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

- 6 / 20 (2016) + 20 (2017); 1st Grad student May 2015

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 → int'l comparisons
  Case studies: NB15, AUT15, FRA15, NED15, Cal16

Progress

- 6 / 15 (2015) + 27 (2016), 15 more scheduled (2015)
- 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?