

Reflections on Alterity in Irish and Scottish Spatial Planning: fragmentation or fugue?

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Abstract:

The developing theory and practice of spatial planning reflects an altered state from the predominant mode of development planning that has been practiced in the UK and Ireland in the last thirty years. The drivers of change have been located in the spatial representation of difference, reinforcing divergence and local distinctiveness. At the same time, there have been wider pressures for cooperative convergence, within a global economic and European context. This paper reflects on these differing pressures on the approaches to managing the spaces of the nation and discusses whether these are evidence of fragmentation or represent a policy fugue, characterised through repeated themes and patterned variations.

Introduction

The implementation of devolved governance provides the opportunity for different models of public policy to be developed and delivered, in ways that are more attuned to culture and place – the spaces of the nation. This article examines spatial planning since devolution in Scotland in 1999 and the Belfast Agreement in Northern Ireland in 1998 and the ways in which they have been responding to nation and identity. It considers also the interrelationships in the development of spatial planning between Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The implementation of spatial planning within the UK, including Wales and England is also considered as part of the context the Scottish/Irish relationships discussed here and draws on a fuller discussion elsewhere (Morphet, 2010). This analysis goes beyond identifying the extent to which spatial planning is integrated within its own main interests, which has been discussed elsewhere (Counsell et al, 2006) but rather to consider the extent

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that it is being integrated into local governance reforms and creating flexible new approaches to managing state spaces.

The introduction of integrated spatial planning approaches into formal systems of land use and development planning has been increasing since the mid-1990s (Kidd, 2007; Harris and Hooper, 2004, 2006; Davoudi and Strange, 2009). In Europe the period leading to the publication of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) (1999) was heavily influenced by earlier mega-regional approaches to integrated working. These were developed following Europe 2000 (1992) and Europe 2000+ (1994) through the creation of geo-political entities within Europe such as the Atlantic Arc and the Baltic Sea Region. The integration of spatial considerations into the use of EU funding for infrastructure and areas with lagging economies began through programmes such as Interreg (Hague and Jenkins, 2004; Dabinett, 2006). This has now developed into a spatially led approach to the EU's wider internal activities in the policy of territorial cohesion (Faludi, 2004, 2009; Faludi and Waterhout, 2002; Sykes, 2008) that is to form the shaping principle of the next funding programme from 2013 (Bachtler et al, 2009). The development of the territorial cohesion policy narrative also takes on a different institutional form, shifting from a predominantly hierarchical governance model between spatial scales to one that is based on networks (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003) and agreements or contracts (Barca, 2009; Turok, 2007).

Whilst these cultural pressures emphasise the nature of difference and self-determination, all parts of the United Kingdom and Ireland are members of the European Union (EU) which has also been turning its attention to the use and regulation of space (Faludi, 2004; Mirvaldt et al, 2009). The EU has competencies over some of the components of space such as the environment, transport, economic interests and public health and less in other areas such as housing and specific locational decisions. As an economic union, the EU is concerned with competition within its territories, between its member states. It also has the role of interpreting global trade policy as agreed through the World Trade Organisation. The framework created by the EU to fulfil these roles might be described as 'tight-loose'; the legislation is clear and in many cases is set by member states within this. At the same time as Scotland and Northern Ireland (NI) have been developing devolved approaches to the 'spaces of their nation', the agreement for conforming practices on the vision and management of territory have also been occurring (Faludi, 2009; Faludi and Waterhout, 2002).

The development of spatial planning in Europe has also been characterised by its integration within reformed local governance structures and this is already present in Germany (Schmidt, 2009). Elsewhere, this integration with local governance is emerging including France (Booth, 2003; 2009); Denmark, (Sehested, 2009), Ireland, (Cussen, 2009), Norway, (Amdam, 2004), the Netherlands, (Needham, 2005) and England (Morphet et al, 2007, Morphet, 2009a, 2010). Spatial planning is no longer a freestanding integrator, as some have suggested (Vigar, 2009; Healey, 2007; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2007) but part of the achievement of horizontal and vertical integration that is manifested through place. In this integrated role, spatial planning has taken on a responsibility for infrastructure investment planning particularly, but not exclusively, in the public sector. This approach has characterised the development of spatial planning in Ireland and the UK, although operating at different scales. In Ireland, Scotland and England this is at national level through the designation and adoption of new processes for identifying or approving major infrastructure projects. At the local level the introduction of infrastructure delivery plans as part of the local development plan has characterised spatial planning since 2004 in England, and also currently lies dormant within the spatial planning systems in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The role of spatial planning as integrated part of local governance and to support infrastructure investment has also been implemented beyond Europe in South Africa (Todes, 2004; Harrison, Todes and Watson, 2008; Valeta and Walton, 2008) and Australia (Gleeson, 2001; Dollery et al, 2000; Dodson, 2009) for at least the same period.

This article reviews the development of spatial planning in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland within this context and considers the approaches taken to see whether they represent a practice of divergence or convergence in the period since 1998. These issues are considered through the lens of four key themes and are then followed by a discussion on the implications for nationally distinctive approaches to spatial planning in the future. Before these are discussed in detail, there is a review of the contextual influences on the development of spatial planning since 1998. These four themes are:

1. The extent to which there is horizontal and vertical integration between scales of spatial planning and other activities
2. The extent to which spatial planning has been integrated into local governance since 2000

3. The role of spatial planning in delivering public sector infrastructure programmes
4. The response of the planning profession to the introduction of new spatial planning approaches

Spatial Planning in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland since 1998: Developing Distance?

Following the introduction of devolved government in Scotland in 1999 and the move to re-establish of local governance structures within NI (RPA, 2002) after the Belfast Agreement in 1998, there have been pressures to establish different, distinctive and more culturally aligned approaches to policy and delivery. Difference and separation between policies and priorities between parts of the UK on a variety of issues was expected and has occurred (Hazell, 2000; Keating, 2003, Shaw, 2003). Amongst the drivers for devolution were the characteristics of place. Although the systems of governance in NI and Scotland already differed from those in England prior to 1998/1999, further differentiation aligned to the interests of the new jurisdictions was expected. This was true in the operation of the spatial planning system, (Allmendinger, 2001; Tewdwr-Jones, 2001; Lloyd and Peel, 2002). There were fears expressed about the potential results of this evolving distance between state processes. Some expected the new devolved UK state to become 'fragmented' (Keating, 2003), with consequent costs to the country as a whole, whilst others saw it as a potential continuation of hollowing out the state (Goodwin, Jones and Jones, 2006). Altogether there was uncertainty about the potential for divergence or convergence (Allmendinger, 2006; Keating, 2006) and about the benefits that more individuated systems, including those for spatial planning could bring. Some, including Hague (1990) maintained that national approaches were already better than practices elsewhere in the UK. In NI, the publication of *Shaping Our Future*, (DRD, 2002) which started in 1996, was already leading the way as a more European integrated approach to spatial planning and investment (McEldowney and Sterrett, 2001; Murray and Murtagh, 2007; Murray, 2009a; Neill and Gordon, 2001; Ellis and Neill, 2006). It has also allowed a greater degree of cooperation between NI and Republic of Ireland that shared the island of Ireland (Blair et al, 2007)

The role of place and its management is a significant expression of the nation, its cultures, priorities and individuality (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994; Neill, 2004; Morris, 2009). The underlying geography, geology and ethnography of places create unique conditions to which any governance or regulatory system must relate and may

frequently be overlooked (Beeson, 2009; Graham, 2009; Harvey, 2009). The opportunity of new jurisdictions and local governance arrangements in Scotland and Northern Ireland provided enhanced opportunities to create visions of place which respect these differences. Regulatory activities, for development, environmental management and protection can all reflect these priorities within the jurisdiction rather than those set as a national context. It also allows differences of expression about place. Further, it allows for new priorities, such as Scotland's early legislation on land reform (Shaw, 2003).

The pressure for the establishment of a separate jurisdiction that recognises cultural and historical differences has been central to nationhood. This pressure represents a desire to see self-determination as well as a symbolic act of separation away from the power of the perceived 'centre'. These processes are most frequently represented through post-colonialist analysis, with a focus on the 'other', opposition and displacement (Ashcroft et al, 2002). In Scotland and NI, these have been focussed on what occurs 'down south'. There is a desire to re-establish a locally determined cultural hegemony, that is more than an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2002; Allmendinger, 2000), and one that has legal validity. A dominant culture is one that transfers its organizing metaphors (Boehmer, 1995: 52) to all areas within its control and it is this attempt at homogeneity, that undermines local differentiation, which can also create alienation (Colley, 1999) where otherwise a system of 'normative neutrality' is sought (Etzioni, 2009, 101).

The desire for separation is driven by cultural determinism but also a sense of being dominated by other cultures that are seen to impose their priorities through power and elites. In Scotland, for example, it is argued that the failure to elect any conservative MPs in 1979 (MacWhirter, 2009) was a defining anti-English moment and that overall there was a sense of 'Anglophobia' that drove devolution (Hussain and Miller, 2006). But once separation occurs, there is also a moment when what results from the separation reflects back on the old system and when the transformative nature of separation results in invention and an altered state or 'alterity' (Attridge, 2004). What results can be a hybrid or a new manifestation (Hazell, 2000), not least as relations between the new jurisdiction and its antecedents continue. It can also be networked rather than formal (Bevir and Rhodes 2003). Both move on in a new relationship in ways that may be unanticipated (Ashcroft et al, 2002). This can create more cooperative forms of working arrangements which are based on respect, difference and equality rather than subordination and hierarchy.

The process of devolution represents a legal change in status that is enacted on a particular date. This is also accompanied by the transformative processes of difference that continue to evolve beyond the legal separation. This separation can create a new 'other' that is developed and performed that is created or invented in the new relationships (Attridge, 2004). The process of forcing through these changes can also create new approaches that occur as a result of separation. The establishment of a new legal status can enable inventiveness which is beyond visible difference from the former system. These moments of difference become critical in defining the 'new' rather than a movement against the old. What is written, in any form, becomes a representation of the new and may be more readily espoused because of the transition it represents. It can also support the creation of a new 'state' which embodies these differences and the way in which they now combine (Etzioni, 2009).

In practical terms the degree of difference between Scotland and NI from a received notion of the UK, ie England had already been well established by 1998. In Scotland, the separate legal and land ownership system guaranteed separation in relation to property whilst in Northern Ireland, the more integrated approaches to governance that had occurred on the mainland through successive reforms of local government and central departments had not been implemented. The failed devolution referendum in 1968 meant that the establishment of separate approaches for Scotland were subsequently intensified and although the Scottish planning system had the same named component parts, by 1999 it was already operating in a different way. In Northern Ireland, the establishment of a separate jurisdiction was apparent from 1922 (McGinty, 2006; Mitchell, 2004). The planning system was also made up of the same component parts but its development since 1972 had been part of a wider political context and in some way became more like that in Ireland with an administrative approach to plan making and regulation by civil servants operating at the local level (Berry et al, 2001; Murray and Murtagh, 2007; Bartley, 2007; Gkartzios and Scott, 2009). In Ireland, the planning system also has similarities to those in Scotland and Northern Ireland not least as it is based on a common root of the local government system (Bartley, 2007). The development of the planning system in Ireland has responded to other changes and the most recent approaches are seen to be related to an economic focus rather than any other (Bartley and Kitchin, 2007).

Devolution in practice: spatial planning 1998-2009

Although ten years is not a long period, it is now possible to consider the extent to which the establishment of separate jurisdictions and practices since 1998 in NI and Scotland have led to a practical implementation of distinctively different approaches, as well as the emergent changes in Ireland and this is examined through four key spatial planning themes that together make up the conceptual characteristics of spatial planning.

1. The extent to which there is horizontal and vertical integration between scales of spatial planning and other activities

The notion of integration as a unifying element of spatial planning is central to its purpose (Kidd, 2007; Davoudi and Strange, 2009), and the extent to which spatial planning systems are seen to be successful is frequently measured by the degree of integration achieved (Vigar, 2009; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2007; Healey, 2007). The degree of success in achieving integration in spatial planning in Scotland, NI and Ireland varies between different spatial scales. The development of the integrated Regional Spatial Strategy for Northern Ireland, *Shaping Our Future*, (DRD, 2002) created a new model for spatial planning in the UK and is one that has still yet to be fully realised at this spatial scale elsewhere. *Shaping Our Future* moved away from the mould of traditional development planning and took on a more European character from the outset. Influenced by the Baltic Sea Plan (CSD/BSR1998), it sought to provide not only a spatial vision and priorities but it also associated itself with the infrastructure and investment decisions that needed to accompany its achievement. In the immediate short term, this more European identity for spatial planning fitted within the approach of the ESDP but also enabled the funding for investment from the EU as part of the PEACE programme to be set within a spatial framework. It took some key components of functional space including hubs and gateways and used these as a structuring device rather than the boundaries and lead locations of local authorities which had been used before. Although the implementation of *Shaping Our Future* has been criticised for a wider lack of commitment from the eleven departments of state in NI to support its delivery (Carmichael and Knox, 2003), it has provided a means of engaging in cross-border working with Ireland (Bailey et al, 2007) which may not have been possible if it had been conceived on administrative rather than functional areas.

This NI model has also been influential in Wales and Scotland although both have developing approaches to spatial planning at other spatial scales (Harris and Hooper,

2004; Lloyd and Peel, 2006; Lloyd and Purves, 2009). In Wales, through the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) (WAG: 2008), there has been a significant approach to sub-regional planning through the establishment of integrated spatial planning boards for each of the sub-regions. These represent vertical integration, through the chairmanship of a Member of the Welsh Assembly Government and horizontal integration through the membership of other public bodies and the private and voluntary sectors on the sub-regional boards. These sub-regional spatial bodies have yet to develop significant plans, strategies or delivery programmes, although they have started to meet regularly. At present the focus on physical infrastructure may be seen to be too narrowly defined and this may change in time.

In Scotland, the focus has been developing the National Spatial Framework (NSF) and NSF2 (2009). This national approach to spatial planning policy has been accompanied by the identification of key infrastructure projects which will support the delivery of NSF2. These projects are funded and led by the Scottish government and provide an overlay for other investment. Scotland has also moved furthest to decentralise its government departments and other services as part of a national approach to spatial planning and development. In some ways NSF2 marks a further development of *Shaping Our Future* in Northern Ireland and the Wales Spatial Plan with its clear focus on national priorities. It is also in marked contrast with England where national planning strategy is set out in policy, is provider-led and it is tangentially spatially represented. NSF2 represents an integrated approach to spatial planning at the national level insofar as it represents a Government investment strategy for major infrastructure

Scotland has also identified four city regions as part of the NSF. Unlike Wales and Northern Ireland, there are parts of Scotland's territory that are not included within these areas so it does not represent an edge to edge approach and is silent on similar approaches and processes for rural areas. This is in some ways similar to the creation of sub-regions in England accompanied by Multi-Area Agreements (MAAs) and the two city-region pilots in Leeds and Manchester, although the provisions to extend these arrangements to the whole of England's territory have recently been reinforced (CLG and BIS, 2009). Scotland's four city regions are developing at different rates and progress can be related to their previous experiences of joint working and the pressures that serve to bind them. In the West, the wider Glasgow area has experience of joint working which continues from the period of the Strathclyde Regional Council (Goodstadt, 2001) and is bound together

by a need to harness external funding to promote investment and regeneration, particularly from the EU. In Edinburgh, there is less of a legacy of joint working and here the growth pressures have served to lead to more competitive approaches. In the Edinburgh sub-region, this lack of common aim coupled with the growth pressures that have accompanied devolution have enabled developers to 'cherry pick' sites (Lloyd and Peel, 2006). Fife is represented in two city regions, Edinburgh and Dundee, and is now divided into both. In both Dundee and Aberdeen the fourth city region there is little manifestation of progress as yet. The delivery of investment and infrastructure in the city regions is tied to the development plans at the local level and although these have provisions within them for delivery, they remain in a more traditional mode. There has not been the same pressure to develop horizontal and vertical integration as there has been in England (DCLG, 2008a; DCLG, 2008b; DCLG, 2009a; DCLG, 2009b; PINS, 2009).

2. The extent to which spatial planning has been integration into local governance since 2000

The introduction of spatial planning has frequently been associated with reforms in local governance structures away from those which are based on administrative rules and organisational boundaries to those that are focussed on place, partnership and programmes. This has also been associated with the stronger emergence of place as a defining policy narrative rather than that of individuals (Morphet, 2009a; DCLG, 2008c). The role of spatial planning in this integrated approach is to ensure delivery. As a place based tool, spatial planning has been seen as a mechanism for these new approaches although it no longer provides the sole mechanism of integration. It has also shifted the focus of spatial planning away from being a policy construct delivered by others and distant from these responsibilities to one which provides the capital investment programme for the area (Morphet, 2009b; Lord, 2009; Baker and Hincks, 2009). These changes are manifest in a variety of ways although the extent to which they have been fully expressed varies between different nations, and within nations at different scales, as this discussion illustrates.

The experience of this integration within local governance is present in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Ireland, as well as England, Wales, France (Booth, 2009), Norway (Amdam, 2004) and Denmark, (Sehested, 2009). Warnock (2009) has described the link between the reform of local governance structures in the RPA (2002) and the important extent to which horizontal and vertical integration can be

achieved and which are set out in the consultation on the new planning system in NI (DOENI, 2009). This relationship and focus on integration as an outcome varies from earlier, more traditional discussions of the future of the planning system in NI (Lloyd, 2008). In Ireland, as Cussen (2009) has shown this is a continuing issue under consideration and governance experimentation in Dublin may provide a model for wider application. In Scotland, the integration of the local development plan with the community plan and partnership has been set out in the Planning etc (Scotland) Act in 2006, but like England, it is taking some time to filter into practical application.

The trend towards the integration of spatial planning into local governance systems has a range of implications. In the past, planning has been seen to be toothless because it has not been able to give much direct effect to the proposals and policies that it has set out in plans. It has more recently been seen to be separated from wider policy considerations at the local level. Where once the development plan formed the leading strategy for any local authority area this has now been replaced by some form of a community plan which is 'owned' by cross sectoral partnerships and increasingly forms the contract between place and government. The integrated approach creates a new role for spatial planning which is central to local delivery. It is important and influences the policy and direction for place but it is not the sole driver of what needs to be achieved. This is creating some tensions for some members of the planning profession who espouse spatial planning but are less willing to relinquish ownership of older ways of working. On the other hand, there are others who see this as a major step forward. So the move to local integration implies new roles for spatial planning and planners and well as the potential for more focussed delivery for places.

3. The role of spatial planning in delivering public sector infrastructure programmes

The role of spatial planning in the delivery of public sector infrastructure investment and providing a framework for other investment has been growing in prominence in a number of countries (Harris and Todes, 2001; Vigar, 2009; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2007; Morphet, 2009; Baker and Hincks, 2009; Lord, 2009; Todes, 2004; Dodson, 2009; Dollery et al, 2000). This specific role seems to be emerging from a number of key pressures which include the need to use national funding in a more efficient and effective way particularly to ensure the maximisation of investment benefit at the local level (HMT, 2007; Todes, 2004). There has also been a new emphasis on the securitization of infrastructure which the attacks of 9/11 in New York

and 7/7 in London have brought into sharper focus (Wicks, 2009; Beeson, 2009). Thirdly, the global economic crisis has brought forward the Keynesian approach to public works investment (Carbonell and Yaro, 2004; HCA, 2009). The development of infrastructure delivery plans are also products of horizontal and vertical spatial planning approaches and represent strong efforts to move away from silo models of decision making which have undermined the ability to ensure that public sector resources are used more effectively in delivery (Vigar et al, 2000; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2007).

The development of spatial planning's role in infrastructure planning and delivery has been developing at different spatial scales in the UK and Ireland, although the development in Wales and NI is not at such an advanced state as that in Scotland, Ireland and England. In Ireland, the *National Spatial Strategy (NSS)* (2002) also adopted the language of gateways and hubs as seen in *Shaping Our Future* and represents the same approach to spatial analysis by functional areas rather than administrative boundaries (Bartley, 2007). The NSS also identified key infrastructure that would be funded to support its delivery and this is an important element of its role, with its integration into the Department of Finance of the national government and with specific central finance arrangements (Cussen, 2009; Wardlaw, 2009). It is also intended that there is one stop shop for Strategic Infrastructure which can support investment and interlink that between all sectors and funding sources.

A national approach to infrastructure planning in Scotland, through the identification of major projects in NPF2 is a key component of investment planning (Purves, 2009). NPF2 has delivery of policies and programmes as one of its core objectives and is a more proactive approach than was set out in NPF 1, which was more concerned with setting out a spatial narrative (Lloyd and Peel, 2006). The 2006 Planning Act in Scotland designates projects as national infrastructure. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in England where the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) established through the 2008 Planning Act has been set up to respond to proposals put from multi-sectoral bodies and examine them. It will work within national planning policy documents, only some of which will be setting out where such national infrastructure should be located. However this may change when new regional strategies that include an implementation plan are rolled out from 2010 (CLG/BIS, 2009; Morphet, 2009). In NI the new approach to planning (DOENI, 2009) is concerned to achieve horizontal and vertical integration and is now to be focussed on both policy and delivery and 'the where of things' (Warnock, 2009).

Both NI and Ireland see the role of the ESDP as a context for their own work and the future of spatial planning following the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty could see this role increasing as part of the implementation of further policies and funding for territorial cohesion (Mirvaldt et al, 2009). The development of the planning system in the Republic of Ireland is also being focussed on delivery through 'bending the spend' (Cussen, 2009). Like the other nations, Ireland is also developing sub and city regions and expecting to see spatial planning more integrated into local governance structures. Like England, there are proposals for changes in City government including the potential role of a directly elected mayor for Dublin similar to the model in London or the other governance arrangements emerging in Manchester and Leeds as city region pilots.

4. The response of the planning profession to the introduction of new spatial planning approaches

The introduction of spatial planning has seen a split between planning and planners. Neill (2009) has called this the 'dethronement of planners' and it is clear that the integration and delivery focus of spatial planning into local governance and corporate interest, changes the role that planners have traditionally exercised in relation to space policy and regulation. This change may be inevitable. As Murray (2009b) states, before 1995 Regional Plans in NI were written by planners for planners. In Scotland, as Vigar relates, although planners talk about spatial planning they really mean land-use planning as this is what they are comfortable with (2009, 1588). Morphet et al (2007) found the same lack of transition from land-use planning to spatial planning amongst planners in England. The cultural change agenda for planners may become even more critical in the future as the degree of focus on it continues (Shaw and Lord, 2007; DCLG, 2005; Tewdwr-Jones, 2002; Morphet, 2010).

At the local level, the picture is different from this. The development planning processes have been largely left unchanged in practice. Although the legal frameworks in NI, Scotland and Wales all include the provision for infrastructure planning and delivery and horizontal integration through local cross sectoral partnerships, these have not yet been manifest themes in practice. It is at the local level where planners remain in the lead on the development plan. Morphet et al (2007) found a reluctance to acknowledge the new requirements for horizontal

integration at the local level amongst planners (PAS, 2009). In England the role of the local infrastructure delivery plan has been reinforced formally through central government and its agencies (CLG, 2009; HCA, 2009; PINS, 2009) and informally through the support provided through the Planning Advisory Service (Morphet, 2009b; www.pas.gov.uk/infrastructure).

The development of city regions and sub-regions as new state spaces for spatial planning have demonstrated similarities in focus although differences in delivery. Brenner (2003) and Lord (2009) point out that these new areas of intervention can work outside the traditional planning scales at local and regional levels and this new partnered approach, with a less formal legal framework can be slippery, provide greater flexibility and allow all these spatial scales to morph to different forms. As city regions and sub-regions are implemented over all the territory of a nation, then the level of formality will increase. They are also ways of working with new groups and not necessarily those who have been managing space as land use planners. Turok sees the shift to city regions as replacing regional policy in due course (2008; 2009) and the emerging trends for Scotland Wales and Northern Ireland together with those in Wales and England suggest a new emerging pattern which is more than accidental.

The development of spatial planning in Ireland, NI and Scotland (and Wales) has been concentrated at national, regional and sub-regional levels. They have frequently required new forms of working (Murray and Greer, 2002) and have brought together multi-agency partnerships for delivery. There is also a strong political and financial leadership engaged in their development and although they are supported by planners, they are not regarded as being led by professional planners. There has also been considerable cross-national working with the Chief Planner in Scotland advising the NSS in Ireland, academics from NI supporting Wales and from Scotland supporting Wales and NI. At the governmental level, the intergovernmental arrangements established following devolution (Hazell, 2000; Shaw, 2003; Laffin and Shaw, 2005) have all served to create a mechanism through which spatial planning policies and approaches can be considered and developed. In this case the introduction of devolution and the cross border arrangements in the island of Ireland have served to generate a new cooperative approach to the development spatial planning systems which are mutually cognisant but have been able to follow different paths to reflect national priorities (Blair et al, 2007).

The intergovernmental group also has been the focus of discussions on the development of spatial planning and the role out of territorial cohesion policies in the EU. The integrated approaches to spatial planning that have been developed in the UK and Ireland can either be seen as an early roll out of the proposals for the future of territorial cohesion (Barca, 2009; Mirvaldt et al, 2007) or as being developed to influence its content. The coherence of these professional networks has been important to the development of integrated spatial planning at all levels and is at the heart of its similarities and differences.

Cooperative convergence?

The wider framework of the European Union, particularly through funding and the ESDP has created a context where not only NI and Ireland can work together (Diez and Hayward, 2008) but also the arrangements set up post-devolution for the UK can be used as a means to operate within a newly cooperative way, in an expression of alterity. Within this cooperation, mutual advice and experimentation has been able to develop and it has allowed nations to focus on what has been important to each whilst informing the thinking of the others. This is not to say that all the interests are seen to be mutual. Work on the implications of the Lisbon Treaty and future EU initiatives for the period from 2013 are also being considered by individual nations. The Dutch, a newly Euro-sceptic nation have shown the way on this (Evers, 2009) and others are following.

The introduction of devolution in the UK has been accompanied by more formal intergovernmental governance arrangements between England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the States of Jersey (Hazell, 2000; Shaw, 2003; Laffin and Shaw, 2005). The evidence shows a range of approaches which reflect innovation and experimentation at some spatial scales and the use of similar texts but different interpretation at others. The processes pre-devolution and currently operating within NI had evolved away from a UK wide approach in practise and this has developed further distance since. At regional and sub-regional levels, the economic driver of integration and EU contexts are having significant forming influences of spatial planning at all scales and the economic role of spatial planning is most frequently mentioned as its primary objective (Scottish Government, 2009; DOENI, 2009). The economic role of spatial planning has to be fully realised in more practical forms although in England this is now emerging (CLG, 2009). The insertion of an economic priority will be tempered by sustainability appraisals and assessments but it is

unclear as yet how any tensions between these will be resolved in specific locations. At the local level, the development planning systems, which might be seen to need to reflect more local ambitions and place differentiation, have emerged as the most similar on a textual analysis but remains resolutely procedural in interpretation and practice (Fabbro and Haselberger, 2009).

In reviewing practice since 1998, it seems that the potential for divergence is being taken through the use of priorities and action at different spatial scales. On the other hand it is possible to see that convergence is also occurring. This may be due to three different but interrelated factors. The first is the overarching context of the *EU* which provides a mechanism for sub-nationalisation and difference across the territories, promoting new alliances (Behar, 2009). The provision of a common framework provides an opportunity for discussion about response and delivery in ways that do not represent pre-1998 governance relationships and Scotland and Northern Ireland have re-territorialised these, through relationships with each other, Ireland and the wider EU. The EU context has also allowed for a *pragmatic policy exchange* between nations, politicians and civil servants is one of the main reasons for cross border working (Zonneveld 2005). The wider context for experimentation and exchange provided by the new intergovernmental arrangements may allow for greater diversity in timing and response and also national performativity which relates to separation and devolution agendas.

The experimentation at differing, and self determined spatial scales has primarily occurred at all levels except the local, where development planning is located and where *determined traditionalism* is continuing. Planners operating at the intergovernmental level have developed approaches with wider governance partners but they seem to be more reluctant to tackle the same approaches at the local level, although they all have 'sleeper' provisions in the reformed systems. The role of professional élites in managing spaces is considerable (Etzioni, 2009) and the development of more integrated approaches at sub-regional or city regional scales can bring with them new governance arrangements more easily. The experience in England where the local integrated system of spatial planning has been more aggressively implemented has demonstrated that this takes a longer time period – up to five years, although lessons can be learned from this experience to translate to other jurisdictions.

Spaces of the Nation – fragmentation or fugue?

The development of spatial planning following devolution has demonstrated alterity and separation. The confidence that has been created by more equal relationships between the nations of the UK has generated greater experimentation and innovation at different spatial scales. Although the different systems within each of the nations has now a similar structure and in some cases the same linguistic representations, the implementation of these spatial planning systems differ, reflecting cultural and economic pressures. The overarching role of the EU has also meant that there is a system emerging which has embraced Ireland in these discussions. The common characteristics between Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland represent a range of these contextual factors including a focus on infrastructure, a contracted model, use of resources and access to services (Barca, 2009).

The resulting approaches to spatial planning, ten years after devolution, have demonstrated that there has been spatial differentiation but that this has not been divergent, leading to fragmentation. Rather it represents a policy fugue where similar themes and approaches to spatial planning are developed and delivered in culturally determined ways within each nation. The integrated approach of spatial planning can be described as the disruption of the 'grand narratives' in a move towards co-production and co-responsibility (Pugh, 2009) and the intergovernmental arrangements have worked to smooth this path. The extent to which this fugue maintains connection and does not establish distance may disappoint some but at the same time it should meet the concerns of those who feared the results of fragmentation. Devolution is an evolutionary process and can be transformative. It can offer a real break with the past but also presents a mature approach that allows for a less oppositional approach to the future.

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