

National systems of production, innovation and competence-building

by

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Introduction

The four authors have worked individually and collectively on different aspects of innovation system-studies for more than a decade. Actually the common research program leading up to this concept was established more than 20 years ago (Andersen et al 1978 and Andersen et al 1979). This paper is an attempt to sum up this work and indicate in what direction we believe future work on innovation systems should go. In the first part we give some background on how the concept 'national system of innovation' has developed by drawing parallels to a radical technical innovation such as the computer. In the second part, we tell the story about how the Aalborg-version of the concept developed from being rooted primarily in production structure towards including all elements of the system contributing to competence building. We illustrate the approach empirically through results from a study of the Danish innovation system (the DISKO-project). In the last part of the paper we discuss how the concept could be adapted in order to be useful for the analysis of countries in the South. We end up by indicating a research agenda and in the appendix we introduce *GLOBELICS* as a concrete initiative aiming at promoting this agenda.