

Call for papers

The unexpected effects of policies on cities and regions

- ✓ **Journal:** The Annals of Regional Science (AoRS, I.F. 2.1)
- ✓ **Call:** <https://link.springer.com/collections/ideaafijiei>
- ✓ **Submission schedule:** open until 15 November 2025
- ✓ **Guest editors:**

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We welcome contributions that analyze the often-underestimated side-effects of public policies to enhance our understanding of the interactions between policy decisions and local realities. The goal is to uncover how policies, even those not explicitly designed with territorial intentions, shape the spatial and socio-economic fabric of cities and regions, sometimes in unexpected ways. We encourage contributions that employ rigorous either quantitative and qualitative approaches, along-side more theoretical contributions, to explore these dynamics in different geographical contexts and policy domains.

Description

Over the past few years, public policy evaluation has become an important area of research. This is partly due to (i) major changes in social and economic policies in many countries, and (ii) the introduction of new management and control procedures in the public sector. In an environment where local and regional governments are facing major budget restrictions, policy effectiveness has become a hotly debated issue. At the same time, more and more regional science articles are being published on the evaluation of these public policies, studying causal mechanisms with convincing identification strategy. In the current research landscape, special attention is being paid to the anticipated impacts of policies. These policies can result in distributive effects, resource reallocations, or changes in socio-economic structures that profoundly influence cities and regions. For example, tax reforms, education policies, or national environmental legislation can have various and sometimes surprising repercussions on different areas, depending on their specific economic, demographic, or environmental characteristics.

However, these impacts often extend beyond the effects initially foreseen by decision-makers, and can affect dependent variables that were not expected. For instance, a policy intended to stimulate employment in a region may also alter the dynamics of internal migration or disrupt the local environmental balance in unforeseen ways. These consequences can be beneficial, such as when untargeted policies lead to an unexpected reduction in regional disparities, or they can be detrimental, raising doubts about the initial objectives of the policies.

This special issue aims to explore these complex dynamics and encourages critical reflection on how public/regional/local policies shape cities and regions in sometimes unpredictable ways. We welcome contributions that analyze these often underestimated side-effects to enhance our understanding of the interactions between policy decisions and local realities. The purpose of this special issue is to address the gap in the study of these unexpected impacts by inviting researchers to analyze and discuss them. The goal is to uncover how policies, even those not explicitly designed with territorial intentions, shape the spatial and socio-economic fabric of cities and regions, sometimes in unexpected ways. We encourage contributions that employ rigorous quantitative and theoretical approaches to explore these dynamics in different geographical and political contexts.

Topics of interest

- ⇒ What are the social, economic, and environmental dynamics of cities and regions?
- ⇒ To what extent do the unintended consequences of public policies challenge the original objectives of these policies?
- ⇒ What methods can be used to more accurately forecast, assess, and manage the lateral territorial impacts of public policies?

