



Special Session Proposal

Left Behind Areas: Past, Present And Future

(Ana Viñuela, avinuela@uniovi.es, REGIOlab, University of Oviedo)

Abstract

Territorial inequalities are barely studied at a local level in Europe in a comprehensive way mainly due to the lack of comparative data or proxies of economic activity. Without local data it is impossible to proof the agglomeration of economic activity (in the cities) and therefore the growing gap between rural and urban areas, between the centre and the periphery of the country or between the core and the fringe of the large metropolitan areas. This is one of the reason why, when studying the areas that have been left-behind, any research tends to focus on case studies.

In this Special Session we will try to combine both qualitative and quantitative research on areas (as opposed to regions) that indeed have been left-behind the paths of economic growth of prosperity. The aim would be trying to answer some of the following questions: What is the meaning of the *left-behindness* concept? How can we identify the left-behind areas? Where are those areas? What are their characteristics? What quantitative data are available to study left-behindness? Are there any common past characteristics that might explain their present situation? What can be done at the different levels of governance (European, national and local) to improve their situation? What has been done in different areas of Europe? And what about regional or local stakeholders? Are citizens mobilizing somehow to either protest or react in order to reverse their localities' situation?