

## **Book Review**

*Towards Cohesion Policy 4.0: Structural Transformation and Inclusive Growth* by John Bachtler, Joaquim Oliveira Martins, Peter Wostner and Piotr Zuber. Regional Studies Association, RSA Europe, 2019, 76 pp.

This book provides a case for a new approach to structural transformation, growth and cohesion in the European Union (EU). In general, the contents in this book explore opportunities and challenges for EU with regards to globalisation, technological change and differences in productivity between regions, and suggests the importance for a new policy framework for inclusive growth. One of the main issues covered in this book is the threatened unity of EU, in which the continued effects of financial, economic and migration crises are linked with decreasing confidence and trust in its democratic institutions and politicians. This book is composed of seven chapters covering policy-based perspectives on the way the EU Member States deal with increasing globalisation.

The first chapter of this book introduces the issues experienced by the EU as an economic region, using Eurobarometer data to assess the trust of EU citizens. Topics such as optimism, patterns of voting behaviour and fears about globalisation are covered in this chapter, highlighting the confidence of individuals in the EU with regards to globalisation impacts. This chapter highlights critical topics of the next chapters of this book, including opportunities, challenges and potential policies for structural transformation and cohesion.

The second and third chapters of this book offer insights into the challenge of economic change and productivity, respectively. The second chapter begins with a case of the fourth industrial revolution, which includes the movement of manufacturing bases to countries such as China and India, and rising middle class among individuals in the Asian region. Such issues pose as threats to the developed world, concerning import competition and off-shoring of production. Digital transformation is also discussed in this chapter with regards to its impacts on employment opportunities. The remainder of the second chapter discusses opportunities through the refinement of policy towards embracing global transformation. The third chapter echoes the content of the second chapter by providing readers with a deliberation on structural transformation and productivity challenges. Here, this chapter categorises productivity through the labels of frontier regions, catching-up regions, keeping pace regions and diverging regions as introduced by the OECD.

The fourth and fifth chapters of this book focus on the opportunity to respond to such economic changes through policy. Concerning the regional performances mentioned in the previous chapter, the fourth chapter offers strategies to adapt and mitigate the effects of globalisation according to region. In this chapter strategies for frontier regions, intermediate regions and lagging regions are provided. Further, this chapter encourages a consistent and mutually enforcing policy framework for different levels to function as a system. The fifth chapter provides a continuation of the fourth chapter by reviewing past EU policies and further offer several suggestions for improvement. This chapter reviews the Lisbon Strategy (which was launched in the year 2000, aiming to for EU to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world), and deliberates the shortcomings of the policy. Then, its successor policy, Europe 2020, is also discussed, and subsequently continued with principles for a new EU strategy, which focuses on refining priorities, increasing efficiency in governance and promoting structural reforms and investment. In this chapter, EU spending from 2014 to 2020 is scrutinised, to which the authors encourage the need for EU spending to take account of the territorial dimensions, specifically towards closing the gap between frontier, intermediate and frontier regions.

The sixth and seventh (final) chapters of this book provide suggestions to ensure territorial and socially inclusive growth and conclusions, respectively. The sixth chapter mainly suggests that the EU needs powerful instruments to ensure that growth is territorially and socially inclusive. This chapter begins with a discussion of the Cohesion Policy (which aims to support an ‘overall harmonious development’ of its Member States and region). The authors discuss the development of the policy towards reducing regional disparities across the years. Then, this chapter outlines the major external factors influencing the use of Cohesion Policy and provide several suggestions for further improvement of the policy. A key aspect that should be understood here is a comprehensive governance system with clear territorial dimensions, in addition to clear policy programming and implementation systems is crucial in overcoming the negative effects in globalisation and integration. In relation to the discussion offered in the previous chapters, the final chapter offers readers with conclusions and recommendations. This chapter suggests for a balance between policies for ‘competitiveness’ and ‘cohesion’, as the challenge for EU is to accelerate growth but also to resume convergence. Points of recommendations, using a policy-based view, are offered in this chapter.

The importance of this book lies in the policy-based perspectives given by the authors, specifically for the EU. This is complemented with data-heavy evidence in illustrating each issue covered by this book. Micro-sensitive evidence such as illustration on the way globalisation impacts individuals in the EU could augment this book further. Nevertheless,

researchers and practitioners who are interested in gaining policy-based views in economic regions, especially the EU, could refer to this book and thus build on it.

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