  
skipped question: 0*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q3. What role defines you best in relation to dealing with the co-operation programme?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*answered question: 8  
skipped question: 0*

Figure 6: Roles and profiles of interviewees

Figure 7: Roles performed by interviewees for co-operation programme

The next question (question four) pertained, how “Territorial Cohesion” is understood by the actors i.e. policy makers involved in the process of development of co-operation programme. The literature review highlights various storylines and discourses of “Territorial Cohesion” evolved over a period of time (Figure 8).
Q4. Which among the following best describes “Territorial Cohesion” for you? (Can select more than one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balanced development / inclusive growth</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polycentric Spatial Development</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial justice or General services of Economic Interest</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness / Smart Growth</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place based policy making</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy coordination</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable development</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 8
skipped question 0

Figure 8: Storylines and discourses dominating “Territorial Cohesion”

For most of the policy makers “Territorial Cohesion” refers to “Balanced development or inclusive growth” (100%) followed by “Policy co-ordination” (50%). One third of the respondents also refer it as “Polycentric Spatial Development”, “Competitiveness” and “Sustainable development”. Surprisingly it was not linked to “General services of economic interest” (12.5%) or to “Place based policymaking” (25%).

Q5. While the co-operation programme was pursued, how significantly “Territorial Cohesion” was factored in the SWOT analysis of the region?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Least Significant</th>
<th>Marginally Significant</th>
<th>Significant</th>
<th>Highly Significant</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 8
skipped question 0

Figure 9: “Territorial Cohesion” and SWOT analysis of the co-operation programme

An important indicator of “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” is its application while the SWOT analysis of the region, in which different co-operation programmes operate, is undertaken (question five). Majority of the respondents replied that “Territorial Cohesion” played a significant role while the SWOT analysis of the region was undertaken (Figure 9). However, the analysis of the co-operation programme” analysed, presented a mixed picture, where “Territorial Cohesion” is used occasionally rather a consistent as a tool for analysis.

Further, in order to corroborate what are the most significant parameters for undertaking SWOT analysis, “Territorial Cohesion” objectives and “Union Strategy” goals were put together and the respondents were asked to select the relevant parameters while SWOT analysis was undertaken (question six, Figure 10). “Competitiveness” and “innovation” were most significant parameters (100%-all respondents) while “Accessibility to energy networks” and “services of general economic interest” was least significant parameters for SWOT analysis. The findings suggest that “Union Strategy” is a priority in the current cycle of transnational Co-operation programmes and match with the findings in the Co-operation programme.
The Cohesion Policy regulations consistently suggest for synergizing Treaty objectives with Union Strategy. However, “Union Strategy” and “Territorial Cohesion” storylines were asked to be rated for their significance in selection of the Priority Axis in relative terms (question seven-Figure 11 and Figure 12). The responses were more weighted towards “competitiveness, sustainable growth and growth in jobs”, in lines with the Union Strategy. Promoting “Polycentric spatial development” or “Imparting spatial justice” were least rated for selection of “Priority Axis”. The trend is consistent with the findings in the programmes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Marginal</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth in Jobs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Competitiveness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Services of General Economic Interest</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced development</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polycentric development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainable growth</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Other (please specify)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 8
skipped question 0

Figure 10: Key parameters of SWOT analysis for co-operation programme

Figure 11: Factors considered for selection of “Priority Axis”
A similar trend is observed when the factors for selection of investment priorities (correlated to the justification of thematic objectives analysed in the programme). Improving competitiveness, growth in jobs, sustainable developments are key factors to ascertain the choice of thematic objectives. (Figure 13 and Figure 14)
The penultimate question (question nine) dealt explicitly with the cross border infrastructure issues (input which guides selection of Priority Axis), in order to assess the usefulness of such measures in fulfilling the “Territorial Cohesion” objectives. The responses suggested “Improving linkage to the TEN-T corridors” and “improvement in regional accessibility”, rated highest amongst the stakeholders (Figure 15 &Figure 16). The analysis of the two co-operation programmes yielded similar attitudes as justifications for selection of priority axis and thematic objectives linked to transport.

**Figure 15 : Factors considered for selection of cross border infrastructure componnets**
The last question (question 10) dealt in asking explicitly the usefulness of “Territorial Cohesion” objectives in fulfilling the goals of the Co-operation programme (Figure 17). Although the pronouncements suggest for “strongly” contributing in achieving its goal, the results of responses from questions 4 to 8, findings from the empirical analysis, suggest that the goals of the co-operation programme are for fluffing objectives of Union strategy i.e., improving competitiveness, jobs and growth agenda and sustainability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Does not matter</th>
<th>Marginal Effect</th>
<th>Medium effect</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 17 :** Territorial cohesion and Co-operation programme

### 4.3.1 Conclusion from the Survey

The responses can be split into two categories i.e. explicit to “Territorial Cohesion” (Cat-I), linked to structuring of the co-operation programme (Cat-II).

With regard to the first category, the respondents understating of “Territorial Cohesion” suggest it as tool for balanced development and inclusive growth (100% of respondents), tool for policy co-ordination (50% of respondents). These two messages are respectively echoed by two main EU policy documents i.e. Green paper on “Territorial Cohesion” (CEC, 2008) and “Territorial Agenda” (Territorial Agenda, 2011). Therefore a positive co-relation can be affirmed between the discourse and actor’s perception.

In case of co-operation programme (Cat-2) the three key themes that are repeatedly prioritized are i.e. “Competitiveness, Innovation and Sustainable Growth” (Table 12). The very reason for it being to fulfill EU-2020 objectives, of what Cohesion Policy has sought to deliver. The finding validates that a strong “conformance” of “Union Strategy” in regulations has cast a shadow on “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” objectives, while the actors initiate actions to develop co-operation programme.
Table 12: Summary of feedback received from various stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Top Answers</th>
<th>Category of Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q4. Which among the following best describes “Territorial Cohesion” for you?</td>
<td>1. Balanced development / inclusive growth (100%), 2. Policy coordination (50%) 3. Polycentric Spatial development (37.5%) 4. Competitiveness (37.5%) 5. Sustainable development (37.5%) 6. Spatial Justice or General Services of economic interest (12.5%)</td>
<td>Explicit to “Territorial Cohesion”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6. In the SWOT analysis, undertaken during the preparation of the co-operation programme, which of the following factors was specifically considered?</td>
<td>1. Competitiveness, Innovation, 2. Balanced growth/ Inclusive Growth (all 100 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7. In your opinion, to what degree the following factors affected the selection of Priority Axis in the Co-operation programme?</td>
<td>1. Improve Competitiveness (4.38 RA), 2. Sustainable growth (4.25 RA)</td>
<td>Regarding structuring of the co-operation programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8. In the selection of investment priorities for thematic objectives, how did the following factors influenced the decision making (where appropriate)?</td>
<td>1. Sustainable development (4.25 RA), 2. Competitiveness (4.13 RA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9. In the process of identification of missing links in cross-border infrastructure, what were the key factors taken under consideration?</td>
<td>1. Linkage to TEN-T Corridor or Trans border accessibility (3.43 RA), 2. Improving Regional Accessibility (3.14 RA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RA = Rating Average, out of 5

4.4 Conformance and Performance Analysis: Conclusions

The empirical analysis undertaken has presented a set of split results. “Territorial Cohesion” is poorly conformed but performed, the latter being confined to a narrow band of “competitiveness” storyline. The reasons, as explained are due to limitation on the capacity of actors to perform, as “Territorial Cohesion” is weakly conformed in Cohesion Policy regulatory framework, particularly in the “scope and themes”. The results of feedback surveys validate these findings.

Table 13: Results: Conformance and Performance of “Territorial Cohesion”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohesion Policy regulations</th>
<th>Results of Analysis</th>
<th>Conformance or Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common and General provisions for various ESI funds including ERDF</td>
<td>Conforms in one out of six parameters of analysis (3/6 or 50%)</td>
<td>Conformance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific provisions for ERDF to ETC</td>
<td>No Explicit Conformance of “Territorial Cohesion” observed (0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF</td>
<td>Conforms in two out of three parameters (2/3 or 75 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operation Programme – NSRP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWOT Analysis</td>
<td>Performs in one out of three parameters (1/3 or 33 %)</td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Axis (PA)</td>
<td>Performs in three out of four Priority Axis (3/4 or 75 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification for selection of thematic objectives</td>
<td>Performs in all the justifications (4/4 or 100 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operation Programme – NSRP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWOT Analysis</td>
<td>Performs in all the parameters (4/4 or 100 %)</td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Axis (PA)</td>
<td>Performs in all the Priority Axis (4/4 or 100 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification for selection of thematic objectives</td>
<td>Performs in all the justifications (4/4 or 100 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Key Conclusions

“Territorial Cohesion” has seen a departure from a tool of Euro-wide spatial planning to a macro apparatus for regional envisioning. It has transformed from a spatial planning jargon to a public policy tool, finding “conformance” in the legislative architecture of Cohesion Policy and “performed” by actors in its various programmes. From the analysis, it can be inferred that even though “Territorial cohesion” is a “Treaty objective” its “conformance” in Cohesion Policy regulations for period 2014-20 is weak. The “Union Strategy” of “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” supported by a set of “thematic objectives” are at the forefront. “Territorial Cohesion” nevertheless is pursued by provisions which require member states to “synergize” Union Strategy with Treaty Objectives or develop “integrated approach for territorial development” for transnational co-operation. Efforts in this regard include adoption of provisions such as ITI’s (Integrated Territorial Investments) and CLLD’s (Community Led Local Development). The articulation of “Territorial Cohesion” in transnational co-operation in light of the EU-2020 goals largely depends upon the capacity of actors in member states to perform. That answers our first research question i.e. “How the Lisbon Treaty objective of “Territorial Cohesion” has been articulated and interpreted in the Cohesion Policy and elucidates various factors that affect its (“Territorial Cohesion”) discourse in the Cohesion Policy ?” The short answer to it, weakly articulated due to lack of “conformance” in Cohesion Policy which constraints its “performance” in Cohesion Policy programmes.

In case of Co-operation programmes, apart from basic skeleton of “programming” (EC, 2013a) which is enunciated in the regulations, the role of actors is all the more significant. However, the limited bandwidth of “thematic objectives” in the Cohesion Policy regulations (EC, 2013a) concentrated explicitly on innovation, sustainability and inclusive growth targets, the actor’s “performance” in applying “Territorial Cohesion” objectives has been contained, limited to “competitiveness” objective (such as capacities, endowments, assets, endogenous potential to name a few). However, the results of feedback from stakeholders suggest that actors are well versed with “Territorial Cohesion” objectives, in lines with the disseminated discourses on “Territorial Cohesion” such as Green Paper on “Territorial Cohesion” (CEC, 2008) and Territorial Agenda-2020 (Territorial Agenda, 2011). Consequent of such scenarios, “Territorial Cohesion” objectives are extrapolated or aligned with EU-2020 goals in Co-operation programme at the discretion of actors, linked to adeptness in concept of “Territorial Cohesion”. The only advantage that seems realized by virtue of “Territorial Cohesion” being adopted in “Lisbon Treaty” is that the capacity of policymakers to integrate it with the prevalent political rhetoric or headline targets has been pushed, as observed in the “performance” analysis of Co-operation programmes. These were some of the findings of analysis in response to the second research question i.e. “How efficaciously “Territorial Cohesion” objectives are structured in Cohesion Policy programmes for their desired outcomes”? The short answer to it, that the structuring of “Territorial Cohesion” objectives is constrained due to the orientation of Cohesion Policy towards EU-2020 goals.

Also, no significant differences in terms of “programming” has not been observed while the two programmes in two different planning traditions are assessed for articulation of “Territorial Cohesion” objectives.

To sum up, the headline EU-2020 targets have limited the narrative of Cohesion Policy to EU-2020 goals (EC, 2012). The “thematic objectives and investment priorities” outlined in regulations are enablers of these stated goals and objectives per se. The territorial solidarity, a net contributor for
social and economic cohesion, therefore is constrained in the present cycle of Cohesion Policy i.e. 2014-20. Consequently on can observe that Cohesion Policy is on a transformational path from a solidarity tool (Delorian model) to stimulus or project architect tool

5.2 Recommendations and Scope for Future Research

Cohesion Policy and its programmes are driven by a set of crafted regulations and provisions. A rule based scheme when “Territorial Cohesion” is a no “means-end” scheme, a dichotomous conjugation. The present research which focussed on interpretations and applications of the EU objective of Territorial Cohesion in Cohesion Policy programmes, has come up with two set of recommendations; firstly in improving “conformance” which could increase the “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” and secondly in advancing actions for perfection of content and process of “Territorial Cohesion” itself. Recommendations proposed for improved articulation of “Territorial Cohesion” in Cohesion Policy are;

- “Territorial Cohesion” objectives be made explicit in the “scope and themes” of the Cohesion Policy i.e. “thematic objectives” should explicitly exemplify or include “Territorial Cohesion” objectives such as polycentricity, territorial connectivity, territorial integration, to name a few.
- “Territorial Cohesion” should be an explicit component of strategic reporting and “programming”.
- “Territorial Cohesion” linked actions be included as “general ex-ante conditionality” and “thematic ex-ante conditionality” i.e. actions that advance “Territorial Cohesion” objectives. This can be facilitated once a Commission driven operational framework on “Territorial Cohesion” is finalized.

The results of the feedback surveys as well as the “performance” of “Territorial Cohesion” in co-operation programmes provide enough indications that key actors involved in the programming exercise are adept in goals and objectives of the “Territorial Cohesion” concept. Therefore, exercises such as consultation papers on “Territorial Cohesion” are helpful in delivering right messages to its audiences. However, this can be further improved by initiating topics as discussed in this thesis.

Also, while the research was undertaken, certain difficulties were encountered with regard to availability of disseminated research on topics, which could have aided vastly in improving the responses for the research questions. Some of these areas which need attention from the fraternity of researcher and policy makers among other stakeholders, and also a limitation of the present research to touch upon these issues are:

- What role does Cohesion Policy Regulations play in advancing “Territorial Cohesion” objectives?
- What should be the guiding principles for selection of thematic objectives of Cohesion Policy, in lines with it stated goals?
- What is the current level of discourse on “Territorial Cohesion” in Europeanization and EU parliamentary debates?

Therefore, it is expected that apart from the present research, similar studies on topics as listed above, in evaluating or improving interface between “Territorial Cohesion” and Cohesion Policy be undertaken. This would vastly improve the advancement of “Territorial Cohesion” goals in EU policies.
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governance in EU regions and cities Sixth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion, Luxembourg, Publications Office.


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ANNEXURES:

Annex-1: Questionnaire for Feedback Survey

1. What best describes your organization?

2. What is your position in the organizational hierarchy?
   - Director/Head
   - Senior Manager
   - Manager
   - Executive
   - Administrator
   - Other (please specify)

3. What role defines you best in relation to dealing with the co-operation programme?
   - Preparation
   - Evaluation and monitoring
   - User
   - Other (please specify)

4. Which among the following best describes “Territorial Cohesion” for you? (Can select more than one)
   - Balanced development/inclusive growth
   - Polycentric Spatial Development
   - Spatial justice or General services of Economic Interest
   - Competitiveness/Smart Growth
   - Place based policy making
   - Policy coordination
   - Sustainable development

5. While the co-operation programme was pursued, how significantly “Territorial Cohesion” was factored in the SWOT analysis of the region?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Significant</th>
<th>Marginally Significant</th>
<th>Significant</th>
<th>Highly Significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. In the SWOT analysis, undertaken during the preparation of the co-operation programme, which of the following factors were specifically considered?

- [ ] Regional and Trans border Accessibility
- [ ] Competitiveness
- [ ] Spatial structure (sprawl, density, etc.)
- [ ] Accessibility to energy networks
- [ ] Governance processes
- [ ] Sustainable Practices
- [ ] Innovation
- [ ] Balanced growth / Inclusive Growth
- [ ] Services of General economic interest
- [ ] Other (please specify)

7. In your opinion, to what degree the following factors affected the selection of Priority Axis in the Co-operation programme?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Marginal</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth in Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Competitiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Services of General Economic Interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polycentric development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable growth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other (please specify)
8. In the selection of investment priorities for thematic objectives, how did the following factors influence the decision making (where appropriate)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Marginal</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balanced development / Inclusive growth</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in Jobs</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement in services of General economic interest</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable development</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polycentric Growth</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place based development</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other (please specify)  

9. In the process of identification of missing links in cross-border infrastructure, what were the key factors taken under consideration?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Marginal</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving Regional Accessibility</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkage to TEN-T Corridor or Trans border accessibility</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair access to infrastructure and services</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to energy networks</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Polycentric growth</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other (please specify)  

10. In your opinion to what degree “Territorial Cohesion” would contribute in achieving the EU-2020 objectives/goals?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Does not matter</th>
<th>Marginal Effect</th>
<th>Medium effect</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Annex-2: List of Respondents requested for recording questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Transnational Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1   Dr. Wilfried Görmar</td>
<td>Manager, Federal Institute for spatial planning, Germany</td>
<td>Central Europe Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2   Monika Schönerklee-Grasser</td>
<td>Head of evaluation and monitoring unit, Central Europe Programme, JTS</td>
<td>Central Europe Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3   Luca Ferrarese.</td>
<td>Head of the Secretariat, JTS</td>
<td>Central Europe Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4   Dr. Bernd Diehl</td>
<td>Deutschland am Leibniz-Institut für ökologische Raumentwicklung Weberplatz 101217 Dresden</td>
<td>Central Europe Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5   Christian Byrith</td>
<td>Head of the Secretariat, JTS</td>
<td>North Sea Region Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6   Matt Nichols</td>
<td>Project Development and Communication Officer, JTS</td>
<td>North Sea Region Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7   Jens Kurnol</td>
<td>Manager, Federal Institute for spatial planning, Germany</td>
<td>North Sea Region Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8   Gusztáv Csomor</td>
<td>Head of JTS</td>
<td>South East Europe Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9   Brigitte Ahlke</td>
<td>Manager, Federal Institute for spatial planning, Germany</td>
<td>Alpine Space &amp; North West Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10  Dr. Antonia Widmer-Leitz,</td>
<td>Team Co-ordinator, JTS</td>
<td>Alpine Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11  Thomas Fleury</td>
<td>Team Co-ordinator, JTS</td>
<td>Alpine Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12  Ms. Eeva Rantama, PhD</td>
<td>Project Team Leader, JTS</td>
<td>Baltic Sea Region Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13  Ms. Gudrun Dittrich,</td>
<td>Managing Authority/Programme Manager, JTS</td>
<td>Baltic Sea Region Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14  Ms. Tarja Richard,</td>
<td>Coordinator, Joint Technical Secretariat</td>
<td>MED Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15  Ruut Louwers</td>
<td>Programme Director, JTS</td>
<td>North-West Europe Programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex-3: Thematic objectives for the ESI Funds

(1) Strengthening research, technological development and innovation;
(2) Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT;
(3) Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, of the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and of the fishery and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF);
(4) Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors;
(5) Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management;
(6) Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency;
(7) Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures;
(8) Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility;
(9) Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination;
(10) Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning;
(11) Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration.

(EC, 2013a)
Annex-4: EU-2020 Targets

The 5 targets for the EU in 2020:

1. Employment: 75% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed

2. R&D / innovation: 3% of the EU’s GDP (public and private combined) to be invested in R&D/innovation

3. Climate change / energy : a) greenhouse gas emissions 20% (or even 30%, if the conditions are right) lower than 1990, b) 20% of energy from renewables c) 20% increase in energy efficiency

4. Education: a) Reducing school drop-out rates below 10% b) at least 40% of 30-34–year-olds completing third level education

5. Poverty / social exclusion: at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion

(EC, 2012)