

Philip F. Kelly (2000) *Landscapes of globalisation: human geographies of economic change in the Philippines*. Routledge Pacific Rim Geographies, no. 1. Routledge, London.

This book can be read at two levels: First, it is an empirical analysis of the region in the Philippines where most of the recent industrial investments and employment creation have taken place. This region is the province of Cavite located south of metropolitan Manila. The focus of the Cavite Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) is the coastal town of Rosario, which covers an area of 275 hectares. A decade ago, no more than one thousand people were working in the CEPZ, but by 1998 some 54,000 people were employed here. This fast rate of growth implies substantial social and spatial changes in the region. The employees live in surrounding towns and villages where new sources of income have been generated for the inhabitants, many of them migrants. Moreover, as with similar zones all over the world, most of the people directly employed at CEPZ are women. This directly affects gender and power relations within the households. Kelly analyses these changes by focusing on two villages in which he carried out a survey. At this level of the concrete changes in people's lives the reader will find the analysis solid, although I would not go as far to say – as the author suggests in his introduction – that it shows how ‘...broad processes of social and economic change are experienced in people's lives’.

Second, this book can be read at a methodological level. It questions how to approach regional economic and spatial developments at the regional level and considers how to operationalise the concept of globalisation. In chapter one, ‘Putting globalisation in its place’, the author presents some basic insights that can be clarified by contrasting his approach with that of Castells (). According to Castells, we are moving from a place centred world towards a global space of flows. In this view regions are defined by their position in the global network and it is the global scale that determines what happens at other scales. Thus a hierarchy of scales exists with the global at the top (and, as Ohmea () would say, regions with fast economic growth just below). As a consequence we understand social processes at the national, regional and local scales as the results of global processes. In place of this hierarchical model Kelly proposes that we conceptualise globalisation in terms of social processes that occur at all scales simultaneously. This way of thinking about globalisation reminds me of discussions around the concept of ‘dependency’. In particular, the early *dependentistas* tended to view developing countries as passive and defenceless victims of the centres of world capitalism. One of the criticisms of adherents of dependency theory concerned the inherent determinism of this view. Since then, more attention has been paid to actor approaches and the complicated relationships between structures and actors. Kelly works within this tradition. He is, I suggest, basically right to argue that globalisation as promoted by neo-liberal policies is a social construction. He is also right to demonstrate how this construction occurs at different geographical scales.

The problem with this view, however, is that there is currently no clear alternative to the neo-liberal approach, unless one wants to return to the old nationalistic paradigms of protectionism. Actually, Kelly shows how the resistance against the liberal programme of president Ramos was based on this old paradigm. It is true that another alternative is in the making, with the Battle of Seattle and the recent demonstrations in Prague as

forerunners of international regulation. But, unfortunately, as yet this is not a credible alternative to the current form of globalisation. Moreover, while one can accept the approach of the author as principally right, the power relationships between actors at the various scales are grossly unequal. This should be built into his approach. For example, the policy of president Ramos (national scale) was supported by the U.S.(global scale) while a nationalist agenda would be opposed.

For the sake of clarity I made a distinction above between two levels at which the book can be read, the concrete research and the methodological approach. In the book these levels are interconnected, the author shows how decisions at the national scale deeply affect the province of Cavite and how agrarian households at the local scale cope with the new situation. However, empirically the book delivers less than the subtitle suggests as it presents a case study of only one region in the geographical landscape of the Philippines. Nevertheless, Kelly has written a useful and readable book and its shortcomings are compensated by the thoughtful and balanced way the research findings are presented and the potential discussions generated around methodological questions.

References

Castells, M. (1996) *The network society: The age of information*. Volume 1. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Ohmae, K. (1995) *The end of the nation state: The rise of regional economies*. The Free Press, New York.

Ton van Naerssen
University of Nijmegen