

## **Environment and technology: a promising field of economic geography.**

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Recent debates in economic geography have emphasized the need for a more explicit analysis of innovation processes at a sectoral or technological level. A great deal of attention has furthermore been devoted to connect the internal disciplinary debate with the wider discourse of the social sciences that deal with economic development in general and the role of innovation in particular.

In the presentation it will be argued that the field of the Social Study of Technology (SST) can inspire research in economic geography in important respects (see also Truffer, forthcoming): SST research has an explicit focus on the genesis of socio-technical configurations, it has developed sector and technology related multilevel theories of socio-technical change, it has a strong emphasis on innovation dynamics and sector transformations, and finally, it has a focus on strategic planning in multi-actor settings and thus favours foresight and participatory planning approaches in science, technology and innovation policy.

SST inspired research could thus be an interesting partner for economic geography. A field of joint interest could be the development of concepts for sustainable development. Environmental problems have received considerable attention in the SST literature recently. Contributions deal with a wide range of problems, from the sustainable transformation of certain economic sectors down to the analysis of specific innovation processes aiming at more environmentally friendly products and technologies. However, regional and spatial aspects tend to be underrepresented in these approaches. Sustainable development could thus be a topical area in which economic geography and SST research could complement each other fruitfully.

### REFERENCES

Truffer, B. (forthcoming): Society, Technology and Region. Contributions from the social study of technology to economic geography. Environment and Planning A. in print.