Handbook on Urban Social Policies
International Perspectives on Multilevel Governance and Local Welfare

Research Handbooks in Urban Studies series

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The importance of subnational welfare measures, and their complex embeddedness in wider multilevel governance systems, has often been underplayed in both urban studies and social policy analysis. This Handbook gives readers the analytical tools to understand urban social policies in context, and bridges the gap in research.

‘Urban contexts have been major sites for the emergence of new social risks and the reconfiguration of welfare in terms of actors, governance and modes of provision. This impressive Handbook elucidates ongoing transformations, through a collection of up-to-date analyses and a path breaking dialogue between different disciplinary perspectives’
– Maurizio Ferrera, University of Milan, Italy

‘The rich contributions of this book offer a complex view of the dynamics which shape local social policies, in the interaction between context specificity, diversity ad multiplicity of actors, national and international regulations. The multidisciplinary approach and its implementation on an ample range of context and time specific cases integrates and goes beyond literatures that have developed in isolation from each other, opening new avenues for research.’
– Chiara Saraceno, Collegio Carlo Alberto, Turin, Italy

‘Emphasizing the territorial nature of social policy and the key role of cities for social inclusion, this Handbook contributes directly to the field of comparative social policy studies. Gathering excellent contributors, it is an indispensable reference volume for students of multilevel governance and local social policy.’
– Daniel Béland, McGill University, Canada

‘It has long been assumed that social welfare is, and should be, a matter for the centralized nation-state. Yet, as this collection shows, the restructuring of welfare and rescaling of social, economic and political life have created both new forms of inequality and new policies to address them. Problems have been redefined, power dynamics have shifted and policy-making systems transformed to create place-specific welfare compromises. The book charts the broad trends to centralisation and decentralisation in social policies while providing contextual analysis of their varied impact in different places.’
– Michael Keating, Emeritus Professor of Politics, University of Aberdeen, UK

‘This terrific volume gives voice to leading European thinkers in conversation with peers from the U.S., Southern Africa, Brazil, China, and Japan about building on the crucial insight that social welfare policies vary as much within national systems as across them. Even in centralized systems, urban delivery practices put a strong stamp on the deployment of social policy instruments and their impact on place-based constituencies. The authors show that the centralization–decentralization dynamic is central to understanding how welfare states function worldwide, and this is a necessary conversation that needs to happen.’
– Yuri Kazepov, Professor of Urban Sociology, University of Vienna, Austria

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and that transcending its discontents will be central to protecting the vulnerable from new social risks. The product of years of collaboration, this Handbook sets the agenda for future thinking about social policy in our precarious urban worlds.'
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