

# Places or people: territorial cohesion in the future

Think tank on post-2013 Cohesion Policy  
Warsaw, 27 October 2008

Moritz Lennert  
IGEAT-ULB



THE EUROPEAN SPATIAL PLANNING  
OBSERVATION NETWORK



EUROPEAN UNION

Part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund  
INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE

# Regional policy under fire

- Critical studies on the impacts and efficiency of structural funds
  - Lisbon strategy and its impacts on the definition of cohesion policy:
    - “Cohesion policy is first and foremost an economic development policy aimed at raising aggregate growth in the Union.” Commissioner Hübner, 2008
  - Sapir report
- => entire regional policy approach in question for
- Efficiency
  - Equity
  - Subsidiarity

# Defending regional policy

- **Territorial Agenda:**  
“...to secure better living conditions and quality of life with equal opportunities, oriented towards regional and local potentials, irrespective of where people live...”
- **Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion:**  
“Territorial cohesion is about ensuring the harmonious development of all these places”
- **National position papers**
- **ESPON**

# Shaky assumptions and assertions

- Economic value of diversity
- Efficiency of polycentricity
- Increasing returns through city networking
- Negative agglomeration economies
  
- Not necessarily wrong, but little clear scientific evidence => need for research
- Note: assumptions about diffusion after concentrated development just as shaky !
- A replay of the old place-based vs people-based debate

# Warming up the people vs places debate

- Social equity and economic efficiency often deemed more efficiently reached through people-based policies (ex: E.L. Glaeser)
- Arguments for place-based
  - social equity (Crane and Manville, 2008):
    - difficulty to identify people to target
    - some people cannot/do not want to move
    - provision of public goods often place-based (e.g. infrastructure, service provision, etc)
  - economic efficiency (Bolton, 1991; Kraybill and Kilkenny, 2003):
    - neighbourhood effects
    - “sense of place” as public economic good
    - market failures

# Policies for people and policies for places

- Evidence not clearly in favour of one or the other
- Effects of policies on territorial structures will be different according to choice of perspective
- “Case-studies” of challenges
  - Demography
  - Globalisation
  - Energy
  - Climate change

# Demography

- People
  - need for pension scheme
  - loss of embeddedness in strong local culture
  - loss of inter-generational contacts
- Regions
  - loss of weight/importance
  - loss of cultural identity
  - negative economic spiral => unbalanced labour market
  - maintenance of infrastructures and services
  - mono-generational regions
  - immigration

# Globalisation

- People
  - unemployment
  - poverty
  - inadequate skills
  - new jobs elsewhere
- Regions
  - less job offers
  - less tax income
  - increased need for social services
  - old economic infrastructures
  - inadequate public services



# Energy

- People
  - higher energy costs
  - less mobility
  - less purchasing power
- Regions
  - inadequate transport infrastructures
  - increased costs for public infrastructures
  - decreasing CO<sub>2</sub> quotas
  - decreasing energy supply
  - decreasing accessibility

# Climate Change

- One of the few challenges where people and region issues coincide => territorial issue
  - flooding
  - water scarcity
  - heat waves
- but some “non-people” (ecological) issues
  - loss of species / change of ecosystem
  - damage to / loss of landscapes

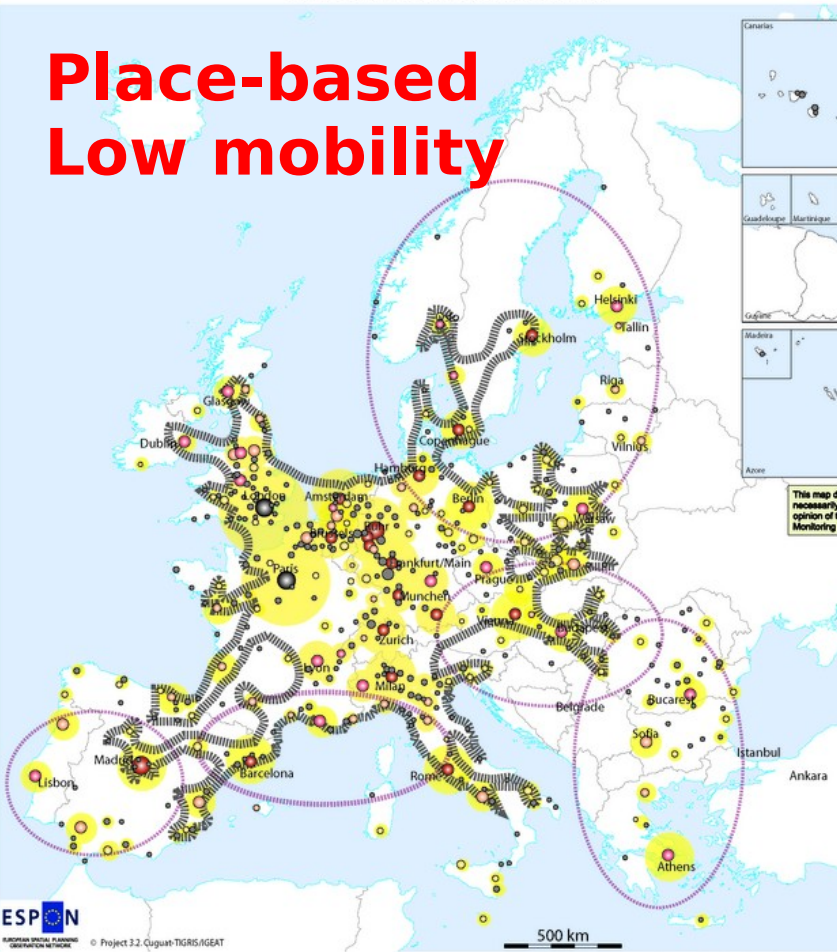
# The responses

- People-based solutions:
  - mobility
  - income support
  - education
  - entrepreneurship
- Place-based solutions:
  - maintenance/adaptation of public goods
  - infrastructures
  - services
  - maintenance of eco-systems
  - ensure energy supply
  - ensure accessibility

# A new perspective on the ESPON scenarios ?

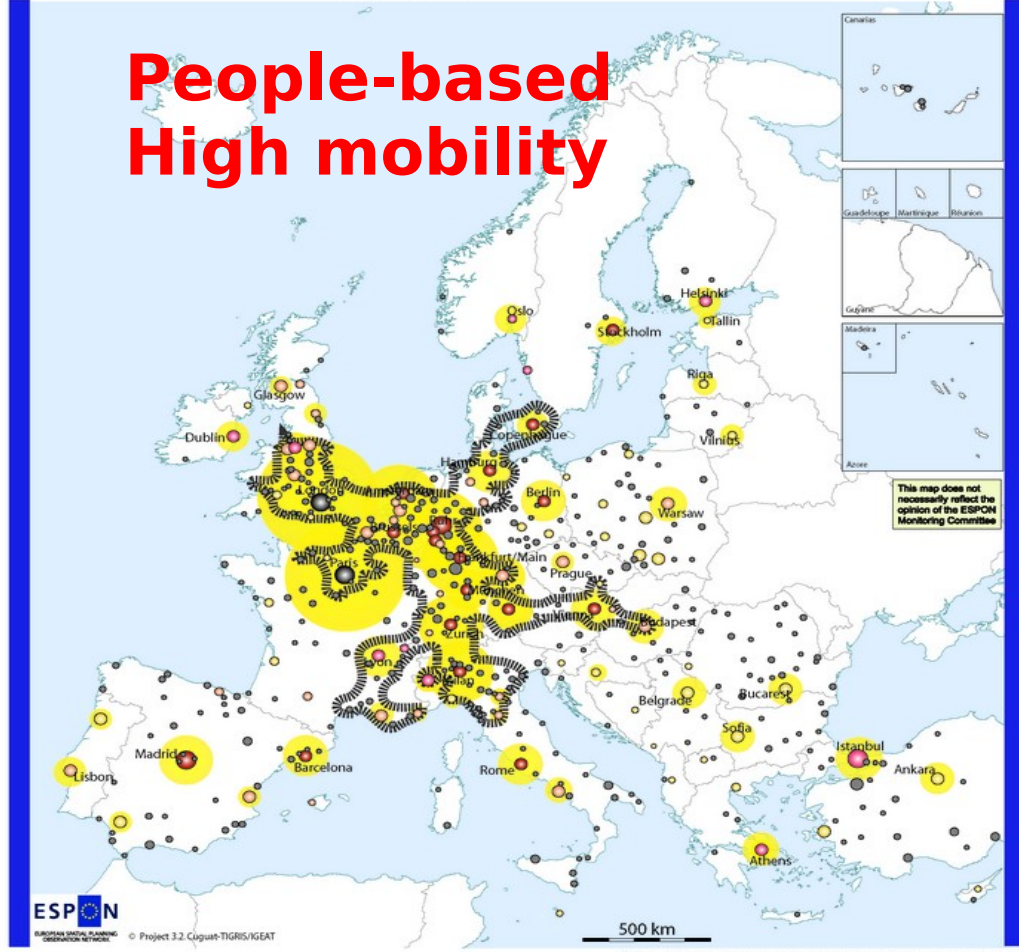
Cohesion-Oriented Scenario

**Place-based  
Low mobility**



Competitiveness-Oriented Scenario

**People-based  
High mobility**



# Of ethics and values

- Should people move to find happiness or should (can ?) happiness be brought to them ?
  - Is there an intrinsic value in the current structure of places and its maintenance ?
  - Is spatial (not social !) concentration of people, wealth and activities negative ?
  - Is global economic growth more important than the safeguard of local communities and traditions ?
- => Need for making more explicit these value issues in the debate

# Fundamental policy questions for the definition of future cohesion policy

- Which issues can **territorial policy** contribute added value to ?
- What is the capacity of policy to influence spatial structures ?
- Which places and spatial structures should be supported / maintained and at which scale ?
- Is it possible to develop “place-tailored” people-based policies ?

# Some reactions to the Polish Issue Paper

- From compensation of development barriers to development potential: why place-based + what if these potentials are the highest in richest regions ?
- From redistribution to concentration: at which scale ?
- Towards provision of public goods: where ?
- From infrastructure to growth determinants: basic infrastructure = growth determinant
- From work+capital to knowledge and innovation: everyone self-employed ?
- Focus on « external challenges »: EU no longer integrative project beyond markets ?

# Thank you !

Moritz Lennert  
IGEAT – ULB  
[moritz.lennert@ulb.ac.be](mailto:moritz.lennert@ulb.ac.be)