

Book Reviews

Malinen, P.; Jussila, H.; Häkkinen, M. (eds.): Finland's National Rural Policy Facing the Challenge of European Integration.

222 pp., 48 figs., 22 tabs., Appendix. Research Reports 114, University of Oulu, Research Institute of Northern Finland. Oulu 1993. US \$ 15.00.

ISBN 951-42-3670-X

This wide-ranging survey arises from growing outside interest in Finland's rural policies at a time when the country is seeking membership of the EC. The studies have been compiled by geographers at Oulu University's Research Institute of Northern Finland, which enjoys close links with administrators and decision makers. The work begins with a background study of rural policy; showing that although the population is sparse (five million inhabitants distributed across 337,000 square kilometers) and there are no "international scale urban centres", the rural areas combine the primacy of forestry with a very active agriculture which is remarkable in the context of high latitude. However since the 1960s new jobs have been created in the metropolitan area while employment has been lost in agriculture. Rural forestry work has also declined relative to the "strongholds" of Finnish forestry in Kemi-Tornio, Kotka, Oulu and Pori. Regional studies have thus been framed in the context of centralisation and the rural policy formulated during the 1980s has had to address the problem of maintaining a modern infrastructure (including transport and welfare services) while the density of an already sparse rural population is falling.

An outline of the challenges facing the Finnish countryside emphasises the threat to Finland's northern agriculture posed by current EC policies. It refers to the encouragement of certified eco-produce and farm forestry as possible solutions; but counterurbanisation must be harnessed to strengthen the non-agricultural population. Further sections deal with rural policy responses and the future research agenda in the light of the challenge of internationalisation: how to encourage counterurbanisation in the context of a "sparseland" environment and so maintain the 1990 population level into the next century. But how should the settlement pattern be supported in order to maintain an adequate network of large village centres, perhaps at the expense of accelerated depopulation in the smaller settlements? One pertinent suggestion is that research on the "Top of Europe" sparselands should be better coordinated so that European integration might be the incentive needed to

turn the wheel of interest and to start a positive, ecologically sustainable development process in the North". The authors certainly feel that integration will have to be balanced by "comprehensive and political and regional self-government".

David Turnock, Leicester, UK

Dutt, A. K.; Costa F. J. (eds.): Perspectives on Planning and Urban Development in Belgium. (GeoJournal Library, vol. 22). XII + 208 pp., figs., tabs. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht-Boston-London 1992. US \$ 79.00.

ISBN 0-7923-1885-4

The purpose of the book is to explore successes and failures of Belgian planning and to fulfil a need for an English language book on that head. Contributions have been delivered by 5 Belgian and 4 non-Belgian authors. Almost all authors underline the importance of linguistic matters for Belgian Planning. In fact in concordance with the process towards a (con?) federal State, planning also has been decentralized. Even the set of authors, for one part not having easy access to Dutch, French or German-written sources and for another part English evidently not being their mother tongue, has been influenced by language barriers. As it is no textbook aiming to teach the reader the art of planning the book is correctly titled Perspectives on Planning.

After an introductory framework three chapters are devoted to the history, administrative structure and legal basis of planning. Descriptions of that kind are, although indispensable, seldom inspiring. Precisely because considerable discrepancies are reported between formal planning procedures and current practice, a need is felt for more inside information, which, however is not provided.

The best chapter of the book is written by Alexander B. Murphy who analyses geolinguistic impact on planning. The last part of the book consists of 6 monographs, ranging from moderate to good. They are devoted to the planning of the Belgian coastal zone and to the cities of Brussels, Antwerp, Bruges, Liege and Louvain la Neuve respectively.

In summary some wavering feelings cannot be suppressed. Those feelings however are sufficiently compensated by the amount of information about the far from transparent Belgian planning, that is collected in this book.

Pieter Lukkes, Norg, NL

Leyden, D. P.; Link, A. N.: Government's Role in Innovation. XV + 194 pp., figs., tabs., refs, index. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht - Boston - London 1992. US \$ 75.00.

ISBN 0-7923-9261-2

Few subjects are so undisputed as the pivotal function of innovations in modern society. This explains why so many governments try to monitor and to enhance national innovation processes. So a policy of stimulation is self-evident. Precisely in the follow-up of that decision questions do arise. Which actions can be taken, what is the amount of money involved, how to assess returns on investment and what is the character of the processes set in motion by federal funds, are some of them.

More predominantly than the title suggests the book is centered on the last question. In this context the main chapters are devoted to the influence of federally financed R & D on productivity growth, the production of technical knowledge, investments in infratechnology, economic impact of federal investments in infratechnology and the impact of external research relationships.

From a methodological point of view all tastes are catered for. The content of the book is a mixture of sound theoretical reasoning, the development of theoretical models, a case study focused on the impact on innovative industries of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), desk research, and the elaboration of data from an inquiry. An appendix with the questionnaires is not included. Due to its qualities the book is worth careful and critical reading. Then some questions may arise. Requesting respondents to agree or disagree with a statement that begins: "It is our understanding from experts, that..." earns a question mark. Charging respondents with the instruction to rectify or not to rectify experts is no good procedure. And now sensible are percentages in decimal fractions when they are derived from a 20% response on an inquiry?

Using clear concepts the authors reveal many relationships between US - federal and non federal financial - and research efforts. Some of the results are eye openers. No doubt the book makes a valuable contribution to the publications on the subject.

Pieter Lukkes, Norg, NL