

The main goal of this project is to verify whether public investments in human capital, financed by the EU structural funds, contribute to economic development at the local level. The effectiveness of public intervention aimed at stimulation of the economic growth is a fundamental issue in the theoretical debate within economics. It is also a crucial element in the debate on the shape of future regional policies, including the possible changes in the EU Cohesion Policy.

Poland is a valuable case for this kind of analysis, as it receives substantial development aid within the EU structural funds. The research will focus on the impact of public investment in human capital, following rich evidence on the positive influence of human capital stock and quality on economic development.

At the stage of project proposal three major hypotheses are formulated:

- There are significant and substantial differences between local communities in Poland both with respect to the capability to absorb external aid and the importance of human capital within the hierarchy of objective financed with the EU funds.
- More affluent and economically developed areas are more prone to invest in human capital.
- Investment in human capital promotes local economic development in Poland, but does not lead to economic convergence at neither regional nor local level.

The proposed methodology can be described as mixed methods approach. The core analyses will rely on quantitative (econometric) techniques, but they will be supplemented with the complimentary qualitative part (case studies), as well as the elements of cartographic analysis.

The project is expected to contribute to the academic debate on the effectiveness of public intervention aimed at promoting the economic development. I will also provide foundation for some important policy recommendations. The innovativeness of the project relies on conducting the analyses on a very disaggregated (municipality and county) level, as well as on merging within one project three different approaches to measure local development: emphasizing income, employment, and migration.

The project will result some research articles submitted to recognized international journals publishing works in economics, regional studies and/or urban studies. The conceptual framework and the results of the project will be also presented and discussed at some international academic conferences. Moreover, the project outcomes will be used to update and improve the content of teaching programmes at two University of Warsaw's faculties: Centre for European Regional and Local Studies and Faculty of Economics.