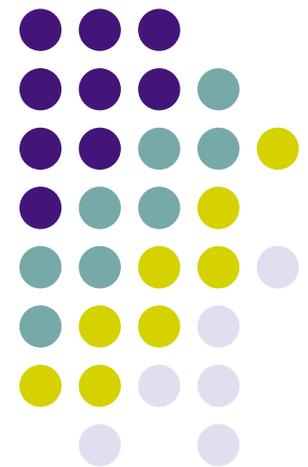


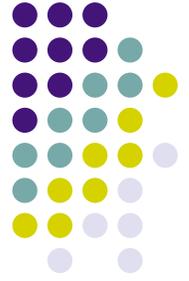
Workplace Governance in Cross-border Regions

**Tod Rutherford
University**

**John Holmes Syracuse
Queen's University**

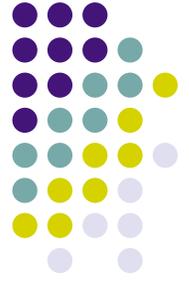


Outline



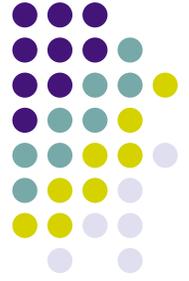
- Beyond the black box? Workplace governance in clusters and global production networks
- Re-scaling, reterritorialization and workplace governance: the development of cross-border regions
- Our current project

Industrial Clusters Literature



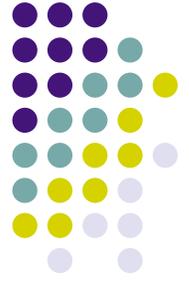
- the “clusters” literature in economic geography dominant in late 1990s
- stressed the individualized and usually highly skilled worker and uncritically assumed labour-management consensus
- the firm as a black box
- largely abstracted from questions of labour-management relations and power asymmetries

Global Production Networks



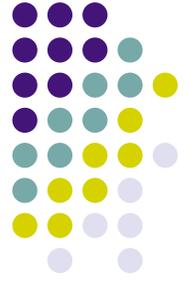
- situated locales and labour within TNC led integrated production networks
- emphasis on value production and capture
- recognized power asymmetries between regions, labour and global firms
- but, workplace governance and class relations tend to be treated as simply another node within networks
- labour is seen as principally an agent in territorial development and not as critical to actual workplace governance

Cross-Border Regions (CBRs)

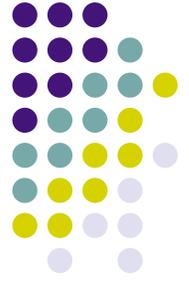


- processes of re-scaling and reterritorialization in contemporary capitalism
- CBRs represent “a territorial unit that comprises contiguous sub national units from two or more nation-states.... [w]hat is new in recent developments is that the construction of cross border regions has become a more or less explicit strategic objective pursued by various social forces within and beyond border regions” Perkmann and Sum (2002:3)
- development of US-Canada CBRs due to deepening economic integration - increasing policy and academic attention to CBRs

Cross-Border Regions (CBRs) and Workplace Governance



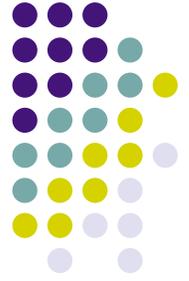
- CBR literature largely silent on workplace governance
- why is workplace (WP) governance important? Workplace governance issues key to competitively positioning regions
- WP governance determines: how you are hired, trained, paid and laid-off, the safety of work, how work is performed and with whom you work, and rights to voice over work conditions
- in 20thc nation-state had principal responsibility for WP governance



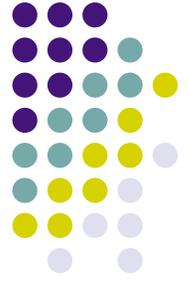
Our Project: Research Questions

- are MNCs in CBRs developing common work organization and human resource management practices across their cross-border production systems?
- how do MNC corporate practices, different federal/provincial/state labour laws and workplace specific employment relations impact workplace governance practices?
- are national differences still the principal mediator of differences in workplace governance or are other scales such as the local or the CBR becoming increasingly important?

Research Design



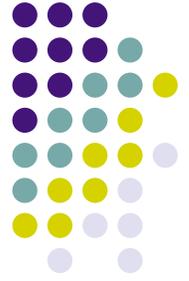
- documenting and mapping Great Lakes States-Ontario CBR trade and investment in different economic sectors.
- key informant interviews –government, industries, unions.
- case studies in MNC work-places spanning CBR-likely to be five matched pairs (i.e. MNCs with WP in both Canada and the US) –interviews with managers and focus groups interviews with employees.



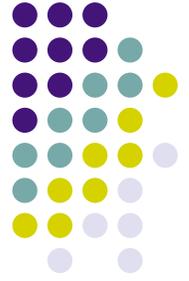
Industrial Relations Perspectives

- considerable debate on the impacts of globalization on national IR systems and institutions
- "... a more complex world for management and workers (especially within the internationalizing firm) than that suggested by the discourses of convergence and divergence. In this world, national and local routines, international competition and universal 'best practice' concepts elide and interact and outcomes never favour one force over another in a straightforward manner." (Smith et al 2009)

Factors Determining WP Governance



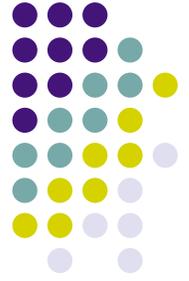
- ability of MNCs to transfer HR “Best Practice”
- national institutions, labour and employment law
- the relative power of workplace actors
- local actors and institutions.



Case study selection criteria

- degree of MNC cross border integration (i.e. investment, sales and employment) and place in value chain
- MNC nationality (differences in HR/IR strategies).
- unionized and non-unionized workplaces.
- Manufacturing (autos, steel??) and services (logistics, financial services??)

Conceptual challenges



- selection of sectors and firms for case studies
- how to measure change in WP governance?
- how to assess CBR 'effect'?