

Book Reviews

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Andreas Faludi

Cohesion, Coherence, Cooperation: European Spatial Planning Coming of Age? London, New York: Routledge, 2010.

207 pp. \$53.95 (paperback). ISBN 978-0-415-56266-9

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“I am not that kind of animal.” This was Andreas Faludi’s answer when asked at a recent conference why he did not take a more critical stance against the objects of his inquiries. *Cohesion, Coherence, Cooperation: European Spatial Planning Coming of Age?* underpins the rightness of this self-description. Although Faludi at times addresses shortcomings of what he calls European spatial planning, the book is basically written as a plea for a European approach to spatial planning and for a certain understanding of space and planning. Besides that, it is a meticulous, well-informed analysis of more than sixty years of European attempts at considering the territorial dimension of integration.

The author intends to trace the development of European spatial planning from the early decades of the twentieth century (especially since World War II) to the present. He wants to show how European integration has raised spatial or territorial issues and how a body of related ideas, which can be called a programme, was formulated.

The book is structured into four main parts, framed by a preface and an introduction, as well as conclusions and an epilogue. The four central parts are oriented at the main phases of European integration. The first phase is “the launch era,” which began in the first half of the twentieth century and primarily includes the run-up to the Treaty of Rome of 1957—establishing the forerunners of what is now the European Union (EU). The main finding is that there were voices advocating for regional development to be considered in the treaty. However, these voices went largely unheard. The second phase, referred to by Faludi as “in the doldrums,” began in the 1960s, deepened in the 1970s and lasted until the mid-1980s. This period was characterized by stagnation and Eurosclerosis and witnessed several initiatives by the Council of Europe (an organisation independent of the EU) and the European Parliament in which the rationale for European spatial planning was articulated. However, these ideas found little resonance among the EU Member States at that time. The third phase, dubbed as “the boom era,” encompasses roughly the two decades from the mid-1980s to the late 2000s. The main achievement of this period was the European Spatial Development Concept, “the mother of all documents” as Faludi likes to call it and to which he has

already dedicated another book (*The Making of . . .*). The most recent years constitute the fourth phase of “crisis,” which for Faludi is a crisis of confidence in the EU and in European Integration as a whole.

Although the author does not explicitly specify his methods, the book is written as a historical account based on analyses of official documents and academic publications. Furthermore, it is obvious that Faludi relies on a large number of personal communications with key actors. However, other than in his earlier book *The Making of the European Spatial Development Perspective*, these contacts are not specified. Indeed, there are long passages in the book offering very detailed information without any references at all, for example, the subchapter dealing with the consultations about the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (pp. 162–67).

In the introduction and in the conclusions, the author positions his analysis in the theoretical landscape. He makes reference to Scharpf’s framework of Actor-centred Institutionalism and to Hajer’s notion of policy discourse and storylines. Furthermore, he invokes concepts of relational space that he compares to a bundle of entangled electric wires as opposed to a set of containers. Indeed, one can only grasp EU spatial planning if one follows Faludi’s conceptualizations of space and planning. In his perspective, Europe is best understood as an overlay of different soft spaces with soft borders. Consequently, strategic plans cannot be hard but have to be soft, too. This means that European spatial planning should not be conceived of as a practice of statutory planning in the sense of land use regulation, but rather as an attempt to shape people’s minds, to develop and to spread certain ideas and discourses about spatial organization.

The book’s four central parts offer brilliant accounts of the historic development of European cooperation concerning spatial issues. They are rich in detail and reflect the author’s many years of scholarly preoccupation with this topic. Faludi presents thick descriptions in which he situates European spatial planning in the context of broader processes of European integration. Although written in an accessible language, it is sometimes tiring to follow the sequences of committee meetings, expert reports, and standpoints of

governments and EU presidencies. In these cases, the text would have benefited from a closer intertwining of empirical descriptions and theoretical considerations. It would also be helpful to have some kind of chart or table listing the main events and documents in chronological order. However, the author succeeds in capturing the attention of his readers by focusing on biographies and personal relations, by tracing the emergence of main ideas and storylines, and by stressing the influences of national traditions and cultures.

Faludi strives at terminological precision and clarity. A constant theme throughout the book is how to define and to understand terms such as cohesion and coherence, space, and planning within the European context. While the author offers definitions of his own, he states that “the meaning of concepts depends on who invokes them, when and why” (p. 143). In particular, he helps the readers grasp the meaning(s) of “territorial coherence”—an expression that is usually difficult to understand for those who are not familiar with French policy discourses.

The author highlights the importance of historical events, different planning traditions, and language issues. He also raises sensitivity for what transnational planning can be at all, namely “soft planning for soft spaces.” In his view, it is about creating discourses and not about regulatory land use planning. One caveat, however, concerns Faludi’s enthusiasm for soft planning and soft spaces: What is the merit of a small number of planners agreeing on well-intentioned, though contradicting, principles such as competitiveness, equal access to infrastructure, and protection of natural resources, when hard decisions have to be made on whether to construct a transboundary motorway through an area of outstanding ecological value or on whether to spread infrastructure funds over the entire territory of a country or to concentrate them on the centers of innovation and economic growth? Hard planning for hard spaces is probably no solution to such issues either, but maybe some kind of robust coordination mechanism including legal and financial provisions.

The book offers little new insight for readers who are familiar with Faludi’s previous books and numerous articles. However, the volume represents a comprehensive synthesis of the author’s earlier writings and situates the empirical findings in a theoretical framework that reflects contemporary theorizing about space and planning. Thus, it ties together many strings of Faludi’s work on both European spatial planning and planning theory.

It is a telling depiction of how spaces are constructed socially and how they can be addressed in policy and planning. The book is particularly apt for an academic audience looking for a concise, accessible, and comprehensive account of European spatial planning and cohesion policy. Furthermore the book can be enlightening for practitioners who are engaging in any kind of transnational or transboundary cooperation effort, especially in Europe.

Reference

Faludi, Andreas, and Bas Waterhout. 2002. *The Making of the European Spatial Development Perspective: No Masterplan*. London: Routledge.

Bruce Evan Goldstein, ed.

Collaborative Resilience: Moving through Crisis to Opportunity. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011. 376 pp. \$27.00 (paperback). ISBN 0-262-51645-4

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On April 17, 2007, a lone gunman killed thirty-two people and wounded twenty-five others on the campus of Virginia Tech. This event, and subsequent responses to it, inspired Bruce Goldstein to organize a “Symposium on Enhancing Resilience to Catastrophic Events through Communicative Planning” at Virginia Tech in 2008. As one of the twenty-five researchers invited to participate, I can report that it proved to be a very stimulating and enlightening event. This book, *Collaborative Resilience*, is based primarily on the papers presented at that symposium.

Goldstein states in his introduction that the book’s essays “seek to answer if resilience can be cultivated among communities that face a wide array of challenges,” and to “explore how various collaborative processes can foster intentional communities” that respond effectively to crises instead of engaging in divisive blame-framing (p. 1). He wanted to learn how planning and natural resource scholars can help communities develop what he calls “communicative resilience,” especially with regard to “the tough cases: when crises are complex, when communities lack cohesion and capacity, and when resilience may require system transformation instead of merely recovery” (p. 5). The contributors to this volume (some well known to planning scholars, others to specialists in natural resource management) collectively “show the ways in which people in crisis collaborate” and present “stories of communities that have survived and thrived through adaptive consensus-building and transformative social change” (pp. 1–2).

Goldstein divides the book into two parts. The first, “Understanding Collaboration,” offers five integrative/theoretical chapters that discuss various ways in which collaborative processes can contribute to resilience. These chapters include Connie Ozawa’s “Planning Resilient Communities: Insights from Experiences with Risky Technologies”; Moira Zellner, Charles Hoch, and Eric Welch’s “Leaping Forward: Building Resilience by Communicating Vulnerability”; Sanda Kaufman’s “Complex