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# Regional innovation systems: Current discourse and unresolved issues

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### Abstract

In recent years, the concept of *regional innovation systems* has evolved into a widely used analytical framework that generates the empirical foundation for innovation policy making. Yet, the approaches that utilize this framework remain ambiguous on such key issues as the territorial dimension of innovation, i.e. the region, and the apparently important role played by “institutions”<sup>TM</sup> or the institutional context in the emergence and sustenance of regional innovation systems. This paper reviews and summarizes important ideas and arguments in the recent theorizing on regional innovation systems. It also examines such issues as (a) definition confusion and empirical validation; (b) the territorial aspect of regional innovation systems; and (c) the role of institutions.



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## Keywords

Regional innovation systems; Institutions; Research; Policymaking

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**David Doloreux** is a professor at the Université du Québec Rimouski and holds the Canada Research Chair in Regional Development. He is interested in research on system of innovation and regional development. He is currently working on projects comparing regional innovation systems in Canada and Nordic Countries, and studying knowledge intensive business services, collective learning and regional development in Québec and Canada. Prior being a professor, he worked as a research fellow at the Division of Innovation at Lund University, and obtained a PhD in Urban Planning from the University of Waterloo in Canada. His research has been published in *Regional Studies*, *European Planning Studies*, *Environment and Planning A*, and the *International Journal of Innovation Management*.

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role of institutions in policy development and implementation. He completed his first degree in Economics at the University of Central England, Birmingham, UK in 1980 and worked in finance until 1993. Prior moving to the Netherlands he worked in Canada as a specialist in implementing environmental management systems (ISO 14001) and applying industrial ecology's "closed loop"™ principles to numerous private and public organizations. He holds an MES (Environmental Studies) and a PhD (Geography) from the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada where he is an adjunct at the Faculty of Environmental Studies.

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