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<b>Author(s):</b>	<b>Anja Jørgensen</b>
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## **Abstract:**

This phase of the COHSMO-project focuses on how location matters in the relation between policies aimed at promoting economic growth and social well-being and the context of local territorial cohesion. It is based on the hypothesis that local conditions such as territorial cohesion here broken down to the elements of patterns of local attachment, identity and interaction between groups are often neglected conditions impacting on the way that policy programmes are able to alleviate inequalities and generate economic growth and social well-being. The claim guiding this part of the project is that the elements of territorial cohesion could impact both in a positive sense by boosting local innovation and ownership of forms of intervention, and in a more problematic sense by creating local inertia and resistance to local development and sustainable change. A cross-

national comparison of territorial cohesion in different types of areas and related to different scales will allow for the development of knowledge about these relations which will form the basis of policy recommendations (WP6, 7 and 8). Based on an interesting and deep discussion of the selection criteria it has become clear that a comparison between European countries is challenging. Due to different administrative principles, unequal degrees of devolution of competences or differences in constitutions, e.g. federal states versus unity states, any attempt to compare local political room for manoeuvre will experience major difficulties. Moreover, the simple fact that some countries are relatively small in terms of population and others relative large, e.g. compare Italy or United Kingdom to Denmark or Lithuania, can only further complicate comparisons. Such conditions are a part of reality and reflect the motto of the European Union “united in Diversity” quite well. The COHSMO-project suggests a distinction between comparability and conjunction. Comparability where cases are alike and units are uniform (narrow, rigorous (well known repetitive units); Conjunction where cases are related, back up each other and justify each other (develop or evolving each other's differences). There are no pre-given uniform units and one of the results of the project is to point to new and more useful (meaningful) smaller units. This is why it is significant that the COHSMO-project is working on a location-sensitive typology.

**Keyword list:**

Case-selection criteria, territorial capital, collective efficacy, policy coordination mechanisms, comparability vs conjunction.

# European POLICYBRIEF2

# COHSMO

Inequality, urbanization and Territorial Cohesion:  
Developing the European Social Model of economic growth and democratic capacity

**Territorial cohesion affects the way that policy programmes are able to palliate inequalities and generate economic growth and social well-being**

**- Urban, suburban and rural localities are investigated in order to take careful aim at the link between policies, policy-organizing mechanisms and collective efficacy.**

This phase of the COHSMO-project focuses on how location matters in the relation between policies aimed at promoting economic growth and social well-being and the context of local territorial cohesion. It is based on the hypothesis that local conditions such as territorial cohesion

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here broken down to the elements of patterns of local attachment, identity and interaction between groups are often neglected conditions impacting on the way that policy programmes are able to alleviate inequalities and generate economic growth and social well-being. The claim guiding this part of the project is that the elements of territorial cohesion could impact both in a positive sense by boosting local innovation and ownership of forms of intervention, and in a more problematic sense by creating local inertia and resistance to local development and sustainable change. A cross-national comparison of territorial cohesion in different types of areas and related to different scales will allow for the development of knowledge about these relations which will form the basis of policy recommendations (WP6, 7, and 8).

This research will most likely challenge viscous administrative boundaries as studies of neighbourhoods are typically based on formal, administrative local units. However, such units do not represent sociologically meaningful communities, where people interact in daily life and share a sense of belonging. By employing mixed-method designs to collect and map combinations of register, survey and ethnographic data, the analysis can be done in three steps, making it possible to investigate place-belongingness while simultaneously integrating extra-local, spatial processes reflecting national and global forces. To develop place-sensitive policies that are able to grasp places as different according to the social features that relate to them and at the same time are able to grasp places as a result of an interrelation between micro-relatedness to place and macro-relations such as economic growth, social inequality, democratic capacity, social investment and policy development – all with a differentiated approach to how place matters.

## Territorial cohesion

The ideal type of territorial cohesion that has been constructed I WP2 for the aims and objectives of the COHSMO project, includes the following:

- **An emphasis on balanced development and accessibility to services (and even connectivity).** In a way, this is the overwhelming aim and all related policy directives are simply ways of achieving it. From the very beginning, the ESDP talks about balancing competitiveness with harmonious and balanced development. Most importantly, balanced development and accessibility to services, as social inclusion imperatives, remain strictly spatial as forms of territorialized social inclusion or spatial justice. According to Rawls' (1971) 'Theory of Justice', his principle of 'fair equality of opportunity' in just and democratic societies translates into the dictum that social and economic differences can only become tolerated if they are associated with offices and positions that they are open to everyone. Nevertheless, this Rawlsian principle of justice is a-spatial, as his theory does not take account of the position of equality of opportunity in space. By all accounts, the

spatialization of this principle would mean that people should not be disadvantaged because of their location; location should not be a hindrance or constraint to the life-chances of individuals. In this sense, the life-chances approach of individuals, or the freedom of individuals to live decently according to their potential in their places of residence, becomes part and parcel of the balanced development and accessibility to services (spatial justice) perspective of territorial cohesion as location should not be a disadvantage. Furthermore, these imperatives become articulated through a policy language that talks about parity of access or equity to services, facilities, infrastructure and even knowledge. More concretely, this balanced development and accessibility to services perspective becomes communicated through the concept of ‘general services of economic interest’ (GSIC) that cover all fundamental needs of people to lead a decent life (jobs, health, education, security etc.). In this sense, through the equal provision of ‘general services of economic interest’ in all places, people do not get deprived of public goods because of where they happen to live. This is a fundamental dimension of territorial cohesion and can be found in many different national frameworks.

- **Polycentric development and the (further) advancement of urban economic growth:** The idea of polycentricity goes hand in hand with notions of economic competitiveness, smart growth, digital connectivity etc. According to the territorial cohesion’s goal of polycentricity, the spatial concentration of people, activity and prosperity in specific urban areas appears to create obstacles that have to do with the increased costs of concentration (land values, quality of life, time to work etc.), but also indirectly, with issues of spatial justice (concentration of economic activity, political representation, facilities etc.). There is a strong policy emphasis on measures that can allegedly facilitate (further) urban/metropolitan economic growth through the creation of a polycentric system and thus enhance the economic competitiveness of the country. Nonetheless, such policies are part and parcel of a wider policy thinking that views economic globalization as unstoppable and stresses the role of (regional) cities around the world in its development. Accordingly, the creation of a polycentric urban system (and its functional areas) becomes perceived as a motto of economic development in a knowledge-economy era; cities are to be seen as growth poles of economic and social development assigned with the task of attracting human talent and economic capital. This notion of polycentricity although originates from the ESDP, can be considered as an important element of territorial cohesion policies, too.
- **A place-based approach:** According to such an approach, activating local development dynamics – in all areas but especially in the underdeveloped ones – on the basis of endogenous resources and local comparative advantages is deemed paramount for any local development efforts to be successful. At the same time, place-based and community-based initiatives have to be harnessed in order for territorial diversity to be taken advantage of, in all its different forms. Accordingly, places have the potential for endogenous development,

however with external help and as part of multi-level governance systems. As a result, localities, in order to escape their undeveloped economic structures and their bleak economic futures, have to exploit territorial assets and even create new ones. Furthermore, such a place-based or local development approach takes for granted a 'bottom-up' perspective as local knowledge has to be harnessed while abstract and a-spatial theories and policies have to be substituted by concrete and place-informed understandings. By all accounts, assuring a balanced mobilization of endogenous and exogenous resources is necessary in all place-based efforts. More importantly, the building of democratic capacities and the broadening of civic participation in policy making, planning and implementation are deemed as extremely important aspects within any forms of a place-based approach. Following such lines, dialogue and consensus building between local populations and governmental institutions has to be promoted in order for the socially inclusive character of policies and service delivery to be guaranteed. Such efforts that promote democratic participation at local level can become materialized through the integration of civil society organizations and mechanisms into decision-making processes through active forms of deliberation.

- **Empowering local and regional governments within a European multi-level governance system (but not only).** In broad terms, territorial cohesion can be considered as part and parcel of the much broader phenomenon of the development of European multi-level governance that includes several actors politically performing at a number of geographical scales. The multi-level governance theory was initiated from research on EU regional and cohesion policies for a general framework of understanding of the relations between Brussels, national governments and regional/local/ urban authorities to be produced. The multi-level governance theory was an early recognition of the fact that EU cohesion policies, which were the redistributive EU spatial policies *par excellence*, increased the political power of regional, local and urban authorities. The multi-level governance theorists rejected the conceptualization of the EU according to the traditional schemes of political science as a superstate, a federal state or an interstate organization and attempted to define its originality. Alternatively, the EU became conceived as a political system where authority is shared between various actors at different levels. Within such a framework, the European Commission along with the sub-national authorities (regions, cities etc.), as well as non-state actors (businesses, NGOs, etc.) can bypass the national governments and thus develop autonomous processes of policy-making. By all accounts, national governments still remain important in policy-making, but they do not longer dispose of monopolistic powers; they are one among a variety of actors. In this sense, policy-making in the EU is rather non-hierarchical and collaborative. This empowering of regional and local governments within an EU multi-level framework of governance appears to be a characteristic element of territorial cohesion policies. However, in some cases, the empowerment of regional and local government structures might not be explicitly related to

the EU multi-level governance system, but instead, it might be promoted through a national perspective that talks about a decentralization urgency or a certain political priority.

**The integration and co-ordination between policies:** The notion of integrated policies usually refers to policies that take into consideration all dimensions of development (economy, society, environment and culture), all scales of space and time and all levels of governance (European, national, federal, regional and local). According to such a perspective, the integration of policies can maximize the intended results and can more easily facilitate stated policy goals. More particularly, territorial cohesion policies appear as closely dependent on the horizontal coordination of all policies with a spatial impact (policy coherence), but also, the territorial cooperation between different spatial units and various actors at all levels of a multi-level EU governance system. Allegedly, such coordination between different policies and cooperation between various governance units can result in the production of integrated policies, which supposedly can provide the best solutions to problems of territorial cohesion across EU space. As such, integrated policies are deemed fundamental for the goals and aims of territorial cohesion

## Central concepts

**Territorial capital:** the degree of activation of endogenous resources. It refers to the economies of agglomeration, polycentric urban structures, accessibility, natural resources, cultural heritage, territorial identities, social capital etc. (Camagni, 2008).

**Collective efficacy:** link between mutual trust, shared expectations among residents and willingness to intervene and interact and dependent on patterns of social interaction, social organization and social control.

Territorial capital will then differ in type depending on the type of locality in focus. We should therefore develop the concept to be specified in relation to rural, urban, and suburban localities.

Collective efficacy is a concept that is developed in relation to the neighbourhood scale. We have agreed to investigate localities, but as it is also emphasized in the guidelines from the Polish team, localities vary. We thus have to develop an operationalization of the concept that will fit the way we agree to approach localities in the case studies.

It becomes clear that policy mechanisms understood like the below are important drivers:

**Policy coordination mechanisms:** concrete policy organs that aim to achieve coordination and integration of policies at the local level, e.g. dialogue between lower tiers of government, or between different sectors, i.e. active labour market policy and vocational training.

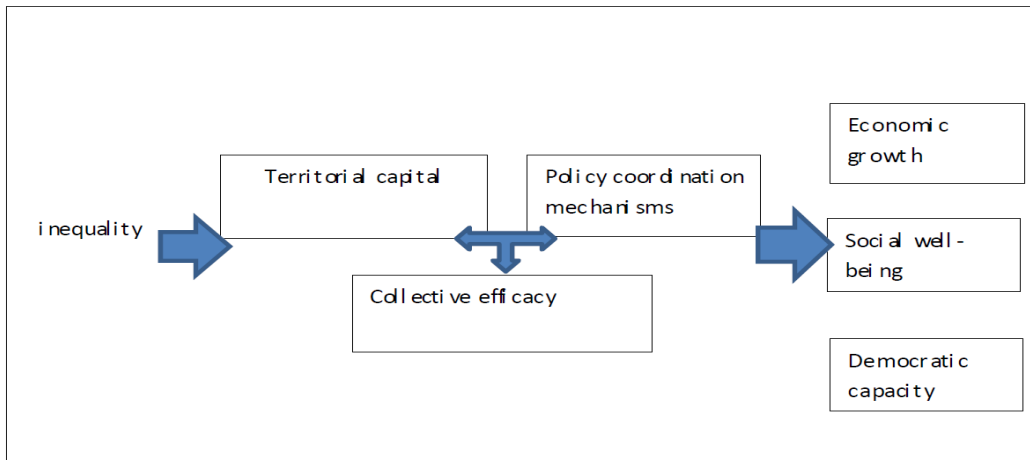


Figure 1 Object of local case studies in WP 4

The advantage being that the COHSMO project would contribute with something new to the debate over territorial cohesion. Rather, than being yet another study of the intricacies of policy implementation and a story of how little room there is for genuine democratic participation, the studies would generate new knowledge of how policy interact with territorial conditions and possibilities and the role that engagement have for turning innovative possibilities into real interventions.

Moreover, that we could expect to move beyond a descriptive analysis to grapple with the substantive workings of the drivers and mechanisms influencing territorial cohesion in the different local contexts. Yes, this means that we might compare different programmes, but the level of comparison would then focus on the similarities in the relations between territorial capital, collective efficacy and policy coordination mechanisms.



## The matrix of case-areas

<i>Type of area</i>	<i>Pattern of urbanization</i>	<i>Pattern of demographic change</i>
<i>A: Metropolitan areas</i>	<i>High population density</i>	<i>High degree of population turbulence</i>
<i>B: Rural areas</i>	<i>Low population density</i>	<i>Tendency to out-migration.</i>
<i>C: Sub-urban areas</i>	<i>Neither high nor low population density</i>	<i>Tendency to population influx</i>

## Case-selection criteria

Based on the COHSMO GA and the already completed WP2 and WP3, six criteria has mandatory when it comes to case-selection:

1. One region with three embedded cases (rural, suburb, urban)
2. Sub-regional successful policy practice: innovative and collaborative place-based policies
3. Empirical overview of socio-economic inequality in each country (results of WP3)
4. Theoretical overview of territorial cohesion (results of WP2)
5. That the cases has to emphasise the links between policies of territorial cohesion, sustainable economic growth and sufficient services of social investment (second and fourth Objective, p. 4 in Section B/. p. 127 in GA PDF1)
6. That the cases allow for the investigation of local stakeholders' and local communities experiences of cohesion and involvement in sustainable growth policies targeting local territories.

The following criteria should also be taken into account:

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7. That case localities should be chosen on the background of existing local involvement (defined in a broad sense to include informal and ‘out of system’ interaction and dialogue).
8. That case localities should host a policy coordination mechanism.
9. Cases should be selected in a way that allows for studying the relative impact of higher-tier policies and governance structures.
10. Since WP5 deals with Social Investment policies, this implies that the cases selected should as a minimum demonstrate growth-policy mechanisms

Based on an interesting and deep discussion of the selection criteria it has become clear that a comparison between European countries is challenging. Due to different administrative principles, unequal degrees of devolution of competences or differences in constitutions, e.g. federal states versus unity states, any attempt to compare local political room for manoeuvre will experience major difficulties. Moreover, the simple fact that some countries are relatively small in terms of population and others relative large, e.g. compare Italy or United Kingdom to Denmark or Lithuania, can only further complicate comparisons. Such conditions are a part of reality and reflect the motto of the European Union “united in Diversity” quite well. The COHSMO-project suggests a distinction between *comparability* and *conjunction*. Comparability where cases are alike and units are uniform (narrow, rigorous (well known repetitive units); Conjunction where cases are related, back up each other and justify each other (develop or evolving each other's differences). There are no pre-given uniform units and one of the results of the project is to point to new and more useful (meaningful) smaller units. This is why it is significant that the COHSMO-project is working on a location-sensitive typology.

**Project Identity**

H2020, Grant agreement No 727058

**Project Name**

COHSMO

**Coordinator**

Hans Thor Andersen, Aalborg University

**Consortium**

**AAU** – Aalborg University, The Danish team (Leading COHSMO)

**UW** – Uniwersytet Warszawski, The Polish team

**POLIMI** – Politecnico di Milano, The Italian team

**UWE** – University of the West of England, Bristol, The British team

**UNIVIE** – Universität Wien, The Austrian team

**VMU** – Vytautas Magnus University, The Latvian team

**HUA** – Harokopio University, The Greek team

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**Budget** Euro 3,748,335.00

**Website**

[www.cohsmo.aau.dk](http://www.cohsmo.aau.dk)

**For More Information**

Hans Thor Andersen [hta@sbi.aau.dk](mailto:hta@sbi.aau.dk)

Anja Jørgensen [anjaj@socsci.aau.dk](mailto:anjaj@socsci.aau.dk)

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