TIME FOR CHANGE: CORPORATE CONVENTIONS, SPACE-TIME, AND UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT

Accepted for publication in Progress in Human Geography

Dr Crispian Fuller

School of Geography and Planning

Cardiff University

ABSTRACT

The corporation remains a critical agent in the production of geographically uneven development. Furthermore, time is critical to the practices and deliberations taking place within corporations, yet it has been underappreciated within prominent economic geographical analyses. This paper argues for the examination of the 'black box' of the corporation, as a site producing uneven development, and through which the temporalities of decision-making and deliberation are critical. Combined with the temporal insights of Harvey's 'social' and 'experiential' space-times, conventions theory is utilised to elucidate the importance of the corporate deliberations and practices that come to produce uneven development. A conventions approach importantly provides a framework in which to examine the role of both conventionalised behaviours, and how conventions are used in heterogeneous experiential space-time deliberations and decision-making, and how this is interwoven with social spaces-times. Such an approach is critical in conceptualising the corporation as a deliberative social and experiential space-time series of sites, and through which it is reified as a temporary instantiation.

CORPORATIONS; SPACE-TIME; UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT; CONVENTIONS; DELIBERATIONS

I INTRODUCTION

There can be little doubt that the corporation remains a key agent of globalisation, though this role has at times had to be recovered from the ontological predispositions of network metaphors (Fuller and Phelps, 2018). Indeed, paradoxically, as the monolithic conception of the hierarchically organized, vertically integrated and internalizing corporation has receded from view, the sources of much geographically uneven development are to be found ever more in the deliberations that take place *within* the corporation itself. While the corporation now takes on diverse forms, and is constituted by geographically and temporally diverse organisational practices (Faulconbridge, 2010; MacKinnon, 2011; Jones, 2017), it nevertheless sits at the centre of processes of outsourcing and offshoring (Contractor et al., 2010), with all that this implies for knowledge production, value capture, the exercise of corporate and institutional power, and the geography of supply chains (Coe et al., 2008; Ponte and Sturgeon, 2014).

Notwithstanding their diverse origins, relational economic geography (REG) and evolutionary economic geography (EEG) approaches, firstly, share a view of the corporation which places less emphasis on historically constituted 'conventions' of behaviour that inform corporate deliberations and action; and, secondly, they focus on a conception of time that is concerned with particular timescales, rather than the multiple rhythms in which agency is apparent - namely, how time shapes and is shaped by corporate actors (Henning, 2018; Barratt and Ellem, 2019). A look inside the black box of the corporation remains important for understanding geographically uneven development, including the various temporalities of decision making within the corporation, and their relationship to the broader structural sweeps of history in which such agency is set. Indeed, if social-spatial inequality has for some time been integral to, rather than an effect of, evolving spatial divisions of labour themselves (Massey, 1995), then examination of the corporation as a deliberative spatial site remains critical to economic geographical analysis.

As an uneven federation of disparate power relations, the corporation is a more complex entity than it has been in the past, including subsidiaries possessing considerable powers and resources (Crescenzi et al., 2014; Morgan, 2018). Uneven development does not disappear from view here since there are intrinsic issues relating to the 'branch plant factory syndrome' and the 'dark side' of economic geographies that remain alive and well, and the disparate space-times through which they operate (Werner, 2016; Phelps et al, 2018). Instead, it may be time for a change in economic geography, time for us to take *time* more seriously for all that it implies for uneven development. Taking our cue from Massey (1995) and Harvey (1996), a consideration of time - the full variety of temporalities or rhythms of corporate decision making - is central to understanding uneven development in a period where space is increasingly annihilated by time.

This paper firstly identifies some of the limits of relational economic geography (REG) and evolutionary economic geography (EEG) in relation to understanding the critical temporal and spatial agency of the corporation. This is followed by a discussion of the French school of conventions. These are constructs guiding behaviour and deliberative mechanisms that are utilised by actors in sites of deliberation, and are important in the space-time decision-making characterising uneven development (Diaz-Bone, 2016). In contrast to mainstream economic geography, a conventions approach provides a conceptual framework in which to explore the 'black box' of the corporation and the spaces of deliberation, contestation and agreement (see Brandl and Schneider, 2017), which are today integral to the agency exercised by corporations and reproduction of spatial divisions of labour. In relation to time, we argue that the temporalities of conventions (as decision-making and coordination) are inexplicably linked with uneven development.

II ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY AND THE CORPORATION

REG and EEG have come to the fore as two prominent approaches in contemporary economic geography. In what follows we offer a sympathetic critique both of the consideration of temporalities within these approaches and their broader neglect of the complexity of agency, represented by the corporation.

1 Relational economic geography and the agency of the corporation

Relationality has developed as a critical aspect of economic geography, with human actors understood to be situated within and produced through networks and institutional relations, but where the practices of actors influence such arrangements in a historically and spatially contingent nature (Bathelt and Gluckler, 2005). An important approach is that of practice theory, which focuses on the temporalities of routines and habits in the everyday of spatial situations. Time is not reduced to objective succession, but rather experiences of practice are experiences of time, such as in the case of repetition or everyday unique practices that colonise particular temporalities (Shatzki, 2010). Building upon this, the corporation is viewed as an unbounded and heterogeneous arrangement of different actors, practices and relations; characterised by everyday negotiation, politics and conflict, and where spatial relations are socially constructed through such processes (Jones, 2005; Faulconbridge, 2008).

While relational approaches represent a significant advance in our understanding of the spatialities of the corporation, accounts are less concerned with the different temporalities of the practices involved (Faulconbridge, 2010; Jones and Murphy, 2011). This is most notable in terms of the focus on the everyday practices and the micro-politics of relations between the considerable number of agents found within the corporation, and which revolve around short-term corporate activities (e.g. negotiations around targets; see Table 1) (Faulconbridge, 2010). Clearly, such micro-politics and their associated ('micro') temporalities are of particular pertinence to the concept of network embeddedness. Yet, the concept of network embeddedness rarely differentiates between the importance of relations, nor is the power relations of these practices examined in depth (Jones, 2008). The corporation remains a site ostensibly of *continuous* organising and coordination. This leaves unanswered questions of what holds these relations together through the intersubjectivity of actors in the short-term, and as emergent assemblages of organisational practices and spaces in the medium- to long-term (Sunley, 2009).

[TABLE ONE]

Nonetheless, relational economic geographical approaches might be said to speak to particular, long-term temporalities of intra-firm, inter-firm and firm-institution decision making processes, such as those working through and performed within institutions (e.g. in the development of co-produced capabilities; see Table 1). Yet, even here broader criticisms of relational approaches centre on the failure to specify adequately the macro-historical processes involved. Inherent uneven development and power relations of foreign direct investment (FDI), corporate activities and GPNs appear only to be viewed in the context of dispersed networks of relations (Sunley, 2009; Phelps et al, 2018; Werner, 2016), in which the precise time-frames over which such networks of relations are (re)constituted also fails to receive much consideration. Correspondingly, Jones and Murphy (2011) argue that it is difficult to explain broader evolutionary economic-geographical tendencies without understanding the micro everyday lives and decision-making of individual agents that produce, mediate and are the effect of the former. In short, economic geographical approaches that connect analyses of micro and macro temporalities are needed (Jones and Murphy, 2011).

Beyond practice-based relational approaches, the Global Production Networks (GPN) perspective is of value in understanding the contemporary corporation when viewing economic geographies in terms of exogenous-endogenous geographical relations. The more recent manifestation of this approach, GPN 2.0, is an attempt to correct for the lack of causal explanation for why GPNs are (spatially) (re)configured in particular ways. It seeks to elucidate causal relations between particular market and risk dynamics (e.g. cost-capability ratios), firm strategies (as responses to the former) and the organisation of production networks (e.g. inter-firm partnership) (Coe and Yeung, 2015). Uneven development is thus explained through an explication of how regions are tied into the dynamics and strategies of the firms and GPNs more broadly. This occurs by way of the 'value capture trajectories' of subsidiaries – namely the heterogeneous and contingency-laden processes of subsidiary change and the implications for regional economic development and the degree and strength of 'coupling' with regions. In both concepts there is recognition of the 'dynamic and multi-directional' paths that are possible through causal dynamics and firm strategies (ibid, 174).

Within GPN thinking, time is largely conceptualised as objective 'clock time', involving the sequential practises underlying the value creation process through networks, involving actors seeking to adjust turnover times in the capital accumulation process, and which shapes time-space trajectories of actors and production (Barratt and Ellem, 2019). This includes, for example, the efforts of firms to gain competitive advantages through time-based efficiencies as part of cost-capability ratios, or the objectivised time taken to get products to markets (Hernes et al., 2013). Given the focus on production, the sequential temporality of such dynamics within GPN studies are largely medium to long term, such as with changes to cost-capability ratios requiring the substantial reconfiguration of spatial resources (e.g. development of human capital; see Table 1).

Taking a medium to long term time frame has its advantages but also potentially underplays some of the agency and dynamism of corporate strategy development, modification and abandonment, let alone some of the contestation and churn that make up these time frames. There is a danger of presenting the corporation, occupying various positions within a GPN, as an internally homogenous rational decision-making entity as part of the 'cost-capability' ratio framework (Neilson et al, 2018). Correspondingly, the spatialities and temporalities of the corporation, production networks and resulting uneven development are presented as an effect of undifferentiated and apolitical firm strategies (e.g. 'inter-firm control') (Fuller and Phelps, 2018). Yet, as many practice accounts identify, the corporation is characterised by disparate cultures and practices where decision-making and actions are not rational, including being a site where the differences between home and host countries are mediated, resulting in new cultural forms but also conflicts that hinder and distort corporation strategies (Faulconbridge, 2012; Fuller, 2021a). For instance, something as seemingly simple as location decisions are themselves the outcome of competing functional perspectives within a single corporation (Phelps and Wood, 2018).

Such dynamics suggest, first, that there are temporal dimensions to decision making that differ to those emphasized in GPN studies, illustrating the importance of temporalities in uneven development that are not just medium to long term (e.g. adjusting cost-capability ratios), but also short term through various everyday corporate practices and strategies. Second, the emphasis on sequential and objective time (e.g. clock time), means there is far less concern with the subjective temporalities characterising social life and through which agents act, including how time is used and performed by actors within and through the deliberative networks that are critical to GPNs. Without consideration of the everyday complexities of the corporation, the nature of (spatial) power relations and uneven development remain partially theorised. Correspondingly, focusing more on the deliberative practices constituting and working through the corporation, supports GPN 2.0 in understanding processes of uneven development and the dynamic trajectories of regions in GPNs, including the multi-dimensional decision-making of decoupling from regions through disinvestment decisions (MacKinnon, 2011).

2 Evolutionary economic geography and firm routines

Evolutionary Economic Geography (EEG) identifies the important role of historical contingency in regional economies, including how present and future trajectories are influenced by interrelated events and past decisions to create particular economic geographies (Boschma and Martin, 2010). Uneven development is thus largely conceptualised in terms of path dependence and change (e.g. creation) (Boschma and Frenken, 2009; Hassink et al., 2014). While EEG examines a range of economic processes and spaces, firms are viewed as being constituted by spatially distributed organisational 'routines', historically created and selected by actors, and which come to organise and control the behaviours of actors through space and time (Strom, 2007). In relation to corporations, evolutionary processes would include subsidiary routines such as the constant drive to reduce production costs or mobilize intracorporate knowledge networks (Table 1). Processes of change stem from the reconfiguration and creation of new organisational routines through processes of 'novelty' and resulting 'selection' by actors, typically by way of spatial proximity and forms of related and unrelated variety, and only occur at periodic times (Boschma and Frenken, 2009). Such elements are interdependent with firm routines (as actor behaviour) and are historically configured, resulting in varying degrees of 'evolutionary' spatial path dependency as firms produce routines in a 'path-dependent and idiosyncratic manner' (Boschma and Frenken, 2009: 153).

EEG is therefore firmly situated within an evolutionary biology perspective of firms and regions as incrementally adaptive to a constantly changing environment, which is accompanied by periodic radical transformation that seeks to realign with substantive environmental changes. Notably, the actions and configurations of the past, as memories or 'data' (Whitehead, 1929), influence what is understandable, possible or desirable in the present, as embedded within routines and novelty, and which constitutes broader processes of path dependency and change (Henning et al., 2013). As such, the perspective takes a sequential or else a cyclical view of time through environmental variation, and the selection and retention (VSR) of routines by firms, and as a forward linear flow of time where these recurrent episodes produce different configurations. In this sense, time is predefined through medium to long term VSR sequences that form broader processes of path dependency and change, rather than EEG being concerned with the emergent and indeterminate temporal perceptions and experiences of actors constituting these sequences.

EEG is notable for having advanced the understanding of the firm and its relationship to evolving regional economic landscapes (e.g. Boschma and Frenken, 2009; Stam 2010). Nevertheless, accounts centre very much on processes of change aggregated at the regional and national scales. As part of this process, EEG studies have tended to treat the firm in an abstract manner, underplaying the heterogeneous and uneven tendencies (including temporalities) characterising the ‘agency’ of the firm, by emphasising ‘routines’ of knowledge codification and replication. As argued by Hassink et al. (2014), EEG conceptualises the firm as a ‘homogenous, conflict-free and self-contained entity of agency’ (1303). From this position, and as outlined above, the nature of regional (uneven) development largely stems from the differentiated nature and transmission of medium to long term temporal routines (as itemized in Table 1), downplaying a concern with firm deliberations and practices that produce routines and which are performed over various, generally much shorter timescales to which subjective meanings are attached (see, also, MacKinnon et al, 2019).

In particular, accounts lack a concern with the deliberative and performative constitution of the sorts of ‘truces’ that lie at the heart of longer-term patterns and processes of aggregate change – whether these be at the register of the everyday or over the medium term. Other questions emerge over how new and existing routines, sometimes operating over different time frames within the firm are combined, and the deliberative processes through which this occurs (Kozica et al, 2014). Yet, such deliberations are interwoven with the social construction of time through human actors and practices, suggesting a need for greater concern with heterogeneous and uneven temporalities of social interaction.

EEG follows routine-orientated studies which also downplay the ‘micro-foundations’ of their construction and performance (Becker, 2004; Felin and Foss, 2009). This stems from a ‘collectivist’ emphasis which subsumes individual actions and disparate temporalities (and thus heterogeneity) within and beyond the firm, with actors tending to be treated as homogenous, and where routines collectively encompass knowledge and ways of undertaking tasks over medium to longer sequentially-regarded timeframes (Felin and Foss, 2009; Steen and Hansen, 2018). Recent evolutionary accounts have sought to interpret the firm in ways that exceed it being a carrier of routines, most evidently in relation to related and unrelated regional diversification. Neffke et al. (2018), for instance, utilise the resource-based view of the firm in understanding processes of regional diversification. The firm is considered a bundle of valuable, rare, inimitable, and nonsubstitutable resources, where market growth and survival comes about through 'dynamic capabilities', involving the reconfiguration of resources. However, the approach sidesteps broader criticisms of the resource-based view of the firm as largely an economic entity. There is little or no place for considering the social, cultural and political constitution of the firm and how its action is organised in complex environments and through particular (subjective) temporalities (as outlined above) and spatial relations (Priem and Butler, 2001). Nevertheless, some of these complexities are central to understanding the twin tendencies of inertia and change found in, and the uneven development associated with, the corporate organization of production (Phelps and Fuller, 2016; Dawley et al, 2019).

Felin and Foss (2009) argue that micro processes, involving much shorter time frames and working through subjective temporalities, should be examined as a precursor to collective routines because the latter are most likely to be the effects of the former. Following Pentland and Feldman's (2005) argument for focusing on changes to routines through performativity, one important example they cite is that of firm managers having to address the 'exceptional' rather than the merely 'routine' on a daily basis, and involving subjective temporalities. This suggests a need to move beyond a 'collectivist' routine-based approach, where spatial relations produce and are produced by homogenous routines operating over medium to longer term timescales. There is a need to examine processes of change and dynamism through everyday, individual and situated action that encompasses various geographies, but where such action is interrelated with much broader conventions that inform behaviours (Storper and Salais, 1997).

Such an approach includes, importantly, understanding the everyday and conjunctural decision-making within corporations that underpin (de/re)-investment decisions and power relations with production networks, and that work through particular relational and territorialised spatial relations (see Table 1). There is a critical need for EEG to focus more on the qualitative, indeterminate lived experiences and deliberative processes of human actors, where complex temporalities inform and constitute decision-making and action as actors interpret the past, and how this influences and co-constitutes their expectations for the future (Schatzki, 2010).

To summarise, a sympathetic exploration of two dominant approaches in economic geography suggests that greater analytical onus can usefully be placed on the intricacies of the multi-temporal-spatial agency of the corporation, and the related implications for uneven development. With these observations in mind, this paper now goes on to explicate a space-time and conventions approach for examining the corporation.

III THE CORPORATION, CONVENTIONS AND SPACE-TIMES

1 Social and experiential space-time

If GPN and EEG approaches speak to the fruits of decision-making played out over medium to longer time frames, and focus on the sequential and objective time in which corporations are implicated, it remains unclear how these are informed or constituted by the sorts of conventions and deliberations that typically operate over a range of timeframes, and involving heterogeneous processes and socially constructed temporalities (see Table 1). Indeed, Table 1 makes clear the likelihood of important contradictions and conjunctures among the various temporalities of corporate decision making, and the disparate processes constituting the emergence of corporations. Such a conceptualisation firstly requires an understanding of the heterogeneous space-time formations characterising capitalist social relations, and through which we can conceptualise conventions.

Harvey (1996; 2006) has long argued for space and time to be treated dialectically rather than separately. Nonetheless, there has been criticism of Harvey for conceptually framing time and space as predetermining processes and actions (Merriman, 2011). In reality, he has built upon Leibnitz's conception of relational spaces, where space exists through the processes and substances creating space-time, which are produced and constituted through the relations between them (Harvey, 1996: 53). More specifically, Harvey (1996; 2006) has been concerned with the (material and discursive) social construction of space and time as they are perceived and conceived differently by actors. An aspect of this has been for Harvey (1996) to argue for an anti-Newtonian holistic understanding of how space-time relations are imbricated with the centrality of exchange-value within the capital accumulation process, and encompassing absolute, relative and relational forms (Castree, 2009).

Harvey (1996) argues that societies and capitalist modes of production comprise 'social space-times' that are relationally produced. Capitalist processes institutionalise a space-time of the relations between activities, events and materialities within such processes, meaning that within capitalism there are many different social space-times. What holds these different space-times together are various flows, such as commodification and exchange relations, which seek to objectify space-times in ways that support exchange-value within capitalist production, and which are imbricated with uneven development, but which stem from the motivations of actors in relation to particular capitalist principles (e.g. seeking to create surplus value). Such space-times thus allude to a variety of trajectories, relying upon largely socially constructed objective succession conceptions of time, from the short term exchange of products between actors in a supply chain, to the creation and selection of particular routines that characterise sectors in certain regions.

These space-times are importantly accompanied by 'experiential' space-times (Harvey, 1996). Everyday experiences of actors within places are defined by the collective activities of actors and which form particular social values, identities, habits/routines and common memory (Harvey, 1996). It is through the 'experiential' that actors both act and are influenced by others through producing and constituting various space-times, and which interact with the space-times of economic processes, and where we see the social construction of temporalities that are integral to human agency. Through such a conception we can understand how actors seek to construct the corporation by way of processes and their space-time configurations, how these interact with other actors who experience these processes, and the role of these processes in (re)configuring certain forms of uneven development as part of the 'social' space-times of the capital accumulation process.

Following Rescher (1996), such a perspective understands that temporalities are interwoven with processes and entities, and this has an important bearing on how we understand the space-time of the corporation and its strategizing and decision making. A distinction is made between a perspective on entities involving processes that represent change, and another involving a landscape of processes where entities are a reification of processes, and that entities are constituted and changed through such processes (Rescher, 1996). The temporal and spatial implications are considerable, with GPN and EEG more skewed towards an entity-based conception of space-time, while practice perspectives and Harvey's dialectic approach are more inclined towards a processual understanding of the constant construction of entities.

Given these considerations it would be inaccurate to view the corporation as an entity that is stable and where change takes place only over the medium to long-term (Faulconbridge, 2009; Fuller, 2021a). Rather, and building upon Harvey (1996), it is a set of constantly emergent and changing processes that reify an entity as a temporary instantiation (or following Whitehead (1929) a ‘permanence’). The further implication being that we can understand the socially constructed, heterogeneous time frames and spatial processes characterising the corporation that are created by actors (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). Conceptions of the past, present and future are interwoven with these space-times, as they underpin the temporal and spatial basis of collective processes (e.g. conventions of behaviour) and actor motives, and which the paper examines in the next section (Schatzki, 2010).

2 A conventions perspective of the corporation, temporalities and uneven development

Thévenot (2001) argues that the firm is inherently unstable, characterised by uncertainty and tensions between actors and practices, and geared more towards heterogeneous social logics rather than any form of economic rationality (Biggart and Beamish, 2003). This arises because of the indeterminate and uncertain nature of the broader social context in which firms exist, and the plurality of different modes of coordination, subjectivities and objects that constitute the social situations in which decision making takes place (Jones, 2008). Reducing uncertainty requires conventions that produce expectations, practices, subjectivities and economic objects, and which underpin recurrent and novel economic interactions within the firm and the market (Biggart and Beamish, 2003; Diaz-Bone, 2011).

Such forms of guidance are similar to routines in evolutionary theories of the firm, and have been demonstrated to underpin particular ‘worlds of production’ based on the qualities of products in ways that are similar to conceptions of path dependence (Storper and Salais, 1997;

Stræte, 2004). However, conventions theory conveys the constantly dynamic nature of the social context, temporalities and forms of micro-action, rather than treating routines as relatively static, long term, and encompassing only particular periods of change through ‘novelty’ or institutional change and path creation. More specifically, routines exist but they are constantly justified, critiqued and changed in social situations through conventions, which themselves are subject to a ‘test’ of their worthiness in different situations (Dequech, 2009).

Conventions encompass a commonly understood frame of evaluation or ‘equivalence’, qualifying the quality, worthiness and attributes of particular practices (e.g. wage structures), actors (e.g. firms) and objects (e.g. products) (Eymard Duvernay, 2006). Critical to this is the process of commensuration, involving the deliberative judgement and attribution of moral worthiness to a socially constructed ‘common good’ for particular economic activities and actors (Lamont and Thévenot 2000; Favereau et al, 2002). Once accepted by actors as providing a cognitive and moral understanding of these economic dimensions, these frames are made common and recurrent as conventions (as a ‘conventional rule’, see Dequech, 2009). Conventions can in this sense underpin the types of longer term path dependencies/change typically explored in EEG and value capture trajectories in GPN. They therefore form the basis of everyday action within economic situations, and are thus constantly subject to change (Boxenbaum, 2014; Kozica et al, 2014).

The importance of conventions lies in facilitating particular interpretations of social life, rather than simply being informal institutional rules or routines (Orléan, 2004). Conventions are concerned with coordinating the interpretations and judgements of actors in the everyday in relation to social space-times (Bessy and Favereau, 2003). By conveying these general principles, conventions underpin intangible agreement between actors. Here, they encompass routines and guide actors when interpreting social situations characterised by ambiguous and indeterminate social coordination, and where actors have differing interpretations of conditions and potential forms of action (Storper and Salais 1997; Stark, 2008).

In Boltanski and Thévenot's (2006) influential account, conventions are produced through modes of coordination termed 'orders of worth', which are historically configured normative conceptions and principles of legitimate and worthy purposes and actions, which are configured and performed through particular spatial formations, thus linking to much broader social values and belief systems (Lamont and Thévenot, 2000; Diaz-Bone, 2016). These provide the justification for values, beliefs and norms of behaviour, and understandings of justice and legitimised priorities and actions, and which come to constitute agreement between actors and guide them through routine behaviour. For Bessy and Favereau (2003), they are a representation, through various forms, of a justified common world. For Orléan (2004), actors adopt and adhere to conventions because they consider them legitimate in relation to a common good ('legitimate convention').

Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) identify a range of orders of worth (i.e. market, industrial, civic, domestic, fame, projective and green) that form the basis of conceptions of a moral common good. Conventions work through particular temporal and spatial processes, such as the short term and spatially networked configurations of market orders (Lamont and Thévenot, 2000). What is critical in conventions accounts is that these orders are understood to not solely generate or constitute conventions. Rather, it is the case that they are combined to generate conventions that are particular to a firm, sector or region, but this is not a succinct and unproblematic endeavour as conventions are utilised to manage organisational pluralism (see Storper and Salais 1997; Stark, 2008; Ponte, 2016; Cloutier et al, 2017).

Convention theory has been widely deployed in the examination of firms, which are viewed as heterogeneous entities characterised by configurations of interdependent relations and practices, and encompassing actors and objects (Stark, 2008; Huault and Rainelli-Weiss, 2011). A conventions perspective views human actors as causal agents central to the construction and dynamic performance of conventions, an approach that contrasts sharply with institutionalist and political economy accounts (Diaz-Bone, 2016). Actors produce, interpret, perform and react to organisational practices and relations by positioning conventions through everyday temporalities (Dequech, 2016). One such example is Reinecke's (2010) study of Fairtrade pricing which found that its organising practices relate to common moral conceptions from which particular calculative measures can be formulated. However, this was a political process around issues of 'civic' morality (e.g. fair wages for producers), rather than being based purely on market values of firm competitiveness. A conventions perspective on organisational practices can also be applied to practice perspectives of the corporation, such as in Faulconbridge and Muzio's (2008) account of the organisational restructuring of law firms. In this account one can argue that the financialisation and reorganisation of legal firms resulted from the deployment of 'market' conventions relating to the logics of financial markets (e.g. promotion tied to formal financial targets), combined with 'industrial' conventions based on performance management, producing new conventions directing the behaviours of actors and firms.

The temporality and spatiality of conventions is determined by actors as they deploy these through action and deliberation, but where such conventions are configured by way of various historical trajectories, suggesting multi-dimensional space-time processes (Biggart and Beamish, 2003). Conventions are historical constructs, produced through the construction of various moral values over time, and configured into a range of social or experiential space-times, thereby representing the past but informing the present and future (i.e. 'conventions as rules', see Batifoulier, et al., 2001; Lamont and Thévenot, 2000; Fuller, 2014). Following the importance placed on socio-institutional settings in GPNs and evolutionary economic geographies (e.g. Neilson et al., 2018; and MacKinnon et al., 2019), a conventions approach takes seriously the significance of examining the causality of historically constituted settings, such as in the state fostering social space-time conventions of commercialisation in GPNs and regional economies (see, for example, Baker and Sovacool, 2017).

The actual moral configurations of conventions, involving legitimised conceptions of 'worth' or common good, requires actors to behave in ways that confirm to an idealised present and future (e.g. through a 'state of worthiness'). As such, future social and experiential space-times (as motivation) are embedded within conventions (Orléan, 2004). The implications are such that any consideration of the role of the (differentiated) agency of the corporation in producing uneven development has to take account of the different conventions and space-times through which it exists. Conventions can therefore be part of, and represent longer term 'social' space-time processes, including the capital accumulation process, where they objectify such processes and their space-times (e.g. moral configurations around the importance of financial responsibility), but where they are accompanied by alternative conventions working through experiential space-times.

Yet, their construction is perennial since they are constantly recreated through everyday 'tests' of legitimacy and relevance within 'experiential' space-times, rather than being static (Reinecke et al., 2017). It is within such situations that alternative conventions also exist through everyday 'experiential' space-times, involving interaction between actors, practices, discourses and objects with different space-times. A conventions approach is therefore critical in examining the politicised and power-laden relations between HQs and subsidiaries, since the former seeks to ensure degrees of control and coordination over the longer term, such as through the construction of subjectivities; but where this depends on the performance of such conventions by subsidiaries that typically desire degrees of autonomy (Clegg et al., 2018). This demonstrates the importance of the present of everyday life and deliberation (as a 'conventional model of evaluation', see Batifoulier, et al., 2001).

In relation to corporations and uneven development, one can argue that the historically constituted behaviours that underpin economic geographies are critical. However, these are subject to change by corporate actors as they reconfigure or create new conventions, and which work to produce particular temporal configurations of corporate decision making that influence and constitute broader processes of uneven development (Storper and Salais, 1997; Ponte, 2016). This is notable in peripheral regions characterised by 'dependency', involving market-based conventions legitimising and underpinning low cost-based operations that characterise particular corporate activities (Bair and Werner, 2011; MacKinnon, 2011; Ponte and Sturgeon, 2014). Here, we see the interaction between social (i.e. capital accumulation) and experiential (i.e. everyday conventions) space-times in producing places of uneven development. Worth is defined by the market values of low-cost unskilled labour and the legitimacy to transfer operations to lower cost locations in the medium term (Massey, 1995; Phelps and Fuller, 2000). The 'tests' by which conventions are (re)created appear in concrete form in the 'locational tournaments' between peripheral regions for corporation investment. Indeed, a 'market for location' has been constructed in some national contexts such as the United States precisely around the substitutability of places largely on the basis of cost (Wood and Phelps, 2018).

Such market conventions are coupled with 'industrial' moral values (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006) of strong parent company control through highly regulated tasks, low management capabilities to undertake decision-making as these are centralised, and endemic reporting procedures, all of which facilitate real-time forms of control (See Table 1) (Dawley, 2007; Kleibert, 2016; Fuller, 2021a). These produce social space-times in the form of particular regulatory places, encompassing the control and regulation of time by HQs in both the present and future (Brandl and Schneider, 2017). Such thinking directly links with the 'firm strategies' deployed by lead firms in GPN 2.0. As argued by Neilson et al (2018), cocoa–chocolate production in Indonesia involves the predominance of greater lead firm monitoring of smallholders in low labour cost sites, within a broader supportive institutional context that orchestrates such conventions (Neilson et al., 2018). Similarly, Bair and Werner (2011) note the role of a 'can do' attitude in the case of apparel firms in Mexico (symbolised through a monument) in the formation of particular phases of corporate investment, and efforts to produce new conventionalised forms of behaviour based on such forms of morality.

The processes outlined above demonstrate that the temporalities and spatialities of conventions are multiple, and have disparate relations with uneven development. A conventions approach can therefore be important in examining the role of broader conventionalised social behaviours, but where they are understood as socially constructed and performed by actors in the everyday (see Table 1). They include embedded, longer term conventions of behaviour, such as those involving the development of indigenous coupling with regions. Yeung's (2009) account of Seoul, for example, illustrates how conventions of close working between Chaebol corporations and the Government were critical in them becoming global lead firms, and which has been important in underpinning corporate strategies of manufacturing localisation in the city-region. Corporations are closely linked with production networks and regional assets in ways that typically involve the development of advanced capabilities and close working relations (Coe and Yeung, 2015). Conventions comprise moral values relating to the legitimacy of having strong relations and interdependencies between corporations and other actors, and which work through experiential space-times of sustained deliberations on future temporalities concerning maintenance of innovation and competitiveness.

This contrasts with ‘structural’ forms of coupling, typically based on cost-reduction, where extensive HQ control can reduce the extent to which subsidiaries have the powers and resources in which to transform (MacKinnon, 2011). There is the potential for medium term transformation through disinvestment, and with conventions that are interwoven with forms of legitimacy based on market competitiveness and the exploitation of low-cost assets, which implies the movement of investments (Yang, 2009; Fuller, 2021). In such instances, experiential space-times are restricted to being concerned with maintaining everyday cost-based competitiveness and efficiency in the present, rather than longer term subsidiary upgrading that enhances value capture trajectories and forms of coupling, and which can positively contribute to uneven development (see, for example, Smith et al., 2014). This can include conventionalised behaviours around the importance of meeting targets, and the flexible adjustment of production to meet changing market conditions in the short term. Lopez (2021), for example, argues that various forms of ‘production-targeting’ (of the workforce and suppliers), as a set of embedded practices that are akin to conventions, enforce labour control regimes that underpin cost-based firm operations within Bangalore garment GPNs. However, we should not treat conventions simply as rules, and which we explore in the next section.

a Conventions, critique and spatial relations

Conventions are not static since orders of worth not only guide behaviours, they are also deployed by actors in deliberative situations as a means of critique where they feel existing arrangements are unjust (as a 'conventional model of evaluation', see Dequech, 2009), and encompassing various space-time relations (Ponte, 2016). In such instances, these conventions of critique are informed by alternative orders of worth to those that are dominant. In this sense, a conventions perspective moves beyond EEG and GPN by examining both the 'micro' of agency actions, and macro perspectives of broader morally configured conventions through a concern with social and experiential space-times. Such instances occur within contemporary situations, but they are endowed with heterogeneous space-time processes through which actors work, with a conventions approach explicating the importance of the disparate space-times both within and beyond the region, and which come to constitute regional uneven development. In essence, it is important not to reduce uneven development and corporations to broader processes of evolving economic landscapes or value-capture trajectories.

The forms of action and conventions outlined above are spatially relational, produced through disparate space-time relations, and where they can stretch across space through various temporalities, forming meso and macro processes that only exist through their performance, but where they are realised within an 'organisational space' of 'situations' of 'experiential' space-time deliberation (Storper and Salais, 1997; Thévenot et al., 2000; Ponte, 2009). Conventions do not then simply guide corporations, they are also utilised by actors within the everyday 'situations' of deliberation as a means of justifying and legitimising their aims (Eymard-Duvernay, 2006; Brandl and Schneider, 2017). It is these relations within the 'situation' that construct, contest and reproduce organisational spaces, as well as forming the production and recreation of uneven development. They form the basis of deliberative decision-making on (dis)investment and production network decisions that influences value capture trajectories, the nature of coupling, and processes of path dependency and creation.

Critique and justification works through a 'test' where actors question the extent to which the evaluative principles of an order of worth are congruent with a material reality ('reality test') (Stark, 2008; McInerney, 2008; Huault and Rainelli-Weiss, 2011; Kozica et al., 2014). This is a process that is comparable to the interaction between social and experiential space-times, and is thus a test of legitimacy with the purpose of producing new conventions or reconfiguring existing ones (Thévenot, 2015). Such mobilisations and modes of power are met by actors, practices and broader structural conditions that mediate such efforts, producing deliberative spaces and differential outcomes (Boltanski, 2011). Deployment of orders of worth to critique and justify action is intrinsic to headquarter-subsidiary relations and the (re)production of uneven development by corporations (Brandl and Schneider, 2017). Of critical concern here is the role of conventions that are deployed as a means of producing varying degrees of everyday HQ control and direction of subsidiaries, involving critiques of their actions and performance, and thus justification for HQ actions (Brandl and Schneider, 2017). Correspondingly, such conventions form the basis of the degree of dependence or autonomy of subsidiaries, which relates to the extent to which they have control over their responsibilities, supply chains and the markets they serve (MacKinnon, 2011). This then influences their degree of coupling with the region, value capture trajectories, and thus potential to positively contribute to evolving regional economies.

Examples of such forms of deliberation include instances where spatially networked 'market' values (of the need for cost-based competitiveness through savings) have been used to justify and legitimise corporate restructuring and closure by HQs (see Phelps and Waley, 2004; Vaara et al., 2006; Erkama and Vaara, 2010; Fuller, 2021a, 2021b). Dawley's (2007) account demonstrates the role of broader conventions of behaviour that are deployed by HQs in deliberations with subsidiaries. Siemens divisional semi-conductor HQ critiqued the northeast subsidiary and justified closure on the basis that the previous strategy of seeking to incorporate Anglo-Saxon market values was erroneous. The new senior management argued that commercial decision making was more important, and that the northeast subsidiary was incongruent to this (Dawley, 2007: 62). Examining how HQs utilise social space-time in judging performance and justifying decisions is therefore critical, and where this is used in a way in which to marginalise any deliberation involving subsidiaries utilising experiential space-time in which to justify their continuation.

In other instance, HQs deploy a business 'rationale' where 'industrial' conceptions of worth (e.g. efficiency) are used to critique the performance of a subsidiary. This involves scalar corporate constructs of performance measurement that critique the subsidiary in terms of quantifiable measures based on social space-times of objective time (Kristensen and Zeitlin, 2005; Koveshnikov et al., 2017). For example, in their examination of the legitimisation strategies deployed in the closure of Volvo subsidiary in Finland, Erkama and Vaara (2010) identify how HQs use financial performance mechanisms to argue that restructuring decisions are 'rational'. In such processes, the HQ is critiquing the particular experiential space-times that characterise the uneven fulfilment of corporate strategies (see Clegg et al., 2018). HQ critique can underpin disinvestment and forms of GPN 'decoupling' where the region will have a decreasing role in production networks. This detrimentally effects regional value capture trajectories as subsidiaries have a reduced value creation role, and with the loss of productive capabilities leading to a decreasing capacity for positively impacting evolving regional economies (MacKinnon, 2011; Fuller and Phelps, 2018; MacKinnon et al., 2019).

Nonetheless, it is not simply a case of HQs unilaterally enacting decisions without deliberation and negotiation with subsidiaries within corporations that are increasingly characterised as 'federations' (Clarke and Geppert, 2011). During deliberative episodes a range of orders of worth are deployed by actors to produce, justify and critique conventions, encompassing various spatial relations (Ponte, 2016). Such instances occur within contemporary situations, but they are endowed with various space-time processes through which actors work. Subsidiary-HQ relations are characterised by subsidiaries utilising orders of worth and working through experiential space-times of distanciated or topological (i.e. video conferencing correspondence) immediacy in their everyday interactions with HQs (Fuller, 2021a). These are interwoven with other spatial relations that can draw upon various experiential space-time processes, such as the importance of a historically configured territorialised identity in producing important material assets within their region, including place-specific business relations (see Clarke and Geppert, 2011; and Erkama and Vaara, 2010).

During such episodes, HQ efforts to produce and control subsidiaries through conventions is often accompanied by subsidiary actions that seek to critique and contest corporation arrangements (Clegg et al., 2018). Subsidiaries can convey critiques, through experiential space-times, based on alternative conventions and temporalities. This includes, for example, utilising orders of worth and conventions on how they have fulfilled production mandates, endogenously reacted to particular events, or developed capabilities in conjunction with regional actors (see, for example, Dawley, 2007; Pavlinek and Zızalova, 2016; Phelps and Fuller, 2016). For instance, Fuller (2021a) argues that even hierarchically controlled foreign subsidiaries in the UK have acquired devolved responsibility for managing Brexit. Subsidiaries argued that they have been successful in fulfilling their responsibilities through the operational autonomy they possess, and that these capabilities can be utilised in risk managing the uncertainties of Brexit. This illustrates how subsidiary critiques are typically interwoven with social space-time conventions conveying their strong performance and capabilities, as set out in conventions of 'market' performance and 'industrial' efficacy (Clark and Geppert, 2011).

Such processes have a considerable impact on the role of corporations and conventions in uneven development. Subsidiaries are seeking to justify their importance and that of the region, and attract new or continuing investment and responsibilities from corporate HQ, which accompanies subsidiary utilisation of their capabilities and resources to enact entrepreneurship and innovation (Coe and Yeung, 2015). Examples include 'civic' territorialised nationalism and local political interests accompanying 'market' conventions of subsidiary management entrepreneurialism in directing action (Vaara and Tienari, 2008). Clarke and Geppert (2011), in their examination of subsidiaries in post-socialist economies, identified 'local patriot' establishments that were strongly embedded within regional economies, societies and networks. This is manifest through conventions of self-reliance, reputation and legitimacy, generated through experiential spacetime relating to historical production of these conventions within regions, and which inform the everyday of subsidiary actors. Such action formed the basis of the subsidiary critique of corporate efforts for greater integration and restructuring, involving mobilisation of regional political actors. However, mistrust with HQs can develop which negatively impacts the subsidiary, and involves social space-time conventions of greater control and integration (Clarke and Geppert, 2011).

Such conventions therefore have the potential for forming the basis of disinvestment and a loss of autonomy, which can negatively impact coupling, prove detrimental to value capture trajectories and hinder the role of the subsidiary in broader evolving regional economies.

However, in other instances, critique by the subsidiary management results in resolution through deliberation and compromise. For Balogun et al., (2011), in an account of the impact of a European integration strategy on a UK subsidiary, integration is driven by episodes of resistance and negotiation. In such cases where actors utilise conventions to critique and contest, the subsidiary justified their importance by way of their experiential space-time knowledge of the national market. Through negotiation, which involved HQ utilisation of social space-time justifications for closer European integration based on financial cost savings, resolution came about that ensured the subsidiary's continuing possession of high value creation activities. The consequence of such actions is the reinforcing of stronger forms of coupling, confirming continuing regional economic trajectories of positive value capture.

What is critical here is the importance of corporate actors utilising and deploying moral arguments in seeking to legitimise their roles and capabilities in deliberations with the HQ, along with conveying the significance of their regions (Fuller, 2021a). These processes are critical in the 'transplantation' of knowledge and capabilities from other parts of the corporation, or the subsidiary acquiring the autonomy and capabilities in formulating new knowledge and capabilities (Martin and Sunley, 2015). Each process is significant in the upgrading of the subsidiary, which can have positive impacts in terms of value capture trajectories, stronger forms of coupling and recoupling, and 'path' dependencies and changes (Yang and Coe, 2009; Horner, 2013; Blažek, 2016; Phelps and Fuller, 2016). Where subsidiaries are unable to successfully utilise orders of worth and conventions in deliberations with HQs, there is the greater likelihood of less upgrading and the prevention of disinvestment, and thus a contribution to the broader perpetuation of uneven development through declining value capture trajectories and weak forms of coupling.

Actors can also critique an arrangement involving a particular convention based on the failure of other actors to fully adhere to this convention in the present, or it can be used to ensure that an actor conforms to a convention and thus projecting forward (Brandl and Schneider, 2017). Here, conventions rely upon the 'state of worthiness' of an actor and arrangements in truly conforming, and thus rely upon historical configurations of worth. In the case of the latter, McInerney (2008) argues that this involves managers seeking out conventions that corporate actors are responsive to, and utilising moral beliefs as a means in which to influence the subjectivities and actions of corporate actors. This is a means in which subsidiaries can contest HQ decision-making by explicating their failure to fully confirm to the conventions they construct, such as HQ decisions leading to inefficiencies and increasing costs (See Brandl and Schneider, 2017).

It is important to note, however, that this is also notable in instances of self-censorship and identity construction by subsidiaries, where they seek to adhere to HQ constructed conventions based on social space-time control. For instance, in their study of a UK subsidiary of a US corporation, Whittle et al. (2016) argues that the subsidiary management obeyed the strategic constructs of the HQ as a means by which to demonstrate its 'worthiness' in relation to conventions that underpin the strategy of greater networked corporate integration. The broader consequences for regions of such episodes are that uneven development can be perpetuated where this involves subsidiaries seeking to adhere to corporate subjectivities. This can lead to the continuation of value capture trajectories and few opportunities for transplantation, and with the greater potential for decoupling in later stages of an investment cycles.

IV CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper has been to advance existing approaches within relational economic geography (REG) and evolutionary economic geography (EEG) by elucidating a conventions approach to understanding the black box of the corporation, coupled with a utilisation of Harvey's (1996) conception of space-time. Within REG, the GPN 2.0 approach argues that production networks and uneven development are the consequence of relatively homogenous rational decision-making corporate actors, working through apolitical firm strategies. Similarly, EEG also has a tendency to view the firm as homogenous, constituted by routines that are punctuated by periods of episodic transformation. There is far less concern with the construction of firm routines through complex space-time deliberations and practices, or the role of broader social, cultural and political processes in constituting the firm. Yet, such complex processes can be of great importance in producing and constituting the corporate organization of production that influences uneven development. In relation to time, both the global production networks and EEG perspectives tend to focus on sequential clock time and with this, specific medium to long term timescales that present the danger of treating the corporation as relatively static. For corporations, such approaches marginalise short term strategies and practices, and downplay how time is experienced and used through subjective means and deliberative relations by actors.

In response, this paper proposes a conventions approach that is combined with Harvey's (1996) conception of space-time. The central concern is with examining the black box of the corporation, moving beyond treating the corporation as homogeneous and apolitical, to understand how it is produced and constituted through socially constructed conventions of behaviour that are informed by broader values (as orders of worth), deliberative relations and situations of both social and experiential space-times. Importantly, a conventions approach does not treat these as simply reducing uncertainties, guiding behaviours and being relatively static. Conventions are generated through social action and perennial legitimisation, but are also critiqued and contested by actors deploying them in social situations. They are, therefore, dynamic in nature, and come to constitute what are heterogeneous, emergent and performative corporate arrangements. A conventions approach thus appreciates the importance of broader macro processes and their space-time, with that of their construction and utilisation in the everyday situations of deliberation and decision-making characterising the corporation, and that involves particular experiential and social space-times.

By focusing on these corporate space-time arrangements of conventionalised behaviours and situations of deliberations and negotiation, and their imbrication with broader processes (e.g. social values), a conventions approach provides a framework to examine the role of complex corporate processes in uneven development. This includes the heterogeneous experiential space-time deliberations and decision-making that is interwoven with social spaces-times (e.g. performance management), and which influences the value capture trajectories of corporate subsidiaries, degrees of coupling, and the nature of evolving regional economies.

In taking this forward, a central element of a future research agenda is to examine corporations, and agency more generally, as a deliberative social and experiential space-time series of sites, which are constantly social constructed, and through which there is a reification of agency as a temporary instantiation (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). This advances recent calls for a greater focus on agency, but moves beyond their limited concern with defining agency in terms of motivation and treating time as sequential (e.g. Martin and Sunley, 2015). A critical element of this is to interrogate the deliberations and conventions characterising motivations, decision-making and actions both within corporations, and between corporations and production networks. This includes examining how conventions are generated and performed, particular conventions come to dominate, and how they are deployed in deliberations of critique and contestation.

Such an approach requires sensitivity to experiential space-times, involving temporalities that are produced and utilised by actors within practices and deliberative situations. However, agency and deliberations are not simply demarcated from the broader context, since a conventions approach requires examination of the role of broader social, economic and political conventions, coupled with a concern with the role of social space-time arrangements and processes (e.g. modes of capitalism). This suggests a research agenda concerned with both micro practices and macro tendencies, and with experiential and social space-times. Through this approach there is significant advancement in the understanding of the complex influence and role of agency, deliberations, and conventions in value capture trajectories, coupling and broader evolving regional economies.

Acknowledgements

This research was conducted with the support of a Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship (RF-2018-195\7). I am immensely grateful to the Leverhulme Trust for funding this research. I am also extremely appreciative for the comments and inputs provided by Nick Phelps, and the constructive feedback on an earlier version of this article by the reviewers and the Journal editor, Noel Castree.

REFERENCES

Balogun J, Jarzabkowski P and Vaara E (2011) Selling, resistance and reconciliation: A critical discursive approach to subsidiary role evolution in MNEs. *Journal of International Business Studies* 42: 765-86.

Baker L and Sovacool B (2017) The political economy of technological capabilities and global production networks in South Africa's wind and solar photovoltaic (PV) industries. *Political Geography* 60: 1-12.

Barratt T and Ellem B (2019) Temporality and the evolution of GPNs: remaking BHP's Pilbara iron ore network, *Regional Studies* 53(11): 1555-1564.

Bathelt H and Glückler J (2005) From Substantive Concepts towards a Relational Perspective. *Environment and Planning A* 37(9): 1545-1563.

Becker M (2004) The concept of routines – some clarifications. *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 29: 249-62.

Bessy C and Favereau O (2003) Institutions according to the Economics of Conventions. Cahiers d'économie politique */ Papers in Political Economy* L'Harmattan, issue 44: 119-164.

Blažek J (2016) Towards a typology of repositioning strategies of GVC/GPN suppliers: the case of functional upgrading and downgrading. *Journal of Economic Geography* 16 (4): 849-869.

Biggart N W and Beamish T D (2003). The Economic Sociology of Conventions: Habit, Custom, Practice and Routine in Market Order. *Annual Review of Sociology* 29(1): 443–464.

Boltanski, L. (2011) *On Justification*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Boltanski L and Thévenot L (2006) *On Justification: Economies of Worth*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Boschma R and Frenken K (2009) Some Notes on Institutions in Evolutionary Economic Geography. *Economic Geography* 85:2: 151-158.

Boschma R A and Martin R (2010) Constructing an evolutionary economic geography. *Journal of Economic Geography* 7 (5): 537-548.

Boxenbaum E (2014) Toward a Situated Stance in Organizational Institutionalism: Contributions From French Pragmatist Sociology Theory. *Journal of Management Inquiry* 23(3): 319–323.

Brandl J and Schneider R (2017) Headquarters-Subsidiary Relationships from a Convention Theory Perspective: Plural Orders of Worth, Arrangements and Form-Giving Activities. In Dörrenbächer C and Geppert M (eds) *Research in the Sociology of Organizations. Multinational Corporations and Organization Theory*.

Castree N (2009) The Spatio-temporality of Capitalism. *Time & Society* 18(1): 26–61.

Clark E and Geppert M (2011). Subsidiary Integration as Identity Construction and Institution Building: A Political Sensemaking Approach. *Journal of Management Studies* 48(2): 395–416.

Clegg S, Geppert M and Hollinshead G (2018) Politicization and political contests in and around contemporary multinational corporations: An introduction. *Human Relations* 71(6): 745 –765.

Cloutier C, Gond J P and Leca B (2017) Justification, evaluation and critique in the study of organization: An introduction to the volume. *Justification, Evaluation and Critique in the Study of Organizations* 52: 3-29.

Coe N, Dicken P and Hess, M. (2008) Global production networks: realizing the Potential. *Journal of Economic Geography* 8: 271–295

Coe N and Yeung H (2015) *Global Production Networks: Theorizing Economic Development in an Interconnected World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Contractor F, Kumar V, Kundu S and Pedersen T (2010) Reconceptualizing the Firm in a World of Outsourcing and Offshoring: The Organizational and Geographical Relocation of High-Value Company Functions. *Journal of Management Studies* 47(8): 1417-1433.

Crescenzi R, Pietrobelli C and Rabellotti R (2014) Innovation Drivers, Value Chains and the Geography of Multinational Corporations in Europe. *Journal of Economic Geography* 14 (6): 1053-1086.

Dawley S (2007) Fluctuating Rounds of Inward Investment in Peripheral Regions: Semiconductors in the North East of England. *Economic Geography* 83 (1) 51–73.

Dawley S, Mackinnon D and Pollock R (2019) Creating strategic couplings in global production networks: regional institutions and lead firm investment in the Humber region, UK. *Journal of Economic Geography* 19(4) 853–872.

Dequech D (2009) Institutions, social norms, and decision-theoretic norms. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 72(1): 70-78.

Diaz-Bone R (2011) The methodological standpoint of the" économie des conventions. *Historical Social Research* 36(4): 43-63.

Diaz-Bone, R. (2016) Convention theory and neoliberalism. *Journal of Cultural Economy* 9 (2): 214-220.

Erkama N and Vaara E (2010) Struggles over legitimacy in global organizational restructuring: a rhetorical perspective on legitimation strategies and dynamics. *Organization Studies* 31(7): 813-839.

Eymard-Duvernay F (2006) *L'économie des conventions Méthodes et résultats*. Vol. 1: Débats, La Découverte, Paris.

Faulconbridge J (2008) Negotiating cultures of work in transnational law firms. *Journal of Economic Geography* 8: 497–517.

Faulconbridge J (2010) TNCs as embedded social communities: transdisciplinary perspectives. *Critical perspectives on international business* 6 (4): 273-290.

Faulconbridge J (2012) Economic geographies of power: Methodological challenges and interdisciplinary analytical possibilities. *Progress in Human Geography* 36(6): 735–757.

Faulconbridge J R and Muzio D (2008) Organizational professionalism in globalizing law firms. *Work, Employment and Society* 22(1): 7–25.

Felin T and Foss N (2009) Organizational routines and capabilities: Historical drift and a course-correction toward microfoundations. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 25: 157–167.

Fuller C (2014) Urban politics and the social practices of critique and justification: Conceptual insights from French pragmatism. *Progress in Human Geography* 37(5): 639–657.

Fuller C (2021a) Brexit and the discursive construction of the corporation. *Journal of Economic Geography* 21 (2): 317–338.

Fuller C (2021b) Understanding the impact of Brexit: the case of foreign software corporations in Scotland and Southeast England. *European Urban and Regional Studies* https://doi.org/10.1177/09697764219894

Fuller C and Phelps N A (2018) Revisiting the multinational enterprise in global production networks. *Journal of Economic Geography* 18(1): 139-161.

Harvey D (1996) *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publishers.

Hassink R, Klaerding C and Marques P (2014) Advancing evolutionary economic geography by engaged pluralism. *Regional Studies* 48(7): 1295-1307.

Henning M (2018) Time should tell (more): evolutionary economic geography and the challenge of history. *Regional Studies* 53:4: 602-613.

Hernes T, Simpson B and Soderlund J (2013) Managing and temporality. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 29: 1-6.

Huault I and Rainelli-Weiss H (2011) A Market for Weather Risk? Conflicting Metrics, Attempts at Compromise, and Limits to Commensuration. *Organization Studies* 32 (10): 1395-1419.

Jones A (2005) Truly global corporations: organizational globalization' in advanced business services. *Journal of Economic Geography* 5(2): 177–200.

Jones A (2008) Beyond embeddedness: economic practices and the invisible dimensions of transnational business activity. *Progress in Human Geography* 32(1): 71–88.

Jones A (2017) The Corporation in Geography. In: Spicer A and Baars G (eds) The Corporation: *A Critical, Multidisciplinary Handbook*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jones A and Murphy J (2011) Theorizing practice in economic geography: Foundations, challenges, and possibilities. *Progress in Human Geography* 35: 366-392.

Kleibert K M (2016) Global Production Networks, Offshore Services and the Branch-Plant Syndrome, *Regional Studies* 50 (12): 1995-2009.

Koveshnikov A, Vaara E, and Ehrnrooth M (2017) Stereotype-Based Managerial Identity Work in Multinational Corporations. *Organization Studies* 37(9): 1353 –1379.

Kozica A, Kaiser S and Friesl M (2014) Organizational Routines: Conventions as a Source of Change and Stability. *Schmalenbach Business Review* 66(3) 334–356.

Kristensen P H and Zeitlin J (2005) *Local Players in Global Games: The Strategic Constitution of a Multinational Corporation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lamont M and Thévenot L (eds) (2000) *Rethinking Comparative Cultural Sociology. Repertoires of Evaluation in France and the United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lopez T (2021) A practice ontology approach to labor control regimes in GPNs: Connecting 'sites of labor control' in the Bangalore export garment cluster. *EPA: Economy and Space* DOI: 10.1177/0308518X20987563

McInerney P (2008) Showdown at Kykuit: Field-Configuring Events as Loci for Conventionalizing Accounts. *Journal of Management Studies* 45 (6) 1089-1116.

MacKinnon D (2011) Beyond strategic coupling: reassessing the firm-region nexus in global production networks. *Journal of Economic Geography* 12 (1): 227-245.

Massey D (1995) *Spatial Divisions of Labor: Social Structures and the Geography of Production.* Basingstoke: MacMillan.

Merriman P (2011) Human geography without time-space. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 37(1) 13–27.

Morgan G (2018) Power relations within multinational corporations. In Nölke A and May C *Handbook of the International Political Economy of the Corporation*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.

Neffke F, Hartog M, Boschma R and Henning M (2018) Agents of Structural Change: The Role of Firms and Entrepreneurs in Regional Diversification. *Economic Geography* 94(1): 23-48.

Neilson J, Pritchar, B, Fold N and Dwiartama A (2018) Lead Firms in the Cocoa–Chocolate Global Production Network: An Assessment of the Deductive Capabilities of GPN 2.0. *Economic Geography* 94(4): 400-424.

Orléan A (2004) L'économie des conventions : définitions et résultats. In Orléan A *Analyse économique des conventions*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Pavlinek P and Zızalova P (2016) Linkages and spillovers in global production networks: firm-level analysis of the Czech automotive industry. *Journal of Economic Geography* 16(2): 331–363.

Pentland B and Feldman M (2005) Organizational Routines as a Unit of Analysis. *Industrial and Corporate Change* 14(5): 793-815.

Phelps N A and Fuller C (2000) Multinationals corporations, intra-corporate competition and regional development. *Economic Geography* 76(3) 224-243.

Phelps N A and Waley P (2004) Capital Versus the Districts: A Tale of One Multinational Company's Attempt to Disembed Itself. *Economic Geography* 80(2): 191–215.

Phelps N A and Fuller C (2016) Inertia and change in multinational enterprise subsidiary capabilities: an evolutionary economic geography framework. *Journal of Economic Geography* 16(1): 109-130.

Phelps N Atienza M and Arias M (2018) An invitation to the dark side of economic geography. *EPA: Economy and Space* 50(1): 236-244.

Ponte S (2016) Convention theory in the Anglophone agro-food literature: Past, present and future. *Journal of Rural Studies* 44: 12-23.

Ponte S and Sturgeon T (2014). Explaining Governance in Global Value Chains: A Modular Theory-Building Effort. *Review of International Political Economy* 21(1): 195-223.

Priem R and Butler J (2001) Tautology in the Resource-Based View and the Implications of Externally Determined Resource Value: Further Comments. *The Academy of Management Review* Vol. 26(1): 57-66.

Reinecke J (2010) Beyond a subjective theory of value and towards a ‘fair price’: an organizational perspective on Fairtrade minimum price setting. *Organization* 17(5): 563–581.

Reinecke J Van Bommel, K and Spicer A (2017) When orders of worth clash: Negotiating legitimacy in situations of moral multiplexity. In Cloutier C, Gond J P and Leca B (2017) *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Ltd

Rescher N (1996) *Process Metaphysics: An Introduction to Process Philosophy*. New York: Suny Press.

Smith A, Pickles J, Bucek M, Pastor R and Beggy B (2014) The political economy of global production networks: regional industrial change and differential upgrading in the East European clothing industry. *Journal of Economic Geography* 14(6): 1023–1051.

Stam E (2010) Entrepreneurship, evolution and geography. In Boschma R and Martin R *The Handbook of Evolutionary Economic Geography*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Stark D (2008) *The Sense of Dissonance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Steen M and Hansen G (2018) Barriers to Path Creation: The Case of Offshore Wind Power in Norway. *Economic Geography* 94(2): 188-210.

Storper M and Salais R (1997). *Worlds of Production. The Action Frameworks in the Economy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Stræte E (2004) Innovation and changing ‘worlds of production. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 11(3): 227–241.

Sunley P (2009) Relational economic geography: A partial understanding or a new paradigm? *Economic Geography* 84(1): 1–26.

Thévenot L (2001) Organized Complexity: Conventions of Coordination and the Composition of Economic Arrangements. *European Journal of Social Theory* 4(4): 405–424.

Thévenot L (2015) Certifying the world. In Aspers P and Dodd N (eds) *Re-Imagining Economic Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tsoukas H and Chia R (2002) On Organizational Becoming: Rethinking Organizational Change. *Organization Science* 13(5):567-582.

Vaara E Tienari J and Laurila J (2006) Pulp and paper fiction: On the discursive legitimation of global industrial restructuring. *Organization Studies* 27(6): 789–810.

Vaara E and Tienari J (2008) A Discursive Perspective on Legitimation Strategies in Multinational Corporations. *The Academy of Management Review* 33(4): 985-993.

Werner M (2016) Global production networks and uneven development: Exploring geographies of devaluation, disinvestment, and exclusion. *Geography Compass* 10(11): 457–469.

Whitehead A N (1929) *Process and Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Whittle A, Mueller F, Gilchrist A and Lenney P (2016) Sensemaking, Sense-Censoring and Strategic Inaction: The Discursive Enactment of Power and Politics in a Multinational Corporation. *Organization Studies* 37(9): 1323 –1351.

Wood A and Phelps N (2018) Towards a geography of intermediaries. *EPA: Economy and Society* 50(6) 1290-1294.

Yeung H (2009) Transnational Corporations, Global Production Networks, and Urban and Regional Development: A Geographer's Perspective on Multinational Enterprises and the Global Economy. *Growth and Change* 40(2) 197–226.

Table One: Temporal and spatial dimensions of corporate conventions

Characteristic corporate activities	Illustrative conventions	Dominant spatial formation	Dominant time frame
Production, cost and turnover targets	Cost reduction Market expansion	Place-specific Relational networks	Short term
Operational/production reporting to the HQ	Rationality of constantly monitoring, including a belief in efficiency	Topological relations, Scalar framing and administration	Short term
Financial reporting to the HQ	Rationality of constantly monitoring, including a belief in efficiency	Topological relations, Scalar framing and administration	Short term
Supply chain management and reporting to the HQ	Rationality of constantly monitoring, including a belief in efficiency	Topological relations, Scalar framing and administration	Short term
Performance reviews to the HQ	Rationality, being able to monitor performance at particular points in time, and based on discursively framed segments of economic life	Topological relations, Scalar framing and administration	Short term
Subsidiary routines	Incorporation of place-specific firm behaviours (e.g. clustering) Cost reduction Market expansion Receiving and absorbing knowledge from other corporate units	Territorialised Relational networks	Medium term
Intra/extra-corporate supplier relations	Negotiation and implementation of contracts (e.g. costs, codified/tacit of knowledge) Day-to-day monitoring of contracts	Relational networks	Short-Medium term
Capabilities development	Human capital (e.g. skills, knowledge), social networks, cognitive abilities, firm absorptive capabilities	Place-specific Territorialised Relational networks	Medium term
Annual business plans	Rationality of constantly monitoring, including a belief in efficiency (e.g. Targets, operational implementation, performance monitoring)	Topological relations Scalar framing	Short-Medium term
Corporate Strategy	Strategic aims	Relational networks Scalar framing	Short-Medium term
Annual reports and accounts	Targets, expenditure/turnover monitoring	Relational networks	Short-Medium term
Mergers and acquisitions	Construction of new firm conventions and compromises; reorientation/creation of	Place-specific Relational networks	Medium term

	new routines; new/reoriented firm apparatus	Scalar framing	
Investment decisions	Cost reduction behaviours Market expansion behaviours Capability development Risk management Possible construction of compromises with HQ	Place-specific Relational networks	Medium-long term
Subsidiary value capture trajectories (e.g. upgrading/downgrading)	Adhering to corporate conventions Utilising conventions in seeking additions or defending subsidiaries Possible construction of compromises with HQ	Place-specific Relational networks	Medium–long term
HQ-Subsidiary relations	HQ integration/localisation HQ monitoring Subsidiary autonomy Compromises	Topological relations Scalar framing (e.g. market) Place-specific assets/ markets	Short-Medium term
Structural Coupling/decoupling	Corporate cost-based operations Control over regional suppliers Vulnerability to disinvestment	Place-specific Territorialised	Medium-long term
Functional Coupling/decoupling	Territorial embeddedness Strategic deliberation with regional actors Strong collaboration with suppliers Strong interaction with place-specific assets	Place-specific Territorialised	Long term
Indigenous coupling/decoupling	Long term societal embeddedness Strategic deliberation with regional actors Development of suppliers, long term relations	Place-specific Territorialised	Long term
Regional path dependency	Lock-in of particular behaviours (e.g. punctuated evolution)	Place-specific Territorialised	Long term
Regional path creation	Novelty/reconfiguration of capabilities and assets to form new firm routines and conventions	Place-specific Territorialised	Long term