

Session Proposal for the AAG Annual Meeting, San Francisco, April 2007

ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHIES OF THE CORPORATE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

Organizers: Jon Beaverstock, James Faulconbridge, and Sarah Hall

Session sponsored by the Communication Geography Specialty Group

In recent years the 'knowledge economy' has attracted increased interest across the social sciences. Powerful popular, academic and political discourses have pointed to the links between rhetorics of the 'knowledge economy' and economic practice. Particular attention has been paid to forms of 'soft capitalism', virtualism and intermediation that justify the reproduction and creation of markets through discourses of knowledge and scientific logic (e.g. management consultants). For example, research has pointed to the changing nature of corporate practice as firms come to terms with, and seek to benefit from, a 'knowledge based economy' through the different spatial strategies possible within knowledge management. Meanwhile, geographers have also pointed to the ways in which discourses of the knowledge economy impact upon individual careers through concepts such as the knowledge worker and their mobile career paths. This session will continue to push forward such debates by considering how notions of a 'knowledge economy' shape economic practice at the intersection between firms and individuals.

Beginning with firms the session is interested in the ways the knowledge economy and associated rhetoric's have changed spatial strategies and practices. Indeed, discussions of the production and circulation of global discourses (e.g. financialization) and their impacts on firms in different places and at different times have been at the top of geographers' agendas but are still in their infancy. In terms of individuals, the session aims to explore the impacts of these changes upon workers in the knowledge economy - their mobility and career trajectories. Studying the changing challenges and geographies of careers in the contemporary economy has revealed the way corporate priorities and discourses associated with knowledge worker have changed behaviours. The session hopes to develop these discussions by considering the geographical implications of this.

Potential topics that complement these two themes might include, but are not limited to:

- * Methodological innovations for researching contemporary 'knowledges in practice and production'
- * Critical approaches to knowledge-based rhetoric's and its links with spatial business practices.
- * Discussions of theoretical frameworks such as actor-network theory and relational economic geographies and their role in analysing the spatiality of knowledge and learning.
- * Discursive market making strategies of firms and their geographical variability

- * The study of firms or institutions acting as intermediaries in new labour, financial or other markets associated with the knowledge economy;
- * Regulation and its influence on knowledge practices;
- * Changes to modes of economic behaviour and practice at the individual or firm level induced by knowledge economy discourses

Expressions of interest should be sent in the form of an abstract acceptable to the AAG (see <http://www.aag.org/annualmeetings/SF2007/call4papers.cfm>) to Jon Beaverstock (j.v.Beaverstock@lboro.ac.uk), James Faulconbridge (j.faulconbridge@lancaster.ac.uk) and Sarah Hall (s.j.e.hall@lboro.ac.uk) by 1st October 2006.

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