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de la investigación transformadora

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transformative research*

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### PRÓLOGOS / FOREWORDS

#### Transformative research and its crucial role in territorial competitiveness

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## **Transformative research and its crucial role in territorial competitiveness**

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The publication of this special issue aligns with the primary purpose of the Bulletin of Economic Studies, which seeks to delve into cutting-edge contributions and implications relevant not only to academia but also, and especially, to society in the fields of economics and management. As Co-Editors-in-Chief of the Bulletin of Economic Studies, we are pleased to present this new special issue on territories, competitiveness, and the role of transformative research in their sustainable future development, aimed at identifying the structural, cultural, and economic factors enabling regions to compete and thrive in a complex global environ-

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ment. The future construction of sustainable territories is indeed a key topic for research that seeks, on the one hand, to serve society and, on the other, to contribute to developing a shared vision of sustainable development keys, encompassing social and environmental perspectives.

We thank Mari Jose Aranguren, Patricia Canto Farachala and James Wilson, who, as guest editors, have driven this issue and introduced in an interesting preface the relevance of transformative research in promoting the sustainable development of territories.

This issue includes nine contributions that, from different perspectives, reflect on territorial development and resilience in the face of global challenges. Specifically, the issue begins with the article titled **“Territorial competitiveness in the interest of publics”** by researchers Silvia Sacchetti and Roger Sugden, placing the achievement of its own objectives at the heart of territorial competitiveness. These objectives are understood as the convergence of the interests of the “publics” –those who share concerns about what happens in an economy. Particularly noteworthy is the authors’ reflection on the role of university research in promoting cooperative forums or spaces for discussing territorial competitiveness as a service to the interests of the publics.

Following this initial contribution, which emphasises the publics’ approach, the second contribution in this issue, **“The importance of subjective well-being in building competitiveness”**, by professors Roberto Horta and Micaela Camacho, focuses on the importance of well-being, both objective and subjective, as the ultimate goal of the competitive process. The article reflects on the impact of adopting a well-being approach in territorial development through the creation of public policies and business strategies aligned with this perspective.

After these first two contributions, the third article in this special issue, **“Sustainable territorial competitiveness within a post-growth paradigm”** by Jon Olaizola, addresses the dilemmas posed by the framework of territorial sustainability in a growth-centred model. The author proposes a series of action-oriented strategies for transitioning towards a post-growth model, where territorial competitiveness is redefined under the principles of social well-being, equity, and environmental sustainability, moving away from the traditional predominance of economic growth.

The fourth article, titled **“The productive matrix as a basis for the territorial development strategy”**, by authors Leticia Eva Tolosa, Vanessa Noelia Toselli, and Lucas G. Vanoli Faustinelli, examines the specific case of the Argentine province of Córdoba. This article reflects on

the collaborative construction process undertaken by a group of territorial development agents who cooperatively aim to create a competitive and sustainable territory. The Catholic University of Córdoba, coupled with the interdisciplinary team's efforts it spearheaded, stands as a prime example of how universities and their affiliated institutes serve as catalysts and contribute to the cocreation of a competitive and sustainable environment, as well as to the formulation of public policies.

In the same vein of shared value and the relevance of environmental and social dimensions, the fifth article in this issue, titled **“Lessons for ESG and RBC Shared Value: Towards indicators and operationalisation”**, by Radu Mares and Kenneth Paul Charman, presents an integrative approach that combines different perspectives from the basic frameworks of ESG criteria and corporate responsibility. This approach contributes to operationalising policies and indicators that help guide the role of the economy and businesses in society.

Subsequently, the sixth article, authored by Eva Arrilucea and titled **“Beyond technology: The role of RTOs in major societal transitions”**, argues that current transitions towards sustainable development goals require complex responses. For this reason, the article presents an interesting analysis defending that Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) can play key roles beyond generating technology, improving the absorptive capacity of businesses and societies.

The seventh piece, intriguingly titled **“Tesla's decision to establish the world's largest gigafactory in Monterrey: Lessons from a regional cluster for investment attraction”**, and written by professors Ernesto del Castillo de la Fuente and Sergio Madero, explores how Mexico has become a major recipient of FDI in the automotive sector, particularly in certain regions and due to the rise of nearshoring. The article analyses Tesla's decision to invest in Monterrey, contextualising regional automotive clusters and evaluating successful public policies for attracting FDI. The authors highlight competitive advantages such as strategic location, infrastructure, and skilled labour, enhanced by well-designed fiscal and logistical incentives.

This special issue of the Bulletin of Economic Studies concludes with two invited articles. The first, **“Europe's quest for competitive sustainability”**, by Beñat Bilbao-Osorio, discusses how Europe faces a strategic crossroads requiring a balance between sustainability, economic competitiveness, and social cohesion. To achieve this, the European Union needs a holistic plan with interconnected measures to ensure competitive sustainability, which has led to the design of an ambitious political agenda

currently under development. Among these, the European Green Deal and the European Competitiveness Pact stand out. The author argues that implementing this plan requires close collaboration between the EU, member states, regions, and public-private partnerships.

The second invited article, and the final text in this issue, is titled **“BRTA: A new boost for the coordination of Basque scientific and technological capabilities to enhance their impact on industrial and social fabric”**, authored by Garbiñe Manterola Agirrezabalaga, Rikardo Bueno Zabalo, and Jon Kepa Gerrikagoitia Arrien. This article examines the technological evolution of the Basque Country since the 1980s, highlighting how it has adapted to economic needs and local and international contexts. It details the role of the Basque Research & Technology Alliance (BRTA), a scientific-technological consortium whose mission is to strengthen regional innovation and competitiveness. In its early years, BRTA has successfully fostered collaboration among scientific and technological agents to address industrial challenges.

## About the authors

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