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THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE IN OLD INDUSTRIAL REGIONS
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOUTH SAARLAND AND TEESSIDE

My PhD-project aims to make a contribution to the burgeoning field of Evolutionary Economic Geography. To date, Evolutionary Perspectives have tended to underplay the role of the state and macro-institutions, and how notions of agency, power, and scale feature in the evolution of a regional economy. In particular, I have focussed on aspects of policy and governance in the long-term adaptation and resilience of old industrial regions coping with disruptive structural change. I have conducted a comparative case study of the old steel regions of South Saarland in Germany, and Teesside in the United Kingdom. These regions both experienced a crisis in their economies in the 1970s and 1980s. South Saarland has been able to adapt successfully, whereas Teesside continues to struggle. The study presents compelling evidence that this has to a considerable extent been a result of differences in the development of policies and governance arrangements, in turn driven by differences in the wider institutional contexts of Germany and the United Kingdom respectively.