During the 1990s and early 2000s, Finland underwent a profound restructuring that saw it change from a country deep in recession to a global model of the knowledge economy. At the same time, the Helsinki region transformed itself into one of the most competitive and innovative regions in Europe. This book examines policy changes related to these transformations, by analysing major shifts in state policies, urban strategies and university activity. At the level of national policies, the book traces adjustments in innovation, university, regional and information society policies. As regards urban-regional strategies, the emergence and characteristics of an urban competitiveness policy in the Helsinki region are scrutinised along with three universities’ endeavours to commercialize their research.

“In this theoretically sophisticated and exhaustively researched volume, Antti Pelkonen explores the emergence of a “competition state” in Finland, with specific reference to various forms of innovation, technology, university and regional competitiveness policy that have been mobilized in the Helsinki region since the 1990s. Pelkonen’s analysis is extremely valuable, not only for those who seek to understand the recent restructuring of the Finnish state. Because he frames his investigation around international theoretical debates on competition states and state rescaling, Pelkonen’s study has broad comparative significance for all those concerned to understand the remaking of contemporary state forms and state spaces. By mediating carefully among different levels of abstraction and across divergent geographical scales, Pelkonen is able to situate policy transformations at a national level and in the Helsinki region in relation to broader cross-national, European and even global trends, while at the same time fine-tuning some of the more sweeping generalizations that have been ventured by previous scholars. This is, simply, an outstanding contribution to geopolitical economy.”

Neil Brenner
Professor of Sociology and Metropolitan Studies, New York University

“Pelkonen makes an important contribution to theoretical debates on state capacities and policy design in science, technology and innovation. The empirical studies are expertly conducted. Pelkonen stands out as a highly gifted policy analyst in the area of science, technology and innovation governance. The thesis is well-written, clear and concise.”

Mats Benner
Director, Research Policy Institute, Lund University