

EXTRA-REGIONAL DYNAMICS, STRATEGIC COUPLING & REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATHS

CALL FOR PAPERS AAG 2017, 5-9th April 2017

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Organisers: Stuart Dawley and Danny Mackinnon (CURDS, Newcastle University, UK); Henry Yeung and Godfrey Yeung (GPN@NUS, National University of Singapore); Asbjørn Karlsen and Markus Steen (Geography, NTNU).

Outline

The extra-regional dimension of regional development has been the subject of greatly increased attention over the past decade or so, in contrast to the intra-regional focus of much 'new regionalist' research in the 1990s and early 2000s. Research has focused on a number of different actors and linkages, including Trans-National Corporations (TNCs), knowledge flows, national and supra-national state institutions and trans-national migration. This has been informed by a range of theoretical perspectives, including Global Production Networks (GPNs), Regional Innovation Systems (RIS), knowledge anchoring and Global Innovation Networks (GINs). Most recently, attention has focused on the potential to draw upon such extra-regional approaches to broaden out the endogenous focus of conventional Evolutionary Economic Geography (EEG) approaches to local and regional growth. From an EEG perspective, external actors and linkages play an important role in underpinning regional development paths, providing access to crucial resources that are not available locally. Extra-regional linkages assume particular significance in facilitating processes of regional 'de-locking' through the transplantation of new investment, knowledge and technology. This can help regions to diversify into new and related markets and industries as part of the process of regional industrial evolution. This concern with extra-regional dynamics serves to refocus attention on the question of where value is generated in wider production and knowledge networks and the changing position of regions within these networks through subsequent recoupling or decoupling processes.

Two key concepts which have been developed to assess the relationship between regions and broader networks are strategic coupling and anchoring. Strategic coupling involves regional actors and institutions harnessing and moulding regional assets to ensure that they fit the needs of lead firms in global production networks. Rather than seeing these relations merely in terms of conventional inward investment whereby regional actors seek to attract TNCs into their region (outside-in), recent work suggests that they need to be seen as two-way in orientation, also incorporating the expansion of regionally-based firms through outwards investment in other

regions (inside-out). Anchoring refers to the processes by which mobile and immobile knowledge elements are re-contextualised, combined and diffused within a region. This process is crucially dependent upon the absorptive capacities of regional actors, requiring knowledge bases and skills related to the incoming flow of knowledge and supportive regional institutions.

In conceptual terms, this session is designed to re-examine regional development processes and outcomes through the lens of extra-regional dynamics. We very much welcome theoretical, methodological, empirical and policy analyses which connect to some of the following topics:

- Development, critique and cross-fertilisation of key concepts such as strategic coupling and anchoring
- The role of firms, particularly TNCs, and other key actors in fostering extra-regional dynamics
- The contribution of external linkages and networks to processes of regional industrial evolution, particularly forms of 'de-locking' from established trajectories
- The institutional and political mediation of extra-regional relations, with particular reference to the role of regional institutions and policy
- The operation of extra-regional knowledge flows and anchoring processes
- The characteristics of GPNs in emerging industries? What conditions their development (e.g. institutions, standards, regulations, policy instruments) and what are the implications for coupling and anchoring processes?
- The geography of value creation, enhancement and capture with a specific focus on 'origin' and 'host' regions for FDI
- Methods of researching extra-regional dynamics and associated regional development outcomes
- The qualitative nature of coupling and anchoring processes and regional development outcomes, with particular reference to the economic and social characteristics of the development path in question (e.g. type of jobs being created, inclusiveness, sustainability etc.) and questions of regional upgrading.

Anyone interested in presenting a paper in this session should send a title and abstract to Stuart Dawley (stuart.dawley@ncl.ac.uk) and Danny Mackinnon (danny.mackinnon@ncl.ac.uk) by 14th October, 2016.