STUDY OF A RELATIONAL-COGNITIVE NETWORK IN COSTA RICA: THE CASE OF THE SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE FOR MEDICAL DEVICES IN EL COYOL, COSTA RICA

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Abstract

The global medical device industry has been experiencing and is expected to experience an annual continuous growth of 5,6% in the 8 year period 2017 until 2024 (Evaluate, p. 10). This represents an amount in sales of approximately US$595,000. Costa Rica is not an exception to this medical device producers' expansion. As a result of the government's promotion of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) with interesting fiscal and corporate benefits for multinational (MT) firms since the early 1990´s, the country has become the ''second largest exporter of medical devices in Latin America'' (Coalición Costarricense de Iniciativas para el Desarrollo, 2019, para. 3) This paper's aim is to develop a relational economic geographic and cognoscitive geographical approach towards the analysis of how 'knowledge´ relational networks; formed by local universities and the medical device MT producers, can contribute to the creation of socio-spatial interactions aiming at concrete economic changes and outcomes. Such relational networks also experience a "multiplying cognitive process, that increases the size and quality of intellectual and social capital that is embedded in a particular place" (Rullani, p. 2). These would in turn be reflected in a harmonious and sustainable business relationship with the host country, and the local territory in which the SEZ is located. Informal institutional arrangements (actions and practices such as participation in job fairs and in conjunction with the local universities) are strong motivations for the medical MT firms in El Coyol, Costa Rica to maintain a harmonious and sustainable business relationship with the host territory.