

DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG



Regional Innovation and Smart Specialization Policy in the European Union

1 Apr 2025 (Tue)

7:00-8:30 PM

LT1A, Cheng Yu Tung Building

Regional capabilities are regarded a key pillar of Smart Specialization policy in the European Union. Regions should build on existing capabilities to develop new activities (like new technologies and new industries), because they condition which new activities are feasible to develop in regions. This had motivated scholars to map diversification opportunities of regions and to formulate a Smart Specialization policy framework that is evidence-based. I will present studies on 292 European regions that assess diversification options of regions more in general, and their potential to participate in specific new activities (like Artificial Intelligence). I propose that regions should target and develop new activities that would involve less risks (because of higher relatedness with existing activities in the region) and generate potentially higher economic benefits (because of their higher complexity). I will also assess how inter-regional linkages may provide access to complementary capabilities that regions need in order to diversify. Finally, I propose a complementarity indicator that can be used by regions to identify regional partnerships, depending on the presence of complementary capabilities in other regions. One of the key findings is that European regions are not exploiting those complementarities. This lecture will have implications for the understanding of the Great Bay Area regional integration, innovation, and development.



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Ron Boschma is Full Professor in Regional Economics at Utrecht University, and Professor in Innovation Studies at UiS Business School of Stavanger University. Boschma has been full professor at Lund University where he was director of the Centre for Innovation, Research and Competence in the Learning Economy (CIRCLE). He is member of the Executive Board of the international Regional Studies Association since 2015. Boschma has published on Evolutionary Economic Geography, geography of innovation, regional resilience, regional diversification, and Smart Specialization policy. Boschma has been ranked every year since 2014 by Thomson Reuters among the top 1% of cited researchers worldwide in all scientific fields. Number of Google Scholar citations (24 Feb 2025): 53,175, number of SCOPUS citations (24 Feb 2025): 23,801. In 2024, he received the prestigious Vautrin Lud Prize for his scientific achievements, considered the 'Nobel of Geography', the highest international award in the field of geography.

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