

READING ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY, edited by Trevor J. Barnes, Jamie Peck, Eric Sheppard, and Adam Tickell. London: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

This book is a follow-up to the popular and widely read *A Companion to Economic Geography*, published in 2000 by Blackwell and edited by two of the present editors, Sheppard and Barnes. The two books are similar in structure, based on five sections: worlds of economic geography, realms of production, resource worlds, social worlds, and spaces of circulation. Each part contains five papers by leading scholars, eight of whom wrote chapters for both books. A useful addition in the current volume is the editors' comprehensive introduction to each of the five sections.

This book is actually a well-organised collection of papers published in leading periodicals or as chapters in edited collections from as early as 1985 (a paper by Sayer and a paper by Walker), to the latest one (a paper by Gertler), which appeared in 2001. Most of them were first published during the second half of the 1990s. Consequently, several readers may be familiar by now with a number of papers, though this collection presents them in a well-knit package. The aim of the book is to assist students and readers of economic geography to become better and more knowledgeable readers and writers in the field. With this purpose the editors' strategy was to provide effective and provocative illustrations of writings by economic geographers, and, with their introductory guidance, to put the chosen papers in context and facilitate their critical reading. It is an enormous task to amalgamate all the written avenues related to the field of economic geography into one volume, and the editors admit that they offer only a partial collection, which reflects their own interest in the field, presuppositions, and opinions. It is a significant selection, though one naturally may find some deficiencies in it.

Trying to put the essence of the book into one sentence, I might say that it deals, more than anything else, with the current dynamics and trends of the capitalist world, and the survival strategies and adjustment processes of various economic units in the late capitalist age. In this context, the book deals with a number of notions that refer to the current (volatile) capitalist economic environment, which appear in a considerable number of papers in the book: profit and capital accumulation processes; production and productivity; flexibility and flexible production systems; trans-national corporations and corporate strategies; competition and competitiveness; development (and uneven development) and growth—local and global; division of labor and gender issues; networks, interactions, and their related state of power relations and embedding; regional development and regional policies; globalization processes and global markets; organizations, institutions, governance, and the state; social and institutional bases of economic performance; learning and knowledge; location and proximity; the service sector, markets and trade; work and unemployment. Altogether, the book is a thorough view of the spatiality of economic processes and the ways in which these processes vary across scales. In other words, it provides readers with all they want to know about the central issues of

economic geography.

Part I of the book, "Worlds of Economic Geography", contains papers presenting the different theoretical approaches used by economic geographers, including political economy, post-structuralism, cultural and institutional approaches, yet not as much discussion of these radical points of view as one might expect to find. Part II, "Realms of Production", concentrates on some of the core and traditional themes of economic geography, such as production, labor, and firms, and the interrelations between them. Interwoven in these essays the reader may find a comparison between aspects of the "local" and the "global" dimensions. Part III, "Resource Worlds", focuses on man-nature relations and the way humans are treating the biophysical environment in which they operate. The discussion encompasses political economy, cultural, theoretical, and feminist perspectives. The papers in Part IV, "Social Worlds", emphasize that economic processes cannot be analyzed in isolation from social processes. Therefore, class and gender relations, as well as the operation of the state and the corresponding power relations of all three are vital elements that affect local and global economic processes. The title of Part V, "Spaces of Circulation", is somewhat misleading, as it comprises five diverse papers dealing with the spatiality of telecommunications, the cultural and institutional conditions of capital flow, and the circulation of foreign labor in advanced economies.

The selection of papers, similar to the selection in *A Companion to Economic Geography*, is skewed towards papers related to the dynamics of the capitalist system and issues related to industry and industrialisation in the late capitalist period. In this context, industrial districts, clustering, and industrialisation are largely referred to within the mode and space of Fordist and post-Fordist production.

Consequently, I might sound somewhat orthodox by stating that, in my opinion, the book neglects some of the main themes of economic geography. For example, it does not deal with the rural space in the developed world and its related aspects: there is not even one paper that takes into account issues related to agriculture and farming, with the exception of one paper on the geographies of food (by Whatmore and Thorne). Hence it leaves us with the feeling that the editors anticipate that the rural space has already been transferred from a space of production into a space of consumption and the form of accumulation that operates in this space is a mere extension of the urban-based capital. Similarly, the book does not deal to any length with the tourism sector, which also has been undergoing tremendous changes in recent times, or even with issues related to transportation, other than in passing. The absence of these themes and their related issues is in line with the editors' scholarly interests, and reflects their specific view of economic geography.

Another weakness is the editors' decision to deal narrowly with radical views and methods of analyzing the dynamics and transformations of the capitalist world. Marxism is referred to in a number of cases, and a fair share is devoted to the discussion of social classes, but not as a major factor contributing to the understanding of the current form of development or uneven development. There are certainly quite

a lot of papers that tackle economic geography using the mode of production approach in a critical way; none of them found their way into the book.

A question to the editors: Why not keep the articles intact, as they were originally published? While in the earlier book, each article has its own bibliography, this book has a consolidated bibliography at the end, just before the excellent index. The presentation of each paper with its own bibliography could better serve the reader.

All these comments and critiques do not mean that scholars and students of economic geography will not appreciate the appearance of this book. The editors have done a marvellous job in putting together some of the best-known and widely cited papers published over the last twenty years. For that matter, the book is well-structured and organised, thus providing those interested in the subject an in-depth view of the underlying processes, phenomena, concepts, and issues central to the current debates in economic geography. My students and I are going to enjoy this book.

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THE INFORMATION AGE: ECONOMY, SOCIETY AND CULTURE. VOL II. THE POWER OF IDENTITY (second edition) by Manuel Castells. Malden MA, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

In the midst of the European football cup Euro 2004 (a global event by the look of it) one of the Dutch team top players, Rood Van Nistelroij, addressed the issue of the coming match against the German team in the following manner: "We are going to play our very best against the Germans. We do not forget what happened 60 years ago during WW2". It seems to me that Castells' *The Power of Identity* is all about these typical tensions and constant contrasts of our current era, that revolve around living global and feeling local (or is it the other way around?). This review celebrates the second edition of *The Power of Identity*, of which the first was published in 1997. *The Power of Identity* is the second part of a formidable trilogy, indeed an *opus magnum*, titled *The Information Age*. The main stance of the trilogy—a product of a life time interest with our world and our lives according to Castells—may be summarized around three independent processes that became gradually effective since the late 60's: the information technology revolution, the economic crisis of capitalism, and the blooming of a new social movement that produced the new society now becoming of age: the information society. These processes, combined together, are affectively responsible for three common characteristics of our times: the creation of the network society, a globally informational economy, and the 'real virtuality' culture.

The Power of Identity explores and explains how power is diffused and changed in the various global networks mainly by focusing on how identity and its various