Preface

Holding *Cohesion, Coherence, Cooperation* (Faludi 2010) in my hands, I promised myself: not another book. So why one now? The immodest answer is that I believe I have something to say about a claim made by the Dutch historian Mathieu Segers. He said that ‘it has become painfully obvious that this new old world of the twenty-first century will unrelentingly test the viability of the “order of Maastricht”’.¹ What I have to say is that looking through state lenses, as that order does – and as planners also do – gives a distorted picture. Colouring initiatives in matters of European spatial planning, those lenses make European space appear as the sum of the territories of member states. In a first approximation this is what territorialism means. That I am critical of it explains the main title of this book. It is from an article entitled ‘The Poverty of Territorialism: Revisiting European Spatial Planning’ (Faludi 2016). The title alludes to a work by Karl Popper (1957 [1966]) – *The Poverty of Historicism*.

Thinking about and dealing with European spatial planning, we are caught in what John Agnew (1994), talking about international relations theory, has famously called the ‘territorial trap’ of the nation state. In a manner of speaking, the state owns its unit of sovereign space: its territory. And with its territory comes its people. This is a symbiotic relationship. So, like prisoners unwilling to swap life behind bars for the challenges of the outside, we hesitate, and maybe wisely so, to leave the trap. A world without territories is difficult to imagine. But I think it is necessary to do so. I am not desperate myself to face the challenges this poses. Rather, I confess to my predilection for the relative safety of a still-functioning – more or less that is – Netherlands. But I hope the

reflections I offer may help us prepare for what is in the offing. What else but offering reflections can being an academic mean?

I am reminded of an applicant for a professorship who, like me, had never worked in practice. Apparently wanting to be taught the tricks of the trade, the student member of the board uttered words like ‘I don’t know, he is too much, well, too much (…) of a professor!’ I thought – and said – that this surely qualified him, and am pleased to say that his has become a distinguished academic career.

Another episode, which I only know from hearsay, is about a university President advising a colleague against writing more books, saying that he should add his name to the articles of his PhD students instead. Sometimes, the citation index comes before academic reflection.

Maybe my graduates were less well prepared for their first job in practice. However, I fancy that, thinking creatively about the settings in which they worked, they came closer to being what Donald Schon (1984) once called ‘reflective practitioners’, becoming what a fellow planning academic has called ‘constitution builders’. His name eludes me but, as when Kissinger was asked whether he had ever uttered the famous words ‘If I want to call Europe, which number do I dial?’, he replied that he did not remember – but that it was a good remark, so why not own up to it? – I have decided to invoke the trope of planners as constitution builders even without a reference. It simply fits my current concerns.

Those concerns came from studying European planning, leading me to consider its institutional setting; its constitution, if you will. So I began reading about Europe, more particularly the European Union (EU), which, emulating the language of the current Treaty of Lisbon, I like to refer to as ‘the Union’.

I as much as possible eschew an academic style of writing, avoiding quoting multiple sources – no, I have not read everything there is to read – and reserving page references strictly for direct quotes. But where a source is in a language other than English, the original text is in the footnotes. Not a professional translator, I wish to cover my back.

Mentioning non-English sources gives me the opportunity to mention something that I am going to reiterate in the Acknowledgements: I have found French literature on the history and theory of the state and of democracy revealing. France provides models...
which, whether consciously or not, we are emulating when we let representatives from across state territories articulate the will of the people. Emerging national and liberal movements of the nineteenth century did so, with reverberations right up to the present. But France is not such a source of inspiration on questioning territorialism. The French seem satisfied with living in what they lovingly call l’Hexagon. ‘Talking about France in such geometric terms, the French give their own country an ideal, stable dimension. In so doing, for the sake of convenience they ignore the fact that the present borders are the result of centuries of warfare, battles and royal marriages’, says a Dutch author who has made a home in that country.\footnote{Door over Frankrijk te praten als zo’n geometrische vorm, geven de Fransen aan hun eigen land een ideale, onveranderlijke dimensie. Daarbij negeren ze voor het gemak dat de huidige grenzen het resultaat zijn van eeuwenlange oorlogen, veldslagen en koninklijke huwelijken.’ Wilfred de Bruijn (2017), Op zoek naar Frankrijk: Een persoonlijk portret van een prachtig land vol tegenstellingen, Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 34.} For questioning territorialism, one had better turn to the veritable deluge of relevant Anglo-Saxon academic works. But after much bashing of what is called the Westphalian state – the epitome of territorialism – its authors tend to resign themselves to territorialism and the state being there to stay.

Indeed, there is no obvious alternative to dividing the surface of the globe into territories and letting the people living in each govern, either directly, as in some Swiss cantons, or through their representatives dealing with policy, including planning. This the more so since the Westphalian state postulates the unity of territory and its ruler, presently – and this is what the French Revolution has brought about – presumed to be the people. So, the people became citoyens – citizens of la République.

Citizenship came to distinguish insiders with rights from others with fewer rights, or no rights at all. But the state will change its spots, maybe becoming an altogether different animal. Citizens will have to undergo, nay actively shape, the process, painful and nerve-racking though this may be. Dual citizenship is, for instance, on the rise, and not only among the ‘anywheres’ – the evocative label given by David Goodhart (2017) to the cursed elites to distinguish them from the ‘somewheres’ bound to the soil. Entirely to the point, Maeve Glave (2017: 4) comments that those ‘who
don’t have the education and skills to travel abroad often resent those who do. To compensate, they identify strongly with the place they come from and support politicians who promise to protect them from both genuine and imaginary threats.’

At this point I limit myself to saying that dual citizenship is not only an elite phenomenon. Also, postulating a one-to-one relationship between territory and citizenship is an undue simplification. There are the rights, under international law, of refugees and asylum seekers and resident rights short of citizenship. Thus, in the EU, permanent residents who are nationals of another member state, and in some cases others as well, can vote in local elections – something which has also been proposed (unsuccessfully) for national elections in Luxembourg, where close to half of the resident population are not citizens. And does the child of parents of different nationalities really have to make a choice between which of the citizenships of his parents to assume? I learned recently that there are 3000 Dutch-Austrian citizens in the Netherlands alone, most of them children of mixed marriages.

Territory, too, is less unambiguous as a concept than one thinks. The interest of the Republic of Ireland in the settlement of the Northern Island Troubles under the Good Friday Agreement is well recognised. Less well known, the same is true for Austria’s stake in the, as it happens very successful, management of issues in Alto Adige/South Tirol: If Austria were to have an issue with the Italian government’s policies in this region, under their joint agreement it could call for international arbitration. There has also been a referendum over sharing sovereignty of Gibraltar which, it must be said, Gibraltarians have overwhelmingly rejected. But at least the thought was not beyond the pale. Finally, there are complex arrangements for land-locked mini-states within the European Union as well as for the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, the Faroe Islands, the Åland Islands and Svalbard/Spitsbergen.

If all this holds a message for the future of European integration, then it is that the bondage of individuals to their state is loosening. No clear path forward appears on the horizon though, and this is also true for the alleged democratic deficit of the EU. The knee-jerk reaction is to pursue conventional arrangements: true European elections (which the present arrangements are not) and a European Parliament appointing a government to replace the present European Commission (EC). But, as Catherine Goetze (2016) has
pointed out: ‘The geometrics of politics have changed. European federalism is ill-designed to respond.’ The twist I give to this is to challenge the belief that the production of democratic legitimacy must be by territories.

Seeing the Union through the lenses of ‘neo-medievalism’, Jan Zielonka (2014) does not talk so much about democracy; but in Zielonka (2018) he does, suggesting that, before things get any better, we have to go through a ‘valley of tears’. I agree, but my focus is on whether democracy must remain caught in the territorial trap. Reality does not lend itself to being pressed into containers, so why should democracy?

To bring this back to planning, plans are made with an eye to satisfying voters in territorial constituencies. So, if this terminology would not sound outlandish, we might as well talk about territorial planning. The point is, whatever effects occur outside the borders are of secondary importance. This makes our whole world order territorial, which is what territorialism means: the world being tucked away in boxes, with planning, too, taking place in containers. The representation of plans – with the area up to the borders filled to the rim and the outside often left blank – suggests precisely that: plans for self-contained territories being suspended in empty space. But any truly optimal allocation of development in space would require considering a wider area of choice. The same goes for locating so-called not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) facilities. By requiring locational choices to take account of only those effects for which the planning authority is accountable, territorialism leads to them being located where they cause the least harm inside the territory, but without due regard to the outside. In European integration generally, it is largely the same, making for decisions that are sub-optimal.

So, is this going to be a plea for a United States of Europe? That would still mean territorialism, albeit on the Union scale within its proper borders. But the fact is, this Union casts a long shadow, and the outside penetrates the inside. Does this not suggest further enlargement, internalising issues and solutions? Is it not logical, then, to continue enlarging the Union until all relevant issues have been covered? But where does this lead to? World government? I for one think rather that we need to re-invent democracy for a networked world. Godspeed!
xiv  The poverty of territorialism

REFERENCES


