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When ‘soft planning’ and ‘hard planning’ meet:

A conceptual framework to analyse how European spatial planning finds its way into national planning systems

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Background

How does the European Union influence its member states?

Can we observe a Europeanisation of spatial planning?

Does the EU lead to convergence of planning systems and policies?

NO! (Adams, 2008; Waterhout, 2008; Stead, 2012; Faludi, 2014)

...but why not?

...why do the effects of EU policies differ?

Problem & Hypothesis

How do different national planning systems encounter and interrelate with European spatial planning?

How does informal, 'soft' planning interrelate with statutory, 'hard' planning?

Assumption:

National planning systems differ in their 'softness/hardness' which is a determining factor regarding the adoption of and adaptation to European spatial planning

European Spatial Planning: A Fuzzy Matter?

spatial planning – spatial development – territorial cohesion

multilingualism

"*current European spatial planning centres around four pillars: the ESDP, the INTERREG programme, the ESPON programme and [...] the Territorial Agenda of the EU*" (Waterhout, 2008, p. 9)

+ macro-regional strategies

what about regional policy, environmental policy, agricultural policy,...?

Soft Spaces: New Planning Scales

original context: Thames Gateway (Haughton and Allmendinger, 2007; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009)

geographically soft: ”fluid areas with fuzzy boundaries”, potentially overlapping, changing over time and blurry

institutionally soft: not identical with administrative entities, therefore lacking statutory basis and legal and institutional framework

problems concerning legitimacy and accountability

Hard Spaces

clearly defined spatially, legally and institutionally

containers fitting seamlessly into larger ones (Faludi, 2010)

legal certainty and democratic legitimacy but "*slow, bureaucratic, or not reflecting the real geographies of problems and opportunities*" (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009)

soft and hard are not dualistic properties but rather relative positions on a shared continuum of spatial closure and territorial definition (Metzger and Schmitt, 2010)

Soft & Hard Planning

soft planning: processes of mutual learning, cooperation, negotiation and coordination

"*complex, overlapping, 'soft' patchwork of activities, relationships and responsibilities*" (Stead, 2011)

hard planning: statutory planning laws, instruments and institutions

soft planning is "*the preferred, indeed the only, realistic model*" for soft spaces (Faludi, 2010)

Parallels & Challenges

land use planning – strategic spatial planning

danger of detachment into parallel systems: planners would face "*an impossible choice between a legitimate rigidity of statutory planning and an illegitimate flexibility of strategic planning*" (Mäntysalo, 2013)

EU as Creator of Soft Spaces

creation of new territories and soft spaces throughout Europe

European Association of Border Regions
(http://www.aebr.eu/en/members/map_of_members.php)

EU as Creator of Soft Spaces

creation of new territories and soft spaces throughout Europe

EU as soft space itself...

...which dissolves formerly hard nation states (Faludi, 2010)

EU as Driver of Soft Planning

no formal competence regarding spatial planning

shared competence regarding territorial cohesion

transboundary nature of problems leads to soft solutions

soft planning is more suitable to achieve strategic goals

Examples of European soft planning

ETC: coordination, negotiation and mutual learning

macro-regional strategies: no new legislation, no financial resources and no complicated institutional architecture

ESDP: no prescriptions or restrictions but "*due to its strategic and non-compulsory character – aims mainly at 'shaping the minds' of actors involved in spatial planning*" (Giannakourou, 2005)

regional policy: hybrid between soft and hard planning?

Encounter of EU and National Planning: Examples

Challenge: incompatibility of domestic system with EU

Finland:

> Nordic bi-polar structure: power lies with state and municipalities

> establishment of regional councils: regional level as part of the formal planning system

> step towards overcoming division between (physical) regional planning and (economic) regional development

Encounter of EU and National Planning: Examples

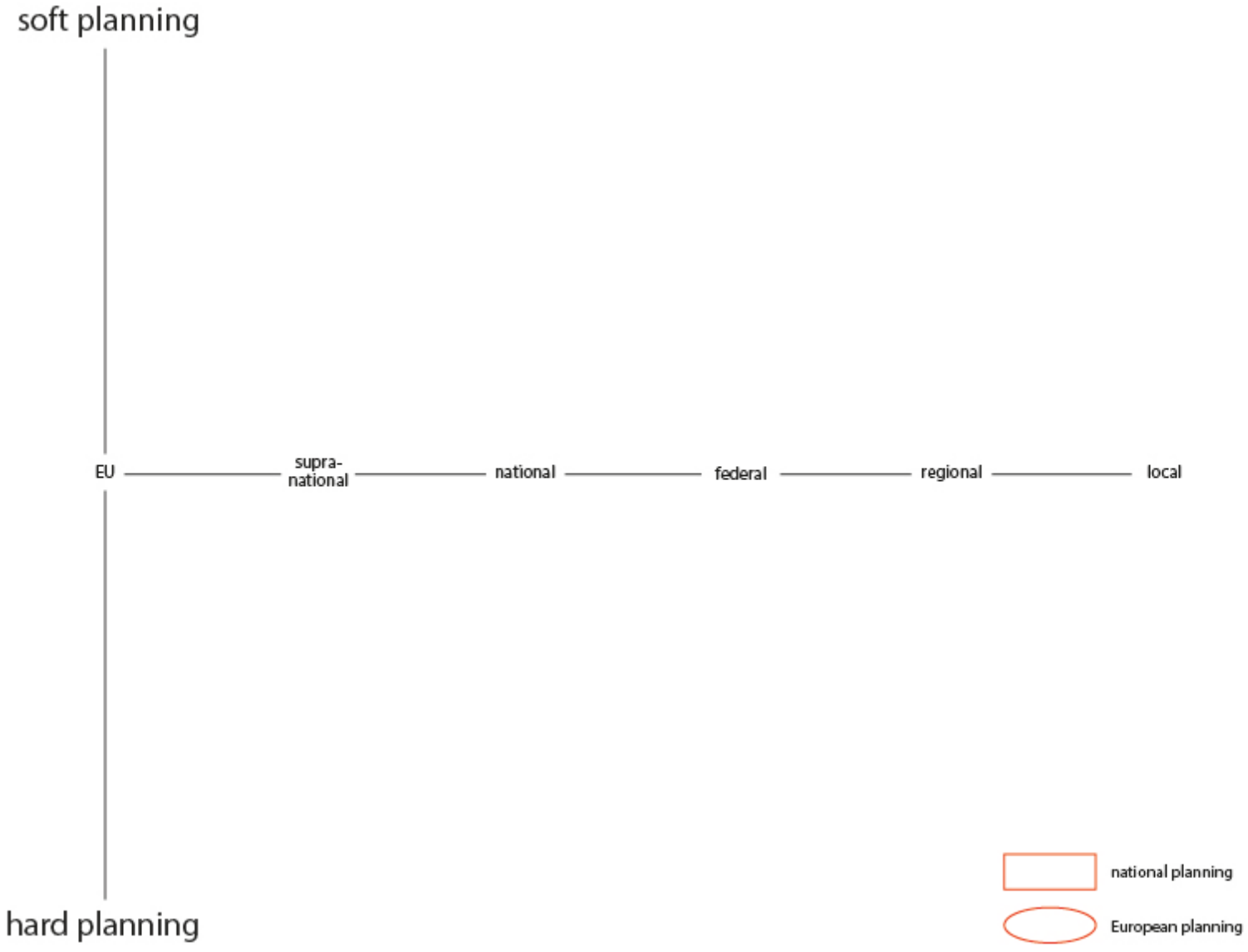
Challenge: incompatibility of domestic system with EU

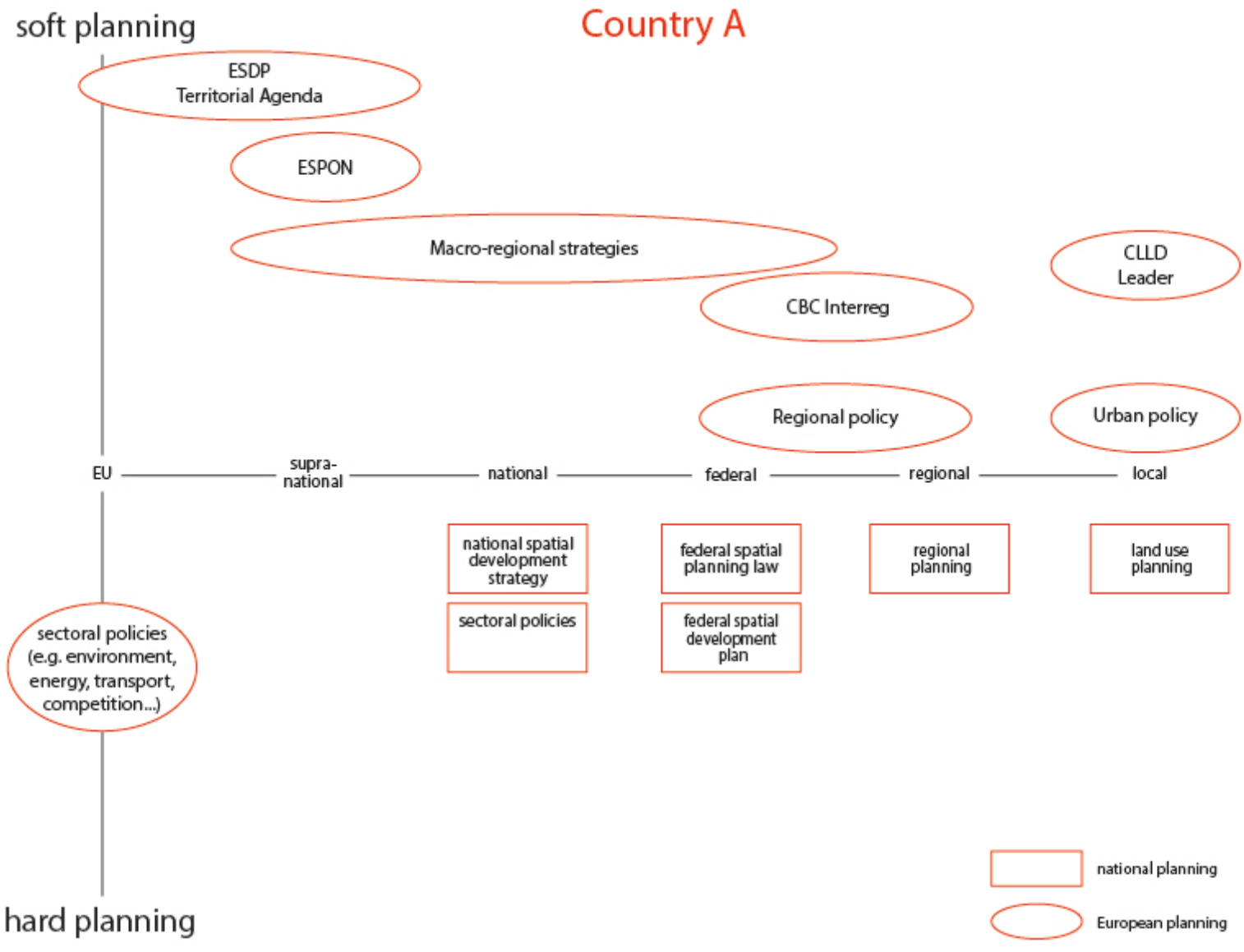
Austria:

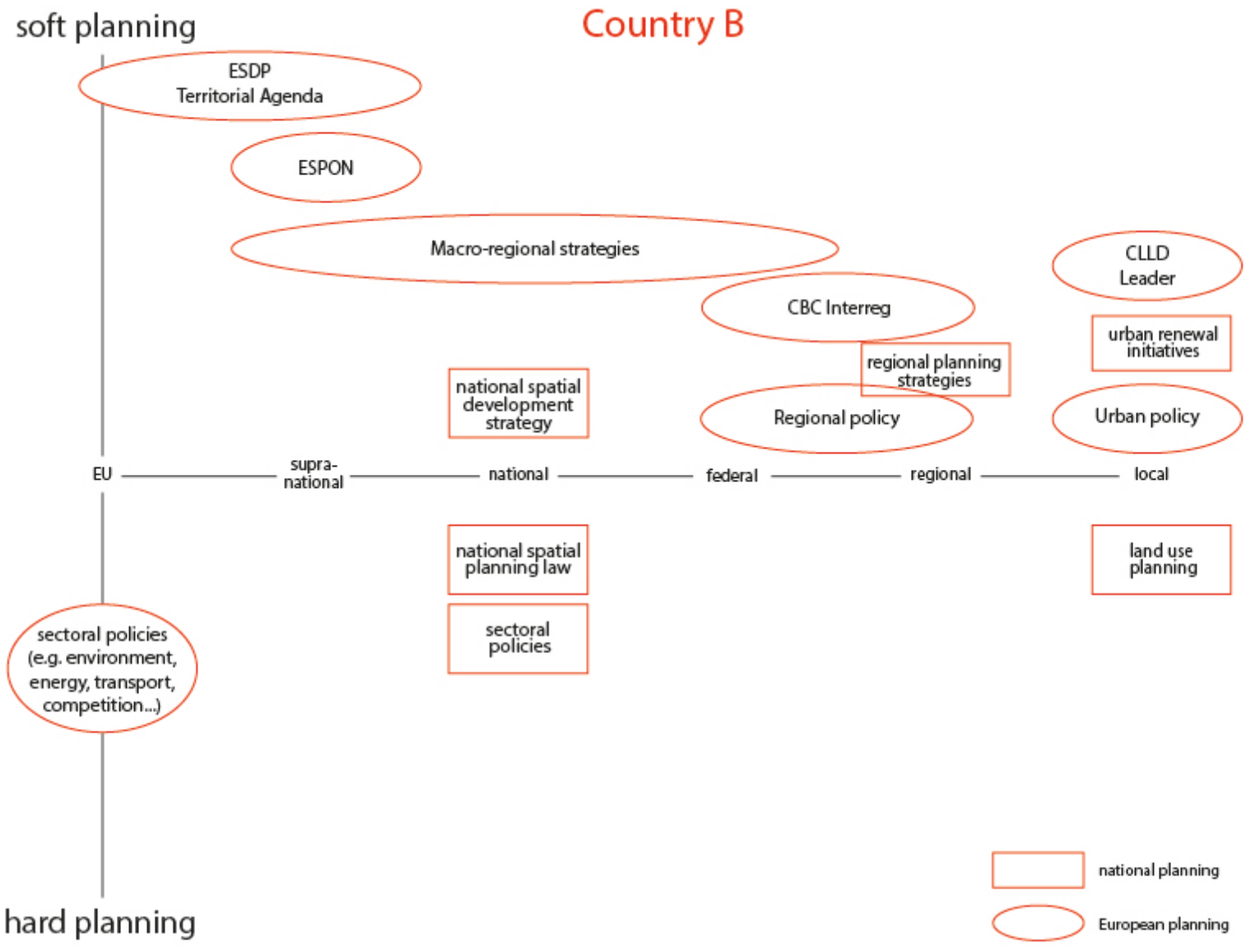
> federal states have planning competence, with EU membership stronger national level needed

> Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning: high political representatives but no formal power, only recommendations

> co-operative arrangements substitute formal powers: "*informal arrangements can work, some would say better than formal ones*" (Faludi, 1998, p. 497)


soft planning
EU
supra-national
national
federal
regional
local
hard planning
national planning
European planning


Country A
soft planning
ESDP
Territorial Agenda
ESPON
Macro-regional strategies
CBC Interreg
CLLD
Leader
Regional policy
Urban policy
EU
supra-
national
national
federal
regional
local
national spatial development strategy
federal spatial planning law
regional planning
land use planning
sectoral policies
federal spatial development plan
sectoral policies (e.g. environment, energy, transport, competition...)
hard planning
national planning
European planning


soft planning
Country B
ESDP
Territorial Agenda
ESPON
Macro-regional strategies
CBC Interreg
CLLD
Leader
urban renewal initiatives
regional planning strategies
national spatial development strategy
Regional policy
Urban policy
EU
supra-national
national
federal
regional
local
national spatial planning law
land use planning
sectoral policies
sectoral policies (e.g. environment, energy, transport, competition...)
hard planning
national planning
European planning

Expected Results from Further Research

Understanding the relationship between hard and soft planning can help to grasp the complex connections between the EU and its member states

Answering further questions concerning actors and legal provisions

Contributing to a broader debate on how to interrelate rigid, formal planning with non-bonding, flexible elements

What's next?

Apply framework to one country

Discuss the ideas with researchers and practitioners

Identify which countries offer interesting variations in their planning systems

…

Thank you!

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