

Global Professional Service Firms and the Challenge of Institutions: 'Field Relocation' as a Response Strategy

Speaker: Prof James Faulconbridge
Transnational Management, Lancaster University

Chair: Prof Neil Coe, Department of Geography, NUS

Date/Time: Friday, 27 February 2015, 3.30pm – 5.00pm

Place: Earth Lab (AS2 02-03), Department of Geography, NUS

Abstract

In this paper we use the case of the internationalization of English law firms into Italy, and the refocusing of their operations on the city of Milan, to make a number of contributions to existing understanding of how transnational corporations handle the challenges associated with and affect diverse host-country institutions. Firstly, we reveal the role of 'field relocation' as a particular response strategy that allows firms to locate in places within a country that pose less institutional challenges to the firms in question. We also identify a number of tactics - re-scoping, re-scaling and re-staffing - through which 'field relocation' is accomplished. Secondly, we show the importance of further developing our understanding of the sub-national geography of institutional fields by highlighting how the 'receptivity' of different city locations may affect in the case of professional service firms responses to institutional challenges. Third, we begin to unpack the recursive interactions between existing institutional environments and transnational corporations by describing the way the firms in our case study both responded to but also helped to influence ongoing evolutions in the institutional environment of Italy in the mid-2010s.

About the Speaker

James Faulconbridge is an economic geography, and Professor of Transnational Management at Lancaster University, UK. His research focuses on the globalization of professional services, with a particular interest in knowledge, learning and institutions. Over the past decade James has completed extensive qualitative research in several professional service sectors including advertising, architecture, executive search and law. His research has been funded by the UK's Research Councils, the British Academy, and the US Sloan Foundation. He has published extensively in leading journals, including in Economic Geography, Environment and Planning A, the Journal of Economic Geography, Organization Studies, and Work, Employment and Society. James co-authored the books 'The globalization of advertising' and 'The globalization of executive search' (both Routledge), and co-edited the books 'International business travel in the global economy' (Ashgate) and 'The business of global cities' (Routledge).

ADMISSION IS FREE - ALL ARE WELCOME

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