

## Special session on 'Rethinking paths in/and clusters'

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During a long time, clusters have been studied from a static perspective, which has changed due to the gain in popularity of evolutionary economic geography and the related focus on cluster evolution and cluster life cycles (Menzel and Fornahl, 2010; Martin and Sunley, 2011; Belussi and Sedita, 2009; Sedita et al., 2020; Lazzeretti et al., 2014). Simultaneously and also inspired by evolutionary economic geography, recently a rich conceptual literature emerged on regional industrial path development (Martin and Sunley, 2006; Isaksen and Trippl, 2016; Hassink et al., 2019; MacKinnon et al., 2019; Trippl, 2020). In rethinking clusters, we see great potential in a stronger exchange between these two literatures (Harris, 2020; Johansen et al., 2020; Stephens and Sandberg, 2020), as path creation, path diversification and path renewal are key elements in cluster development.

We see in particular potential in rethinking clusters through synergies with the recent path development literature concerning the following topics. First, recent literature on path creation, path diversification and path renewal towards green and more sustainable innovative economic activities (Trippl et al., 2020; Sotarauta et al., 2021) could help to understand the restructuring and transformation of clusters. Secondly, asset modification through agentic processes discussed in recent literature (Trippl et al., 2020; Baumgartinger-Seiringer et al., 2021) could be put in relation to cluster development and transformation. Thirdly, recent work on inter-path dynamics (Frangenheim et al., 2020) could be inspiring for analyzing and understanding cluster development in an intra-regional, inter-regional and international context.

We see, therefore, room for debate about the inter-relationships between path and cluster development, which we aim to stimulate with the help of this special session. We welcome contributions that are related, but not limited, to the following themes:

- Drivers of and barriers to path diversification (and other forms of path development) in clusters
- Endogenous and exogenous sources for path development in clusters
- Inter-path dynamics between clusters
- Green clusters and new path development
- Sustainability transitions, challenge-led/mission-oriented innovation and path development in clusters
- Transformative resilience of clusters and the directionality of path development
- Asset modification, change agency and replicative agency in paths and cluster development
- Modern cluster policies and the proposed shift from smart specialization (S3) to smart specialization for sustainable and inclusive growth (S4+)

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