

Regional Studies - Annual Lecture 2020

07/04/2020, 2:25 PM - 3:40 PM, Sheraton Hotel, Grand Ballroom 2, IM Pei Tower, Second Floor Level, Denver, Colorado, USA



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Regional Worlds: From Related Variety in Regional Diversification to Strategic Coupling in Global Production Networks

The recent literature in regional studies has at least two influential but parallel tracks. In the evolutionary economic geography (EEG) track, much has been written on and debated about knowledge and innovation in regional path development and the role of related variety in regional diversification. In the second and relatively smaller strand of literature linked to the global production networks (GPN) approach, researchers are concerned with how regional actors and assets can be strategically coupled with the competitive dynamics of global production networks. This lecture intends to serve as an initial and sympathetic attempt to pave a “side track” to connect these two parallel strands that can enable researchers on both tracks to engage more explicitly with each other. To do so, I offer a reconceptualization of “regional worlds” as a central concept in regional studies. I argue that both strands of literature are premised on their different conceptions of “regional worlds” of innovation and production – a more endogenous view of regions as “specialized worlds” of production in the EEG track and a more relational view of regions as “interconnected worlds” of production in the GPN literature. Extending further Boschma’s (2017) Regional Studies annual lecture, I believe this reconceptualization of “regional worlds” can allow analytically the possibility of strategic coupling with GPNs as a new form of related variety in regional diversification by highlighting the importance of extra-local/regional linkages and network dynamics. By relating related variety to strategic coupling, this view can potentially reconcile the coexistence of endogenous and exogenous sources of regional transformation. I will end the lecture with some future agenda for theory and practice in regional studies.

Chair & Organizer: Dieter Kogler, *University College Dublin*

Introduction: Jennifer Clark, *The Ohio State University*

Discussant: Andres Rodriguez-Pose, *London School of Economics*



Regional Studies Journal

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