Measuring the economic impacts of transport infrastructure: Reflection & Discussion

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Outline

1. **Are we measuring things in the right way?** *(transport economic perspective)*
   - General insights and reflection
   - Rural transport infra: economic impacts

2. **Are we measuring the right things?** *(transport geographical perspective)*
   - From infrastructure to (geographical) accessibility
   - From measured to perceived accessibility

3. **Discussion**

  => Focus on rural areas
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3. **Discussion**
General insights and reflection

› Great overview of theory and empirics!
› Size of effects: transport on its own is likely to achieve very little in terms of improving regional economic development
› Causality of effects
› Type of effect/(in)dependent variable
› Decreasing returns on investment
› New growth versus reorganization/relocation
› Emphasis on road infrastructure (limited rail)
› Underlying mechanisms often unclear
› The role of governance
Rural transport infra: economic impacts? (Theory)

- Much (policy) focus on cities
- Lower transport costs (NEG)
  - Business
    - Industry => move to periphery
    - Services => cluster in city
  - People
    - Attractiveness living in periphery increases
    - Cities more attractive for employees
Rural transport infra: economic impacts? (Empirics)

- Transport infrastructure => no clear regional GDP growth (slide 18-19)
  - But... no strong effects for other regions either
- Potential causes?
  - Functional relations (daily urban system)
  - Integrated transport system
  - Diminishing returns on investment

=> Investing in rural/less developed areas: good/bad idea? Sufficient evidence?
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From infrastructure to accessibility

- Project decisions
  - Focus on travel times/traffic congestion
  - SCBA (consumer welfare perspective)
- Geographical accessibility
- Rural areas
  - Larger distances to services
  - Public transport under pressure
  - Car important
- Spatial inequality, but problematic?
  - Basic level of accessibility: sufficiency threshold (Martens, 2016)
From measured to perceived accessibility (and wellbeing)
Discussion

› **Are we measuring things in the right way?**
  - What would be important focus points for future analyses? What would such analyses add to the current insights?
  - Spatial differences in impact: sufficient evidence?
  - The role of QoG (governance)?

› **Are we measuring the right things?**
  - Too much focus on traffic congestion and travel time?
  - Broader accessibility perspective? And how?
THANKS!

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