Handbook of Local and Regional Development

Andy Pike, Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, John Tomaney

Introduction

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Andy Pike, Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, John Tomaney
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Introduction

The problematic of development regionally and locally sits at a difficult and uneasy juncture. Improvement of living conditions, decentralisation, prosperity, wellbeing and life chances for people and places internationally is ever more important in a world of heightened inequalities and inequities and intensifying environmental pressures. Yet powerful social forces are shifting the context and shaping formidable challenges to the understanding, role and purpose of local and regional development. Even before the tumultuous events triggered by the financial crisis at the end of the opening decade of the twenty-first century, numerous assessments already pointed toward the mounting discredit and ineffectiveness of development models nationally, questioned the role of states and other institutions in promoting development and even challenged the purpose and rationale for any form of spatial policy. Doubt was cast too upon the relative weaknesses and abilities of local and regional agency to influence the profound and transnational challenges of – inter alia – energy and food insecurity, climate change and demographic shifts in the context of globalisation. Other views, however, countered that local and regional development was broadening beyond a narrow focus on the economic to encompass the social and the ecological. They argued too that centralisation provided opportunities to give particular meanings to development and contest prevailing orthodoxies, better tailor policy and resources to local and regional conditions and mobilise latent economic and social potential. Indeed, it was contended that it was regional and local institutions that were especially well placed for constructing and nurturing the collective capacities to adapt to and mitigate constant, far-reaching and disruptive global change. Amidst such differing views in a changing and challenging context, this collection is timely in seeking to take stock and consider current thinking and practice in local and regional development.

Building upon our previous integrative work (Pike et al. 2006, 2007), the genesis of this Handbook lies in an effort to begin more systematically and rigorously to map out the terrain of local and regional development in an international and multi-disciplinary context. The powerful and contradictory currents buffeting, questioning and reinforcing development regionally and locally underline the need for a broadly based collection that attempts to bring together and reflect upon
current thinking and provide a reference point for multi-disciplinary and international work in the field. More specifically, the Handbook aims:

i) To provide critical reviews and appraisals of the current state of the art and future development of conceptual and theoretical approaches as well as empirical knowledge and understanding of local and regional development.

ii) To connect and encourage dialogue between the (sub-)disciplinary domains between ‘Local and Regional Development’ in the Global North and ‘Development Studies’ in the Global South through the international outlook and reach of its coverage and contributors.

iii) To engage with and reflect upon the politics and policy of how we think about and practise local and regional development.

To fulfil such aims, contributions have been sought from leading voices concerned with issues of development across the disciplines internationally. We make no claim to any exhaustive comprehensiveness – no doubt other topics, authors, disciplines and/or geographies might have been included – but we have sought to identify and incorporate what we believe are the most important and resonant issues for local and regional development. To frame what follows, this introduction identifies and elaborates three central themes motivating and animating the Handbook: the meanings given to local and regional development in an international and multi-disciplinary context; addressing the tensions between context sensitivity and place in their articulation with universalising, ‘placeless’ concepts, theories and models of local and regional development; and, connecting considerations of development regionally and locally in the global North and South. The organisation of the Handbook is then outlined.

Defining development regionally and locally

The definitions and meanings of development regionally and locally become centrally important when considered in a more international and multi-disciplinary context. The geographical differentiation and change over time in what constitutes ‘local and regional development’ within and between countries are amplified internationally. Changing and contested definitions of development seek to encompass and reflect geographical variation and uneven economic, social, political, cultural and environmental conditions and legacies in different places across the world. The search for any singular, homogenous meaning is further undermined by the socially determined definitions of development that reflect the relationships and articulation of interests amongst social groups and their interpretations and understandings of their predicament. The question of ‘what kind of local and regional development and for whom?’ (Pike et al. 2007) is deliberated, constructed and articulated in different ways in different places – albeit not necessarily in the conditions of their choosing and with varying degrees and kinds of autonomy for reflective and critical engagements with dominant and prevailing orthodoxies (Gough and Eisenschitz, Cochrane, Gibson-Graham, Lovering, this volume).

Such diversity about what local and regional development means does not, however, imply that we confront a relative, context-dependent concept. Far from it, perceptions of local and regional development across the world share numerous characteristics and a growing sense that “causes and solutions… are increasingly integrated across borders and disciplines, and revolve around common if differently-experienced patterns of change and the capacity to control it” (Edwards 2007: 3). A first such current connecting local and regional development internationally is the shifting and sometimes turbulent context that imparts complexity,
inter-dependency, risk, uncertainty and rapidity of change upon any considerations of the development of localities and regions. Adaptation and adaptive capacities in regions and localities have come to the fore in order to cope with the kinds of volatile, far-reaching and profound changes unleashed by global economic challenges and successive regional and local crises – such as the Asian crisis of 1997 and the 2007–8 financial crisis. Such concerns have propelled the rapid emergence of ‘resilience’ as a developmental notion internationally, notwithstanding its conceptual and theoretical weaknesses arising from its heterogeneous (sub-)disciplinary origins in Ecology, Economics, Engineering and Geography (Pike et al. 2010). A second and related international current is evident in the broadening of notions of development regionally and locally beyond its longstanding economic and quantitative focus to encompass sustainable social, cultural, political and environmental dimensions and more qualitative, even subjective, concerns about quality of life and wellbeing (see, for example, Cypher and Dietz 2004, Geddes and Newman 1999, Morgan 2004, Pike et al. 2007, Stimson and Stough 2008). In part, this change has been stimulated, first, by the widening of the notions and narrative of sustainability beyond a narrow concern with the state of the physical environment and resources to encompass the economic and the social (Christopherson, Hadjimichalis, Jonas et al., Morgan, this volume). Second, such change has been prompted by the – early stage and perhaps tentative – engagement between ‘Local and Regional Development’ in the global North and the historically broader conceptions and understandings of development within ‘Development Studies’ in the global South (Mohan, this volume). As the shifting context and broadening of local and regional development issues cross international, institutional and disciplinary boundaries at different spatial levels, it prompts some reflection upon our frameworks of understanding and their (sub-)disciplinary roots.

The shifting international context of disruptive and uncertain change, coupled with the widening and intersecting domains of economy, society, environment, polity and culture that impinge upon a broader, more rounded sense of what local and regional development is, means that any single discipline – regardless of its predilection or status – is ill-equipped and perhaps ultimately unable to capture the evolving whole. We see no need, then, to claim or establish disciplinary status for ‘local and regional development’ or its like or the dominance of any singular conceptual and theoretical framework (cf. Rowe 2008). Indeed, we argue that a more fruitful way forward is to recognise that “at the very least…there is no ‘one best way’ to achieve development. No one model should be privileged, nor should any one approach to economic theory” in order to stimulate an ambition to “reimagine growth and development as an inherently thick process, encompassing multiple social processes that can be illuminated differently by insights from different disciplinary fields” (De Paula and Dymski 2005: 14, 11). Local and regional development has such long established multi- and inter-disciplinary roots that reach up and out from especially economics, geography, planning and urban studies (Bingham and Mier 1993) and, we argue below, can extend and intertwine with ‘Development Studies’ in productive ways capable of invigorating our ability to engage with current and future challenges.

Rather than consensus and unifying, singular approaches, an aspiration for dialogue, establishing ‘trading routes’, negotiating ‘bypasses’ and ‘risky intersections’ (Grabher 2006), even contributing to ‘post-disciplinarity’ (Sayer 1999), underpins such multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to local and regional development. Such endeavour may have potential if a meaningful ‘spatial turn’ in broader social science is underway and disciplinary boundaries are genuinely becoming more open and porous. Checks and balances in conceptual and theoretical dialogue emerge...
in an open context of accountability, analysis, exchange and argument; offering the potential for the diversity of an ‘engaged pluralism’ which is active, inclusive and emancipatory in its intent (Sheppard and Plummer 2007).

Such broad-based and all-encompassing approaches to what local and regional development are are not without problems. Critics may ask what unites local and regional development and gives it coherence in such a plural context? Does such a diverse and varied conceptual and theoretical backdrop allow academics and policymakers simply to pick the theories to suit their interests and justify their interventions? We argue that the stance outlined here need not descend into such a relativist free-for-all. Rather, we see value in approaching local and regional development with multi- and inter-disciplinary insight and in promoting a dialogue aimed at stimulating understanding and explanation of the problematic of development in different local and regional contexts. This stance promotes an appreciation of politics, power relations and practice in multi-level, multi-agent and devolving systems of government and governance. It raises the normative dimensions of value judgements about the kinds of local and regional development we should be pursuing and the adaptation of frameworks in the light of foundational concerns such as accountability, democracy, equity, internationalism and solidarity (Pike et al. 2007, Hadjimichalis and Hudson 2007). This Handbook is our contribution to this agenda and specifically includes new and sometimes contrary contributions from leading voices working internationally in an array of (sub-) disciplinary bases in Community Studies, Development Studies, Economics, Gender Studies, Geography, Planning, Political Science, Social Policy, Sociology and Urban Studies.

**Context sensitivity and place**

The longstanding and thorny question of how to reconcile the general and the particular remains central to frameworks of understanding and the practices of local and regional development in an international and multi-disciplinary frame. Localities and regions in South Korea, Surinam and Sweden face shared issues and concerns in securing and enhancing livelihoods, prosperity and wellbeing in the context of globalisation, urbanisation and decentralisation processes. But how they address those issues and concerns is mediated by their highly geographically differentiated contexts, which reflect specific and particular growth trajectories, developmental aspirations and strategies, institutional arrangements of government and governance and other broadening dimensions shaping their development paths and strategies. In these circumstances, the challenge is how we reconcile more general concepts and theories to understand, explain and analyse global development challenges with the need meaningfully to incorporate context and place into the development equation.

An enduring view holds that local and regional development is especially dependent upon context as a consequence of its engagement with social processes in geographically differentiated and uneven spaces and places. In some ways, an inherent reading of context is ingrained in our understandings whereby the “the very nature of local or regional development – where context exerts a pivotal influence – impedes the translation of theory into practice” and shapes decisively policy intervention because of “the important influence context plays in determining the success or failure of economic development programs...not all local growth strategies work in all circumstances” (Beer 2008: 84, 85). There is even a sense that the complex, uncertain and rapid changes shaping local and regional development has heightened the importance of the specificity and particularity of geographical differentiation and uneven development in the Global North and South. Here, adjectives and conceptions of a ‘spiky’ and ‘sticky’ rather than ‘flat’ and ‘slippery’ world contest for our
understanding and explanations (see, for example, Rodríguez-Pose and Crescenzi 2008, Markusen 1996). Reflecting and understanding the richness of experiences and distinctiveness of places is clearly important but in some ways serves to underline the contingent nature of development regionally and locally. Development in this reading is witnessed at specific and particular times and places when certain conditions and tendencies meet in localities and regions.

A strong emphasis upon context has, however, its downsides and critics. Taken too far, it risks portraying local and regional development as particular, unique and unrepeatable episodes from which other people and places can learn little. From the perspectives of regional economics and regional science (see, for example, Capello and Nijkamp 2009), overly privileging context obfuscates the isolation of cause-and-effect relationships, undermines ‘observational equivalence’ and frustrates the analyst’s search for more widely applicable and generalisable knowledge and approaches as well as the “common element” upon which to base comparative and systematic international understandings, methods and analysis (Stimson and Stough 2008: 177; see also McCann 2007, Overman 2004). If, in caricature, ‘it is all different everywhere’ such critics argue that each situation ends up with a bespoke, idiosyncratic and contingent account of little explanatory use in any different context. Lessons cannot be learned and strategies and policies cannot be developed.

But such views of an overly narrow adherence to such deductive and positivist approaches to social science risk affording insufficient conceptual and theoretical weight to context and geographical differentiation. At worst, the particularities of place are treated as some kind of unexplained residual in mathematical models. This is important because if we conceive of “the economy of any country as a purely macro-economic phenomenon (e.g. national GDP, unemployment, inflation, export performance, and so on)...we often fail to grasp its full meaning because we tend to abstract away from its underlying geography” (Scott and Garofoli 2007: 7). Overly abstracted views are especially problematic where such general concepts and theories have developed into universalising, somehow ‘placeless’ logics whose general applicability is appealing to academics and policymakers and their needs for broadly based understanding, explanation and comparison. Economic geography, for example, is wrestling with exactly this tension in the wake of the emergence of ‘new economic geography’ or ‘geographical economics’ (see Clark, et al. 2000). In policy circles, current international debates mirror this issue in the opposition between a ‘spatially blind’ conception of local and regional development informed by ‘new (economic) growth theory’ and its emphasis upon the agglomeration and spill-over benefits arising from the geographical concentration of growth (World Bank 2009) and the ‘place-based’ view of tackling persistent economic inefficiencies and social exclusion in specific places to promote more balanced and distributed endogenous growth as the basis for EU cohesion policy (Barca 2009; see also Rigg et al. 2009, and Tödtling, this volume). In development debates too, place has morphed into an ecological determinism in accounts that seek to demonstrate how low-income countries of the Global South are trapped by their geography (Mohan and Power 2009).

At the heart of this question of how better to address the differences that context and place make to our general concepts and theories of local and regional development is the nature of our abstractions. De Paula and Dymski (2005) reject Krugman’s (1995) argument that the notion of development could be salvaged by stronger links to neo-classical economics and its language of formal mathematical expression. They go on to critique the weak analytical and explanatory purchase of such ‘thin’ abstractions. Instead they claim that “theoretical models can best help us imagine new possibilities
if they are institutionally specific, historically informed, and able to incorporate diverse social and psychological processes” (De Paula and Dymski 2005: 3). Such combinations of clear conceptualisation and the theoretical purchase of ‘thick’ abstractions offer some promise for local and regional development in affording heightened sensitivity to context dependence and an enhanced ability to situate and interpret the import of the particularity of place in appropriate conceptual, theoretical and analytical frameworks (Markusen 1999). Contributions to this Handbook and elsewhere offer some examples of how this approach might be furthered including adaptations of Sen’s capabilities approach (Perrons, this volume), evolutionary approaches to path dependency, lock-in and related variety (Hassink and Klaerding, this volume), culture and creativity in an urban context (Power and Scott, this volume) and regulation theory-informed policy evaluation (Valler, this volume). Important too is Rodríguez-Pose and Storper’s (2006) emphasis upon the role of community and institutions in providing the pre-conditions and key elements characteristic of appropriate and successful development capable of resolving informational and coordination problems regionally and locally. Given the “enormous challenges” of “finding exactly the right mix of arrangements to fit any concrete situation” because “All-purpose boilerplate approaches are certainly unlikely to be successful in any long-run perspective” (Scott and Garofoli 2007: 17) and the absence of any “universal model or framework guaranteeing success for regional economic development” (Stimson and Stough 2008: 188), our intention is that the contributions to this volume can help prompt critical reflection upon the appropriateness of our frameworks of understanding and policy and an aspiration of better matching and adapting general ideas and frameworks to particular regional and local circumstance in more context-sensitive ways.

Connecting local and regional development in the Global North and South

Strong and enduring traditions exist in the study and practice of local and regional development within and beyond the academy. ‘Local and Regional Development’ characteristically focuses upon localities and regions in the advanced, historically industrialised and urbanised countries of the ‘Global North’ (see, for example, Blakely and Bradshaw 2002, Fitzgerald and Green Leigh 2002, Pike et al. 2006, Stimson and Stough 2008). ‘Development Studies’ is founded upon a concern with the ‘Global South’ and has primarily – although not exclusively – been concerned with the national scale and, latterly, the regional, local and community levels (see, for example, Cypher and Dietz 2004, Mohan, this volume). Such traditions have run in parallel, with limited interaction and cross-fertilisation, and been marked and separated by the language, concepts, theories and terminology of the ‘First’, ‘Second’ and ‘Third World’, the ‘Developed’ and ‘Less Developed Countries’, ‘Less Favoured Regions’ and their recent change toward notions of ‘emerging economies’, ‘transition economies’, ‘post-socialist economies’ and ‘High’, ‘Middle’ and ‘Low Income Countries’ (Scott and Garofoli 2007, Domanski, O'Neill, this volume). The legacy of such bounded fields of study lingers in recent contributions that circumscribe the geographical focus and reach of their studies such as Rowe’s (2008: 3) recent collection and its focus upon “advanced western nations”. Yet there is growing recognition that such compartmentalised and discrete approaches make little sense in an increasingly globalised world and create unhelpful gaps in our understanding (see, for example, Murphy 2008, Pike et al. 2006, Pollard et al. 2009, Rigg et al. 2009). In the context of an international and multi-disciplinary engagement with development at the regional and local level,
much can be gained and learnt from con-
nection and deeper interaction, building
upon the insights of genuinely cross-national
comparative work in a global context (see, in-
ter alia, Beer et al. 2003, Markusen 1996,
Niklasson 2007, Pike et al. 2006, Scott 2002,
Poon and Yeung 2009).

The arguments for closer linkages and
cross-disciplinary, international dialogue are
several. First, the dissatisfaction and critique
of the development project in the Global
South in Development Studies, especially
amongst post-colonial writers (Blunt and
McEwan 2002, Hart 2002), echoes critical
reflection upon the prevailing local and
regional development models in the Global
North (Geddes and Newman 1999, Morgan
2004, Gonzalez, Turok, this volume). From
seemingly different starting points, both
strands of work have questioned the under-
lying basis of the ‘developmentalism’ of linear,
programmatic stages through which each
and every country, region and locality must
travel to effect development (Cypher and
Dietz 2004, McMichael 1996). Moreover,
such an approach offers only a “simplistic
perspective of progress” and that “the discus-
sion of development could not be restricted
to the economic sphere per se, that is, it could
not be oblivious to the urgent questions of
poverty, neither to ethnic and gender ine-
qualities” (De Paula and Dymski 2005: 4). A
rethinking is shared, then, about the goals and
processes of development and its underlying
concepts and theories such that

This view rejects any call for the dominance
and adoption of any one conceptual and the-
oretical framework – particularly given our
approach to reflecting diversity and variety
in frameworks of understanding in this
Handbook. In particular, this stance recog-
nises that the differences that connecting
local and regional development in the Global
North and South make are conceptually and
theoretically important. There is value in
‘theorising back’ (Yeung and Lin 2003) from
empirical analysis in the Global South at
dominant western, Global North perspec-
tives (Nel, Chien, Vázquez-Barquero, Green
Leigh and Clark, Dunford, this volume). With
parallels for local and regional development,
Murphy (2008: 857) frames the dilemma for
Economic Geography: “Is the subdiscipline
better served by sticking to research topics
and locations that have driven many sig-
nificant theoretical developments over the
past 20 years or does a more intensive, exten-
sive and coordinated engagement with the
Global South offer an important opportunity
to test, extend or retract these theories?” One
key area centres on the impulse to question
and broaden the meanings given to local and
regional development beyond narrow con-
cerns with economy and its quantitative
dimensions. Development Studies work is
vitally important here in its emphasis upon
livelihoods, basic living standards, poverty
reduction, capabilities and non-market forms
of value, prosperity and wellbeing (Sen 1999).
Problematising the meanings given to devel-
opment allows us to question the assumption
that places with higher levels of economic
wealth – measured in an indicator like GDP
per capita – have achieved more develop-
ment and are higher up the development
ladder than other countries with relatively
lower levels of economic wealth. Ostensibly
‘poorer’ places on wealth measures may
actually be pursuing more appropriate, ful-
filling and sustainable forms of development
regionally and locally (Morgan, Perrons,
Turok, this volume).
Second, ‘Local and Regional Development’ and ‘Development Studies’ intersect through people and places across the world facing common issues and changing contexts. Albeit that they begin from markedly different starting points and along different pathways and trajectories of change with highly uneven social and spatial outcomes. Shared and common boundary crossing phenomena configure the development problematic in differentiated ways as part of intensified but highly uneven internationalisation and even globalisation (Bowen and Leinbach, Coe and Hess, Dawley, Hudson, Lee, O’Riain, this volume). Examples of such common issues explored in this Handbook include the spatially imbalanced geographical concentration of growth based upon agglomeration economies and spill-overs within nations (Ache, Dunford, this volume), sharpening inter-territorial competition (Bristow, Crouch, Gordon, this volume), shifting migration and commuting patterns (Coombes and Champion, Vaiou, Wills et al., this volume) and decentralising, multi-level and multi-agent government and governance (Cox, Goddard and Vallance, Jessop, Jones and MacLeod, Mohan, Wood, this volume, Rodríguez-Pose and Ezcurra 2009). Inter-connection, inter-dependency and integration in the context of globalisation frame shared concerns around the “increasingly desperate search of households throughout the world for safety, for security, and for freedom from want and freedom from the fear of want” (De Paula and Dymski 2005: 5). As Edwards (2007: 3) puts it:

HIV infection rates…are as high among certain groups of African-American women in the United States as in sub-Saharan Africa, and for similar reasons. The erosion of local public spheres around the world is linked to decisions made by media barons in Italy, Australia and the US. The increasingly differentiated interests within the faster-growing ‘developing’ countries (China, India, Brazil and South Africa) make it difficult to see why Chad or Myanmar would be included as comparators but Ukraine, Belarus, Appalachia and the Mississippi delta would not.

Such shared issues and common ground challenge existing categorisation and typologies. In response, emergent understandings interpret a “worldwide mosaic of regional economies at various levels of development and economic dynamism and with various forms of economic interaction linking them together. This notion allows us to describe global geographic space as something very much more than just a division between two (or three) broad developmental zones” (Scott and Garofoli 2007: 13). Developmental impulses and problematics – however geographically differentiated in their definition, articulation and expression – shape the selective incorporation and exclusion of a far wider range of different countries than hitherto, conditioning the potential and paths for territories “arrayed at different points along a vast spectrum of development characteristics” (Scott and Storper 2003: 33).

Recognising shared and common issues for development at regional and local levels is not to suggest homogeneity and sameness. Because, third, continued differentiation and the need to recognise context and place in understanding and policy – as discussed above – are central to the ‘thick’ abstractions needed to provide conceptual and analytical purchase upon heightened and evolving heterogeneity and geographically differentiated unevenness in the Global North and South. While finance is a shared issue for development policy internationally (Wray, Marshall and Pollard, this volume), for example, macro-economic instability remains a particular problem for regional and local development initiatives in many parts of the emerging world in ways that have generally been less familiar until recently to relatively more advanced western economies.
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(Sepulveda 2008; see also Vázquez-Barquero, this volume). Echoing our concern with context and place, “Centrally mandated development policies are... usually ill-equipped to respond to the detailed idiosyncrasies of individual regions and industrial communities” (Scott and Garofoli 2007: 8). Places across the world face problems in devising and delivering development strategies and adapting and translating concepts and models originated elsewhere. A sense of exhaustion is apparent with traditional ‘top-down’ approaches that appear too rigid and inflexible (Pike et al. 2006), where ‘success’ stories are increasingly harder to find. While the number of examples of botched national ‘top-down’ development strategies continues to grow, the cases of successful interaction between the state and the market in the development realm continue to be the exception – and constrained to East Asia (i.e. Wade 1990) – rather than the rule. This predicament has triggered the search for, and experimentation with, more sustainable, balanced and integrated alternatives and complements to longstanding top-down approaches jointly constructed through locally owned, participatory development processes and partnerships between state, capital, labour and civil society (Herod, Gough and Eisenschitz, Moulaert and Mehmood, this volume). But in contrast to the redistribution and equity enshrined in the spatial Keynesianism of the post-war period, the influence of new (endogenous) economic growth theory means “Development strategies today are less and less concerned with the establishment of an autarchic and balanced national economy, than they are with the search for a niche within the global division of labour” (Scott and Garofoli 2007: 5) (see World Book 2009, Rigg et al. 2009). In a context of increased bottom-up regional and local agency working in facilitating national frameworks, the unequal capacity and resource endowments of places may mean unequal development outcomes arising from such ‘self-help’. In a more growth-oriented rather than redistributive spatial policy framework internationally, what is to be done for the localities and regions with limited economic potential and chronically weak conditions for growth?

This characterisation of local and regional development in the Global North and South creates, establishes and enlarges the common ground and shared concerns with the well-being and livelihoods of people and places across the world. Given our emphasis upon the importance of context and place, this is not to suggest that different places can be treated the same through the rolling-out of universalising, ‘one-size-fits-all’ models or assuming and promulgating the dominance of a specific set of ideas and practices from particular core parts of the world in the peripheries. Knowledge networks are distributed as well as concentrated and flows are diverse, varied and nuanced – cross-cutting, permeating and transcending boundaries as well as being channelled and controlled by various powerful interests (Bathelt, Cumbers and MacKinnon, Vale, this volume). Originating in development economics in India, the wider travels and import of Sen’s capabilities approach provides one such example of Global South to North mobility. Our aspiration is not just about ‘going South’, doing more work to take and test Global North perspectives on local and regional development in more varied contexts or diffusing ‘leading-edge’ notions, techniques and practices from core to periphery (see Murphy 2008). Rather, it is that making such interconnections and encouraging dialogue might stimulate fresh thinking, new options and novel possibilities for often entrenched and intractable problems. We have identified only two areas of shared interest here – defining development at the local and regional level and tackling context specificity/particularity and place – with which to begin such an open, even democratized, discussion (De Paula and Dymski 2005). Our argument connects to Edwards’ (2007: 3) calls: “for development professionals to recognise that problems and solutions are not bounded by artificial
definitions of geography or economic condition, and to reposition themselves as equal-minded participants in a set of common endeavours. By doing that, we could instantly open up a much more interesting conversation.” Ideally, such dialogue can extend and be of use not just to academics and researchers but to policymakers and practitioners in the Global North and South too. A central task to kick-start this dialogue has been to situate local and regional development in its international context. Contributors to the Handbook explicitly deliver on this in their international locations and outlooks contained within the Global North and South examples discussed in numerous of their contributions and cemented in the specific Section VI: Global perspectives (see p. 483). This part specifically explores the legacies and traditions of different approaches to local and regional development supra-nationally and nationally in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, North America and Europe. If the Handbook can act as a source and reference point for ideas, new thinking, inspiration even, then it will have served its purpose in beginning this broader conversation.

Organisation of the Handbook

In placing development locally and regionally in an international and multi-disciplinary frame, we have organised the contributions into seven connected parts. Section I: Local and regional development in a global context situates the development problematic against the backdrop of intensified internationalisation. It provides critical reviews and appraisals of the persistent importance of institutional and organisational issues shaping the kinds of development achievable at a regional and local level in the context of globalisation (O’Riain), the contextual influences upon collective action and policy choices in the face of inter-territorial competition (Gordon) and the imperial echoes of the historical evolution of development as capitalist incorporation at national, regional and local scales in the disciplinary domain of ‘Development Studies’ (Mohan).

Section II: Defining the principles and values of local and regional development addresses the fundamental bases and normative dimensions informing and giving meaning to particular definitions of development. Interventions here confront and reflect critically upon the potential of ameliorating socio-spatial inequalities through more inclusive models of growth and development (Perrons), the tensions and possibilities of ‘inclusive growth’ locally and regionally (Turok), the transformative potential of the sustainability narrative and the role of the ‘Green State’ and the public realm in delivering its regional and local outcomes (Morgan) and the prospects of approaches that reach upwards and outwards from the regional and local in constructing alternatives to currently dominant orthodoxies (Cochrane).

Section III: Concepts and theories of local and regional development demonstrates the diversity and variety of contemporary thinking through critical engagements with recent and emergent approaches. An initial set of contributions addresses the relationships and dynamics of spatial circuits and networks of value production, circulation, consumption and regulation shaping development prospects within and beyond localities and regions (Hudson, and Coe and Hess) and the particular role of labour individually and collectively in shaping the definition, meaning and practice of development regionally and locally in an international context (Herod). The next set reviews influential recent work concerning: path dependence, lock-ins, path creation, related variety and co-evolution emerging from evolutionary approaches (Hassink and Klaerding); the role, legacies and contingencies of socio-institutional relations and structures shaping spatial distribution and proximity in different kinds of innovation, knowledge and learning (Bathelt); the agglomerative and place-bound character of development based upon culture and creativity (Power and
Scott); the roles of path dependency and heterogeneity in moulding the diversity and variety of post-socialist transition experiences (Domaníski); and the complex and multi-faceted relationships of current migration and commuting patterns to local and regional development (Coombes and Champion). The remaining group of contributions in this section reflect recent, somewhat more disruptive interventions that question the possibility of regional and local development in cross-cutting territorial and relational space (Lee), the potential and spatialities of more social forms of innovation (Moulaert and Mehmood) and the possibilities of post-development and community economies (Gibson-Graham).

Questions of the state, institutions, power and politics are considered in Section IV: Government and governance. Interventions here engage with and prompt reflection upon the political and institutional questions of how we think about and practise local and regional development. The first batch of contributions address: the different dimensions of statehood, the state apparatus, and state power as well as governance and meta-governance (Jessop); the differentiated conceptions and forms of geographical political economies of power (Cumbers and MacKinnon); the compatibility of territorial and relational readings of space and place in devolved economic governance (Jones and MacLeod); and the burgeoning institutional fixes constructed within and beyond the state as part of attempts to contain the spatially uneven contradictions of capital accumulation (Cox). The second batch considers ‘ecostate’ restructuring in the local and regional development politics of carbon control (Jonas, While and Gibbs), the democratic deficits and politics of new institutional forms attempting to govern and regulate city and city-regional competition (Crouch), the changing nature of the state in capitalism and geographical specificity in the politics of local and regional development (Wood) and the relationships and tensions in spatial planning for broader forms of territorial development policy (Ache).

Connecting current conceptual and theoretical developments to emergent approaches to intervention is the central concern in Section V: Local and regional development policy. This section captures and reflects contemporary approaches, policies and experiences of institutions in places seeking to promote and encourage local and regional development internationally. A first set of contributions critically appraises the potential and pitfalls of approaches focused upon: indigenous and endogenous development (Tödtling); the ubiquitous, dominant and malleable policy discourse of territorial competitiveness (Bristow); the complex and culturally nuanced emergence of regional and local gaps in venture finance provision (Wray, Marshall and Pollard); the possibilities, problems and politics of ‘green’ economic development (Christopherson); the wider and deeper potential of ‘ordinary’ SMEs and entrepreneurialism beyond the paradigmatic (Hadjimichalis); the potential and pitfalls of attracting and embedding exogenous forms of development regionally and locally through transnational corporations (Dawley); the new policy directions required in the context of multi-scalar and multi-local spaces of innovation networks (Vale); universities forging leading roles in science and technology-led development and attempting to broaden their civic engagement and roles (Goddard and Vallance); and globe-spanning logistics networks coordinating economic interactions between people and places (Bowen and Leinbach). The second set offers a more local and urban twist to development questions in considering the international (im)migration underpinning service economies in cities (Wills et al.), the character and consequences of neoliberal urbanism in Europe (Gonzalez) and the division and cohesion of gender and ethnicity in southern European cities undergoing socio-spatial transformations (Vaiou).

Section VI: Global perspectives demonstrates the international connections and
inter-dependencies between local and regional development in the Global North and South. Distinctive supra-national and national histories and approaches to development regionally and locally are discussed comprising the experience of Africa (Nel), urban-focused industrialisation and development in Asia-Pacific (Chien), the traditions of metropolitan and territorial regionalism shaping local and regional development in North America (Green Leigh and Clark) and the definition and classification of areas and the mechanisms and distributional consequences of financial resource allocation in framing the evolution of cohesion and policy in Europe and its implications for China (Dunford).

Section VII: Reflections and futures closes the collection by addressing critical issues and normative political questions about the further direction and trajectories of development regionally and locally in an international frame. Contributions here consider the language and discursive constructions that shape how we think about local and regional development (O’Neill), the vital question of how we evaluate local and regional development policy and the shortfalls of current approaches and gaps in the coverage and rigour of our uneven analysis of evidence (Valler), the critique of the Neoliberal character of ‘New Regionalism’ held up as a key idea in promoting development regionally and locally (Lovering) and a return in the current context critically to reflect upon the future potential of what’s left of the radical agenda that invigorated vibrant local and regional intervention and development during the 1980s (Gough and Eisenschitz). We then reflect upon some of the central messages and future directions of local and regional development in the final chapter. In sum, this Handbook represents only the start of what we envisage will be a challenging and difficult but fruitful and worthwhile dialogue and praxis about the problematic of development regionally and locally in a multi-disciplinary and international context.

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References


INTRODUCTION


**Further reading**

