



The Oxford Handbook of Local and Regional Democracy in Europe (Oxford Handbooks)

By John Loughlin, Frank Hendriks, Anders Lidstrom

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The Oxford Handbook of Local and Regional Democracy in Europe analyses the state of play of democracy at the subnational level in the 27 member states of the EU plus Norway and Switzerland. It places subnational democracy in the context of the distinctive Anglo, the French, the German, and Scandinavian state traditions in Europe asking to what extent these are still relevant today. The *Handbook* adapts Lijphart's theory of democracy and applies it to the subnational levels in all the country chapters. A key theoretical issue is whether subnational (regional and local) democracy is derived from national democracy or whether it is legitimate in its own right. Besides these theoretical concerns it focuses on the practice of democracy: the roles of political parties and interest groups and also how subnational political institutions relate to the ordinary citizen. This can take the form of local referendums or other mechanisms of participation. The *Handbook* reveals a wide variety of practices across Europe in this regard. Local financial systems also reveal a great variety. Finally, each chapter examines the challenges facing subnational democracy but also the opportunities available to them to enhance their democratic systems. Among the challenges identified are: Europeanization, globalization, but also citizens disaffection and switch-off from politics. Some countries have confronted these challenges more successfully than others but all countries face them. An important aspect of the *Handbook* is the inclusion of all the countries of East and Central Europe plus Cyprus and Malta, who joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. This is the first time they have been examined alongside the countries of Western Europe from the angle of subnational democracy.

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- Sales Rank: #3862523 in Books
- Published on: 2012-12-29
- Released on: 2012-12-29
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.70" h x 1.90" w x 9.70" l, 3.10 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 816 pages

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Review

"A high-quality team of experts on the different member-countries have produced thorough, clear and well-documented surveys of the state of territorial politics within every state of the Union, and the collection is held together by strong editorial guidance and a lucid and incisive theoretical overview. Accessible to both specialists and readers with more general interests, this work is an essential reference for anyone interested in the changing patterns of the contemporary state."--David Hanley, Professor Emeritus of European Studies, Cardiff University, and Visiting Professor, Centre for European and International Studies, University of Portsmouth

"The impressive *Handbook* on local democracy in Europe is an invaluable source of precise data about 29 countries, but also makes strong claims about transnational trends and typologies. . . it also stresses the "hybrid" nature of most states now when seen from below. It makes a powerful case for understanding democracy and its transformation beyond the nation state by precisely reviewing the implementation of direct democracy instruments and forms of political participation. Territory strongly matters if we are to understand European democracies, the Handbook eloquently makes the point."--Patrick Le Galès, Research Professor of Politics and Sociology, Sciences Po/CNRS, Centre d'études européennes

About the Author

John Loughlin is author and editor of over twenty books and numerous articles and book chapters on European territorial governance. He is an expert of the Council of Europe's Committee of Independent Experts on Regional and Local Democracy and chaired the Advisory Committee of Experts on Effective Decentralization of UN-Habitat. He has acted as advisor on territorial governance to the European Union, the UK government and other agencies. In 2009 he was invited by the French Senate to contribute to its reflections on reform of French subnational government. He is Professor of European Politics at Cardiff University. He also holds Visiting positions at Oxford, Cambridge, Umea University, and the Institut d'Etudes Politiques Aix-en-Provence as well as numerous other appointments.

Frank Hendriks deals with cross-border comparison of policies and governance systems, including the comparative analysis of democratic and decisionmaking models at the national and the subnational level. He has conducted extensive research, partly commissioned by public bodies, on governance and democracy at the local, regional, national, and European level. He is member of various (international) research networks and editorial boards. He has published in international journals such as *Public Administration*; *Democratization*; *International Journal of Public Administration*; *Innovation*; *Local Government Studies*; *Administrative Theory and Praxis*; *GeoJournal*; *Dutch Crossing*; *Verwaltungsarchiv*; *Journal of Crises and Contingencies*, *International Review of Administrative Sciences*. He is Professor of Comparative Governance

at Tilburg University, the Netherlands.

Anders Lidstrom's research focuses on local politics and government, comparative politics, and education policy. This includes studies of local democracy and self-government, both within Sweden and in a comparative perspective. Current research includes comparative studies of local government systems, and studies of democracy and political participation in city-regions. He has also carried out research on education policy, with a particular focus on how this is shaped at the local level. He is Professor of Politics, University of Umea, Sweden.

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