

Seminar report for

Theorising Regional Economic Development

Monday 6th April 2009

Regional Studies Annual Conference: Understanding and Shaping Regions: Spatial, Social and Economic Futures, Leuven, Belgium

This seminar was integrated in the program of the Regional Studies Annual conference held in Leuven between the 6th and the 8th of April. It included the presentation of 6 papers in two different sessions, covering a wide range of topics. The first session began with a paper by Martina Fuchs and Johannes Winter from the University of Cologne, on the evolution of innovative competencies in subsidiaries of international companies. Their research, based in Poland, looked at how the development of new competencies among multinational subsidiaries in a peripheral country led to the generation of new development paths.

The second presentation was based on a paper by Andrew Johnston, from the Sheffield Business School, and Hannah Noke from Nottingham University Business School. Their focus was on entrepreneurship in the public sector and its role in promoting regional and local economic development. The third presentation was based on a paper by Jesse Heley, Suzie Watkin, Graham Gardner, Martin Jones and Michael Woods from Aberystwyth University. In it they explored the importance of local culture in a Welsh peripheral region for the stimulation of endogenous economic development.

The second session started with a presentation by Flavia Martinelli from the Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, reassessing the pertinence of a Marxist approach to the provision of 'social reproduction services'. The author supported a greater intervention of the State in providing these services, due to their central role in the structuration of social relations. The second presentation was given by Pedro Marques, from Newcastle University. It used empirical results from research in the Portuguese moulds industry to develop a holistic model of territorial innovation.

The last paper in this session was given by an invited speaker, Olivier Crevoisier from the Université de Neuchâtel. As a member of the GREMI group, an influential research centre that promoted the concept of *innovative milieux*, the author looked back at the main ideas developed in this field and evaluated the extent to which they remain pertinent in the light of new research and changes in the global economy.

After the conference the organisers of the research network organised a social event with some of the presenters, allowing for further discussions.