



## **BOOK REVIEW**

# **TERRITORIAL COHESION: A MISSING LINK BETWEEN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WELFARE. LESSONS FROM THE BALTIC TIGER**

**Edited by: J. Bradley and J. Zaucha**

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The book edited by John Bradley and Jacek Zaucha is indeed a missing link. Not only does it show how territorial cohesion bridges between economic growth and welfare, more importantly it is the missing link in academic literature linking the conceptual work of territorial cohesion to reality.

The book stands in line with Jaques Robert's book on the European territory (Robert 2014) and illustrates concretely what territorial cohesion means. While most publications on territorial cohesion stay at the conceptual level (see Camagni 2006; Davoudi 2009; Faludi 2010), this present book goes beyond that. The book skilfully draws together the various discussions about what territorial could mean and takes the debate than one step further. Following the conceptual parts, the book illustrates how various facets of territorial cohesion can be measured. It translates it into concrete and measurable aspects which can be applied to the Polish context. In that sense already the first section of the book "Territorial concepts and frameworks" provides a considerable added value to the on-going debate about territorial cohesion.

Considering Polish development policy as a laboratory of new concepts and ideas, the book makes a contribution to the European debate on territorial cohesion – which many practitioners and researchers in the field of applied sciences have been longing for. Building on the work conducted for the Polish EU Council Presidency, the Polish example helps to get a clearer understanding of the meaning of territorial cohesion and its possible measurements. The second section of the book "Territorial empirical analysis" introduces the reader to the territorial diversity of Poland and what that means in terms of territorial cohesion. This is mainly done by focusing on territorial capital and modelling territorial cohesion as inter-related processes. The chapters of this second section do not only introduce the reader to territorial cohesion issues in Poland, they also discuss different

methodological approaches of how to measure certain aspects of territorial cohesion. The methodological developments and discussion of their merits and limits are an additional added value.

The use of the concrete Polish examples makes the book valuable and distinguishes it clearly from other books on the topic. In doing so, the second section of the book actually accomplishes two things in one go. Firstly, it makes the idea of territorial cohesion become more concrete and real than what most previous publications in the field managed to achieve. Second, it showcases Polish territorial developments and policies, which have not received the attention they deserve in recent international academic debates. It presents interesting empirical analysis on the trade-offs between territorial utilities and growth, and on the independencies between growth and territorial capital. The proposal of the territorial utility function can be seen as pioneering work in the field.

The following key topics are researched and addressed in the book:

- territorial cohesion: origin, content and operationalization;
- cohesion as a territorial optimum;
- Polish development policy and its territorial dimension;
- various dimensions of territorial cohesion in Polish regional development policy;
- territorial capital in Poland and its input to the growth of Polish regions (empirical analysis);
- modelling territorial cohesion as an inter-related process.

The book is timely, both as input to the debate on the future of EU cohesion policy as well as on the boarder debate on the future of the EU itself. The book responds to the need of examining the pros and cons of territorial dimension of the EU regional policy. Furthermore, the book is devoted to the EU with a hope that the Union will survive the stormy time and will continue offering peace, solidarity, and prosperity. Given the current policy developments, it is a good thing that such a particular contribution has been made by Polish scholars.

The book makes a valuable contribution both to the academic and policy debates and makes important Polish researchers in the field of regional development more known internationally. Indeed, Jacek Szlachta and Jacek Zaucha as well as many of the other authors, deserve to be familiar names for scholars all around Europe and not only in Poland. Hopefully this book can contribute to making their work better known internationally – it would be well deserved.

As for the target group, the book is not only of interest for academia but might also attract the attention of policy-makers struggling with territorial cohesion in practice. At the same time, the strong focus on the Polish example allows also to use the book as textbook on territorial capital and regional development in Poland. Indeed, the book shows that there is a lot to learn about Poland, which is one of the largest EU member states, but in large parts of Europe only little is known about the territorial structures and diversities of the country.

Thus, the book has actually a twofold focus and can attract two different target groups: (a) academics and professionals that want to deepen their understanding of territorial cohesion, and (b) scholars that want to learn more about the territorial dimension of Poland.

Summing up, “Territorial Cohesion: A missing link between economic growth and welfare. Lessons from the Baltic Tiger” – the book developed under the Polish National Science Centre grant “Concept of the territorial cohesion in cohesion policy. Implications for Economic Growth” is well recommendable for reading. It has the potential to actually leave its imprint on the policy debate and contribute to educating future research(ers).

## References

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