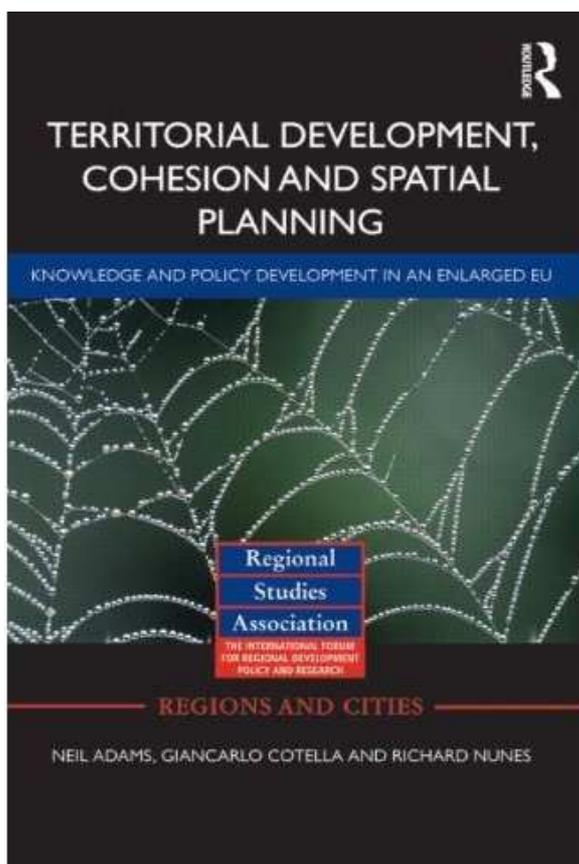


NEIL ADAMS, GIANCARLO COTELLA and RICHARD NUNES - TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT, COHESION AND SPATIAL PLANNING: KNOWLEDGE AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN AN ENLARGED EU, 1st edition, Routledge, Abingdon, 2010, 488 p. ISBN 978-0-415-55194-6



This book is the result of joint efforts of a team of European specialists with rich academic backgrounds and diverse areas of expertise related to spatial planning. Their accomplishments and involvement in major research projects testify their credentials and authority on the subject. Due to the fact that such a topic has a multidisciplinary nature, in this study the experts cover a wide spectrum of issues including regional development, territorial cohesion, EU enlargement and governance, territorial knowledge channels, territorial knowledge communities.

EU's enlargements in 2004 and 2007 triggered serious changes in the regional policy. The book focuses on the consequences of this process and it highlights the experiences through which the new Member States went through in their attempt to

adjust to the European policy framework. As more countries joined the European Union, the patterns of economic development had been reshaped because many discrepancies need to be tackled. The challenges remain high because of the practices related to territorial governance are heterogeneous.

According to the editors of the book, the purpose of this study is twofold. On the one hand, they aim to emphasize and explore the interplay between knowledge and policy development in relation to spatial planning and territorial development. On the other hand, the book tries to explain the dynamics of a multi-jurisdictional policy environment. Both purposes tend to be achieved. This book is a valuable contribution to the field of regional economic development in several ways.

Firstly, it is a soft blend of interconnected concepts, literature and real facts. The inputs come from different editors therefore there is a wide array of approaches to spatial planning. The findings of previous researches are carefully selected, summarized and included in the book in order to support the ideas.

Secondly, it reveals and discusses issues for the Central and Eastern countries, which is not very common the literature. Most working papers, articles and books concentrate on the experiences of the old EU Member States, known as the "core countries". The book does not follow the same trend of computing case studies solely on the Western countries and it compares the two categories whenever relevant conclusions can be drawn. For example, at some point Pallagst analyzes the impact of the epistemic communities for the spatial development agenda, considering CEE countries as well as the Western member states.

Thirdly, the book offers comprehensive guidelines on policy formation and provides in-depth insight on how the multi-level governance works. Most cases are described starting with the local level and further, things are analyzed at a national level. Regional perspectives are also added and finally everything is aggregated to the European level.

The writing relates to current EU debates that are sprinkled with territorial cohesion reports and spatial development initiatives. Even though the first discussions on territorial cohesion emerged back in the 1990s, the *Lisbon Treaty* stated it as an objective of EU ("EU shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member states"¹) and the leaders had been

¹ Treaty of Lisbon, 13 December 2007.

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committed to developing policies that would sustain it.

The European Union seeks for balanced development and it is a high interest in this area. Over the years, numerous INTERREG projects had been funded and important public debates were launched. *The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion*² (2008) had a major impact as it stressed that a better coordination of public policies is necessary in order to enhance synergies and it is crucial to have a solid knowledge base on territorial development across the EU. This important document argued that territorial diversity of EU is a vital asset because it can provide the base for a sustainable development of the whole Union. The Commission and the Council of Ministers of Spatial Planning collaborated intensively with national governments in their attempt to implement territorial policies across the old and new Member States. The ESPON 2013 Programme also known as the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion currently supports policy development related to EU Cohesion Policy.

The book reveals multiple facets of spatial planning and it outlines the importance of knowledge in the policy development process. The writing is divided into four large sections. The first one deals with the challenges of spatial planning in an enlarged EU and it is followed by the second part, which finds the motivating factors behind the institutionalization of territorial governance and spatial planning approaches. The next section analyzes the process of policy formation around increasing disparities in the new regions of EU, where basically are discussed the undergoing changes of the Regional Policy. The last part provides a forward-looking reflection on the Eastern border with Russia as this country is considered important to EU for geopolitical relations.

A hypothesis of this writing upholds that the course of spatial planning policy depends on how knowledge translates into the organizational and institutional forces in charge of this issue. Along the 17 chapters, a complex bundle of topics are covered including EU's competitiveness and growth agenda, the evolution of cross-border communities in terms of dynamics of territorial cooperation and the importance of setting up a "planning community" within EU. One captivating chapter analyzes the role of territorial knowledge channels in the process of policy elaboration and explains the

"situated learning" context. Another thought-provoking one refers to the emergence of epistemic communities in the post-enlargement landscape. Most of the research is conducted for the case of Slovenia, Slovakia, Poland and Latvia.

The merit of the editors is that their work provides a critical and yet reflective approach on the evolution, the challenges and future opportunities of the territorial development agenda of EU. The strength of the book comes from the fact that it doesn't focus exclusively on the past, but it points out the trends in terms of European territorial development policy. Moreover, it introduces concepts that are quite new in the literature such as regional promotion, knowledge arenas and territorial capital while it reinforces the understanding of established concepts like polycentric urban development, European macro-regions or meta-governance. However, a weakness of the study comes from failure to elaborate on the reasons for which EU's spatial planning policy is still very weak compared to other policy areas. Although it is a hot topic for the leaders as it implies the forthcoming development of EU, somehow other priorities seem to be ardent. Moreover, despite the fact that is not directly linked to this topic, the authors do not emphasize in their study the role that political integration has for further advancements in the territorial development policies.

The added value of this writing emerges from a compelling research and a unique fusion of the main concepts. The text is engaging but unless the reader has in-depth knowledge, apprehension and expertise related to this topic, it would not be easy to keep up with it. The editors share a lot of information and present a broad vision of territorial planning and the outcome is a fine blend of theoretical assumptions, interesting research results from the literature and awakening notions.

Specific findings of researches conducted by the contributors are revealed throughout the chapters but there is not much information on the methodologies used. Although there is plenty of valuable scientific support, the reader cannot verify the facts on his own. However, the soundness of the facts should not be questioned as the editors have excellent credentials and competencies in this domain. The arguments are straightforward and the overall structure is balanced.

The book certainly pleads for the stability of spatial planning policy within EU and it reveals one important aspect. Pursuing territorial cohesion at the EU level seems to be more wanted by the old EU Member States rather by the new ones. The

² Green paper on Territorial Cohesion, COM (2008) 616, October 2008, p. 3

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diversity of the European territory underlines the necessity to address spatial planning in localized and particular ways. Unleashing EU's territorial potential can be achieved through cross-border, transnational and inter-regional cooperation and all Member States have to be involved in this process.

While this book is reality-grounded, the fact that most concepts are still very new and are not fully explained by the literature overcasts the chances of instantly becoming a roadmap for the EU policymakers. However, this writing can be helpful to both Western and Central European authorities as they can become aware of the complexity of issues that need to be addressed in order for the new Member States to fit into EU's institutional and policy framework.

Compared to other books in the field with a similar topic, this book has a broader scope and quite a different approach. Studies in the same field such as *Cross-border governance and sustainable spatial development* by Markus Leibnath, Ewa Korcelli and Robert Krippschild, published in 2008 by Springer or *Cohesion, coherence, cooperation: European Spatial Planning coming of age?* by Andreas Faludi, published in 2010 by Routledge

focus more on examining the policies developed by EU in order to achieve increased economic and social cohesion, therefore, this writing brings extra novelty to the domain. Closer to the content of this book are the previous works of the three editors on regional development (for instance, *Regional development and spatial planning in an enlarged European Union* by Neil Adams, Ashgate Publishing, 2006). Despite of having distinctive purposes, all of the mentioned writings and the reviewed book emphasize the fact that spatial planning can become a runabout not only for territorial cohesion but also for the general EU policy.

EU and national policymakers across the continent, as well as researchers in this discipline can benefit from reading this book. This study can serve the interests of practitioners in fields such as EU's territorial governance, urban and regional development, spatial planning and innovation. The completion of the book added yet another piece to the territorial policy puzzle and it provides the opportunity to compare the western and eastern experience but it also points new research directions for the international scientific community.

Reviewed by **RALUCA OPRESCU**³

³ PhD candidate, the Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania.
E-mail: raluk.or.raluca@gmail.com