

Preface

The role of endogenous processes in regional economic development and as potential explanatory factors in accounting for spatial variations in the pattern of regional growth and decline has been attracting increasing interest from regional scientists and from regional development policy-makers and practitioners.

Among researchers there are a range of perspectives on endogeneity and endogenous regional growth processes. There are challenges in developing suitable measures of endogenous regional growth and in building and implementing operational models to analyse endogenous regional development and growth across spatial systems. It is also important for research to generate in-depth analysis of endogenous processes at the scale of the local region to enhance our understanding of the different contextual bases in which endogenous processes occur in local regional economic development.

The chapters in this book address these important issues. They are based on papers presented at an international workshop on 'Regional Endogenous Development: Measurement, Models and Empirical Investigation' held at The University of Queensland's Customs House facility in downtown Brisbane, Australia, in February 2008. It was hosted by the Australian Research Council Research Network in Spatially Integrated Social Science, with financial assistance from the Australian government's Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics. The workshop brought together researchers in regional science from around the world to address these issues.

The workshop was one of many held over the last decade in which a small international group of about 20 to 25 established and emerging researchers come together to discuss topics relating to regional economic development, with an emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship. The workshops have been held under the banner of the Tinbergen Institute (named after the Nobel Laureate in Economics) and are normally held in Amsterdam. The workshops are sponsored by the Tinbergen Institute; the Department of Spatial Economics at The Free University, Amsterdam; the School of Public Policy at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, USA; and the Australian Research Council Research Network in Spatially Integrated Social Science.

This book is, we believe, a unique contribution to the growing literature that addresses endogenous issues in regional economic development in that it deliberately presents a series of different disciplinary perspectives on endogeneity and the nature and role of endogenous factors in regional development and growth. Those contributions come from the perspective of an economist, a geographer, a sociologist, a planner and a researcher in organizational management/social psychology. In addition, the book includes chapters in which researchers explore new frameworks to model endogenous regional development, focusing on a range of factors including regional resource endowments, entrepreneurship and institutional factors. Contributions to the book also include empirical investigations conducted at a variety of levels of spatial scale, from cross-national mega-regional level of scale, to the national level of scale, to the city level of scale and the local small town level of scale.

We thank the participants in the Brisbane workshop for their participation in the processes leading to the publication of this book, which we hope will attract the interest of researchers, students and practitioners in regional science and regional development. The financial and other assistance of the sponsors of the Brisbane workshop is gratefully acknowledged. And we are indebted to the Edward Elgar team for their encouragement to produce this book and for that publisher's ongoing commitment to publishing research in regional science.

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