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GEOGRAPHIES OF INFORMATION, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Session chair Tommi Inkinen

Session on Friday 27. October 2017 at 9:00 – 10:30

Sidath Dinusha Alwis: **Towards a comparative understanding of the dynamics of University-Industry interactions in advanced and emerging economies**

Reima Helminen: **Digiport – a research project combining digitalisation and port operations**

Lari Jaakkola: **Start-up-business incubation as a knowledge creation process – a case study from Salo**

Heikki Sirviö and Toni Ahlqvist: **Geopolitics of strategic economic imaginaries in Finland**

Juho Kiuru and Tommi Inkinen: **Interrelations between technology use and economic development in European metropolitan areas**

Towards a comparative understanding of the dynamics of University-Industry interactions in advanced and emerging economies

Sidath Dinusha Alwis

The literature on university engagements in regional development is broad and diverse. A broader comparative investigation of how to align the university-industry linkages (UILs) to address the desired regional needs and collective and reciprocal involvements of regional actors to achieve identified focal outcomes is still lacking. The aim of this paper is to conduct a comparative investigation on the key trends of development trajectories of UILs in advanced and emerging country contexts concerning desired regional needs and unveil the dynamics of the orientations of interaction approaches. For that, the article carry out a literature based investigation on selected six advanced and emerging economies (Japan, South Korea, Finland, China, India, Thailand) which have demonstrated certain similarities in economic activities, university research and teaching conditions under the respective country groups. The data are analysed based on content analysis method. The paper demonstrates that UILs in India and Thailand are limitedly diversified while Chinese experiences reflect certain similarities to the contexts in advanced economies. In the country group of advanced economies, it reflects better commitments and engagements of university sector in relation with Finnish context compared to other countries. The paper highlights the key focused outcomes identified in the development trajectories of UILs and the specific orientations of UILs, based on the desired regional needs of respective countries. Additionally, the potential lessons that could be identified are also shown.

Key words: university-industry linkages, advanced economies, emerging economies, university engagements

Digiport – a research project combining digitalisation and port operations

Reima Helminen

Digiport project (DP) explores business opportunities obtainable through digitalisation and open data. Empirical investigation concerns in two Finnish seaports, namely Turku and Hamina. Shipping and ports are considered as a “tradition bound industry” and relatively late adopters of innovation driven growth compared e.g. to airline industry. DP will enhance understanding of digitalisation among port authorities. It will also integrate other industry partners to realise the opportunities entailed with open data. The project focus specifically on opening the port infrastructure related data. A major goal in DP is to screen what kind of data the ports have and what part of it may be opened for developers. The eventual aim is to establish a port infrastructure (Data Catalogue) service, which is meant to be used together with the Finnish Transport Agency’s open data. The project will arrange the Hack the Port “hackathon” to accelerate innovations and use of open data. It intends to provide solutions for ports' operational challenges and demonstrate how open data can be digitally implemented. Finally, the DP will envision the future of the ports within the framework of digitalisation. Different scenarios are constructed on the basis of different anticipated developments paths in ports, and in the shipping sector in general (e.g. autonomous vessels).

Start-up-business incubation as a knowledge creation process – a case study from Salo

Lari Jaakkola

The city of Salo has experienced a large economic restructuring in recent years especially in consumer electronics production. In 2015 Microsoft laid off 1200 employees working in the development of mobile phones in Salo. To attempt to mitigate the negative effects of the layoffs Microsoft and Yrityssalo organized business incubators where the unemployed could start new companies using their knowledge and skills.

This research looks at business incubation as an interactive knowledge creation process. The aim of the presentation is to explain how the participant’s knowledges are refined and combined with each other during and after the incubation. The theory of proximities is used to explain what kinds of interactions support the creation of novel business ideas. Geographical, cognitive, social, institutional, organizational and personal proximities are analyzed. The research materials were gathered by a survey and interviews.

The results show that the participants in the incubators were too proximate to each other in the cognitive dimension. This suggests that the knowledge base of the employees should be combined with knowledge bases from other industries. Business incubators could be organized in an interdisciplinary way to create a larger cognitive distance making it more feasible for radical innovations to emerge. Incubators could also benefit from the creation of joint projects with existing companies in the adjacent region. The negative effect of possible geographical distance may be eased by temporary geographical proximity in the beginning stage of the incubation and the use of advanced communication technologies such as virtual reality in later stages.

Geopolitics of strategic economic imaginaries in Finland

Heikki Sirviö and Toni Ahlqvist

The Finnish state has experienced a period of economic troubles since the decline of the technology company Nokia and the bulk of the ICT industry with it. This has contributed to a sense of crises among

the representatives of the Finnish state as well as among the associated transnational techno-economic assemblage in Finland. This consciousness of crisis has motivated an austerity regime, a series of reforms for restructuring the state, as well as a search for new direction for the economic future of the state. In our paper we analyze the spatiality of competing policy ideas and their economic imaginaries. These all can be said to reconfigure in different ways the spatio-temporal matrix of the state.

To our view, there are at least four influential (partly competing, partly complementary) economic imaginaries on which the economic future of the state is being envisioned. These include (1) metropolitan city-regionalism building on the imaginary of the knowledge based economy, (2) bioeconomy seeking a new combination of material and immaterial economy, (3) development of the Arctic, which has the potential to turn the spatial image of the Finnish state “upside down”, and finally (4) digitalization with its visions of connectivity and cyberspace.

These imaginaries inform the planning and conduct of regional development and policy, and our aim is to look at the ways how these imaginaries figure spatiality and what are their possible implications for core-periphery relationship, international positioning of the state, spatial-political subjectivities, public-private relationship, and for rescaling of state space. In our analysis we will utilize the theoretical perspectives of socio-spatial dialectic, uneven development, and the geographical transfer of value, on which we base our interpretation of the potential of these imaginaries to rework and to renew the spatio-temporal matrix of the state.

Interrelations between technology use and economic development in European metropolitan areas

Juho Kiuru and Tommi Inkinen

Technological development is a significant contributor to regional economies and growth. Established social media tools that are founded on the developments done in information and communication technologies (ICTs) have made possible new means of data acquiring and corresponding analysis. This paper is one of the few investigations combining unconventional innovation and technology measures obtained from Twitter social media service with traditional statistical data of European metropolitan economies. Conceptually the paper discusses different forms of capital. Empirically it shows the explanative power of these new measurers in order to understand correlation and to some extent causal relations behind Tweeting activity and economy. The paper classifies European metropolitan areas according to a fourfold scheme to digitally active-less active and economically successful and less-successful groups. Based on the results it is clear that accumulation, both electronic and economic, takes place in major cities. The paper encourages the use and creation of new socio-technological measures in contemporary studies in the field of geography focusing on information, technology and innovation.