Creating digital opportunity:
Skills, skis, scale and scallops

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Situating my work

What’s the story in smaller city-regions?

- Skiing in Sussex, St-Sauveur or Chamonix
- Particular opportunities and limitations from scale? Funnels: …urban networks? …hierarchy? …GPNs?
- Digital breadbaskets to Canada’s global cities?
- “Second-rank cities” have been outperforming 1st rank in Europe since 2008 (Dijkstra et al. 2013)
- Do GPNs fit in city-network theory (Camagni et al. 2015)?
- …between the global cities and the remote areas?
- RED as national productive efficiency and not just allocative / redistributive (Parkinson et al. 2015)
Theme 1 – Scalar and spatial shifts

Canada’s Position in GPNs and GINs

Q: How, when, where do IP and talent become mobile?
- How (M&As), when (stage), where (FDI, relocate)
- Recapture metrics?

H: IT in small cities more likely to relocate as they scale.
- Mitigation? ...local embeddedness (velcro), founder, niches, prospects, funding sources

Methods
- Genealogy: Births, dating, marriages, obituaries, maps
- Branham-ish listings + Interviews

Progress

Relevance
- T: local embeddedness vs GPN during maturation
- P: startups to grownups, R.o.I.

Initial findings
- Geog exit strategies, matchmakers indiv > inst
- Gov clueless (?), but entrepreneurs cognizant of recapturing talent from implosions, tag VC
Theme 2  Digital skills
The local context for global networks

Q: How are digital skills linked to youth employability and SME productivity?

H: SMEs have poor capacity to assess DS, provide job-specific training, or couple with vintage technology

Methods
- Quant (PIAAC) and Qual (forestry and FIRE)
- 2 (2016) + 2 case studies (2017), interviews

Progress
- Cf UNB-UdeM Digital skills SSHRC PDG (2014-17)
- OECD PIAAC PSTRE data with NB PETL (Aug 2015)

Relevance
- T Micro-level productivity effects of DS integration
- T From occupational to skills mismatches
- P Curricular development, point of acquisition

Initial findings
- Co-existence of $15 and $25/hr jobs in same sector
- NB PSec and labour market disjointed
- DS used as worker and youth retention strategy
Theme 3 Bioenergy
Diffusion of digital technology

**Q1**: From where are resource-based companies sourcing ICT to develop new revenue streams (bioenergy)?

**Q2**: What role have local ICT providers played in the dynamic evolution of bioenergy clusters?

**H1**: Sourcing mainly from Europe (Ger, Aut, Fra, Fin, Ned).

**H2**: Cluster local ICT sourcing and tech exports = LT

**Methods**
- SSHRC assessment + policy partners \(\rightarrow\) int’l comparisons
- Case studies: NB15, AUT15, FRA15, NED15, Cal16

**Progress**
- 1st grad student (May 2015)

**Relevance**
- Demand-driven innovation, GHG, green jobs

**Initial findings**
- Using resource no guarantee of VA (NB vs NED)
- Sustainability: Margins falling for low VA, retention
- Policy / Supply gap (NBIF) vs Demand (AcFor)
Food for thought

- Role of markets (cost of producing and transpo)
- In terms of national policy, does it matter how small-cities connect to GPNs? ...up hierarchy or directly to ski slopes in Cali and Europe?