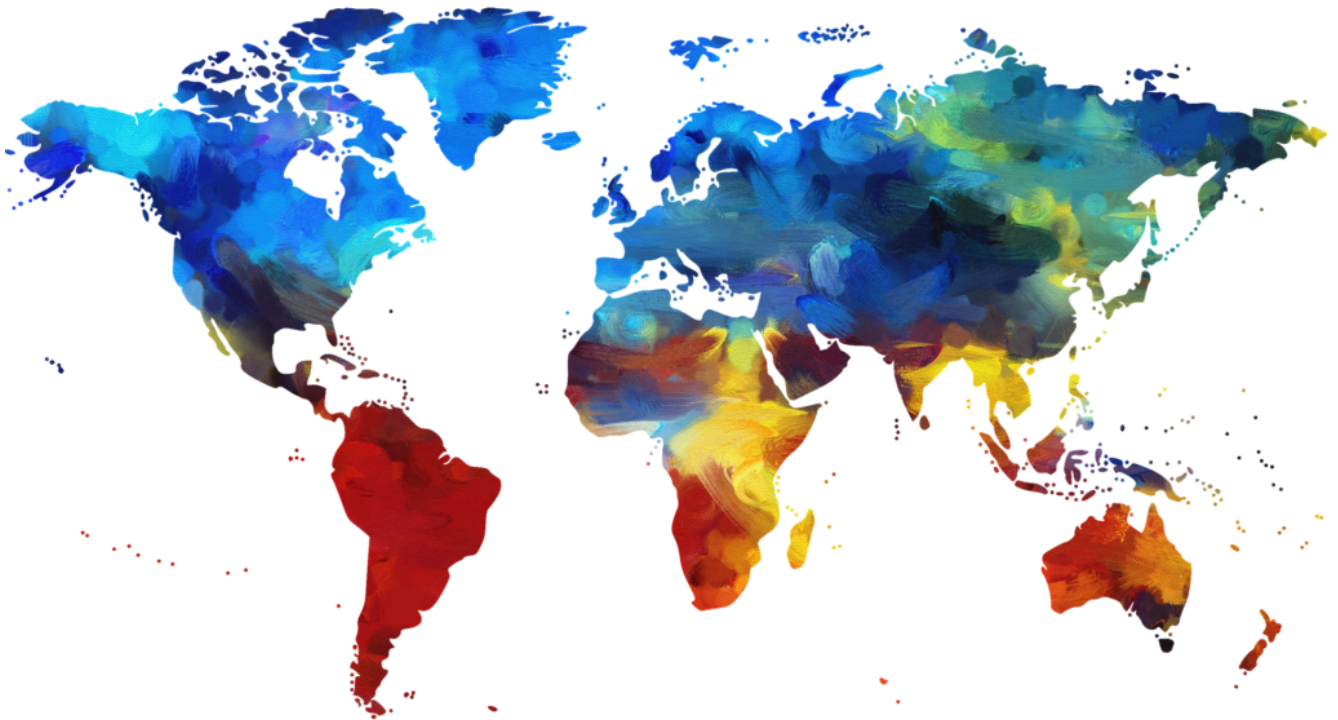


RSA Global Webinar Series - Latin America - Panel on Local economic Development in Latin America



By Janine Bittner, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany

Michael Storper's keynote speech was followed by a panel with three presentations focussing on the local economic development in different parts of Latin America.

Alejandra Trejo, who is currently a professor at the Center for Demography, Urban and Environmental Studies, at El Colegio de Mexico in Mexico City began the session. She first highlighted that understanding local economic development in Latin America requires considering key elements like social and economic preconditions, the endowment of social capital, knowledge about the political changes in the past 40 years, as well as governance structures and policies. She also emphasized that local economic development in Latin America had to be understood as urban economic development. In this context she drew attention to the fact that Latin America is the most urbanized region in the global south and

critically reflected the consequences of the development of urban agglomerations and megacities, the problem of hyper urbanization and the lack of social and economic progress. She argued that there is a need for a more active approach to urban planning, effective urban policy and orientation towards international urban agendas in order to achieve economic progress and wellbeing.

Sergio Montero, Associate Professor of Urban and Regional Development at the Universidad de Los Andes in Bogotá, then presented his new book “Rethinking Local Economic Development from Colombia”. Like the previous speaker, he also pointed out the importance of a territorial approach regarding the consideration of economic development in general and the need to develop and implement conceptual tools and strategies for local economic development adapted to the global south. Sergio’s book deals with five challenges of economic development in Colombia: the presence of illegal activities, the gender perspective, biodiversity, governance structure and strategies, competitiveness and innovation processes.

Carla Daniela Calá, who is currently a full professor in International Economics and member of the Industrial Economics Research Group at Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, Argentina, in the final contribution of the session presented the results of a research study that focused on the elements of regional structural changes processes, specialization patterns, productive diversity and the influence of promotion regimes. She illustrated that there are regional specialization patterns in Argentina and important socio-economic regional differences. The results of the multivariate model calculations show that the productive diversity is positively associated to service structure features of the region, per capita income population density and negatively associated to firm exit. In addition, regional patterns in economic specialization, which show a clear contrast between central provinces with a concentration of economic activities with a high degree of mechanization and specialization and peripheral provinces, could be identified.

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2nd—16th November 2020

