

Introduction to the master class: why territorial effects

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Cohesion policy and territory

- **Cohesion policy** is funded on the concept of territory
- **Art. 174 of the Treaty:** *In order to promote its overall harmonious development, the Union shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion*
- **Regional and national development** measures the economic and social cohesion, while infrastructural endowment, functionality and sustainability measure territorial cohesion
- **Concentration principle** and resources allocation are based on territorial disparities in the GDP per capita in PPP
- **Programmes** are often defined on territorial bases

Territory and economic development

- **Economic theories** (poles of development, industrial districts, endogenous growth theory, new economic geography, etc.) analyse territories and their differences as engine for development
- The **social capital** is strongly linked to the social and historical characteristics of a territory
- **Policy debate on Cohesion policy** is around the role of the territory (“place-based” vs. “place-blind” or “one-fits-all”; local development actions, PO5, urban agenda, rural development)

How to handle the concept of territory

- **Territory is a multidimensional concept.** A territory includes many things (people, historical roots, culture and habits, institutions, infrastructures, enterprises, administrations) and is crossed by many flows (migration, trade, finance, transports, knowledge)
- **Scale matters.** Analyses change according to the territorial scale: on a large scale socio-economic interactions are many and the analysis is necessarily stylized, and vice versa.
- **Data availability differs.** At national and regional (NUTS 2 and 3) level official statistics are available but defined on administrative borders and cover few phenomena, at local level few official data available. Increasingly availability of **administrative data and big data** make new analyses possible.

Territory and evaluation

- **Evaluation focuses on policies** not on territories,
- ...but **policies target territories** or have territorial effects, and are affected by territories (**mutual influence**)
- Territories can be the **unit of analysis** to measure outcomes (e.g. EU, national, regional or local GDP and employment growth) or verify the quality of a strategy (e.g. S3, administrative capacity)
- Territories reflects the **socio-economic context** in which a policy is implemented and help to verify how the same policy is affected by different contexts (e.g. urban/rural, developed/less developed, etc.)
- Territories can be **benchmarks** for a policy (comparison between similar territories, counterfactual between assisted and not assisted territories)

Territory and cohesion policy evaluation

- **CP evaluation is generally restricted to the single programme**, rarely compares programmes and territories (administrative competence prevails on the nature of the phenomena to assess)
- CP evaluation could **better dialogue with territories** (involvement of local actors, analyses of other policies affecting the examined territory, in-depth knowledge of the needs and the opportunities of the territory)
- **Regional disparities** are increasing in EU and **territorial strategies** increased their importance in 2021-2027; these trends require a new attention to territorial effects of CP