University of Groningen

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Published in:
Romanian Journal of Regional Science

Publication date:
2020

RETHINKING THE REGIONAL BOUNDS OF JUSTICE: A SCOPING REVIEW OF SPATIAL JUSTICE IN EU REGIONS

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Abstract

This paper contributes to the debate on spatial justice in a geography of regional uneven development in the EU. The purpose of this study is to provide a philosophically grounded and empirically informed review of how regional inequality relates to spatial justice. This is done inventorying spatial injustices through a systematic literature review, unravelling the kind of injustices based on a philosophical principle and categorisation of (in)justice. The paper starts with a discussion of how spatial justice has been conceptualised, looking more particularly into Nancy Fraser's egalitarian understanding of social justice. Her tripartite distinction of justice

as (re)distribution, recognition, and representation allows us to re-examine regional inequality and to sharply formulate what is understood as just or unjust. Through a spatial reinterpretation of Fraser's prism, we then re-examine 134 empirical papers carefully selected with a scoping review method. Our results reveal six manifestations of regional injustice in the EU, which not only encompass an unequally distributed regional development of economic wealth and access to services, but also signal a cultural hierarchy imprinting territorial stigmas and neglecting environmental issues, as well as a political geographical divide of deeply felt rural and regional misrepresentation.

1. Introduction

Globalisation has reached a critical conjuncture of increasing interregional inequalities (Martin et al., 2018). In the last decades, several regions bloom in prosperity while other parts of the same country are 'left behind' in the fierce economic competition of globalisation (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018; Wuthnow, 2018; McCann, 2020). Even though the European Union (EU) implemented policies to improve territorial cohesion and economic underdevelopment of areas, regional inequalities within member states steadily increased since the mid-90s (Butkus et al., 2018; Raugze and van Herwijnen, 2018; Odendahl et al., 2019). This geography of uneven development has recently been flagged as a prominent source of exclusion and political shocks, generally expressing understanding for residents in left-behind regions protesting against policies from urban elites (Cramer, 2016; Hochschild, 2017; Wuthnow, 2018; Dijkstra et al., 2019; Guilluy, 2019). Indeed territorial inequality can provoke experiences of unfairness and injustice, as reflected also in the rise of right-wing populism that thrives on addressing this discontent (Evans et al., 2019; Mamonova and Franquesa, 2019; Rodríguez-Pose, 2020). Although the residents' moral outrage is often understandable, it is, however, important to better understand what precisely constitutes (spatial) injustice. Despite the acknowledged uneven regional development and its potential to destabilise liberal democracies, little is known about what spatial justice entails, which regional inequalities are unjust and why.

This paper attempts to unravel how regional developments relate to injustice, by using a philosophical substantiated multidimensional framework of social injustice to re-examine the empirical evidence of regional inequality in EU regions. To identify and better understand the injustices that arise in uneven regional developments, we introduce the concept of spatial justice next to the concept of social justice. While social justice scholarship fails to incorporate spatiality (e.g. Rawls, 2009; Young, 2011; Fraser, 2019; Sandel, 2020), many spatial justice scholars undertheorise the moral principles of justice (e.g. Bret et al., 2010; Dikeç, 2001;

Fischer-Tahir and Naumann, 2013; Marcuse, 2009; Soja, 2010). In addition, spatial justice theorists tend to focus on urban spaces and neglect areas beyond city-borders (e.g. Fainstein, 2015; Harvey, 2009; Soja, 2010). A lack of expounding the political philosophy of spatial justice leaves us in the dark about what moral laws of justices are being violated and how. We argue that establishing these principles of justice helps to better understand, evaluate and debate justice in a spatial context.

Galvanised by Carolan's (2019) approach to justice in the countryside, this study builds on Nancy Fraser's philosophy of social justice theory and takes her egalitarian principles of equality into a spatial context. Fraser's (2009) tripartite understanding of social justice goes beyond economics, and acutely assembles the major disputes in justice theory: the distribution of wealth and resources, the apportion of respect through recognition, and the representation of political voices. Through a new spatial interpretation of Fraser's normative prism of democratic egalitarianism, we are able to establish a heuristic schema of forms of spatial injustices to revisit the empirical evidence on regional inequalities in state-of-the-art literature. This study conducts a *scoping review* (Peters et al., 2015), in which we systematically collect relevant empirical papers revolving regional inequality and categorise them according to forms of spatial injustices. The results are what we term 'manifest regional injustices'.

This paper is structured as follows. First, we revise the conceptual spatialisation of social justice and argue for a Fraserian theoretical grid to analyse the empirical literature, sharply formulating the philosophical standpoints of what is understood as just or unjust. Second, we show the methodological steps in our scoping review, to provide a detailed overview of how we systematically collected and categorised the empirical literature. Third, we present which occurrences of spatial injustice we have identified in the literature, revealing six manifestations of regional injustice in the EU. Last we conclude with a discussion of spatiality in the production of injustices in globalisation, and the implications of Fraser's principles of justice for our findings.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Revising the spatialisation of social justice

The philosophy of social justice has a long history and can even be traced back to philosophical thinkers such as Confucius, Plato and Aristoteles who discussed the notion of justice in relation to fairness, goodness, and virtue among others. It was only in the late twentieth century that the spatiality of injustice was assessed when critical geography scholars introduced concepts such as 'the right to the city' (Lefebvre, 1996), 'territorial social justice' (Harvey, 2009) and later

'spatial justice' (Pirie, 1983). Social justice scholarship was criticised by them for having a blind spot for territorial characteristics and spatial circumstances that should be weighted, and still is criticised for the same reason by scholars up till today (e.g. Dikeç, 2001; Marcuse, 2009; Soja, 2010; Bret et al., 2010; Carolan, 2019). Yet it was not until the economic crisis of 2008 that the concept of spatial justice became big within academia, as demonstrated by the literature review of Jones and colleagues (2019, pp. 107).

If one thing, critical geography taught us that socio-spatial dialectic affects a just society: social justices can differ spatially and spaces can produce social injustice (Marcuse, 2009; Soja, 2010; Fainstein, 2015; Carolan, 2019). Spatial justice theory distinguishes itself from other geographical approaches to inequality, with a different set of questions, both investigative and moral, which not only captures distinctive vulnerabilities of communities but also how space influences injustices. Moreover, it considers the rights of citizens and fair treatment concerning the spaces they live in. Spatial justice can be studied at multiple scales and in many different social contexts, from urban segregation to postcolonial geographies.

Nevertheless, spatial justice literature, we argue here, can be criticised for two reasons. First, it ignores the countryside. It is developed and applied in urban studies to highlight fundamental unjust procedures and outcomes in the city (Lefebvre, 1996; Harvey, 2009; Soja, 2010; Fainstein, 2015), leading to a rather urban-centric focus. To our knowledge, Carolan (2019) and Woods and colleagues (Jones et al., 2019; Woods, 2019) are currently the few scholars who apply justice theory in a rural context, arguing that the bounds of injustices are not only fundamentally interpersonal, such as race, sexuality, and gender, but place also matters in the production of injustices.

Second, many studies of spatial justice lack a clear formulation of ethical principles of justice. Often there is no interest in unpacking the political philosophy of the term (e.g. Bret et al., 2010; Dikeç, 2001; Fischer-Tahir and Naumann, 2013; Marcuse, 2009; Soja, 2010), which leaves us in the dark what and how moral laws of justices are being violated. This theoretical deficit can be explained by the choice for a rather inductive approach to territorial inequalities, which lets empirical evidence point out the spatial injustices. Harvey (2009, pp. 14) noted that there is an inevitable distinction between observation and values in the judgement of justice, however, in contrast to Harvey, we argue in line with the Frankfurter School to make normative criteria explicit and up for discussion. We argue that it is necessary to clarify moral standpoints and assumptions about justice upfront, rather than keeping them implicit. Once these principles are established and transparent we can evaluate and debate them in a spatial context. In correspondence with Pirie (1983, pp. 166) we acknowledge that '*different basic assumptions*

do, however, generate different principles of justice and are open to debate anyway'. We are aware that with another philosophical framework, grounded in liberalism or utilitarianism for instance, it is possible that one might find other spatial injustices.

2.2. Revising social justice from a spatial perspective

In this study, we take Nancy Fraser's philosophy of social justice theory into a spatial context to revise the current literature of regional inequality. Fraser (1995; 2009; Fraser and Honneth, 2003) considers inequality from a radical-democratic standpoint of participatory parity: everyone should be able to participate in social life as peers, and we should dismantle the institutionalised obstacles that induce imparity. In this egalitarian philosophy, Fraser strives for a community of equals: a society in which everyone has an equal position to participate. Accordingly, it is necessary to continuously (re)identify who are subjects of injustice, who are the marginalised groups, and critically assess whether all groups have the same legal rights, entitlements, opportunities, and outcomes as others.

In response to a surge of distributive justice scholarship in the 70s (e.g. Rawls, 2009), Fraser (1995) argued for incorporating the multiculturalist critique of 'recognition of difference' brought forward in the 90s by Charles Taylor and Iris Marion Young among others. According to Fraser (1995; 2004), on the one hand theorists of distributive justice ignored identity politics while theorists of recognition on the other hand ignored distribution. Integrating the two, Fraser (1995) argues, would help to better understand the social challenges at stake. Later Fraser (2005; 2009) is revising her previous account of what justice encompasses and adds a third political dimension alongside the economic and cultural dimension she presented in her earlier work. This makes the following three dimensions that capture the process of justice: *(re)distribution*, *recognition* and *representation*.

Fraser's first dimension concerns political and economic structures of (re)distribution: who gets what? An equal distribution of material resources ensures a participants' independency and voice, and can be ensured through government policies of redistribution. The second dimension considers a philosophy of recognition: equal respect ensures the equal opportunity for achieving social esteem. This concerns the position on the institutionalised hierarchies of cultural value and social status inequality, and the stigmatisation of people. To put it bluntly, disputes revolve around the question: who matters? The third dimension looks at the democratic representation in governance structures and voice in decision-making procedures. Equal political constitution accords roughly equal political voice to all social actors. If groups are structurally deprived from their fair chance to influence decisions that affect them,

this is called political misrepresentation (Fraser, 2005; 2009). Last, we note here, that Fraser does not make any hierarchy in the three dimensions and they are interwoven, one cannot see the one without the other.

Table 1. Fraser's dimensions of social justice

	Disputes	Realms	Injustices
(Re)distribution	Access to resources: Who gets what?	Economic realm	Maldistribution
Recognition	Respect from others: Who matters?	Public realm	Misrecognition
Representation	Voice in decision-making: Who is heard?	Political realm	Misrepresentation

Although Fraser (2005; 2009) claims that globalisation forces us to rethink justice, her approach aims to go beyond national borders, arguing that people no longer coincide with territorial citizenries and economies are no longer national. Following the spatial critique on social justice scholarship by Carolan (2019) and Soja (2010), we emphasise uneven geographies (e.g. Martin et al., 2018; Wuthnow, 2018), and argue here to critically engage with borders from a multiscalar perspective that comprehends how social injustice relates to spatial inequality, from local to transnational. Contrary to looking beyond borders (Fraser, 2009), this study aims to examine existing evidence of regional inequalities within states and rethinks them in the light of social justice.

3. Method

3.1. Scoping method

To not randomly select empirical evidence on regional inequality, and to give substantial support to our new conceptual spatialisation of the Fraserian framework of social justice, this study conducts a scoping review. A scoping review is considered as a type of systematic literature review focussing specifically on key themes drawn from one or more bodies of literature. The systematic review is known and acknowledged in academia, for its transparency and replicability, thoroughly explicating *a priori* limits and steps that are taken in the process of selecting the literature for review (Peters et al., 2015). Unlike systematic reviews, which typically analyses the empirical evidence for the effect of an intervention, the scoping review comprises '*a technique to 'map' relevant literature in the field of interest*' (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005, pp. 20). This study is conducting the scoping review according the PRISMA

statement (Moher et al., 2009), which describes four steps to select literature: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

3.2. Data selection

Next we describe the search strategy and the selection criteria for papers we used for analysis. Unquestionably the inclusion criteria will not capture all relevant literature, as it is impossible to get a perfect extraction from the great ocean of academic literature. To search for documents we used the software program *Publish & Parish*, searching for peer-reviewed articles *between January 2015 and May 2020*. This time frame covers articles with fresh insights in regional inequality, including compelling events in the EU such as the aftermath of the economic crisis and political shocks brought about by rising populism. See table 2 for the inclusion criteria.

Table 2. Inclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria
- Full-text articles only. This means no books, book chapters or book reviews.   - Article is written in English. There is high financial cost and time related to translating foreign languages, resources not available for this study.   - Article is published between January 2015 and May 2020. This time frame covers state-of the-art literature, including studies on recent economic and political shocks in the EU member states.   - Article is peer reviewed. This provides assurance of quality standards of work and identifies gaps specifically to this dissemination mode.   - Study demonstrates findings based on research involving socio-spatial analysis of regional spaces.   - Findings express marginalisation of people tied to regions – specifically in rural areas and peripheries.   - Research setting is beyond the urban context, preferably with a comparative view.

To find relevant literature we used search phrases within three key themes: region, inequality, and fields. These consider inequalities of regions in sociology, geography, and fields affiliated to them. This includes studies in fields such as rural sociology, regional sciences, economic geography, and political geography. With that, we draw upon keywords from theoretical concepts related to regional inequality. See table 3 for the search phrases that were used to search.

Table 3: Search phrases

Key themes	Search phrases – combined using AND
Region	region OR rural OR periphery OR 'left behind'

Inequality	exclusion OR inequality OR resentment OR marginalization OR marginalisation
	'uneven development'
	peripheralization OR peripheralisation
	'spatial justice'
	regionalism OR regionalist
Field	sociology OR geography

In total a number of 4750 documents were retrieved, which have been narrowed down through filtering type of documents and screening of journals, titles and abstracts on basis of the inclusion criteria. This led to the selection of total 138 papers for a full-text review, of which 134 are categorised. After identifying relevant papers, these have been coded according to a categorisation of six bodies of literature: uneven regional development, peripheralisation, territorial stigmatisation, environmental justice, politics of resentment, and territorial politics., First we compiled and labeled six bodies of literature, which we subsequently examined for spatial injustices. In the results section below we describe a distinctive spatial injustice from each body of literature. The types of injustices in the findings are based on six definitions in the work of Fraser, which to our opinion are underexposed terms that can actually be of much help in better understanding injustice. With a spatial and empirical specification of these social injustices, this paper endeavors to further develop Fraserian understandings of justice.

Table 4. PRISMA steps

PRISMA steps	Exclusion criteria
Identification (n = 4750) *Filtering document type*	**Excluded** (n = 1234): ▪ Books ▪ Book chapters ▪ Book reviews ▪ Citations ▪ Journal absent or unknown
Screening (n = 3516) *Screening journals and titles*	**Excluded** (n = 3220): ▪ Book chapter ▪ Book review ▪ Irrelevant field ▪ Outside of EU ▪ Not in English ▪ Not peer reviewed ▪ Duplicates
Eligibility (n = 296) *Examining abstracts*	**Excluded** (n = 158): ▪ Irrelevant topic (n = 90)

	- Outside of EU (n = 25) - No access (n = 12) - Urban focus only (n = 11) - Not peer reviewed (n = 7) - Book chapters (n = 6) - False hyperlink (n = 5) - Not in English (n = 2)
Included (n = 138) *Full-text review*	**Excluded** (n = 4): Irrelevant topic (n = 4)
Categorised (n = 134)	

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Economic marginalisation in 'Uneven regional development' (n = 46)

The purpose of uneven regional development literature is to better understand the development paths to overcome economic underdevelopment. Uneven development generally demonstrates the evolution of economic divergence, and seeks for drivers and patterns of inequality in the economic landscape (Martin and Sunley 2015b; Horner et al., 2018). Scholars typically build on the work of urban and economic geographers who stipulate a rise of prospering city-regions caused by globalisation's new spatial division of labour (e.g. Storper and Walker, 1984; Florida, 2004; Glaeser, 2011; Moretti, 2012).

Substantial quantitative and longitudinal economic data, mostly GDP on NUTS-level 2 or 3, shows that for decades subnational regions within almost all EU member states are drifting apart (e.g. Butkus et al., 2018; Iammarino et al., 2019). Since the mid 90's the economic inequality between EU member states has decreased, while regional inequality within the majority of the member states has increased (Butkus et al., 2018). The uneven regional development maps out clear within-country divisions between so-called 'underperformers' and 'overperformers' (Iammarino et al., 2019). Underperforming regions cope with high unemployment rates while overperformers profit from the transformation to high-skilled manufacturing and services with a high productive growth.

Explanations for regional unevenness are generally sought in 'resilience', the ability to bounce back from economic downturn in an era of transforming industries (Fainstein 2015; Martin and Sunley, 2015a). The responses to the economic crisis of 2007/2008 in Europe and the varied aftermath shows that regions with cities had greater economic resilience (Hansen, 2016; Omstedt, 2016; Pósfai and Nagy, 2017; Tyler et al., 2017), especially according to the type of functions hosted in them (Capello et al., 2015; Martin et al., 2016b; Eriksson and Hane-Weijman, 2017). To venture beyond a brief observation of underperformance, scholars

explicate typical negative pathways or strategies that incorporate the diversified contexts of stagnation and decline (Blažek et al., 2019; Iammarino et al., 2019; Li et al., 2019). While many old industrial areas are hit by a decline in employment and relative income, rural areas are characterised by income stagnation (Martin et al., 2018). Meanwhile the countryside is becoming the central site for the postcarbon transition, asking for a rural development towards sustainable rural communities (Marsden, 2016; Navarro et al., 2016; Cañete et al., 2018; Li et al., 2019; Lowe et al., 2019).

The literature on uneven regional development highlights the unequal spatial distribution of economic resources such as wealth, employment, and income. This corresponds to Fraser's (2005) notion of *economic marginalisation,* which she defines as being confined to poorly paid work or being denied access to labour. The so-called 'productivity puzzle' that is put forward in the literature (McCann, 2020), urges policymakers to rebalance inequalities and mitigate economic shocks. Typically, scholars suggest unfolding place-sensitive development policies that stimulate the economic resilience of regions by adjusting internal capacities to external changes. In contrast to the performance-based redistributive policies striving for innovation and utilisation of economic potential, some papers claim to reconsider the distribution system, since uneven development, in other words economic marginalisation, is inherent to the neoliberal model of competitiveness, argued for instance in studies on spatial planning in Ireland and the UK (O'Callaghan et al., 2015; Daly, 2016; Jessop, 2018).

4.2. Deprivation in 'Peripheralisation' (n = 30)

In response to the economic perspective on uneven regional development, an increasing number of scholars appeal to look beyond economic growth and to consider spatial differentiation. In the beginning of the twenty-first century several German critical geographers pled for a multiscalar and multidimensional approach to analyse the deterioration of regions, this approach is known as peripheralisation (Kühn, 2015). Leick & Lang (2018) suggest there are limits to growth and therefore we should look beyond growth-oriented paradigms in regional development. Drawing on the work of Castells (1997), Amin (2004), and Massey et al. (2003) on relational connections in globalisation, peripheralisation looks at the multilayered (dis)connections of regions producing subnational cores and peripheries, and is concerned with the accessibility of resources and services that affect the quality of life in areas (Lang, 2015).

One of the problems standing out in peripheralisation literature is population decline. Comparative and case studies in the EU highlight the negative impacts of population decline, or 'shrinkage'. For instance, Wirth et al. (2016), Kühn et al. (2017), and Pociūtė-Sereikienė

(2019) show the negative effect of population decline on the access to public services in places. Due to a shortage of people who could generate the necessary taxes and revenue, crucial services might be forced to merge, close departments, or even completely close down. Depopulation affects public services such as infrastructure, public transport, health facilities, and education. Studies on digital infrastructures expose an important paradox for peripheral areas: they are in most need of digital connectivity to compensate for remoteness but they are the least connected (Philip et al., 2017; Salemink et al., 2017; Townsend et al., 2017). Sparsely populated rural areas suffer from digital exclusion simply because of a lack of return on investment for market parties, also known as a *rural penalty* (Salemink, 2016). Research on the initiatives of community resilience in the context of the digital divide (Ashmore et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2017), as well on the social engagement and innovations to revitalise rural communities (Bock, 2016; Gieling et al., 2019; Richter, 2019; Ubels et al., 2020), show that peripheral areas rely on social networks, in the form of self-organisation and civic action, more than others, when it comes to overcoming certain spatial inequalities.

Peripheralisation literature, thus, emphasises the unequal access to crucial public services in countries. This resonates with Fraser's (2005) definition of *deprivation* signalling inadequate material standard of living. The findings in the selected papers stress a lack of multi-scalar strategies in addressing and regulating deprived regions. Especially policymakers above the local level are compelled to reach out to peripheries and design new strategies to overcome problems of peripheralisation (e.g. Humer, 2018). Therefore Bock (2016) calls for a 'nexogeneous' approach to reconnect and bind together forces across urban and rural spaces. Moreover, there is a surge for multidimensional policy strategies that go beyond economic performance of regions and include demographic development, quality of life, and subjective well-being (e.g. Dax and Fischer 2018). Peripheralisation scholarship, we conclude, calls for a redistribution that ensures the basic rights and the standards of living, to fix the deprivation in peripheries provoked by economic and population decline.

4.3. Disrespect in 'Territorial stigmatisation' (n = 15)

The literature on territorial stigmatisation uncovers the negative consequences of social constructions of spaces and place-based identities, mostly with qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups. Perceptions, prejudices, and labels that are ascribed to places matter when it comes to equality of respect between groups in society and the (re)production of socio-economic precarity (Shucksmith and Schafft, 2012; Wacquant et al., 2014; Meij et al.,

2020; Sisson, 2020). In a regional context the negative discursive power is mostly reflected in the portrayal of rurality and the countryside (de Souza, 2017).

Most studies of the selected papers are engaged with the negative downward-spiral effects of stereotyped areas through narratives around 'deplorable areas' or the countryside as being 'backwards', 'hollowed out' or 'wasteland'. Drawing on the peripheralisation approach a few scholars integrate stigmatisation of inner peripheries with economic and demographic aspects, also known as discursive peripheralisation (Meyer et al., 2016; Willett and Lang, 2018; Willett, 2019; Willett, 2020), problematising desires of out-migration and perceptions of a lack of economic viability. Marginalised rural areas are challenged to shake off the negative representations of themselves by outsiders, and change the downward-spiral effect and attract potential inhabitants, companies, and government investments, addressed for instance in studies of Poland and Greece (Gkartzios and Scott, 2015; Dymitrow, 2017). In a case study of perceptions on shrinking regions in Eastern Germany, Meyer and colleagues (2016) show that adolescents also dissociate themselves from derogative stigmas, by 'othering' the stigmatised groups in their own region and extending the geographical borders of the stigma. Research on gendered dynamics in rural context stresses the domination of rural masculinity constructions (e.g. Dirksmeier, 2015; Sircar, 2019), which are defined opposed to the perceptions of urban ideologies of heterogeneity of race, sexuality, and class (Leap, 2017). Wiest (2016) signals a high rate of out-migration among women in shrinking villages in Eastern Germany, triggered to escape a dominant and distorted perception of being left behind in a backward male life world. The rhetoric of excelling here implies moving to 'progressive' or 'successful' places.

The specified stigmas imprinted on marginalised (rural) areas not only affects inhabitants' dignity but also reinforces patterns of uneven development. Place-based stigma fends off people and business from settling. According to Fraser (1995) misrecognition can manifest in what she terms *disrespect*, referring to a situation in which people are degraded in public discourse and cultural representation. Economic success and progressive culture proved to be important values in the apportion of social status to places, and led to disrespect places down the ladder. Yet, findings also recognise and point out that the rural idyll remains a strong and attractive imaginary that can mobilise people (Wiest, 2016; Shucksmith, 2018), for instance after the economic crisis in Greece (Anthopoulou et al., 2017; Gkartzios and Remoundou, 2018) - the COVID-19 pandemic could have a similar effect. Looking at how stigmas can be challenged and changed in UK's region of Cornwall, Willett (2019; 2020) pleads for radical democratic approaches that give agency to residents in the process of placemaking their own resilient community, which will provide counter-narratives to stigmatising perceptions from

outsiders. The idea is that local citizens can better envision alternative qualities, attractive landscapes or local culture.

4.4. Non-recognition in 'Environmental justice' (n = 17)

Another form of misrecognition of communities is prompted in a fresh perspective of justice theory concerned with the regional differentiated impacts of exploitation of natural resources and of environmental hazards and risks, called 'environmental justice' or 'energy justice'. Building on the work of Fraser (e.g. 2009), Young (2011), Soja (e.g. 2010), and Jenkins et al. (2016), among others, these papers aim to integrate multiple aspects of justice in their spatial approach to environmental impacts. Apart from addressing an inequitable spatial distribution of environmental risks and benefits, and unheard voices in environmental decision-making, this approach addresses the ignoring of regional spaces (Pellow, 2017). In contrast to territorial stigmatisation, it is not so much about disrespect but about neglecting place-based issues from communities by the state.

Findings of the selected papers suggest neglecting of spatial injustices concerning energy and environment in EU regions. For instance, Bouzarovski & Simcock (2017) signal a disregard of regional differentiations in vulnerability to energy poverty. Golubchikov & O'Sullivan (2020) identify so-called 'energy peripheries' in South Wales, in which, despite the presence of natural resources and space to harness low carbon energy, households are trapped and remain locked-in to out-dated, inefficient, and carbon-heavy technologies (O'Sullivan et al., 2020). Other studies highlight a blind spot in politics for the regional damage to the environment and the social upheaval caused by the extraction of natural resources. Some regional spaces are at risk of becoming wasteland through land degradation. For instance through fracking, a technique for natural gas and oil mining from unconventional petroleum reservoirs that leads to chemical pollution of water, air and soil, seismic risks, and disruption of natural landscapes (Meng, 2018). Cotton (2017) concludes that UK fracking policies are insufficient in protecting communities from harm by a pro-industry central government that neglects the fact it is making profits at the expense of fracking-intensive regions. Also, in their study on biodiversity conservation controversies, Martin and colleagues (2016) illuminate misrecognition, exemplified in a case study of an association for small-scale peasant farmers in France's Dordogne that seeks both cultural and legal recognition in a predominantly industrial and polluting agriculture in Western Europe.

Environmental impacts on communities can be quite harmful, definitely if the state ignores regional interest. Environmental justice points out that basic rights and standards of

living can be neglected, especially when regions become wasteland through land degradation. In light of Fraser (1995) this form of misrecognition we consider as *non-recognition*: a situation where the needs or circumstances of groups are not identified or ignored. To tackle non-recognition of regional spaces the conceptual framework of spatial justice is put forward as a critical tool to inform decision-making (e.g. Sovacool et al., 2017). Martin et al. (2016) and Cotton (2017) stress to include careful attention to ways to pursue equality of status for local stakeholders and empower communities. In environmental justice scholarship, we distil, the inclusion of local communities in democratic deliberation and governance is viewed as an important step towards environmental justice.

4.5. Misrepresentation in 'Politics of resentment' (n = 9)

The politics of resentment is typically understood as the analysis of spatially differentiated grievances driving political behaviour, examining geographic patterns in the mobilisation of collective resentment, generally concerning the rise of right-wing populism. This is also called the *geography of discontent* (Hendrickson et al., 2018; Dijkstra et al., 2019; McCann, 2020). The crux for the politics of resentment is to find out how inequalities are politicised and incorporated into spatial identity constructions (e.g. Carolan, 2019; Cramer, 2016; Guilluy, 2019; Wuthnow, 2018).

Interestingly, studies of the politics of resentment demonstrate a hinge towards populist nationalism in response to territorial inequality (Bonikowski, 2017). Considerable research demonstrates that regional uneven development within countries serves as a breeding ground for populist movements in the EU (Essletzbichler et al., 2018; Gordon, 2018). Especially the 2016 UK referendum on its EU membership received close attention from economic geographers, concluding that left-behind places have taken their 'revenge' through the ballot box (Gordon, 2018; Rodríguez-Pose, 2018). The right-wing populist revolt mostly came from old-industrial Britain which is still suffering from deindustrialisation: closing down factories, shipyards, and coal mines (MacLeod and Jones, 2018). Essletzbichler et al. (2018) add to that a significant effect of rising immigrant shares and poor recovery from the 2008 economic crisis regions, on populist support in Austria and the UK. The prevalent framing of 'Left Behind Britain' then effectively captured a sense of dissatisfaction with regional uneven development, Sykes (2018) concludes from unpacking some spatial imaginaries of the UK's Brexit debate. In addition, Willett and colleagues (2019) illuminate significant perceptions pulling voters towards the Leave camp with a case study of Cornwall in the South West of the UK, such as the idea that a stronger nation-state would take away their uncertainty, insecurity and frustration

about governance decisions. Several rural studies also address that people feel their rural way of life is under pressure. For instance, in Nordic countries, populist hunting movements pressured in their cultural tradition due to regulations protecting species, defied their exclusion from public debate through radicalisation: militant acts of resistance and rhetorically uniting heterogeneous ruralities (Von Essen et al., 2015). Also in legitimising policies to revitalise rural communities Nilsson & Lundgren (2018) find that the phrase 'a living countryside' in Swedish rural politics is charged with both beliefs about civil rights for quality of life and a Swedish rural idyll.

Voicing feelings of being forgotten and excluded from decision-making processes by an urban establishment, provoked a swing to the right in deprived and rural areas. The dispute of injustice here concerns what Fraser (2009, pp. 18-21) terms *misrepresentation*: if political decision rules include people but are wrongly denied to participate as peers. To prevent groups from exclusion in politics and push them towards populist nationalism, the selected papers suggest to enhance the acknowledgement of spatial differences in development policies and to include regional voices in mainstream politics. Despite the evidence for economic and cultural victimisation, the empirical evidence for actual misrepresentation in political science is not overwhelming. The assumption, here, is that populist parties do not actually defend the interests of residents' place-based grievances that have long been disregarded and now voiced through populist rhetoric. To substantiate the claim of misrepresentation, we need different research that goes beyond voting behaviour and engages in a geography of parliamentary political representation (cf. Pitkin, 1967).

4.6. Misframing in 'Territorial politics' (n = 16)

The scholarship around territorial politics traditionally grasps marginalisation conflicts over borders, culture, and ethnicities. It points out that a sense of regional belonging is a central feature in political mobilisation. Studies examine what issues are setting the stage for regional disengagement and secessionist movements (e.g. Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Rokkan and Urwin, 1983; De Winter and Tursan, 2003). Traditional forms of regionalism, also referred to as 'nationalism' or 'ethno-regionalism', revolve around old cultural identities and linguistic minorities. Seeking the roots for electoral threats to territorial cohesion and state authority, studies looking into party rhetoric, as well as economic conditions and cultural recognition of regions. Territorial politics interprets injustice in terms of political oppression, such as 'internal colonialism' and 'subordination', and draws on Anderson's (2006) work on 'imagined

communities', Castells' (1997) understandings of 'nations without a state' (MacInnes, 2006), and Paasi's (2003) interpretation of 'regional identities'.

In many EU member states, regionalist movements shaped around a regional identity that values cultural history, language, traditions, and landscape (e.g. Warf and Ferras, 2015). Party origins are typically a struggle for self-determination and recognition, which initiated parties to represent the interests of peripheries against a dominant centre with a nation-building attitude (Fagerholm, 2016). Yet several international comparative and longitudinal studies demonstrate that regionalist parties in Europe have differentiated ideologies, from left to right on the political spectrum and from protectionist to separatist standpoints (e.g. Fagerholm, 2016; Massetti and Schakel, 2016). In search of attention from the centre regionalist parties can radicalise and mainstreaming their demands by pulling other parties along (Basile, 2015; Mueller and Mazzoleni, 2016). Some regionalist parties protect regional interests, while separatist and secessionist parties act to reframe the sovereignty of a territorial state. Regionalist parties in relatively rich regions lean towards a rightist orientation, while regionalist parties acting in relatively poor regions tend to develop a leftist orientation (Massetti and Schakel, 2015). Both sides claim economic victimisation and political marginalisation. The 'internal colonialism' rhetoric of left-wing parties, however, calls for more national solidarity in regional development, while in the 'bourgeois regionalism' discourse of right-wing parties the loss of regional resources to poorer regions is denounced (Massetti and Schakel, 2015). In the latter case political parties, for instance in Italy, voice a 'backward core' that exploits a more advanced periphery of 'hard-working people' in the north (Basile, 2015; Newth, 2019). Yet *Lega Nord* toned down the hostile rhetoric towards the 'wasteful South' and a corrupt elite of 'robber Rome' for a more nativist sound, which attracted voters beyond northern borders and won them the highest number of votes in the history of the party (Newth, 2019).

In territorial politics matters of inequality are centred around the misrepresentation of regions by regionalist parties, claiming minority communities are oppressed by a central state that leads them to economic disadvantages and cultural restraints. As a result of economic and cultural victimisation both poor and rich regions can seek for more self-determination, or even drawing new territorial state borders to create a new nation-state for their own. Separatist parties seek to redraw the boundaries of the existing territorial states. Accordingly, the political injustice at stake here is a deeper form of Fraserian misrepresentation: *misframing*. Misframing concerns the electoral boundaries of politics: the frame-setting, the constitution of both members and non-members, in a political community can exclude groups from participation. Separatist parties claim that their region is being denied the proper political autonomy and aims

for state sovereignty. Yet on basis of the selected empirical literature it is difficult to conclude whether the perceived injustice is in fact just or unjust, more research is needed substantiating that specific regional residents are excluded from political decision-making.

Table 5. A summarised overview of manifest regional injustices

Understandings of injustice	Claims of regional injustice	Typical remedies
Distribution literature		
Economic marginalisation	**Uneven development** (n=46) Underdeveloped regions can suffer from a decline in economic resources such as wealth, employment, and income.	**Resilience-based redistribution** Stimulate regional resilience and utilise economic potential of underperforming regions through implementing place-based investments.
Deprivation	**Peripheralisation** (n=30) Disconnected, sparsely populated regions can have poor access to essential public services such as health care, education, and infrastructure.	**Standard-based redistribution** Protect basic rights and standards of living through (re)connecting regions to network linkages and regain livelihood.
Recognition literature		
Disrespect	**Territorial stigmatisation** (n=15) Stigmatised regions can suffer from disrespect and stigma can (re)produce uneven development.	**Community reimagination** Involve communities in building counter-narratives to change their cultural status.
Non-recognition	**Environmental justice** (n=17) Neglected, unseen regions can be disadvantaged by a lack of protection from environmental exploitation and hazards such as land degradation and pollution.	**Community protection** Include local stakeholders in deliberation and governance to protect regional interests and environment.
Representation literature		
Misrepresentation	**Politics of resentment** (n=9) Regions can be misrepresented in their place-based economic grievances and cultural discrepancies.	**Regional representation** Voice place-based grievances of redistribution/recognition in mainstream politics.
Misframing	**Territorial politics** (n=16) Regional minorities can suffer from state or majority oppression.	**Regional self-determination** Rebalance regional autonomy.

6. Conclusion

This paper makes the case for a philosophical grounded and empirically informed perspective on how regional inequality relates to injustice. We first expounded the Fraserian principles of justice on equality, arguing that justice is obtained when groups are participating as peers in society. Accordingly, this is a matter of equality on three dimensions: (re)distribution, recognition, and representation. From this egalitarian reinterpretation of spatial justice, we re-examined 134 empirical papers that we carefully selected through a scoping review method. Reviewing the literature in relation to the three dimensions of justice we identified six manifest regional injustices that withhold people from participating as peers in social life based on their place of origin/residence. In table 5 we made an overview of the manifested regional injustices, which we briefly present below.

First, in the selected papers on unequal regional distribution, we found evidence for two forms of spatial maldistribution: economic marginalisation and deprivation. Studies in uneven regional development showcase that globalisation's new spatial divisions of labour, moving low-cost manufacturing industries to countries outside the EU, led to the underdevelopment of various old industrial and rural areas. In Fraserian terms, these regions cope with *economic marginalisation*: a decline in economic resources such as wealth, employment, and income. In addition, peripheralisation literature highlights the *deprivation* of regions: a lack of access to public services, such as (digital) infrastructure, health facilities, and public transport, due to population decline. We can speak of a spatial political economy, which institutionalised an uneven allocation of economic and public provisions to depriving and sparsely populated regions.

Second, other than unjust distribution, we found two forms of spatial misrecognition in the selected literature engaged in status inequality: disrespect and non-recognition. Empirical research of territorial stigmatisation typically supports the conclusions of Wacquant (2008) and Shucksmith (2012), claiming that stigmas ascribed to disrepute places provoke *disrespect*: an unequal level of respect and a cultural hierarchy of territorial status. Moreover, it (re)produces economic marginality. The stigmatisation of marginalised rural areas as lagging behind, in economic and/or cultural sense, perpetuates uneven development as it drives away youngsters, mostly female, and holds off citizens and entrepreneurs from settling in a 'backward male lifeworld'. Moreover, studies of environmental justice reveal to us the injustices that some regions are subjected to, specifically of the *non-recognition* of environmental impacts on regions in public debate. In many cases, land degradation as a result of extracting natural resources and industrial pollution affects local inhabitants, but their concerns remain

unacknowledged. We conclude that there is a spatial status order that generates spatial injustices of misrecognition. Rephrasing Fraser's own words about gender for a spatial context (Fraser and Hrubec, 2004, pp. 883), we claim that a spatial order institutionalises a hierarchy of cultural values that privileges traits associated with growth, progress, and innovation of places, while devaluing traits categorised as obsolete and decline and ignoring environmental issues.

Third, in the tabbed papers addressing the inequalities of political representation in a regional context, we established two forms of injustices: misrepresentation and misframing. With the analysis of geographical patterns of voting behaviour, new social movements, and political discourse, the politics of resentment reveals that people living in regions who have long been disregarded by the political establishment, are now given voice through populist rhetoric. People can be *misrepresented* when their place-based economic grievances of unequal distribution and cultural discrepancies are not voiced in decision-making processes. Territorial politics then illuminates that regional minorities can suffer from state or majority oppression. In some regional communities, people experience no membership of the nation-state, they feel excluded from participating in democratic decision-making that concerns them and they strive for more self-determination, or even separation. This is an issue of *misframing*. We note here that our selection of empirical papers is not grounded in legal or constitutional analysis to substantiate the voiced imparity of participation in politics.

We conclude this paper with an endorsement for scholars in rural sociology, regional studies and other related fields to consider regional inequality in relation to justice in future research. The tripartite understanding of Fraser provides a helpful set of pillars addressing important dimensions of justice, and proved to be very useful in a spatial context of territorial inequality. Looking at regional inequalities from an egalitarian principle, spatial planning could focus less on arming regions for an economic race between regions and more on policies that protect basic standards of living, respect people and environment, and make the quality of life better for all regions.

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