Labor and regional development in the U.S.A.: Building a high road infrastructure in Buffalo, New York*

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In a country where worker representatives lack broadly institutionalized roles as “social partners,” how can they play a constructive role in solving the problems of regional development? In Buffalo, New York, regularized, labor-inclusive procedures of problem solving involving multiple coalition partners – what we call a high-road social infrastructure – has emerged. Socially engaged researchers and educators have played a role in spreading lessons and organizing dialogue. Despite the emergence of regional cooperation, however, successful development politics are hampered by many of the same problems seen in European regions, including uncertainty about the best union strategy, hostility from business and political elites and the enormity of the region’s long-term structural problems.

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