Breakout Session #4
How to measure success in city regions
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Measuring

- Consider diverse social contexts
- Empirically Complex project (with three themes)
  - We are explanatorily modest and prescriptively modest
  - There are things that we may just not be able to answer
What have we done to date?

We have been making up our own

- Don’t have a common dependent variable?
  Nothing reduces cleanly to a behaviorally driven outcome…
- Need to identify a common outcome related to innovation
- What are we trying to explain?
Suggestion...

- Economic development trajectory is the variable (dependent)
  - Three streams
- Normative
  - Those city regions that are more socially dynamic are also likely to have a more successful economic development trajectories
Define “Successful economic trajectory”
- May be different for different city regions
- “success” implies all or nothing
  - Can we develop a typological / continuum / classifications? (similar problem that occurred with defining clusters)
Datasets

Can’t think of datasets as a static set
- We can stratify them
- We CAN compare… especially amongst those regions that have similar industrial foci

Distinguish structural factors from local factors
- Account for Spatial distribution/geographic
- THEN add in endogenous factors…
What is success?

The system may indeed be operating as it should, but the “success” outcomes may not be there (i.e. firms not doing well, job loss, not generating wealth, etc.)

This would suggest that we need other indicators.
Indicators

- May have an overarching indicator... but perhaps they need to customize indicators within each of the themes.
- Traditional indicators within innovation studies do not work well.
- Good indicator = measure of observable changes in knowledge flows.
Operationalizing Variables

IDEA:

- Independent variable = social dynamics (?)
- Intermediary variables = themes
- Dependent variable = economic development trajectory
Means and Ends

City-regions have different “ends”… therefore the “means” to reach those goals will be “different”…

- Means could be different = indicators could be different