

NEWS AND REVIEWS

I have just returned from the Regional Studies Association conference at Leuven, where we were lucky enough to be able to launch the new format *Regions*. It was extremely pleasing to see so many people carrying round the newsletter, and we do seem to be getting over the message to people that *Regions* is a membership publication! We do want to hear what you are up to, within your branches and sections, or in your organisations, departments or through your own research. I am pleased to say that an increasing number of members are therefore submitting their own news reports, a trend which we wish to further encourage. There is nothing mysterious about getting involved – just send us something which you think will interest others!

So whenever you have anything new to report or would like to review a book or write an event report, please contact us at g.j.hospers@utwente.nl. The deadline for the next issue is until August 2006. Many thanks in advance – we look forward to hearing from you!

Gert-Jan Hospers –
University of Twente

CONGRATULATIONS TO PROF. HENRIK HALKIER

Former Chair of the RSA's International Committee and local organiser for the Aalborg conference in 2005, Professor Henrik Halkier successfully defended his senior thesis (habilitation) on 19th May at Aalborg University, against formal opponents, Michael Keating and John Bachtler, and ex-auditorio questions. Congratulations to Henrik on this marvellous achievement!

The typical Danish habilitation ceremony lasted 5½ hours and followed work that has taken more than ten years to bring to publication. Indeed, what a labour of love and scholarly commitment... rather naughtily, at the cele-

bratory dinner in the evening, one wit commented that by his calculations Henrik's writing productivity over the past ten years on this piece of work was some seven words per cup of tea drunk!

A large crowd gathered to witness Henrik in the dock and all stayed at Norland Castle to celebrate his achievement.

Peter Lang Publishers has published Henrik's book, entitled *Institutions, Discourse and Regional Development – The Scottish Development Agency and the Politics of Regional Policy*. The book deals with the intriguing question why some regional development

strategies are adopted and why others are rejected. Only limited systematic attention has been paid to the politics of regional policy, including the role of institutions, discourse, and political debate in shaping this major area of public policy.

The book develops an institutionalist approach to the study of regional policy, capable of spanning major European development paradigms and accounting for the dynamic relationship between organisations, policies and political discourse. This conceptual framework is then applied to the Scottish Development Agency, a devel-

opment body famed across Europe for its innovative policies but surrounded by political controversy in Scotland.

A detailed study of corporate strategies, policy implementation, and the wider British environment questions existing interpretations of the organisation which have tended to vilify anti-interventionist Thatcherites or glorify shrewd development professionals. Instead, Henrik proposes an alternative synthesis which highlights the interplay between institutions, discourse and regional development in the politics of regional policy.

IN MEMORIAM

URBAN GURU, JANE JACOBS, PASSES AWAY

On 25th April 2006, world-famous American-Canadian, urban guru, Jane Jacobs passed away in Toronto, only a few days before her 90th birthday. Her death is an enormous loss for regional and urban studies.

Most readers will know Jacobs because of her classic *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) and her passionate plea for local diversity. Over the years, however, Jacobs elaborated her vision on cities in *The Economy of Cities* (1969) and *Cities and the Wealth of Nations* (1984). Since the nineties, this 'little old lady in tennis shoes' explored the philosophical side of life, searching in *Systems of Survival* (1992), *The Nature of Economies* (2000) and *Dark Age Ahead* (2004) for the moral foundations of society.

Let us sincerely hope that Jacobs' ideas live on and continue to inspire researchers in our discipline.

EVENT REPORT

THE ROLE OF 'INDUSTRIAL KNOWLEDGES' IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF POST-INDUSTRIAL REGIONS

University of Gdańsk, Gdańsk/Gdynia, Poland
19th-21st February 2006

Frank Siedlok, Durham University

This event was a follow-up to the workshop of the same name, held in Newcastle upon Tyne in February 2005. This year's seminar again attracted a good selection of academics interested in the role of industrial knowledges, re-industrialisation and regional development in Old Industrial Regions (OIR).

Hosted by the University of Gdańsk, the workshop was preceded by a study excursion around the post-industrial landscape of the Tri-City (Gdańsk city network including the three cities of Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot). The first of the two days of presentations and discussions started with a tour around the

former Gdańsk shipyard, a visit to an 'artists colony' and an 'industrial lunch' in one of the shipyard's canteens.

This gave the participants a great feel of the post-industrial landscape, a better understanding of the present situation of the shipyard and a good background for the subsequent presentations. A warm welcome from Professor Iwona Sagan, University of Gdańsk, formally opened the workshop for the presentations, which were grouped in four topics: old industrial knowledges in Poland, the correlation between sectoral transformation and old industrial knowledges, spaces of old industrial knowledges and the link between old industrial knowledges and culture and policies.

The first topic was developed by two presentations portraying the idea of industrial identity as a source of economic development and creativity in the case of the city of Gdansk (Roman Sebastyanski and Mariusz Czepczynski respectively). Two more presentations, one on the transformation of the former textile capital of Poland, Łódź (Szymon

Marcinczak) and the second on the coal-dominated locked-in region of Upper Silesia (Borys Cymbrowski & Robert Geisler) finalised the first group of presentations, giving the participants a sound background of Polish (post) industrial regions and their socio-economic transformation.

The second topic on the correlation of industrial knowledges and sectoral transformation consisted of case studies portraying the development of the former textiles region of Twente in the Netherlands (Paul Benneworth, Gert-Jan Hospers & Ben Jongbloed), structural change in the Portuguese footwear industry (Richard Nunes), the transformation of the telecommunication industry in Latvia (Jelle Bakker & Gert-Jan Hospers) and the emergence of the subsea technologies sector in the North East of England (Frank Siedlok). The presented case studies helped to weave a fabric for the role of industrial legacies in regional restructuring as well as the influence of universities and local embeddedness on the transformation process.

This topic was taken up at the following day by three presentations on spaces of old industrial knowledges, with case studies on the coal region of North-West Bohemia (Martin Myant), the link between old industrial legacies and foreign direct investment patterns in the Leningrad Region (Oleg Golubchikov) and, finally, an international comparison of structural adjustments in old industrial regions (Rüdiger Hamm). The diversity of case studies covered in the two sessions provided a sound backbone for the understanding of various trajectories of renewal in industrial regions, the diverse roles played by local authorities, academia and other institutions in the transformation process.

The final session focused on the role of culture and politics in the transformation process of post-industrial regions and cities. The experiences of Kraków (Monika Murzyn), Gdańsk (Romina Peritore) and Newcastle (Alice Mah) were presented and enhanced by a presentation on the role of old industrial knowledges in attracting FDI in some countries in Central and East Europe (Craig Young).

Each of the sessions was concluded by a round of questions and discussion. However, due to time restrictions during the day, the discussions continued till late in the evening. Overall, the workshop provided an excellent opportunity for the exchange of ideas and networking, as well as a ground for comparison of the very diverse transformation trajectories of old industrial regions across Europe.

The event also sheds some light on the potential and positive influence of industrial knowledges on the further socio-economic development of regions that are usually overshadowed and depreciated by negative effects of industrial demise and crisis. The workshop proved yet again to be of such a high quality that a follow-on has already been proposed and is anticipated next year.

Finally, on behalf of all the participants, our gratitude to all the people involved in organising these very stimulating three days, especially Professor Iwona Sagan and Mariusz Czepczynski from Gdańsk University as well as Alison Stenning and Paul Benneworth, both from Newcastle University.

BOOK REVIEW

BOSCHMA, R.A. & R.C. KLOOSTERMAN (2005) (EDS.), *LEARNING FROM CLUSTERS: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT FROM AN ECONOMIC-GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE*, DORDRECHT: SPRINGER, ISBN 1-4020-361X.

Reviewed by Paul Benneworth, Institute for Policy and Practice, Newcastle University (UK)

In his memoir of 30 years as a well-known sports journalist, *Retro* (Nieuw Amsterdam, 2006), Dutchman Maart Smeets is greatly exercised by how such a retrospective should comport itself. After searching a number of reference books, he comes to a definition with which he wholeheartedly agrees, namely 'providing an orientation towards the point of exit'. Mr Smeets' compatriot Professor of Economic

Geography Jan Lambooy, formerly based at Utrecht University, is therefore fortunate that his erstwhile colleagues have arranged and published such a backward look into his career.

The book under review, *Learning from Clusters: a Critical Assessment from an Economic-Geographical Perspective*, obliquely addresses Professor Lambooy's personal contribution through considering

the scientific state of the art at his retirement. The editors, Ron Boschma and Robert Kloosterman, begin with Professor Lambooy's lifelong wholehearted commitment to promoting multi-disciplinary theoretical approaches.

This is indisputably achieved in the book, although also highlighting the difficulties, which exist with multi-disciplinarity, particularly in reconciling conflicting visions of reality

without producing an overly complex theoretical model. Seventeen rather eclectic chapters nevertheless cohere to illustrate both the complexities and insights emerging from an intuitive and stylised conversation between disciplines.

The book focuses on recent geographical approaches on learning and knowledge capital in economic development, particularly, as the title suggests, the 'cluster'. Complexity recurs