Talking about Kennispark: understanding expat campus stories to explore global science spaces’ symbolic attractiveness for highly skilled migrants.

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Franziska Eckardt & Paul Benneworth (CHEPS, University of Twente)
Paul Benneworth & Franziska Eckardt (CHEPS, University of Twente)
Dave Valler (Oxford Brookes University) &
Nick Phelps (University College, London)
ROLE OF GLOBAL SCIENCE SPACES IN ATTRACTING EXPATS

- How do international knowledge migrants (expats) perceive and begin to identify with place-specific characteristics of particular regions?

- How can GSSs attract expats beyond the employment and career opportunities they offer?
• **Economic-function**: generators of wealth, employment and productivity (business acceleration/production of applied research)

• **Regional upgrading effect**: university-industry linkages / external spillover effect

• **Function as social spaces**: particular imagined communities act and interact to achieve desirable goals / personal affection towards a specific space
ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK

- [1] functional effect (effort to create a nice and attractive place)
- [2] regional upgrading effect (acquired outcomes leading to a new culture and skills aiming to enhance regional innovation)
- [3] external recognition (effort and outcomes recognized by expats)
- [4] personal attraction affection (external “driving force” that attracts expats)
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

• How do those people creating science parks aim to establish local environments that attract expats? ➔ the creators

• How are these efforts and outcomes perceived by expats?
METHODOLOGY

• Exploratory case study
  – Identify key themes for a future quantitative research which will be undertaken in 2016/17

• Narrative analysis technique

• Series of semi-structured face-to-face interviews
  – Snowball technique

• People of the Kennispark who deliberatively created a physical local place-environment that attracts and retains expats (creators)

• People who perceived these efforts and outcomes (expats)
THE CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE

- Located in Twente region (E NL)
- Old textiles region seeking reinvention
- During the 1970s: creation of the Kennispark
- Entrepreneurial profile
- More than 700 spin-off firms are rooted in the UT
CREATORS EFFORTS

• Creation of Campus environment
  – Former country estate “Drienerlo”
  – Self-contained campus
  – Three functional areas
• Creation of a integrated Kennispark structure
  – Establishment of a visible university-industry linkage
  – Reconstruction of campus buildings into shared academic and corporate facilities
  – Establishment of a virtual space-architecture
CREATORS EFFORTS

• Creation of a symbolic profile
  – 1987: unique profile known as “the entrepreneurial University”
  – Creation of more than 700 spin-offs
• External recognition acquisition
  – More internationalisation efforts
  – Objective to offer English-speaking bachelor and master programmes only
  – Invitation of a number of well known Dutch personalities (e.g. king Willem-Alexander, Prime Minister Mark Rutte)
## EXPATS PERCEPTIONS OF THESE EFFORTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How expats perceived these efforts</th>
<th>Creation of a campus environment</th>
<th>Creation of a integrated Kennispark infrastructure</th>
<th>Creation of a symbolic profile</th>
<th>External recognition acquisition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive points</strong></td>
<td>unique, beautiful campus environment</td>
<td>virtual-space architecture of the campus</td>
<td>strong entrepreneurial and innovative profile</td>
<td>unfolds its local attraction though actual experience</td>
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<td></td>
<td>functional disposition of the campus area</td>
<td>• funding opportunities</td>
<td>• offers unique opportunities</td>
<td>• strong internationalisation of the UT</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Negative points</strong></td>
<td>lack of metropolitan and multicultural buzz (village atmosphere)</td>
<td>no visible university-industry linkage</td>
<td>• unknown provincial place</td>
<td>• no global or national perceived attraction affect</td>
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<td>picture of individual internationalism</td>
<td>• physical disconnection</td>
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CONCLUSION

• Establishment of a strong distinctive symbolic profile and a unique space environment can help to awake expats’ affection

• Creators of GSSs can attract expats though active local place-making beyond a purely economical dimension
  – Personal affection towards a specific place that is characterised, for example, by an identikit, tasteful, and landscaped campus

• Creation of a highly international space atmosphere to encourage a metropolitan and multicultural buzz
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