Innovation, Finance, and Space

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Preface

This is the first of what we expect to become a series of publications of the recently formed ‘Uetliberg Group’, i.e. an interdisciplinary group of European social scientists who have joined to initiate a research framework on innovation, finance and space. The present publication is intended to launch a larger research network in order to explore the inter-relationships between the dynamic developments of the financial industries and its markets on the one hand and the localized production sectors in relation to their innovation activities on the other. The book synthesizes the output of a workshop held in Zurich, Switzerland, October 3rd – 5th 2002. The beautiful location on top of the Uetliberg, which is the geographic landmark of the Zurich area, provided an inspiring atmosphere to elaborate on two objectives that will guide future work of the Uetliberg Group. The first aim was to conceptualise the financial place and its interacting participants as a system. In focusing on inter-mediation processes, some key questions and points of departure were derived in order to develop the building blocks of a financial place theory. The second aim was to highlight the inter-relationships between the financial system – localized in financial places – and the production system with regard to the financing of innovations. This perspective addressed the effects of financial markets on industrial value chains in the urban or regional innovation process.

The Zurich workshop was jointly organised by the two editors of this book. In our twofold role as organisers of the workshop and editors of this book we would like to acknowledge the support of the following individuals and institutions, who have made this undertaking not only possible but a promising research framework. As for the workshop, a big hand, above all, goes to Christian Kruse and Patrick Dümmler, both research assistants at the Chair for Territorial and Spatial Development at ETH Zurich, and to Michael Grote, now Junior Professor at the Faculty of Economics at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University, Frankfurt/Main. Administrative support came from Marianne Kächenbühl and Stefan Wüthrich, both at ETH Zurich. The Zurich workshop was largely funded by the Student Exchange Office of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich and IAESTE-traineeships (Mrs. Martina Bächli), and by Euresearch Zurich of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich (Mrs. Sofia Karakostas). The inspiring introductory speeches at the Zurich-Uetliberg workshop by Professor Hans Geiger, the Swiss Banking Institute, University of Zurich, and Dr. Rezo Francioni, Chairman of SWX Swiss Exchange, Zurich, are also gratefully acknowledged.

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Alain Thierstein and Eike W. Schamp