EDITORIAL

LOCAL ECONOMY

Editors

Joyce Liddle, Oto Potluka, Martin Quinn, Dane Anderton, Hugh Bartling

The papers included in this special edition are a selection of contributions to a seminar entitled 'Linking Urban & City leadership: Making connections and identifying leadership needs' held between 20th-21st October 2016 at the Institut de Management Gouvernance and Territoriale Gouvernance (IMPGT), Aix-Marseille Université, France. The seminar was the most recent in a series convened since 2010 by members of the Regional Studies Association's international research network on Leadership in Urban and Regional Development. The network has gone on to produce a special issue of Regional Studies (2017) as well as this volume. After the last research network event (University of Birmingham, November 2015) we had developed a series of questions for further exploration in Aix-en-Provence. Prior to the main Aix event a Round Table discussion examined how academic researchers might bridge the gap between Universities and the worlds of policy/practice, and in this 'collaborative space' delegates shared perspectives from their own institutions and places, to inform novel approaches to the academic/practitioner divide. Wide ranging discussion ensued on crossing academic and policy/practice boundaries; the construction and sharing of knowledge and the legitimacy of theory; cycles of action and reflection; transformation of practice; different models of partnership; professional learning; negotiating roles, complexities and accountabilities and sharing problems. Shared ideas on co-design, co-construction and co-production of research problems and how to remove important barriers to collaborative learning were highlighted.

Of particular interest was the question of the formal/publicly acknowledged roles and contributions assumed by individual leaders and groups as they lead urban and regional projects and places; everyday activities, motivations and relational dynamics embedded in processes of enactment of leadership; how different policy contexts shape (or frustrate/create barriers) to place leadership. We also hoped to further conceptual/definitional clarity in leadership research; bring together studies beyond the mainstream urban and regional studies, especially comparative cross-country and cross-scale research, and learn from examples of on-going 'action research' that is

stimulating novel relationships between academics/policy-makers and practitioners. It is Important to tap into a growing body of work across a wide spectrum of research activities and build on the strengths of existing descriptive and narrative accounts of place leadership.

The aim was to continue to share research undertaken by an international community of scholars and develop critical reflections and make sense of the ever changing and often contested roles of leadership in urban and regional places. It was hoped to appreciate some of the broader changes impacting on place leadership and identify gaps in knowledge and understanding.

Leadership research has been a topic of debate for centuries, though research on the topic of urban and regional leadership research is still in its infancy. There are thousands of definitions of the term leadership, yet still no agreement on what it is or how to research it. The concept encapsulates political, civic and bureaucratic/administrative, but also managerial, technocratic and professional leadership, so considerable challenges arise in exploring different conceptions and meanings in urban and regional studies. It is also difficult to assess relative strengths and weaknesses of different methodological approaches to the study of urban and regional leadership, because of the variety, differences in understanding and categorization in sub-national places. Moreover, it is important to understand what key research questions ought to be addressed, what key insights have been obtained so far with regard to these questions, which theories and methods have been employed to obtain them, and what research challenges lie ahead.

In addressing some of these key research questions, the first paper sets the scene for the contributions to follow, by emphasising global and international leadership contexts. David Marlow offers an illuminating practitioner viewpoint on how urban and local leaders navigate an impending international relations revolution. It is a very timely piece in the wake of President Donald Trump's election in the USA, the unpredictability of Kim Jong-Un's regime in North Korea, and the uncertainties post-Brexit, for the UK, European and other states beyond. In this period of intense international and global turmoil, the author adroitly urges local leaders to look outward for new opportunities and challenges, and to set in train essential measures for positioning cities and communities for long term success. Formulating and delivering an international strategy might not appear to be a top priority amidst immediate economic, societal, and financial pressures, but, Marlow argues, it must be at the forefront of leadership thinking.

This illuminating viewpoint is followed by a theoretical contribution by Martin Quinn of Leicester on place leadership and the social contract. Quinn examines the development of leadership capacity in the East Midlands in England through the lens of Social Contract Theory. Linking to Sotarauta et al's (2013) earlier call for sustainable regional development through place leadership Quinn argues that a contract with the population and business community will only be formed once local leaders are given political mandates through the local government system and are tasked with leading coherent economic regions.

Then we turn our attention towards leadership in central Europe. Oto Potluka, Judit Kalman, Ida Musiałkowska, and Piotr Idczak (University of Basel, Switzerland; Hungarian Academy of Science; and Poznań University of Economics and Business) introduce a contribution relating to non-profit leadership in local development in large cities. The high, but not fully utilized potential for co-creation is evident in post-transition societies in Central and Eastern Europe as around one third of local politicians play an active role in non-profit organisations. This engagement of local politicians in civil society sector helps to increase low social trust in these countries.

A comparative research project by Leslie Budd, Alessandro Sancino, Michela Pagani (Open University, UK), Ómar Kristmundsson (Reykjavik, Iceland), Borut Roncevic (Slovenia), and Michael Steiner (Graz, Austria) investigates city leadership patterns in sport across five European Cities. Place leadership patterns with different administrative and socio-cultural traditions allowed greater understanding of the role that context plays in shaping city leadership patterns in the policy domain of sport. Using an exploratory approach to analyse the city as a complex adaptive system, the paper investigates the main actors, structures, processes and followership patterns across different forms of city leadership (political, managerial, business and civic). The findings show that although context may or may not influence city leadership patterns it remains an essential parameter in comparative analysis. Moreover, place leadership in the policy domain of sport appears generalizable and can reinforce the transformative nature of place leadership in developing and sustaining socio-economic resilience.

Hugh Bartling (Chicago, USA) then uses climate change to assess policy leadership in the suburbs of the USA. The article assesses local climate policy in the United States through the lens of governance challenges and leadership practices. At the national level, the United States lacks a cohesive climate policy. While other countries have been developing national climate mitigation strategies, differences in partisan understanding of the issue has inhibited effective national policy making.

Given the uncertain nature of national climate policy in the United States, climate policy leadership has been most pronounced at the sub-national level. A handful of state governments have established cap-and-trade mitigation schemes and passed legislation to help municipalities develop climate plans and adaptation strategies. Many municipalities have taken advantage of these initiatives as well as developing their own climate plans without being contingent on the support of state or federal governments. This article explores some of the experiences of local climate planning in the United States and attempt to develop a framework for evaluating local leadership for local climate policy.

The final two papers are focused on the UK, but findings have wider implications for leadership of place. Dane Anderton 's paper examines the effects of changing place-based leadership when developing knowledge intensive industries in a peripheral city region. He examines the video games and life sciences industries in Liverpool City Region; both are key to the city regions knowledge economy strategy. Few studies have examined why different types of regions experience diverse path-dependent development (Isaksen, 2015), but in tracing the two high technology sectors back to their conception it became apparent that the most significant developments were between 2005 and 2015. During this period, the city region saw increased public intervention and underwent institutional change. Public and institutional leadership in the city region prior to 2010 managed to reinvigorate the industrial base and increase R&D capacity in the high technology sectors and develop institutional assets to sustain growth in the region. The change in leadership post 2010 highlighted the life science industries dependence on public leadership and support, compared with the video games industry. Anderton argues that If these sectors are to be resilient, policy makers need to improve the transition between leaders in regional development so that best practices and soft infrastructures are inherited, maintained or improved. Additionally, long-term engagement is required in developing high technology sectors such as life sciences in peripheral city regions, where pathways to market carry uncertainty and demand for a highly qualified labour market is increased.

Will Rossiter and David Smith (Nottingham Trent, UK) examined urban leadership in the Post Industrial City of Nottingham, UK. The paper develops a conceptual framework that draws on three discrete bodies of research: institutional perspectives on economic development, place leadership and public entrepreneurship. The framework is used to re-interpret the recent economic development of Nottingham (a second-tier regional city in the UK) with a particular focus on attempts to respond to the challenges of economic restructuring and de-industrialisation over the long term. Examples of public entrepreneurship are seen as forms of recursive agency

through which institutions are established and reconstituted in ways that may facilitate adaptation and path creation in local economic development.

Building on the work of Sotarauta et al (2017) and colleagues in the Regional Studies special issue all seven contributions offer research and deeper understandings of aspects of variety in urban and regional leadership, in particular the experiences of connections between multi-sectoral actors across multi-level jurisdictions and varied legal systems. All illustrate how individual and institutional actors (formally and informally) mobilise resources, broker new power relationships, advocate new ways of working, and lead urban and regional change within periods of austerity.   The limits and possibilities of place leadership are well rehearsed and generally well understood, but the papers show that there is a gap in developing data bases of comparative place leadership and a need to co-ordinate findings cross-nationally.

There are obvious transferable lessons to be learned from qualitative research methods deployed in academic disciplines beyond economic geography as leadership scholars are integrating understanding of varieties of leadership experience by drawing upon political economy, psychology, sociology, social anthropology, linguistics, and education studies. The adoption of a multi-disciplinary approach – of course with care taken to avoid theoretical and methodological confusion and inconsistency - could aid a much more extensive exploration of leadership dynamics in cities and regions over the coming years.

In terms of bringing in approaches to leadership enquiry from disciplines beyond the traditions of urban and regional studies, it is important to capture the 'doing' of leading *in situ,* and in varied places. This would help to reveal the fine detail of how leadership is enacted at the micro-level and across the ordinary and mundane everyday activities that take place in and around leaders and leading. It would also service to address the leadership development needs of those 'doing' leadership in specific places.

Adopting ethnographic and action research methods that allowed for long term longitudinal data to be gathered, could provide rich qualitative accounts of the experience of those 'doing the leading' and of those 'being led' that might help to capture less-well understood features of urban and regional development such as hidden/covert leadership and the place of 'the other' in the enactment of counter-reaction leadership, as well as the significance of emotionality and identity in subnational decision-making.

The question of hidden leadership addresses, not only to the things that senior leaders do publicly in urban/regional development, but also reflects how leaders

influence others beyond formal organisational boundaries and geographic spaces. Influencing the framing of policy and institutional design as well as setting policy parameters and 'rules of engagement' can significantly alter strategic direction and aid or frustrate strategic change. In periods of political and economic transition, where there is heightened intra- and inter-place competition for resources, or where there is economic uncertainty or social instability within and across places, hidden forms of leadership can have powerful effects on development trajectories.

The learning emerging from action research could contribute to improvements in leadership policy and practice, and inform the development of curricula and pedagogies relevant to future generations of urban and regional development leaders. Our international network should place a key role in gathering data bases of cross-national leadership in different cultures and coordination of findings and identifying the roles of individual leadership & institutional entrepreneurs/navigators who creating new rules of the game and redesign systems for achieving this. This will enable the network to better Inform policy and practice-further developing the research network's engagement with policymakers and practitioners, in an action research for leadership enquiry or engaging with practitioners in the coproduction of knowledge.

All contributions have offered a fresh focus on uncovering the relationships between three core aspects of the sub-national leadership experience – namely; i) the question of the roles and contributions (formal/publicly expressed and also sometimes hidden) of individual leaders and groups of individuals attempting to lead urban and regional projects as well as places (in order to better understand the motivations of those who seek to lead as well as the relational dynamics across and between leadership teams and how these are mediated and reconciled); ii) the everyday activities of leading (what are leaders actually doing?) and leadership processes (how is this 'leading' being enacted, by whom and with whom?); how do multi-sectoral actors connect with other actors and on what basis? and iii), the relevance and impact of different local and national contexts both in terms of how economic, social, environmental and policy context shapes (or does not) leadership approaches and how different leadership approaches might influence place-based development outcomes differently (if they do at all).

We currently lack a clear appreciation of the cultural dimension and how place leadership in varied settings engages multiple types of actors and institutions. Significant questions remain on 'What links leadership together across multiple sectors governance levels?' and 'Who are the entrepreneurial leaders who navigate and lead innovative, divergent paths to change, by redesigning novel solutions within fluid spaces for action?'. Moreover, 'How do they capture the imagination, take risks

and gain trust?' Clearly the visibility (or otherwise) and accessibility/accountability of leadership and whether or not it operates top-down or bottom up requires deeper investigation.

A number of areas of general common interest regarding future research and engagement activity surfaced in these papers, and more broadly in the research seminar, that offer possible further research agendas. These include developing a clearer thematic framing of place leadership, and identification of key variables for investigation and enquiry and identifying the missing ingredients that embed leadership, and link to resources, people, political/ economic/ social/ administrative/ environmental systems. Regional scholars need to be aware of the many different approaches to leadership drawn from other disciplines eg emancipatory, paradoxical, dynamic leadership (many others were highlighted during the event) and especially our role in linking leadership in regional studies to social and political theories.