

PhD Lecture

PTE Regionális Politika és Gazdaságtan Doktori Iskolája

Trends and Visions of Regional Policy in Europe – New Regionalism

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*EU BORDER
REGIONS*

EU EXTERNAL BORDERS AND THE IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS.
ANALYSING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS
THROUGH POLICIES & PRACTICES OF
CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION



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Overview and questions

- How do regional studies and regional policy relate to each other?
- What are the main elements of paradigmatic change in RS and RP?
- What does EU Cohesion Policy signify in terms of RS; how does RP reflect trends in RS? To what extent?
- In fact, the development of European Union regional policies reflects a "dialectic" relationship between thinking about regions and practical implementation – and I argue this is part of the EU's political identity
- I will relate "New" Regionalism to Cohesion Policy

Regional thinking – a study in complexity

- Regions – a very general definition based on Turnock (2004): Areas that are characterised by “homogeneity through relations that generate some form of cohesion”
- Regional thinking is complex indeed. Regional Studies emerged from regional geography and the holistic description (historical, economic, topographic, cultural, natural, political) of territories
- Today, RS is a highly diversified research field that is analytic in nature

Conceptual evolution in regional geography (Peet 1998)

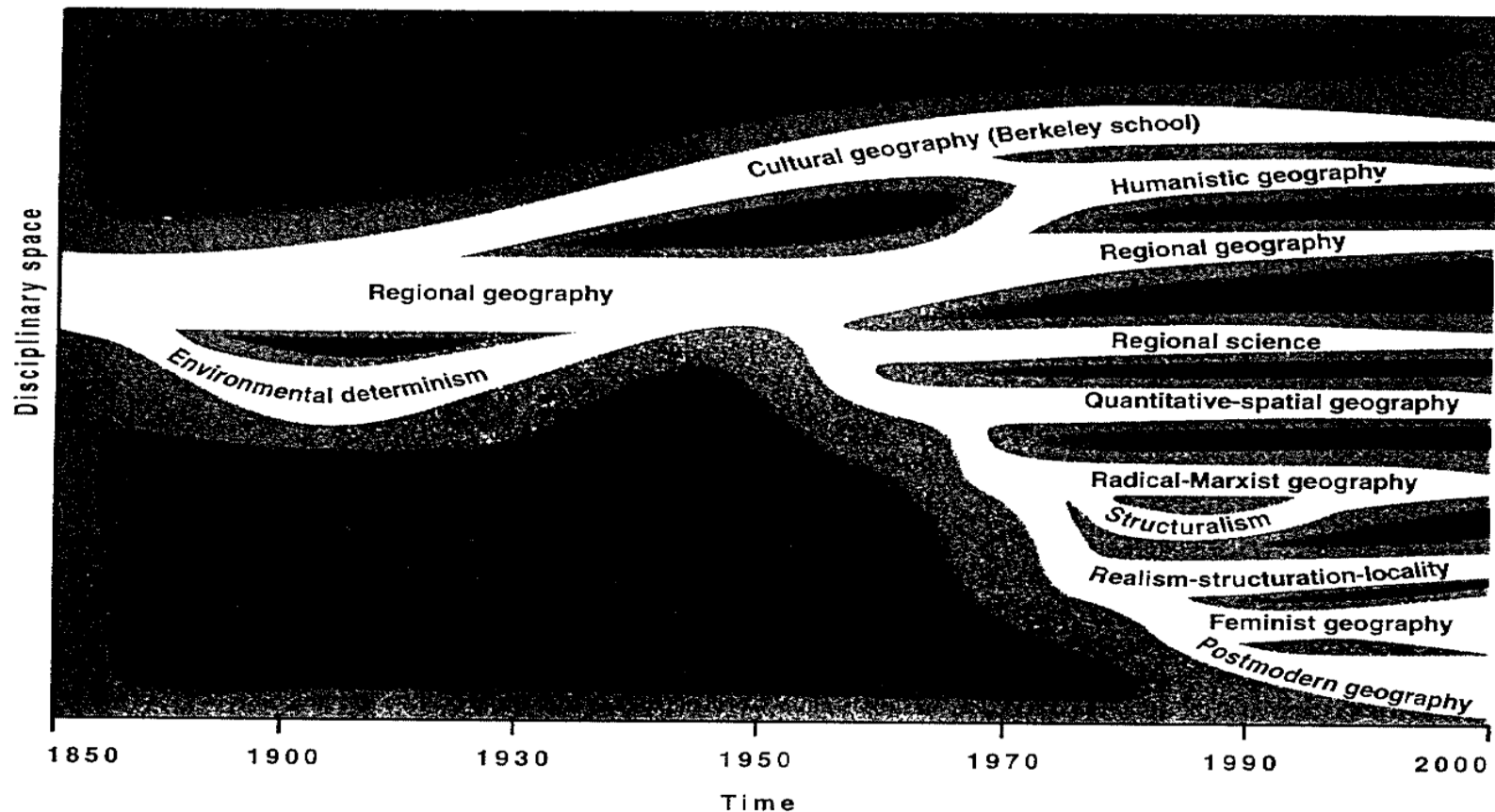


Figure 1.2 Schools of modern and postmodern human geographical thought.
An increasing variety of schools of thought have emerged over time in the discipline of geography.

Continuity and change in understandings of regions – a very rough overview!

- **Geodeterminist:** regions and their borders as markers of socio-ecological space; at the most extreme as products of “Darwinian” struggle (Ratzel, Maull, Semple)
- **Functionalist:** Genesis, structure and functions of regions (Hartshorne, de Blij, Franz Barjak and contemporary regional studies!)
- **Critical Systemic View:** intermediaries of national and interstate economic relations (Agnew, Taylor and Flint)
- **Constructivist:** Socio-political processes that create categories of difference (regions as relational, not given and contested) (Paasi, Faragó)

Relating understandings of regions to more general discursive shifts in the social sciences

- Hegelian/Darwinian (Ratzel/Mauß/Semple): History as cultural ecology, regions determined by and change with the physical, cultural environment
- Historical geography and anthropology (Bloch/Febvre/de la Blanche): Regions as territorial history - an interconnection of politics, culture, economics, psychologies, ideologies regions are wilfully created by society and its values
- Scientism (Christaller/Lösch/Hägerstrand): Regions as products of the physics (gravity) and geometry (space) of social relations
- Neo-Kantian Functionalism (Hartshorne/Kristof/Jones): Regions as a function of historical evolution and events that exhibits essential and necessary characteristics (consolidation of the state)

Relating understandings of regions to more general discursive shifts in the social sciences

- Marxian/Critical (Agnew/Massey/Flint): regions as a systemic element of capitalist accumulation and concomitant forms of stateness, territorial control, uneven development
- Pragmatist/Social critical (Paasi, Faragó): regions as social construction, as social/cultural contention, as mediators of socio-political and cultural power
- However a caveat: this periodisation of paradigm shifts in thinking about regions does not mean that "older" ideas have disappeared from debate. On the contrary, they co-exist with new ones and they are often evoked - critically or inspirationally – to highlight the complexity of borders as a societal phenomenon

Argument: New Regionalism reflects change and continuity in regional studies

- Emphasises regional (rather than just national) scale in terms of economic performance, democratic governance, efficient policy delivery
- This primacy is seen to follow from globalisation, economic integration processes (e.g. EU, NAFTA)
- Suggests that “partnerships” between the State, economic actors and regional stakeholders offer adaptive governance modes
- Requires scientific synergies through interdisciplinarity and method mixes
- Is very closely related to the evolution of EU regional policy

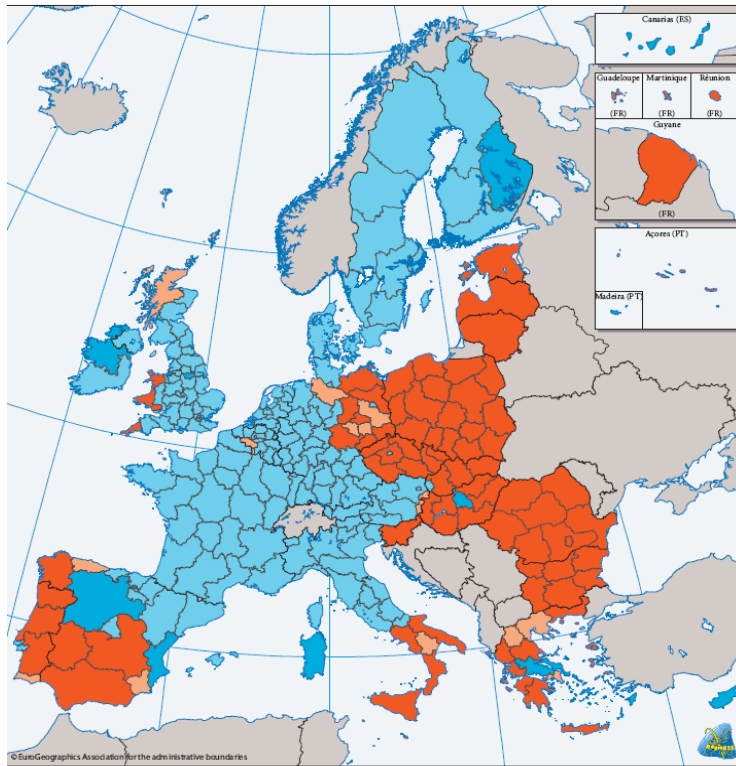
Elements of the NR paradigm

- Governance (see Kohler-Koch, Hooghe and Marks)
- Political Economy and economic networks (Marshall, often with Marx and/or Adam Smith, see Storper, AJ Scott, Castells)
- Social Construction (Image, Identity see Paasi)
- A variable combination of the above (region-building but also flexible place-making see Keating, Jonas)

European Regional Policies since 1975

- Similar to the evolution of RS, European RPs have developed into a highly complex policy area
 - Started as nationally focused structural aid for industry and industrial areas
 - Is now a common political objective of EU member states that is sectoral, structural, social, cultural as well as area-specific and administered in multilevel political partnerships
- EU RP has promoted the creation of a regional context
- EU RP has also promoted regional development across borders

Regions and European Cohesion



**Structural Funds 2007- 2013:
Convergence and Regional Competitiveness Objectives**

- Convergence Regions
- Phasing-out Regions
- Phasing-in Regions
- Competitiveness and Employment Regions

- Regional scale central to European integration project
- Neoliberal ideologies mixed with generous redistribution policies
- Strong core-periphery tensions in terms of regional capacities, self-image, political and economic roles

EU regional focus in question

- Ironically: significant in Core Europe and in relation to questions of “Nation” (citizenship, multilevel tensions, relative economic development, power, identity and performance) e.g. in the case of Catalunya, German Länder, Vlaanderen, Northern Italy, etc.
- Otherwise, it is often merely managerial – with little autonomy and little potential as a socially transforming process
 - Contribution to decentralisation and new governance forms rather limited up to now
 - Is often in competition with the development of municipal structures

Regionalisation in Hungary



- Delivery of regional development policy main goal
- Regions arbitrarily defined, little historical basis
- Administrative deconcentration only, QUANGOs as regional bodies

Regionalisation in Poland



- Metropolitanisation and economic consolidation as goal
- Historical-cultural Basis for regions
- Incomplete decentralisation: elected councils, few competencies, limited local financial resources

EU response a further example of NR: flexible territorial strategies

- Regionalist optimism of the 1990s has in the new millennium given way to a new "realpolitik" of power and consolidation – national interests too powerful
- Crisis of identity and direction of the EU has caused it to focus on managerial incrementalism, intergovernmental agreements
- In order to promote a sense of EU policy aimed at cohesion, new territorial solutions have been targeted that are spatially flexible and multilevel

Regional Policy Paradigm Shifts (source: Tomaney, 2010)

	Old Paradigm	New Paradigm
Objectives	Compensating temporarily for location disadvantages of lagging regions	Tapping underutilised potential in all regions for enhancing regional competitiveness
Unit of intervention	Administrative units	Functional economic areas
Strategies	Sectoral approach	Integrated development programmes
Tools	Subsidies and state aids	Mix of soft and hard capital (capital stock, labour market, business environment, social capital and networks)
Actors	Central government	Different levels of government

Source: adapted from OECD (2009: 51) *Regions Matter: Economic Recovery, Innovation and Sustainable Growth*, OECD: Paris



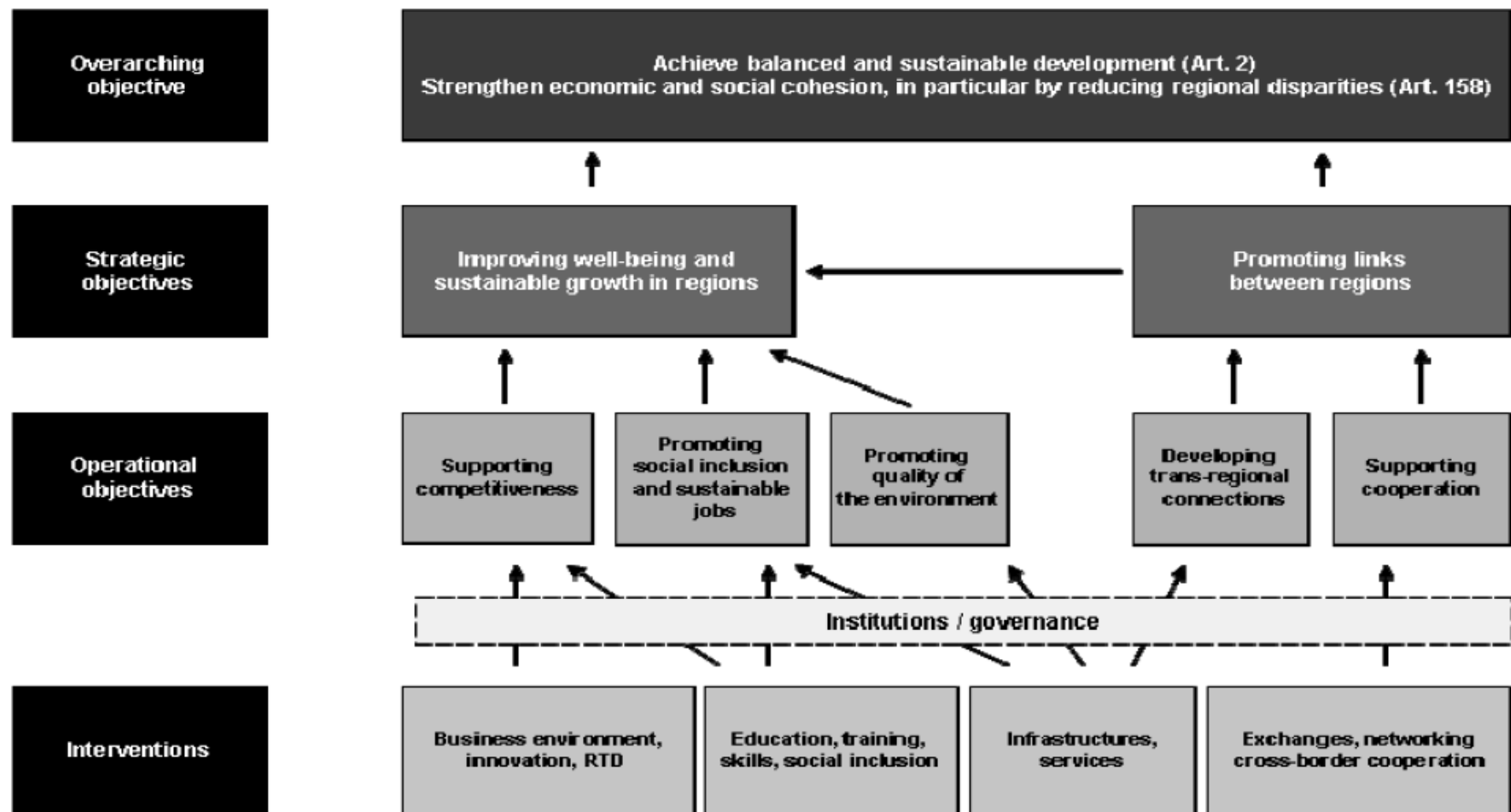
Place-Based territorial cohesion priorities

(e.g. Mirwaldt, McMaster and Bachtler 2009)

- Polycentric development : mobilisation of capacities, resources and social capital
- Balanced development – designing redistributive measures that can be supported by place-based strategies in peripheral areas
- Accessibility – improving the connectivity between cities and rural areas
- Networking – improving actor-centric coordination through better communications and cultures of cooperation
- Concrete regional ideas have been largely abandoned –region now a flexible abstraction and statistical element (NUTS)

Cohesion Policy as Network (Source: Ahner)

Cohesion policy logical diagram.



Re-thinking regional contexts for RP

- EU's vision of territorial cohesion and economic dynamism has been based on the experiences of Core Europe and the big centres
- The EU is now thinking about "place-based strategies" that involve greater bottom-up participation and improved consideration of local situations and local economies – explicitly promoted by the Polish presidency
- The precondition for this working is the inclusion of new actors as well as much more flexible forms of project development and financing
- It is no longer the "region" that is at the centre of paradigmatic change but the notion of flexible territorial interventions that emerge from "bottom-up", supported by multilevel governance
- New approach: Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD)

“Integrated Territorial Investments”

» A designated territory and an integrated territorial development strategy

It is essential to develop a cross-sectoral integrated development strategy that addresses the development needs of the area concerned. The strategy shall be designed in a way that the actions can build on the synergies produced by coordinated implementation.

Any geographical area with particular territorial features can be the subject of an ITI, ranging from specific urban neighbourhoods with multiple deprivations to the urban, metropolitan, urban-rural, sub-regional, or inter-regional levels. An ITI can also deliver integrated actions in detached geographical units with similar characteristics within a region (e.g. a network of small or medium-sized cities). It is not compulsory for an ITI to cover the whole territory of an administrative unit.

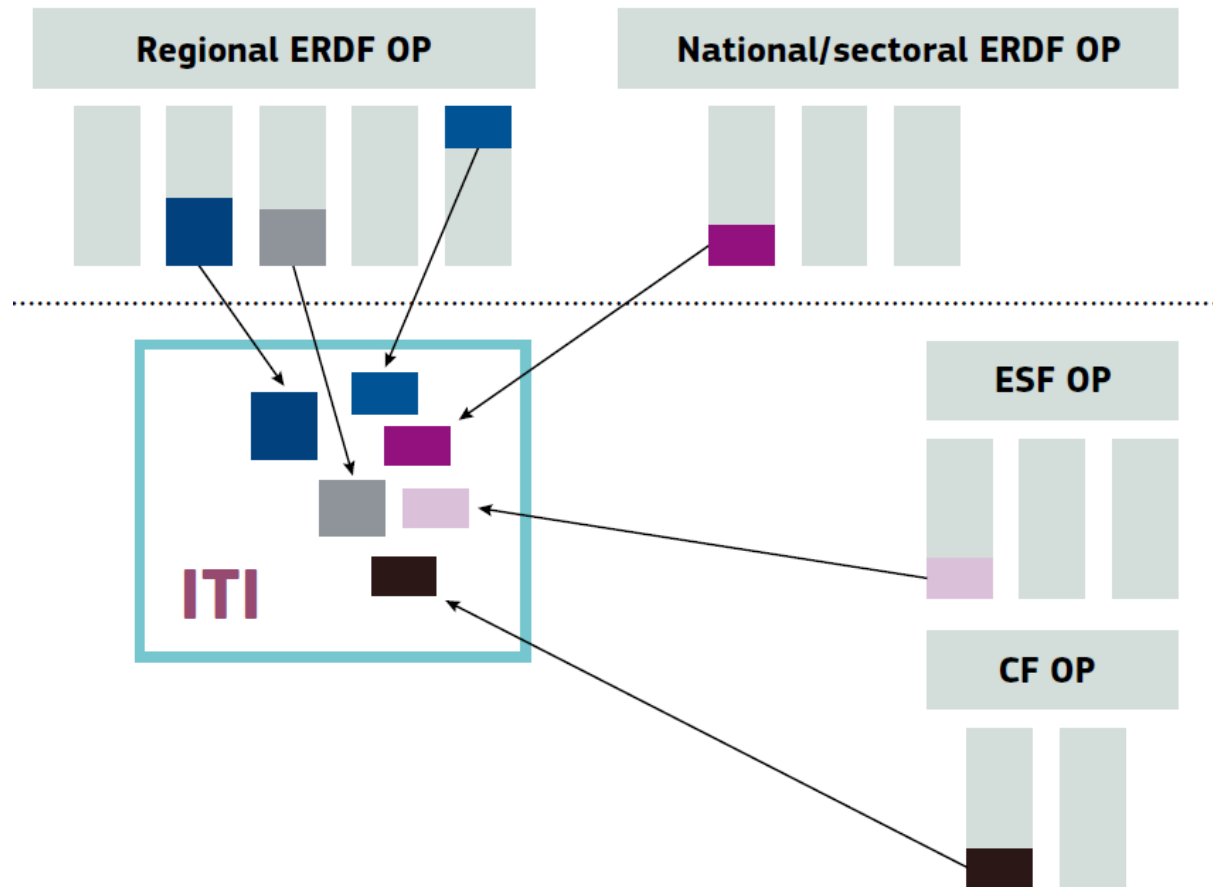


CLLD: a microscalar and multisectoral focus in EU RP (source: EU 2013)

Table 1: Schematic representation of CLLD principles

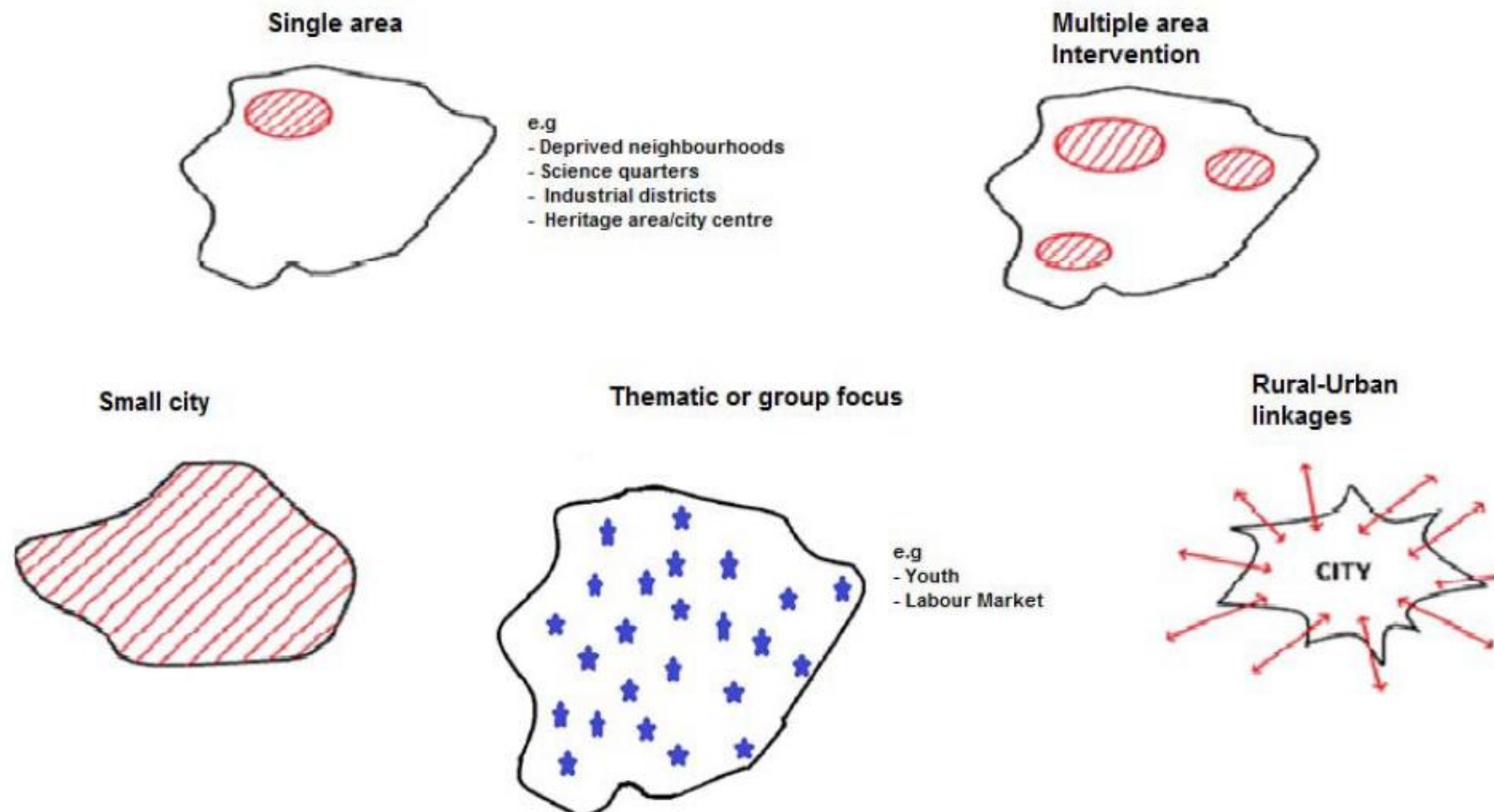
Sub-regional areas. The local territorial approach (Article 28.2a)	Funds are concentrated on the areas that need and can use them most. Solutions are adapted flexibly to meet their diverse needs and opportunities - at the right time and place.
Community led partnerships. Participatory and partnership approaches (Article 28.2.b)	Co-responsibility and ownership. No one interest group whether public or private dominates. The partnership mobilises the knowledge, energy and resources of local actors.
Integrated multi-sectoral local strategies (Article 28.2.c)	The actions reinforce each other and build on the strengths of the area. Linkages are improved horizontally with other local actors and vertically with other levels in delivery or supply chains. There may be different priorities and entry points.
Innovation (Article 28.2.d)	In a local context, the method generates new ways of thinking and doing - new markets, new products, services, ways of working and social innovation.
Networking and cooperation (Also Article 28.2.d)	Local areas and communities learn from each other and find allies for strengthening their position in a global economy.

Place-based development through ITI



New territorial concepts from NR to RP

Figure 1: Possible configurations of CLLD in urban areas



CLLD – Közösségvezérelt (source: Szokolai 2013)

- Speciális régió belüli térségek fejlesztése
- Integrált, területi alapú helyi fejlesztési stratégiák megvalósítására
- Magán és non-profit, a helyi szocio-gazdasági érdekeket képviselő szervezetek, valamint állami szereplők partnerségével
- 49%-ot meghaladó, döntési jogköröket biztosító szavazati arány egyik félnek sincs – együttműködést kikényszerítő
- Helyi fejlesztési szükségleteket és lehetőségeket figyelembe vevő célmeghatározás program szinten – bottom-up
- Egy vagy több OP egy vagy több prioritása alatt valósítható meg – ERFA, ESZA, EMVA
- Célközösség: 10-150 ezer között

Conclusions: Regional Studies and EU Regional Policy

- The development of EU regional policy has clear links to paradigmatic shifts in regional studies
- Many of the elements of New Regionaism as RS can be found in recent conceptualisations of European Cohesion
- One lesson that has been learned: artificial region-building does not really work – regions have to be understood as complex realities that exist through interaction , cooperation and local attachment
- Hope of the EU: create a stronger sense of EU and European citizenship through flexible territorial partnerships and partnership with national and European agencies

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Thank you



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