



The role of the local in improving cohesion and spatial justice

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Place-based regional development as well as the more effective use of territorial capital and assets are some of the approaches that have been invoked to facilitate a greater local orientation of cohesion, territorial development and other EU policies.

Since the publication of the Barca Report, place-based notions of cohesion have entered the policy vocabulary. The challenge of situating urban scale and other local development settings within these highly complex policy contexts needs greater attention. Besides place-based development, there is growing concern about the increasing lack of positive identification with the European project by citizens.

Persistent regional disparities and increasing social injustices with marked spatial effects in localities are part of this trajectory and need to be addressed by the European policy community. Social, economic and environmental disadvantage are socially produced and spatially expressed, and spatial processes in turn produce and reproduce these conditions of disadvantage and vulnerability. The special session titled "The Role of the Local in Improving Cohesion and Spatial Justice" discusses the capacity of place-based approaches to deliver spatial justice. We invite papers that contribute to the understanding of the role of the local level in deploying cohesion policies.

The session is planned to address the following two questions:

- How do perceptions, capacities, tools and policies, forms of co-ordination, governance, participation and autonomy interact with each other and affect the relevance and effectiveness of place-based approaches in reducing spatial injustice?
- How specific place-based approaches to local development can be integrated into the design and deployment of the future Cohesion Policy of the EU?

We welcome both theoretical and empirical contributions.

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