

## Book reviews

Local Economy

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Markku Sotarauta, *Leadership and the city: Power, strategy and networks in the making of knowledge cities*. Routledge & Regional Studies Association: London, UK, 2016; 174 pp. ISBN 978-1-138-80406-7, £65.30 (hbk)

**Reviewed by:** *Joyce Liddle, Aix-Marseille Universite, France*

In this single-authored book, which is the latest in a long line of publications in the Regional Studies Association and Routledge series on Regions and Cities, Professor Sotarauta offers very fresh, insightful and timely contribution to the field of city and regional development. At the outset, he explains his conviction that leadership is vital for strategic transformation of places to benefit citizens and inhabitants. The analytical focus throughout is on ‘generative’ leaders, in particular illustrating how they individually and collectively lead and develop governance networks of influence and power. The book offers an excellent theoretical exposition on a growing field of enquiry, but is also underpinned by up to date empirical data drawn from numerous city/country cases.

Structurally, it is very well organised into an introduction, which is followed by six excellent chapters covering knowledge-based development of cities; governance and influence networks; the basic features of place leadership; power and leadership, generative leadership as a relay in time; generative strategy. The final two chapters (of

eight in total) address some of the lessons learned, with chapter eight focussing on generative leadership, strategic intentions and emergence. In a very uplifting and positive epilogue, there is a plea for ‘generative’ city leaders to continue to develop transformative strategies based on creative tension, sense of urgency, believable stories and shared vision of imaginative futures. The evolving nature of 21st century city development is acknowledged in all chapters, and it is no mean feat to achieve a merger of sociological, political, economics and geographical thought processes within the golden thread of ‘generative’ leadership.

The publication harnesses over three decades of research, on-going engagement with policy and practitioners, and evolving theoretical development. This erudite book is so very good on many levels as the author demonstrates wide, eclectic literature source materials across multiple disciplines. Its comprehensive nature successfully bridges existing scholarly work and some of the essential issues facing city leaders. In every chapter, the author draws on empirical case material to emphasise the points being argued.

What is especially novel about the work is how the author takes lots of traditional theories and approaches to power, governance and networks and then analyses them afresh from different angles and perspectives. The importance of informality is dealt with head on, and the work offers new insights into how constellations of

actors use resources, leverage institutional systems, develop capabilities and develop new models of development to assure their own legitimacy and value creation.

There are so many examples of a fresh approach to theory, but one in particular I liked was the three types of influence networks in chapter three (strategic, focused and web of potentiality). I also learnt a lot from the comparative sections where the seeds of change, mobilisation, belief formation and action/institutionalisation are interrogated across cases. Figure 6.1 on Seinajoki gives an indication of different forms of leadership from such perspectives. Furthermore, the inclusion of some pitfalls and learning failures in city development are welcome, as a counterpoint to many existing accounts based *solely* on success stories.

The author 'entrepreneurially' and thoroughly interrogates many existing theories; as one might expect from someone who is an academic and practice/policy leader of reknown himself. He is also too modest by half on page 92 in not declaring his own central role in Finnish regional development. There is no attempt in the book to be overly scholarly (though it does achieve this aim); rather there is an honest appraisal of a long-standing debate on regional development, to explain and understand the significance of dynamic leadership as a potential glue to hold everything together. It goes beyond any current research on place leadership because it is authoritative, scholarly, shows thorough engagement with policy and practice and is refreshingly articulated. The aim to construct a theoretically informed but practically rooted dynamic model of leadership within complex contexts has been admirably achieved.

I would recommend this book as required reading for academics, researchers, early career researchers, policy and practitioners across a wide field of social science

and management disciplines. It will be relevant across numerous sub-fields such as geography, economics, politics, sociology, regional development, regeneration, strategy and leadership, and is a very welcome addition to this significant field of enquiry. It has the potential to become a classic of the genre.

Greg Clark, Tim Moonen, Emily Moir and Debra Mountford, *Local economic leadership*. OECD, 2015; 114 pp., Free (PDF)

**Reviewed by:** Dane Anderton, *Manchester Metropolitan University, UK*

The report examines the value of local economic leadership recognising the distinctive leadership arrangements across multiple contexts. 'Local' is defined by the cases used, which focus on city regions of varying size within Europe. Innovation and the ability to change are reported as critical in local economies to avoid locked-in to previous cycles of production and to make sure they are 'geared-up' for the future. Equally, it recognises the multifaceted and diverse nature of leadership in local economic development or place-based leadership.

A 'new era of globalisation' is referred to in the report, calling for leadership to include multiple agents, develop common strategy, partnerships and co-ordination, coalition building and wider reform to be effective at the local level. Four cases are presented in the report from across Europe: these are Stockholm, Hamburg, Amsterdam and Manchester. In all cases, there is a repeated call for collaboration and partnership building within and beyond the city regions. The report gives a well-summarised table of leadership