

**Yoji Koyama, Massive Outflow of Population from
Peripheral Countries of the European Union and Their
Depopulation: Its Implications for the European
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This book encapsulates the scholarly endeavors of Professor Yoji Koyama from 2017 to 2023, who has meticulously examined the integration strategies of former communist nations in Central and Eastern Europe into the European Union. Upon reading this book, it naturally prompts one to raise a compelling question: why would a Japanese academic be profoundly interested in the economic frameworks and international relations of these European regions, particularly their democratic transitions and EU integrations? Professor Koyama attributes his keen interest to personal experiences, drawing parallels between his upbringing in a less developed region of Japan during its economically disadvantaged periods and the transformative struggles faced by these European countries. His unique perspective is rooted in the themes of transformation, survival, and integration - a viewpoint that offers fresh insights into the significant challenges these nations encounter, including depopulation and labor migration to wealthier Western countries. This narrative not only broadens our understanding of geopolitical dynamics but also enriches the discourse on global socio-economic transformations.

The ten chapters of Yoji Koyama's book meticulously delineate the European Union integration processes of former communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, including Poland, Slovenia - the successor states of Yugoslavia as "the Best Performer of Former Yugoslavia", the Baltic States, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, among others. The text compellingly addresses, on one hand, the economic context and interrelations that significantly affect labor migration to Western Europe. On the other hand, it explores the intricate dynamics between peripheral countries and the regional policies of the European Union. This examination not only highlights the

economic dependencies and political interactions but also sheds light on how these elements collectively influence the broader trajectory of EU integration. The book's analysis provides a comprehensive insight into the multifaceted economic, social and political landscape that shapes the integration experience of these nations within the European Union framework.

Immigration is not a novel phenomenon for the countries of Western Europe and it didn't appear by the establishment of the European Union and the subsequent freedom of labor movement. Historically, Western European nations have experienced the influx of workers seeking higher wages. Traditionally, these workers would migrate alone, sending remittances back to their families in their home countries. However, a significant shift occurred during the years 1973-1974, marked by the emergence of what is described in literature as the "liberal paradox" or the "intention-result paradox" (p.2). This paradox unfolded when the European Community (EC) signaled an end to the acceptance of workers from outside its borders. This policy change prompted community workers to bring their families to Europe, leading them to settle permanently, have children, and gradually integrate into the societal fabric, eventually acquiring European citizenship. This was a stark departure from their initial intention of temporary economic migration, underscoring a profound transformation in migration patterns and policies within the European Union.

The author meticulously examines the disparities among the former communist countries, highlighting that the economic, social, and institutional landscapes are far from uniform across these nations. Positioned between two poles, he identifies Estonia as the epitome of market orientation, whereas Slovenia represents the most definitive example of strategic coordination (p. 13). To contextualize these differences, the author employs five theoretical models from the literature: Anglo-Saxon model, Social-Democratic model, Continental European model, Southern European model (Mediterranean), and Asian model. Each model offers a distinct framework for understanding the varying degrees of market liberalization, state involvement, social welfare policies, and institutional structures prevalent in these transitioning economies. This analytical approach not only elucidates the unique paths taken by each country in navigating post-communist transitions but also enhances our comprehension of how diverse governance and economic strategies impact their integration into the global economic system.

Another theoretical tool employed by the author is Immanuel Wallerstein's

classification, which stratifies global capitalism into core, semi-periphery, and periphery categories. Building on this framework, Norkus introduces an additional category, the "semi-core" to more precisely position the Central and Eastern European states within the global economic context. This nuanced adaptation allows for a more detailed analysis of these countries' roles and statuses in the international economic order. By incorporating the semi-core category, Norkus acknowledges the unique transitional status of these nations, which do not fit neatly into Wallerstein's original tripartite division. This adjustment enables a more sophisticated understanding of the economic dynamics and challenges faced by Central and Eastern European countries as they navigate their post-communist economic transformations and integration into the global market system.

The issue of migration encompasses myriad facets, ranging from the quest for higher-paying employment opportunities to the aspiration of securing a more prosperous life for one's family. Additionally, it includes the emotional distress associated with family separation and the poignant realization among the elderly that their grandchildren have grown distant, culturally and linguistically, transforming into foreigners in their ancestral lands "our grandchildren are already foreigners" (p.1).

Each of these aspects represents just a few of the numerous nuances and factors that demand thorough analysis within the rather heterogeneous landscape of Central and Eastern Europe. This complexity is not merely a reflection of economic or demographic trends but also encapsulates the profound personal and social changes impacting individuals and communities. Understanding these varied dimensions requires a multidisciplinary approach that considers economic motivations, familial bonds, social networks, and the broader socio-political context influencing migration patterns in this region.

Poland exemplifies a typical Central European country where migration patterns have become highly active, particularly following its accession to the European Union. This increased mobility has seen a significant number of Polish citizens relocating to countries such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, and Ireland. In response to this labor outflow, Polish companies have been compelled to recruit workers from neighboring nations like Belarus and Ukraine to fill the resultant labor shortages.

The author's analysis of Poland's migration situation encompasses two critical aspects (p.64). Firstly, there is an exploration of the limited capacity of host

countries to absorb immigrants. This involves assessing the economic, social, and infrastructural challenges faced by these nations in integrating a large influx of foreign workers, which can strain local resources and potentially lead to social tensions.

Secondly, the discussion extends to the impact on sending countries, particularly focusing on the significant loss of capable individuals who are crucial for the social and economic development of their home countries. This "brain drain" phenomenon can severely hamper the developmental trajectories of these nations. Moreover, there is a consideration of the cultural implications, as the emigration of substantial segments of the population can lead to a dilution of cultural traditions and a disconnection from cultural heritage. These factors together paint a comprehensive picture of the multifaceted impacts of migration on both sending and receiving countries, highlighting the need for policies that address the complexities of international labor mobility within the European context.

For this purpose, the author thoroughly investigates the structural transformations within the Polish economy, particularly focusing on Poland's transition to capitalism. This analysis includes a detailed examination of the demographic shifts and labor market dynamics that have accompanied and influenced this transition. Additionally, the author delves into the complexities of migration patterns, specifically the entry and exit flows of migrants.

This comprehensive study addresses how these structural changes have reshaped the economic landscape of Poland, illustrating the interactions between economic reforms, labor market adjustments, and demographic trends. The discussion extends to how these factors collectively influence migration movements, both into and out of the country. The author's exploration helps to illuminate the broader socio-economic repercussions of these changes, providing insights into the challenges and opportunities presented by Poland's integration into global capitalist systems and its effects on human mobility. This nuanced approach underscores the interconnected nature of economic policies, demographic shifts, and migration trends, and their collective impact on national and regional development.

Furthermore, an acute issue explored in the author's analysis is the challenge of sustaining pension finances due to the migration of the younger population (p.100). The departure of young, economically active individuals to foreign labor markets significantly disrupts the balance of pension systems traditionally reliant on a broad base of working-age contributors. This demographic shift heightens the

burden on the remaining, often older, population who are less able to contribute economically. As a result, there is an increased financial strain on public pension schemes, which must now support a growing elderly population with a diminishing pool of contributions from a shrinking workforce. This situation necessitates a reevaluation of pension policies and potentially innovative approaches to social security to ensure stability and adequacy of support for the aging population in Poland.

Slovenia, along with the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia Federation (p.126), presents a distinct case study: as a relatively affluent nation, akin to the Czech Republic, it has experienced a net immigration, attracting more individuals from foreign countries than the number of people emigrating from Slovenia. This phenomenon can be attributed to Slovenia's unique positioning as an innovation-oriented country that has successfully integrated into the core of the global capitalist economy.

This strategic alignment with innovation and advanced technology sectors has not only bolstered its economic status but has also made it an attractive destination for skilled migrants seeking opportunities in a robust and dynamic economy. Consequently, Slovenia's approach to integrating into the world economy, leveraging its technological capabilities and fostering an environment conducive to innovation, has distinguished it from other transitioning economies in Central and Eastern Europe. This has implications for its labor market dynamics, demographic trends, and overall economic growth, reinforcing its role as a central player in the global economic system.

Among the Baltic nations, Yoji Koyama has opted to focus his analytical lens on Lithuania, a country where migration trends have precipitated a significant population decline. This demographic shift is compounded by an aging population, which further exacerbates the challenges faced by the nation.

Koyama's analysis delves into the multifaceted impacts of these demographic trends on Lithuania's social structure, economy, and governmental policies. The dramatic reduction in population not only affects the labor market, with a shrinking workforce and increasing dependency ratios, but also places considerable stress on public services and infrastructure, particularly healthcare and pension systems. By examining Lithuania within the broader context of post-Soviet migration patterns, Koyama provides insights into the long-term effects of emigration on national development, social cohesion, and economic sustainability. This

comprehensive study highlights the critical need for strategic planning and policy interventions to mitigate the adverse effects of these demographic changes. The Lithuanian government made desperate efforts to enter Eurozone and these reforms "have caused strains on the society", "major factors driving people to emigrate" (p.159).

Also situated within the peripheral area of the European Union, Romania exhibits its unique pattern of depopulation, particularly pronounced in rural areas. This demographic shift poses substantial challenges for national development and sustainability. Despite government efforts to counteract these trends, the measures implemented have consistently proven to be insufficient (p.217).

The author's analysis delves deeper into the underlying causes and ramifications of Romania's rural depopulation. It scrutinizes the effectiveness of governmental policies aimed at reversing or mitigating these trends, highlighting a significant gap between the objectives of such policies and their practical outcomes. The inadequacy of these measures often results in exacerbating the rural-urban divide, leading to increased migration towards urban centers and abroad, further depleting the rural population. This exploration provides a critical examination of the policy framework, suggesting that a reevaluation of strategies is essential to address the complex socio-economic factors driving depopulation and to foster sustainable development within these vulnerable communities.

For Romania, the challenge of transitioning to a market economy within a brief timeframe, under the conditions of an open economic system, was formidable. Additionally, endemic political corruption has significantly hindered the effective utilization of EU funds, further complicating this transition. The concept of "an able state" (p.241) is crucial in this context, referring to the capability of the government to enact and enforce policies effectively. Unfortunately, Romania has struggled with this aspect, leading to suboptimal outcomes in economic development and integration within the European Union.

This lack of governmental efficacy has had direct repercussions on job creation, particularly in the rural areas where new employment opportunities have been scarce. Neither industrial improvements nor infrastructure enhancements have been adequately addressed, which has been detrimental to both rural and urban regions. Consequently, these shortcomings have driven a significant number of individuals from both rural and urban areas to seek better opportunities abroad through emigration.

The author's detailed examination of Romania's economic and political landscape elucidates the multifaceted challenges the country faces. By analyzing the interplay between corruption, policy inefficacy, and economic underdevelopment, the study offers insights into the structural and systemic reforms needed to stabilize and stimulate growth within Romania, particularly in its most underserved regions. This analysis underscores the necessity for robust governance and strategic policy interventions to reverse the adverse trends of depopulation and economic stagnation even remittance by Romanian migrants contributed to the "reduction of current account deficit and improvement of living standard of their families left in Romania by enhanced consumption" (p.242).

The author asserts that for Romania to bolster its economic development, a strategic initiative is needed to encourage Romanian expatriates to return and invest their resources—such as capital, expertise, networks, and entrepreneurial skills—back into the country. While some policy measures aimed at facilitating this repatriation have been implemented, the government's efforts have thus far proved insufficient.

The analysis explores the complex dynamics of leveraging the diaspora's potential to contribute to national development. It suggests that a more comprehensive and coordinated approach is essential, one that not only incentivizes return through economic opportunities but also addresses the broader systemic issues that initially drove emigration, such as political stability, economic transparency, and quality of life improvements.

Moreover, the author recommends enhancing the effectiveness of these policies by ensuring they are well-publicized, accessible, and aligned with the needs and expectations of the Romanian diaspora. This could include offering tax incentives, support for business development, and guarantees of political and economic stability. A holistic approach would potentially transform the diaspora into a pivotal force for economic revitalization and innovation in Romania, significantly contributing to the country's long-term prosperity.

Bulgaria, too, has experienced significant emigration during its transition to a market economy. The absence of an "able state" capable of implementing efficient governmental strategies has led to what has been termed "premature de-industrialization" (p. 262) and devastated the agricultural sector. As a result, the younger, educated population has faced a severe shortage of suitable job opportunities, prompting massive emigration.

This analysis explores the interrelation between insufficient governmental planning and the economic challenges that ensued. Without robust and effective state mechanisms, Bulgaria struggled to manage the complexities of transitioning to a market-driven economy, which exacerbated industrial decline and agricultural destabilization. This situation left many of the nation's youth unable to find employment that matched their qualifications, leading to a brain drain as they sought opportunities abroad.

Furthermore, the European Union's regional policy, designed to support economic development and reduce disparities across the EU, has not been successful in reversing these trends in Bulgaria (p.263). The failure points to a need for more tailored approaches that consider the unique economic and social contexts of member states. The author suggests that for Bulgaria to stem the tide of emigration and foster economic growth, it must rebuild its industrial base, revitalize agriculture, and create a conducive environment for high-skill employment. This would require a reevaluation of existing policies and a concerted effort to establish a more capable governmental infrastructure that can effectively utilize both national and EU resources to stimulate sustainable development.

In the Western Balkans, Serbia exemplifies the challenges associated with high rates of emigration coupled with population decline, particularly in rural areas. A noteworthy example of this trend is the significant exodus of young medical professionals from Serbia, a phenomenon commonly referred to as "brain drain." This migration is primarily driven by economic factors; for instance, wages in Germany are reported to be 5-6 times higher than those in Serbia, and working conditions are considerably better (p. 286). Consequently, certain regions in Serbia face a critical shortage of medical practitioners.

The chapter dedicated to this country shows that Serbia's only viable option for addressing these systemic issues is to pursue membership in the European Union (p. 297), although this path is acknowledged as a lengthy and complex process. The Serbian economy has struggled to keep pace not only with the more advanced EU member states but also with the newer EU members from Central and Eastern Europe. Further exacerbating Serbia's economic and social challenges are the legacies of ethnic conflict, UN sanctions following the breakup of former Yugoslavia, and the damages inflicted by NATO's air raids.

Additionally, there is a significant mismatch between the output of educational institutions and the needs of the business sector. This disparity

contributes to the employment challenges within the country, as the skills and qualifications provided by local educational institutions do not align with the requirements of the labor market. For Serbia to mitigate the adverse effects of these issues and foster a more robust economic environment, it is imperative that the government undertake substantial reforms. These should include improving educational curricula to better meet market demands, enhancing working conditions to retain skilled workers, and accelerating the EU integration process to stabilize the political and economic landscape.

In the final chapter of his analysis, but also in the final Conclusions part, Yoji Koyama addresses concerns surrounding the rapid emigration from four peripheral countries: Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, and Bulgaria. He particularly emphasizes the challenges faced by regional policy within the European Union at the NUTS 3 level (p. 300). While acknowledging the advancements made through European integration, Koyama notes persistent imbalances between affluent and impoverished regions.

To address these disparities, the EU established Structural Funds aimed at supporting less developed regions and areas affected by industrial decline. Additionally, the Cohesion Fund, instituted by the Maastricht Treaty, was designed to aid relatively poorer member states in their preparations for entering the Economic and Monetary Union. These initiatives were part of broader growth strategies envisioned to mitigate economic and monetary crises.

The collapse of socialism in Central and Eastern Europe around 1989-1990, and the subsequent transition of ex-communist countries to market economies, marked a significant transformation. These states' accession to the European Community (later the European Union) was guided by the Copenhagen Criteria, which were formulated to ensure equitable membership terms.

However, the global economic crisis, coupled with the Euro currency crisis, refugee crises, and demographic declines, also impacted these new member states. Despite these challenges, financial mechanisms like the Cohesion Fund and Structural Funds have facilitated economic development in these regions. Nevertheless, Koyama underscores that while substantial progress has been made, significant challenges remain. These include ongoing economic disparities, the need for further structural adjustments, and the continuous support required to ensure the sustainable development of new member states within the broader EU framework.

The book nevertheless offers an intriguing perspective originating from a distinct part of the world, crafted through rigorous effort in examining both theories and the practical application of economic and social principles. Furthermore, it involves an in-depth interpretation of extensive data to draw conclusions about the landscape of Eastern and Central Europe.

This comprehensive analysis not only synthesizes theoretical frameworks but also integrates empirical evidence to provide a detailed exploration of the region's complex socio-economic environment. The author's methodological approach effectively bridges the gap between abstract theoretical concepts and their real-world implications, enabling a nuanced understanding of the dynamic interactions within these transitioning economies. The insights garnered from such a thorough examination are invaluable, shedding light on the multifaceted challenges and opportunities that define Central and Eastern Europe in the contemporaneity.