

## Editorial

### Territory in Clusters and Local Production Systems of Agroindustrial Firms

The territorial question in the analysis of economic growth has hardly been dealt with in academic works, and it was not until recently that interest in studying spatial aspects of the economy started to grow. Nevertheless, unlike the neoclassic model in which space was understood fundamentally as distance, territory adopted a passive role. Space was only a source of costs of economic agents. However, new theoretical developments propose reconsidering the role of space in overall economic philosophy, stressing its active participation in processes of development, in such a way that the “space” variable becomes one of the ways to promote the generation of elements (external economies and growing profits) which mean that the model of imperfect competence is considered as the theoretical starting point.

Among the different approaches that have arisen we should highlight the theory of endogenous development. This considers development as a territorial process and its methodology is based on case studies. It considers that development policies are more efficient when carried out by local agents. This interpretation argues that spatial organization of production is one of the determining factors in processes of development, as is shown by the growing relevance of networks of businesses in the regions [1]. It takes economic growth to be an evolutionary process that is characterized by uncertainty and fate and is shaped by changes in market conditions and by the investment decisions of the agents. Firms take investment decisions bearing in mind their capabilities and the specific resources of the territory in which they are located, and so growth analysis is enriched by considering the territorial perspective. Moreover, economic progress does not depend only on the territory’s resources and the saving and investment capacity of the economy, but also on the successful functioning of the mechanisms via which capital is accumulated (such as the organization of the systems of production, the diffusion of innovation, urban development of the territory and institutional changes), and on the interaction among these factors. All of these elements have contributed to making this interpretation facilitate the definition of strategies and policies which the agents of a given territory can carry out to take advantage of the opportunities that globalization brings [1].

Given the profound transformation in the organization of production that took place from the 1970’s on, with the loss of hegemony of the hierarchical models that were characteristic of the great Ford-type firm and the appearance of new, more flexible and decentralized forms, many theoretical interpretations started to appear. Among these were the interpretations of industrial districts [2], flexible specialization [3], new industrial spaces [4], industrial clusters [5], knowledge economy [6], new geographical economy [7, 8], innovative environment [9, 10], sociological [11] and institutionalist [12]. Therefore, there is no single interpretation on how production in a given territory is organized that enables us to explain the factors leading to the appearance of agglomerations and clusters of firms, or the mechanisms through which they develop, the reasons why they change and become transformed.

The formation of a cluster in a given territory has a strong impact on the firms that make it up. In an international context in which it has become ever easier to uproot and change the location of productive processes, the emergence of a cluster constitutes an important factor for the competitiveness of a territory. In the industrial sector there is an abundance of studies and empirical analyses on the effects of the formation of clusters. However, as there has been little analysis of the agroindustrial sector, it is appropriate to study specific cases of clusters arising around agricultural activities, which have enjoyed success based on the comparative advantages the territory has provided them with.

This Special Issue of “The Open Geography Journal” is devoted particularly to examine successful cases of clusters and local productive systems based on agro-industrial firms and resulted from a territory’s competitive advantage. It also discusses the main obstacles and problems which have to face agroindustrial clusters and local productive systems in their constitution. The Special Issue papers cover different geographic localizations and sectors in highly varying contexts. It allows us have an analytic overview over the factors which determine the development processes linked to these productive systems and territory. We hope that this supplement could be useful to stimulate more research in this area, particularly concerning the relation between development and territory.

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