

Innovation and Regional Transformation: Change Agency and Opportunity Spaces

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Abstract

Innovative entrepreneurship plays a key role in regional transformation. At the same time, the opportunities to bring about path-breaking innovations vary between regions. Structural factors such as industrial composition, the size of the region, capital and labour endowments, institutions and infrastructure partly explain innovation performance. However, regional opportunity spaces for path-breaking innovations can potentially be altered by other types of change agency such as institutional entrepreneurship and place-based leadership. Regional transformation may then hinge on the intertwining of many actions and structural factors that facilitate or circumscribe path-breaking innovations.

The special session is devoted to papers that i) develop a better understanding of why, how, and under which conditions this interplay between agency and structure promotes or impedes path-breaking innovations, ii) investigate the reasons for regional difference in innovative entrepreneurship and other types of change agency, and iii) study under which conditions path-breaking innovations translate into the emergence of new regional paths. Contributing to this line of inquiry, the special session invites papers that address questions of the following sort:

- Why do some regions convert opportunities better into path-breaking innovations than others with similar preconditions?
- Why does innovative entrepreneurship and other types of change agency differ between similar types of regions?
- Who are the key change agents in different contexts, what are their actions, why do they get engaged, and how do they earn the positions of doing so?
- How do different actors perceive opportunities, how have the perceptions changed over time, and how has this motivated actions?
- What is the combination of change strategies actors adopt in specific situations at specific times, and what are the intended and unintended consequences?

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