

Regions in Transition: New Path Development and Path Coupling as Policy Challenges

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Introduction



Grand societal challenges provoke the need for regional economies to embark on new development paths

Evolutionary economic geography (EEG), innovation & transition studies

- Focus often on one path / new path development (PD) activities in only one field (few exceptions: Martin & Sunley 2006)

“Single path view” prevailing in the literature appears to be a limitation

- Research gap: How do various newly emerging paths influence each other?

Aims



Meaning and nature of relationships between newly emerging paths in different fields?

- ***competing relationship*** versus ***supportive relationship***
- effects on new PD and wider transformations

Policy implications and challenges?

- broader and more integrative innovation policy approach
- coupling potential and proactive linkage formation

New path development



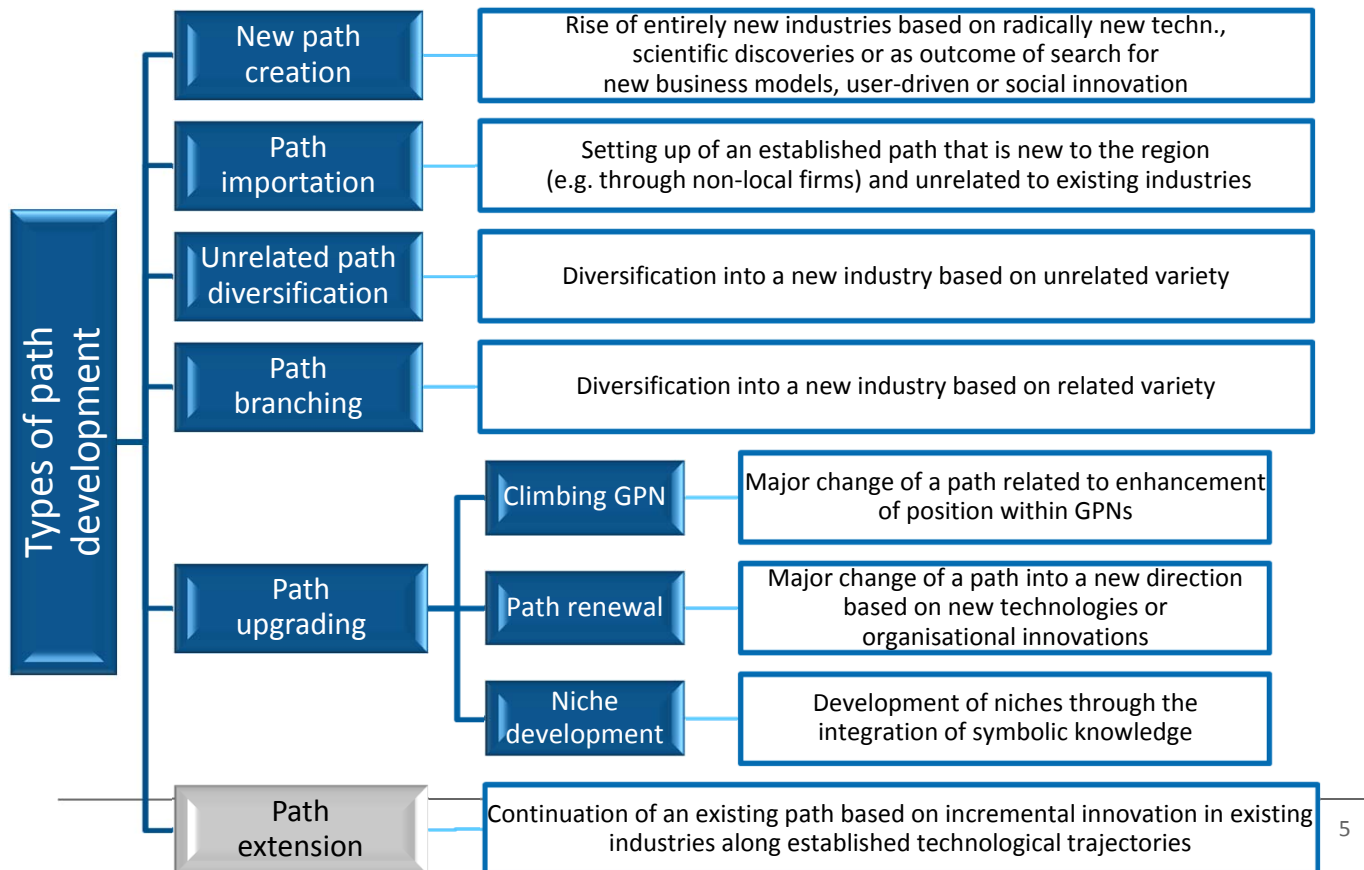
Evolutionary Economic Geography

From the canonical model to the “path as a process” model
(Martin 2010)

Related & unrelated diversification (Boschma 2017)

Path creation, path importation, path branching, path
upgrading ... (Isaksen, Trippel & colleagues 2016, 2017)

Types of (new) PD



New path development



Transition studies

Transition pathways (Geels & Schot (2007), Geels et al. 2016)

- Common themes with EEG: enabling and constraining conditions; relation of new paths to old ones

Relation between new PD in different fields?

- EEG: little is said about the relation between newly emerging paths in different fields
- Transition studies: several niche innovations (in one field) compete with each other – *possible mutual support is ignored*

Nature of relation between new paths



Broad conceptualization of new PD activities

knowledge creation & diffusion, institutional change, market creation, visions, legitimacy, sourcing, mobilization & anchoring of resources (e.g. Bergek et al. 2008; Binz et al. 2016)

Relationships between new pathways

- **Competitive relationship:** over scarce resources, policy support, mobilization of stakeholders, public attention
- **Supportive relationship:** complement & reinforce each other, coupling potential for wider transformations but also barriers

Geography of new path coupling and RIS capacities



How do geographical context and scale matter in new path coupling?

- ***RISs differ in their capacities*** to nurture new PD (e.g. Isaksen & Trippel 2016, Xiao, Boschma & Andersson 2016) and ***to promote new path coupling***

Institutional capacities of RIS: explaining uneven distribution

- capacity to mobilize and orchestrate heterogeneous RIS actors: joint visions and experimentation, technological, social, institutional learning
- alignment with policy incentives and other influences at higher spatial scales (Dawley et al. 2015)

Electric mobility and renewable energy

Promotion of electric mobility in Austria

- Purchase support schemes
- Tax benefits

Coupling of new PD activities in electric mobility and renewable energy

- „Model regions of electric mobility“
- Core regions and rural areas



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Electric mobility and renewable energy



New path coupling by setting a requirement

- 100% of the electricity must be provided from renewable sources generated in newly installed plants

Searching, experimentation, demonstration

- Potentials for expanding renewable energy
- Effects of path coupling on the overall acceptance
- Involving green electricity customers as partners

Conclusions for Innovation policies



New path development ranks high on policy agendas – selection of new paths is a key policy challenge

- Prioritization and setting direction: identification and explicit selection of paths with coupling potential

Coordination of heterogeneous actors as task of the state

- Removing barriers that prevent new paths to connect and proactive path coupling of them

Conclusions for Innovation policies



Green industrial policies promote cross-technology cooperation and competitive potential of new technologies

- Balancing competition and cooperation as crucial prerequisite for wider transformation

Place-based policies matter

- Proactively exploit place-specificity by creating model regions as laboratories for path coupling experiments

Many thanks for your attention!

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