

**The Europeanisation of spatial planning in Britain:**

**New spatial ideas for old territories?**

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[please note – the spatial images have been removed from this version of the paper to  
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## **Abstract**

This paper explores the representation of European space in images, and the significance of these images in building and reproducing policy discourses of European space. Landmark and less well known images of European spatial relations are discussed, from representations of trans-European infrastructure networks to the iconic 'bananas' and 'grapes', which articulate European spatial concepts such as polycentricity in image form. These are seen to create a challenging context for more localised planning processes, and the case of South Yorkshire is used to illustrate how the ideas and images representing alternative spatial futures are becoming Europeanised.

Images are understood as elements of an emerging transnational spatial policy discourse, and so are analysed in the context of contestation over meanings, played out in policy debates, in documentation and in other practices of spatial planning. In particular we concentrate on how images are used together with textual references and discussions to form a persuasive component of spatial discourse. We therefore analyse these representations of space as contested, rather than as the outputs of rational spatial analysis. The aim is to reveal the underlying rationales of different framings of space and spatial relations, leading to insights into the ways in which such images are playing an increasingly important role in foregrounding certain ways of thinking about European space and mobility whilst bracketing others.

Our analysis suggests that whilst iconic representations of European space articulate an apparently unified view of European development, they also embody major unresolved tensions at the heart of the spatial development strategy, in particular between competing configurations of urban and regional development and mobility. Depending on their interpretation, the images can be seen as capturing the tensions between flows and places, and between underlying rationalities of cohesion and competition. Overall, the paper argues that whilst the use of images in EU spatial policy discourse succeeds in strongly visioning a polycentric Europe of flows, it also (perhaps unintentionally) reproduces the uncertainties, conflicts and tensions which surround this vision. The paper concludes with a discussion of how such use of images can contribute to the formation of a European identity.

## **Authors' note**

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When maps are drawn, emotions run high (Dutch National Spatial Planning Agency: *Spatial Perspectives in Europe*).

## 1. Introduction

When a policy language is created, and it becomes institutionalised by the construction of frameworks and measures which seek to spread and apply its core ideas, we are seeing Europeanisation at work. Conceptually, we are talking here partly about the ability of a policy discourse to create the conditions for its own survival and reproduction – the active promulgation of the European project – and partly about the ways that a hegemonic discourse is ‘naturally’ reproduced through practices which absorb its policy ideas – the passive adoption of the EU spatial policy discourse into policy making across scales and places. In this paper we will explore these subtle processes of enabling the ‘silent development’ of a spatial policy discourse across the new multi-level field of spatial policy (Graute, 2002).

Planning researchers have noted that it is easy to miss even the most obvious influences of European policy and legislation on planning in Britain:

‘for example, with 34 British implementing regulations and 27 guidance documents issued since 1988, the practice of environmental assessment has become so embedded in the British planning system that it is easy to forget its parenthood in the European Commission’s EIA Directive 85/337’ (Tewdwr-Jones and Williams, 2001: 11).

Tewdwr-Jones and Williams note that, as a consequence, British planners are frequently unaware of the European origin of the frameworks and ideas they work with(in). Researching the Europeanisation of planning in Britain is therefore likely to be difficult, and this difficulty is made worse by the fact that the Europeanisation of spatial planning takes place in a range of ways which include but extend far beyond its legal framework. This paper concentrates on some of the less apparent ways in which Europeanisation is taking place.

Conceptually one can operate with (at least) five different notions of the term Europeanisation (Olsen, 2003). It can either be seen as changes in external territorial boundaries (e.g. in the form of enlargement); as the development of institutions of governance at the European level; as central penetration of national and sub-national systems of governance; as exporting European forms of governance beyond the European territory; and finally as a political project aiming at a unified and politically stronger Europe (Olsen, 2001: 3). In this paper, we seek to explore how practices which reproduce Europeanisation carry with them spatial ideas which are contested. Rather than attempting to deal explicitly with each facet of the Europeanisation of spatial planning, this paper opts to explore how the representation of European space in images has played a part in building and reproducing policy discourses of European space. It is hoped that through this approach a particular dimension of Europeanisation will be foregrounded: the shaping of spatial ideas through multi-level power struggles. To do this, landmark and less well known images of European spatial relations are discussed, ranging from representations of trans-European infrastructure networks to the iconic ‘bananas’ and ‘grapes’, which articulate

European spatial concepts such as polycentricity in image form. These are seen to create a challenging context for more localised planning processes, and the case of South Yorkshire is used to illustrate how the ideas and images representing alternative spatial futures are becoming Europeanised. In doing this, we hope to draw together and build on some of the observations of previous research which have pointed to the significance of images in European spatial policy making (particularly Kunzmann, 1996, Williams, 1996a,b, Faludi, 2000).

Our use of the term ‘iconography’ is a way of framing concerted attempts to construct policy icons using images that capture and distil critical ideas about European space in ways that can be communicable to a policy audience as well as to a wider citizenship. We are particularly interested in the ways that such images can be seen as building blocks for a potential European identity, and here we attempt to draw out the implications for identity building of the particular ideas and values which are reproduced in the emerging imagery. This investigation into the visual representations of EU spatial policy does not constitute a comprehensive semiotic analysis. Even so our analysis suggests that whilst iconic representations of European space articulate an apparently unified vision of European spatial development, of a ‘Europe of flows’ (Hajer 2000), they also reproduce the major uncertainties, conflicts and unresolved tensions at the heart of the spatial development strategy. These tensions centre on competing configurations of urban and regional development and mobility. Depending on their interpretation, the images can be seen as capturing the tensions between flows and places, and between underlying rationalities of cohesion and competition.

The structure of the paper is as follows. First we outline a tentative conceptual framework for understanding the different ways that spatial images can play a part in policy making. We then analyse some of the major examples of European spatial policy maps, focusing specifically on the use of proposals maps in the trans-European transport network (TEN) and successive drafts of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP). Our contribution to analysis of these fields is to add a new layer of analytical exploration focusing on maps and images. We discuss how, in the new spatial policy discourse, the imagery of European space is changing, as explicit maps of policy proposals are replaced by impressionist representations of policy ideas. Finally, we draw things together by discussing how these images contribute to the construction of a new policy discourse of European space in ways that are instructive on the power relations operating at this level.

## **2. Conceptualising the meaning of images**

Images are understood as elements of an emerging transnational spatial policy discourse, and so are analysed in the context of contestation over meanings, played out in policy debates, in documentation and in other practices of spatial planning. In particular we concentrate on how images are used, together with textual references and discussions, to form a persuasive component of spatial discourse. We therefore analyse these representations of space as being contested, rather than as the outputs of rational spatial analysis. The aim is to reveal the underlying rationales of different framings of space and spatial relations, leading to insights into the ways that such images are

playing an increasingly important role in foregrounding certain ways of thinking about European space and mobility whilst bracketing others.

But how can we ‘break the code’ in terms of analysing such images? Here we make use of the approach that we have previously applied to the analysis of EU spatial planning (Jensen & Richardson, 2001, Richardson & Jensen, 2000). Accordingly ways of framing space in these policy discourses demand an understanding of both words and images as they are articulated by social agents within specific institutional settings in order to bring about a strategy expressing a certain power-rationality configuration. In this sense we perceive these images in the broadest sense to be part of the ‘language’ and vocabulary used to frame European spatial development – a sort of ‘textual mapping’. In this paper we will consider in particular two different aspects of images which help in drawing out their different uses in policy making. Firstly we are interested in how images contain representations of space in varying degrees of detail. Secondly we are interested in how images may act to frame and reproduce policy metaphors, without necessarily being tied in their content to the representation of particular dimensions of physical space.

For the purposes of analysis, spatial images can be divided into two categories, one concerning the referentiality of images, and one concerning maps as mental constructs (Dematteis, 2000). The latter approach can again be subdivided into a heuristic and a de-constructive approach to maps. The de-constructive approach deals with consolidated images and traces the unspoken premises of common thought and explores alternative meanings (Dematteis, 2000: 49).

We are all familiar with the territorial representations of more or less realism that we call maps. From the geography schoolbooks picturing the nation state territory to the iconic diagram of the London tube we have learned to deal with such visual representations of space and place. But what is a map more precisely? A map can be understood as a cultural text (Harley, 1996: 432), meaning that one has to engage in an interpretative activity in terms of its analysis. The cultural significance of maps lies in their ability to capture and frame ideas about space, and carry them from one mind to another, in a field of discursive struggles over meaning and interpretation. Mapping and imaging are therefore techniques of power in that they capture and frame certain ideas, relations, realities and potentials whilst excluding others. In doing this, they also mask the interests that bring them into being (Wood, 1993: 95):

It is, of course, an illusion: there is nothing natural about a map. It is a cultural artefact, a cumulation of choices made among choices every one of which reveals a value: not the world, but a slice of a piece of the world; not nature but a slant on it; not innocent, but loaded with intentions and purposes; not directly, but through a glass; not straight, but mediated by words and other signs; not, in a word, as it is, but in ... code (Wood, 1993: 108).

As Latour (1990) argues, mapping means ‘drawing things together’ in the sense that diverse semantic fields immediately can be brought into contact:

Realms of reality that seem far apart (mechanics, economics, marketing, scientific organization of work) are inches apart, once flattened out onto the same surface (Latour, 1990: 54).

In this way maps act as a focusing device (Wood, 1993: 117). In the words of Dematteis, as they *'connect together a quantity of 'superficial' evidence, they mark changes and problems, suggest hypotheses, challenge consolidated images'* (Dematteis, 2000: 71). This is partly because the process of map making involves activities of selection, omission, simplification, classification, creation of hierarchies and symbolisation (Harley 1996:437). Furthermore de-constructing the map also means an epistemological shift from a strict reality-representation link towards seeing maps as inherently power laden (Harley, 1996). Thus the 'cartographic rules' in a sense resemble the Foucauldian 'epistemes' (Foucault, 1969/89) with certain rules of representation. But they also are rhetorical devices:

All maps are rhetorical texts ... All maps strive to frame their message in the context of an audience. All maps state an argument about the world and they are provisional in nature ... Indeed, the freedom of rhetorical manoeuvre in cartography is considerable: the mapmaker merely omits those features of the world that lie outside the purpose of the immediate discourse (Harley, 1996: 437).

Mapping is thus also a communicative event in the sense that we are dealing with both author subjects and institutions as well as audiences. But space can also be represented in ways which rely more on the use of metaphor than representation, where the graphical qualities of the image do not rely on an attempt to represent physical space in anything more than a notional manner. Many of the iconic spatial images in European spatial policy discourse (e.g. the reference to fruits or machines) have taken on a life beyond the original image that framed them. We need to think about how such spatial images combine visual graphics and concepts, and that these concepts often are metaphorical in their core. The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 5). Within social theory there is a very widespread use of metaphors for consciously and analytically describing social phenomena in terms of machines, living systems, legal orders, war, market places, games, theatres, and discourses (Rigney 2001). However, also social theory may import metaphors in a less reflective way, and thus make use of such 'thinking devices' without really critically appreciating it (Urry 2000). Thus spatial metaphors play a critical role in the formation of human knowledge, action and imagination and provide a quasi-logical framework of associations (Williams 1996a: 95). So the metaphors form a vital part of the 'spatial imaginary' and refer to the processes of social spatialisation (Shields, 1992: 7):

Metaphors may create realities for us, especially social realities. A metaphor may thus be a guide for future action. Such actions will of course, fit the metaphor. This will, in turn, reinforce the power of the metaphor to make experience coherent. In this sense metaphors can be self-fulfilling prophecies (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:156).

The metaphors of the European spatial planning discourse to be analysed here are in fact famous for their colourful and associative capacities. Notions of 'blue bananas', 'bunches of grapes' and 'golden triangles' (Williams, 1993), are ways of imposing

certain qualities of these metaphors and excluding others and are thus an expression of a European spatial rhetoric (Williams, 1996b). Such a way of spatial framing can be labelled 'framing with images' (Faludi, 1996). According to such a perspective the images work by providing principles of spatial organisation that stick in planners' minds, enticing them to act and assisting public dialogue (Faludi, 1996: 97). The London Green Belt, the Copenhagen Finger Plan, and the Dutch Green Heart are all examples of such 'framing with images' where a spatial policy discourse make use of powerful metaphors as well. Many people have never seen the original images which first articulated these concepts, but they retain some sense of the vision which lies behind them, capturing core values and spatial relations. Metaphors such as the blue banana carry powerful messages about the organisation of European space and economy as they become policy icons which take on a life beyond their graphic origin.

These analytical dimensions are significant for scrutinising the new field of European spatial policy making, which is clearly characterised by strong use of metaphorical imagery. Dematteis has pointed to a lack of theoretical and analytical depth in European spatial planning documents, in favour of extensive use of spatialised language and imagery that works at a more rhetorical level and aims to reach beyond the policy process into the public domain:

This theoretical and analytical weakness is reflected in the absence or near-absence of technical content in the planning and urban policy documents produced by the EU and by the Governments of its member states. The ample recourse to spatial language in these documents is largely rhetorical, not only in the general sense that the language of geographical space is in any case a sort of metaphorical code for talking about social issues and implicit political projects, but also in the stricter sense of an artifice designed to persuade (Dematteis, 2000: 70-71).

So EU spatial policy discourse, articulated through its images, maps and spatial metaphors, as well as many other devices, can be understood as contributing to an explicit political agenda. But these images also play a part in the more implicit political project of framing European identity in a new way, underpinned by a new consciousness about European space (Jensen, 2002).

Summing up, we are arguing for a critical focus on maps, images, and spatial metaphors as vital elements in the discursive framing of European space. In widening the 'vocabulary' of analysis from text to include graphical representations we aim to deepen our understanding of how spatial policy discourses work in power laden and rhetorical modes. In this way, we may bring to empirical analysis of spatial policy discourses some basic insights into the deep embeddedness of images and maps in textual representations, illustrating the powerful urge for 'being on the map'.

### **3. Mapping European space – empirical examples**

#### *Shrinking Europe*

One of the most striking examples of attempts to frame space in EU policies for planning and transport can be found in the agenda-setting work of the industrial lobby. Here we explore how a critical policy problem for European integration - the absence

of adequate infrastructure to support the completion of the single market – was first framed in agenda-setting lobbying using spatial metaphors such as ‘missing links’ and ‘missing networks’, and was subsequently re-articulated in the consequent policy discourse of frictionless trans-European mobility in a more positive way: the solution of high speed infrastructure and a shrinking Europe (figure 1).

Advocacy for improvements in international infrastructure linkages as part of the single market programme can be found most explicitly in lobbying material produced by the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT) in the 1980s (eg ERT 1984). The critical role of the ERT in shaping EU policy has been analysed elsewhere, for example by Green (1993), Cowles (1995) and Lemberg (1995), and attacked by environmental activists (eg A SEED, 1993). Through the lobbying activities of the ERT, we see the construction of a new policy discourse of European space and mobility as a result of concerted action by European industrialists.

The ERT has been described as ‘the spiritual progenitor of the 1992 process, and the single most powerful business group in Europe’ (Gardner, 1991: 48, see also Cowles, 1995). Endo (1999) points to the ERT as one of the few pressure groups able to actually change EU policy. Having defined the infrastructure problem in terms of missing international infrastructure links (ERT, 1984), the ERT next sought to set the agenda for action in *Missing Networks - A European Challenge, proposals for the renewal of Europe’s infrastructure* (ERT, 1991). The first level of action, based on the rethinking of spatial relations on a European scale, was to continue to deal with the problem of missing links. By 1991, however, the need for physical infrastructure improvements had extended eastwards, to encompass the new European orientation of the Central and Eastern European states, and had become more of a network view, as international corridors were identified.

The second level of action called for by the ERT was perhaps more far reaching in its scope. They called for a fundamental restructuring of institutions and practices in order to achieve the required pan-European transport perspective. The report goes beyond arguing for physical solutions - building new roads or railways - and states the need for new ways of conceptualising, decision making and financing trans-European networks. Here, then, was an explicit call for a EU policy response, rather than simply trans-national infrastructure project implementation. Building on the imagery of *Missing Links*, in *Missing Networks*, the ERT proposed not only new physical infrastructure, but also a shift in the mindset of politicians and policy-makers: ‘to think and rethink existing networks in specifically European spatial and economic terms’ (op.cit.).

The ERT propose a number of ways forward. Among these is the identification of ‘missing networks’ - new mechanisms for the planning and delivery of transport, which are needed to bridge the gaps between transport modes, and to deliver international infrastructure corridors - and the adoption of holistic, integrated approaches. The concept of ‘missing networks’ clearly expresses a problem to which the logical policy response would quickly become ‘trans-European networks’ (TENs).

Inherent in these metaphors is the quest for frictionless mobility (Hajer 2000, Urry 2000), in this case by removing the physical and institutional barriers to free movement



across Europe. The shift from a problem of friction to a solution of free mobility, traceable in the emerging policy discourse, is powerfully articulated through another important spatial metaphor: ‘shrinking Europe’. The trans-European transport network contributes to an effect of shrinking European space by reducing journey times, and so reduces the barriers of time-space between European member states, regions, and cities. In *Missing Links*, the ERT graphically illustrated equivalent length journeys in the US and Europe, and identified the additional time delays caused in Europe by border crossings and inadequate infrastructure – the economic message was clear. The idea of a shrinking Europe has become a preoccupation of policy makers and analysts. Figure 1 demonstrates how the benefits of TENs are communicated graphically in the image of shrinking EU space. The image is based on detailed analysis, but the overall effect is powerfully rhetorical. In *Europe 2000+* (CEC, 1994), a key Commission policy document setting out elements of its spatial vision, the image is accompanied by the text ‘Planned improvements will .. effectively bring regions closer together’.

**Figure 1:** Shrinking Europe (CEC, 1994)

We turn now to the use of proposal maps in European spatial policy making. Proposals maps have been highly controversial, and have attracted political struggles that have tended to mask the actual policy issues at stake. We illustrate this by discussing how the proposals maps for trans-European transport networks in the early 1990s became the focus of intense lobbying which became separated from the debate over policy guidelines. This is followed by a discussion of the use of proposals maps in the drafting of the ESDP, illustrating how mapping policy proposals became so controversial that the final ESDP dispensed with them altogether, instead making use of maps depicting the results of spatial analysis. Thus in the struggles over proposals maps, we can see contestation over their meaning: are they intended as blueprints or as ‘target images’?

#### *Trans-European Networks proposals maps: road network<sup>1</sup>*

The High Speed Rail (HSR) network master plan was published by the Commission as early as 1990 (CEC, 1990). It was not until several years later, following the Treaty on European Union that Karel van Miert (Transport Commissioner, 1989-95) set out the first Commission proposal for trans-European networks in the principal transport modes. This led to a Council Decision on the creation of separate trans-European networks in the areas of roads, combined transport and inland waterways. These separate network master plans were brought together in 1994 into a single, multi-modal proposal, incorporating road, rail, inland waterways, combined transport, seaports and airports, as well as information and management systems for the integrated network. The concept of the trans-European transport network was now properly institutionalised.

Policy development in the period after 1992 followed two parallel courses. One was the preparation of a policy / planning framework which would guide future decision-making on networks, individual corridors and projects. The other was the preparation

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<sup>1</sup> The quotes from policy actors used in this paper are drawn from Richardson, 2000.

of a series of outline plans for individual transport modes. The drawing up of master plans was increasingly influenced by lobbying from regions and member states on the inclusion (or otherwise) of particular lines on the maps. The succession of revised plans for each transport mode came to form a central focus to the development of policy, running parallel to development of policy guidelines.

Figure 2 shows one of the proposals maps for the trans-European road network. Here we can see a powerful image which depicts an apparently homogenous EU territory linked by a single transport network which seamlessly crosses the borders and natural barriers between member states. A series of existing and proposed links and corridors are identified, which represent physical space in a reasonably precise manner. As well as articulating the broader message of a mobile Europe, it allows actors operating at different spatial scales and representing different interests to ask questions such as ‘is our town on the map?’, and ‘will our commercial strategy be supported by the new infrastructure proposals’. In fact, the preparation of these maps reflected the playing out of EU, national and regional political, industrial and environmental interests. In the drawing up of this map, and the corresponding maps for other transport modes, several strategies can be identified. Perhaps the most apparent is the EU discourse of integration through the establishment of the networks. However the strategies of other actors did not fit so neatly into this harmonious view of European space. One example is the use of Tens by member states as a means of promoting their adopted national transport plans. The emerging maps can be interpreted as reflecting in large part the transport plans of individual member states, rather than a European view:

... where things went wrong in the first place was that the Commission then got in touch with each member state and asked them what they wanted and of course all they did was dust down all their old national plans from the shelves and put them in (Member of the European Parliament).

Later, regions and other local authorities would become more active in lobbying for the adoption of locally preferred schemes within the outline plans, but in the early 1990s member states carried out only limited consultations in developing their submissions to the Commission.

**Figure 2:** The trans-European network road outline plan (CEC, 1995).

The infrastructure lobby maintained a powerful hold at the EU level, as the proposals from member states and other bodies were filtered and assembled into network outline plans. The membership of one of the key decision making bodies illustrates the institutional power of this lobby. Proposals for the Trans-European Road Network (TERN), for example, were developed by the Motorway Working Group (MWG) of the Commission’s Transport Infrastructure Committee. Membership of this Group includes the Commission, member states, the European Conference of Ministers of Transport, and significantly a number of private sector interests including the European Round Table (ERT), the Association des Constructeurs Européens d’Automobile (ACEA), and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) (CEC, 1992). The overwhelming dominance of transport interests, and the infrastructure lobby, and the absence of

environmental interests can be seen. It is difficult to imagine that such a committee could produce anything other than a solid case for progressing TERN. The decision making process adopted by the MWG is unclear, although they transformed national infrastructure ‘shopping lists’ into international network proposals. However, environmental criteria were not integrated into decision making although they were identified, in broad terms, in policy documents (Bina et al, 1995). The published proposals identify a network of corridors, but fail to set out the criteria used in their designation. It appears that the debate within this key decision making arena was largely political.

The importance of the European industrial lobby in the development of TERN was clearly recognised within the EU institutions, but perhaps seen more as a positive influence in achieving a pan-European perspective, counter to some of the more parochial lobbying:

We’re building a single market for Europe, we need a single European transport system to go with it, that system must be sustainable. But it’s got to be European, we can’t have national networks superimposed on each other and bad interconnections. And they’re the people building this stuff, and also they’re the people using it (European Commission official).

A feature of the preparation of outline plans was that, although the infrastructure lobby enjoyed a high level of access in decision-making, environmental organisations were never formally consulted. The Member States were expected by the Commission to represent their respective environmental interests (Frommer, 1992: 10, and European Commission official’s comments).

Given the above, it is not surprising that any comprehensive planning which might have taken place in the preparation of the outline plans was overshadowed by multi-level lobbying and political bargaining. What was launched as a grand European vision risked becoming an assemblage of local pet projects:

Oh yes. It was all terribly parochial, terribly parochial. I mean this isn’t really European planning this is all about out member states trying to get a bit of commission money for things they were going to do anyway, and local authorities trying to jump on the bandwagon. That’s really what was happening (European Commission official).

This high level of interest in TENs can be simply explained by the prospect of a new source of funding (the EU budget) for local or national projects at a time when finance was becoming difficult in the face of recession and increasing resistance to infrastructure development on environmental and social grounds. One interviewee explained this financial interest thus:

... And at that point ministers got involved, and said “well these are some maps and we want to put a bypass on there”. And then people start smelling money, so you get everyone coming along. Local authorities, they fail to get money out of national government, they haven’t got enough money in their own coffers, so they think they’re going to get money out of the Community. So everyone comes along lobbying to get their little pet schemes onto the TEN and the result is that you end up with, not a tight limited set of routes of importance, but you end up with a whole load. Right, so rapidly this process started spiralling out of control. In addition, the southern member states were told that the maps

for TENs would be used in some way as the basis for the allocation of cohesion funding. And that's big money. So of course they've bunged on everything they could find (European Commission official).

The fine grain of TENs – the outline plans composed of individual projects - was being shaped politically. For some policy makers this politicisation of decision-making was simply business as usual.

*'No line on the map, no money' – on pork-barrelling and TENS as an institutional battlefield*

A feature of the TEN process was that even as policy was being developed, advocacy for the detailed projects which would comprise the networks was taking place. As the procedural arguments continued over issues such as environmental integration, simultaneous struggles were taking place over the content of policy: the adoption and prioritisation of projects, corridors and networks. In some cases, EU money was already being used to finance projects as well as to fund feasibility studies.

In early decision-making, lobbying for the inclusion of individual projects in the lists annexed to the policy guidelines, and represented on the outline plans, had been important in shaping the emerging proposals. In co-decision, a new lobbying route was opened – through MEPs and the Parliamentary process. The later stages of drafting the policy guidelines were marked by intense lobbying from regions for projects to be added to the network, as 'what was for the Commission a skeleton became all the veins and arteries as well' (European Commission official).

This 'pork-barrelling', as it was described by one interviewee, raised the concern that TEN, rather than delivering a European infrastructure plan was being taken over by member states trying to obtain money for projects they were going to do anyway, and local authorities trying to jump on the bandwagon, in a climate of uncertainty over continued public investment in infrastructure. There was clearly a perceived regional interest in getting projects onto the maps. TEN designation offered a new lever for releasing funding from the EU budget for local infrastructure projects. For example, in the UK's governments consultation on roads, which shaped its submission to the Commission on TEN, the regions complained when their local 'lines' were not adopted in the proposals map, because they felt 'no line on the map, no money' (European Commission official).

The nature of the policy process was clearly shaped by this lobbying. Developing a 'rational' network from these diverse projects was a difficult task, as local political interests blurred the clear rationality of the original vision:

This was one of the worst aspects of the process. It was frankly almost scandalous, the kind of pork-barrelling that was going on. There were ridiculous things. In the first reading you'll find for example two high speed train [proposals] from Amsterdam to Hanover. Those were the kind of amendments that we were having to put up with. It was a joke, which detracted from the more serious amendments (European Commission official).

*ESDP - from Noordwijk to Potsdam: a retreat from proposals to analysis*

From this discussion of the early use of proposals maps in representing mobility dimensions of European space, we move forwards to the use of maps in the preparation of the *European Spatial Development Perspective* (ESDP). During the gestation process of the ESDP maps were often an issue to be discussed. In a working document from the CSD<sup>2</sup> we thus find the notion of the ESDP maps as a unifying ‘cartographic language’:

Experiences from the ESDP-process so far show that the elaboration of European maps of a strategic nature can not be undertaken within a short time ... This work will be aiming to define *a cartographic language common to all Member States* and applicable to all relevant geographical scales (CSD, 1998: 3, our emphasis).

Studying the actual maps in the ESDP process we find that there is a difference from the first draft version, the so-called Noordwijk document over the Glasgow document and to the final Potsdam document. It will exceed the scope of this paper to outline such an analysis here, but the main point is – not surprisingly though – that there is less and less political vision and leverage in the maps as we approach the Potsdam version (Jensen, 1999: 289, SPESP, 2000: 94). The Dutch planning analyst Andreas Faludi also notes the special attention given to maps in the ESDP gestation process:

Maps were another problem. The CSD saw the drafts a month before the target date [of the Noordwijk document] and some delegations were not amused. It was decided to eliminate policy maps altogether (Faludi, 2000: 247, comment in parenthesis added).

Also, in a report assessing the impact of the ESDP on the Regional Planning Guidance level in the UK the existing map use in regional planning is criticized as a more ‘European’ and outward looking perception is demanded:

For diagrams to effectively represent a region in its wider UK and European contexts, they need to be more than simple ‘geography maps’ showing the location of the region. More thought needs to be given to how the functional linkages with other regions and key EU contexts such as INTERREG programme areas and projects can be represented. A starting point could be to include maps showing the position of the region in relation to any relevant transnational megaregions and INTERREG projects ... (Shaw & Sykes, 2001: 63).

In a very well informed analysis of the ESDP gestation process, Faludi and Waterhout discuss the specific topic of maps in the ESDP process under the headline ‘the problem of maps’. They suggest that up until the very last moment, maps were an issue of controversy (Faludi & Waterhout, 2002: 104). The maps turned out to be a field of contested representation, as the different member states focused on their own territories and their position relative to the others. Thus in the run up to the preparation of the Noordwijk version of the ESDP maps were not included and non-committal maps presenting analysis rather than proposals were inserted as an appendix. Each of these

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<sup>2</sup> The Committee on Spatial Development (CSD) is the intergovernmental group of senior civil service officers from the member states that drafted the ESDP (see Faludi & Waterhout 2002 for a detailed account of the institutional history of the ESDP).

maps was provided with a very careful, to say the least, proviso or ‘Nota bene’ stating that:

This representation is only an illustration of certain spatial elements referred to in the text of the First Official Draft of the ESPD (sic), presented at the informal meeting of ministers responsible for spatial planning of the member states of the EU in Noordwijk, 9-10 June 1997. They do in no way reflect actual policy proposals and there is no guarantee that the elements displayed here are exhaustive or entirely accurate’ (CSD, 1997).

According to Faludi and Waterhout the maps played a part in triggering the North-South conflict, allowing the southern Europeans to interpret the maps as reflecting a centre-periphery model which stigmatised the South European regions (Faludi & Waterhout, 2002: 107).

When we turn to look at the maps themselves, we find the Noordwijk map on ‘Accessibility, infrastructure and transport’ enclosed loose in the back of the draft ESDP. This map includes proposals for the trans-European networks, and identifies peripheral regions, population centres and congested corridors (figure 3). This map is certainly about friction and accessibility as it represent a vision of European territory in terms of flows and places. In this sense we could say that the periphery is framed in terms of immobility or lack of access. Thus overcoming such state of unequal accessibility hinges on one of the core rationales of DG Regio (former DGVXI) namely that of ‘cohesion’. Furthermore, by picturing the cohesion problem in terms of mobility potential the theme of European ‘integration’ is measured by cross-border movements.

**Figure 3:** Accessibility, infrastructure and transport, ESDP Noordwijk version (CSD 1997)

As hinted at previously, there was a shift in the character of the maps that were eventually published in the ESDP. All that remains in the final ESDP is a map of ‘Accessibility’, depicting ‘within 3 hours travel time accessible EU population by combined transport mode (road, rail, air) in 1996 NUTS 3’ (figure 4). The source quoted is the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning. So this is spatial analysis ‘pure and simple’. This is used for problem framing where we find the previously mentioned key rationale of cohesion explicitly linked to the other basic rationale of economic competitiveness: ‘*Good accessibility of European regions improves not only their competitive position but also the competitiveness of Europe as a whole*’ (CSD, 1999: 69).

**Figure 4:** Accessibility, ESDP Potsdam version (CSD 1999:70)

A narrative of the role of maps in the ESDP process can be found in a publication from the Dutch planning Ministry on European spatial planning (Dutch National Spatial Planning Agency, 2000). Taking departure in the basic question ‘*Am I well represented?*’ the report uncovers the fact that map making in the ESDP process was a rather sensitive business. The prime example of conflicts and tensions within this

process that came out very clearly in relation to mapping was the ‘North-South’ conflict and its alleged foundation in different planning cultures:

In some countries a map is a “plan”, a blue print of how things should be. Other countries also have more indicative maps, not blue prints but “target images”, intended as a framework for the co-ordination of actions, not to be taken as literal reality. In the Netherlands, such “target images” are a favoured means of “getting everyone facing in the same direction” towards an often abstractly formulated long-term goal. This phenomenon is also familiar in Belgium, Denmark and Germany. In countries such as Spain, Portugal and, to a lesser extent Italy, maps are interpreted more as blue prints (Dutch National Spatial Planning Agency, 2000: 47).

Map making is, however, not only an expression of power but also a communicative event. Maps, then, clearly have an ‘ambivalent potential’. In the words of the Dutch National Spatial Planning Agency, once an image provides the visualisation needed to depict a dominant paradigm, it becomes a kind of policy icon (SPESP, 2000: 93). Thus some analysts see a progressive potential in the new practice of EU spatial policy map making. According to Kunzmann the cartographic exercises in the EU has the following advantages (adapted from Kunzmann, 1996: 144):

- 1) The process is more important than the plan – maps are facilitating a “joint cross-cultural understanding of spatial development processes in Europe”
- 2) Visualisation of spatial problems makes public and political communication much easier
- 3) “Symbols and spatial images play an underestimated role in spatial planning” – and reduces complexity
- 4) Shortcomings or dissatisfaction with maps and concepts triggers off new research

Thus maps can be seen as moments in the process of decision-making (Wood, 1993: 185). Among the benefits of the ESDP is its ability to provide “a useful, visual identification of the spatial issues that confront the EU” (Chapman, 1999: 219).

### *Towards impressionism*

A different role for images is in attaching significance to particular constructions of planning problems, and also in articulating the emerging politics of space. Here we are thinking of spatial images which may be more impressionistic in their form, and which rely on conveying ideas about space in a more metaphorical sense, without necessarily being tied to particular dimensions of physical space. The point of such images is that they are designed to carry an idea, an impression, rather than a specific policy proposal. The important feature of these images is that they are less precise in their attempts to represent space. They articulate spatial relations in the broadest sense, in a way which does not allow their meaning to be pinned to specific localities. We explore the increasing reliance on such images by first analysing images which took on iconic significance in framing particular issues and opportunities, and then moving on to discuss the new, increasingly coherent ‘science’ of consciously producing a vocabulary of images which reproduces key ideas in the new transnational spatial policy discourse. We discuss single key images which stand as iconic representations of European space, capturing critical moments in policy debates.

### *The blue banana...*

Probably the most well known of all these spatial images is the ‘blue banana’. According to Williams this was in fact the metaphor that started the wide spread use of metaphors in EU spatial policy discourses (Williams, 1996a). The metaphor refers to the economic and political core of Europe taking shape as a banana and running from south east of England to the north of Italy (figure 5). The image of the so-called ‘blue banana’ was originally published in a report made for the French Spatial Planning agency DATAR (Brunet, 1989), where the *economic* core region of Europe was identified as the ‘Dorsale Européenne’, literally the ‘backbone of Europe’. Thus we find also here a powerful image coupled to a metaphor that in its original form had organic connotations to the body. This image clearly juxtaposes this core zone with *lacunae*, which we might translate as shadow regions, and proposes a new southern growth region, the *Nord du Sud*. This image was then adapted in Europe 2000, a policy document originating in the European Commission’s Directorate Generale for Regional Development, to identify the existing *economic* core region and propose a new core region (the Nord du sud).

**Figure 5:** The ‘Blue Banana’ (Brunet 1989)

There are a number of anecdotes and stories to explain why this ‘backbone’ became the ‘blue banana’. For one thing it can be seen from the original source (Brunet, 1989) that the banana is not blue as it is actually hatched black in the original DATAR image. According to Faludi and Waterhout:

It was quite accidentally that the *dorsale* got the name ‘Blue Banana’. On a visit to DATAR, the French Planning Minister, Jacques Chéréque, saw a map of Europe with the *dorsale* printed in blue and asked: ‘What is this blue banana for?’. A reporter from the weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*, after overhearing this comment, published an article under the title *La banane bleue*, and the name stuck (Faludi & Waterhout, 2002: 11, emphasis in original).

Whatever the real reason for the naming this particular spatial image, ‘this metaphor creates a memorable image which simplifies and structures peoples’ thinking about the spatial structure of Europe’ (Williams, 1996a: 96).<sup>3</sup> Evidently the banana image is framed around a notion of core and periphery (Williams, 1996a). Thus adding to the fact that it has been seen as highly controversial, especially politically (Dutch National Spatial Planning Agency, 2000: 25). This seems to be the case not least in relation to the South European countries, but also the Scandinavian countries have made notes of their peripheral representation. As will become evident, this particular influential metaphor and image must be seen in relation to the follow-ups that tried to articulate

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<sup>3</sup> As an illustration of how this particular metaphor has stuck in the minds of European politicians we will make a small contribution to the increasing number of ‘folk narratives’ about the Blue Banana. Supervising a student project, one of this paper’s authors read a number of interview transcripts conducted by the students in question. One was particularly interesting, as it was with the former Danish Minister of the Environment (and planning). In an interview he explained very frankly how his civil servants had shown him a map of Europe picturing the development banana going to the ‘wrong side’ of Denmark. And the minister said; ‘If you see something like that, it is your obligation to straighten up that banana’.



visions and ideas of the European territory in explicit relation to the ‘banana’. Thus, our analysis of this particular image implicitly carries on in the following sections.

*... and the bunch of grapes*

As an alternative to the Blue Banana we find the metaphor of a Europe of ‘grapes’ (figure 6). According to Williams (1996a) this was Germany’s response to the banana, based on the basis of its experience of post-war federalism. This metaphor conveys a polycentric rather than centralised image of Europe’s urban and economic structure. The grape metaphor is described as articulating a ‘Europe of sustainable regions’ (Kunzmann, 1996), signalling the beginning of a discourse of sustainable spatial development. Waterhout sees the tension between the two images as representing the playing out of a ‘one-dimensional view of Europe’ versus a ‘more subtle, diversified view of Europe’ (Waterhout, 2001: 9). Accordingly the advantage of the ‘grape’ metaphor should be a willingness to take the individual regional characteristics into consideration (op. cit.).

**Figure 6:** The Europe of Grapes (Kunzmann & Wegener 1991, here from Williams 1996b: 96)

Waterhout furthermore interprets the ‘banana’ and the ‘grapes’ as being two generically speaking different types of images. He argues that the former should be understood in descriptive terms, whereas the latter should be perceived in normative terms (Waterhout, 2001: 10). These two iconic images have played an important part in the shaping of the ESDP. Waterhout sees the ESDP as performing a narrative function in moving from the iniquitous centre-periphery model towards the more polycentric pattern of the grapes:

In the ESDP the European territory is described in the vein of the blue banana, with a core and a periphery. However, the ESDP vision (only described verbally) reflects much more the idea of the European bunch of grapes, with several core zones. So, what the ESDP actually did is bridge the gap between the archetypes of European spatial conceptualisation: the blue banana and the European bunch of grapes and all the connotations that belong to them (Waterhout, 2001: 16).

We would certainly not disagree on the perception of the ‘banana’ as one of great wealth and economic prosperity (and of congestion and internal unequal development). But it is too simple to make this distinction since it ignores the normative way in which the blue banana was graphically presented. The blue banana represented the existing growth centre of the EU, but it was accompanied by the Nord du Sud – a second banana centred on the Mediterranean arc of EU members, which articulated very strikingly a proposal for channelling future growth, into a second core region rather than across a more devolved network. This interpretation is of course open for contestation as one could see the ‘grapes’ at the antidote to the ‘banana disease’. However, one need just to look at the way that the ‘banana’ image is perceived in Scandinavia or in the South European member states to realise that it is more than a cool factual statement of how things are. Furthermore, and to our minds even more seriously, understanding images and metaphors as ‘descriptive’ and thus purely objective is to miss the point of how spatial representations in words and images

always carry the potential for normative understandings and power laden strategies. That these do not simply implement themselves instrumentally in the minds of the beholders should not mislead us into believing in their neutrality.

Williams also seem to argue in line with Waterhout, as he stresses that the images and metaphors should not be understood in deterministic ways:

Metaphors such as these are not predictions, and certainly not predestination, though people sometimes talk in these terms. This is especially true of the blue banana, which is sometimes taken to imply that all other areas are doomed. They really should be regarded simply as ways of describing the spatial structure of Europe in a manner that can be easily grasped, which may help people who find it difficult to think in European terms to gain a sense of spatial positioning, and may also help with place marketing (Williams, 1996b: 97)

Obviously the wording alone and the metaphorical quality of the spatial image may not exercise causal forces on the complex field of social agents within planning across Europe. However, having said this we would argue that these images do portray key spatial rationalities that are contested. The tension or relation between the images articulates the struggle between alternative spatial rationalities. These metaphors are linked as elements in a spatial narrative. They are not simply descriptive, but are semantic tools for sliding back and forth around this more or less tangible spatial imagination of Europe.

*Reconstructing spatiality in the shadow of Europe: the case of South Yorkshire*

Within this context of multi-level contestation of policy ideas about European space, more localised struggles are taking place to create spatial strategies which increasingly mirror the wider tensions. Here we briefly discuss how in one territory, South Yorkshire, the Europeanisation of spatial planning was manifested first through the strengthening of territorial identity (through Objective 1 designation), and secondly through the shaping of the debate over spatial futures, as the process of conducting a strategic spatial study (SYF, 2003) recast the political relations between local authorities in a new spatialised and Europeanised way (discussed in more detail in Dabinett and Richardson, 2004).

The designation of South Yorkshire as an EU Objective 1 region gave specific spatial expression to the area's problems and regeneration policies. Uneven spatial development was articulated in terms of low GDP per capita and high levels of unemployment and social exclusion, whilst policies were expected to support indigenous regional development (Bachtler et al 2003). These ideas sought to reposition the region within a new global order, in which competitive advantage could be secured through development of a knowledge-based economy. This prevailing economic paradigm was given articulation in the SYF strategy, which sought: "To build a balanced, diverse, and sustainable high growth economy in South Yorkshire by 2010, recognized as a growing European center for high technology manufacturing and knowledge based services, offering opportunities for the whole community" (SYF 1999 p.1). These ideas were further articulated explicitly within the Objective 1 Programme,

which expressed support for business clusters and high-tech industries, the information society, enterprise development, and the acquisition of new skills by the local labour force.

As such, the desired impacts of the Programme were regarded to be aspatial, since outcomes were measured in terms of jobs and investment for the sub-region as a whole. However, the delivery of the Programme was given a spatial expression through the identification of areas in which social exclusion was concentrated and new investment was to be encouraged. The former provided a basis for targeting community economic development and social capital measures, whilst the later covered the four main urban centers, and three Strategic Economic Zones (SEZs) consisting of two motorway corridors and the ex-coalfield in the Dearne Valley. The SEZs were generally very large areas, mapped on to the sub-region so as to incorporate existing and known industrial development sites. A 'Bottlenecks' study, carried out in 2001 was an attempt to convert these general intentions into a framework of investment and action, but it was largely unable to do so in the absence of explicit or effective spatial organising ideas for the territory. Consequently, the SYSS in 2002/3 was the first attempt in the sub-region to link economic development goals to specific spatial impacts and desired outcomes.

In a break from the prevailing ideas of territorial competitive advantage, which had become locked into the normative policy constructs of the four local authorities, the collaborative partnership of SYF choose to consider the idea of polycentric urban development (figure 7). A concept that borrowed heavily from EU spatial policy discourses, in particular the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP). Polycentric development within the ESDP offered a new perspective for the peripheral areas of the EU territory: "The creation of several dynamic zones of global economic integration, well distributed throughout the EU territory and comprising a network of internationally accessible metropolitan regions and their linked hinterland will play a key role in improving spatial balance in Europe" (ESDP). This idea of polycentric development was seen as a way to off-set centralizing tendencies in the distribution of economic growth; to counter-balance the negative effects of competition; to address current limits on environmental and infrastructure systems; and to establish a basis for voluntary collaboration in territorial governance. Thus it is crucial to ask what do such general desires mean in a specific context, such as South Yorkshire, since the reproduction of these spatial constructs is likely to be contested as the ideas potentially frame new territorial meanings, capacities and identities.

**Figure 7:** Image of 'polycentric' development in South Yorkshire  
(<http://www.barnsley.gov.uk/syforum/coredocuments.asp>)

Critical to the application of the polycentric urban development idea is the issue of scale, since this can raise contested interpretations of the idea as a normative and explanatory concept. The SYSS drew a boundary around the 'administrative' South Yorkshire and used models of polycentric urban development to explore changing local geographies of economic activities within this boundary. The idea was interpreted

through prevailing development discourses – the location of strategic economic zones; the future functions of urban centres; the need for transport investment; the accommodation of growth within sustainable development goals. As a result the SYSS became largely concerned with dealing with equity between the four urban municipalities of South Yorkshire, and inequality or spatial justice at the scale of the sub-region in relation to the UK and European territories was not articulated. However, the potential basic policy tension between the EU organizing ideas of polycentric development (Jensen & Richardson) and more immediate policy discourses was seen in the contested processes involved in preparing the SYSS and Bottlenecks Study. A conflict given direct expression in the desire of stakeholders to attract substantial new economic investment to the already congested motorway corridors and junctions; in the contested future of the coalfields, quickly developing as a car-based, out-of-town, non-place urban realm largely supporting call-centres and personal consumption activities; and the simultaneous demolition of social housing in areas of low market demand alongside public subsidies for private house building on brownfield sites (represented in the Don-Deerne axis growth model, figure 8). Thus, the initial exploration of the South Yorkshire territory begins to unlock what new meanings of space are being constructed. Notions of polycentricity and balanced regional development are highly contestable as both explanatory and normative spatial ideas, but already their use in constructing policies and notions of space was becoming reproduced and institutionalised.

**Figure 7:** Image of ‘Don-Deerne axis’ of development in South Yorkshire  
(<http://www.barnsley.gov.uk/syforum/coredocuments.asp>)

The narratives presented here suggest that a spatialisation of these debates was prompted at the sub-regional scale as a new Structural Funds period and publication of the ESDP gained influence over the territory. The designation as an Objective 1 area resulted in the formalisation of a ‘South Yorkshire’ space not only within plans and policies applied to the area (Regional Planning Guidance, Regional Economic Strategy), but also within the governance structures of the territory (South Yorkshire Forum, Objective 1 Directorate). Furthermore, the normative construct of polycentric urban development, underpinned by the fundamental spatial organising principles of frictionless mobility and balanced regional development, led to a new expression and meaning of space in South Yorkshire.

The narratives have also explored how this territory then applied spatial ideas to tease out contested relationships within the area, either between boroughs or between different urban areas within the boroughs, as polycentric urban development and parity of access to infrastructure were given specific expression. However, these conflicts were largely constructed, given interpretation and meaning, and assigned legitimacy by a narrow set of actors and interests. ‘Popularist’ politicians, community based stakeholders, and other ‘outsiders’ such as private capital, saw little value in the two policy studies. The policy formulation process reinforced particular beliefs and values. The complex, multi-level and stakeholder relationships revealed by the South Yorkshire narratives suggest that certain responses dominated over others, some were excluded or refused legitimacy. A hierarchical set of policy relationships tended to reinforce and act as a confirmatory setting for local policy makers, but this was neither the only or dominant factor that conditioned the advancement and

acceptance of policy ideas. Contestation arose where different solutions and a means of implementing desired local outcomes clashed, for example between market and welfare models of transport provision. These clearly had roots that reside within broader notions of rationality and sets of values and beliefs within multi-levels of governance.

#### **4. Being on the map**

Our analysis shows how different types of images can play different roles in policy making. We have seen how images are used to capture and frame moments in political struggles over policy ideas and institutional responses. Images can be used to press a case for a policy or institutional response, and to frame problems for policy attention.

In policy processes, images are commonly used to frame representations of ‘what is out there’ in particular ways which suggest certain responses. The image of a shrinking Europe (figure 1), for example, carries a powerful rhetorical force, which conceals the strategic power play behind its making, and presents a persuasive offer of seamless freedom of mobility (if, of course, the policy is implemented). This is an image that now appears ‘of its time’, as we enter a more cautious and unstable period where the European project, and the extent of integration in all its forms, are under renewed scrutiny. Images may also reflect consensus among a coalition of interests, or may communicate uncertainty, unresolved tensions, stalemate and compromise. The proposals map for the trans-European road network (figure 2) shows how an apparently unified image of networked mobility across European space is in fact the product of complex multi-level power struggles. The maps of infrastructure proposals found in the draft ESDP documents articulate the coherent discourse of a ‘Europe of Flows’, but are once again shaped within a contested field of divergent spatial representations. Thus the image of flows is most striking in the draft ESDP (figure 3) and is watered down in the analytical map of accessibility that appears in the final ESDP (figure 4). Here we see how even the presence (or absence) of images can indicate something about the extent of consensus among policy actors.

The images of the banana (figure 5) and the grapes (figure 6) together capture a much broader discursive struggle than seems apparent from an examination of their graphic form. Their juxtaposition symbolises a tension between centralised and decentralised urban development that recurs at various spatial scales and across spatial policy processes. The example of Denmark serves to illustrate this tension well, as national spatial policy was marked by a dispute between the decentralised ‘star city sketch’ versus the agglomeration-oriented notion of urban development along the motorway structure called the ‘big H’ (Jensen, 1999). Notwithstanding our earlier comments, Faludi and Waterhout see these iconic images of European space in a dialectical relation to each other (Faludi & Waterhout, 2002: 12). Williams even stresses the potential for the ‘blue banana’ image to become the backbone of a EU spatial planning doctrine (Williams, 1996a: 97).

Finally (in figures 7 and 8) we turn to the question of how these broader struggles over European space influence localised planning activity. Here we find that the ideas at the heart of spatial strategy making are clearly Europeanised, and that the injection of these

ideas makes a difference to the ways that spatial futures are debated, and to the range of possible outcomes.

From our analysis, we can identify several reasons why, as policy making progresses, images may change their nature and lose definition, become more indicative and impressionistic, or even disappear altogether. These reasons include the need for images to play a role in working towards consensus, where the precision of detailed maps of proposals is contested. The changing representation of accessibility from the early TENs proposals maps to the drafting ESDP illustrates this quite clearly. But they also include the need to find iconic images that can carry perhaps quite simple, but potentially epistemic, framings of space and spatial relations. The final images discussed in this paper are example of this new form of spatial representation within the European spatial policy discourse. The way that polycentricity is imagined within the emerging field of 'infographics' (figure 7) is to our minds a powerful new field of spatial representation which we will most certainly see more of in the future. The work of the Study Programme in European Spatial Planning on images shows clearly that the new spatial policy discourse is concerned not only with being reproduced in words and concepts but also in visual terms. Interestingly, it appears that representing accessibility and mobility, which at the EU level is pinned heavily to the idea of networks, remains unresolved. Infographic endeavour has as yet failed to produce a new iconic image of mobility in European space comparable to the blue banana and the iconic policy metaphor of polycentricity.

Several points are to be drawn from this analysis. On the conceptual and theoretical side this firstly speaks in favour of widening the notion of spatial policy discourse beyond text (Jensen and Richardson, 2001). On the policy side the lesson to be learned, as Morley and Robins (1995: 189) have argued, is that in the new European Community, the matter of territorial coherence and integrity is paramount. Here infography has become useful in articulating relations and changes that can't be represented in traditional maps, where the albeit limited experience at the trans-national level has shown that political agendas quickly overrun any attempts to debate policy issues. Each of these images focuses on aspects of spatial development in Europe, either as a deliberate expression of power and tactics or as a reflective conceptualisation of spaces and places. Furthermore, the role of metaphors is striking, and suggests that we should not only think of spatial policy images in terms of their visual qualities, as they are more often than not linked to a complex linguistic and metaphorical play of signification. Thus they 'carry meaning' by fusing words and pictures.

So we would argue that maps are not only to be seen as a 'planners tool'. As we learn from history, the discipline of cartography has (together with the other great discipline of 'spatial order'; Geography) played a major role in the process of nation building. Thus the new practices of map-making in the European Union may be seen in parallel to the political project of 'building Europe':

The new Europe is being constructed on much the same symbolic terrain as the old nation-states of the last two centuries. Flags, anthems, passports, trophies, medals and maps are all icons for evoking the presence of the emergent state ... (Shore, 2000: 50).

Maps and discursive images have clearly facilitated discussion, and have become part of the new vocabulary of European spatial policy. As such they may be regarded as a platform for enhanced mutual understanding (Tewdwr-Jones and Williams, 2001). However it is important to maintain a critical view of the use of these images. Refined images may carry particular meanings within a sophisticated but exclusive policy world. The images and the meanings conveyed by them may simply reproduce a hegemonic discourse, or they may be contested. Alternatively they may remain more open to interpretation, and encourage a subtle and less clear re-imagining of Europe as a transnational space. In different ways, then, the top down process of reproducing a spatially homogenising and integrating discourse, may be pursued through the deployment of analytical maps and iconographic images which together encourage the acceptance and adoption of new spatial agendas. What is clear is that images are part of the armoury of persuasion used by interest groups and policy makers operating in the multi-level arenas of European spatial planning. Images are clearly useful tools for persuading policy makers to notice certain things, politicians to understand in a particular way, and citizens to reconceptualise their relationships with the space around them.

The future path of transnational spatial policy making seems likely to be illustrated by analytical maps that help in problem framing, and more discursive images that carry ideas about policy options. This trend will take planning documents into a genre of more vision oriented and less tangible images of space and place. This style of representation reflects that the political is increasingly concerned with form over content, with symbolism presiding over materiality. The field of spatial policy discourse therefore becomes an '*ambivalent territory*' (to use a metaphor) for either a progressive sense of belonging and inclusion into the European territory, or a regressive and exclusionary vision of Europe as a closed Community. Being 'on' the new map of Europe may be important, but it may be just as important to participate in the struggles over the meanings which are being framed in the new iconography of European space.

The case of European spatial policy shows Europeanisation taking place in different ways: as transnational institutional creation, as penetration of national planning, as reproduction of a top down political project, but also as the creation of new spaces and potentials for the content of Europeanisation – for the policy ideas at stake – to be reconstructed and contested, at different scales and in diverse institutional and societal settings.

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