

KNOWLEDGE PLACES IN LATE OCCIDENTAL CAPITALISM.

HULL'S SINKING OLKC. Peter Clark & Gemma Thompson.

KEY WORDS KNOWLEDGE PLACE TIME

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ABSTRACT.

OLKC possesses three unevenly developed tributaries. The most dominant are intra-organizational and inter-organizational. We contribute to the urban-regional political economy of OLKC. Regional knowledge places are multilayered interconnected locations of possibility. Understanding their evolution and future requires analytic resources which draw from critical realism, comparative historicized sociology, organization design, affordance theory, elective affinities and actor network perspectives. The regional place around Hull has been analyzed within the macro-meso elimination contests of occidental capitalism. The initial affordances and elective affinities boomed in the long nineteenth century but began to unfold during the twentieth century. The sinking metaphor is applied and connected to the contrasting case of the Netherlands. The paper applies counter and superfactual analytic strategies.

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INTRODUCTION

In OLKC there are three unevenly developed tributaries. The best developed and most dominant tributaries are intra-organizational and inter-organizational. The least developed is the urban-regional political economy. If so, do the OLKC approaches already developed readily transfer into the more contextualized places of the urban-regional political economy? The implication of the interrogation of knowledge by Fauconnier and Turner (2002) is that the mainstream OLKC is populated by research programs which are about ‘forms’. They are thus thin rather than thick on the contextuality of place and on temporalities. Place is one of the most multilayered and multipurpose concepts and is understood contextually as an interconnected location of hybridity and possibility. The notion of knowledge places was implicit in Alfred Marshall’s imprudent characterization of flexibility amongst engineering firms in Birmingham, England in the 1890s (c.f. Clark 2000). The geography of knowledge places became more central at the millennia.

The paper undertakes depthful social structural analysis by a robust and experimental assembling of elements drawn from six analytic resources. These include the comparative historical-sociological analysis proposed by Clemens (2007) and elements from critical realism. Depthful analysis concerns causal issues and explanation, including what cannot happen. Our approach situates the generative mechanisms and repertoires of OKLC in the past and present whilst exploring unfolding in the next generation. This is a contribution to constituting an anticipatory dimension to foresight (Booth et al 2009). Moreover, based on the recent ESRC initiative on the Evolution of Business Knowledge (EBK) the issue of strategic foresight is being reformulated. One analytic innovation is to scrutinize the relatively small stock of counterfactuals done in business schools (Herik & Tetlock 2007) and to establish the analytically structured narrative of impossible pathways as superfactuals. Exnovation, disrupting and re-orienting path dependencies are required.

There are numerous competing perspectives espousing ‘becoming’ and ‘emergent properties’, yet their treatment of history, social structure, time and memory is often thin. Their temporal modalities are often weak on the agentic possibilities and zones of maneuver for alternative worlds (Clark 2000; Booth et al 2009). The role of chronological codes remains under developed (Clark 1976, 1985, 1990; Clark & Maielli 2009). There is still a tendency for the extended present and normalcy bias to elide significant temporal variations on the triptych of past, present and future. The anticipatory dimension is largely neglected (Clark 1972, 2003).

Geo-temporal modalities address flow, generative processes, becoming, and emergence with a metaphorical repertoire. Serres suggests that the role of metaphors is to map disparate discourses between processes onto each other by uncovering elastic structures interweaving between diverse events and the world. The notion of Hull’s sinking OLKC is a conceptual blending. Serres complements our understanding of the fruitful debates on time and history between Gurvitch (1965) and Braudel (1959), yet does not account for the current state of that debate. Latour’s

searching conversation with Serres (1995) reveals the problems still on the table after more than a decade.

THE EVOLUTION OF OCCIDENTAL CAPITALISM & ITS KNOWLEDGE PLACES.

Thought Experiments

In their evolutionary account of the way we think Fauconnier and Turner (2002) contend that the formal structures and rules of transformation such as the finite genetic code involve the manipulation of formulas for combining and recombining elements. These forms typify every field of knowledge creation. The forms enable new questions and can be transmitted electronically. However, ‘forms’ on their own are hollow (2002: 6). The focus on forms obscures and elides the hidden complexities. Fauconnier and Turner contend that western civilization is based upon, is shaped by, and requires modes of thought which involve integrating together separate pieces of open door analysis coupled to using imagination to identify networks of causal powers and liabilities. Imagination routinely involves counterfactualizing even though this is neither obvious nor thoughtfully developed. Every causal inference depends upon counterfactual reasoning. However, few counterfactuals occupy journal space.

In the ESRC initiative on the Evolution of Business Knowledge (2005-2008) attention was given to the role of thought experiments in the form of an international workshop on counterfactuals. We contended that the usage of counterfactuals did not adequately define those thought experiments which claimed that certain strategic options were impossible in specific knowledge places. Two exemplars may be mentioned. First, in a comparison between two cases drawn from different national regions and treated as time-places cases of problem solving, that Henry Ford could not have founded his automobile empire by starting out from the English West Midlands (Clark 2000, 2007). The required OLKC was absent in the UK. Additionally certain affordances in the American cultural repertoire were absent in the British context. These include the interfaces within design between the expertise of electronics and the manufacturer and the weak linkages between manufacturers and distributors. This comparative case study, which was based on actual situations was labeled a superfactual because the alternative world is impossible. Second, similar analytics were applied to the claim that the Italian knitwear innovator Benetton could not have emerged from the English East Midlands (Clark et al, 2008). In that thought experiment there was an examination of the massive extent of exnovation of existing OLKC and networks which would have to be exnovated for the existing situation of corporate decline to have been countered. These two examples throw considerable doubt at the claims made of reversing corporate decline.

Anglo-American Organic Intellectuals in Schools of Business, 1967s-2010s.

In the Cold War and its Long Peace business schools, largely led from the USA, became major capillaries, especially after the triumphs attributed to Big Science in WW2. Operations Research was an early leading edge. Significantly, the 'Diffusion of Innovations' composed by Rogers (196, 2005) for an American knowledge flocking conference, became one of the most heavily cited and most compressed accounts of the pro-innovation hypothesis. It was grounded in the exceptional cultural template of the Agricultural Extension Agency. The rise of portable frameworks fitted an occidental capitalist-imperialist philosophy of the politics of control and hope in terms of the imposed 'liberal template' of self-control (e.g. family size in India). The employee is being manufactured. The marginalizing of the depthful, contextualized, comparative studies by universalist perspectives can be traced from the sixties. Perrow (1967) compressed seminal book length texts into a single framework of social technology in fourteen journal pages. Explicitness increases the global availability of the surfaces under their optic, though not the situated knowledge necessary in specific knowledge places. However, depthful research strongly suggests that culturally bound templates only travel across national borders in particular circumstances and through the OLKC building capacities of specific members of the global class. The problems of transferring American templates are now clear (Clark 2003; Zeitlin & Herrigel 2007; Clark & Todeva 2007; Clark 2011). Emulation is very difficult (Clark 2003) and appropriation (Clark 1987: 153) is very rare.

Now there is a switch to research programs which are contextual, such as non-representational theory in geography (Thrift 2008). The 'protective belt' to form-impregnated research programs is provided by the simplistic usage of dichotomous 2x2 matrix to claim that current research is more contextual and depthful than previously. Clark constructs a 3x3 matrix which locates much of new depthful claims on the fringe not in the core of depthful (2003: 57).

Analytic Resources & Social Structure: Relational, Comparative and Longitudinal.

Developing a more depthful approach is undertaken by constructing an analytic toolkit to promote a comparative, longitudinal and relational organizational sociology impregnated with temporal modalities and focused on places. Six analytic resources are selectively considered. These are elements in a sketch of an evolutionary ecology of occidental capitalist-imperialism (Clark 2011).

First, Clark and Maielli (2010) argue that an imaginative deployment of the critical realist theorizing of Archer (1995) on the causal power of groupings within social structures with Sayer's (2000) position on generative mechanisms and the requirements of synthesis can be combined with other key analytic features. This will involve the retroduction of the contemporary dynamics to outline the operating generative mechanisms in specific places.

Second, the issue of macro-meso-micro level elimination contests and competition between contexts (as Clark 2000) is drawn from the configurational approach of Elias and associates. The

central analytical evolutionary feature is that elimination contests between political entities which can increase size also trigger differentiation in occidental states. In the 1490s there were five hundred state-like entities in occidental Europe and its spheres of domination. By 1900 these had been reduced to less than fifty. Elias contended that as territorial units grew in size then the internal power ratios between strata, occupations, gender and region are altered to facilitate modes of foresight which emphasize anticipatory self-control, insouciant attitudes and a calculated companionable sociality. Duelling decreases. Competitive games emerge and gain constituencies as defined places for blending emotional learning with the disciplines and strategic intents of OLKC. Clark (1987: Ch.6) compares American Football and Rugby Union from 1850's to 1985 along twenty dimensions related to discipline and strategic foresight. Since then Rugby Union has heightened its systemic complexity and controlled violence. Rugby is increasingly played by female teams. With respect to emergent new power ratios in late occidental capitalism at level of meso-macro level these steer the psychogenesis of female roles in the occident (Clark 2003: Fig 6-1). Elias was constantly seeking to detect ongoing trends such as embourgeoisement and shifting power ratios for which there were feint signs of emergence. He was not unaware of reversals although this was not frontal in his theorizing.

Wouters (2004) examines the trends in changing manners within the leading occidental cluster focusing on female emancipation between 1890 and 2000. The dates are important here. Wouters examines the disappearance of chaperonage and the rise of new codes for courting, public transport, dancing, dates and in the work place. The tension between a longing for enduring intimacy and sexual gratification contrasts with the arena of sport although there are underlying connections. Our approach diverges significantly from the recent bold account of the USA by Mennell (2007 c.f. Clark 2008). It is not difficult juxtapose Gramsci's account of historical blocs, of post Civil War USA, of organic intellectuals and of hegemony alongside the figurational perspective.

Elias was constantly seeking to detect ongoing trends such as embourgeoisement and shifting power ratios for which there were feint signs of emergence. He was not unaware of reversals although this was not frontal in his theorizing. Consequently, the claims of the configurational school are strongly promoted and hotly contested (Clark 2008). Elias clearly implies a view of history which is also amenable to imaginative critical realist inquiry. For example, suppose, unlike Mennell's analysis, we consider the growth of the USA in size to have extended over much of Latin America and post-WW2 Europe. The UK would be a quasi-dependent entity within the American open door capitalist-empire. Now, post 1990 we can postulate certain consequences arising from global shifts in the past two decades (Arrighi 2007). Suppose, as Clark and Maielli (2010) observe that if the size of the American entity is now refolding and with increasing counter movements in Europe, Latin America and southern states of Mediterranean, then, have we to postulate that late occidental capitalism has particular, may be unwanted, consequences for European regions and even for corporate agencies? What might this mean for the Netherlands and Hull's hinterland?

Third, the theoretical imagination of the previous section implies that at the macro level each state is involved to varying degrees in elimination contests which are transnational. Competitors will vary in the affordances within their own contexts and those of their competitors. They will also vary in their elective affinities (Clark 2000: 169-175). Their survival, decline or growth centers upon the choices about sequences of problem solving (Clark 1987, 2000). These are evolutionary ecological problem solving entities. Haydu (1998, 2010) has explicated the periodizing of sequential problem solving.

Fourth, the geography of knowledge places is now well established (e.g. Thrift 2008). Thrift is primarily interested in what knowledge actors have at their disposal in any city. Storper and Salais (1998) provided a stimulating typology of the elective affinities between four types of market-producer characteristics and the regional contours of France, the USA and Italy. Rugman (2003) rightly emphasizes the potential impacts of external corporate agents on domestic zones of maneuver and the fragmentation of supply chains (see Clark 2000). American food, drink and household product firms have deeply impacted the British market thereby inflecting the competition between Reckitt-Benckiser and Procter-Gamble. Rugman (2005) contends that the region is a crucial, not to be neglected, dimension of knowledge embeddedness. Clark (2000) reverses Rugman's claim that Penrose (1959) is only an economist. Penrosian learning mainly gains analytic purchase within a sociological framework which contains memory, culture and multiple temporalities (Clark & Blundell, 2007).

Fifth, the problem of time is recognized yet rarely connected to the role of historical explanation and cultural memory. The limits of an extended present and a-temporal stasis continue. Flux without enduring features is untenable because the heightening degree of ongoing transformational processes is increasingly related to quite durable models of path dependency. These debates are inherent in the claims of Braudel (1969) that historians have a expert monopoly over the use of time as a metric of processes, his rejection of the multiple social times proposed by Gurvitch (1965) and claim by Gurvitch that Braudel was very mistaken.

For historians calendrical time is a significant metric. They claim to detect cultural patterns, both on the surface of contingent events and underlying consequential tendencies such as impact of conjunctions in the past on today's events. Historians regularly cover the timing of events. The timing can be revealing. Is there a trajectory of connections from the British defeat at Lexington, 1776, to American landings at Omaha in 1944? For sociologists there is the claim that there are multiple, coexisting and conflicting temporal codes containing an anticipatory dimension which edits cultural memory and brings the possible future into the present (Clark 1990, 2000). The discontinuous typologies of multiple temporalities from Gurvitch cover the relationship between past/ present/ future; the degree of continuity, contingency and surprise; duration incorporating pace (Clark 2000 c.f. Harvey 1989). Calibrating tempo is much more central to Gurvitch than timing.

Claims about time occupy the open frontier between the theorizing on structuration by Giddens (1984) and the critical realist morphogenesis of Archer (1995) and the non-representational theory developed by Thrift (2008). Temporal conflicts are embedded in the evolution of the productivist episteme since the diffusion of double entry accounting across the occident by Pacioli (1495).

Sixth, Actor Network Theory, which conceptualizes technology as the social made durable, provides a strong insight into how affordances are transformed into specific forms of OLKC.

PERIODISING OCCIDENTAL CAPITALISM

The half millennia of occidental state wars and trade contests up to WW2 involved massive state investment in military technology for navies and armies as well as extraordinary developments in logistical OLKC, imagineering and practices. Many key organizational innovations occurred in the military, initially in the Netherlands and Sweden. State managers innovated the collection of taxation by creating new forms of knowledge. State managers and the emerging strata of corporate agencies developed capabilities for the generation of food stuffs and the recovery of commodities for energy and basic raw materials. There was an increasing investment in experimentation (e.g. Wedgewood) and in the accumulation of a reflective knowledge. The role of West Point as a fulcrum of state wide civil engineering exemplifies the frontier of this trend (Hoskin & Macve, 1988). Developing the practices, procedures and capabilities for creating networks and for their systemic nesting became a sure way of dominating distant places from occidental places. These macro level elimination contests shifted the balance of military capability and its power ratios to enable some occidental states to gain dominant, imperial networks and quasi-empires outside the occident.

The long term since 1490s can be periodized according to criteria derived by postulating macro level problems involving elimination contests between states (c.f. Haydu 1998). In the case of occidental states there is a disjointed temporal relationship between every extended sociogenesis and the subsequent attempts to fuse conflicting internal power ratios into a more 'civilised' secular civic society which is also infused with productivist epistemes. The role of civil society as analysed by Gramsci in terms of the possibility of hegemony suggests complex temporal dynamics as different groups deploy their chronological codes in attempts at macro steering (Clark 1990).

Arrighi (1994, 2007) postulated three main eras in the creation of occidental capacities for commodified accumulation and the regulation in the triptych of market, state and civil society. First, after 1500 there was shift away from the city states of Italy to the rise of new entrepots and military capacities along major river systems (e.g. Rhine, Seine, Rhone) and around the North Sea: Sweden, The Netherlands and the UK. This is era of dominance for the Netherlands, France and the UK coupled to their role in opening up the continent of North America. Second, the mid

period commences with the rise of the unified German states and the USA in the 1860s and 1870s, especially after the American Civil War. The American Twentieth Century of political and knowledge hegemony (Zunz 1998) has displaced the UK by 1917. In the late 1970s despite multiple claims of renewal from Harvard Business School American affordances were unfolding. Hegemony was sustained in the Cold War primarily by through the capillary of federal investments in computer related technologies to continue the containment of the USSR. The new networks for external-internal strategic co-ordination required complementary capabilities from different American regions. The innovatory networks possessed social morphologies which are still being re-aligned with emergent global power ratios. Third, 'late occidental capitalism' is seeping through. Arrighi has a Beijing dimension which ironically and rhetorically revisits the occident's earlier ventures in the Far East. Even so, current American reflection on Europe endorses the historical notion of dominance by design. de Grazia (2005 c.f. Clark & Todeva 2006) essays Europe since 1917 as a figment and fragment of the American market empire. Arrighi (2007) contends that American hegemony is seeping away. Callincos (2009) concurs. Certainly, America's market empire and military dominance is re-folding (Clark & Todeva 2007 c.f. de Grazia 2006; Clark & Maielli 2010).

How did and does the long term trajectory of occidental capitalist imperialism impact the OLKC of Hull and its hinterland?

HULL'S RISE, ZENITH AND 'SINKING OLKC'

Introduction

The case of Hull provides a robust extension of the organizational approaches. This is a sketch of the geo-historical position of Hull in occidental capitalism since the 17thC. Hull is situated in the Humber Estuary on the mid-East coast of England near where the River Ouse enters the Humber. There are important hinterlands of East Yorkshire and of New Holland, North Lincolnshire on the opposite Humber bank. Its main period of continuous growth and differentiation was from 1790 (pop: 15k) onward up to a zenith in 1914 (pop: 220k).

From early and mid occidental capitalism up to WW1 Hull possessed positive geo-economic affordances such as its role in transferring continental emigrants travelling to the USA from Liverpool in the mid-19thC. The affordances and potentials were navigated in the agential geo-temporal steering mechanisms and modalities of both local corporate agents and a small community of incoming trading agents. Arguably the OLKC of Hull in 1896 would have seemed as future proofed as Alfred Marshall's over optimistic account of Birmingham as a flexible economy [refs]. WW1 massively disrupted Hull's North West European connections, especially from the Baltic and Scandinavia. Moreover, by the close of WW1 an organizational revolution in scale was unfolding largely inflected from the USA. This would have medium term positive consequences. However, after WW2 the scale/scope end game was casting a deep shadow over

Hull. Even so there were some important innovatory contributions to the future audit society. Despite bold post-Millennia intentions of the local council by 2009-2012 the prospects look bleak, yet not impossible.

13th-18thC Hull Above the Waves

From the 13th to mid-17thC Hull was the former royal property of Kingston-upon-Hull which provided royal income from dues. Then 1650-1760s was a century of extending involvement in the highly dangerous whale oil industry. State subsidies encouraged local developments. The growing affordances from trade networks enabled a scattering of small local enterprises. There were increasing import/ export connections with the emergence of trading networks to the Baltic for importing raw materials. Strong business connections developed with Holland Province.

From well before 1760 into the interwar years of the twentieth century Hull was a major region of innovation and robust maritime trading possessing trading and business connections throughout the North Sea and into the Baltic. Neave (2010) shows quite clearly from the architecture of Hull that by the 1760s its wealth and a splendid whirl of social activity co-existed with the gravitas which formed the experience of Wilberforce.

Long 19thC

From 1800-1900 there was a ten-fold growth in population from around 20, 000 to 200,000. A key bifurcation after the mid-19thC between the shipping-dock-port institutional pillar and the diversified growth of raw material processing in locally established mills and workshops. Overseas families and firms established themselves in Hull. There was a distinctive evolution of parallel, quasi-independent, although related pathways. One pathway contained shipping, ship building, dock management, chandelling. Another pathway was of processing and manufacturing firms connected to imported raw materials such as those producing paint (e.g. Blundells). Four vignettes are indicative of the tight spectrum.

First, In the 1790s business of ships chandlery in which Benjamin Skill Harrison worked involved him selling rescue rockets around Europe, including Russia. These rockets linked breeches buoys to the shore line rescuers attending sinking ships.

Second, the founding of the firm of Smith & Nephew (Foreman-Peck 1995) who are now the fifth largest health care products supplier in the world. In 1856 Thomas Smith, who was born across the Humber in Grantham and was trained at University College London was admitted to the just formed Royal Pharmaceutical Society. He bought a shop in White Friargate, Hull. Smith soon became involved in the wholesale trade of bandages and related materials. The affordance of the close by docks and fishermen provided an opportunity to supply cod liver oil from Newfoundland to local hospitals. Cod liver oil was believed to cure rickets, tuberculosis and even rheumatism. It was cheaper than a doctors' visit. Smith kept expanding and needed to keep buying and renting premises to store his products. Smith discovered after a trip to Norway that

Norwegian cod liver oil was cheaper and more tasteful than oil from Newfoundland. His wholesaling bloomed and he registered his product as Paragon Cod Liver Oil. Rivals entered from Norway but Smith began international expansions (e.g. Cairo). In 1896 his young nephew, Horatio Nelson Smith, became a partner and after the death of his uncle switched the business into bandages. The firm continued to grow. Horatio Nelson registered the company and undertook further international expansion. He realised that the materials and method of production for sanitary towels was similar to his firms OLKC. In a strategy of strategic acquisition and disposal of related products he bought into sanitary towel manufacture in 1912. This was lifted by trends in women's health care and embourgeoisement. In WW1 the firm became heavily involved in the huge demand for bandages, but this fell away in 1918.

Third, Hull's links with the future Norway were strong. In the 1860s a Norwegian enterprise established Scandinavia House on the corner of Wellington Street. Part of the largish building was used to establish a small, family owned, import business which focused upon prawns and herring. The Pedersen family lived in Hull. The business prospered. The family sought to brand their business with a silk Christmas calendar to which customers would refer frequently. In 1914 the linkages to the Norwegian supply chain were totally broken. Post-1918 the family sold the business to two brothers who were part of local Hull family network involved in various forms of small scale business. The incoming brothers successfully extended the distribution network by adding fish and game related imports.

Fourth, the Quaker Isaac Reckitt (b.1792) borrowed money from his family and bought a starch factory on Dansom Lane in 1840. Starch was the only product for decade yet by 1854 the firm had expanded its range into laundry, metal polish (black lead) and washing blue with twenty-two products. It was an established company by the 1860s. Thomas Ferens came to Hull and joined the firm in 1868, becoming works manager in 1874, Company Secretary in 1879 and General Manager in 1900. Ferens worked closely with James Reckitt (Church 2004) in expanding the business and in opening offices in London and New York. They incrementally extended the firms OLKC from disinfectants into pharmaceuticals. Ferens occupied a highly visible and important position in the civic life of Hull. He was an organic intellectual, actively espousing the values associated with strong Wesleyan Methodism and giving particular attention to women's rights and roles. He entered Parliament in the 1906 election as a Liberal and became a Privy Councillor in 1912. He actively supported temperance and was a generous benefactor to various educational projects. By 1914-18 Reckitt & Sons were a major firm in Hull with international networks and a capacity to grow their management, to engage with their workforce and to develop competitive forms of organization including a technostucture incorporating research. They were part of the chemicalization of Britain in its post Cardwell Reforms to compete with Germany.

These vignettes illustrate the emergence of successful SMEs and larger organizations either related to shipping or in some way related to the import of raw materials including food stuffs into the UK. By 1914 Hull had become a major port for the importation of raw materials from

Scandinavia and the Baltic. There was also trade with the Netherlands and Germany. 1914 was a peak year for tonnage and for the building of an oil jetty. Hull was confirmed as the third port in England. However, the 1914-18 elimination contests between European nations massively dislocated every segment of trading activity.

At the First World War Hull contained both a cluster of firms operating in international networks and creating local occupations for management and for white collar workers. An important number of these firms (e.g. stevedores) were directly and indirectly in the shipping business and in the related OLKCs of insurance. Thus young Hull women might gain occupation in offices undertaking adjustments to insurance claims or similar 'white collar' work. Those who did were able to assemble friendship groups in the Old Town, often with Church related nodes. Methodism was strong in this period although it was gradually unwinding its influence by the time of WW1. Liberal politics were strong until the 1914-1918 involvement of the Liberal Party in global elimination conflicts. Hull was one of the earliest places to establish a cremation service. The relative prosperity for middling occupations and the petite bourgeoisie stimulated demand for embourgeoisement as expressed in the residential projects for the 'Avenues' and Pearson Park. Ketchell (1978) refers to these as 'from Victorian suburb to conservation area. Newland Park on the northern edge gradually contained a slightly better off strata of small scale owners, some from the fishing industry. With the growth of saloon cars Bridlington and Scarborough became a favoured relaxation zones.

Short Twentieth Century

In the early 20thC Hull was still a fine town, albeit with rows of terrace housing. Its East Riding provenance contained the overflow of middling occupations and their residential neighborhoods (e.g. Beverley). Its labor and trade groups such as the fishing sector displayed pride and an orientation to civil manners. Hull was a home base for a number of significant organizations including Reckitts, Ideal Standard, Smith & Nephew, Rank flour mill business, the pre-cursor to Northern Food, Needler's Chocolates, 'Hull Telephones' (still public) and the fishing related sectors. However, by WW1 the most recent favorable 'wave' was flickering and its affordances were unfolding. Even so, in the interwar years of 1918-39 Hull was not yet in rising impoverishment. Bridlington had new rows of second homes.

From 1918 to WW2 Hull and its hinterland contained SMEs and big corporations which were globally significant until more recently. Its cluster of professional-technician educational pillars were parallel and tiny islands of situated expertise. R&D was both confined and also flowing out to international locales. Ferens donated £250,000 to establish a university college.

Five tendencies typify the 20thC. First, the OLKC's within Hull were increasingly agglomerated into footloose large scale corporations increasingly trading in a global political economy. Science was an important intra-corporate activity, but did not possess the local filiere assembling features found in Silicon Valley. Hull's pre-existing and disparate OLKC was draining away.

Second, untraded dependencies were enclosing and isolating. There was insufficient collective anticipation of how the R&D based OLKC of Germany and the USA would transform corporations. That anticipation dimension was steering them into the role of design and R&D in future performance. Key generative mechanisms in the spectrum of occidental capitalism were absent. Third, despite East Yorkshire's socially lively interwar years for its entrepreneurial and corporate staffs – see the entertainments then on offer at Bridlington – Hull was being becoming economically challenged and was then massively disrupted by WW2. In the mid-50s the *Economist* was opinionizing about Hull's future. Fourth, after WW2 the emergence of factory ships to replace trawlers, which the economists in the White Fish Authority highlighted as early as 1954, undermined key pillars of local sectoral institutional complexes. The famous fishing community around the Half Moon and the Holderness Road has been re-located in the countryside. Fifth, by the 1980s one stratum of small businesses had disappeared: fish merchants and the small trawler owners. Hull's key enterprises were actually shifting their scale of operation and becoming progressively footloose in order to compete in the global market place.

There were mixed signals of the future. In one trend there were clear signs of decline of former strengths. Significant sectoral decline began in the fifties for the fishing industry, especially in trawling, boxing and distributing fish. Locally founded SME's began to exit. In contrast there were deceptive signals of growth for a spectrum of medium and larger firms. These included the accounting duo, White and Hanson, who assembled a firm which squeezed porosity and costly inventory from any type of firm and became Hanson. Horsfall's Dairy morphed into Northern Food which then declined. By the 21stC Smith & Nephew, with R&D in North Carolina and only returning 2% yield, are facing the OLKC of body engineering cluster in the USA. Former national corporate giants are departing (e.g. Northern Foods).

HULL CROSSING THE NORTH SEA TO THE NETHERLANDS

Hull is typified by an unfolding OLKC (Doel 2005) which became stronger in the past three decades. There is no emerging favorable 'long or short wave'. Hull now contains parallel, disconnected islands of OLKC with few untraded interdependencies whose path dependent forms of coordination, informal rules and habits are causal liabilities. They are a roster of generative mechanisms embedded in the national division of the UKs repertoire and memory and are not yet capable of coordinating the regional spectrum of economic actors under the current conditions of uncertainty. Moreover, the role of reflective centers of strategy and of innovation in management, organization and performative practice has a confined presence. The profits of Hull's earlier affordance in communications were spent upgrading the fish dock. Upcoming affordances might arise from the incoming austerity such as expanded residential services and higher education. Materially, if water levels rise and rain surges increase, the sinking metaphor acquires an unwanted relevance.

Our wicked form of alternative world imagines that Hull and Humberside would be able to out-source its politico-economic governance from the Netherlands. “Going Dutch” (Jardine 2009) does not repeat the 1688 invasion of Torbay then London by William of Orange. It does pay attention to the response by the Dutch to 1953 North Sea flood. Dutch water engineering to protect its low lying deltas is one of the recent wonders of the world and a triumph of OLKC. Moreover, in the Netherlands there are at least two major urban conglomerations, Amsterdam and Rotterdam. For Hull it would mean entering a knowledge space replete with highly developed organizational, inter-organizational and regional OLKC. In the Netherlands English speaking and the use of informatics is typically excellent. Moreover, there are symbolic links indicated by King Billy’s statue and the Machiavellian gaze of the Hull man, Andrew Marvell in observing the Dutch court. However, for Hull cultural borrowing will not work (Clark 2003). Nor can the elegance of conceptual blending (Oswick 2011), or, optimistic rhetoric and strategic fantasy.

Therefore, organic intellectuals considering the case of Hull could be looking to the future by taking a neo-Gramscian cultural perspective on the existing historical bloc in order to detect its reverse salients. They could look across very the narrow stretch of the North Sea to an English speaking context which has abundant OLKC relevant to the East Riding. It is worth noting the geographical imagination (as Gregory 1984) for mapping Hull by turning England on its side and showing Hull as the apex of triangle with long sides and a narrow base into the contexts on the other side of the North Sea. There is an intriguing imaginary about strategically possible and impossible worlds (c.f. Storper & Salais, 1999).

The thought experiment addresses both the indepthful analysis of the existing reverse salients and prizes open path dependent strategic thinking. Going Dutch requires a political and economic boundary adjustment in order to be a significant regional actor with the Randstadt. This might be considered as an initial step which articulates with the new regional geography of European knowledge places. This contends that there is an European trend to national assimilation with consequent territorial fragmentation and/or devolvement (e.g. Scotland). Hull and its hinterland are increasingly within a ‘Europe of regions’ and sub-national places. Europe is becoming a continent of regional identities currently containing fifty active regional groups (e.g. Padania). Regions are becoming significant corporate actors.

Amsterdam and Rotterdam in the Randstadt are nearer than London. Children in the Netherlands are often speaking good English by the age of ten. More world class academics with Dutch OLKC of an explicit kind publish in Anglo-American speak than in Dutch. There are some corporate connections exemplified by Reckitt-Benkizer. There are many historic connections, both situational and comedic. Hull is a gateway for the Dutch enterprises dealing with UK based firms in Leeds and Manchester such Procter & Gamble. If Scotland can be devolved then Hull can certainly be located in a Dutch political economy. Moreover, the self- advertising of Hull often turns England on its side to show the possibility of its being a triangular apex with the Randstadt.

Serres metaphor of crossings is timely.

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