



Call for Papers – Special Issue of the Review of Regional Research

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Policy options for lagging regions – effects, new approaches and emerging challenges

Regional disparities have recently received increasing attention in public and scientific debates because they are thought to explain at least partly the phenomenon of rising populism (Rodríguez-Pose 2018). These debates have also sparked renewed interest in (placed-based) policies that aim at promoting growth in lagging regions and reducing regional disparities. The European Union and many highly developed countries spend a significant share of their budget on policies that are supposed to foster development in structurally weak areas. Various approaches and measures have been applied in this context. However, robust evidence on the effects of these policies is still scarce and findings are ambiguous (Brachert et al. 2019, Rodríguez-Pose 2018). Moreover, the effectiveness of placed-based policies seem to differ across regions eligible for assistance (Becker et al. 2013).

Persistent regional disparities in many countries and regional policy measures that seem to produce mixed results so far suggest a revision of conventional development strategies. Moreover, new challenges for regional policy emerge as labour supply declines due to demographic change in many lagging regions and the EU Commission proposes to modernize regional policy for the 2021-2027 programming period. The need to rethink development strategies for structurally weak areas calls for a comprehensive knowledge base on the effects of different policy measures. Theory and robust empirical evidence on the effectiveness of various instruments should inform the design of new policies. This special issue aims to contribute to the required knowledge base and to provide new evidence on the effects of different policies that are applied to foster development in lagging and declining regions. Potential topics include (but are not limited to):

- Causal effects of (placed-based) policies on different (regional) outcomes
- Heterogeneous responses to regional policy measures
- Different impact channels of regional policy
- Role of mediating factors such as local institutions for the effectiveness of policy measures
- Adapting regional development strategies to emerging challenges caused e.g. by demographic change and changes in EU policies

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Literature

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- Brachert, M.; Dettmann, E.; Titze, M. (2019): The regional effects of a place-based policy – Causal evidence from Germany. *Regional Science and Urban Economics* 79: 103483.
- Rodríguez-Pose, A. (2018) The revenge of the places that don't matter (and what to do about it). *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 11(1), S. 189-209.