Responses to peripheralisation

A literature review on bottom-up strategies by enterprises, social enterprises and households

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Background

Existing theories on spatial polarisation tend to focus on macro-explanations and focus on structural processes and the socioeconomic effects, while often disregarding local strategies and rooms for manoeuvre.

Objectives

The aim of the paper was to identify and review existing literature that uses a bottom-up approach to peripheralisation, focusing on social enterprises, and households in peripheral areas. The questions guided the analysis:

- How is *peripheralisation* defined in the literature?
- What bottom-up *strategies* to deal with peripheralisation do scholars identify?
- How is the *outcome* of these strategies evaluated?

Contribution to RegPol²

The literature review is part of WP3; it is meant to provide PhD students in the work package with an overview of existing approaches and widen their conceptual perspectives. It also identifies key questions that they will need to take into consideration.

What strategies do local actors develop to deal with peripheralisation?

Main results

Studies identify different strategies to deal with peripheralisation including: local and extra-local networking activities, learning processes, social capital and local support systems.

There are significant differences in how they evaluate the room for manoeuvre within peripheries. Studies identify three scenarios:

a. *success and competitiveness*

b. *stability and self-sufficiency*

c. *survival*

These differences depend on actors' resources and context of study. It is also shaped by sampling strategies and theoretical assumptions. Particularly studies on business enterprises and social enterprises tend to have an optimistic account of the capacities for local development and innovation.

Conclusion

Research on bottom-up strategies bring a grounded perspective to spatial polarisation research. At the same time, the literature review identified three limitations in existing studies: a) the privileging of successful examples (sampling), b) the failure to address why strategies are successful or not, and c) the danger of replacing structural approaches with approaches privileging local agency, resulting in a localization of peripheralisation.