

BOOK REVIEWS

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**Eduardo Medeiros (ed.) (2021): Territorial Impact Assessment.
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In 2019, the United Kingdom's Regulatory Policy Committee – an independent body sponsored by the Government – published its opinion on the Department for Exiting the European Union's impact assessment on the piece of legislation that would provide the domestic legal basis for the UK's withdrawal from the EU. Among the many issues the Committee raised, including the fact that the Department for Exiting the European Union's impact assessment was unable to quantify the impacts on trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland due to a lack of data, it noted how the Government did not intend to monitor or evaluate the ongoing impacts of the legislation that would enact the Withdrawal Agreement between the UK and EU. The Committee's opinion, therefore, 'recommends that the Department set out a monitoring and evaluation plan that would address those gaps and track impacts that are currently too uncertain to assess', and in light of the Withdrawal Agreement's inclusion of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland it stresses how this 'is particularly the case for the new Protocol, where appropriate monitoring and evaluation (for example more detailed monitoring of trade flows) could support appropriate decision-making on the future of the Protocol and of the UK's future trade arrangements' (Regulatory Policy Committee 2019, p.14). What the Committee's opinion highlights, given the enormity of what the UK's departure from the EU would mean, is not only the crucial need for proper impact assessments of public policy and legislation, but also for impact assessments that can reveal the territorial implications of policy and legislation: *Territorial Impact Assessment* (TIA).

In this regard, Eduardo Medeiros' edited volume represents a major contribution to the field of impact assessment, addressing the significant absence of a dedicated manual to the specific and crucial area of *territorial* impact assessment, made available through an international publisher. This collection of scientifically sound essays forms a rich and vibrant compendium that is ideally placed to equip policy and decision-makers, as well as relevant experts, academics and practitioners with an invaluable resource. It is structured to offer the reader a critical understanding of the (comparatively young) history of the development of territorial impact assessment (TIA), with the first part setting out the foundational role of European Spatial Planning Observatory Network (ESPON) methodologies, while also presenting Medeiros' own methodology – TARGET_TIA – before outlining TIA methodologies for cross-border contexts in the second part, and concluding in the third part with methodologies seen as alternatives to some of the more mainstream approaches considered at the beginning of the volume.

There are a number of characteristics that run through the entire collection and give it a vitality that keeps the reader engaged, even as it moves from one potential TIA methodology or field of application to another. One of those is the fact that the various methodologies are presented not as merely theoretical constructs that work perfectly on the page of the scientist's notebook, but as systems that have been tested in relation to a range of policies, policy contexts *and territorial realities*. The reader is aware of this because each chapter in the book provides evidence of that testing and how it serves to further develop particular methodologies and the wider field of knowledge of Territorial Impact Assessment, with the authors acknowledging their methodology's potential shortcomings as well as their added value. From the very outset, this volume also reveals itself not to be an uncritical exposition of impact assessment in general or TIA in particular, with Medeiros noting in his introduction to the collection, for example, how the

Quick_Check TIA methodology had been excluded from the volume for not being viable, sound and relevant. In this sense, this is indicative of a concern that is present throughout the book, which is to highlight the need for TIA to supersede or be offered equivalent standing to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), while also underlining the responsibility to protect the integrity of TIA methodologies by not promoting the use of ‘quick, dirty and shallow TIA methodologies’. A further creative tension that runs through the volume is that between the meta and the micro, the search for methodologies that can be applied across a vast landscape (i.e. the European Union) alongside calls for methodologies to be designed attuned to the differences of the local, or the “bottom-up” versus the “top-down” perspectives. These are not necessarily contradictory positions, but rather reflections of the vibrancy that arises from the exposition of multiple experiences in the development and application of TIA methodologies alongside one another in the same rich volume.

The first part, therefore, sets out what are described as “mainstream methodologies”. It begins with Medeiros’ exposition of his TARGET_TIA methodology, which he developed as a consequence of the deficiencies he found when applying the ESPON TIA methodologies already in existence to the measurement of the impacts of EU Cohesion Policy in Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Norway. To illustrate how TARGET_TIA can be used as an effective tool to measure territorially sensitive impacts in different territories (and in a way that is a common feature in all the chapters that follow), the author uses the example of the evaluation of the main ex post territorial impacts of EU Cohesion Policy in Portugal and Spain from 1989 to 2013, taking the reader through the main steps and stages of its application. Medeiros notes how it is a methodology that has been used to assess territorial impacts at different territorial scales – national, regional and cross-border – and that it has been designed for use in all evaluation phases: ex ante, mid-term and ex post. There is a clear need for a TIA methodology able to cope with the complexities of the cross-border dimension, for example, but one that does not itself become overly complex and time-consuming, which the TARGET_TIA does not appear to be given its implementation via a spreadsheet whose domains can be tailored to different territories and subjects of evaluation.

The following two chapters present two of the ESPON methodologies referenced by Medeiros in the development of his TARGET_TIA methodology. Roberto Camagni sets out the TEQUILA methodology, while in her chapter Maria Prezioso offers the reader the Sustainable Territorial Economic/Environmental Management Approach (STeMA). In a particularly illustrative way, Camagni’s chapter highlights how Medeiros’ volume helps the reader to understand the historical context for TIA methodologies, as he recalls his first-hand experience as Italy’s representative on the Committee on Spatial Development, which was fundamental to the production of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP). Camagni notes efforts at the EU level to find a common approach to TIA in order to provide a more robust assessment of the impacts of EU policies and funding programmes across the EU landscape, of which the TEQUILA methodology would be one of the results. However, in presenting the methodology and its capacity to include the ‘cultural and identitarian’ dimensions of any geographical space, Camagni rightly highlights the need for territorial impact assessment that brings to life the specificities of different regions across the EU, rather than a form of assessment that flattens the diversity of experiences of any given policy which, for the author, should ultimately be an assessment of how successful a particular policy or programme is in contributing to the goal of territorial cohesion. He also offers a powerful conclusion that warns against what he sees as the omission of territorial or spatial concerns from core EU policy debates, which implies a detachment from the everyday concerns of citizens and their lived realities.

In her chapter, Prezioso sets out in a comprehensive fashion her STeMA methodology, which is designed to take into account the diverse nature of spaces, but despite the complexity of its design, is based on ten hypotheses that can be easily communicated to students and users. Again, illustrative of what occurs throughout this edited volume, the author notes how the methodology is now in its third version, having been refined as it has been adopted at the highest levels of regional and national policy-making, and as it has been applied to the assessment of policies with

the widest reach, such as the Europe 2020 Strategy and the use of its associated ESIF budget. Having taken the reader through the practical applications of her STeMA methodology, thereby underlining how the methodologies presented in this book are not merely theoretical constructs, Prezioso ends her chapter by correctly pointing out that the ultimate responsibility for decision-making does not lie with this methodology; indeed, however complex or sophisticated the TIA methodology employed may be, decision-makers can always ignore the results, and in any case, the decision is always theirs. Likewise, and as Marot, Golobič and Fischer highlight in the concluding chapter to the volume's first part, the omission of relevant stakeholders from the development and application of TIA methodologies will inevitably result in "top-down", highly quantitative, but ultimately incomplete and unsatisfactory assessments. To address this shortcoming, the authors present the results of the ESPON and Territorial Impact Assessments (EATIA) project, which looked to furnish regional and local stakeholders with a qualitative bottom-up approach to TIA that is simple to perform and understand. Among the very positive and striking elements of the approach outlined in this chapter is its participatory and collaborative nature, which was evident in its elucidation by the authors, and it is significant how, among the case-studies presented, Slovene participants remarked on the TIA providing them with a neutral space to consider policy and governance issues. However, the authors also conclude their chapter with some sobering and frank observations suggesting, for example, possible resistance at national and regional government levels to adopting a collaborative TIA methodology.

Territorial impact assessment for cross-border cooperation programmes is the theme of the second part of Medeiros' edited volume. It begins with a reflection by Unfried, Kortese and Bollen-Vandenboorn on the experiences of assessing the impacts of EU and national legislation in the German, Dutch and Belgian cross-border regions, as part of the pioneering work of ITEM (the Institute for Transnational and Euregional cross-border cooperation and Mobility), based at Maastricht University. Conscious of how those who live and work in cross-border territories can be impacted by the introduction of European and national legislation, policies and programmes, the ITEM team has been developing a bottom-up approach to cross-border impact assessment that is built on collaboration with stakeholders in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, including practitioners in border regions, cross-border entities and experts from a range of organisations dealing with cross-border aspects of taxation, social security and health insurance, among other issues. The authors rightly highlight that one of the fundamental factors giving rise to the need for cross-border impact assessment is that while there may be an impetus at the EU level to achieve cohesion, barriers are created as individual Member States transpose EU directives into national legislation in ways that give rise to divergences between neighbouring jurisdictions. Crucially, and what is essential to capturing cross-border realities, the authors also stress that a cross-border impact assessment cannot be implemented in the border region of one state, but must cover the cross-border territory, even if the legislation or policy under consideration has been developed with a focus on a single jurisdiction. Moreover, Unfried, Kortese and Bollen-Vandenboorn note the importance of assessing the impacts of legislation, policies and programmes on the development of cross-border cooperation and cross-border governance structures, and raise the question as to the feasibility of a comparative approach to assessing the quality of cross-border cooperation and the impacts of policies on that cooperation. Their suggestion that efforts to reach a common understanding of a methodology that would allow partners from different cross-border territories to adapt it to their particular circumstances is underpinned by a fundamental belief: that the expertise on cross-border impact assessment can be found in the cross-border regions themselves, and it is from there that any common understanding should be forthcoming.

Gyula Ocskay's chapter – the second in this part of Medeiros's volume – reinforces the value of a bottom-up approach to cross-border territorial impact assessment, and to how such an assessment needs to focus on potential impacts in the quality of cross-border cooperation itself. Reflecting on the accumulated experience of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI) in cross-border cooperation and impact assessment, Ocskay acknowledges the bottom-up approach of the methodology developed by ITEM in the sense that it looks at the impact

of legislation from the perspective of a specific cross-border territory, while the CESCO methodology assesses the impact of cross-border interventions themselves. The CESCO methodology is bold in its single focus on cooperation, effectively ignoring evidence of impacts in the economic performance, environmental and social conditions of border areas. Like others in this volume, the author is refreshingly frank in his highlighting of the general failings of cross-border cooperation programmes, whose impacts in terms of cross-border cohesion are generally not sustainable beyond the respective periods of funding, while also arguing that EU Cohesion Policy itself sustains borders and creates artificial barriers to cooperation. In this regard, and with what could be suggested to be some justification, Ocskay is of the opinion that the indicators set for EU Cross-Border Cooperation programmes do not necessarily encourage genuine cross-border cohesion and cooperation. Ocskay's chapter captures and presents the reader with the rich complexity of the cross-border dimension, employing to good effect the concept of "soft spaces" to deterritorialise approaches to cross-border cooperation, and to highlight the value of looking at borders as the impermanent results of the spatial behaviour of border citizens, thereby stressing the need for a bottom-up approach to cross-border impact assessment.

In the concluding chapter to this second part of the volume, like the authors of the previous chapters Ferreira and Verschelde underline the need for legislation be assessed for its cross-border impacts so that it is not "border blind". The authors of this chapter reflect on the efforts at an EU level to develop TIA methodologies that can be effectively deployed in the cross-border dimension, and that can offer EU policy-makers reliable assessments of the effectiveness of EU policies and programmes, and in particular those related to territorial cohesion and cross-border cooperation. Here the reader can sense the creative tensions between the search for a methodology that can be applied to allow for comparability across the European space, and those (such as CESCO's set out by Ocskay in the previous chapter) which highlight the uniqueness of particular cross-border territories. That creative tension becomes more evident as Ferreira and Verschelde appear to dismiss ITEM's methodology because it is deemed not to have been developed to be applicable to *any* cross-border region. They conclude their contribution by making a clear and legitimate call for all administrations with legislative powers to embed cross-border TIA into their processes, while also highlighting the value of this edited volume in presenting a number of potential methodologies.

The final part of Eduardo Medeiros's volume, which is dedicated to alternative models and complementary approaches to TIA, brings into sharp focus the living nature of the development of territorial impact assessment and the contexts to which they are being applied. In their chapter, Böhme, Lüer and Holstein offer the reader a fascinating insight into the territorial foresight approach to impact assessment, which combines elements of territorial impact assessment and foresight approaches. Recalling in some ways elements of the methodologies presented by the ITEM team and Gyula Ocskay in the previous part, the territorial foresight approach relies to a significant extent on participative elements, recognising how different places and their citizens envision different futures faced with the same policy or challenge. As in so many other instances in this volume, and what gives it so much added value, the authors set out how the methodology they are describing has been developed and tested in a variety of contexts, of which the authors then give concrete examples. Contrasting to some extent to Böhme, Lüer and Holstein, the chapter by Lavallo et al. sets out the LUISA methodology, which is for comprehensive, EU-wide use and primarily in relation to the assessment of the impact of EU policies. That contrast becomes apparent as the methodology relies on EU policies to provide its baseline scenarios, but what also comes to the fore in this chapter is how its authors (like others in this volume) are taking part in exciting living laboratories for the development of TIA methodologies, and are present in vital meeting places for policy-makers and those involved in the evolution of impact assessment methodologies, as exemplified by the Knowledge Centre for Territorial Policies (KCTP). In their chapter, Dvouletý, Blažková, and Potluka set out how a territorial impact assessment that made use of a large dataset underlines the need for the local to be at the forefront of the design of policy interventions and their accompanying funding programmes. They pinpoint the need for the local

to shape interventions in order to maximise the potential of a policy's success, while also offering an honest synthesis of the political tensions that may underlie evaluations of EU cohesion policy, where any resolution will have significant impacts for regions across the EU: whether EU cohesion policy should focus on lagging regions, or on supporting more competitive regions. The final chapter in this volume sees Neto and Santos proposing new guidelines for TIA applied to regional smart specialisation strategies (RIS3) that will ensure a more integrated and multidimensional approach. Their contribution alerts readers to the complexities in the factors that need to be taken into account when undertaking a TIA of RIS3, particularly in light of the fact that RIS3 is not accompanied by its own funding instrument. This means that any TIA of RIS3 must rely on data coming from projects funded by a range of different thematic and regional operational programmes.

Each part, and each chapter in this volume edited by Eduardo Medeiros, makes an invaluable contribution to the vital effort to understand how legislation, policies and funding programmes are shaping the landscape in which we live. It represents a vital resource – a manual – for all those concerned with the search for methodologies that can help us to measure impacts in a manner that is sensitive to territorial variations, including those with a cross-border dimension. Medeiros has not only been successful in achieving the overarching objective of presenting readers with an accessible presentation of the most relevant TIA methodologies currently available, but he has also done so in a manner that offering us a clear sense of how these methodologies are the product of evolving interaction with the realities they seek to assess, and of the tensions that exist between the search for overarching methodologies and those that are the product of local specificities. It is a remarkable contribution to the field of Territorial Impact Assessment.

Reference

Regulatory Policy Committee (2019): RPC Opinion: European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill. www.uk.gov/rpc