

J Peck and H Yeung (Eds.) (2003) *Remaking the Global Economy: Economic-Geographical Perspectives*, London, Sage. ISBN 0 76 19 4898. 246 pp.

In this edited collection, Jamie Peck and Henry Yeung bring together a number of contributions on globalisation in order to take stock of economic geography's contribution to the debate and to explore new interdisciplinary frontiers of research. The book is intended to mark the contribution of Peter Dicken to work on globalisation and thus has an introductory chapter where Henry Yeung and Jamie Peck outline the shifting focus of Dicken's work from the 1970s onwards up to the present day, his role in putting globalisation on the agenda in economic geography, and the influence of his work (especially through the publication of *Global Shift*) upon disciplines outside geography. As a former postgraduate student of Peter's, I can only echo their appreciation of his work and his guidance on 'how to do economic geography'.

The book is subsequently divided into three parts, each containing four chapters by leading economic (mostly) geographers. Part one, entitled 'Grounding Global Flows', contains chapters by Dicken, Coe, Kelly and Olds, Lee and Schoenberger. Peter Dicken sets out to engage with one aspect of the globalisation debate - the relationships between firms and geographical space. Drawing upon a number of studies investigating the influence of home country environments, he critiques arguments about the development of the 'placeless firm' and the 'global corporation' and argues that place and geography are fundamentally important to the ways firms are produced and how they behave. Firms are thus embedded in particular places, both in relation to where they operate and, especially, to their place of origin. Neil Coe, Philip Kelly and Kris Olds link concepts on transnationalism derived from sociology, anthropology and the humanities with work on the globalisation of capital, trade and production. They argue that 'keeping the two apart occludes many realities in the contemporary global economy, where the movement of people, and their social networks across space, are both shaped by, and constitutive of, global economic restructuring' (p. 46). They illustrate their arguments by reference to two case studies: transnationalism and property development in Vancouver and Toronto, indicating the key importance of Chinese social networks; and transnationalism in the Pacific Rim information technology industries. As with Dicken's chapter, a key theme here is the continued importance of the nation-state in creating and regulating transnational forms and outcomes, whether this is changes in immigration policy in both Canada and the USA, geopolitical uncertainty in China or the two-way flows of individuals and technologies between the USA and Taiwan. Roger Lee's chapter on emerging markets concerns the relationships between uneven geographical development and geographies of investment and points to the inadequacy of simplistic local-global or core-periphery conceptualisations of globalisation. Finally, Erica Schoenberger examines the globalisation of environmental management in relation to water, wastewater and solid waste management. A key point here is her use of a combination of Harvey's notion of a 'spatial fix' and Peck's 'institutional fix' in relation to these sectors. In these particularly place-bound environmental sectors, the 'spatial fix' involves the 'articulation of private capital with the physical environment' (p. 84) coupled with an 'institutional fix' as the rearticulation of the state opens up new possibilities for capital through privatisation. Here again, the continued importance of the nation-state comes through with different water supply and waste management

regimes in the USA and Europe leading to different technological outcomes and corporate strategies.

Part two, on 'Placing Global Knowledge' has chapters by Gertler, Amin, Thrift and Malmberg. Meric Gertler is concerned with examining the influence of nation-state institutions upon private firms, the extent to which firms 'learn' across national boundaries and the extent of local embeddedness of global corporations. As with Dicken's chapter, he provides substantive evidence that whether as 'home' or 'host', nation-states remain a primary source of influence upon industrial practices through the prevalent institutional framework. The ability of head offices to impose uniformity across their operations overseas is limited, as is the ability of global firms to learn from or transpose experiences from abroad. Gertler's conclusion is that given these findings 'there remains considerable room for national (and, by implication, local and regional) politics to fashion distinctive strategies for economic development' (p. 113). Ash Amin draws upon work on organisational learning to investigate the spatiality of tacit learning in organisations. Using the concept of 'communities of practice', acting as performative spaces for learning by homogeneous groups of employees, he argues that relational proximity is not limited to face-to-face contacts and spatial proximity, but is also possible in distanced networks. Nigel Thrift develops some of these ideas around learning and knowledge and addresses the ways in which the exercise of capitalist power is changing through the agency of new spacings and timings. Finally in this part, Malmberg re-examines Porter's cluster approach and addresses the issue of whether these should be conceptualised functionally or spatially. He argues that we need to distinguish between 'industry clusters', which are not confined to, or contained within, a particular scale and 'spatial (or localised) clusters'. The former will have widespread global connections and not be confined to local areas.

The final part on 'Refiguring Global Rules' has chapters from Tickell and Peck, Glasmeier and Conroy, Brenner and Hudson. Adam Tickell and Jamie Peck explore the meanings behind neo-liberalism, arguing that, as with globalisation, it is not a monolithic phenomenon, but produces its own geography. They argue that neo-liberalisation refers to 'the process of political-economic change' (p. 165), representing 'the extension of market rule and disciplines, principally by means of state power' (p. 165). Their aim here is provide an account of the development of 'the neo-liberal project' from the 1970s onwards. Here, although they add the rider that neo-liberalism has been neither coherent, nor unchallenged, there seemed to me too much emphasis on retrospective coherence, where think-tanks and prominent individuals are seen as key behind-the-scenes movers and shakers. At the end, I was left wondering how far seeing all economic and political shifts over the past 30 years or so as variants of neo-liberalism is particularly useful in analytical terms - at worst neo-liberalism appeared to explain everything and nothing.

In a useful companion piece to the chapter by Tickell and Peck, Amy Glasmeier and Michael Conroy examine 'the causal connections between global processes and emerging regulatory regimes' (p. 182) by focusing upon the emergence of a new global trade regime between the passage of the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the formation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Here the contested nature of greater marketisation is made clear - for example in relation to the development of the North American Free Trade

Agreement and the polarised views of US business and politicians at that time over the relative merits of free trade and protectionism. The power relations involved over trade-related issues is highlighted - 'global trade is by no means free trade and, if anything, regulatory oversight is increasing even as new participants and exceptions abound' (p. 190). Moreover, the fragility of seemingly neo-liberal trade regimes is made clear - as Glasmeier and Conroy indicate, actions on the part of the USA through the US Trade Representative's Office and in relation to trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPs), continually threaten to undermine the legitimacy of trade regimes.

The final two chapters focus upon globalisation processes at the European scale. Neil Brenner provides a theoretical interpretation of urban entrepreneurialism in Western Europe, drawing upon Jessop's strategic-relational approach, whereby 'glocalising states' are concentrating the capacity for economic development at sub-national levels (city-regions, industrial districts) through specific, albeit contradictory, state spatial strategies. Again, the key role of nation-state institutions is evident here, producing and shaping the institutional terrain where the dynamics of globalisation are played out. Finally, Ray Hudson examines transnational investment in Europe and the globalisation of production systems. In relation to large capital investments, he argues that rather than seeing such investments as a dichotomy between 'global outposts' and 'embedded branch plants', we need to conceptualise these as opposite ends of a continuum. Globalised production systems therefore exist in 'a complex dialectic of competition and co-operation, distanciation and localisation/regionalisation' (p. 221). Europe is also being integrated into global production systems through the transitions at work in industrial districts, whereby formerly 'sticky' places have become much more tied into global production systems. At the same time, new spaces of production have emerged elsewhere as part of the same processes. For example, at the same time as clothing production in Italy has been hollowed out through the activities of lead firms, new clothing clusters have emerged in central and eastern Europe.

While the quality of all the individual chapters is high for an edited volume, I felt some attempt at teasing out the contradictions and complementary sections of the contributions would have been useful. For example, the continued key role of the nation-state comes across in many of the chapters, while the potential for alternative economic strategies can be optimistic (Gertler) or more pessimistic (Lee). Similarly, there are some differing interpretations of learning, knowledge and space in the chapters by Amin, Thrift and Malmberg. As well as providing an insight into economic geographers' perspectives on the globalisation debate, this volume is certainly timely in its formal recognition of the contribution of Peter Dicken to economic geography. It is perhaps ironic, however, that a tribute to such a meticulous academic is marred by poor production values from the publishers. Widow and orphan sentences, conjoined words, missing words and a particularly annoying hyphenation of words in all the chapters all detracted from the text in my review copy. I am sure that producing work in this format as a postgraduate student for Peter to read would have resulted in a swift demand to come back when it had been done properly!

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