

FRAMING CORE-PERIPHERY RELATIONS: GERMANY & ROMANIA

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How do policy-relevant actors think and do regional development at the junction of national traditions and European norms?

Background

Within the EU, **development** is a key performative agency which backs a set of policies aimed at reducing stark spatial disparities in economic productivity. However, the concept itself is multifaceted, charged with normative, seemingly well-intended meanings. The same goes for **region**(al cohesion). And (good, multi-level) **governance**. Failure to develop is seen to be a sign of weak **administrative capacity**. Nowadays, in spite of parting significant funds towards reducing the economic productivity gap, policy bureaucrats resent to have thus far only been partially successful. Why? Hint: these very terms are understood differently in the multitude of contexts in which they are used.

Objective is to understand:

- the conditions under which socio-spatial peripheries are reproduced in Central and Eastern Europe;
- how actors from what are perceived to be peripheral sub-regional places represent themselves and their interests in the process of governance;
- how development policies are practiced at a regional scale.

Theoretical framework

- pragmatist approach, grasping inequality as an outcome of inequitable relationships in networks of governance.
- core-periphery model viewed as an evolving dynamic of power settings which shapes the context of policymaking;
- decentered governance as a means of emphasising the contingent constructions of several actors inspired by competing webs of beliefs and associated traditions.

To what extent could development programmes focus on avoiding the reproduction of *inequitable socio-spatial relations* rather than *growth*?



How is regional development shaped in practices of networked governance?

Methodology

- constructivist grounded theory;
- unstructured interviews with policy relevant actors at local / regional scales in Germany and Romania; participant observation of decision making practices;
- use of frames as a tool for analysing the construction of policy elements, identities, and intended course of action.

