

Äänekoski bioproduct-mill

Innovative bioeconomy ecosystem with added regional value

or

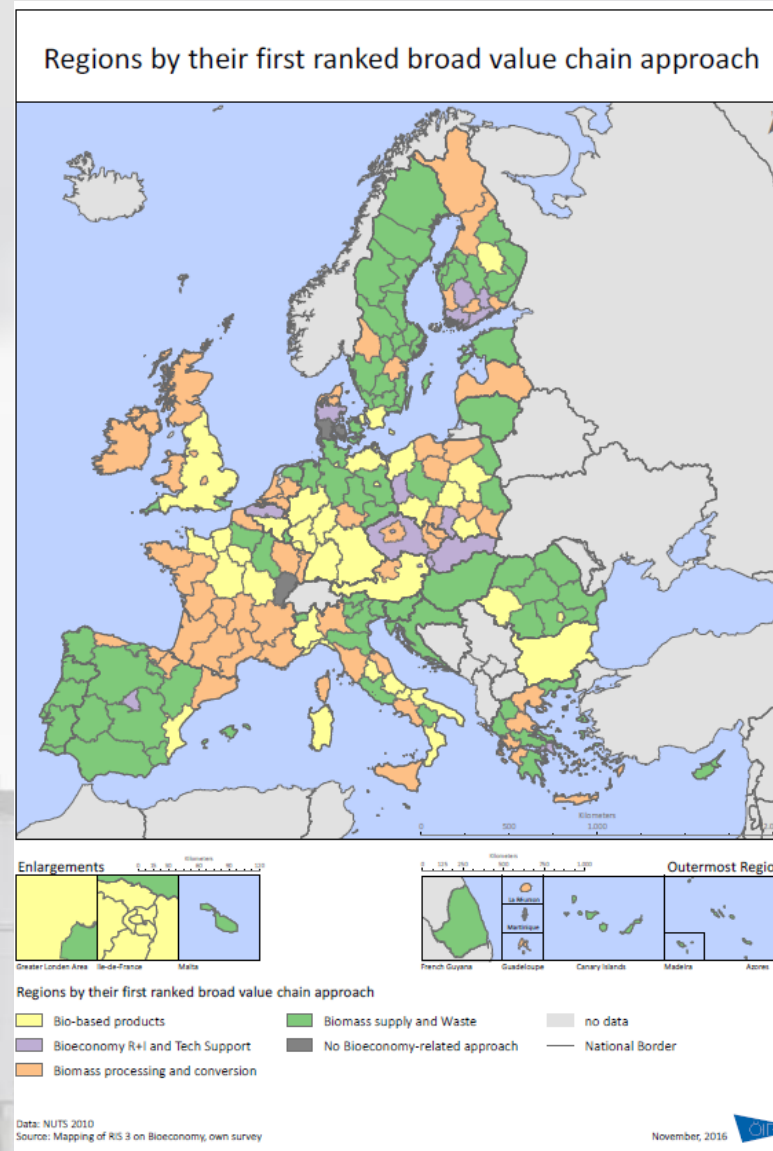
Just a modern and big pulp mill?

Moritz Albrecht

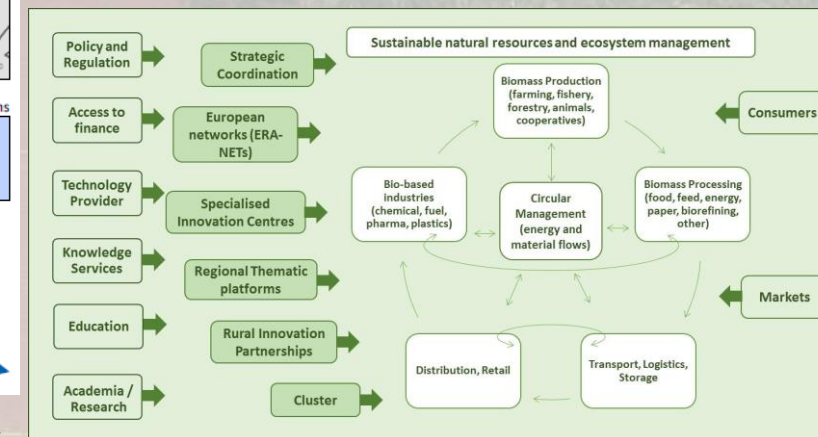
Bioeconomy (in) EU Regions

- Indicator/"expert" based
- Socio/techno-economic systems
- Best-practice guided
- "visions"/pathways of bioeconomy
- Lack of critical sustainability view
- disregard of local peculiarities

Lack of integrating socio-spatial processes in the treatment of (regional) bioeconomy



Source: EC 2017, EC 2012



Bioassemblages of regional bioeconomy; or the “...places where policy comes to rest...” (Peck & Theodore 2015)

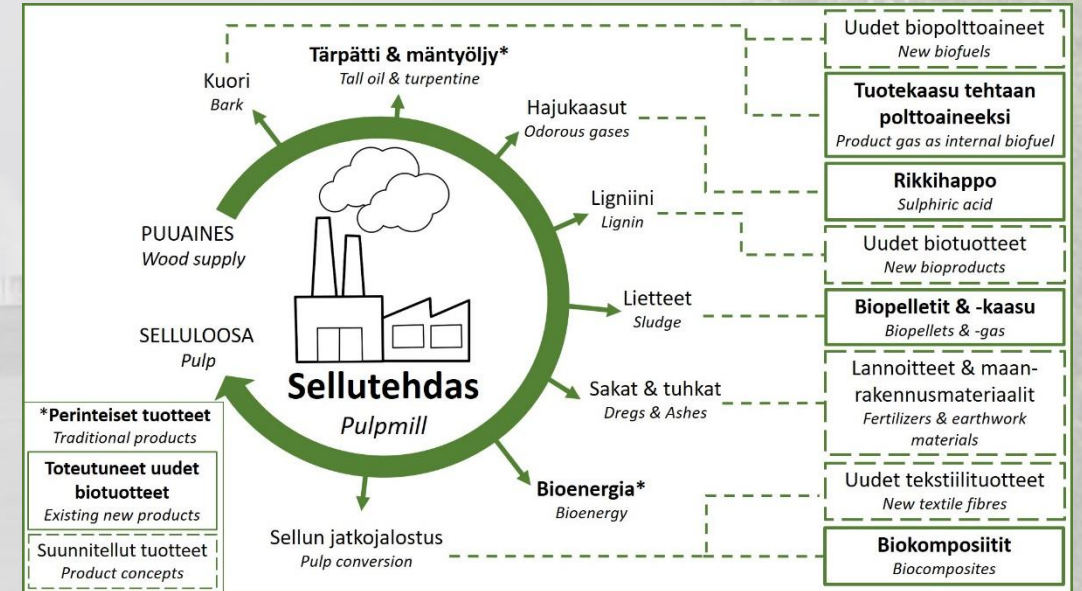
Äänekoski Bioproduct Mill

Socio-economic “ecosystem” rhetoric

vice versa

Spatialities of materialization

(relational make up as assemblages)



Kortelainen & Albrecht (forthcoming)



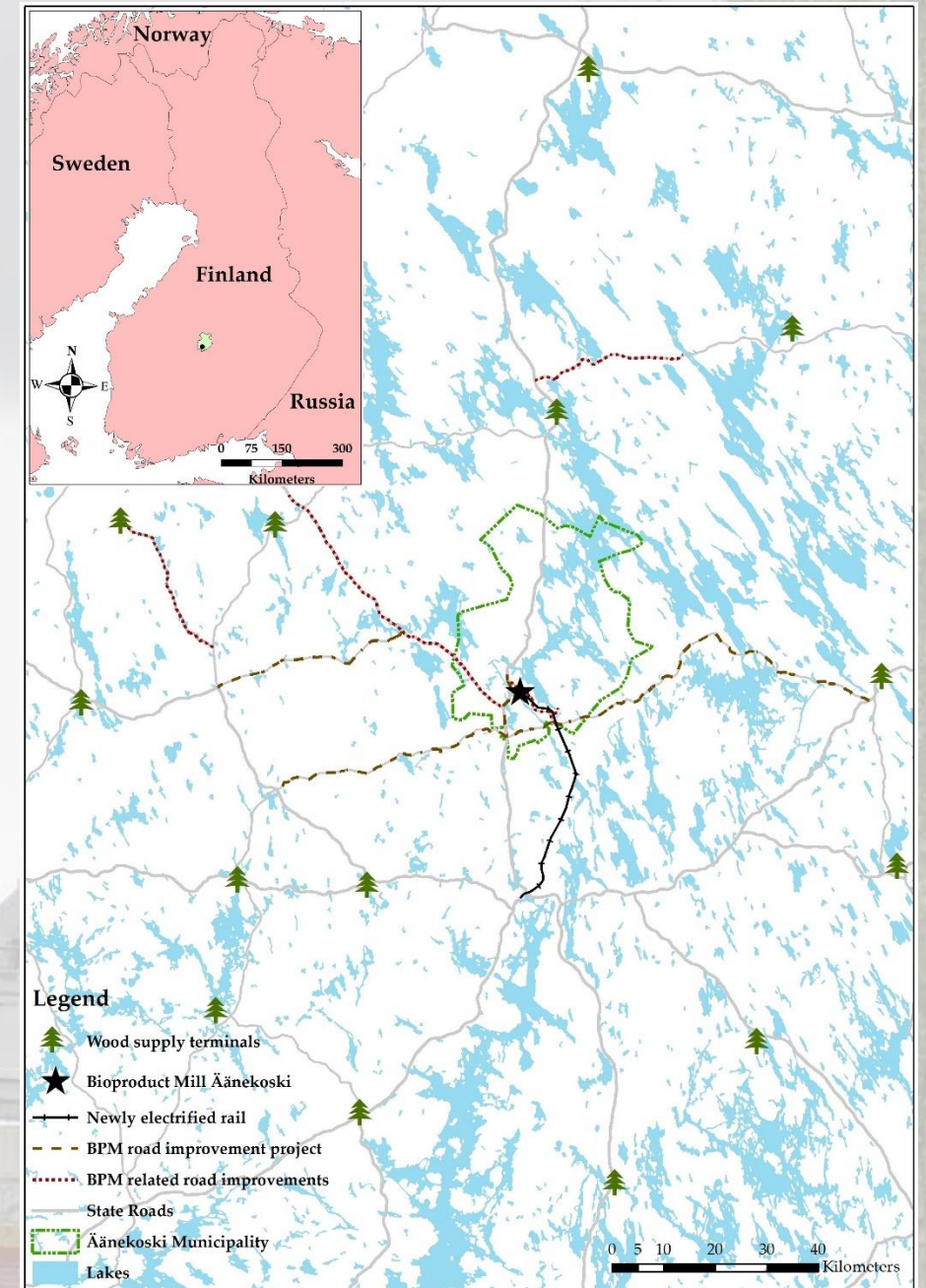
Effects and spatialities of regional bioeconomy development

Äänekoski as “...*place to dwell*...” (McFarlane 2011)

- Large infrastructure investments (state, region & municipality)
- Town strategy adjusted
- Tourist strategy adjusted
- Plänet B (BPM based B2B development project)
- 200% heavy load traffic increase
- Mixed possibilities of local involvement (e.g. jobs)
- Environmental perspectives (locally: water & smell)

Wider spatialities

- Wood requirements? (nationally/internationally)
- Sustainability of products?
- Best practice for whom?
- Increased import from Russia?



Source: Albrecht 2019

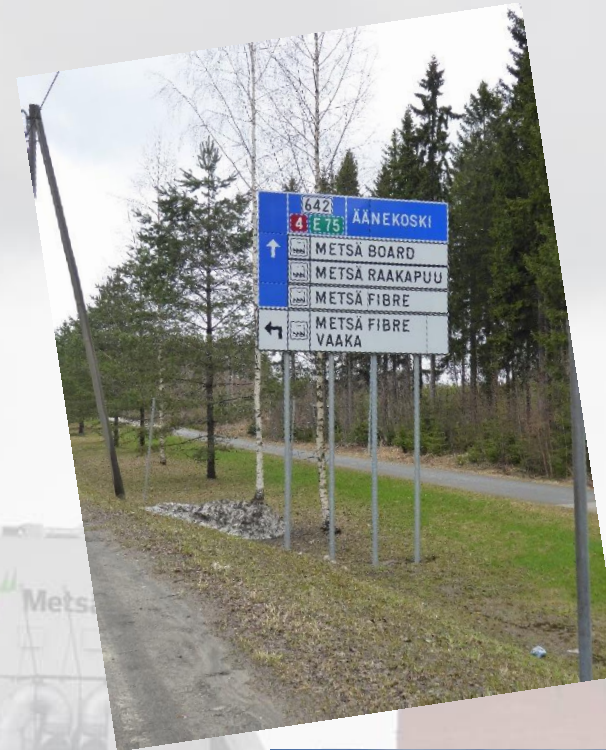
Development for whom?

Metsä Group

- Very profitable business for Metsä Group
- Rises profile of Metsä Group as bioeconomy expert/best practice (Pro Nemus, Plänet B)
- Demands from Metsä Group to be met by public sector (infrastructure, education,...)
- Exclusive BPM site

Locality

- Improved town infrastructure (self/tax paid)
- Improved municipal finances (longterm?)
- Investments framed on growth (risks!)
- Continuous drain of (young) people
- Industrial image vs. sust. Bioeconomy narrative
- Development at mercy of Metsä Group (sustainability of development?)
- Few additional local jobs
- High risk to external political shifts (e.g. climate policy, markets)



Some wrap-up thoughts to consider...

- BPM developed as a semi-permeable micro territoriality: (re-)produces unequal power relations & restricts alternative development trajectories
- Local improvements largely materialised & paid through public authorities (incl. risk)
- Problematic choice of policy “relevant” materialities in best-practice use: employment of “*assumptive*” *policy narratives*
- Externalization of sustainability debate in (BPM) bioeconomy narrative
- Smart/green growth rhetoric very questionable for small industrial communities: *smart shrinking* as solution?

