

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **European Regions in the Strategy to Emerge from the Crisis: the Territorial Dimension of the "Europe 2020"**

Rubén Camilo Lois González, Valerià Paül Carril, Editors, Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Servizo de Publicacións e Intercambio Científico, 2013, 173 p.  
ISBN 978-84-15876-11-3

**Reviewed by** MARIA-GIANINA VLĂDEANU, University of Bucharest, Romania

The book gathers a synthesis of the results of the ESPON (European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion) research project, called „Spatial Indicators for a 'Europe 2020 Strategy' Territorial Analysis" (SIESTA), developed between June 2011 and April 2013. The aim of the ESPON SIESTA project was to provide evidence referring to the territorial dimension of the EU2020S through identifying development opportunities for different types of regions, in relation to the objectives and pilot initiatives established in the Strategy (European Commission – ESPON Project, 2013).

The book includes the academic considerations of the main ideas developed within the project and it is structured in 12 thematic sections realized by the researchers involved in the SIESTA project. Most of these thematic sections are accompanied by rich spatial information, which is synthesized in different indicators represented for the EU member states through maps at different scales – from NUTS 0 to NUTS 3.

The first two chapters (Presentation: seeking the territorial dimension of the "Europe 2020 Strategy" and The "Europe 2020 Strategy" as a vision to emerge from the crisis: an overall interpretation) present the SIESTA project, its objectives and the research group. The EU2020S is a document edited by the European Commission and it represents the EU's development scheme for the period 2010-2020; the main goal of the Strategy is the

overcome of the economic crisis through sustainable growth and development. In this sense, the EU2020S aims to bring the benefits of the economic growth across the European Union in order to strengthen the territorial cohesion (European Commission, 2010).

The primary objective of the SIESTA project was to elaborate an atlas, which represents also the main scientific product of the project. The maps are represented at close spatial scales and they include some territorial indicators that reflect the present territorial situation in relation to the EU2020S' objectives.

This is also the main objective of the third part of the work (Remarks on how to map the Europe 2020 Strategy), realised by Marta Calvet, Andreu Ullied and Oriol Biosca (MCRIT SL, Barcelona). The atlas is available also in digital format on the official website: <http://mapfinder.espon.eu>.

The territorial indicators are grouped in three main categories: sustainable growth, smart growth and inclusive growth. According to these territorial indicators, there were defined three main types of maps: a) thematic maps, referring to the present territorial situation; b) maps that reflect the degree of accomplishment of the EU2020S' targets; c) maps of the large urban zones (LUZ), reflecting the present state of the cities in relation to each analysed theme.

The forth part of the book (Growth and

competitiveness in a crisis differently affecting European territories, authors: Lidia Mierzejewska - Institute of Socio-Economic Geography and Spatial Management, and Adam Mickiewicz - Poznań University) refers to competitiveness and other economic issues, taking into consideration that the EU2020S promotes growth.

The fifth chapter (Territorial dissimilarities in energy and climate change, realised by Francesco Bonsinetti, Angelo Cannizzaro, Enzo Falco, Barbara Lino and Giuseppe Modica), analysis the sustainable economic growth through promoting the „green” energy. EU2020S proposes to diminish the climatic changes and to overcome the economic crisis through methods less aggressive for the environment.

Chapter VI (Research, development and innovation across the European territories, authors: Niamh Moore-Cherry, Delphine Ancien and Ruth Comerford-Morris) analysis research and innovation in relation to smart growth. EU2020S mentions that smart growth means to develop an economy based on knowledge and innovation, which implies investments in education, research and innovation, and an efficient use of resources.

Education (mainly higher education) represents a main part of the smart growth priority promoted by the EU2020S. Higher education is directly connected with growth, research, innovation and competitiveness so that it benefits from an independently chapter that details all these aspects – The territorial dimensions of education, authors: Niamh Moore-Cherry and Delphine Ancien.

The use of the information and communication technology (the digital or computerized society) represents an essential domain of the smart growth. Access to using computers, internet in general and high speed internet in particular, represent growth indicators. All these aspects are analysed by Lila Leontidou, Alex Afouxenidis, Stelios Gialis and Anastasia Stringli in the eight section of the book – Persisting digital society territorial divides.

Chapter IX (The territorial configuration of employment and lifelong learning, realised by Ioan Ianoş, Nataşa Văidianu, Daniela Stoian, Cristina Merciu and Andrei Schvab – CICADIT, University of Bucharest) refers to the main EU2020S’ objective to create jobs, competences and the labour market reform. In order to cope with the aging of the population, the increased dynamics of the population and the global competition, the European Union of the year 2020 has to fully use its working potential. In the same time, lifelong learning and the competences’ development are indispensable to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Chapter X (Territorial dissimilarities in poverty and exclusion, authors: Petros Petsimeris, José Ignacio Vila Vázquez and María Luisa Caputo) is dedicated to poverty. The prediction is that the number of poor people is increasing due to unemployment as an effect of the economic crisis, so that the EU2020S aims to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or of social exclusion.

The last two sections (XI – The uneven territories of the EU2020S through a composite index and territorial clustering / authors: Valeriá Paül Carril and Alejandra María Feal Pérez; and XII – Territorial policy recommendation to emerge from the crisis / authors: Xosé Carlos Macía Arce and María José Pineira Mantinán) reunite the main ideas of the book. On the one hand, the authors propose a regional assessment of the European territory through a composite index and a cluster analysis. On the other hand, the authors make a synthesis of the policy recommendations obtained within the project, in order to establish the European Union’s strategy to overcome the economic crisis.

#### Reference

European Commission (2010) Europe 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, Brussels.

European Commission – ESPON Project (2013) „Spatial Indicators for a ‘Europe 2020 Strategy’ Territorial Analysis” (SIESTA), Applied Research, Final Version; [http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu\\_Projects/Menu\\_AppliedResearch/siesta.html](http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_AppliedResearch/siesta.html)

**La politique européenne de cohésion  
(The European Cohesion Policy)**

Marjorie Jouen, Paris : La documentation française, 2011, 188 p.  
ISBN 978-2-11-008330-2, (in French)

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The book represents a thorough analysis of the European Union's cohesion policy since its first plans of implementation in the mid 1980's. The evolution of the policy throughout the years is assessed not only from a historical point of view, but also by taking into account the different factors that have modelled and changed certain aspects of the policy, as well as the debates surrounding the subject. As a result, the book consists of four distinct parts, each dealing with a certain period in the cohesion policy's evolution.

The first part focuses on the premises of the cohesion policy's emergence and its implementation in the first two programming periods, 1989-1993 and 1994-1999. Besides offering technical details, like the six founding principles of the cohesion policy, its priorities or the privileged areas of intervention, the author also realizes a critical comment of the policy's scientific foundation, implying its inspiration from the Keynesian economy and 1970s-1980s development theories. Begun as a policy meant to aid regions and states lagging behind from a social or economical viewpoint, thus fostering solidarity among the member states, the cohesion policy relied on certain strategic objectives and financial mechanisms (structural funds, Community Initiative Programmes) in its implementation. Its results at the end of the century were considered to be mixed, as territorial inequalities between regions persisted although the gap between the member states was slightly reduced.

The second part of the book deals with the challenges induced to the cohesion policy by the great enlargement of the European Union at the beginning of the new century, with a

special focus on the 2000-2006 programming period. The author outlines the enlargement's impact on the cohesion policy, as all the new member states have an economic situation which qualifies them under the cohesion objective. Nevertheless, this period is also characterized by an emphasis of the debate on the cohesion policy, with critics outlining its ever-growing weight in the Union's budget, as well as the difficulties in quantifying its impact and overall added value.

The third part presents a detailed analysis of the 2007-2013 programming period: priority objectives, financial instruments, distribution of the financial resources, implementation methods. Furthermore, the author realizes a summary of the cohesion policy in France in the same period, outlining some of the important projects that were co-financed through structural funds. In the end, the impact of the financial crisis in forcing certain adaptations of the cohesion policy is outlined, as well as its limits and improvement possibilities.

The final part of the book presents a summary of different debates regarding the next programming period (2014-2020), in strong relationship with the Europe 2020 Strategy. The author highlights the contrasting opinion on the cohesion policy offered by different reports (World Bank Report and the Barca Report – 2009), as well as offering possible solutions for a better implementation of the policy in the future, through instruments such as multi-level governance or changes in the structure of the Cohesion Reports.

The book doesn't limit itself to a strict presentation of the different aspects (strategic,

implementation, financial mechanisms) of the policy – it also presents the way in which the policy and its results are viewed by different documents (reports), its relation with the European Union's strategies (Lisbon Strategy, Europe 2020 Strategy) and other policies (especially the Common Agricultural Policy) and the way it was influenced by different elements such as the enlargement of the European Union or the financial crisis in the 2009-2010 period.

The text is well organized and enables the author to outline the changes suffered by the cohesion policy from its inception until now: the abridgement of its priorities (from 6 objectives in 1989 to 3 objectives in 2007) and financial instruments (from 16 Community Initiative Programmes in 1989 to just four in 2000 and none in 2007), the continuous rise of the policy in the budget of the European Union, its shift from a policy oriented strictly towards aiding regions and states that are lagging behind to one which is also designed towards competitiveness and efficiency (as stated by the Competitiveness objective in the 2007-2013 programming period). The well-structured information on these different facets of the cohesion policy is also supported by text boxes which detail certain aspects (like the evolution of the Community Initiative Programmes) or present case studies (e.g. Ireland

as a net beneficiary of the Cohesion Policy in the 1990s). The few tables, graphs and maps in the book offer a good synthesis of the elements presented, especially in the chapter regarding the 2007-2013 programming period.

While it's not the objective of this book, the author manages to reach subjects such as the influence of the French vision of territorial planning (*l'aménagement du territoire*) on the cohesion policy (as stated also by Faludi, 2004) or the change in paradigm caused by the introduction of the term *territorial cohesion*.

All in all, the book offers a good synthesis of the evolution of the European Union's cohesion policy, presenting the different factors involved in this process and the debates surrounding the subject with great objectivity. However, the author doesn't refrain from using critical comments when necessary, especially in the later chapters where she offers good examples, based on a rather extensive literature review, on how the policy can be improved in the future.

#### Reference

Faludi, A. (2004) *Territorial Cohesion: Old (French) Wine in New Bottles*, *Urban Studies* 41(7), pp. 1349-65.