

Chapter 14

REVISITING NEO-ENDOGENOUS RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Rural development policy discourse has shifted considerably during recent decades, increasingly supporting participatory models of governance and differentiated understandings of what constitutes 'rural policy'. Drawing on classic texts, primarily dealing with the European experience, this chapter explores shifting narratives of ideal paradigms of rural development policy across exogenous and endogenous *models*, and eventually towards neo-endogenous *approaches*. We argue that while neo-endogenous development has offered exciting imaginations to understand power structures and the dynamic of networks in support of rural development and planning, it could be further advanced through adopting explicit reflexive lenses. Against this backdrop, we conclude by pointing to the role of hybrid research-practice networks, interdisciplinary methodologies and international comparative research for ensuring reflexivity and for testing the transferability of neo-endogenous thinking across different contexts and beyond the rural domain.

INTRODUCTION

The quest for a comprehensive rural development theory has been long. Various efforts have emerged focusing primarily on the governance mechanisms of rural development as well as the priorities of rural policy remits, across a mosaic of production and consumption interests, and the characteristics of rural areas. What all attempts towards a theory have in common is the acceptance that it is vital to understand how things work in practice, suggesting a more discursive approach to the production of rural development knowledge. As van der Ploeg et al. (2000: 391) point out:

The hard core of what constitutes the essence of rural development will emerge as the strength, scope and impact of current *rural development practices* become clear. Much will depend on the capacity of scholars to develop an empirically grounded theory.

In this context, this chapter reviews attempts to engineer rural development theory from the early modernisation project of exogenous rural development to more 'bottom-up' models encapsulated by the concept of endogenous development, and eventually towards a neo-endogenous approach. The chapter offers critical insights for developing such approaches based on more recent contributions (for example Bock's suggestion of nexogenous rural development), and less desired practices observed in rural planning policy (for example Gkartzios and Scott's observations of pseudo-endogenous development in a housing context). It is argued that neo-endogenous thinking can move forward through an explicitly reflexive approach in the production of knowledge on rural development, facilitated by practices such as networks across polity and the academy, interdisciplinary methodologies and international comparative research.

EXOGENOUS MODEL

In the post-World War II period in Europe, a modernisation model of rural development emerged, usually termed 'exogenous' rural studies (i.e., 'derived from outside'), with its key characteristics described in Table 14.1. In this model, rural areas were treated as dependent (technically, culturally and economically) on urban centres, while the main function of rural areas was to provide food for the ever expanding urban populations (Lowe et al. 1998). Lowe et al. (1995: 89) criticise various assumptions in the exogenous model, which operated within a narrow productivist policy frame:

The spatial category of rural was often viewed as a residual category and became equated with the sectoral category of agriculture.

Table 14.1: Exogenous model of rural development (Lowe et al. 1998, p. 7)

Key principle	Economies of scale and concentration
Dynamic force	Urban growth poles. The main forces of development conceived as emanating from outside rural areas
Function of rural areas	Food and other primary production for the expanding urban economy
Major rural area problems	Low productivity and peripherality
Focus of rural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agricultural industrialisation and specialisation – Encouragement of labour and capital mobility

As a consequence, a discourse around marginality and peripherality was often used to address and seek solutions to rural development problems. This 'rural pathology' is often witnessed in European policy of the time, particularly in the first phase of this model which refers to the consolidation of farm structures (such as land reforms), land improvement schemes (such as drainage and irrigation) and the development of farm-oriented infrastructure. The second phase acknowledges a new focus on attracting new types of employment to rural areas, for example through tourism, supporting firms to relocate in rural settings and by investing in transportation and communication links between urban and rural areas (Lowe et al., 1995).

Woods (2005) argues that exogenous rural development had its successes, such as increased employment rates in rural areas, improvements in technology, communication and infrastructure as well as combating prolonged rural depopulation in certain cases. However, he criticises this model on the grounds that, first, exogenous development is dependent on external investment (and consequently the profits of the development are often exported and not diffused locally) and, secondly, that the non-participatory nature of the model can create a democratic deficit. Similar concerns have been expressed by many social scientists (see for example Mitchell and Madden, 2014; van der Ploeg et al., 2000). In summary exogenous approaches to development have been heavily criticised for promoting the following (Lowe et al. 1998):

- *dependent* development, reliant on continued subsidies and the policy decision of distant agencies or boardrooms;
- *distorted* development, which boosts single sectors, selected settlements and certain types of business, but leaves others behind and neglects non-economic aspects of rural life;
- *destructive* development, as it erases the cultural and environmental differences of rural areas; and,
- *dictated* development, as it is devised by external experts and planners.

ENDOGENOUS MODEL

These criticisms eventually found expression in rural development policy which sought to address not only the productivist myopia of rural policies, but also the top-down governance in which they were framed. In particular, a fundamental shift has characterised rural policy, from sectoral supports (predominantly about agriculture) to territorial development and spatial approaches (Moseley 1997, 2000; Shortall and Shucksmith 2001; OECD 2006). While the position of agriculture in rural development is still pre-eminent for many countries (van der Ploeg and Renting, 2000), this has been in relative decline (Woods, 2005), thus eroding the

distinctiveness of rural economies. Indeed, in some contexts, such as the UK, urban and rural economies are broadly similar in composition, with differentiation *across* rural areas being of greater significance (OECD, 2011). Parallel to these changes, the emergent policy discourse advocates that territorial approaches should integrate the delivery of separate sectoral dimensions of public policy (agriculture, housing, employment creation, transport, etc.) and offer a holistic approach to balancing the economic, social and environmental processes that shape rural areas (these themes are also discussed by Lapping and Scott, in Chapter 3 of this Companion).

Examples of such multi-sectoral and multi-scalar initiatives can be seen in many countries (for example, in Japan: OECD, 2016; in Chile: OECD, 2014). In Europe, since the 1990s, much of the focus in rural development practice has been targeted on local action and endogenous ('emerging from within') development initiatives, exemplified by the European Union's LEADER Programme (*Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale*) (EC, 2006). In practice, LEADER put at the heart of the development process autonomous local action groups (LAGs) 'working in partnership' across public, private and voluntary sectors (Edwards et al., 2001). The essential elements of this approach to rural development are identified by researchers such as Moseley (1997) and Ray (2000) and include: a territorial and integrated focus; the use of local resources; and local contextualisation through active public participation. As Picchi (1994: 195) argues endogenous development is to be understood as 'local development produced mainly by local impulses and grounded largely on local resources' (cited in Lowe et al., 1995).

In this context of policy transformation, social scientists were faced with the challenge to provide useful models of social science theory to capture these trends. As Lowe et al. (1995: 91) observe, 'the switch from a concern with exogenous to endogenous development strategies has been driven by practical realities and not by theory' (see also van der Ploeg et al., 2000). Neither was there a simple switch from one to the other: endogenous approaches (such as LEADER) sat beside exogenous approaches (such as most of the CAP).

Endogenous development draws attention to the distinction between local and external actors having *control* of the development process (Lowe et al., 1995) with the endogenous model favouring a 'mosaic' of local action (Ray, 2006). According to Ray (1997) an endogenous approach to rural development has the three following main characteristics:

- It sets development activity within a territorial rather than sectoral framework, with the scale of territory being smaller than the nation
- Economic and other development activity is restructured in ways so as to maximise the retention of benefits within the local territory by valorising and exploiting local resources – both physical and human
- Development is contextualised by focusing on the needs, capacities and perspectives of local people

Similarly, Lowe et al. (1998) summarise the characteristics of the endogenous model of rural development as shown in Table 14.2.

Table 14.2: Endogenous model of rural development (Lowe et al. 1998: 11)

Key principle	The specific resources of an area (natural, human and cultural) hold the key to its sustainable development
Dynamic force	Local initiative and enterprise
Function of rural areas	Diverse service economies
Major rural area problems	The limited capacity of areas and social groups to participate in economic and development activity
Focus of rural development	– Capacity building (skills, institutions and infrastructure) – Overcoming social exclusion

The discourse of endogenous/exogenous development has been criticised, not least because it creates a 'development dichotomy' (Lowe et al., 1998), but also because it fails to appreciate wider links and power struggles throughout the development process (drawing on Whatmore,

1994). Indeed, the endogenous model in principle implies a very different style of policy, dependent on a significant transfer of power away from centrally defined top-down policy, towards participative, community-led action. However, in practice, while endogenous approaches became the norm in rural development policy prescription across Europe (Ray 2000), the LEADER experience has typically demonstrated problems of participation, elitism and the limitations of local action and control (e.g. Barke and Newton 1997; Storey 1999; Bosworth et al., 2016). Shucksmith, for example, argues that '[...] there is a tendency for endogenous development initiatives to favour those who are already powerful and articulate, and who already enjoy a greater capacity to act and to engage with the initiative' (2000: 215). Similar concerns have been expressed by many social scientists in various European contexts (Kovach, 2000; Osti, 2001; Shortall, 2008). The result is often mixed outcomes. For example, Navarro et al. (2016) recently identified limited participation of marginal groups such as unemployed people and young people in LEADER programmes, but increased engagement of women who have been traditionally underrepresented in rural development fora. Certain policy areas such as agricultural production policy, taxation and transport infrastructure policy remain strongly exogenous in their outlook. This is also the case with housing. For example, a property-led regeneration policy through tax incentives in the Republic of Ireland, aimed to repopulate a marginal rural region through sponsoring private housing construction. The policy was developed outside mainstream rural development channels and was top-down in its conception, monitoring and implementation despite the evidence of bottom-up rural policy approaches in the Republic of Ireland (Gkartzios and Norris, 2011).

Even where policy delivery embraces an endogenous rhetoric, it can have adverse effects on rural localities. In a rural planning context for example, in the Republic of Ireland again, a policy that supported local people's housing needs included specific measures devised to support the construction of new private houses in the countryside on the basis of local need criteria such as bloodline, residency, language requirements, etc. in keeping with notions of housing development associated with healthy, diverse and growing rural communities (Gkartzios and Scott, 2009, 2014; Scott, 2012). However, the particular policy in practice has been associated with a clientelist system of local governance and corruption, and has been criticised for

contributing to unsustainable rural settlement patterns with associated environmental, social and economic costs, as well as for supporting inequality of access to rural housing. For this reason, Gkartzios and Scott (2014) present such policies as pseudo-endogenous development. Similar adverse effects have been described in Britain, when rural planning policies ostensibly aim to prioritise the needs of local people, but which usually result in favouring only certain, and more powerful, social groups (Satsangi et al., 2010; Shucksmith, 1981).

FROM *MODELS* TO *APPROACHES*: THE NEO-ENDOGENOUS THINKING

The increased influence of external pressures and actors on rural areas has been recognised by Brunori and Rossi (2007), who highlight the role of capital, consumers and regulatory bodies in shaping rural localities through processes of economic globalisation. Similarly, Woods (2007), developing the ideas of a 'globalised countryside', explores how local and global forces reconstitute rural spaces within an extremely differentiated geography, producing hybrid relations. Within this context of a globalised rural economy, it has been argued that endogenous development is not a realistic paradigm. For Ward et al. (2005: 5) for example:

The notion of local rural areas pursuing socio-economic development autonomously of outside influences (whether globalization, external trade or governmental or EU action) may be an ideal but is not a practical proposition in contemporary Europe.

It was consequently suggested that there is a need for a hybrid model that goes 'beyond endogenous and exogenous modes', by focusing on the dynamic interactions between local areas and their wider political and other institutional, trading and natural environments' (Ray 2001: 3–4). Drawing on network analysis (e.g. Dicken and Thrift, 1992; Cooke and Morgan, 1993) and local/non local hybrids (e.g. Amin, 1993), original conceptualisations were made by Lowe et al. (1995: 104) to consider hybrid local development narratives too:

We should, however, recognise and indeed celebrate interconnections between areas and between networks. Then the pressing task becomes studying associations and links as sets of power relations. The object of this analysis should be to ascertain where inequalities and asymmetries within networks lead to a weakening of already weak actors in peripheral or declining areas.

Ray (2001) eventually proposed the term neo-endogenous development to describe an approach to rural development that is locally rooted, but outward-looking and characterised by dynamic interactions between local areas and their wider environments. Ray (2001: 8–9) argues that neo-endogenous development:

[...] requires us to recognize that development based on local resources and local participation can, in fact, be animated from three possible directions, separately or together. First, it can be animated by actors *within* the local area. Second, it can be animated *from above* as national governments and/or the EU respond to the logic of contemporary political administrative ideology. Third it can be animated from *the intermediate level*, particularly by non-governmental organizations which see in endogenous development the means by which to pursue their particular agendas. The manifestation of neo-endogenous development in any territory will be the result of various combinations of the *from the above* and *intermediate level* sources interacting with the local level.

Neo-endogenous development was thus a perspective on the governance of rural development. It was not a policy prescription devised by social scientists at the time on how development should work in practice. In fact social scientists were late in recognising the potential of rural areas to steer or inflect development pathways to their own advantage:

The so called population turn-around and the urban-rural employment shift surprised policy makers as much as academics. While social scientists have struggled to come to terms with the meaning and significance of these empirical trends, development agencies have realised that rural areas and regions may possess a growth potential of their own just waiting to be unlocked (Lowe et al. 1995: 92)

Various works have illustrated the networked nature of knowledge production, contrary to a hierarchical and unidirectional transfer from the academy to policy circles, acknowledging that knowledge is not the exclusive reserve of academics (Lowe and Philipson, 2006; Shortall, 2012). In this context, neo-endogenous development was an effort to rationalise what was actually happening on the ground, a way of thinking about how things work in practice, accepting that rural development knowledge is produced by various agents.

Neo-endogenous thinking embraces the previous endogenous model, in the way for example that rural development is multi-sectoral, 'territorial' and moves this forward by focusing on networks, realising that the development potential requires the merging of both internal and external networks (see also Bosworth et al., 2016). From a planning perspective, this advocates institutional integration (local, regional, national and European) and brokering connections between town and country and new urban-rural and local- global relationships (Scott and Murray 2009), ideas well embedded in spatial planning practice (Albrechts et al., 2010; Zonneveld and Stead; Davoudi and Stead, 2002). A neo-endogenous approach suggested by Gkartzios and Scott (2014) (drawing on the earlier models described by Lowe et al., 1998), is presented in Table 14.3. The authors here drew particular attention to rural development research, calling for more international comparative perspectives in rural studies, as most research on endogenous and exogenous models has been primarily conducted on a single country and case study basis. More critically, the authors observe that where internationally comparative projects have emerged, these have primarily focused on North American and European experiences.

Table 14.3: Neo-Endogenous model of rural development (Gkartzios and Scott, 2014: 11)

Key principle	Socio-spatial justice and balancing local needs while competing for extra-local people, resources, skills and capital
Dynamic force	Fostering a new urban-rural and local-global relationship through inclusive, multi-scalar and multi-sectoral governance arrangements
Function of rural areas	– Sustaining rural livelihoods, while maintaining natural capital

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A mosaic of re-emerging productivist functions and consumerist uses (including housing, services)
Major rural area problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Exclusive countrysides – Neoliberal deregulation versus policy apathy and lack of regulation – Climate change challenges – Economic crisis
Focus of rural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Place-making and community wellbeing – Building resilient rural places – Coping with the new politics of austerity – Coping with emerging geographies of exclusion and (im)mobility triggered by economic crises – Realising and valorising alternatives to development (especially non neoliberal) in times of crisis
Focus of rural development research	International comparative analysis, dialogues and shared lessons (inclusive of, but not exclusive to the USA/EU contexts)

Various theoretical and policy applications have been described within this hybrid neo-endogenous context, trying to understand local and extra-local agency in rural governance and development processes. This has ranged from the role of universities in rural development through the creation and support of a research-practice rural network (Atterton and Thompson, 2010), to the role of architects in designing affordable and vernacular houses in the countryside (Donovan and Gkartzios, 2014). Special attention has been given to in-migrants in rural areas as extra-local agents of neo-endogenous development given their contributions to local identity, knowledge and skills, even though in terms of employment they might generate few full-time jobs for locals (see contributions by: Steel and Mitchell, 2017; Mitchell and Madden, 2014; Atterton et al., 2011; Bosworth and Atterton, 2012). In the context of innovative service network

technologies that support planning practice, Tolón-Becerra et al. (2010) propose a knowledge exchange model for the co-construction of local development plans following neo-endogenous principles. More recent work has also looked at art practice through a neo-endogenous lens, in the ways that art practice supports the merging of local and extra local networks facilitating an understanding of community-nature relations and/or even fractures (Crawshaw and Gkartziros, 2016). Bock (2016), drawing on the concept of social innovation, describes the opportunity it offers in understanding the shifting nature of local and non-local development agents, who in turn produce more nuanced understandings of place, beyond the local and the rural that have occupied development thinking thus far. She makes the case for a new approach to rural development in the particular context of marginal rural areas (see also chapter 9 of this Companion), introduced as a *nexogenous approach*, that:

[...] departs from the importance of reconnecting and binding together forces across space. It borrows from the Latin noun '*nexus*' for bond and the Latin verb '*nectere*' for binding together. It underlines the importance of reconnection and re-established socio-political connectivity of especially marginal rural areas. The linkage and collaboration across space give access to exogenous resources, which allow for vitalisation if matched with endogenous forces. The development of marginal areas is seriously hampered if social innovation is understood simply as self-help and an indication that marginal rural areas have to rescue themselves. Then, social innovation reconfirms their material, symbolic and political disconnection (Bock 2016: 570).

What these contributions demonstrate, *inter alia*, is that the demand for a single, all-inclusive model or theory of rural development is no longer a requirement or a realistic expectation. Diverse approaches will emerge given the unique cultural and knowledge linkages emerging in different spatial contexts. In all cases, however, there is an explicit focus on the creation, valorisation and continuation of both local and extra-local networks that facilitate knowledge exchange that create opportunities for the benefit of rural areas.

CONCLUSIONS: KNOWLEDGE AND THE QUEST FOR REFLEXIVITY

Exogenous and endogenous 'ideal' models were somewhat, but not equally, naïve in trying to theorise the rural development process. What both models lacked was (self) reflexivity concerning the actors involved in local development as well as their agency, although the endogenous model and associated rural development practice (i.e. the LEADER programme) were relatively pioneering in transferring – with observed limitations – power from central experts to local communities. The contribution of the neo-endogenous thesis was not to present a *model* of development but rather a *way* of thinking about rural development and understanding how things work on the ground. Research on neo-endogenous development approaches has thus drawn attention to power struggles centred on the interactions of local and non-local actors in steering the development potential of rural areas. An example of understanding the terrain of power in rural development processes is provided by notion of the 'differentiated countryside' which, drawing on England, offered a new rural 'non-typology' of understanding the development trajectories of rural areas and the associated positionality of various actors (farmers, landowners, in-migrants, commuters, the state, etc.) (Murdoch et al., 2003).

Implicitly at least, neo-endogenous thinking constitutes a reflexive practice which requires and embraces the involvement of multiple actors (including academics too) and seeks to understand their positionality on the development of rural areas. Central to this practice of neo-endogenous thinking is the ability to (self) reflect on one's own disciplinary perspectives and agency in the production of knowledge in support of rural policy-making. Despite numerous contributions to neo-endogenous practices in Europe and elsewhere, what remains absent in these debates is reflexivity on the role of the academy and in particular of social scientists in the production of rural development policy discourse. Power struggles regarding competing forms of knowledge is not a new proposition in the rural domain (see Shortall, 2012). The model of knowledge transfer where social scientists produce theories that are consequently applied in practice by policy

makers is long gone (Lowe and Philipson, 2006); however, what is less evidenced is an appetite to produce reflexive discourses, across multiple rural development stakeholders who contribute to rural development debates.

To understand reflexivity we draw attention here to the pioneering works of Schön, who views reflection as 'a dialogue of thinking and doing through which I become more skilled' (Schön, 1983: 31). Schön's reflective model involves: the construction of personal meaning from knowledge and experience; the quest, participation and analysis of feedback; the evaluation of one's skills, attitudes and knowledge; and the identification and exploration of new possibilities for professional action (Schön, 1983; 1987). The quest for a model for reflection has been further developed by other social scientists particularly in pedagogy, due to the discipline's need to continue developing from practical experience (see also Kolb, 1984; Brookfield, 1995). However, these contributions of experiential learning offer original insights into understanding the continuous co-construction of knowledge in the rural development process. In line with neo-endogenous thinking, these contributions highlight that reflection does not only occur within the self, or within particular actors, but also requires actors to continuously seek feedback, to understand other actors' experiences, and to question attitudes and accepted behaviours. It is in fact a combination of such experiences that both constitute and produce reflexivity. Central to such a reflexive approach is social scientists' understanding of their own agency in producing narratives and knowledges about rural development. This requires an open discussion about the nature of reflexivity, how it is an essential element in the co-construction of knowledge and expertise, and how it can be engaged in development policy.

Ways to promote reflexivity within neo-endogenous thinking have been described in the literature, implicitly or explicitly perhaps, and include at least: first, research-practice rural development networks (such as the experiences of the Rural Learning Network of Central and Western New York co-ordinated by Cornell University in the US; the Northern Rural Network co-ordinated by Newcastle University in the UK; see also Atterton and Thompson, 2010); secondly,

interdisciplinary methodological synergies between different social scientists, and also between natural and social scientists working in rural development contexts (see Lowe and Philipson, 2006; 2009); and, thirdly, international comparative research (Gkartzios and Scott, 2014; Lowe, 2012). Comparative research is particularly important not only for the transfer of knowledge or lesson sharing as it is commonly argued, but, more critically, because it mirrors and challenges one's own assumptions about the development process (Gkartzios and Shucksmith, 2015). All these channels of production of knowledge are essential elements of neo-endogenous thinking as they promote a culture of reflexivity challenging normative thinking, own agency and power dynamics. They all are networked approaches too in the way they require collaboration with multiple actors who may hold different forms of knowledge. The continuous co-production of discourse on *what* is and *how* to do rural development, as well as the transfer of lessons across different cultural and/or rural contexts rests within these reflexive platforms.

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