Port-logistics in Prince Rupert and Northern BC: lessons and questions for development in remote urban regions

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Abstract

What economic and other benefits do port-logistics developments bring to remote urban regions? The successful emergence and growth of Prince Rupert as a container port has surprised and excited many local industry and policy observers. Since opening in 2007, the Fairview terminal has grown to handle over three-quarters of million TEU per year, alongside diversification in cargos, carriers and routes, and expansion in direct port employment. Yet between 2006 and 2016, the population of the Prince Rupert census agglomeration declined by about 5%, not reversing a decades-long trend. The discrepancies between these qualitative and quantitative outcomes raise questions about how we should think about the economic benefits and other impacts of port-logistic developments in remote urban regions. In this presentation of ongoing work, I will argue that the impacts of port-logistics development in remote urban regions need to be understood in relation to long-established trajectories of economic development which are mediated by existing and emergent institutions. Lacking the advantages of scale and independent global connections, the mechanisms to secure the local benefits of transportation-related infrastructure might rather be found in less formal and historically contingent arrangements.

Biography

Peter V Hall is Director and Professor of Urban Studies at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada, where he teaches economic development, transportation geography and research methods. He received his doctorate in city and regional planning from the University of California at Berkeley, and he previously worked in local government in Durban, South Africa. His research examines the connections between port cities, seaports and logistics, as well as community, local economic, and employment development. His publications include the co-edited “Integrating Seaports and Trade Corridors” (Ashgate, 2011) and “Cities, Regions and Flow” (Routledge, 2013), as well as numerous journal articles, book chapters and reports. He is an Associate Editor of the Journal of Transport Geography.