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Nino Javakhishvili-Larsen is a researcher in the fields of economic geography and urban and regional economics, focusing on human capital creation and regional development issues in the urban, rural and cross-border regions.

She is affiliated with the research group 'Macroeconomics, Trade and Economic History' at the Department of Business and Economics of the University of Southern Denmark. She obtained her MSc in Urban and Regional Planning Studies in 2004 from the faculty of Geography and Environment at the London School of Economics and Political Science. In 2001 she obtained an MA in Environmental Policies and Regulations from the TekSam at the Roskilde University and BSc with honours in Socioeconomic and Political Geography from the faculty of Geography and Geology at the Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University in Georgia. After working as a researcher and consultant for eight years, she decided to join the regional economics and economic geography research team at the former Department for Border Region Studies at SDU, where she pursued her PhD studies in July 2013 and submitted her dissertation in June 2016.



PhD Dissertation of

Nino Javakhishvili-Larsen

at the Department of Business and Economics,
University of Southern Denmark

The role of human capital in regional
assemblages

Human capital creation in the urban-
rural and cross-border regions

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The role of human capital in regional assemblages

Human capital creation in the urban-rural and cross-border regions

There is no universal model for regional development. Various socioeconomic and political factors intertwine with the territorial entities and impact on the course of their development. Heterogeneity of the regions is reflected in the local characteristics that determine regional typologies, i.e., urban, rural and cross-border. In the contemporary human geography, there is a discussion that *regions* can be conceptually understood as fixed territorial entities with pre-defined administrative boundaries; they can be also understood as spatio-temporal assemblages, as they engage in the interactions beyond territorial borders and collaborate with the various actors across different levels of governance.

Human capital creation and agglomeration of high-skilled labour is one of the prerequisite factors for regional economic development and growth. This study creates knowledge about the interdependent and interactive links between humans and locations. It aims to discover how their interactions influence and support each other; i.e. how humans, with their skills and knowledge (human capital), support local development and how location-specific factors, such as institutions, support human capital creation in the regions.

This dissertation comprises three main parts. *Part One* offers theoretical discussions around the main concepts and approaches to the research. It is an analytical dialogue of a philosophical discourse through which whole research process and the results are thought. *Part One* of this disserta-

tion attempts to revisit the conceptual discussions about regional assemblages in the modern philosophy of human geography and emphasise the importance of distinguishing research rationale and methodology while studying regions from that perspective. Studying regions within different conceptual discourses require scientific reasoning for how to approach it methodologically. This part of the dissertation discusses the empirical strategies for studying *regions* as fixed territorial entities (urban and rural municipalities), as well as the cross-border assemblages.

Part Two of the dissertation provides two independent empirical contributions to the understanding of the human capital creation process while demonstrate the importance of human capital in the fixed territorial entities and, especially, in the rural/peripheral regions. The results confirm theoretical assumptions and determine that highly skilled labour inflow is crucial for employment opportunities in the peripheral areas. Furthermore, an empirical research on the mobility behaviour of graduates from higher educational institutions (HEI) prove that graduates with academic education favour mobility towards urban areas, while, professional graduates who had studied in the HEIs in the rural areas have positive labour market outcomes when they move to other rural areas for employment. In summary, establishing HEIs and attracting human capital in the region is one of the main factors for developing rural/peripheral regions in a country.

Part Three in this dissertation discusses a structure of institutional interactions and cooperation framework in the spatio-temporal assemblages, i.e. cross-border regions. This part combines two interdependent scientific papers that develop theoretical and methodological research approaches to empirically study “cross-border institutional thickness” (CBIT) and analyse whether observed CBIT could potentially support human capital creation in the cross-border regions. A rationale of the CBIT model is initially proposed and applied in the case study of the Rhine-Waal region (NL-GE), however, further developed and augmented based on the case study of Sønderjylland-Schleswig region (DK-GE). According to the results, the course of development and a structure of cross-border assemblages are highly path-dependent, and regardless of the similarities of the case study regions that both implement common EU regional policies and follow a pre-defined set of cooperation structure, their CBITs are different and unique.

This dissertation attempts to create new knowledge. Understanding a conceptual distinction of regions opens up new scientific approaches and adds a few more pieces to a puzzle to reveal the factors of human capital in regional assemblages.

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Department of Business and Economics

The Department of Business and Economics is a department under the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences. The department has locations in Odense, Slagelse and Sønderborg.

The department has a strong tradition for high-quality research within the fields of economics and business. The research covers both theoretical and empirical subjects, but the use of economic theory and quantitative methods, such as mathematics, statistics, econometrics and computer science, characterizes most research projects.

The research activities at the department are organized within:

- Accounting and Finance
- Econometrics and Management Science
- Macroeconomics, International Economics and Economic History
- Microeconomics

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The cross-faculty centre COHERE, which undertakes research in health economics, is highly integrated in the department, as is COHERE Analysis, which carries out socio-economic research-based analyses on request.

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