

## European Local and Regional Development: The Context and the Role of Leadership

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**Abstract** As a relatively new applied scientific discipline, local development allows for a flexible interpretation that permits overlaps with related disciplines. It involves the transformation of localities to improve material and social well-being, economic performance, welfare, knowledge exchange, and sustainability. Political leaders and local authorities play a crucial role in driving local and regional development in EU Member States. The chapter underscores the importance of local leaders adapting to a dynamic environment. It explores the roles of political leaders, the future challenges for leadership and the competences required. It emphasises the significance of local development in Europe and highlights the role of local and regional authorities in EU cohesion and regional policies. The chapter concludes with a comprehensive overview that summarises the multi-layered understanding of local and regional development in Europe.

**Keywords:** • local and regional development • local leadership • locality • context • EU

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## 1 Introduction

While local<sup>1</sup> development as a phenomenon has been present throughout human history, local development as an applied scientific discipline is relatively new. From this perspective, the concept of local development should be deliberately conceived in a rather flexible interpretation that enables a wide scope for overlap with other related, already existing established disciplines. Futó (2019: 4) argues that the lack of a precise definition is due to the fact that academics have actively chosen to include contributions from several relevant and related scientific disciplines and from a variety of policy areas where the relevant insights can be applied.

However, local (in a broader sense also regional) development generally refers to the transformation and change of a locality, usually in terms of improving one or all of the following: its level of material and social welfare, economic performance, well-being and opportunities for residents, knowledge and circulation of ideas, availability of technologies, resilience to shocks and adverse events, external relations, internal stability and cooperation, or social and environmental sustainability. Therefore, the study of local development is a way of interpreting performance and change at a meso-level, using localities as the unit of investigation rather than focusing more narrowly on individual social actors and organisations. In this constellation, local development is directly related to how societies, economies, and institutions interact at the local level, as well as with the rest of the world, specifically with other localities and countries (Dallago, 2019).

Since the 1960s and 1970s, local development has become an increasingly important task for national, regional and local governments around the world. At the same time, the framework conditions for local development have changed dramatically due to profound changes in the economic structure and have become significantly more demanding. Firstly, there has been an alleged qualitative shift towards a more "reflexive" capitalism, characterised by increased complexity, uncertainty, risk and speed of economic, social, political and cultural change. The economic system has become more internationalised, even 'globalised', knowledge-intensive and competitive. The inclusive and sustainable nature of territorial growth and development is increasingly being questioned; fundamental questions are being asked about what constitutes 'success' and 'development' in localities and regions.

Secondly, and closely related to this, government and governance structures are evolving into multi-level, often decentralised systems operating at local, regional, sub-national, national and supranational levels. Existing institutions have been reorganised, new institutions have emerged and new relationships, often based on "partnership", have determined the governance of local and regional development.

Thirdly, the reshaped terrain of local development has stimulated new interventions through instruments and public policies aimed at harnessing both internal and external

forms of growth and development. Different localities have been able to exert varying degrees of influence in reshaping existing and developing new approaches and experiments in local and regional development.

Fourth, debates about local development have shifted from a focus on the quantity of development to a focus on the quality of development. Originally this was about the impact of economic development on the natural environment and the constraints it places on development, but now it is about quality-of-life issues. This new interest in sustainable development is now ubiquitous, but the term and its implications are highly controversial. There are many definitions of sustainable development, but perhaps the best known is that of the World Commission on Environment and Development, which calls for development that ‘meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987: 8; Pike et al., 2006: 3-4).

One of the most controversial questions in the analysis of local development is why and how distinct and separate localities continued to exist and why some flourished, and others withered away. One should never overlook the fact that there are important and powerful obstacles to development. Some of these obstacles are external to the locality, such as an unfriendly or centralising national government, the existence of distributive coalitions between other localities, and tensions and conflicts with other localities. However, most obstacles are likely to be internal and include entrenched local policy styles, political instability, a lack of cooperative and innovative attitudes among local actors, extreme poverty, underdeveloped infrastructure, and more (OECD, 2003).

The question of uneven development of localities leads to the question of whether each locality should be self-sufficient in its own way or whether each locality should specialise and interact and exchange with other places on the basis of its potential. This question concerns the static and dynamic role of the cohesive force of proximity (Balland et al., 2015; Boschma, 2005) – the essence of a locality in its economic, geographical, political, and social sense – versus remoteness, advantages, and threats from the rest of the world. Being larger and more powerful, we can consider remoteness (the rest of the world) as a constraint on proximity (local development) and a source of opportunity. It follows that local development can be open to the rest of the world or closed and self-sufficient. Both positions have a rationale that depends on the nature and setting of each component (proximity and remoteness), from which the potential advantages and disadvantages of interaction emerge (Dallago, 2019). In contemporary economies, local development must be located within the perspective of globalisation (Scott & Storper, 2003). Following Rodrik (2007), local development should strive for the best possible fit with local conditions and their use while respecting common issues and rules. It is about finding the best possible place in the world and doing what one knows and does best (i.e., knowing what to do and how to do it). In short, one must be pragmatic, in tune with one’s reality and aware of external conditions and possibilities.

Moreover, local development also depends on the capacity of local leaders and actors to improve the social and material potential of their own localities, to foster cooperation, and to inspire the participation of local people and institutions. For this reason, it is extremely important to consider the more than one million elected politicians at local and regional levels in European countries, who, as key political actors, need to be highly adaptable and develop the skills that the increasingly dynamic working environment demands of them. At the same time, they must maintain an authentic connection with citizens and be responsive to their needs and desires (Kukovič, 2023).

In its first part, this chapter explains the role of leadership in the realm of local development and highlights characteristics that future local leaders should possess. In the second part, a broad understanding of local development is presented and further developed in the following chapters that depart from this multi-disciplinary framework.

## **2 Political leadership for local and regional development**

When considering local development, we cannot neglect to emphasise political leaders who work within local authorities and are a crucial driving force at local and regional levels in all EU Member States. Moreover, empirical research shows that local and regional authorities enjoy greater trust than national governments in all Member States (OECD, 2022) and greater trust than the EU in most countries. It turns out that municipalities and regions are a means of regaining trust in politics, not only in the EU but also at the national level. More than 120,000 municipalities and regions in EU Member States are led by progressive mayors and presidents.

Although organisational roles and tasks are more or less clearly defined within formal norms and rules, it is true that the higher the position is, the less precise formal rules are. Leaders, particularly those who hold the highest political positions, face tasks that are often defined very loosely (Larsen, 2000: 6). Leach et al. (2005) explained that political leadership offers plenty of room for the interpretation of roles where political leaders can develop their skills and abilities. In some cases, these impact their actions, as well as the operation and leadership. Local leaders therefore develop (regardless of their operating environment) a variety of skills and abilities in order to create effective coalitions in the local council and the broader local environment (Lowdnes & Leach, 2004). This emphasises understanding the ways of leadership and the leaders' labour orientation (Gains, 2007: 298). Therefore, it is not surprising that local leaders occupy different roles in their positions and consequently prefer some tasks to others.

### **2.1 Roles of local leaders**

Due to different perceptions of the roles and tasks of local political leaders, Ivanišević (1987: 87-82; 113-129) developed a theoretical framework for the comparative analysis

of mayors. He defined six mayoral tasks or roles: administrative coordination, political integration, the transmission of political decisions, the separation between politics and administration, the vertical integration of the whole political system of a country, and the representation of local interest before central bodies.

Based on extensive empirical studies of political leadership, Elcock (2010) designed a matrix of local political leaders' (i.e., elected mayors') roles. The horizontal axis presents three sets of leadership attributes: (1) the *formal powers and duties*; (2) *informal relations*, which the mayor needs to develop with the director of municipal administration (CEO) and local councillors, as well as with political parties, trade unions, voluntary organisations, and other partners; and (3) *personal characteristics*, including charisma, integrity, and the ability to develop good relationships with other local leaders. On the vertical axis Elcock (2010) ranked three of the most important sets of mayoral roles: (1) *governmental* – policy formulation and coordination of the municipal council, composition and supervision of the budget, and convening and leading municipal council meetings; (2) *governance* – cooperation with complex networks of stakeholders, negotiations with service providers, contractors, traders, voluntary organisations, and other actors in a fragmented local system; and (3) *allegiance* – maintaining contacts with municipal councillors, political parties, citizens, and voters, with the specific intention of maintaining and ensuring a strong electorate at the following election.

**Table 1:** Analytical grid for local political leaders

<b>Influences</b>	<b>Institutional/ Formal</b>	<b>Informal</b>	<b>Individual</b>
	(Manifest/Structure)  Legislation; Standing orders; Council constitution	(Latent/agents)  Relations with council, political parties, CEO, officers	(Charisma/agent)  Experience; Background
<b>Roles</b>			
<b>Governmental</b>	Policy, budget, vetoes, appointments, personnel	Relations with political parties, backbenchers, CEO, chief officers	Articulate, ability to dominate, negotiate; competencies/experience
<b>Governance</b>	Representation, outside memberships, decentralised structures	Relations with lobbies, interests, other levels of government	Reticulist abilities/skills, established contacts/networks; ruthless
<b>Allegiance</b>	Term of office, formal relation to council; power of recall/dismissal; abolition of office	Relations with outside parties, lobbies, electorate; Power	Approachable, assessable; risk of corruption; clientelism; power

Source: Author based on Elcock (2010: 7).

An empirical study of the relationship between personality traits and successful leadership performance has revealed that mayors outlined as their key priorities: (1) personal success – cooperation with others and managing relations; (2) strategic direction and integrated oversight; (3) political intelligence – understanding and action in the political arena; and (4) organisational mobility – organisational and cultural changes (Leach & Wilson, 2002). Building on this, Leach and Wilson (2002) divided the work orientation and mayoral roles into four categories: (1) preservation of political association (construction of a multi-party coalition in the municipal council or maintaining alliances within the majority), (2) providing strategic direction and policy development, (3) representation of the municipality to the outside world, and (4) ensuring the effective implementation of adopted decisions. This distribution coincides with the distinction between mayoral roles developed by Koprić (2009). Koprić (2009: 84) argues that a minimum of four roles can be distinguished: political, administrative/managerial, internally oriented leadership, and externally oriented leadership.

However, empirical research (see Kukovič, 2015) has shown that mayors (regardless of the size of the municipality they lead) recognise as the most important of their local management tasks those that are as much related to local development as ‘raising funds from various external sources’, ‘providing quality local services’, ‘promoting new projects in the municipality’, and ‘creating a vision for the municipality’. The fact that mayors recognised these four tasks as the most important was also evident in the test question, in which respondents listed what they considered to be the three most important tasks for mayors: 61% of mayors responded, ‘raising funds from various external sources’ 61% ‘promoting new projects in the municipality’, 54% ‘providing high-quality local services’ and 47% ‘creating a vision for the municipality’. More than 90% of the participating mayors rated all tasks listed as ‘very important’ or ‘best’. Furthermore, for the majority (84%) of mayors, the most important objective of the mayoralty is ‘attracting economic activity to the municipality’. Mayors rated the second most important issue they would like to shape during their term of office as mayor as ‘improving the ‘infrastructure in the municipality and transport services’ (84%). It is therefore not surprising that according to the mayoral network typology (Magnier et al., 2006), the majority of mayors gravitate towards the development network, which is characterised by attracting economic activity to the municipality, developing areas that require highly skilled labour silos, attracting new residents to the municipality, attracting more affluent residents, improving the (external) image of the municipality, changing the external image of the municipality and developing the important position of the municipality in the wider environment/region. Such development-oriented mayors aim to promote innovation and growth in the local environment and to achieve a wide range of possible local development goals (Kukovič, 2015: 145-147).

## 2.2 Future local leaders

Local leaders must not only focus on the present; they must also turn their gaze, particularly to the future, and thus adapt to the dynamics of the challenges and changes to come, especially if they want to perform successful local development and investments in such a demanding environment. A responsive, successful, and responsible local political leadership requires strong and creative leaders who give directions in forming local policies, coordinate individuals and organisations and participate in the renewal of the local identity. Traditional mayors with their formal political authority and power, therefore, no longer meet the changing conditions of the fragmented local community with different values and conflicting interests at the concurrent need to ensure the mutual interdependence of the various stakeholders; local leaders must, therefore, become more professional, strategic, responsive, and networked (Gains, 2007). Due to functioning in dynamic and unstable environments, mayors must develop a sense of detecting threats and upcoming (especially negative) changes and take as many opportunities as possible to improve the position of the local community, even in unpleasant situations. Mayors of the future cannot and must not be active only in the present; they must also focus on the future, whereby they must adjust their leadership style to the context, situations, and challenges.

However, local and regional leaders alone are not enough. In all EU Member States, active citizens who are willing to participate in decision-making processes and, in particular, to contribute to the common goals of a better quality of life are needed. Local and regional authorities are in close contact with local businesses, social partners, civil society, and citizens and have valuable first-hand experience of the needs and aspirations that arise in society. Listening to the concerns of citizens, stakeholders, and local and regional authorities and meeting their expectations is crucial to strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the EU and bringing Europe closer to its citizens. Active citizens and their democratic participation are fundamental for both the European Union and the regions and municipalities to shape their common future.

If we add interactions with citizens and the specifics of local leadership to these properties, we may speak of a so-called cosmopolitan leader. Quist (2008: 50) describes the cosmopolitan leader as someone who can easily cooperate and interact with different people, as he values diversity and is creative in all respects. Such leaders take positive advantage of diversity, especially during changes and in fragile situations, when they act flexibly (both with regard to situations and people) in adapting to new needs. Theoretically, a cosmopolitan leader emerges from a group of people whose main motivation is to help others (Marquardt & Berger, 2000: 22). From this point of view, the local level is a suitable environment for cosmopolitan leaders, especially if we take into account the fact that the impacts that are changing the operating conditions of leaders in the concept of local leadership are becoming more intense over time.

The normative framework of the given competence places the mayor at the centre of a local authority. Here, we need to know that the *de facto* functioning of the mayor is both much more extensive and full of challenges. The mayor must therefore be especially attentive to the triggers of change and in order to successfully face the emerging changes, the mayor must develop special competencies.

One such trigger is *globalisation*, persistently making its way into local communities. The mayor must therefore be able to see the functioning of the local community from the micro point of view (i.e., individuals) and also look at the municipality from the macroglobal perspective. The second trigger that changes the *awareness and knowledge* requires continuous learning, experiences, and new findings from the mayor on the needs of citizens, other local stakeholders, the local community, and even employees in the municipal administration. *Constant changes in the working environment* require a mayor who can arrange and ensure a safe environment, which transitions to greater cooperation. The cosmopolitan mayor is aware that the municipality is not his property and that managing a municipality is not just a project spanning a couple of years, but rather an investment into the future of the people who live in a certain area. Due to the *rapid changes in the organisational structure*, the mayor must be able to think systematically and carry out several projects simultaneously. The cosmopolitan mayor is qualified to discover and resolve the real reasons for problems and not just eliminate symptoms.

The next trigger is *environmental needs and the ever-increasing awareness of our responsibility*, which requires the mayor to elevate the function by dealing with issues in the life of the community, reflecting core values and personal and social responsibilities. Cosmopolitan leaders strive to increase the ethics in their operations, and even in citizens and in the local community. Much progress can be seen in *technology*, and mayors are expected to follow new trends and use them well. Cosmopolitan leaders know the positive and negative impacts and understand the borders brought forward by new technology. In line with the *rapid changes in market needs*, mayors must think about the future, seek new projects and services, and face uncertainty confidently. Cosmopolitan mayors are creative and opportunistic and know how to use the intelligence, know-how and experiences of various stakeholders.

Lastly, it must be noted that the *rapidity of changes is increasing*, which is why mayors must have formed ideas and a vision. Thus, the cosmopolitan mayor does not only think about everyday tasks, but he must also assess and plan the future development of the community and look for a way to motivate and inspire the local population to accept his vision (Kukovič, 2021: 220).

In their relation to citizens, cosmopolitan mayors have the following four competencies:

- *appreciates the citizens*: a cosmopolitan mayor lives and works under the principles and values of the community and serves as their caretaker. He appreciates individuals with unique and diverse properties;



- *prepares the citizens*: a cosmopolitan mayor informs the citizens about the current challenges and prepares them for future challenges. Thus, he initially listens to the needs of citizens and then empowers them with information and trains them for future plans;
- *motivates the citizens*: a cosmopolitan mayor directs citizens with the vision of the future of the local community and strives to achieve common goals, such as a higher quality of life in the community, a higher level of services, an all-around local development, and the fulfilment of other needs of the community;
- *activates the citizens*: a cosmopolitan mayor encourages citizens to take action by preserving the environment that enables learning and development and taking advantage of the available resources. The mayor activates the citizens with persuasion and empathy, proving his responsibility and motivation.

Modern society always has new demands which are often formed due to the needs of the citizens and then demand the changed functioning of society. Special challenges are related to the conceptualisation of local leadership in the future, that is with the ‘art’ of leading people in the ‘post-leadership’ environment. These are challenges in the predominant paradigm of leadership which is meant to solve the problems of control and efficiency (Brezovšek & Kukovič, 2014). In the future, local leadership should serve the goal of increasing people’s sophistication in a world of ever-increasing uncertainty, major changes, and increasing complexity (Kukovič, 2021: 222). From this point of view, empowered cosmopolitan mayors with their enhanced feel for the triggers of changes in the environment and in society and their developed competencies for adjusting to the unpredictable environment are an alternative to future local leadership and local development.

### **3 Evidence of European local and regional development**

Local development moves around a common thread, which is a difference: local development makes sense and is important because there are differences within countries and internationally among different localities. This situation goes well beyond the statement that geography matters, and that resources tend to agglomerate in particular spaces, although this is certainly true and important (Krugman, 1995). What is fundamental is that space and distance matter for human activity in different ways, both material and immaterial. The latter range from spillovers and agglomeration economies in economic activity to a sense of belonging, the circulation of ideas, transaction costs, common culture, interpersonal relations, trust, and many more. These aspects stress that local development has its *raison d’être*, both in its own right and as an organisational principle of more complex societies (Dallago, 2019: 470). This is the perspective that the European Union takes in building European integration and pursuing convergence within it among different countries and NUTS localities. The main goal of EU regional policy design is to reduce the development gap among NUTS localities and Member States to promote economic, social, and territorial cohesion.

Local and regional authorities have always been the backbone of European democracy. They are the building blocks not only of each Member State but also of the EU itself, as they are responsible for managing hundreds of thousands of projects funded (at least in part) by EU programmes. According to official figures, two thirds of the 550 programmes funded under EU cohesion policy are managed at the regional level. Every day, new projects are adopted under these programmes, which aim to make regions and municipalities better places to live and work. By creating links between them, regions forge social, economic, and cultural bonds that connect Europeans. There is no doubt that municipalities and regions make an important contribution to the development of the European Union. Local development policies have become increasingly important in recent years as governments around the world seek to address the persistent problems of disadvantaged and underdeveloped areas by supporting local, bottom-up approaches that complement mainstream national programmes. The increasing globalisation of the economy and accelerating technological change have opened new markets and competition to which local development policies should respond. The EU has also become active in the field of local development by including the concept of local development in the new long-term EU budget (2021–2027), for which the European Commission has proposed a more modern, simple, and flexible cohesion policy as the main investment policy and at the same time as a tangible expression of EU solidarity aimed at the sustainable development of urban, rural, and coastal areas and local initiatives. Moreover, the EU's regional and cohesion policies are often considered core policies that impact the EU (Kukovič, 2023).

All these highlight how difficult and yet fundamental it is to take a comparative systemic approach to local development. It is difficult to understand precisely what local development is, why it is important, why it is complex, why it is in inadequate supply, and why the comparative approach is necessary. Because local development is an applied science, it relies heavily on the concepts, models, and empirical strategies of other disciplines, such as economic geography, sociology, political science, and regional science. The analysis of local development begins with the selection of the proper terms, hypotheses and theories, and this book in the following chapters offers various contributions to all these different cases and considers them extensively.

The first set of chapters is dedicated to the sociological perspective and brings the understanding of local development through the changes emerging in society. *Tamara Besednjak Valič*, *Miljana Čosić* and *Clémentine Roth* analyse the interplay between cultural and creative industries (CCIs) and regional development in the Danube region. This chapter analyses the complex relationship between the cultural and creative industries and regional development. In doing so, the authors have referred to the concepts of local and regional development, where the term refers to the efforts and policies to promote the social and economic progress of different territorial units, which involves the mobilisation of local resources, the promotion of innovation and the empowerment of

communities to shape their development aspirations. Furthermore, *Erika Džajić Uršič* explores the intricate relationship between women's leadership, the circular economy, and the broader landscape of sustainable development. This author has frequently encountered the term 'local/regional development', which is pivotal in this discourse. In this case, local/regional development refers to deliberate efforts and policies designed to stimulate economic progress, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability within distinct geographic regions. *Janja Mikulan* and *Martina Malinovič* shed light on the vulnerability and resilience to radicalisation and extremism at the local level. They argue that in the context of radicalisation and violent extremism, social, economic, and cultural local/regional development that ensures all community members thrive is crucial. Such development recognises the importance of being aware of diverse risks and challenges and understanding that disconnection, marginalisation, and socioeconomic disparities can fuel extremist ideologies. Local authorities play a pivotal role, as their knowledge of community nuances ensures tailored solutions. Strengthening social bridging and linking fosters a sense of belonging, reduces vulnerabilities to radical influences, and enhances resilience. Moreover, prevention initiatives by local stakeholders, leveraging these social bonds, serve as frontline defences against potential threats.

The next set of chapters describes innovative combinations of policy areas, mechanisms and instruments that have been implemented in real local development. The chapters cover the institutional and political framework of local development. *Alenka Pandiloska Jurak*'s chapter reviews the longitudinal data on GDP per capita within the EU macro-regional strategies and compares the macro-regions with each other. The definition of regional development in this chapter is a term strictly adhered to the understanding defined by the European Commission and used in the Cohesion Policy. That policy distinguishes between 'Less developed regions', 'Transnational regions', and 'More developed regions'. Less developed regions are those that have a GDP per capita that is less than 75% of the EU average, the transition regions between 75% and 100% of the EU average, and more developed regions that have a GDP per capita above 100% of the EU average. *Tine Šteger* explores the challenges in measuring local development in line with the idea of sustainable development and quality of life. This author defines local development as follows: if economic development can be viewed as improving economic activity, environmental development as achieving a better quality of the environment, and social development as achieving social characteristics that are desirable in a particular society, then local development can be viewed as a set or combination of these actions at the local level, that together contribute to the overall quality of life or happiness. Moving on, *István Hoffman*'s chapter analyses this impact by examining legal regulations, policy documents and policy practices, particularly the analysis of the Hungarian case. This author explains local/regional development as the conscious plans to influence the economic, social, and environmental characteristics of local and regional units (municipalities, regions) with different endowments and development levels by public (supranational, national, regional, and municipal) bodies to achieve a system of criteria reflecting a specific choice of values. *Pavel Maškarinec*'s chapter conducts a cross-

sectional examination of regional development in the Visegrad Four countries to identify any associations between regional development and selected indicators of the quality of democracy. This author recognises the need for a broader definition of regional development and the possible role of various factors; however, he stays limited by the scope of the chapter and thus understands regional development as socioeconomic development and applies the traditional definition of regional development in terms of gross domestic product (GDP).

The last set of chapters highlights the instruments and tools for processes and development patterns from an economic perspective. *Andreja Mihailović* and *Bojan Božović* critically examine the role of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in promoting cybersecurity in the Western Balkans and emphasise their growing importance in the digital economy. The authors agreed that the process of local and regional development might be compared to the intricate creation of a mosaic within the larger setting of geopolitical landscapes. Every individual component is deliberately positioned to complement the socio-economic and natural landscape of a certain area. This approach, which is firmly grounded in methods that are specific to a particular location, not only utilises internal capabilities but also navigates complex geopolitical dynamics. Recognising the always-changing geopolitical dynamics emphasises the necessity for flexible, knowledgeable, and cooperative endeavours to guide regions towards sustainable development and resilience. Finally, *Jelena Jovović*'s chapter analyses green financing mechanisms in the context of local development through an extensive review of existing green policies and their impact on enhancing the local development process. The author explains that local development, as a whole, can be regarded as a multifaceted network of political, social, economic, and environmental efforts that bring well-being to the inhabitants while simultaneously establishing infrastructure that provides conditions for sustainable and long-term economic growth.

Given this background, this book explores and analyses the (growing) importance of local and regional development and offers a diversity of valuable analyses and case studies of important issues and situations, with a strong focus on EU regional policies and their impact(s) on local and regional development in Europe, European strategic visions for local/regional development as well as key challenges, and mechanisms. All this makes a book focusing on the various aspects of local and regional development in Europe particularly appropriate and timely.

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> A local is usually meant as a territory, i.e., any social and geographical component situated below the national level, so that the latter includes the interaction among various localities.

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