



Special Session Proposal

Regional Growth Against All Odds

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Abstract

Increasing polarisation between economically successful and less-favoured regions, as well as climate change call for novel strategies promoting structural changes in regions. However, the dominant theories and models in economic geography and regional development studies advance mainly structural explanations, and questions related to agency often remain in shadows. Studies connecting agency and structure in regional development are rare.

Simultaneously, the rapidly expanding stream of studies focusing on regional path development recognises that translating insights from studying historic development paths to the ways and conditions of conscious path development requires a more robust theoretical and conceptual link between agency and structures.

In the special session, we focus especially on non-core regions that require ways to grow against all the structural odds, i.e. regions in which agency may be essential to overcome structural disadvantages. The basic premise is that conceptually and empirically rigorous studies on agency will add analytical leverage into this field of enquiry.

The main purpose of the special session is to advance understanding of the role of agency in the economic, social and environmental transformation of regions by assembling a novel collection of articles. The special session aims to stimulate refreshed and critical reflections around the relationship between agency and structure in the context of regional path development.

The special session has three key objectives: (1) to advance a theory of agency and structure in regional development, (2) to introduce novel methodological approaches that shed new light on causal relationships between agency and structure over time, and (3) to provide solid empirical evidence on the interplay between agency and structure within and across different territorial contexts.