

Book review of Hilpert, U. (Editor) (2003) *Regionalisation of globalised innovation. Locations for advanced industrial development and disparities in participation*. London: Routledge.

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This book, published in the series 'Routledge Studies in the Modern World Economy', is part of a growing body of research about the role of regional economies in the global economy. For this book, Hilpert has collected and edited a set of essays based on comparative empirical research into how different types of regions succeed or fail to link up to globalised patterns of innovation. The main argument running through the different chapters is that so-called 'Islands of Innovation' are more often than not concentrated in old industrial spaces. This argument puts claims about the windows of locational opportunity offered by new technologies (see eg. Storper and Walker, 1989), that is moments of enhanced locational freedom experienced by innovators in fast-growing industries, into perspective.

The book contains several chapters that show how regional industrial histories form the basis for the development of new technologies and products. For example, Nelund and Norus (chapter 10) give an interesting historical account of the construction of the Oresund cross-border region. They show how both the physical and mental bridge between the Copenhagen area in Denmark and the area of Malmö in Sweden have come into being and the role played by the Medicon Valley Academy in the latter. Other chapters focus more on the restructuring of old industrial locations. Giarratani, Singh and Briem (chapter 7) for example point to the role of demographic factors and the labour market in the restructuring of the Pittsburgh metropolitan area. Yet another set of chapters looks into the problems and opportunities that are encountered by peripheral regions in their attempts to link up with the European centres of innovation.

One of the strong aspects of the book is its continued stress on the selectivity of global networks of innovation and the regional uneven economic development that follows from it. Attention is also drawn to the way in which public innovation policies, especially those developed in countries with a strong tradition of centralised state structures, tend to strengthen these forms of uneven development. Despite this critical attitude towards current trends in global economic development, none of the chapters opens up perspectives for more inclusive forms of socio-economic development. The strong attention for uneven economic development, combined with the lack of attention for alternatives to the highly selective patterns of global innovation and the positive evaluative language that is used by some of the authors to describe the painful restructuring of traditional sectors in a direction that enables the region to link up with the global economy (see e.g. chapter 8 on the restructuring of the steel and shipbuilding industries in Liguria), makes the overall argument of the book less than coherent.

Although the case studies of regional economic development that are presented in the book contain a rich variety of empirical material, the book lacks a clear conceptual and theoretical framework that could help to integrate the findings from the different chapters into a set of general theoretical propositions that could explain current patterns of regional economic development. One of the main questions that is addressed throughout the book is how and why global processes of innovation are increasingly taking on regional expressions. However, no clear definition is given of what constitutes a regional economy. The reader is left with the idea that a region can be everything that is neither local nor national. Most chapters seem to assume that regions are formed by agglomerations of similar or interdependent economic activities and the research institutes that underpin these activities. Although the introductory chapter claims that technological innovation is not just an economic or scientific process, but also a social and political process, few references are made to how broader political and

social processes are shaping the formation of regions. The inspiring case study on the building of the Oresund region in Denmark and Sweden by Nelund and Norus is a notable exception to this. Some concepts that are used throughout the book such as Islands of Innovation and Archipelago Europe are not sufficiently defined and contextualised (e.g. the first clear definition of 'Island of Innovation' comes on page 53, although it has been used several times before).

Central to the book is the role of the state and public policies in the governance of complex industrial systems. The introductory chapter by Hilpert claims that the state has acquired a new role. Hilpert rightly argues that globalisation has made demand policies largely ineffective and more debatably that whereas governments previously concentrated on general economic conditions, they now have to tailor their policies to particular situations. Despite the focus on public policies, there is no political-economic analysis of the changing forms of state intervention in the age of globalisation. State restructuring is simply assumed to respond and adapt to ongoing processes of global economic restructuring. This leads to an economically reductionist conception of the state, which is clear from statements such as "governments should genuinely be regarded as economic entities" (pp.4).

Overall this book convincingly shows how most current Islands of Innovation are located in the old industrial spaces and have been able to successfully redefine their industrial history through new products and technologies. Several interesting case studies are presented to support this claim. These case studies also show the highly selective nature of the global processes of innovation and hence draw attention to regional uneven development as the downside of the current wave of global competition. However, the lack of a clear and coherent conceptual framework leads to a failure to put the rich empirical material to work on the theoretical level and the arguments in the book would also have benefited from a better understanding of how social, political and cultural processes are co-constituting regions. Finally, the intelligibility of the authors' arguments is been badly served by the poor copy-editing by the publishing company.

Storper, M. and Walker, R. (1989). *The capitalist imperative. territory, technology and industrial growth.* NY: Basil Blackwell.