Regional Advantage by AnnaLee Saxenian

Regional Advantage is an impressive demonstration of why new technologies and new markets both create and are driven by new business models and corporate structures.--Michael Stern "San Francisco Chronicle"

"Regional Advantage is an impressive demonstration of why new technologies and new markets both create and are driven by new business models and corporate structures."—Michael Stern, The San Francisco Chronicle

In Regional Advantage, Saxenian sets out to answer this question for the computer and hardware industries. Why did Silicon Valley beat Route 128 so drastically? While she offers a few different arguments for the superiority of Silicon Valley, it's hard to disentangle what, precisely, made the Valley such an innovation engine. Saxenian attributes Silicon Valley's success to a combination of factors, including a culture of entrepreneurship, a strong university-industry relationship, and a geographical advantage.

The book is divided into two parts. Part one covers the history of the computer and hardware industries in the United States, while part two focuses specifically on Silicon Valley and Route 128. Saxenian begins by examining the development of the computer industry in the 1950s and 1960s, highlighting the role of government funding and the emergence of the minicomputer as a major force in the industry.

Part two is where the book really shines. Saxenian provides a detailed comparison of Silicon Valley and Route 128, analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of each region. She argues that Silicon Valley's success is due in part to its ability to attract and retain talented workers, as well as its culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

In the conclusion, Saxenian argues that the study of Regional Advantage offers important lessons for other regions looking to develop their own innovation economies. She suggests that regions should focus on building a strong local innovation ecosystem, rather than simply trying to attract companies from outside.

Overall, Regional Advantage is a well-researched and thought-provoking book. Saxenian's analysis is nuanced and informative, and the book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history and development of the computer and hardware industries.
Introduction. In the 1970's both the Route 128 complex of Boston and the Silicon Valley were centers of high technology industry, but by the 1980's the Route 128 area was stagnating while the Silicon Valley, after experiencing economic shocks, was moving ahead to become the unchallenged global leader in high technology.
since the early-to-mid 2000s, South Africa’s Western Cape and Kenya’s capital city Nairobi have been attracting flows of trade and investments in information technology-enabled services (ITES). The methodologies involving 120 semi-structured interviews, secondary data, and participant-observation in both Kenya and South Africa to investigate each context and make broader claims about how regions create regional advantage in global IT-enabled services. Nairobi’s initial attempts to create a BPO sector failed because the region could not compete with other global locations on cost, labor, and skills. The region’s emerging services sector. However, as the region seeks to deepen and expand services, it leads to a coordinated set of actions to boost services that can be considered developmental whereby services can also lead back to development. The idea of development, by a number of individuals from different regional, organizational, and institutional contexts, is the impetus and the origin for the competitive on wages with respect to India and the Philippines. Based on a comparative analysis of Nairobi and Cape Town, I argue that development can lead to IT-enabled services and that IT-enabled flows are small but significant and growing, with multinational companies like Amazon, Google, IBM, and others locating and developing market niches in these regions. Why have these regions managed to attract IT-enabled services investments, given their regional economic challenges and marginality with respect to the global services economy? I employed a qualitative case study methodology involving 120 semi-structured interviews, secondary data, and participant-observation in both Kenya and South Africa to investigate each context and make broader claims about how regions create regional advantage in global IT-enabled services.