

responses to the survey questions are shaped by the institutions of the welfare state or by something else (Danish political culture, interactions with native-born Danes, or any of the complicating factors mentioned above) therefore remains very much an open question. Additionally puzzling is that the main theoretical account the authors invoke to explain how institutions shape attitudes heavily relies on the mechanism of positive feedback effects, but that there is very limited evidence in the findings that points at the importance of time (for example, in most multivariate analyses length of residence does not seem to have any effect on welfare attitudes).

This is related to a fourth and final point: while it is tempting to take the conclusions of this study and reflect on their implications for broader questions regarding the assimilative power of institutions or the integration of immigrants in welfare state systems, future cross-national research should test the external validity of this book's findings. This research has taken place in a context which combines a universal and encompassing welfare system with a comparatively assimilationist approach to immigrant integration. Moreover, it relies on survey data that oversample long-settled immigrants (p. 33) with good enough proficiency in the Danish language to answer the questions (p. 35). One might speculate that the evidence of assimilation into the welfare attitudes of the majority would not be as robust in countries with leaner welfare systems and more liberal integration strategies, or in surveys that target the least integrated among the newcomer population.

Again, the intention of these critical considerations is mostly to suggest ways for future researchers to pick up where Breidahl, Hedegaard, Kongsjø, and Larsen left off. Their book is an innovative and thought-provoking contribution that should be on the shelves of anyone interested in the connection between immigration and welfare.

EDWARD ANTHONY KONING
University of Guelph
ekoning@uoguelph.ca

Lisa Dellmuth (2021), *Is Europe Good For You? EU Spending and Well-Being*, Bristol University Press, £47.99, pp. 202, hbk.
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The role of the EU in 'levelling up' its territory, through an increasing range of policies and funded programmes that have been developed since the Treaty of Rome in 1957, is more publicly recognised than many others that it performs. The now familiar cycle of seven year Cohesion programmes, funding projects and investment, accompanied by public sign boards of acknowledgement of EU contributions, have been a significant means of communicating the EU's vision and values in tangible and local ways. While not overcoming any charges of a democratic deficit, the Cohesion policies are designed to reduce economic and social differences between different places across the EU's territories, providing the EU with a public face that can meet local circumstances. In the UK, as seen in the Brexit Referendum outcome, the provision of this EU support to more deprived areas was so engrained in local life that local politicians could not understand why it was not being maintained after the UK left the EU. Elsewhere in Europe, this local role of the EU is perhaps better understood.

Yet the EU's initiatives at the substate level have not always been welcomed by member state governments who have regarded these Cohesion programmes as undermining their own

role in decision-making and, in some cases, political preferences for locations receiving support. While the identification of the areas to receive these funds is done in an open and transparent way, the specific projects and programmes have been left to be managed within the arena of domestic policies and choices, albeit within overarching frameworks.

In Lisa Dellmuth's book, we see an interesting evaluation of these European Union (EU) objectives and their redistributive outcomes, with a particular focus on the 2006-2013 Cohesion programme cycle. In tackling the application of Cohesion policy and any consequent changes in local economic and social indicators, Dellmuth has constructed her own data evaluation model to examine how effective these policies have been. This is interesting to consider, since most of the evaluation of Cohesion programmes has been commissioned by the European Commission (EC) and have focused on governance and delivery issues rather than the effective improvements that might have been stimulated in specific locations. Dellmuth's findings demonstrate that these programmes have had little effect in changing the relative disadvantages in the areas that they are designed to target. In some cases the funding is diverted to more prosperous areas, for political or policy reasons while these more prosperous areas have advantages which growing economies emphasise, confirm and accelerate. They are also more resilient to the economic downturns such as that in 2007, which stimulated this research. She also notes that the role of member states in selection of projects and methods can also serve to support more economically successful locations.

While Dellmuth's assessment focuses on the effects on this Cohesion policy, the text also illuminates other key issues that would be worth more discussion. These include the insights that her research provides on central/local relations within member states, and member state/EC relationships in decision making. It also reflects a changing approach to policy making within the EU that has not received much consideration which is the attempts that are gradually being made to move from policy and programme silos within the Commission to those which are spatially focussed and more integrated. While not examining the 2014-2020 Cohesion programme in detail, Dellmuth does discuss the role of member state Partnership Agreements, instituted for the first time in this round. These have been required to incorporate the principles of subsidiarity, further extended in 2009 but too late for the previous programme under review here, which are clearer about the role of member state governments in relation to their substate areas. However, there remains a continuing discussion about whether these Partnership Agreements should supplement domestic policies in the member states or set out how they will work with their substate governments in general, as the EU adopted subsidiarity principles set out.

While Dellmuth shows that the EU's Cohesion programmes have not achieved their redistribution objectives in the ways intended, as Rothstein indicates in his introduction, she does make a coherent and convincing case that the EU should be using social investment to promote well-being to support inclusive growth. In the last chapter, Dellmuth discusses how this inclusive growth can be fostered within the EU. It could be through an increasing pooling of social policy delivery within the member states or through a differential balance in expenditure, increasing the budget for Cohesion policy and programmes from its current level of 20% of the EU regional policy expenditure that has been in place since 2000. Or should it be through compliance audits to check the extent to which member states have achieved the EU's social goals? Dellmuth argues that such an approach would support views on the EU's legitimacy with its citizens.

This is a thought provoking book and the issues that it raises are timely, not least as the EU faces some debate about its future – stimulated by changes in the political leadership of Germany, for example. Within the EC, discussions will now be taking place on the preparation of the next Cohesion programme 2028-2034 and Dellmuth's analysis of the effect of past

Cohesion programmes could give some strength to the arguments for more change – towards increasingly integrated programmes, more specific outcome criteria and greater focus on member state monitoring and compliance. While the electorate’s views on the EU as demonstrated in the 2016 Brexit referendum does not appear to be replicated in other member states, there are issues about the extent of EU power for determining governance and funding allocations that may grow in some member states. However, while this takes place, the position of the EU as welfarist and socially redistributive organisation is not in doubt. Dellmuth’s book should help to raise the questions about how it can be more effective in achieving these objectives.

JANICE MORPHET
UCL
j.morphet@ucl.ac.uk

Will Bartlett, Vassilis Monastiriotes and Panagiotis Koutrumpis (eds) (2020), *Social Exclusion and Labour Market Challenges in the Western Balkans*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, £64.99, pp. 309, hbk.
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The labour market is the segment of the economic system which has arguably suffered the most profound and lasting dysfunction under the impact of violent disintegration of former Yugoslavia, and the transition to market economy upon which the Western Balkans countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) embarked some three decades ago. For most of this time, labour markets have performed poorly. Low activity rates, high unemployment, proliferation of informal and other types of precarious work and gender pay gaps all stubbornly persist despite gradual progression in the overall labour market’s institutional architecture in alignment with the European Union’s institutional practices. The most recent 2020 data on labour market trends produced jointly by the World Bank and the Vienna Institute for International Economics (World Bank/WIIW, 2020) show that over time, improvements in the main aspects of labour market performance recorded by this set of countries have been modest and unstable. An additional twist to what in terms of economic development prerogatives is already an unsatisfactory labour market input is accelerating outward migration whose scale and profile differ significantly from the historical trends.

Against this backdrop, the volume edited by Bartlett, Monastiriotes and Koutrumpis applies the lens of social exclusion in order to analyse the factors and processes that lead to the discrimination and disadvantage in access to the labour market for three distinctive groups (namely, young people, women and Roma) while extending the inquiry to migration and social protection as two areas entwined with the persisting labour market deficiencies. The introduction to the volume sets the scene for the research findings discussed in empirical chapters by summarising in a comparative fashion the main characteristics of the labour markets in the Western Balkans, which complements the country-level analysis conducted in all but one empirical chapter. This is useful since although there are strong commonalities across countries, each labour market has its own idiosyncrasies, which reflect distinctive historical and contemporary developments. The volume’s main objective is to contribute empirically to the body of research on labour market developments in the Western Balkans as a foundation to design more concerted and innovative policy responses. Most chapters include a reflection on policy issues, and some lay out concrete policy proposals.