INTRODUCTION

The Lisbon Treaty introduced territorial cohesion as the third dimension of the major objective of European policy, besides the social and economic cohesion. The term describes the territorial dimension and serves as a leitmotif for the spatial development of the EU, in spite of the absence of formal institutions to enforce it. It is acknowledged that territorial cohesion needs to be implemented indirectly, via sectoral policies (Spit & Zoete, 2009, p. 20). Thus, European spatial governance depends on the mobilization of coalitions and partnerships across the vertical and horizontal levels and governance structures (Smith, 2007, p. 1020; Heinelt & Lang, 2011). But how could a coalition between the European Territorial Cohesion Policy and particular spatially relevant sector policies function?

Contemporary academic discourses on territorial cohesion often focus on the lacking formal competence of the European Union in this field. This article will leave out these aspects and pay attention to (undefined and legally non-binding) conceptual elements of territorial cohesion, focusing on the challenge of linking it within spatial policies and organising the relations. Therefore, the theoretical approach of Cultural Theory and its concept of clumsy solution are applied to overcome the dilemma of typical dichotomies by adding a third and a fourth (but not a fifth) perspective. In doing so, normative contradictions between different rational approaches can be revealed, explained and approached with the concept of ‘clumsy solutions’. This contribution aims at discussing how this theoretical approach helps us explain and frame a coalition between the Territorial Cohesion Policy and spatial policies. This approach contributes to finding the best way of linking and organising policies, although the solution might be clumsy according to the different rationalities involved.

Keywords: Cultural theory, territorial cohesion, spatial planning, planning theory, policy analysis, public policy

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2 By Cultural Theory in capital letters, we refer to the work by Mary Douglas, Aaron Wildavsky and fellows, as opposed to the more general field of cultural theory.
situation can be described in terms of four ideal-typical rationalities: individualism, egalitarianism, hierarchism, and fatalism. Therefore, it can be used to distinguish between existing approaches. Recently, the theory has been further developed by Thompson, Ney, Verweij and others with the concept of ‘clumsy solutions’ (Ney, 2003; Verweij & Thompson, 2006; Verweij, 2011). It is discussed in this contribution how this concept can help developing a comprehensive European policy of territorial cohesion.

The remaining part of this paper consists of three major sections. Section 2 explains the basic features of Cultural Theory and its categorization of four different approaches. The following section sums up the discussion on the institutional weakness of territorial cohesion and on the definition of the term. It concludes with the need to establish coalitions with spatially relevant sectoral policies to implement the European policy of territorial cohesion. The third section then presents the ideal-typical coalitions of territorial cohesion and spatial policies. In this section we also explore theoretically how Cultural Theory’s concept of clumsy solutions recommends pursuing a comprehensive European Territorial Cohesion Policy. In the Conclusion, research gaps are identified to enable future empirical research on this topic.

CULTURAL THEORY

Although Cultural Theory originates from anthropology and has been much used in research on risk perception (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1983; Renn, 2008; Rippl, 2001), its relevance for planning theory has also been proven (Davy, 1997; Hendriks, 1999; Zwanikken, 2001; Hartmann, 2012).

Why should Cultural Theory be applied to territorial cohesion? Establishing coalitions between policy fields is difficult because of manifold uncertainties, complexities and normative biases (see e.g. Hillier, 2010; Gunder & Hillier, 2009; Roo, de & Silva 2010), and it has been described as a ‘wicked problem’ (Rittel & Webber, 1973; Hartmann, 2012). In social and political science, there are two conceptual camps when it comes to solving such wicked issues (Verweij, 2011, p. 35): One camp builds on the assumption that societies function on the same or similar premises; the other camp acknowledges pluralism and assumes that the complexity of society impedes the development of policy solutions. Proponents of rational choice theory or the homo oeconomicus, typical of the first camp, approach policy issues in order to find one perfect-fitting solution. Frame analysis as a well-known example of the second camp is often attributed to Erving Goffman; Cultural Theory also belongs to theories acknowledging pluralism in social situations, rejecting approaches from the first camp. There are parallels: both Cultural Theory and frame analysis put values, beliefs, and perceptions central in the analysis of social situations, instead of rejecting them as irrelevant or irrational; also, both regard interpretations of the world as dynamic (Benford & Snow, 2000). As opposed to Goffman’s framing concept which tries to explain or focus on the question where different interpretations (or frames) of the world stem from, Cultural Theory provides a simple analytical scheme that allows reducing pluralism to a manageable number of four. Thus, we are able to analyse pluralism without rejecting it, and without getting trapped in usual dichotomies (state vs. market, top-down vs. bottom-up, macro vs. micro), which often lead to normative discussions about the preferred option (Thompson et al., 1990, p. 21). Another important feature of Cultural Theory that differs from frame analysis is that it contends that the analytical scheme it provides is an exclusive reduction of pluralism and a generic model that can be applied to every social situation. In addition to this analytical aspect, Cultural Theory also offers a conceptual model for policy path towards solutions, namely clumsy solutions (see below). So, although frame analysis and Cultural Theory have the same pedigree in social constructivism, there are also important differences enabling Cultural Theory to provide a substantial contribution to policy solutions of wicked problems (Hartmann, 2012). In the following, Cultural Theory shall be outlined in its basic features.

Cultural Theory acknowledges that there are different rational solutions to policy problems because stakeholders perceive the world through different rationalities (Thompson et al., 1990). Thus, it ‘can be used to detect and locate actual positions taken in political or policy debate’ (Hendriks, 1999, p. 428). The anthropologist Mary Douglas is acknowledged to be the founder of this theory, and Thompson, Wildavsky, and Ellis are further important supporters of this theory; see also Schwarz & Thompson, 1990; Thompson et al., 1990; Ellis & Thompson, 1997. As mentioned earlier, the theory distinguishes four ideal-typical (Hendriks, 1999, p. 428) ‘cultures’ (Ellis & Thompson, 1997) or ‘rationalities’ (Davy, 2008): hierarchism, individualism, egalitarianism and fatalism. These rationalities represent different ways of ‘organizing’ and perceiving social situations (Thompson, 2008, p. 39). It is important to mention that the

3 There are different strands of the framing approach, but many reach back to a famous book by Goffman (1974); Benford and Snow (2000).

4 Mary Douglas (1999) calls the grid and group scheme of Cultural Theory a ‘parsimonious’ model.

5 Herein also lies a frequently criticized aspect of Cultural Theory.
Each rationality is driven by particular expectations about how the world reacts to interventions (Hartmann, 2012). The rationalities are best illustrated by pictograms showing a ball in a landscape. The ball represents the world; the landscape represents the behavioural characteristics of the world following interventions (Thompson et al., 1990, pp. 25–37). Such pictograms depict the four rationalities and their perception of the world in a very useful way, helping us understand their differences in perceptions and conceptualizing. The reification of the rationalities is used here to simplify the text. Actually, the subject that envisions the world in a particular way is a person that acts out the respective rationality in a particular situation. The following brief descriptions of the four rationalities are largely derived from Schwarz & Thompson (1990).

- **Individualism** sees the landscape as a valley; the world lies on the bottom of this valley. This is a rather robust situation. Accordingly, individuals can experiment with the world, and each fault provides also an opportunity. There is no inherent need to cooperate or act in a group; self-determination and individual liberty are the important values. Individualism follows a neo-liberal concept of justice and pursues market-based management approaches.

- **Egalitarianism** envisions the world as lying on top of a hill in an unstable equilibrium. There is an inherent threat that even a small disturbance will destroy the equilibrium irreversibly. From this perspective, it is rational not to experiment: there is no scope for failures as they are irreversible and have severe consequences. In the grid-and-group scheme, this rationality is assigned to a high degree of group and a low degree of grid adherence. Egalitarianism emphasizes community, and neglects government interventions and market schemes.

- **Hierarchism** pictures the world lying in a small dip on top of a hill. This is a relatively robust equilibrium. But beyond certain boundaries – beyond the dip – the world crashes down and the equilibrium is destroyed. A rational response to such a world is to set rules and regulations. Hierarchism therefore needs strong group adherence and a strong grid. According to this rationality, nested levels of hierarchy are important to maintain the equilibrium. So, hierarchism is a perspective that regards regulations and rules as necessary to govern society and markets.

- **Fatalism** actually the pictograms originate from work on visions of nature. Thompson and colleagues added these pictograms in the 1990s to Cultural Theory (Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky, 1990). Originally, only three such visions existed, and there is a debate among Cultural Theory scholars if the fatalistic rationality is actually represented properly with the flat landscape. This, however, shall not be discussed here. For further literature on this, the reader is advised to check recent publications on Cultural Theory (Ney, 2003; Ney and Verweij, 2010).
Finally, fatalism believes in a capricious world. Fatalists do not prefer a specific concept of justice, as it is not enforceable in a complex world, and instead rely on fate and luck. The perception that we cannot know how the world reacts, and we cannot influence events, is depicted by a flat landscape in which the world (the ball) lies. It is unpredictable whether it will roll to the right or to the left, or whether it is in equilibrium at all. Fatalistic rationality is not a rationality of indifference, but a rationality where individuals do not believe in the controllability of the world. The strong grid is externally determined and, owing to the weak group dimension, exerting influence on the grid is not possible.

These four rationalities are internally consistent, mutually contradictory and jointly exhaustive (Schwarz & Thompson, 1990). They comprise a system of plausible, rather than empirically demonstrably true rationalities (Dake, 1992, p. 24). For more detailed elaboration on the theory and the rationalities, see also literature on Cultural Theory (Thompson et al., 1990; Davy, 1997; Hartmann, 2012).

The European policy of territorial cohesion

This section will elaborate on what territorial cohesion is and how it is pursued. It briefly outlines its origins before addressing the debate on the meaning and the term “territorial cohesion”. It also explains how territorial cohesion can be considered as a leitmotif of European spatial development. As such, it is shown that the legal basis of territorial cohesion depends very much on its implementation in the member states.

The European Union as a whole can be considered as a spatial policy experiment, composed by projects in different policy fields such as regional, environmental and social policies (Vogelij, 2010, p. 1). These policies determine the EU and its territorial boundaries through acts of exclusion and inclusion (Vanolo, 2010, p. 1307). These boundaries mirror different perceptions of European territory and sub-territories (Ritter & Fürst, 2009, p. 13). These are not determined by spaces of nature (e.g. rivers, mountains, coastlines), but are built on the socially constructed boundaries of common values, policies or economic activity (Hengstermann, 2011, p. 200) and take shape in institutional settings (Ekelund, 2012). Recently, territorial aspects of European governance have been recognized increasingly in what can be labelled as a second ‘spatial turn’ (Ritter & Fürst, 2009, p. 13; Schlögel, 2003, pp. 60–71). This goes along with an increasing demand for the coordination of European spatially relevant policies (Robert et al., 2001, pp. 153, 158; Siehr, 2009, pp. 79–80). A place-based policy is needed (Barca, 2009), one that would be less segregated, less sectoral, more integrated, and better coordinated (Vogelij, 2010).

The Treaty of Lisbon formally addresses the need for a territorial strategy by including ‘territorial cohesion’ among its general goals (Art. 3 III TEU). Hereby, the territorial dimension complemented the existing aims of economic and social cohesion, and together they generate a triangular goal as the orientation frame for European policies (Ahner & Füchtner, 2010, p. 543).

Since its first official appearance in the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), and increasingly after its definition in primary law (2007), the term has been subject of innumerable discussions and different definitions (Abrahams, 2013). Academics, policy-makers and practitioners have been attempting to understand what is meant by this vague term. Neither a detailed study of the term’s origin (Faludi, 2009), nor a Green Paper (2008/2009), nor a wide survey on ESPON projects (Abrahams, 2013) could deliver a common understanding. The term fits or does not fit to different cultural contexts and varying geographic scales – it is applicable to macro regions and likewise to local surroundings. Whether this vagueness is assessed as essentially positive (as it provides some flexibility and scope giving a meaning to this term), or whether some it hinders the implementation of territorial cohesion, depends very much on the perspective – or rather rationality – of the assessor, as it will become clear later on.

The coalition behind the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP, 1999) and its follow-up document, the Territorial Agenda (TAEU, 2007 & 2011), does not provide any further specification of the term. It understands territorial cohesion as a set of principles underpinning multiple objectives: a harmonious, balanced, efficient, sustainable territorial development (ESDP 1999); spatial solidarity; and “convergence between the economies of better-off territories and those whose development is lagging behind” (TAEU, 2011, pp. No. 8). In short, the goal is to enable “equal opportunities for citizens and enterprises, wherever they are located, to make the most of their territorial potentials” (TAEU, 2011, pp. No. 8).

It can only be stated that the term outlines a “new, officially agreed policy objective for the development of Europe’s territory” (Vogelij, 2010, p. 2), and the related policy field “is still very much in the making” (Luukkonen & Moilanen, 2012, p. 428).

Territorial cohesion serves as a leitmotif, offering a direction of thinking, but has to be interpreted constantly for each and every situation and context. In this sense, it is not different from other concepts of modern management and governance processes (Vogelij, 2010, p. 2). Even the term spatial planning itself has different meanings throughout Europe and includes different ap-
proaches to influencing spatial developments (Hillier 2010), which could be a reason why the new term of territorial cohesion was created.

Putting aside the quest for a precise definition, the conceptual characteristics of territorial cohesion appear in three dimensions (Battis and Kersten 2008, p. 7):

- territorial balance,
- territorial integration,
- territorial governance.

These dimensions frame the concept in order to provide a proper tier of European planning, which goes beyond the sum of 28 national planning approaches (Hengstermann, 2012, p. 51).

Territorial balance represents the normative dimension; it implies that spatial disparities shall be reduced. Territorial cohesion policy is differentiated according to places and geographical context according to the particular function. Such spatial solidarity requires and supports the development of endogenous potential in accordance with responsibility for the overall space. This leads to a territorial balance that is not meant as homogeneity, but as equal potentials.

The (vertical and horizontal) territorial integration of different sectoral policies with spatial impact regards functional spaces irrespective of administrative and state borders. In doing so, ad-hoc spaces are defined on the basis of a territorial balance, a general direction of thinking. Summarizing the debate on the definition of term territorial cohesion, the term has to be understood as an over

The tension between the actual influence of the European Union on territorial development via sectoral policies and the lack of a formal competence in spatial planning itself requires some kind of a moral obligation to implement spatial planning (Fürst, 2010, p. 181). Therefore, territorial cohesion needs to add tangible added value to spatial policies to be accepted by them as an overall leitmotif without legal competence. In this way, the overall goal of territorial cohesion can generate actual effects on spatial development and implement such development via various policy fields. Pursuing the Lisbon Treaty’s goal depends on building coalitions with spatial policies.

Applying Cultural Theory to European spatial policy

In the following section, the basic features of Cultural Theory are applied to the question of how coalitions between the European Territorial Cohesion Policy and spatial policies could function.

Four ideal types of coalitions

According to the previously outlined four rationalities of Cultural Theory, four different ideal types of coalitions between the European Territorial Cohesion Policy and spatial policies can be designed. These ideal types are an abstraction of real coalitions in spatial planning. In line with Weber, the ideal types are de-
signed as generalized and simplified types, leaving out particular features from practice and stressing others. The criteria for their design are derived from the four rationalities of Cultural Theory. However, the different types of strategies that can be identified in the practice of regional development match the four abstract ideal types below pretty well (Wiechmann, 2008). Each type is consistent within one rationality but irrational from the perspective of the other three.

To describe and compare the differences between the four types of coalitions, the components ‘problem’, ‘objective’, and ‘method’ are used to characterize them. These three components are derived from Schönwandt and Voigt (2005, pp. 770–772). Planning problems are evaluations of current situations that are perceived as undesirable or inconvenient by the evaluating subject; planning objectives are defined as desirable or more convenient future situations; and planning methods contain the legal and social rules and norms (institutions) applied to implement the planning objectives. As Schönwandt and Voigt point out, the three components are very much dependent on the rationalities of the stakeholders (Schönwandt & Voigt, 2005: 770). Schönwandt and Voigt originally referred to ‘background knowledge’, but the term ‘rationality’ covers better what is meant: an inherently consistent and logical way of thinking (see also Davy, 2008; Hartmann, 2012). So they are suitable for the following thought experiment of designing four ideal-typical coalitions.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>HIERARCHIC: COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING</th>
<th>INDIVIDUALISTIC: COMPETITION OF PROJECTS</th>
<th>EGALITARIAN: COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT</th>
<th>FATALISTIC: REACTIVE MANAGEMENT</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missing leadership, unclear responsibilities, institutional diversity</td>
<td>Too few incentives for initiatives and too many administrative obstacles</td>
<td>Lobbyism and institutionalism obstruct the public interest</td>
<td>Policy fields are too complex and too different</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Integrated programme on territorial cohesion and sector policy</th>
<th>Projects that combine territorial cohesion and sector policy</th>
<th>Common vision on territorial cohesion and sector policy</th>
<th>No particular alliance</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Synoptic planning approaches</th>
<th>Tendered competition of ideas for alliance projects</th>
<th>Participation and collaborative planning</th>
<th>Ad hoc short-term collaboration</th>
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This thought experiment shall show how the pursuit of different rationalities results in different coalitions. It is, however, remarkable that there can be found empirical indicators of the existence of the four types in literature on strategy building and spatial planning coalitions. In his analysis of regional planning in Germany, Wiechmann (2008) brings up four different types of coalitions (Wiechmann, 2008, pp. 252–254) without making reference to Cultural Theory (so that the argument of a biased empirical research can be rejected).
The first of these four types is called ‘strategic spatial development’. It uses synoptic planning approaches based on ‘rational’ analyses as well as strong and binding decisions. ‘Project-oriented networking’ is the second type of coalitions. It rejects big plans; rather, it prefers projects that achieve local developments without imposing strict regulations. One can regard this approach as the market approach. The third type is ‘cooperative planning’. It focuses on broad participation of stakeholders and consensual decision making. This approach fits with what is known as collaborative planning in planning theory (Healey, 2003; Healey, 2009). Voluntary agreements and mutual trust are important elements. The fourth type is labelled as ‘strategic project management’. It assumes that spatial development is not predictable, and so (long term) strategic planning is the only possible option. The reason is that the entire socio-economic system is too complex and has to cope with uncertainty. Such an approach pursues projects without a particular strategic steering mechanism. The sum of a project will emerge in a pattern, which can be considered as a strategy ex post. Therefore, Wiechmann identifies in his analysis four fundamental and even contradictory types of regional planning. ‘Strategic spatial development’ fits hierarchical rationality, ‘project-oriented networking’ almost ideal-typically represents the ideals of individualist rationality, ‘cooperative planning’ describes exactly how egalitarians would approach regional planning coalitions, and ‘strategic project management’ is easy to assign to fatalistic rationality. This can be regarded as empirical support for the existence of the four types of rationalities in spatial planning.

In summary, four ideal-typical approaches to coalitions can be designed. The example of Wiechmann’s empirical research shows that these can even be found in practice. The ideal types described above are exaggerated and designed according to one of the rationalities each. They are mere analytical constructions to benchmark existing practices and categorize approaches to coalitions between spatial policies and territorial cohesion. This complicates the challenge of establishing coalitions between the European Territorial Cohesion Policy and spatial policies because the four types of rationalities dominate certain situations in floodplains, and how this dominance influences the management of these areas (Hartmann, 2011). Establishing a coalition between the European Territorial Cohesion Policy and spatial policies is not a question of choosing a strategy following one of the four rationalities described above, but rather a question of incorporating elements of all four of these strategies. However, from the limited perspective of any single rationality, such a polyrational solution can never be perfect, and rather appears a bit irrational because of incorporating elements of the other rationalities. Verweij and Thompson therefore use the term ‘clumsy solution’ to describe a polyrational solution (Verweij & Thompson, 2006). On a side note, it is important to recognize that the term ‘solution’ is in fact misleading. A solution is always a response to a problem. Social constructivist approaches (such as Cultural Theory), however, acknowledge that the perception of a problem results from interpretation by a certain rationality. The solution does in fact not ‘solve’ a problem, but it responds to the plurality of worldviews. So, the inclusion of all four rationalities is its strength as well as its weakness. A clumsy solution is always a dynamic situation where the different rationalities compete to erase the clumsiness (the other three rationalities) and make it a perfect solution. This is what Thompson and his fellows call ‘permanent dynamic imbalance’ (Thompson et al., 1990, p. 87).

For the field of spatial policymaking, the impossibility theorem has been described empirically. Davy’s study on regional cooperation in the Ruhr area found that the four rationalities emerge in such situations and explained how they frame solutions (Davy, 2004). Hartmann developed a clumsy solution for the field of flood risk management. He explained how the four rationalities dominate certain situations in floodplains, and how this dominance influences the management of these areas (Hartmann, 2011). Establishing a coalition between the European Territorial Cohesion Policy and spatial policies is not a question of choosing a strategy following one of the four rationalities described above, but rather a question of incorporating elements of all four of these strategies. However, from the limited perspective of any single rationality, such a polyrational solution can never be perfect, and rather appears a bit irrational because of incorporating elements of the other rationalities. Verweij and Thompson therefore use the term ‘clumsy solution’ to describe a polyrational solution (Verweij & Thompson, 2006). On a side note, it is important to recognize that the term ‘solution’ is in fact misleading. A solution is always a response to a problem. Social constructivist approaches (such as Cultural Theory), however, acknowledge that the perception of a problem results from interpretation by a certain rationality. The solution does in fact not ‘solve’ a problem, but it responds to the plurality of worldviews. So, the inclusion of all four rationalities is its strength as well as its weakness. A clumsy solution is always a dynamic situation where the different rationalities compete to erase the clumsiness (the other three rationalities) and make it a perfect solution. This is what Thompson and his fellows call ‘permanent dynamic imbalance’ (Thompson et al., 1990, p. 87).

This raises the next obvious question: how could a clumsy strategic approach to a coalition between territorial cohesion and spatial policy work? It needs to combine elements of all four types mentioned before. It is, however, more than just adding them together. A clumsy strategy must be rational enough for each rationality to be accepted by it. The hierarchic element in such
a clumsy strategy can, for example, be an institutional framework and a plan that guides the actions of stakeholders in a desired direction. However, contrary to a pure hierarchic strategy, the framework allows some scope, and it does not bind all stakeholders. This matches the idea of how the world is constituted: the ball in the landscape (see Figure 1) may roll a bit to the right or to the left, as long as it remains in the dip. The individualist element in the clumsy strategy is certain project orientation providing opportunities and incentives for innovative and experimental projects for collaboration between both policy fields. Although the ball will roll a bit uphill towards the edges, the long-term result will be the best possible situation – a stable position at the bottom of the landscape. Also, an egalitarian element is essential for a clumsy strategy. This could indeed be a common vision, which is probably not sophisticated and probably just vague but provides some orientation – as long as it is followed, the ball won’t fall. Not all stakeholders will be covered by the hierarchic, individualist or egalitarian element. A clumsy strategy also needs to accept that some unexpected and uncontrollable actions may happen, and deal with non-believers. This is the fatalistic element, where the ball and the landscape do not exert influence on each other. Finally, a clumsy solution advice for setting up a coalition between the European policy field of territorial cohesion and spatial policies is to combine such elements of all four rationalities in a viable rather than perfect way. This is why it is called a clumsy solution (as opposed to a perfect solution).

Besides this potential benefit in opening one’s thinking about territorial cohesion and unveiling the rationalities of the different actors, it cannot be denied that Cultural Theory is constrained by existing normative contradictions. Different policy approaches perceive problems by using different normative leitmotifs according to different rationalities. Therefore, this social constructivist approach requires careful treatment, as anyone using Cultural Theory also inherently and inevitably can be assigned to one of the rationalities. So, the advantage of confining pluralism to four rationalities thus can become a threat as well, as anyone using Cultural Theory can be blamed for acting out one of the rationalities and thus being normatively biased.

Cultural Theory does not offer a method for designing a clumsy solution that is able to cope with this dilemma – due to the constraints of the theory itself: there is no meta-rationality which one can use to design a clumsy solution. The planners of a clumsy solution probably need something like a ‘veil of rationality’ (John Rawls proposes a ‘veil of ignorance’ (Rawls, 2005, c1971) for the design of a fair social contract. In short, he suggests that – as a thought experiment – all members of a society discuss and negotiate their society without knowing their later position in society. Applied to our problem of designing a clumsy strategy, planners need to put themselves behind a ‘veil of rationality’. They will not know which rationality they adhere to. Therefore, the best thing they can do is to make the strategy as rational as possible from all four perspectives. What such a clumsy strategy for establishing a coalition will actually look like and what particular elements it will have depends on the political context in which it is developed. This could be a method for designing a clumsy strategy for a coalition that is capable of implementing the European Territorial Cohesion Policy. However, there are some discussion points and drawbacks with the idea of Cultural Theory, as shall be discussed in the conclusion.

**CONCLUSION**

It has been shown that the European Territorial Cohesion Policy is a field based on a vague term and weak formal competences. In this field, it is a priori difficult if not impossible to apply traditional planning methods and instruments. Rational argument, efficiency bias, or juridical solutions fail without having a reliable definition and strong competences. Therefore, applying Cultural Theory and its clumsy solutions in such a contested and complex policy situation might reveal some of its crucial features and constraints. In addition, the article focuses on conceptual elements of the Territorial Cohesion Policy. One of the features of Cultural Theory that comes to the fore is that although the theory derives a logic for clumsy solutions, proposing a clumsy solution in a contested policy field like the Territorial Cohesion Policy is quite demanding because a clumsy solution is per definition not totally convincing from any of the four rationalities. It is understandable that planners, policymakers, and stakeholders strive for perfect solutions. However, Cultural Theory’s framework of the four rationalities not only provides four different ways of designing a solution, but also explains how the respective other solutions will be rejected. This is an interesting added value of Cultural Theory. Thereby, the Cultural Theory perspective enables typical dichotomies to be extended by a third and fourth alternative perspective.

A crucial constraint of Cultural Theory which must not be underestimated is that it explicitly stresses normative contradictions between the rationalities (and thus between different policy approaches). This social-constructivist approach helps us better understand the Territorial Cohesion Policy debate by discerning the plurality of four rationalities. So, this paper offers not more and not less than a debate on the use of another theoretical approach to the European policy of territorial cohesion. It was not intended to provide empirical proof, as this would have curtained the theory. Empirical research on the four
rationalities within the policy field is missing as well as approaches to cope with the weaknesses of clumsy solutions. It also needs to be verified empirically if the clumsy solutions discussed here can indeed become real solutions. However, this contribution is primarily an attempt to elaborate how Cultural Theory can contribute to find such solutions in practice – it is thus a deductive application of the theory (Cuthbert, 2011). More empirical research like the work by Wiechmann (2008) needs to be conducted and interpreted in an inductive way to see if and how there is indeed a match between what the theory predicts and what happens on the ground. Nonetheless, there has been a discussion about a theoretical model of integrating territorial cohesion within spatial policies – without getting lost in the endless debate about the lack of definitions or legally binding competences.

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