

Abstracts

PERRIN, J.-C.: «Pour une révision de la science régionale. L'approche par les milieux» [“Toward a Revision of Regional Science: The Approach in Terms of Milieu”]. The paradigm of perfect rationality prevents regional science from dealing with true territorial problems and dynamic analysis from modeling creative processes, which are the substance of innovation and global development. The revision proposed in this article shows “local innovative milieus” to be the cornerstone of socioeconomic dynamics. Elements of a theory of local innovative milieus are presented, and the role played by local systems within globalization processes is analyzed.

MAILLAT, D.: «Milieux et dynamique territoriale de l'innovation» [“Milieus and the Dynamics of Territorial Innovation”]. According to several analyses, peripheral regions have some ability to progress in the space hierarchy, thanks to specific territorial mechanisms. These phenomena, however, need to be interpreted within the context of a new theoretical reflection on the origin and mechanisms of space development. This article, then, seeks to develop a territorial approach to innovation in which territories become innovative environments, called innovative milieus, instead of zones where extraregional firms locate. Relationships between innovative firms and their environment show the role of cultural and geographical proximity in the rise of innovation networks. Moreover, taking them into account allows formulation of a typology of territorial production systems. This article suggests regional policies that stimulate the action of these innovative milieus.

QUÉVIT, M.: «Milieux innovateurs et couplage local-international dans les stratégies d'entreprise: un cadre pour l'analyse» [“Innovative Milieus and Local-International Linkages in Enterprise Strategy: A Framework for Analysis”]. Recent observations of the structure of production systems indicate a breakdown in the national context of industrial policy, which is paradoxically changing the approach to local-international linkage. On the one hand, the worldwide economic interchange is growing, largely because of the pressures of evolving technology, leading to new forms of intercorporate relations inter-

nationally. On the other hand, the decline in the institutional effectiveness of nation-states, especially in highly industrialized societies, is prompting a correlative movement favouring local dynamics whose structures are influenced by partnership networks. This article will try to incorporate this new relationship between the local and the international. Its aim is not to offer a definitive explanation of these dynamics but rather to clarify for the reader the dynamics of local-international links in business strategies in the more general context of analysis of innovative milieus such as that undertaken by GREMI.

DESHAIES, L., A. JOYAL, and P.-A. JULIEN: «Le recours au milieu par les PME québécoises exportatrices» [“Exploitation of the Milieu by Small Quebec Exporting Firms”]. Analysis of the use of local resources by small and medium-sized Quebec companies reveals that these firms draw more on their milieu if they export a great deal and if they have a proactive approach to the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. On the whole, they make little use of government resources, particularly programmes related to marketing as opposed to those concerned with productivity. In short, local influence on the lesser vulnerability of small business to free trade can be favourably compared to the influence of such variables as past and future investments, commercial monitoring, and research and development. Thus, local and regional partnerships are a means of entry to the international scene, but businesses apparently use the local and regional milieu less as they increase exports. This situation casts in doubt the pertinence of partnership as a means to successful participation in the world economy.

PLANQUE, B.: «Milieux locaux et politique technologique locale. Étude de cas» [“Local Milieus and Technology Policy: A Case Study”]. This article describes the factors generated by a local environment lacking an industrial tradition that will raise barriers to innovation. The analysis is based on an experiment with an original local technology policy carried out in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region of southern France. It emphasizes that a territorial “covenant on innovation”, characteristic of innovative milieus, cannot be imposed. For such a policy to flourish, a long process of collective learning and cooperation must be undertaken. Also required are certain structural elements in the local organization of production.

MITCHELL-WEAVER, C.: “Public-Private Partnerships, Innovation Networks, and Regional Development in Southwestern Pennsylvania”. This article asks what the concept of an innovative local milieu or

environment can contribute to the understanding of regional economic change in southwestern Pennsylvania, the region surrounding what was the heavy industrial complex at Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh's high-tech development strategy based on a system of public-private partnerships is well known in the literature. This article briefly summarizes this material and asks whether observed changes in the regional economy can reasonably be attributed in part to the institutional structures and linkages that make up the local milieu. This study suggests that much more work is needed to affirm the effectiveness of regional innovation networks, and that caution may be advisable in the transfer of regional growth institutions and strategies from southwestern Pennsylvania to other regions.

BRAMANTI, A.: “The Spread of Cooperative Attitudes among Small Firms with Different Territorial Backgrounds: The Case of Northern Italy”. The article explores the area of cooperative agreements among small manufacturing firms, particularly those that are the outcome of innovative activities or that exist for that purpose (in the case of local systems with a diversified industrial structure). It argues that different types of milieu lead to stimuli and pressures on the emergence and implementation of cooperative relations among firms. A comparative reflection, which draws on the results of several empirical surveys, is used to substantiate the role and significance of the various paths of diffusion followed by cultural and organizational innovations.

PROULX, M.-U.: «Appartenance, utilités, fonctions. Le cas des milieux MRC du Québec» [“Belonging, Usefulness, and Functions: A Study of the MRCs in Quebec”]. This contribution analyzes the territorial organization displayed by 95 supra-local entities, the Municipalités Régionales de Comté (MRC), since their inception 10 years ago. It shows that from a feeling of territorial identity has emerged collective utilities for which the territorial functions are exercised. Although none of the entities examined may be likened to a small Silicon Valley, it appears that many of them have tended to become an environment munificent in factors that definitely induce innovation thanks to quality of life, individual development, worker skills, and organizational entrepreneurship.