



Regional Science and Economic Development: Synergies, Insights, and Opportunities

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Abstract

Economic development has traditionally been examined through national or sectoral lenses, with regional variations often overlooked. Yet, spatial disparities in economic growth, innovation, and resilience highlight the importance of considering regions as key units of analysis (Lu, 2024). Regional science and economic development fields share a common goal: understanding the dynamics of growth, inequality, and policy effectiveness (Capello and Nijkamp, 2019; Malizia et al., 2020). Despite these shared objectives, researchers focusing on economic development often do not consider regional science a natural academic home.

There is growing evidence that local spatial context matters in shaping economic development outcomes. Regional characteristics, such as infrastructure, local governance quality, innovation networks, cultural norms, historical legacies (Nunn, 2020), and human capital (Faggian et al., 2019), are pivotal in determining how regions develop (McCann, 2019; Amin, 1999). Furthermore, geography plays a key role in determining economic behavior, and much of the discussion on the performance of local, urban, or regional economies is fundamental to the relationship between geography and the economy (McCann, 2013).

In the emerging, increasingly polycentric world of regions (Katzenstein, 1993; Voskresenski, 2019), another 'location' aspect gains significance: a region's position within the global value chain. Glocalization's uneven and non-linear process (Robertson, 1992) is strongly tied to the dynamics of economic development.

The relative importance of regions is also hampered as supranational entities increasingly choose local levels, rather than states, as counterparts for implementing targeted development strategies (Greenwood, 2001; De Lombarde et al., 2012).

Understanding how and why regions grow in light of their geography and function is essential for designing effective development strategies. If regional characteristics

influence economic outcomes, policies must be tailored to these spatial features to foster equitable growth (Barca et al., 2012).

This special session aims to foster in-depth discussions among development economists, political scientists, and regional scientists, emphasizing the compatibility of these fields and the mutual benefits of enhanced collaboration.

The session welcomes (but is not limited to) work dealing with:

- **Spatial inequalities** and their impact on economic development outcomes;
- **Urban-rural dynamics** and their implications for development policy;
- **Place-based policy interventions** and their effectiveness in reducing regional disparities;
- Mechanisms and local determinants in **resource allocation**;
- **Regional innovation systems** and their role in driving economic growth;
- Regions in the **Global Value Chain (GVC)**;
- **Local governance and leadership** in shaping regional outcomes.

Although primarily focused on quantitative and applied research, the session welcomes research papers that explore theoretical frameworks and case studies.

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