

Exploring network positions – the case of intermodal freight transport

(Competitive paper)

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Abstract:

Positions in networks has been explicitly dealt with and conceptualised in relation to the industrial networks perspective. This is associated with Mattsson and Johanson contributions (e.g. Johanson & Mattsson, 1985 and 1992) dealing with investment processes and firm strategies in networks. Further, Henders (1992) has contributed with discussions on the concept from a more philosophical point of view, and lately network positions have been related to role theory (Henders, 1992; Anderson & Havila, 1993; Anderson et al, 1998).

Based on case studies from a recent dissertation on networks producing intermodal freight transport (Aastrup, 2002) this paper addresses the network positions of actors in this fragment of the transport industry. It does so by applying a framework for exploring network positions drawing heavily on an interpretation of the critical realist view of structure-agency duality and a view of network position as a sensitising concept (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980). The explanatory structure of this framework is based on elements also associated with network positions in the contributions above. These elements are structures of consensus/dissensus and the underlying network logics, role expectations and claimed domains, as well as structures of dependency and the underlying control of resources and capabilities.