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0521633273 - Innovation Policy in a Global Economy

Edited by Daniele Archibugi, Jeremy Howells and Jonathan Michie

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Innovation Policy in a Global Economy concludes the successful sequence of books on globalisation and technology edited by Daniele Archibugi and Jonathan Michie following *Technology, Globalisation and Economic Performance* (Cambridge, 1997) and *Trade, Growth and Technical Change* (Cambridge, 1998). This final volume argues that the opportunities offered by globalisation will only be fully realised by organisations which have developed institutions that allow for the transfer, absorption and use of knowledge.

Innovation Policy in a Global Economy is relevant for graduate and undergraduate courses in management and business, economics, geography, international political economy and innovation and technology studies. Presenting original theoretical and empirical research by leading international experts in an accessible style, *Innovation Policy* will be vital reading for researchers and students and of use for public policy professionals.

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Foreword

This is a brilliant set of papers. Unlike many such collections by diverse authors, the standard is uniformly high and even more surprisingly, there is a clear common theme which links them together despite the lack of common authorship. That theme is the elucidation of just what is meant by ‘globalisation’. As Archibugi and Iammarino observe, this is a catch-all concept which is used indiscriminately to describe many diverse phenomena.

In particular, the book concentrates on the ways in which globalisation affects and is affected by technical change and systems of innovation. Over the last decade or so many authors have used the expression ‘national system of innovation’ to describe and analyse those networks of institutions and activities, which in any country, initiate, modify, import and diffuse new technologies. Some of the authors have attributed the origin of this concept to me. This is not accurate. To the best of my knowledge the expression was coined by Lundvall, who contributes the first chapter in this book in which he argues cogently that what matters most is *learning*, rather than knowledge itself. In any case, as I am sure he would agree, and as several of the chapters point out (e.g. Dosi and Kluth and Andersen) there is a long tradition in economic thought of this combined approach to technical innovation and institutional change, going back at least to Count Serra in Naples.

As this discussion has unfolded, it has become apparent that both the international (‘global’) and the sub-national (‘regional’) dimensions of innovative activities merit investigation and debate as well as the national dimension. This book explores all three of these and contributed substantial new theoretical insights and empirical evidence at each level. It would be invidious to single out individual chapters in a book where the overall standard is so high but for reasons of space it is not possible to discuss them all in a brief preface. I therefore just comment on a few points which are of exceptional interest.

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[More information](#)xiv **Foreword**

The chapter by Jeremy Howells provides an outstandingly good review and analysis of regional systems of innovation. He points out, with a wealth of illustrations, the necessity of an historical as well as a geographical approach to this topic. The example of Scotland illustrates very well his point that what were once ‘nations’ may become ‘regions’ and *vice-versa*. This leads to the conclusion that an historical ‘multi-layered’ approach is essential.

This conclusion is just as relevant for the global/national level which is the main focus of most of the chapters. Patel and Pavitt sustain their well-known position that the domestic national home base of multi-national corporations continues to be the main platform for most of their innovative activities. However, Dunning and Wymbs provide interesting new evidence of the increasing efforts of many MNCs to extend their sources of information and new ideas through the activities of their subsidiaries abroad. It is especially welcome to see the contributions to this volume from John Dunning and John Cantwell from Reading University. John Dunning pioneered the programme of research at this university which made it a leading centre in Europe for the study of MNCs, and it is good to see that he is still an active source of inspiration for this work about 40 years later.

Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to suggest that this is a small example of that type of sustained and cumulative learning by research (in this case in the academic world), which underlies institutional trajectories and in the industrial sphere leads to the ‘strickness’ of the patterns of specialisation, which many of the chapter authors observe. It is to be hoped that the editors continue their own collaboration in promoting this research trajectory which has produced such fruitful results. The cohesion of the book should be attributed to their sustained efforts, as well as to the fascination of the topic and the work of the authors. All of them merit warm congratulations and a wide circulation for this excellent publication.

Chris Freeman
University of Sussex

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Preface and acknowledgements

All the chapters in this book were commissioned specifically for this volume and draft versions were discussed at a working conference in April 1996 in Rome. This conference marked the second in a series of Euroconferences entitled 'The Globalization of Technology: Lessons for the Public and Business Sectors' co-funded by DGXII of the European Commission as part of the Human Capital Mobility (HCM) Programme (Grant no. ERBCHCCT940230), organised by the three of us.

The overall Euroconference initiative has a number of objectives, but a key aim is to help inform, involve and support young scientists and researchers in the field of industrial innovation and technology policy. The Rome conference therefore sought to bring together an informal group of some young and some not so young researchers working in this field. The result was a lively and interesting debate surrounding the issues of national innovation systems and of the globalisation of technology which is of such crucial strategic importance to both private and public sectors alike.

Obviously a vital role was played by all the conference presenters, many of whom have subsequently become contributors to this book. We would therefore like to thank Jørn Andersen, Giovanni Dosi, Paolo Guerrieri, Simona Iammarino, Michael Kitson, Michael Kluth, Bengt-Åke Lundvall, Keith Pavitt and Mario Pianta for presenting papers and participating in the discussions. We would also like to thank John Cantwell, John Dunning, Pari Patel and Clifford Wymbs for their contributions.

We are grateful to the Institute for Studies on Scientific Research and Documentation of the Italian National Research Council for hosting the Conference in Rome.

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Our personal thanks go respectively to Paola, Clara and Orlando; to Jane, Katherine, Mark and Louisa; and to Carolyn, Alex and Duncan.

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