

Call for Special Issue (1st Semester): “The Future of Rio de Janeiro’s Development”

The city of Rio de Janeiro, once the stage for Brazil’s first (belated) industrial development initiatives, now appears to function primarily as a provider of modern services (Oliveira and Rodrigues, 2009) and a major tourist destination in the country. The memory of this industrial legacy “remains scarcely visible or valued in the social imagination associated with the city” (Cavalcanti and Fontes, 2012, p. 12). Many factories that occupied Rio’s railway suburbs until the mid-20th century now stand as remnants of industrial heritage, often awaiting some form of repurposing (Albernaz, 2025; Corrêa, 2025).

The manufacturing industry is recognized for its capacity to generate value, create jobs, produce tax revenue, and drive technological innovation. However, specialized literature indicates that, according to available statistical data, this economic sector has been losing prominence in Brazil’s economy (Oreiro and Feijó, 2010) and even more sharply in the state of Rio de Janeiro (Aucar, 2024; Sobral, 2017; Tunes, 2020), sparking debates on the phenomenon of deindustrialization.

Deindustrialization processes can lead to the deterioration of productive capacities (competitiveness, diversity, and complexity of goods produced) and general conditions of population well-being, particularly in peripheral and emerging economies like Brazil (Oreiro and Marconi, 2014). What effects of deindustrialization can be observed in Rio de Janeiro? And what possibilities exist for reversing this trend?

The need for energy transition in the face of the climate crisis, coupled with new production technologies such as the “Internet of Things,” digitalization, *big data analytics*, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and other innovations under the umbrella of what is termed “Industry 4.0” (IEDI, 2017), opens opportunities for industrial reconversion strategies (Ramalho and Conceição, 2024) and both regional and national reindustrialization. However, fiscal austerity measures resulting in low public investment hinder the implementation of large-scale initiatives necessary to drive economic development.

The challenge, therefore, lies in identifying opportunities for the strategic integration of Rio de Janeiro’s economic activities into global value chains and in building the necessary conditions for these activities in terms of infrastructure, business environment, skilled workforce, innovation ecosystems, and more. What links in these production chains could be prioritized? And what public policies are required to foster their development?

In light of this, we welcome articles discussing the role of industry and industrial services in Rio de Janeiro’s economic development, particularly the city of Rio de Janeiro. This theme encompasses reflections on industrial policy and its challenges, new production technologies, identification of potentials and opportunities, promotion of innovation-friendly environments, (re)spatialization of Rio de Janeiro’s economic activities in contemporary times, workforce qualification, and related topics.

Possible themes include, but are not limited to:

- Development and industrial policy;
- Reindustrialization through innovation and new technologies;
- Anchoring links of global production chains/networks in the territory;
- Analysis of industrial subsectors;
- Contemporary economic geography of Rio de Janeiro;
- History of industry in the city and state of Rio de Janeiro.

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