# FYI

This kritik argues that transportation policy should not be made for reasons of improving U.S. economic competitiveness. Economic competitiveness refers to the comparative strength of technological and economic innovation between two different countries (or firms or regions). The negative authors argue that providing competitiveness as the reason for transportation changes the way that we organize our economy and society. First, they argue that competitiveness encourages nationalism and a zero-sum approach to economic growth. Zero-sum means that one side’s gain is automatically another’s loss. Second, that competitiveness-enhancing policies encourage us to prioritize the needs of elite transit users and the needs of business over the goals of equality and social justice. Competitiveness acts as a “frame” for transportation policy. A policy frame sets the terms of debate. For example, who has the authority to make decisions, what type of information counts in those decisions, and the end goals of the policy. Prioritizing the needs of elite transit users provides a hierarchical form of mobility – access for some means denying it to others. The negative alternative argues that rather than pre-determining the goals of transit policy in terms of competitiveness we should privilege a process for deciding about transport that prioritizes equality.

The affirmative responses in this file contain a defense of the accuracy of competitiveness. This would mean that competitiveness is more than a frame or a story that tell about the economy, instead it is a concept that accurately describes economic behavior. Other responses defend the political and persuasive importance of competitiveness. In this case, even if competitiveness is a frame, it is a useful one for convincing different interest groups that a particular transportation investment is worth making. The negative’s alternative that tries to reframe the debate won’t work because different politicians and interest groups believe that competitiveness is real and important. The affirmative can also attempt to permute the negative’s advocacy of a process that makes economic decisions according to other goals by using the environmental and growth portions of their advantage to argue that they are a more effective form of economic reform.

# Competitiveness K

### 1NC

#### Competitiveness discourse turns economic debates into nationalistic decisions over who deserves to live and who must die.

Erica **SCHOENBERGER** Geography and Envt’l Engineering @ Johns Hopkins **’98** “Discourse and practice in human geography” *Progress in Human Geography* 22 (1) p. 2-5

The second theme I want to draw on has to do with the ways in which discourse enters into the constitution of our social reality and, indeed, of us as social agents. In part here I'm following the lead of McCloskey's (1985) The rhetoric of economics which inquires into the nature of the conversation within that discipline, viewing the analysis of rhetoric as an exercise in self-understanding. I am guided also by Poovey's careful investigation of the historical development of epistemological domains such as `the social' and `the economic' in Victorian England (Poovey, 1995). This process involves the establishment of boundaries between domains and the development of discourses and analytical styles appropriate to them.1 As Poovey shows, the discursive strategies and technologies of representation employed within these domains are involved in the creation of the very social categories they purport to define and analyse. A conceptual apparatus, in this way, takes on the property of materiality: the abstraction becomes a real social entity. At the same time, academic disciplines, such as sociology or economics, can be seen as nothing more than the study of these epistemological domains and the institutions associated with them. As academics, then, we also have to wrestle with an epistemological and discursive history that not only guides us in the production of knowledge but also tells us in important ways who we are and what we do. Taking the two themes together, what I'm trying to do is to be strongly objective about how the discursive strategies of others affect my own discursive constructions and how these, in turn, enter into the material work that I do. In other words, what difference does it make that I accept certain ways of talking about the world I'm trying to analyse and what happens if I challenge those rhetorical and discursive conventions? In what follows, I want to examine the meaning and use of the concept of `competitiveness'. The analysis claims, in essence, that the term is not merely an `objective' description of a fact of economic life, but also part of a discursive strategy that constructs a particular understanding of reality and elicits actions and reactions appropriate to that understanding. This is followed by a discussion of why the discourse has the power that it does and how it may influence how we think about and act in the world. I then work through some examples of how an unexamined acceptance of a discursive convention may obscure as much as it reveals. II Competitiveness as an economic category and discursive strategy I'm going to make this as simple as possible for myself by reducing the whole problem of discourse to one word: competitiveness. For economic geographers in general and for me in particular, the categories of competition, competitive strategy and competitiveness have a great deal of importance and might even be thought to pervade our work, even when they are not directly under analysis. All sorts of industrial and spatial economic outcomes are implicitly or explicitly linked to some notion of `competitiveness' (cf. Krugman, 1994). The rise and decline of particular industrial regions have something to do with the competitiveness of the labour force (generally understood in terms of comparative costs and unionization), which (for geographers if for no one else) has something to do with the competitiveness of the region in the first place, understood as its particular mix of resources, infrastructure, location and cost profile. More than that, though, `competitiveness' seems to me a term that has become truly hegemonic in the Gramscian sense. It is a culturally and socially sanctioned category that, when invoked, can completely halt public discussion of public or private activities. There is virtually no counterargument available to the simple claim that `doing X will make us uncompetitive,' whatever X and whomever `us' might be.2 In a capitalist society, of course, it is more than reasonable to be concerned with competition and competitiveness. No matter what your theoretical orientation, mainstream to Marxist, these must be seen as real forces shaping real outcomes in society. They are not just intellectual constructs that lend a false sense of order to a messy world. On the other hand, we can also analyse them as elements of a discursive strategy that shapes our understanding of the world and our possibilities for action in it. In that case, it seems to me the first questions to ask are whose discursive strategy is it, what do they really mean by it, where does its power come from, and what kinds of actions does it tend to open up or foreclose. 1 Whose discourse? The discourse on competitiveness comes from two principal sources and in part its power is their power. In the first instance, it is the discourse of the economics profession which doesn't really need to analyse what it is or what it means socially. The market is the impartial and ultimate arbiter of right behaviour in the economy and competitiveness simply describes the result of responding correctly to market signals. The blandness of this `objective' language conceals the underlying harshness of the metaphor. For Adam Smith, the idea of competition plausibly evoked nothing more disturbing than a horse race in which the losers are not summarily executed. Since then, the close identification of marginalist economics with evolutionary theory has unavoidably imbued the concept with the sense of a life or death struggle (cf. Niehans, 1990).3 In short, on competitiveness hangs life itself. As Krugman (1994: 31) defines it: `. . . when we say that a corporation is uncompetitive, we mean that its market position is . . . unsustainable ± that unless it improves its performance it will cease to exist.' As with evolutionary theory, our ability to strip the moral and ethical content from the concepts of life and death is not so great as the self-image of modern science suggests. Competitiveness becomes inescapably associated with ideas of fitness and unfitness, and these in turn with the unstated premise of merit, as in `deserving to live' and `deserving to die'. Secondly, competitiveness is the discourse of the business community and represents both an essential value and an essential validation. More generally, it serves as an all purpose and unarguable explanation for any behaviour: `We must do X in order to be competitive.' Again, the implied `or else' is death. As hinted, though, the discourse of competitiveness has seeped out beyond these sources and is becoming socially pervasive. University presidents, hospital administrators and government bureaucrats also discourse quite fluently now about competitiveness and its related accoutrements: customers, total quality, flexibility and so forth. It will be objected that competitiveness is a deeply ingrained social category and value in the USA and elsewhere and there is no particular reason to single out economists and business persons as culprits in its dissemination. That objection is true enough, and no doubt contributes to the general power of the discourse since it resonates so well with this broader heritage. But `competitiveness' in the sense of `deserving to live' is not what was commonly meant by this more diffuse social understanding. It is, however, what is meant in economic analysis and business life, and it is increasingly what is meant in other institutional and social settings as well. 2 The power of the discourse In my own work, I am constantly engaged in discussions of competitive strategy and competitiveness with the people who run firms. In this context I strive to be a critical and detached interlocutor whose job it is to analyse and interpret ± rather than simply report ± responses to my questions. When I'm talking with people about what it takes for them to be competitive in a particular market, or whatever, I am not especially shy about debating the substance of their answers. That is to say, I will argue with them about whether or not a given strategy is a good way of being competitive and what you really need to do to implement it. But that there is some irreducible category called competitiveness, the fulfilling of which, in extremis, over-rides all other considerations ± that I don't argue about. Or I haven't up to now. I have simply accepted the general idea of competitiveness as the ultimate demonstration of the validity of that behaviour. I don't think I'm alone in this. I think it's characteristic of economic geography to assume the categories of competition and competitiveness in order to answer other questions rather than asking what these categories themselves might be about. I think also that an unexamined notion of competitiveness plays an increasingly strong, if not decisive role in many political and institutional debates with enormous consequences for real people. So it is important to try to understand why the concept is so powerful that it enjoys a kind of social immunity. You can discuss what is more and what is less competitive, but you can't call the category into question. Within the academy, the power of the discourse of economics has a lot to do with the social power of the discipline. This, in turn, involves some complicated mix of command over material resources, claims of social utility, a certain amount of proselytizing in other disciplines, asserting a family resemblance with other powerful and `hard' disciplines such as physics by virtue of its mathematized and abstract style of reasoning and so on. Social power, in turn, can be deployed to set a standard of what constitutes `science' in the social sciences against which other forms of social science (e.g., geography) are implicitly or explicitly valued (cf. Clark, 1997). As McCloskey (1985: 82) notes, `The metaphors of economics often carry . . . the authority of Science and . . . its claims to ethical neutrality'. One doesn't have to suppose the least degree of cravenness on the part of other social scientists to imagine that the social norms established in this way gradually become part of the general environment and become more generally valued as they are within economics (Foucault, 1995). Certain practices and ways of thinking, as in a Marshallian industrial district, are `in the air' and we are all hard-pressed to avoid inhaling them. The best evidence of this effect within economic geography that I can think of is actually in the writings of the Marxists within the field, especially in the 1970s and early 1980s. There was a time when none of us could write anything without a lengthy introductory section in which we took great pains to demolish the assumptions and analytical tropes of neoclassical economics.We couldn't leave it alone, and I think it must be the case that the long struggle to valorize an alternative world-view and scientific method has left its mark on all of us. But we're marked in surprisingly subtle ways and it takes real work to see the effects. But economics also derives some of its power from being able to deploy concepts such as competitiveness which have tremendous ideological weight. Market competition is the guarantor of the fairness of the social system as a whole because markets, by the definition of the discipline, are impartial and competitiveness, though a life or death affair, proceeds on a purely technical basis. That is to say, you are not competitive or uncompetitive because of who you are, but merely as a result of how you respond to market signals that provide the same information to everyone. Further, the idea of economic competitiveness meshes so perfectly with evolutionary theory that it takes on exactly the natural and timeless air that makes it so unarguable. The discipline that owns such a concept ± whose discourse this is ± is bound to seem inevitable. In sum, the social power of economics within the academic hierarchy helps anchor the power of its discourse which, in true virtuous circle fashion, reinforces the social power of the discipline. On top of all this, the discourse is shared with another extraordinarily powerful social group: the `business community'. The problems of competition, competitive strategy and competitiveness are deeply meaningful to people who run businesses. They really see them as authentic life and death issues and, at the limit, they are right. But there is arguably a broad range of issues and conditions in which life and death are not at stake, but competitiveness is automatically invoked anyway as the unchallengeable and `natural' explanation for what is about to happen. The degree to which this is accepted and even imitated by people in other spheres entirely is remarkable.

#### Transportation competitiveness locks in hierarchical elite mobility.

Stephanie **FARMER** Sociology @ Roosevelt **’11** Uneven public transportation development in neoliberalizing Chicago, USA *Environment and Planning A* 43 p. 1155-1157

2 Uneven development and public transportation neoliberalism Since the production of space is inherently a social phenomenon, a theory of uneven geographic development should be attuned to the particular articulation of structural forces and social relations in capitalist society. Uneven geographic development is produced by a constellation of factors consisting of (1) the embedding of capital accumulation processes in space; (2) historical class, social, and political relations contingent to a geography that privileges some places, social groups, or activities over others; (3) the preexisting built environment; (4) institutional and political policies implemented in localities; and (5) consumption preferences (Harvey, 2006, page 78). Harvey (1999) sketches out the contours of uneven geographic development: ``Uneven development occurs as capital mobilizes particular places as forces of production creating a highly variegated capitalist geography consisting of an unequal distribution of productive forces, institutional arrangements, raw materials, the built environment and transport facilities, as well as differentiations of social relations and a litany of other factors shaping spatial relations'' (page 416). The specific configuration of market forces, state regulation, and class relations at work at a given time and place (the prevailing accumulation regime) profoundly shapes the development of the urban terrain. Contemporary urbanization processes are strongly shaped by the logic and policies of neoliberalism. Neoliberal ideology advocates the extension of market-based principles in the arena of the state in order to `liberate' both public services from so-called `state inefficiencies' and capital `squandered' by taxation that could be more profitability deployed by private actors. Accordingly, neoliberal regulatory frameworks promote market discipline over the state, usually achieved by such policy mechanisms as lowering taxes on businesses and the wealthy, shrinking or dismantling public services, and subjecting public services to the logic of markets through public ^ private partnerships or outright privatization. The creative ^ destructive processes of neoliberal state strategy reconfigure the territorial organization of accumulation, and consequently produce new forms of uneven geographic development. The literature on neoliberal urbanization establishes the broader processes of political, economic, and social restructuring and rescaling in response to declining profitability of the Fordist accumulation regime (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002). The roll-back of Fordist regulatory configurations and the roll-out of neoliberalization transformed the sociospatial hierarchy of regulatory frameworks with the nation-state as the center of state regulation to a more multiscalar regulatory framework articulated by the interactions of global, national, and local scales (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). Cities emerged as crucial sites of neoliberalization and institutional restructuring. In the United States, neoliberal policies restructured Fordist forms of territorial organization by devolving the relatively centralized, managerial ^ redistributive system of urban planning and financing at the federal level to subregional states and municipalities (Eisinger, 1998; Harvey, 1989). Thus localities were forced to finance local infrastructure, transit, housing, and other forms of collective consumption on their own or abandon them altogether. By starving cities of revenues, neoliberal state restructuring rendered states and municipalities more dependent upon locally generated tax revenues as well as intensifying intercity competition (Harvey, 1989). Cities starved by neoliberal state restructuring responded to their fiscal troubles by adopting entrepreneurial norms, practices, and institutional frameworks. Entrepreneurial municipal governments prioritize policies that create a good business climate and competitive advantages for businesses (Harvey, 1989; Smith, 2002) by ``reconstituting social welfare provisions as anticompetitive costs'', and by implementing ``an extremely narrow urban policy repertoire based on capital subsidies, place promotion, supply side intervention, central-city makeovers and local boosterism'' (Peck and Tickell, 2002, pages 47 ^ 48). In effect, neoliberal urbanization encourages local governments to retreat from social redistribution and integrated social welfare policies in favor of bolstering business activity (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002; Swyngedouw et al, 2002). As a consequence, entrepreneurial mayors emerged in the 1980s to forge alliances between government and business leaders (what I refer to as the `global city growth machine') under the banner of urban revitalization (Judd and Simpson, 2003). City space is mobilized ``as an arena both for market-oriented economic growth and for elite consumption practices'' (Brenner and Theodore, 2002, page 21). The abandonment of Fordist planning, privileging a more integrated urban form in favor of selective investment in privileged places, has resulted in what scholars have variously deemed as a fragmented, polarized, splintered, or quartered urbanity (Graham and Marvin, 2001; Marcuse and van Kempen, 2000; Sassen 1991; Swyngedouw et al, 2002). The business-friendly policies and practices pursued by entrepreneurial urban governments must also be understood in relation to the global reorganization of production. Global cities emerged as the command and control nodes of the global economy, where multinational headquarters, producer services, and FIRE (finance, insurance, and real estate) firms cluster (Sassen, 1991). To lure multinational corporate headquarters, producer services, professional ^ managerial workers, and tourists to their city, municipal governments recreate urban space by prioritizing megaprojects and infrastructure that help businesses gain competitive advantages and keep them connected within global networks as well as providing financing and amenities for gentrification, tourism, and cultural consumption (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Fainstein, 2008; Graham and Marvin, 2001; Peck and Tickell, 2002; Swyngedouw et al, 2002). These urban development strategies are ideologically and discursively legitimized by the global city growth machine as necessary for `global city' or `world-class city' formation (McGuirk, 2004; Wilson, 2004). Public transportation policy is one dimension of spatial restructuring deployed by entrepreneurial governments to create place-based competitive advantages for global capital. Transportation represents a fixed, place-based geographic element where the local and the global interact; where global processes shape local geographies and where local politics shape global networks. As Keil and Young (2008) suggest, transportation should now be considered in relation to globalized trade and economic networks and consumption-oriented patterns of everyday life. Growth demands in cities experiencing gentrification, the development of luxury consumption spaces, and a surge of tourism have placed pressure on local agencies to expand airports, roads, and rail and public transit capacities. Large-scale urban redevelopment plans have made a comeback as city planners conceive of megaprojects that concentrate new public transit investment in the revalorized core (Fainstein, 2008; Keil and Young, 2008; Swyngedouw et al, 2002).

#### The hierarchical mobility of competitiveness destroys those who fail to produce.

Mark **DAVIS** Sociology @ Leeds **‘8** “Bauman on Globalization” in *The Sociology of Zygmunt Bauman* eds. Michael Hviid Jacobsen and Paul Poder p. 145-146

It is this stark opposition between tourists and vagabonds that Bauman (2004) develops further in his more recent ideas on the 'wasted lives' brought about by processes of globalization. At the basis of this development is Bauman's observation that both sides of the identified opposition between tourists and vagabonds can be characterized by their freedom to move. However, whereas the former travel for enjoyment or profit, and are rewarded for doing so, the latter travel for survival, and — alarmingly—are condemned for doing so. For Bauman, it is this `lie of the free trade promise' that marks the present day combination of the annulment of entry visas and the reinforcement of immigration controls with a particular symbolic significance. In short, it lays bare the fact that 'access to global mobility' is the basis of a world-wide re-stratification**.** To put it in a nutshell: if indeed we are nowadays 'all on the move', only some of us are permitted to be so. Moreover, Bauman notes how the dismantling of all barriers to the free movement of capital, commodities and information, and its carriers, is accompanied by the concomitant production of new and ever-higher barriers to keep out the multitude wishing to follow suit and go where the opportunities beckon. This is supported by the sociological and political phenomenon highlighted at the start of the chapter in relation to the world being 'full'. This new 'fullness' of the planet — or, perhaps more accurately, of those particular areas of the planet where dreams and desires are most likely to be realized — have resulted in an acute crisis of what Bauman calls the "human waste disposal industry" (Bauman 2004:7). According to him, globalization has become a prolific production line of 'wasted humans' precisely because of the global spread of the 'liquid modern' form of life as a single homogenising force. Those different forms of human life and togetherness that, heretofore, represented adequate ways and means of survival in both the biological and sociological sense are destroyed by the dominance of the global over all aspects of the local. As a result, those who represent difference — and thus evoke precisely those feelings of uncertainty and insecurity endemic to 'liquid life' — are uniquely suitable to play the part of visible local target for the unloading of frustrations caused by invisible global After all, asylum seekers and 'economic migrants' are collective replicas (an alter ego?, fellow travellers?, mirror-images?, caricatures?) of the new power elite of the globalized world, widely (and with reason) suspected to be the true villain of the piece. Like that elite, they are untied to any place, shifty, unpredictable. Like that elite, they epitomize the unfathomable 'space of flows' where the roots of the present-day precariousness of the human condition are sunk (Bauman 2004:66). And it is these groups of asylum seekers, 'economic migrants' and refugees that represent the 'human waste' of globalization, the vagabond nightmare in the society of tourists. All periods of modernity have, of course, produced social suffering amongst the excluded. However, Bauman (2004) argues that the suffering experienced by the growing ranks of vagabonds is unique insofar as the included do not forge any common cause with those 'wasted humans' precisely because they rarely come into contact with them. By being managed and administered in localized camps or 'sink estates', the tourists have no opportunity to converse with vagabonds and, as a result of their stigmatization and criminalization, frequently have little desire to do so. As a consequence, an entire way of human-being-in-the-world is denied its reality and so easily removed from the realm of moral obligation. Indeed, it is this that represents one of the central ethical challenges that faces humanity in the era of globalization: the need to recognize the plight of the 'wasted humans' produced by those global processes that make the life of the tourist so desirable. One of the main obstacles to this ethical challenge is precisely the experience of insecurity and fear that 'wasted humans' are so often taken to embody. Furthermore, Bauman notes how current local solutions to these problems fail to address their global causes — 'there are no local solutions to global problems', as he frequently asserts. The growing pervasiveness of fear in 'liquid modern' society, coupled with an absence of global solutions, has led Bauman to explain globalization as entirely 'negative'.

#### The production of wasted life is a political evil that must be rejected.

Patrick **HAYDEN** Senior Lecturer IR @ St. Andrews **‘7** “Superfluous Humanity: An Arendtian Perspective on the Political Evil of Global Poverty” *Millennium* 35 (2) p. 289-290

Much like Arendt, Bauman argues that modernity is characterised by instrumental rationality and a drive towards bureaucracy and technological order, with a resulting emptying out of moral responsibility. The era of neoliberal globalisation, Bauman contends, exposes how the project of modernity - or more accurately, of compulsive modernisation - necessarily produces ‘human waste’.52 Here three historical strands of modernisation converge: order-building, economic progress, and capitalist globalisation. For Bauman the modernisation process is defined by the drive to design, engineer and administer society, most fundamentally in terms of the ‘freedom’ to consume. The corollary of this process is that whatever cannot be assimilated into the model of modernisation (or ‘development’) as consumption must be treated as unfit, undesirable, redundant, useless, and disposable. Immigrants, refugees, and the impoverished are simply superfluous populations who, if they cannot be directly eliminated in the ‘post-totalitarian’ era, at least can be made to disappear from our consciousness. In Bauman’s words, we ‘dispose of leftovers in the most radical and effective way: we make them invisible by not looking and unthinkable by not thinking. They worry us only when the routine elementary defences are broken and the precautions fail.’53 The wasted lives of human refuse are stripped of dignity, driven to the furthest margins of society, and eradicated from public space while hidden in plain sight. Bauman’s argument, couched in language that evokes the parallels drawn by Arendt between totalitarian systems and the basic conditions of modern capitalist society, lends support to the central claim of this article: that global poverty ‘erases’ the global poor, excludes them from recognition as fellow human beings, and denies them standing as equals within a shared public world. Simply put, global poverty makes a vast portion of humanity superfluous. The global poor have become, to borrow Arendt’s phrase for those deprived of their human rights, ‘the scum of the earth’, because of who they are (or where they are born) rather than what they have done.54 As Dana Villa asserts, in today’s world ‘untold millions will have to suffer the crushing fate of being no use to the world economy’.55 Along these lines, Thomas Pogge has proposed that extreme global poverty may constitute ‘the largest crime against humanity ever committed, the death toll of which exceeds, every week, that of the recent tsunami and, every three years, that of World War II, the concentration camps and gulags included**’**.56

#### Our alternative – refuse to frame transportation policy as an issue of economic competitiveness. Transportation planning helps constitute preferences. An advocacy *process* should be preferred over predetermined economic *ends*.

Richard **WILSON** Urban and Regional Planning @ Cal. State Poly **‘1** *Transportation* 28 p. 16-18

Purpose of planning. The purpose of transportation planning continues to be to develop strategies for connecting people and goods with destinations. However, transportation planning is not divorced from larger issues such as the development of human potential, social justice, environmental improvement or aesthetic appreciation. Its purposes broaden from the primary task of designing and selecting programs to enhancing the deliberative capability of decision making bodies and the public, and promoting learning about transportation phenomenon. Transportation planning also provides a way for the public to reflect on broader social issues, such as the relationship of travel choices to the environment and social equity. Transportation planning is a creative activity that adds meaning to people’s lives as well as helping them link origins and destinations. It is intended to increase the capacity for reasoned deliberation and democratic decisionmaking. Whereas the larger project of instrumental rationality could be described as increasing rationality, social progress and individual freedom, the larger project of communicative rationality is to enhance the quality of community and political dialogue in support of democracy, creating a transportation planning process that fully addresses both means and ends and links transportation issues to broader social concerns. The effects of this approach are greater attention to ends (goals), better integration of means and ends, new forms of participation and learning, and enhanced democratic capacity. Because of the educational function of planning, planning documents and presentations do more than document technical analysis – they engage the public in thinking about fundamental questions, explore images, ideals and values, and open up the process to creative participation. Public participation is seen as a part of an ongoing learning process, not an episodic event prior to the adoption of a new plan. Example: The parking planning effort has multiple purposes: 1) to design and implement parking policies; 2) to promote learning about the ridership, fiscal, environmental and social equity goals of the agency; and 3) to build a deliberative capacity among decision-makers and community stakeholders for addressing other strategic transit issues. The planning process helps decision-makers, stakeholders and the public learn about how transit agency goals are realized in specific policies and informs the broader goals of the transportation agency and society. For example, one board member may see free surface parking as the impediment to economically feasible transit-oriented development while another might see it as a basic right of a commuter. The planning process helps them explain their perspectives, search for common ground and agree to tradeoffs. Similarly, discussion about the distributional consequences of alternative parking charges may lead to discussion of broader station access strategies, or even a discourse that redefines the mission of the organization. The parking issue is a way of developing the strategic plan of the organization and can be a catalyst for broader public debate about transportation pricing, transportation equity and the environment. 3. Planning process. As shown in Figure 2, communicative transportation planning does not involve a linear progression from ends to means. Instead, it is an iterative process that transforms the decision environment and the participants themselves. Participants simultaneously consider means and ends. Communicative transportation planning emphasizes listening, conveying, interpreting, mediating and bridge-building between stakeholders – encouraging them to ease their commitment to pre-existing positions and to share interests and goals. It is open to and influences the larger context of societal values, public opinion, institutions and stakeholders. Consequently, communicative planning itself may develop or modify the planning process. Finally, communicative transportation planning encourages a continuous critique about the planning process and its effects. It draws attention to that process rather than using a cookbook-like set of procedural steps for planning.7 Accordingly, communicative rationality involves experimental approaches because developing the planning process is an explicit part of the planning activity. Planning processes are designed with attention to the time it takes for decision-makers and stakeholders to learn and adopt new positions. A communicative planning process has simultaneous research, forecasting, value exploration, and alternative testing activities, ensuring that each element informs the other. Modeling and research, for example, is an on-going process that responds to policy questions as they occur rather than a discrete step that produces a product for policy consideration.

### 2NC K Prior

#### Competitiveness framing of transportation planning crowd out democratic decision-making and social justice goals.

Enrico **GUALINI** ISR Inst. for Urban and Regional Planning @ Technical University Berlin **AND** Stan **MAJOOR** Geography, Planning & Int’l Development Studies @ Universiteit van Amsterdam **‘7** Innovative Practices in Large Urban Development Projects: Conflicting Frames in the Quest for “New Urbanity” *Planning Theory & Practice* 8 (3) p.

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Large urban development projects have increasingly become the subject of public critique— and rightly so. Against the background of a competition-oriented developmental rhetoric, large projects dominate urban agendas, particularly in cities pursuing ambitious internationalization strategies. Their physical, social and economic results, however, often testify to wrong choices, missed opportunities and unequal benefit shares. “Mega-projects” have thus become icons for the lack of comprehensive, integrative and persuasive planning concepts, and for the failure in shaping development choices in away which appeals to both public and private interests. The reproduction of generic concepts and the inability to create liveable urban places have turned into significant factors of public dissatisfaction and, occasionally, popular resistance to what is seen as the expression of a narrow-minded neo-liberal agenda. The contemporary agenda of large urban development projects has come under criticism from different scholarly directions. Authors like Graham and Marvin (2001) view them from the perspective of a general growing fragmentation of space. This is manifested both in the layout and, even more fundamentally, in the perception of new “public” spaces. Most large urban development projects—places like airports, shopping malls and business districts—seem to turn into privatized, controlled and regulated worlds of their own (Hajer & Reijndorp, 2001). The physical result is often seen as “junkspace” (Koolhaas in Chuihua et al., 2001) or as a “non-place” that challenges our commonsense view of planned public spaces as places for encounter, for combining individual identification and socialization (Auge´, 1995). Other studies highlight a diffuse reality of cost overruns in prestigious (mainly infrastructure) projects and the way this affects the pursuit of declared public investment goals (Flyvbjerg et al., 2003; Altshuler & Luberoff, 2003). From a governance perspective, a major reason underlying criticism of contemporary urban large urban development projects is that strategic and comprehensive planning approaches to such projects has been very limited so far, both in the US and in Europe. The reasons for this are manifold. One of the main reasons is the institutional fragmentation wherein most projects are realized. These situations lead both to a lack of effective implementation of new planning ideas and a lack of “bargaining power” of (local) governments to secure certain values and democratic aspects in these projects (Savitch & Kantor, 2002). A key line of criticism has been developed from a political economy perspective. Large urban projects are viewed as a key manifestation of a structural change in public policy in European cities: the emergence of a “new urban policy” marked by a shift from redistributive policies towards more market oriented approaches aimed at economic development and inter-urban competition. While recognizing that large urban projects are generally inserted into existing statutory planning guidelines, and often attempt at balancing economic targets with physical and social-economic development objectives, authors like Moulaert et al. (2003) emphasize the hegemonic dimension they take in the context of a neo-liberal turn in urban policies. Among the key consequences recognized are the selective nature of policy arenas and of actors involved in setting project agendas, and the frequent bypassing or ritualization of procedures for extended public participation. The result is that large development projects define a “new choreography of elite power” in which—by default if not overt choice—the undemocratic nature of decision-making processes strongly contrasts with the level of public resources involved. However, “urban projects of this kind, are not the mere result, response, or consequence of political and economic change choreographed elsewhere” (Swyngedouw et al., 2002, p. 199). Rather, it is in the nature of this “new urban policy” that the state—in its different articulations (local, regional and national)—is actively involved in promoting, designing and implementing these projects. This may even result in an apparent paradox: projects that share in a market-oriented competition rhetoric are often mainly publicly led and highly vulnerable with regard to shifting market interests, putting the burdens of financial investments and risks largely on local governments (Salet & Gualini, 2007). The empirical findings and critical statements from this literature represent an indispensable background for any serious discussion of the role of urban projects in changing our social, political and physical cityscapes. In this contribution, however, we choose to address a specific and more micro-analytical and agency-oriented perspective on the changing nature of planning practices. The underlying assumption is that planning can be viewed as integral to the practices, discourses and routines that contribute to framing urban policy. Accordingly, there is scope for inquiring into the changing nature, role and possibilities of planning practice in framing urban policy. This perspective stems from the observation that the analysis of actual planning practices is, in our view, relatively neglected in the literature on large urban projects. It also reflects a critical planning theoretical attitude, concerning the question of whether there is room for planning practices that “make a difference” under current political-economic conditions of urban policy. In this sense, this paper aims at complementing critical analyses of large urban projects from a specific analytical perspective, centred on planning-related forms of agency, and addressing their changing nature in the governance of development processes. Of course, this does not imply adopting a naıve belief in the “steering and control” capacity of planning. Nor does it imply viewing planning as a mere outcome of powerplays deterministically shaping the course of development processes. Rather than positing causal determination, we adopt a conditional view on the role of planning in framing policy processes. Planning—as integral to political-institutional practices—is a dimension of the institutional embeddedness of development processes. Through its role in framing patterns of agency, it bears a conditional influence on shaping actors’ preferences and behaviours. Understanding this dimension may contribute to our critical awareness of the possibilities and limitations of planning in shaping urban transformations. In this paper, we focus in particular on the role of ideas and concepts of urban spatial development. Urban research has devoted much attention to the organization of private interests and to the coordination of actions in goal-oriented, purposive ways directed to achieving economic development goals. Hence, much of the discussion about strategic spatial planning has focused on process, on how significant stakeholders can be mobilized to develop strategic agendas in a “diffused power” context, and become cohesive enough to develop “collective actor power”: to the contrary, conceptions of urbanity in a changing local governance environment have been little analysed and, accordingly, “[t]here has been much less analysis of the nature of the concepts of place and space being deployed” (Healey, 2004, p. 46). The question arising in this respect is: how can discourse on the urban quality of places in an “open”, competitive development environment affect collective choices in a reflective way, possibly leading to integrating private interests within innovative public strategies?

#### How advocates frame transportation policy shapes the world of implementation.

Richard **WILSON** Urban and Regional Planning @ Cal. State Poly **‘1** *Transportation* 28 p. 20-21

Problem-framing. A communicative rationality model frames problems differently than the conventional model. Rather than assume that problems can be defined and bounded in a single frame, communicative planners place greater emphasis on acknowledging different problem frames and mediating between frames. A problem frame is a construct that organizes one’s understanding of problems, their causes and the effectiveness of alternative responses.8 Although the existence of different problem frames suggest that participants to planning do not agree on the criteria by which one might judge a rational decision, communicative rationality provides a basis for examining and seeking redefinition of problem frames. In doing so, the planning process becomes more realistic and transparent, albeit potentially more complicated. In fact, the acknowledgment of different problem frames can be an effective strategy for depersonalizing conflict. Decision-makers may discourage planners from identifying problem frames if that process sharpens conflict or empowers opposing groups. Recognizing this reality, communicative planners seek appropriate ways to facilitate understanding of alternative frames, alter pre-existing problem frames, and/or discover new ways that respond to multiple frames. The idea is not pure relativism, where all frames have equal value, but to establish a rational process where some frames hold greater weight on the basis of a better argument. A better argument will not emerge if exclusion, unequal power and varying access to information and expertise exist among stakeholders. Therefore, communicative transportation planners take advantage of opportunities to counteract distortions of communication along the lines suggested by Forester (1989). A planner might indicate how a way of defining a problem might exclude consideration of an important issue or an unexpressed interest that is influencing the plan’s direction. Furthermore, planners draw attention to how language and discourse is used to construct, modify and reconcile these problem frames. Because the planner is not separate from the planning process, s/he also discovers how her or his own frames guide perception and thinking about solutions.

#### Linguistic and advocacy choices are crucial for transportation planning.

Richard **WILSON** Urban and Regional Planning @ Cal. State Poly **‘1** *Transportation* 28 p. 1-3

Transportation planners use language as if it mirrors the world. If language is a mirror, then, it is a neutral tool in the service of communicating information. In most transportation planners’ minds, language describes objective conditions, explains methodologies and expresses values. Numbers, moreover, are a precise form of language that provide unambiguous representations of reality. Are not measures of vehicle flows, level of service or cost effectiveness robust representations of reality? Gridlock is gridlock, right? For planning, however, gridlock is not gridlock until we have defined it as a problem and decided to do something to address it. Transportation plans depend on what gridlock means, and establishing meaning is an inherently social and linguistically based process. The way that transportation planners use language – understanding certain ideas and values and excluding others, hearing some things and not hearing others, and defining roles for themselves, their organizations, decision makers and the public – shapes knowledge, public participation, problem definition, process design and negotiation, and the outcome of planning. The perspective offered in this paper is that language profoundly shapes our view of the world. The paper critically examines the formal scientific rationality that dominates the field and uses insights from planning practice, social theory and philosophy to explore the promise of communicative rationality as a new paradigm for transportation planning – one in which language and communicative processes form the basis for rational planning. Innovative forms of transportation planning based on theories of communicative rationality hold the promise of solving some of our most difficult transportation planning problems. The global aim of communicative rationality is to create a rational basis for constructing ends and means in a democratic society, by enriching public and political discourse. Communicative rationality focuses on interactive processes rather than the deliberative process of a single actor, emphasizing the design of planning processes, participation and learning, and a reconciliation of different ways of understanding planning opportunities. It reorients planning from a form of scientific, instrumental rationality to a form of reason based on consensual discussion.1 Alexander (2000) argues that there are many forms of rationality – communicative, instrumental, strategic, and so on – and that the real question is appropriately matching the form of rationality to the planning circumstance. This paper takes a different approach, anticipating a paradigm shift that will radically change the basis of knowing and the process for making transportation planning decisions. Kuhn (1970) explains that such shifts only occur when contradictions in the predominant paradigm become great and a new, more useful paradigm is compelling. The reader is invited to consider his or her own practice to conclude whether the preconditions for a paradigm shift in transportation planning are present and whether communicative rationality will be the new transportation planning paradigm. To properly explore these questions, the transportation field needs an intense dialogue about planning processes and a willingness to look at how transportation planning really works. This effort has been hampered by the fact that transportation planners and planning theorists generally ignore one another. Communicative rationality has not been reviewed in transportation journals; planning theory research seldom links to transportation planning. Furthermore, theory articles are often presented in language that is difficult to understandand disconnected from practice. In taking up these questions, therefore, I am seeking to foster a conversation between transportation planners and planning theorists, one that will improve the quality of transportation planning and add rigor to planning theory.

### Competitiveness Flawed

#### Competitiveness discourse is methodologically bankrupt – equating nation-states with firms undermines economic policy.

James **WILSON** Basque Inst. of Competitiveness **‘8** “Territorial Competitiveness and Development Policy” http://www.tips.org.za/files/Wilson\_James\_Paper.pdf p. 7-9

Use of the concept of competitiveness in economic policy circles has subsequently seen an explosion, with Porter’s framework developed with respect to smaller geographical units of analysis, including cities and regions (Porter, 1995, 2003). Moreover, given its origins, the popularity of the discourse of competitiveness has encouraged a stress on direct rivalry between territories in economic development processes (Malecki, 2004). Thus Fagerberg (1996, 48, emphasis added) suggests that “a consensus definition of international competitiveness might perhaps be that it reflects the ability of a country to secure a high standard of living for its citizens, relative to the citizens of other countries, now and in the future.” Furthermore, Bristow (2005: 287) argues that “along with other prominent commentators such as Robert Reich and Lester Thurow, Porter has made a powerful contribution to the sedimentation of the idea that places are equivalent to corporations, competing for market share within an increasingly interconnected and fiercely competitive global economy”. More generally such a perspective has strong links with aspects of the debate surrounding the changing role of the State as processes of globalisation have accelerated (Radice, 2000; Sugden and Wilson, 2005). Authors such as Ohmae (1995), Storper (1997) and Scott (1998), for example, have been influential in emphasising regions as basic economic units in an increasingly globalised world, and trends in globalisation have helped fuel a burgeoning literature in regional studies.10 Within these debates the concept of territorial competitiveness continues to play a pivotal, though contested, role. While analysis of territorial competitiveness has proved extremely attractive for many policy analysts and practitioners, reflected for example in wide adoption of the terminology and core principles of Porter’s approach, it has raised concerns in different parts of the academic literature. In general the variability in quality of analyses is noted: “serious analyses as well as ideological tracts, low-level business school reports, banal data churning, applications of impressive but vacuous formulae, and straightforward ‘bashing-the-foreigner’” (Lall, 2001a: 2). More specifically, criticism has been aimed directly at Porter’s framework and its impacts on policy. Davies and Ellis (2000), for example, review various critiques in identifying a series of specific weaknesses and suggest that “policy-makers are left with a ‘laundry list’ on which to base simple SWOT-type analyses of their economies, but there is no reliable guide to policy”. Reflective of the distance between the economics and business literatures, Lall (2001a: 5) makes a more general point on business school approaches that transpose corporate strategy to the national level: “they often describe what they regard as the (sensible) constituent elements of competitive success (innovation, skills, clusters) without grounding it in theories of markets, market failures and the ability of government to overcome these failures.” Finally, the use of a concept of competitiveness itself has been attacked, criticisms ranging from it being ‘ambiguous’ due to lack of rigorous definition in the early economics literature (Siggel, 2006), to it being fundamentally ‘misguided and damaging’ (Krugman, 1994). Krugman’s (1994, 1996, 1998) damning dismissal has been particularly widely cited. However, his strongly-worded call to recognise that “the obsession with competitiveness is both wrong and dangerous” (1994: 44) has neither stemmed the flow of analysis nor put an end to the controversy over its meaning and use. Schoenberger (1998: 3) has since argued that competitiveness has “become truly hegemonic in the Gramscian sense.” In line with some of Krugman’s concerns over the misuse of the concept, she questions whether we can be “sure that the desired objectivity of our research is not subtly undermined by our reliance on a language and a discourse that is not entirely of our own choosing and, arguably, is a language and a discourse that represents the interests of particular social groups and not others?” (ibid.: 13). Such apprehension is echoed by Bristow (2005) in a consideration of regional competitiveness. In particular, she argues that “policy acceptance of the existence and importance of regional competitiveness and its measurement appears to have run ahead of a number of fundamental theoretical and empirical questions” (286). Thus, our theoretical understanding of what is meant by competitiveness at a regional scale lags behind its emergence as a “discrete and important policy goal” and the associated proliferation of “indicators by which policy-makers and practitioners can measure, analyse and compare relative competitive performance” (ibid.: 286).11 Much of the unease stems from a questioning of the validity of extending, or aggregating, a firm-based concept to the level of a territory. Krugman (1994: 31), for example, argues: “When we say that a corporation is uncompetitive, we mean that its market position is unsustainable - that unless it improves its performance, it will cease to exist. Countries, on the other hand, do not go out of business. They may be happy or unhappy with their economic performance, but they have no well-defined bottom line. As a result, the concept of national competitiveness is elusive.” Thus the application of the language of the market is deemed inappropriate to analysing nations and regions in their whole. Nations and regions exist in a system of relations that includes markets, but in which market success alone does not determine their continued existence or extinction.

#### Competitiveness discourse is counterproductive. Economic and technological benefits of growth are best when shared.

Konstantin **KAKAES** Schwartz Fellow @ New America Foundation **‘12**

http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future\_tense/2012/01/u\_s\_scientists\_are\_not\_competing\_with\_china\_or\_any\_other\_country\_.html

The extremely complicated interactions between countries—goods, people, culture, and ideas all flowing back and forth—are not akin to a sporting competition. To pretend that we are all engaged in a giant worldwide track meet for economic domination serves the interest of business above individuals. To pretend that there is a field event for technological domination actually hurts American business by imposing futile regulations on technology exports. This deeply entrenched misunderstanding about the nature of technological innovation leads to unnecessary tax breaks and prioritizes trendy metrics of performance (where putative relative success can be measured) over the fundamentals necessary to shaping a better society. By thinking we are racing with China, or Europe, we will end up worse off. The case that we are in competition is often linked to the claim that the United States is somehow “falling behind.” A July report by the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation that ranked countries on the basis of how “innovative” they are typifies this perspective: “It is worth reiterating that in 2000 the United States ranked first, a position it likely held for the majority of the post-war period, but in a decade it has fallen to fourth. At this rate, where will the United States rank at the end of the next decade?” The United States was “behind” Singapore, Finland, and Sweden. Comparing a country of 300 million people with a city-state and a couple of Nordic countries whose combined population is less than that of Los Angeles doesn’t mean much. But it lets ITIF sound the trumpets of alarm and claim that drastic action is needed. On the surface, there is a sort of international competition over jobs. Commerce Department data show that U.S.-based multinationals cut 2.9 million domestic jobs during the first decade of the century and added 2.4 million jobs abroad. But look more closely, as in a November report from the Commerce Department, and you’ll see that of those new jobs abroad, only 8.9 percent involved sales to U.S customers—the overwhelming number of new jobs abroad were related to economic growth abroad. It looks like jobs “moved” from the U.S. to other countries, since the numbers are about the same size. But the truth is that jobs were lost in the U.S. for many reasons: technological change, corporate consolidation, and a sluggish economy. The jobs that were created abroad are, by and large, different jobs than the jobs lost in the United States. As Paul Krugman wrote in an essay for Foreign Affairs in 1994, “it is simply not the case that the world's leading nations are to any important degree in economic competition with each other, or that any of their major economic problems can be attributed to failures to compete on world markets.” It’s easy to blame today’s bleak economic outlook on a failure to compete. But doing so is just finding a scapegoat for domestic shortcomings. The bible of the competitiveness crowd is a National Academy of Sciences report called Rising Above the Gathering Storm. (In terms of melodramatic white paper titles, the United States is surely a world leader. The report was first issued in 2005; a 2010 revision was subtitled: Rapidly Approaching Category 5.) The 2010 report notes, “30 years ago the United States had 30 percent of the world’s college students. Today we are at 14 percent and falling.” This is cited as evidence of a decline in American competitiveness. But that’s like saying the United States has a smaller percentage of the world’s well-nourished people than it did 30 years ago. It is good for people around the world to go to college and be well-fed. Neither takes anything away from the United States. The competition rhetoric is almost always linked with calls for increased investment in research. But as Argentino Pessoa of the University of Porto, among others, has pointed out, there is a slight negative correlation between R&D intensity and GDP growth—in other words, spending more on research doesn’t necessarily make you richer. Amar Bhide, in his book The Venturesome Economy, cites the example of Norway, which isn’t even in the top 20 countries ranked by share of scientific papers published, but has the highest labor productivity in the world. Knowledge—of which technology is a kind—gets shared widely. A Dec. 7 New York Times article called “China Scrambles for High Tech Dominance” gets it exactly wrong. “If the future of the Internet is already in China, is the future of computing there as well?” The future of the Internet isn’t in China any more than the present of the Internet is in the U.S. Technonationalists (as Bhide calls the competitiveness caucus) like to trumpet the fact that Google is an American company. But the benefits of quartering Google’s corporate headquarters are dwarfed by the benefits of using Google (and its peers, like Baidu, a Chinese search engine) and other revolutionary technologies. And those benefits get spread widely. The Internet, for example, was invented in the United States—but that does not mean we get the most benefit from it. Indisputably, more scientific research is going on in China today than 30 years ago. But let’s do a simple thought experiment. Imagine that someone in a lab in China cured cancer tomorrow. Technology spreads quickly—that cancer cure would be applied in the United States (and throughout the world) with tremendous benefit for human welfare. In no way would we be worse off. Sure, a Chinese pharmaceutical company would make money. But so would the pharmacist who sold the drug in the United States and the doctor who prescribed it. American researchers would build on the Chinese discovery. American workers would be more productive, and American families would have their sarcoma-ridden loved ones futures restored to them. The money made by the notional Chinese pharmaceutical firm is inconsequential compared with the worldwide effect of the miracle cure. Let’s consider the example of penicillin, discovered in England by Alexander Fleming. Louis Pasteur did important preliminary work in France. It was in the United States that industrial production (and therefore the ability to benefit large numbers of people) was made possible. Sure, “the Internet” was invented in the United States, but the World Wide Web (click here for the difference) was invented 20 years ago in Switzerland by an Englishman. The computer I’m working on was made in China. Which country gets the credit when I go to Slate.com? Companies do compete with one another over particular implementations of technologies. But if a Japanese company sells an American an awesome photocopier, both are better off. The Gathering Storm report claims “even weeks can matter in the race to be first; hence the job-creating value of research is highly perishable.” This is hokum. Tons of things matter when it comes to who sells more photocopiers, or cameras, or assembly-line robots, or music players. In the next sentence, the report gives the example of the iPod—a phenomenally successful consumer product, which came to market years after the first MP3 players, undermining the very point the authors were trying to make. The competition between Apple and other manufacturers of MP3 players has nothing to do with which country’s researchers find the basic principles behind digitally encoding music. Even military technologies that governments strive to keep secret spread quickly. Russia got the atomic bomb within a few years of the United States, as did Britain, France, and China. The Russians made a copy (the Tu-4) within years of the American B-29’s debut. When an American drone crashed in Iran recently, there was much handwringing about the Iranians using the fallen model to create similar technology. But it would be more remarkable if Iran never got its hands on a drone. Whenever a technology becomes useful, whether to the military or to a teenager, it becomes more widely used. When it becomes widely used, a copy is likely to fall into the hands of an adversary, thus spreading the technology. This isn’t to say that the plans for the newest stealth drone system need to be made open source. It’s reasonable for a country to try and keep some secrets, just as companies try to keep proprietary information under wraps. But we shouldn’t be shocked when these attempts fail—it was in their nature to fail. Advertisement Attempts to limit the spread of technology, like ITAR—the U.S. framework for controlling the export of militarily sensitive technology—never work very well. Being overzealous in their enforcement on the basis of a supposed technological competition just creates a bureaucratic quagmire, without actually securing any military advantage to speak of. If we find ourselves at war with China, we can worry about the question of tactical advantage. (The efforts to counter roadside bombs in Iraq and Afghanistan are a good example of actual technological competition in the narrow sense in which it does take place: not between Iraq and the U.S. as countries, but between the insurgent who wants to explode a roadside bomb and the soldier who wants to prevent it from going off.) Regulations based in the wrongheaded belief in technological competition, like ITAR, hurt American businesses that are trying to export technologies that fall under ITAR’s umbrella (at one point, the export of computers with Pentium chips were banned). But other businesses stand to get boondoggle tax breaks and subsidies in the name of competition. A June Commerce Department report calls for tax breaks to help America compete, arguing that it will spur innovation. (The report called for a five-year vacation from capital gains tax for small business and three years of zero corporate income tax.) If you are ranking countries based on who gives start-ups the most freebies, more tax breaks will always improve your ranking. But will they actually help spur economic growth or innovation? New ideas are a good thing, but trying to come up with more of them than someone else by throwing money at the problem won’t work. As a 1998 paper by Austan Goolsbee noted, sudden increases in R&D spending tend to just raise salaries for researchers, rather than lead to more research. The same can be said of broad-based tax breaks; investors will make more money, but they won’t necessarily be any more innovative. Competition rhetoric can be used to incite hysteria—“We are falling behind!”—and to inspire pride—“We’re number one!” Weirdly, the competitiveness crowd often argues both of these at the same time: We are the greatest country on earth even as our schools are failing. This contradiction can only be resolved by realizing that these rankings were meaningless to begin with. We don’t need to run twice as fast, or rise above any storms, or worry if people in Germany or Japan or China live better than they used to. We shouldn’t worry about American technology spreading to our rivals. Television spread quickly throughout the world; so did the computer, the railway, antibiotics, the car, the automatic washing machine, and any other useful technology you care to name. If this diffusion takes place faster today than it used to (witness the rapid adoption of mobile phones around the world), this is a good thing. It doesn’t hurt America’s ability to “compete” because, as an empirical fact, the economic importance of cooperation trumps that of competition on a national scale. This is bad news for jingoistic politicians and business leaders, but good news for everyone else

### **AT: Growth/Econ Turns**

#### Our alternative is a pre-requisite to *democratic* economic frame that incorporates more than bare growth and income.

James **WILSON** Basque Inst. of Competitiveness **‘8** “Territorial Competitiveness and Development Policy” http://www.tips.org.za/files/Wilson\_James\_Paper.pdf p. 12-14

Thus while it is increasingly apparent that regions are in direct competition with similarly placed regions in certain respects – the attraction of a specific firm, group of firms or event, the attraction of certain types of labour - it is dangerous to assume that a process of win-lose competition is the dominant characteristic of the relationship between regions. There are indeed significant risks in overuse of competitive benchmarking, including the tendency to copy and replicate. This may harm the capacity of territories to develop their own strategies and value propositions, which provide a basis for suitable co-operation. Used carefully, however, the language of competitiveness can potentially be targeted to stimulate positive processes of interaction, action and reflection among socio-economic agents. This becomes especially productive when the concept can be directly related to the objectives of those agents, an argument which brings us to the second and third issues identified above. Productivity-centred approaches to competitiveness make an implicit assumption that the overriding economic development objective of a territory is to increase output, thus income. This assumption has come to dominate discourse on competitiveness, just as it dominates analysis of economic development (Sugden and Wilson, 2002), as epitomised by the approach of the World Bank. Their World Development Report presents a detailed array of statistics but makes it clear that “the main criterion used…to classify economies and broadly distinguish stages of economic development is GNP per capita” (World Bank, 1999, p. 227).16 Almost forty years ago, Seers (1969, 1972: 21-22) questioned such narrowness, arguing that given “that the complexity of development problems is becoming increasingly obvious, this continued addiction to the use of a single aggregative indicator … begins to look like a preference for avoiding the real problems of development.” However, the addiction has persisted, and there is a sense in which the ‘territorial competitiveness’ has simply reframed an old debate in new language. Indeed, there are strong parallels between the process for ranking ‘development’ in the World Development Report and those employed to rank ‘competitiveness’ by the World Economic Forum (2007) and the International Institute for Management Development (2007). Each incorporates a wide range of indicators, but maintains a fundamental focus on the objective of income growth in their methodologies for producing the headline ranking. The economic development literature is characterised by considerable debate around the appropriateness of this assumption, as reflected in long-standing critique of the Washington policy consensus and structural adjustment programmes that have been premised on market-driven growth above all else (Cornea et al., 1987; Dasgupta, 1998; Collier and Gunning, 1999; Stiglitz, 2002; Sugden and Wilson, 2002). While income growth is often argued to be a logical, easily measurable outcome, there is a strong current of analysis that questions whether it is an appropriate proxy for the desired objectives of a society. This concern has heightened in recent years, in particular given increasing recognition of the significance of environmental sustainability (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987; Ekins, 2000; Stern, 2006) and acknowledgement of the complexity of relationships between income and other dimensions of socio-economic progress (Easterlin, 1974, 2001; Oswald, 1997; Frey and Stutzer, 2002; Layard, 2006; Di Tella and MacCulloch, 2008). Unsurprisingly, therefore, similar concerns regarding the pitfalls of an income-driven, market analysis have also arisen in response to the growing use of the competitiveness concept in policy circles. For example, in critiquing the market- and income- focus of the UK Government (1994) in analysing competitiveness, Pitelis et al. (1996: 160) argue that the approach is ‘‘vague’’ and‘‘unnecessarily restrictive”. They question the need to focus exclusively on success under “free market conditions” and to narrowly specify “real incomes as the objective’’ (ibid.: 160). Rather, Pitelis (1994, 2003) has consistently argued that competitiveness should be defined more broadly as the ability of a country to improve on a subjectively defined welfare index, relative to other countries. This is related to the approach taken by Aiginger (1998, 2006), who suggests that a defining of competitiveness as the “ability to create welfare” will accelerate the alleviation of current “misunderstandings and vagueness connected with the term” (2006: 174). More specifically, he suggests a need to assess both: ‘outcome competitiveness’, in terms of a welfare function taking in a variety of considerations that can be operationalised; and ‘process competitiveness’, in terms of place-specific analysis of qualitative factors inside the ‘black box’ of an economy (ibid.).17 Branston et al. (2006) go further in their analysis of health industry competitiveness. They argue that welfare-based analyses such as those proposed by Pitelis (1994, 2003) and Aiginger (1998, 2006), while an improvement on the narrowness of income-based analyses, remain fundamentally flawed in that they fall short of addressing how the chosen objectives of the welfare function are arrived at. It is suggested that “more focused is a perspective that sees competitiveness in terms of the democratically determined objectives for development in a specific locality. Then, to be competitive is to satisfy those objectives effectively as compared to other localities” (Branston et al., 2006: 309). They acknowledge that this is considerably more difficult to operationalise, but also argue that to construct a concept of competitiveness without endogenising democratic processes for the determination of desired outcomes “would be to seek ‘scientific’ convenience at the expense of recognising what is most fundamental to people’s economic development” (ibid., 309).18

### 2NC - Alternative

#### We should question the form of knowledge production that makes competitiveness appear natural and necessary.

Erica **SCHOENBERGER** Geography and Envt’l Engineering @ Johns Hopkins **’98** “Discourse and practice in human geography” *Progress in Human Geography* 22 (1) p. 6

The relationship between discourse and material reality/action is mediated by the social power of the discursive agent. The social resources deployed in validating the discourse on competitiveness are really quite impressive. But they can be deployed with great economy or remain entirely latent because of the way the discourse has been successfully naturalized. The beauty of it is that, once the conversation moves on to this terrain, we more or less automatically fall silent of our own accord. This may be a particular instance of Foucault's notion of disciplinary individualism, in which the essence of freedom is voluntary compliance with the rules ± in this case, the established order of a particular discipline (Foucault, 1995; cf. Poovey, 1995). Once the word is uttered, its disciplinary force is made manifest. This isn't meant to imply that we unavoidably end up by simply parroting the economists and business persons. But it does suggest that we may be subtly deflected from certain kinds of questions or challenges to the discourse and the practices associated with it, whether this is in an academic setting or a more general public arena. This rather simple observation has, I want to stress, real consequences for academics and nonacademics alike. For academics, the substance of our questions and challenges is our stock in trade. We get research funds on the basis of them and write articles which will anchor our careers, allowing us to ask new questions to get more funding and so on. Meanwhile we are contributing to the collective construction of a body of knowledge ± an interpretive structure ± which shapes a more general understanding of the world. We make and validate ourselves through our discourse. The silencing and deflecting effect of the discourse on competitiveness can also be seen in various forms of public discourse about any number of issues: the environment, welfare reform, healthcare reform and, more obviously, the competitiveness of the national economy. Again, when all goes well, no specific exercise of overt power has to be undertaken. The disciplining effect of the discourse has been naturalized and internalized, so it is effective even with people whose interests are plainly not served by it. It also makes it all the more remarkable when some undisciplined groups of people do, in the end, fight back.

#### We should use transportation planning debates to shape values – not privilege economic efficiency.

Stephen **WHEELER** Landscape Architecture **‘1** “Technology and Planning: A Note of Caution” *Berkeley Planning Journal* 15 (1) p. 87-89

Technology has played an equally large but far less examined role in the planning profession itself, particularly in encouraging the growth of a detached, scientific mindset, in reinforcing a view of the planner and academic as objective expert, and in promoting the supremacy of social science and economic methods over design and advocacy. The spread of the automobile in the 1920s led not just to new forms of suburbanization, but to new priorities and methods in planning. Roadbuilders and engineers, epitomized by Robert Moses in New York, came to dominate many urban bureaucracies. The emerging planning profession adopted quantitative analysis as a way to establish its niche, in contrast to the aesthetically oriented approach of architects, landscape architects, and others involved in the City Beautiful movement, or the humanistic orientation of lay authors such as Mumford. As planners such as Harland Bartholomew formed consulting firms they relied on tabulation of housing, demographic, circulation data as the basis for recommendations on new infrastructure and policies to accommodate the automobile and urban growth in general. Newly established city planning offices did the same to gain legitimacy. Later, the spread of computers beginning in the 1960s reinforced the abstract, quantitative focus of urban economists, social scientists, regional scientists, transportation planners, and many other branches of the profession. New technology went hand-in-hand with a modernist, scientific worldview emphasizing quantitative data and a cautious, expert role for planners. As Walter Isard put it in 1975, “A regional scientist is not an activist planner. ..The typical regional scientist wants to surround himself with research assistants and a computer for a long time in order to collect all the relevant information about the problem, analyze it carefully, try out some hypotheses, and finally reach some conclusions and perhaps recommendations. His findings are then passed on to key decision-makers.” The tendency of technology to reinforce an expert role for planners and distract them from active engagement in real-world problems continues to this day. It is all too easy for planning researchers to closet themselves in a computer lab working on GIS systems, spreadsheets, transportation demand models, input-output tables, or regression analysis, and not to gain skills of actually looking at urban places, understanding the lives of those who live in them, and collaborating with others to bring about change. The technocratic approach of many economists and social scientists within the planning profession amounts to a religion or worldview. Information about the urban world that is irreducible to economic or quantitative values is discounted. Advocacy planning and normative judgment are looked down upon. In contrast, I would argue that there is an ethical responsibility for planners to become leaders in addressing today’s critical urban problems, and to confront the entrenched power of corporations and land developers that have benefited enormously from technology. Meanwhile, reliance on technology and technocratic discourse within the planning profession serves to distance the public from decision-making. Transportation planning is probably the worst culprit, though some economic and environmental analyses are equally complex. Impenetrable computer models, acronyms, and highly technical terminology camouflage decisions that determine the growth patterns of entire metropolitan regions. It has been extraordinarily difficult for the public to know what assumptions are being structured into the models and to develop alternative policy directions in similar technical language and detail. Even if all the assumptions fed into models could be clarified, the process would still be highly complex and difficult for the public to scrutinize. Just as importantly, the role of planners as technicians and scientific experts— rather than advocates and humanists—would remain central to the planning process. Last but not least, technology serves as a magnet for research dollars, and so tends to skew academic planning agendas in certain directions. The amount of money available for transportation research in general, and intelligent transportation systems in particular, is a case in point. Research using GIS also soaks up many available dollars. Meanwhile, qualitative research that doesn’t rely on technological methods is often discounted and unfunded. \*\*\* The message of this brief essay is one of caution. We must watch technology carefully both to make sure that its power does not overwhelm social and environmental values within urban development and to ensure that its concomitant mindsets do not dominate the planning profession itself. I am optimistic that planners in the twenty-first century can do this. We have learned much from the excesses of the past century, in which entrancement with technology and scientific method was a critical part of the now discredited modernist enterprise. But we still need much practice in balancing technical tools with other methods. We still need to be better at stepping out of technocratic roles as planners to take leadership in addressing urban problems. And equally important, we need to limit the extent to which technology reinforces economic power in ways that harm cities, the people in them, and the natural environment.

#### Prioritizing the discursive analysis of infrastructure is crucial for social justice.

Colin **McFARLANE** Geography @ Durham **AND** John **RUTHERFORD** **‘8** “Political Infrastructures: Governing and Experiencing the Fabric of the City” *Int’l Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32.2 p. 364-

Yet traditional accounts of urban politics have too often relegated infrastructures to an apolitical context or backdrop, as not worthy of attention, too hidden from view (physically and/or discursively), and/or as simply the purview of engineers or technocrats (Coutard, 1999). Taken together, the above corpus of literature has begun to problematize these accounts, opening up the ‘black box’ of urban infrastructure to explore the ways in which infrastructures, cities and nation states are produced and transformed together. How this politicization of infrastructure takes shape and with what socio-spatial repercussions in a diversity of urban milieux is the central theme of this symposium. It connects nature (as water and sanitation flows) to capitalist urbanization and the ‘public’ interest (cf. Smith, 1984), revealing specific ways in which the development of infrastructure is tied to the discursive, material and spatial dimensions of the public realm. As well as focusing on specific dimensions of this wide-ranging infrastructure politics, we are concerned with exploring what can be gained from juxtaposing accounts of urban infrastructure in the North and in the South. Developing such a comparative perspective across the North–South divide is perhaps the major outstanding task for the urban infrastructure research community given the important unresolved tensions this work has highlighted — notably the persistent inequalities embedded in network provision—which suggest an urgent need to look beyond the familiar for fresh ideas and lessons, and for the articulation of theory. Echoing recent calls in urban studies for the need to think, learn and draw insight across and between North and South, this symposium modestly offers a further contribution to promoting what Robinson has referred to as ‘a more cosmopolitan approach to urban studies’ (Robinson, 2002: 532).A comparative approach to infrastructure reveals a diversity in terms of how the urban fabric is produced, managed and distributed, and comes to matter in everyday life. In this spirit, we view this symposium as part of a larger project to develop comparative studies of urban infrastructure in order to develop a more globally informed conceptualization of the politics of the urban fabric (Legg and McFarlane, 2008). Urban infrastructure: embedding policies, reinforcing power relations One starting point for tracing the political dimension of infrastructural change is in the shifts in policies and forms of governance that have been evidenced in recent years. Reforms of utility services have now been introduced in most countries and sectors in one form or another, usually with great impacts both on how networks are managed, financed and regulated, and on how populations access services (Lorrain and Stoker, 1997; Curien, 2000). There has been a great deal of work reflecting on global trends of privatization and liberalization by exploring how the contested politics of infrastructure production and management are played out in particular urban contexts (Graham and Marvin, 2001; Bakker, 2004; Lobina and Hall, 2003; Lorrain, 2005; Laurie, 2007). Many writers on urban infrastructure in the South have, for example, critiqued neoliberalinflected World Bank reform policies (see also Kooy and Bakker, 2008, in this issue; McFarlane, 2008a), arguing that global trends are differentially experienced, and take place in different contexts of fragmentation of networked infrastructures in different parts of the world. Related to this, there have been widespread and ongoing transformations in urban governance which have in differing ways reconfigured powers and levels of authority between local, metropolitan and national scales, often with a direct impact upon the planning and management of cities and their infrastructure (Le Galès and Lorrain, 2003; Brenner, 2004). The emergence of city-regions in North America and Western Europe, for example, creates new scales of government through which towns, cities and villages become infrastructurally connected (and disconnected) (Gottdiener and Hutchinson, 2006). More generally, contiguous forms of territorial governance reinforced by universalization of infrastructure provision have been displaced by the rise of a logic of network connectivity which frequently bypasses traditional administrative boundaries and restrains the capacity of local and regional authorities to deliver network services for their territories (Offner and Pumain, 1996; Offner, 2000). In Southern contexts, there are numerous examples, particularly in smaller urban centres of sub-Saharan Africa, of water and sanitation requirements leading to diverse forms of local governance arrangements involving small-scale local private operators (for example, in affermage systems) and/or community associations based on user participation (Solo, 1999; UN-HABITAT, 2006). Infrastructures can be at the core of transformations in wider territorial governance.3 Focusing on urban infrastructure policies (and their discursive and/or material dimensions) is a useful way of approaching the co-evolution of cities and technical networks in a global context. This is rarely enough, however, to analyse the full range of ways in which the constitution of infrastructures inherently materializes and often reinforces existing sets of power relations within urban societies. As John Allen (1997; 2004) has shown, there is a need to focus on how power’s different modalities are variously exercised, how it puts people in place. The articles in this symposium share this desire to uncover and analyse the contingent ways in which the stakes of urban infrastructure motivate particular elite groups to mobilize power over others in order to reach their goals. The exercise of power is present in the construction of water scarcity to strengthen political elites in Sicily (Giglioli and Swyngedouw, 2008, in this issue), in strategic responses to urban shrinking and infrastructure overcapacity in Eastern Germany (Moss, 2008, in this issue), and in the governing of colonial and post-colonial infrastructure to socio-spatially differentiate and ‘discipline’ urban residents of Jakarta and Mumbai (Kooy and Bakker, this issue; McFarlane, 2008b, in this issue). We argue that the development of urban infrastructure is always a highly political process. At a given time in any city, one finds a physical fabric above and below ground being produced, altered, repaired, maintained and demolished by a host of builders, developers, architects, engineers, bulldozers and diggers (Latour and Hermant, 1998; Graham and Thrift, 2007), while in parallel to this the particular shaping, location, financing, use and repercussions of this physical work are continually debated, negotiated and contested through the more discursive and tactical realms of government statements, media reports, formal and informal protests, lawsuits, etc. The articles that follow in this symposium all reveal how processes of fragmentation, inequality and crisis in the urban fabric are produced and contested, and highlight how different infrastructures in different places can become sites of negotiation, tension and struggle between a variety of interest groups (Star, 1999; Barry, 2001). In the next two sections, we contextualize and introduce the articles in relation to wide-ranging debates on colonial and postcolonial infrastructures and on network service provision in contexts of urban fragmentation and fragility. We suggest that what is often at stake here is not simply the provision of infrastructure, but the conceptualization of the city, and the nature of social justice.

### AT No Alternative/Utopian

#### Utopian visions of an alternative economy reinvigorates criticism—they turn us into fatalists.

Chamsy **EL-OJEILI** Sociology @ Victoria (Wellington) **AND** Patrick **HAYDEN** IR @ St. Andrews **‘6** *Critical Theories of Globalization* p. 210-212

Wallerstein's fourth emphasis is intended to accent the revival of a critical utopian dimension, what he calls 'utopistics'. In our view, this last suggestion must be given the kind of serious consideration that the other issues tend to receive. In this regard, while the openness of and excitement generated by the World Social Forum's insistence that 'another world is possible' may be viewed as enough, it is still perhaps seen as less pressing than some other dimensions of the AGM. This insistence in itself, though, is an important utopian moment. We believe that one of the most unfortunate aspects of the period of 'happy globalization' or 'the end of history' was the apparent evacuation from the popular imaginary of any sort of utopian dimension. For some, the demise of utopia was an extremely positive thing because utopias, in this view, are in essence religious and irrational, projecting the possibility of perfect future harmony, transparency, and order, thereby fleeing dangerously from the complex realities of modern life and modern people. The inevitable failure of such unrealistic aims, it is often argued, leads inexorably first to disillusionment then to coercion and totalitarianism. From this perspective, the apparent triumph of liberal modesty about what we can know and do would be viewed as an important victory. For others, the loss of the utopian dimension would be a tragedy, meaning an end to thinking deeply about what makes politics meaningful in human life and a closing down of democracy's potential. Thus, Perry Anderson (2004) laments the general suspension of utopia since the mid-1970s, which has produced a 'remorseless closure of space'. Similarly, Bourdieu (1998) spoke of the spread of a 'banker's fatalism' across the world, and Castoriadis (1997a, 1997b, 2004) was concerned that the postmodern present was threatening to fall back into what he called 'heteronomy'. Castoriadis's argument was that autonomy, the radical political move away from tradition, wherein the social order was viewed as established outside of the activities and imaginations of human beings acting collectively, had appeared twice in history - first with Greek Antiquity and then again in the modern period. This autonomy signified the realization that human beings were collectively responsible for the institutions they had created, with the radical accompanying thought that, therefore, we could collectively take up and transform these institutions again. For this reason autonomy requires the ability to think both in and through the present, to imagine a better future - what Canius (1991: 121) called a 'relative utopia' - that can be realistically constructed from the contradictory conditions of the current global system. Here the utopian impulse remains strong, although shorn of any messianism (found in both Marxist and capitalist ideologies) bent on perfecting the world in an absolute sense, that is, according to a single and final 'blueprint', and thereby ushering in the supposedly inevitable 'end' of history. In both pro- and anti-globalization arguments, there is frequently a desperate sense that the system is moving all by itself, that we can do nothing to alter its inexorable unfolding. Thus, Thomas Friedman (1999) contends that no one is to blame for globalization and its failures, no one can control its dynamic, and therefore we need to submit to its dictates and learn to love it, From a very different ideological pole, Bauman (1999a) notes the widespread sense of globalization's unstoppability, likening our contemporary experience to that of passengers in a plane who discover that the pilot's cabin is empty. Such senses of globalization's self-propelling dynamic are, to our minds, the very opposite of the autonomy Castoriadis speaks of. It means a closing down of the utopian imagination, and this in turn is devastating to democracy, which surely should be precisely about the sort of unlimited and unending critique and questioning that Castoriadis points to as a central modern achievement. This reinvigoration of the utopian dimension means a return to one of the crucial dimensions of critical theory - 'thinking beyond' the politics of the present while acutely aware of the demands and limits that the present places upon us – and the message we wish this book to send: that the utopian heartbeat can and must still be detected in our giobalizing world.

#### No alternative rhetoric destroys genuine political and policy comparison.

Zygmunt **BAUMAN** Sociology @ Leeds ’**99** *In Search of Politics* p. 74-75

The most conspicuous feature of contemporary politics, Cornelius Catoriadis told Daniel Mermet in November 1996, is its insignificance, ‘Politicians are impotent…They no more have a programme. Their purpose is to stay in office.’ Change of governments – of ‘political camps’ even – is no watershed; a ripple at most on the surface of a stream flowing unstoppably, monotonously, with dull determination, in its own direction, pulled by its own momentum. A century ago the ruling political formula of liberalism was a defiant and impudent ideology of the ‘great leap forward’. Nowadays, it is nor more than a self-apology for surrender: ‘This is not the best of imaginable worlds, but the only real one. Besides, all alternatives are worse, must be worse and would be shown to be worse if tried in practice.’ Liberalism today boils down to the simple ‘no alternative’ credo. If you wish to find out what the roots of the growing political apathy are, you may as well look no further. This politics lauds conformity and promotes conformity. And conformity could as well be a do-it-yourself job; does one need politics to conform? Why bother with politicians who, whatever their hue, can promise nothing than more of the same? The art of politics, if it happens to democratic politics, is about dismantling the limits to citizens’ freedom: but it is also about self-limitation: about making citizens’ free to enable them to set, individually and collectively, their own, individual and collective, limits. The second point has been all but lost. All limits are off limits. Any attempt at self-limitation is taken to be the first step on the road leading straight to the gulag, as if there was nothing but the choice between the market’s and the government’s dictatorship over needs – as if there was no room for the citizenship in other form than the consumerist one. It is this form (and only this form) which financial and commodity markets would tolerate. And it is this form which is promoted and cultivated by the governments of the day. The sole grand narrative left in the field is that of (to quote Castoriadis again) the accumulation of junk and more junk. To that accumulation, there must be no limits (that is all limits are seen as anathema and no limits would be tolerated). But it is that accumulation from which the self-limitation has to start, if it is to start at all. But the aversion to self-limitation, generalized conformity and the resulting insignificance of politics have their price – a steep price, as it happens. The price is paid in the currency in which the price of wrong politics is usually paid – that of human sufferings. The sufferings come in many shapes and colours, but they may be traced to the same root. And these sufferings which stem from the malfeasance of politics, but also the kind which are the paramount obstacle to its sanity. The most sinister and painful of contemporary troubles can be best collected under the rubric of Unsicherheit – the German term which blends together experiences which need three English terms – uncertainty, insecurity and unsafety – to be conveyed. The curious thing is that the nature of these troubles is itself a most powerful impediment to collective remedies; people feeling insecure, people wary of what the future might hold in store and fearing for their safety, are not truly free to take the risks which collective action demands. They lack the courage to dare and the time to imagine alternative ways of living together; and they are too preoccupied with tasks they cannot share to think of, let alone to devote their energy to, such tasks as can be undertaken only in common. The extant political institutions, meant to assist them in the fight against insecurity, offer little help. In a fast globalizing world, where a large part of the power, and the most seminal part, is security or certainty. What they can do and what they more often than not are doing something effectively to cure or at least to mitigate insecurity and uncertainty calls for united action, most measures are undertaken under the banner of safety are divisive; they sow mutual suspicion, set people apart, prompt them to sniff enemies and conspirators behind every contention or dissent, and in the end make the loners yet more lonely than before. Worst of all: while such measures come nowhere near hitting at the genuine source of anxiety, they use up all the energy these sources generate – energy which could be put to much more effective use if channeled into the effort of bringing power back into the politically managed public space.

### AT: Perm

#### Competitiveness framing rules out economic agency. The logic of competitiveness precludes alternative forms of economic organization.

Suzanne **BERGERON** Social Sciences @ Michigan (Dearborn) **‘1** “Political Economy Discourses of Globalization and Feminist Politics” *Signs* 26 (4) p. 988-990

An alternative vision of the global economy maintains that national identities still count. This formulation does not necessarily turn on the old Keynesian-Fordist assumptions of national production and consumption, or on national-planning, closed economy models. Indeed, many of those who invoke the nation-state's economic role within the new world order begin by acknowledging the extent to which that role has changed in the past years. Still, a wide variety of observers across the political spectrum believe that the state continues to have power to manage the affairs of the nation within the broader logic of global capitalist processes. Some imagine this role to be limited to supporting and maintaining the nation's competitiveness. For example, Robert Reich (1991) contends that national governments can best contribute to the welfare of their peoples by pursuing a competitiveness-enhancing strategy such as educating the workforce in order to attract and keep high-paying jobs or underwriting research and development to promote innovation within national firms. The national-management approach, however, takes other forms as well. Calls for restrictions on the movement of capital across national borders and for opposition to WTO agreements in the name of protecting national firms and workers also refer to national collective interests and thus to national subjectivities. This approach often portrays states as not only major players themselves but also collectively through regional trading blocs such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Mercosur, and the European Union. Other writers emphasize the role that national governments can play in protecting subordinate groups from the worst aspects of globalization via regulations and safety nets. Still others insist that there is an important role for national policy in maintaining economic stability in an increasingly unstable globalized world economy (e.g., Taylor 1995). In recent years, even the World Bank has occasionally advocated an increased role for the state in managing the worst effects of globalization, on the condition that states practice the "good governance" guidelines set forth by the bank (World Bank 1996b; Wolfensohn 1997).4 These perspectives, unlike the global-imperative view outlined above, construct and deploy collective identities defined by national affiliation to make sense of the political economy of globalization. While the national-management and global-imperative approaches invoke different ideas about the power of global capital, economic subjectivity, and strategies for resistance, theorists do not maintain a distinct boundary regarding the use of one or another of these frameworks. The extent to which the role of the state has been reduced is still a question of debate, contributing to the ambiguity found in the political economy literature on globalization in general as well as in specific texts. Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, for example, argue that a universal global capitalist economy has not yet emerged, but at the same time they are skeptical regarding the state's ability to regulate transnational capital. They suggest a hybrid approach, with "integrated patterns of national and international public policy to cope with global market forces" (1996, 10). As Kayatekin and Ruccio (1998) argue, we need to recognize the similarities as well as the differences between these two major discursive approaches within the political economy literature. While each leads to different conclusions regarding global economic and political integration and in regard to strategies for resistance, they also rely on the same general discourse of globalization, wherein subjectivities are inscribed within the inner logic of globalization. They see the total or partial globalization of the world as determining the global or national actors on the economic stage who, in turn, either match or resist these processes. These discursive practices create a limited space for imagining agency and practices of resistance within the context of global economic restructuring. Their emphasis on the power of institutions such as transnational capitalist firms, international financial institutions, and states causes us to fixate on these entities while relegating others to the margins. The extent to which these discourses are amenable to feminist projects, and whether feminist approaches to the political economy of globalization challenge these accounts and/or contribute to alternative conceptualizations, are the questions to which I now turn.

### AT: Policy Relevance

#### Quantitative methods are inadequate – postivist economic methods can’t account for social context.

Henry Wai-chung **YEUNG** Geography @ University of Singapore **‘3** “Practicing New Economic Geographies: A Methodological Examination” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93 (2) p. 447-448

Choosing the right kind of data required is perhaps the most crucial moment in any methodological framework. Much of neoclassical economic geography originates from what Barnes (2001b, 546) terms ‘‘epistemological theorizing,’’ which assumes ‘‘that spatial economic phenomena could be expressed in an explicitly abstract, formal, and rationalist vocabulary and directly connected to the empirical world.’’ It has been concerned with explaining the logic behind the spatial patterns and processes of economic activities. This approach is underpinned by a quantitative methodology which, to borrow from Philo (1998a), was and still is about ‘‘the things that count.’’6 Large quantitative datasets about individuals and firms are collected through direct surveys (primary data) or surveys by government and nongovernment agencies (secondary data). Data about firms and regions can also be collected through transactional records and other cumulative means of data bookkeeping. These data are processed through inferential statistics to test the statistical significance of predefined hypotheses and/or models. Valid findings are then generalized into theories and laws for predictive—and in some instances social engineering—purposes. As the researcher is quite isolated from the researched, this process is deemed highly neutral and objective, and is therefore awarded the esteemed status of being ‘‘scientific.’’ The fundamental assumption of this positivist methodology is that the economic system under observation is ‘‘closed’’ and economic processes are empirically observable. A ‘‘closed’’ economic system implies that the causality of empirically observable outcomes can be identified and measured, and no external influence on this causality can be found. This methodology seems to achieve strong reliability, because repeated observations of causality can be made and should generate the same results (see Table 1). It is also deemed valid because the research instrument (e.g., survey) can measure what it is supposed to measure (e.g., employment characteristics). Quantitative methods and data, however, are much less concerned with reflexivity, to the extent that it is regarded by most neoclassical economic geographers as irrelevant to their practice of modeling the geographical world constituted by measurable objects rather than social actors. If economic systems are much more open and subject to multiple codetermination by different social actors, as is argued in new economic geographies, the reliance on primary or secondary quantitative data becomes questionable (see Table 1). One begins to question both the weak validity and the weak reflexivity of using these quantitative data to explain economic behavior of social actors. Since quantitative data are not sensitive to variations in experiences at the individual social actor level, they are not necessarily valid measurement of the rationale and behavior of these social actors. If we take the economic action of these actors as socially embedded and highly contextualized, the validity of quantitative data is even more questionable, since indicators of economic action may not be compatible with the goal of measuring social and cultural behavior. Even though some actor behavior can be codified and quantified via behavioral models and/or psychological tests, these quantitative data are still unable to capture adequately differential experiences and contexts associated with actor behavior. For example, some studies in new economic geographies have not found validity in quantifying the pluralistic identities of gender and ethnic relations (McDowell 1992; Lawson 1995; Yeung 1997a). Quantitative data, whether in their primary or secondary genres, are neither necessary nor always appropriate in generating valid and reflexive explanations of social actors in new economic geographies.

#### Genealogical and discursive methods produce useful and realiable evidence for understanding economic phenomena.

Henry Wai-chung **YEUNG** Geography @ University of Singapore **‘3** “Practicing New Economic Geographies: A Methodological Examination” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93 (2) p. 448-449

Second, other forms of data obtained beyond stylized facts and close dialogue may be as reliable as quantitative data. New economic geographers study not only the nexus between the economic and other spheres of social life, but also the discursive context in which knowledge of this nexus is created. In other words, the spatial effects of discourses and power relations embedded in a dominant form of capitalism can be among the substantive issues in new economic geographies (e.g., Clark andWojcik 2001; Kelly 2001; Bunnell 2002; Coe and Kelly 2002). This line of inquiry requires genealogical research that ‘‘becomes the reconstruction of trajectories of discourses and practices which produced a unified capitalism’’ (Walters 1999, 321). Much of the data for genealogical research and the related discourse analysis originate from key writers, proponents, politicians, and other advocates of a particular hegemonic discourse. Information about the power structure of knowledge creation and reproduction— that is, the situatedness of knowledge and the researcher’s reflexivity—is also necessary in this project (Pile 1991;Keith 1992; Thrift 1996; Rose 1997; Cochrane 1998; Hammersley 1999). All these data and information may be reliably obtained from existing intellectual and popular publications, public speeches, and policy statements. Even the Internet and abstract databases may be a useful source of data for discourse analysis in new economic geographies (see Pritchard 1999; Chapman and Edmond 2001). These kinds of data may be ‘‘unconventional’’ in much of economic geography, but they may enable new economic geographers to be more reflexive, and they promise to unravel the underlying power structures and social relations in the (re)production of our geographical knowledge.

### Impact Ext.

#### Competitiveness constructs space according to authoritarian neoliberal logic.

Eric **SHEPPARD** Geography @ Minnesota **‘2** “The Spaces and Times of Globalization:

Place, Scale, Networks, and Positionality” *Economic Geography* 78 (3) p. 313-314

Most often discussed, of course, is the rising importance of the global scale. Yet the argument developed by scale theorists is more complex. Observers of transnational corporations, typically seen as the vanguard of globalization, have concluded that their global reach has not resulted in a loss of either national identity or attachment to localities (cf. Ruigrok and van Tulder 1995). Instead, transnational corporations engage in a strategy of global localization, whereby global competitiveness is rooted in close relationships with particular localities, including headquarter locations, low-cost production sites, industrial districts, and demand nodes (Mair 1997). Since Fordism, nation-states have also actively participated in supranational organizations and agreements (harmonizing market regulation and dismantling national barriers to commodity and capital flows), while simultaneously promoting their own local, particularly metropolitan, economies as vital to national economic competitiveness and as responsible for their own success or failure (Jessop 2001). Thus, political and economic processes are both globalizing and localizing— dubbed glocalization by Swyngedouw (1997b). As Brenner (1999, 52–3) put it: the contemporary round of globalization has radically reconfigured the scalar organization of territorialization processes under capitalism, relativizing the significance of the national scale while simultaneously intensifying the role of both sub- and supra-national forms of territorial organization. . . . Processes of territorialization remain endemic to capitalism, but today they are jumping at once above, below, and around the national scale upon which they had converged throughout much of the last century. Brenner insisted that the result is not a zerosum game, in which local-scale processes are gaining at the expense of national-scale processes, arguing that nation-states are active participants in (rather than victims of) globalization. Nation-states encourage localization, and metropolitan economies still depend on nation-states to champion them and their products in global markets. State territorial power no longer maps neatly into the boundaries of the nation-state. “The globalization of urbanization and the glocalization of state territorial power are two deeply intertwined moments of a single process of global restructuring . . . since the early 1970s. . . . From this point of view, globalization must be understood as a rescaling of global social space, not the subjection of localities to the deterritorializing, placeless dynamics of the ‘space of flows’” (Brenner 1998, 27). In this view, phase shifts in the dynamics of global capitalism are seen as precipitating scalar shifts in its territorial organization. Jessop (1999, 35) offered a somewhat different analysis, placing more emphasis on the conflicts with the national state that result from cities orienting themselves beyond the national space, a process he called glurbanization. Both Swyngedouw and Brenner see the spatial dynamics of capitalism as the central driving force in this rescaling, reworking a Marxian analysis of the production of space through the lens of scale. Whereas Brenner is more concerned with the economics of this process, Swyngedouw (1997a, 173, 176) argued that the politics of scale is also crucial to these shifts and to challenging antidemocratic tendencies associated with them: [T]he “glocalization” or rescaling of institutional forms leads to more autocratic, undemocratic and authoritarian (quasi-)state apparatuses. . . . These new institutional forms are riven with all manner of conflict and tension. First, this . . . is highly contested, particularly by those who become marginalized in or excluded from these new institutions. Second, the new alliances . . . accentuate the need from the part of boosters to try and create a new hegemony of vision. . . . The politics of scale are surely messy, but ought to take center-stage in any successful emancipatory political strategy. Helga Leitner (1997, 125) emphasized that the politics of scale is not just driven by economic dynamics, but is politically constructed, using the term construction of scale to bring attention to political structures and to the importance of agency in the politics of scale (Leitner forthcoming). Sallie Marston (forthcoming) adds an important third element—social reproduction and the gendering of scale—although she does not address its implications for globalization.

### Link Ext.

#### Transportation competitiveness relies on unequal and exploitative distribution of mobility.

Neil **BRENNER** Urban Theory @ Harvard Graduate School of Design **AND** Nik **THEODORE** Director of the Center for Urban Economic Development **‘5** Neoliberalism and the urban

Condition” *City* 9 (1) p.105-106

Second, the detailed case studies presented by the authors also provide important insights into the spatial selectivity (see Jones 1997) of neoliberalism as a political strategy. The impacts of the policies highlighted in these papers do not fall uniformly across the urban landscape. Rather, either implicitly or explicitly, these policies have extremely variegated geographical implications insofar as they differentially impact particular locations, places and scales. Gilbert, for example, notes that national immigration policies are now redirecting immigrants away from prosperous cityregions and towards laggard rural zones as a way of reigniting processes of regional development. In so doing, Gilbert argues, immigration policies work to constitute a (more or less) captive labor pool in areas in which employers face severe labor shortages. Likewise, Grengs shows how mass transit policies are increasingly favoring the interests of suburban commuters, while low-income, central-city, mass-transit-dependent residents witness significant cutbacks in transit funding. Siemiatycki, meanwhile, emphasizes the strategic centrality of large-scale investments in urban transportation infrastructure to the establishment of neoliberalized governance arrangements, such as public-private partnerships. In their article, Wekerle and Jackson show how, in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, anti-sprawl initiatives have lost momentum in the United States as deconcentrated settlement patterns are increasingly promoted as a basis for maintaining public safety. At the same time, the authors illustrate a number of ways in which a new “geography of fear” is being consolidated as urban spaces are increasingly militarized through the socalled “War on Terror.” And, finally, Keil and Boudreau analyze the ways in which neoliberalization projects in the Toronto region have entailed a multifaceted rescaling of inherited political geographies. As they indicate, the politics of neoliberalism in Toronto have been articulated in significant measure through efforts to reorganize the geographies of governance within the region as a whole. In light of this, anti-neoliberal social movements have likewise had to create new geographies of resistance through which to oppose the politics of the “competitive city.” Taken together, the contributions underscore the impossibility of equating neoliberal political strategies with any singular spatial strategy or geographical pattern. For, within each national, regional and local context, neoliberalization projects are reorganizing inherited spatial configurations in highly variegated, place- and scale-specific ways. The point, however, is not that spatial organization is a static platform on which the politics of neoliberalism are articulated. Rather, we might read the contributions to this special issue as efforts to decipher the intimate, if contextually specific, linkages between neoliberalization strategies and urban-regional sociospatial restructuring. In other words, spatial organization is at once a foundation, an arena and a mechanism for the mobilization of neoliberal political strategies.

#### Basing transportation on competitiveness produces spatial and economic inequalities.

Joe **GRENGS** Urban and Regional Planning @ Michigan **‘4** “The abandoned social goals of

public transit in the neoliberal city of the USA” *City* 9 (1) p. 52-53

The neoliberal city of the USA is one that must struggle to compete and remain viable in the network of globalizing cities by cutting costs, reducing social welfare, deregulating business activity, privatizing previously public spaces and activities, and engaging in new forms of social control (Marcuse and van Kempen, 2000; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Goonewardena, 2003). This essay examines how the contradictions of the neoliberal city influence mass transit policy in the USA, creating a worsening divide between disparate transit constituencies and undermining longstanding social equity goals. Mass transit is a new space of emerging social conflict over how the contradictions of neoliberalism will be resolved in cities of the USA (Rodriguez, 1999; Grengs, 2002). This new space of conflict holds special relevance for planners, because the neoliberal agenda involves central questions about public services in an increasingly privatized polity, the agenda contributes directly to changing urban spatial patterns, and the emerging spatial patterns raise new questions for planning theory about the role of social justice in cities where racial and economic segregation are worsening. Contradictions within neoliberal urbanization highlight an obscure but crucial predicament faced by transit planners. Are current transit policies hurting social equity? Should public transit serve an even higher purpose, as an instrument for advancing social justice? Transit once held promise as a means for advancing larger social goals. Congress embraced transit as a legitimate means of redistributing wealth, as an acceptable counterbalance to the damages imposed by a transportation system skewed toward the automobile (Fitch, 1964; Smerk, 1991; Weiner, 1999). Despite a commitment to social goals over several decades aimed at providing mobility for people who cannot drive, other goals have taken over in prominence. But transit policy is slowly, almost imperceptibly, shifting away from its broader social purposes. This shift away from meeting social goals toward the more narrow purpose of relieving traffic congestion, from achieving equity toward merely efficiency, is now influenced by a neoliberal political agenda that separates the social from the economic, causing planners to lose sight of the public purpose of mass transit. In an emerging world order where capitalism spreads American-style to all corners of the globe, three major problems are widely recognized by critics from left to right: a continuous threat of war; persistent economic inequality that threatens to disrupt the social order; and a loss of political community that undermines our ability to address day-to-day problems and decisions (Goonewardena, 2003). By way of analysing transportation policy, I will set aside the question of war even though we grow ever more dependent on oil to feed our bigger and faster cars. The recent headlines about surging gasoline prices and the ongoing wars in the Middle East add up to a compelling case that our highway-dependent lifestyles have as much to do with the threat of war as perhaps any other explanation. But here I focus on the two problems of social inequality and the loss of political community because they both bear on future outcomes of mass transit policy. The argument proceeds in three steps. First, government support for mass transit has long carried with it explicit social goals. The US federal government took decisive steps starting in the 1960s to advance mass transit. These congressional actions strengthened transit as a counterbalance to previous federal programmes that had overwhelmingly supported highway construction as the principal thrust of transport policy, and had inadvertently contributed to urban spatial patterns that put some people without access to a car at a serious disadvantage. Second, the social purpose of public transit is becoming supplanted by the economic imperative of efficiency and competitiveness. Gains in shifting commuters from cars to transit may actually undermine the goal of providing transit for those without cars, so that the social goal of providing mobility becomes displaced by the economic goal of reducing congestion. The third part of the argument explains how recent changes in transportation policy are influenced by a neoliberal political agenda, heightening the conflict between transit’s competing goals in ways that are not readily evident. To the casual observer, support for transit is growing. But national policy has at the same time encouraged a shift in emphasis within the transit programme, a shift that is likely to harm those who depend most on good transit.

# Aff – Competitiveness K

#### Kritik isn’t prior – economic realities and effects can’t be reduced to discourse.

Allen **SCOTT** Urban Planning @ UCLA **‘6** in *Economic Geography: Past Present and Future* eds. Sharmistha Bagchi-Sen and Helen Smith p.66-68

These brief remarks, schematic as they may be, already underline the obvious and pressing need for economic geographers to pay close attention to the ways in which culture and economy intersect with one another in mutually constitutive ways. The urgency of this need is reinforced by the observation that the economic and the cultural come together with special intensity in place (Shields 1999), and that many of the key agglomerations constituting the focal points of the new economy around the world are critically dependent on the complex play of culture. Thus, to an ever-increasing degree, the productive performance of agglomerations like the City of London (Thrift: 1994), Hollywood (Scott 2002a), or Silicon Valley (Saxenian 1994) can only be understood in relation to their joint economic and cultural dynamics. Each of these places is shot through with distinctive traditions, sensibilities, and cultural practices that leave deep imprints on phenomena such as management styles, norms of worker habituation, creative and innovative energies, the design of final outputs, and so on, and these phenomena in turn are strongly implicated in processes of local economic growth and development. In view of the discussion above, it seems fairly safe to say that only a few die-hards and philistines are likely to make strenuous objections to attempts to bring culture more forcefully into the study of economic geography. In spite of the neologisms and cliche-ridden prose that Martin and Sunley (2001) rightly complain about, there is obviously a significant nexus of ideas in a more culturally inflected economic geography that responds in a very genuine way to major problems posed by contemporary capitalist society. Once this point has been made, however, a number of the reforms of economic geography that have been most strenuously advocated under the rubric of the cultural turn are rather less obviously acceptable, and have recently been subject to heated debate by economic geographers (see, for example, Martin and Sunley 2001; Plummer and Sheppard 2001; Rodriguez-Pose 2001; Sayer 1997; Storper 2001). This debate has tended to find its sharpest expression in relation to the curious reluctance by some proponents of the cultural turn to make any concession to the play of economic processes in economic geography except in so far as they are an expression of underlying cultural dynamics. In a number of their more fervent statements, indeed, some of these proponents occasionally verge on an inversion of the classical Marxian conceit to the effect that culture flows uni-causally from the economy, by offering equally exaggerated claims about the influence of culture on the economy. In a statement that displays much enthusiasm about the study of culture and much acrimony in regard to the discipline of economics, Amin and Thrift (2000) essentially recommend withdrawal from economic analysis, as such, and a wholesale re-description of economic realities in terms of cultural points of reference. Thus, in writing about the problem of eventuation they one-sidedly argue that 'acting into the words confirms the discourse and makes a new real' (p. 6), so that in their formulation, the economy becomes nothing more than a series of 'performances' derived from a script. Elsewhere, Thrift: (2001) further proclaims that the new economy of the 1990s was fundamentally a rhetorical phenomenon. The argument here starts off promisingly enough with an examination of the role of the press, business consultants, financial advisors, and the like, in helping to foment the fast-paced, high-risk economic environment of the period, but then it veers into the blunt assertion that the new economy as a whole can be understood simply as a discursive construct. In formulations like these, basic economic realities - the state of technology, the rhythms of capital accumulation and investment, the rate of profit, the flow of circulating capital, and so on - become just so much inert plasma to be written upon this way or that as cultural shifts occur and as revisions of the script are introduced. Certainly, words are a critical moment in the circuit of mediations through which economic reality operates, and there can be no doubt that many unique effects are set in motion at this particular level of analysis. Conversely, and it is puzzling that so trivial and obvious a point should need to be made, there are also deeply-rooted economic logics and dynamics at work in the contemporary space-economy, and at least some of these (such as the dynamics of industrial organization, or the increasing returns eft-ects that lie at the root of industrial districts ), require investigation on their own terms above and beyond invocations of the causal powers of discourse and culture.

#### Alternative can’t solve – economic elites resist change. Changing representations isn’t sufficient.

Allen **SCOTT** Urban Planning @ UCLA **‘6** in *Economic Geography: Past Present and Future* eds. Sharmistha Bagchi-Sen and Helen Smith p. 68-69

In a series of recent writings, Barnes (e.g. 1996, 2001, 2003), has pursued a related line of investigation opened up by the cultural turn. Barnes' work is much influenced by Derrida and Rorty, and is centrally focused on the metaphorical and narratological character of geographical writing. There is actually much of interest in the approach Barnes takes. He has many useful things to say about the ideologies and working habits of economic geographers, as well as about the rhetorical devices that they deploy in their written reports. This helps among other things to keep us focused on the critical idea that our intellectual encounters with the real are always deeply theory-dependent (Sunley 1996). But as the plot thickens - or thins, according to your taste - we steadily lose sight of economic geography as a discipline with concrete substantive concerns (such as regional development or income inequalities), for these simply dissolve away into the primacy of the text and its metaphorical perplexities. I am perfectly prepared to admit that there may be strong elements of metaphor in, for example, a geography of hunger, but I certainly have no sympathy for the idea that hunger is just a metaphor, if only on the ad hominem grounds that it has painful physical manifestations and morbid long-term effects. Here, the legitimate claim that we can only know the world through socially-constructed codes of reference seems to have given way to the sophism that all we can know about the world is the codes themselves. An even more extreme case of the solipsism that haunts much of the cultural turn can be found in the book by Gibson-Graham (1996) about strategic possibilities for progressive social change in contemporary capitalism. The central arguments of the book hinge upon the proposition that the criteria for validating a theory are purely internal to the theory to be validated. As Gibson -Graham writes (p. 60): 'We cannot argue that our theory has more explanatory power or greater proximity to the truth than other theories because there is no common standard which could serve as the instrument of such a metatheoretical validation process'. If this proposition were indeed true it would presumably undermine much of the point in Gibson-Graham proceeding any further in her argument, though she does in fact continue on for another 200-odd pages. In the course of this discussion , the relativism of her main thesis is steadily transformed from a merely academic exercise into a political agenda of sorts. Thus, she announces (p. 260), 'the way to begin to break free of capitalism is to turn its prevalent representations on their heads'. Presto. Not even a hint about a possible transitional program, or a few suggestions about, say, practical reform of the banking system. The claim is presented in all its baldness, without any apparent consciousness that attempts to break free of any given social system are likely to run into the stubborn realities of its indurated social and property relations as they actually exist. More generally, Gibson -Graham's argument leads inexorably beyond the perfectly acceptable notion that all intellectual work is theory dependent and into those murky tracts of idealist philosophy where reality is merely a reflection of theory, and where theory produces social change independently of concrete practice and disciplined attention to the refractory resistances of things as they really are . So, quite apart from its dysfunctional depreciation of the role of economic forces and structural logics in economic geography, the cultural turn also opens a door to a disconcerting strain of philosophical idealism and political volun tarism in modern geography. The net effect is what we might call economistic grand theory in reverse: a remarkable failure to recognize sensible boundaries as to just what precisely a cultural theory of the economy can achieve, and a concomitant over-promotion of the notion that social and economic transformation involves nothing more than the unmediated power of theoretical ideas. Again, nothing in this argument is intended to deny the important continuities and intersections between culture and economy or the significance of the econ omy as a site of cultural practices; neither is it in any sense an attempt to eject the study of cultural economy from geography. The problem is not 'culture' but the cultural turn as it has emerged out of cultural studies with its militant project of reinterpreting all social relations as cultural relations, and its na"ive, if understandable, attempt to humanize the iron cage of capitalist accumulation by unwarranted culturalization of its central economic dynamics (Eagleton 2003; Rojek and Turner 2000).

#### We should privilege policy relevance – improving existing economic realities is more effective than their alternative.

Allen **SCOTT** Urban Planning @ UCLA **‘6** in *Economic Geography: Past Present and Future* eds. Sharmistha Bagchi-Sen and Helen Smith p.70-72

A prospective economic geography capable of dealing with the contemporary world must hew closely, it seems to me, to the following programmatic goals if it is to achieve a powerful purchase on both scientific insight and progressive political strategy. • To begin at the beginning: economic geography needs to work out a theoretical re-description of capitalism as a structure of production and consumption and as an engine of accumulation, taking into account the dramatic changes that have occurred in recent decades in such phenomena as technology, forms of indusuial and corporate organization, financial systems, labor markets, and so on. This theoretical re-description must be sensitive to the generic or quasi -generic forms of capitalist development that occur in difterent times in difterent places, which, in turn , entails attention to the kinds of issues that regulation theorists have identified under the general rubric of regimes of accumulation (Aglietta 1976; Lipietz 1986). A perspective of economic geography 71 • In addition to these economic concerns, we must recognize that contemporary capitalism is intertwined with enormously heterogeneous forms of social and cultural life, and that no one element of this conjoint field is necessarily reducible to tlle other. Directions of causality and influence across this field are a matter of empirical investigation, not of theoretical pre-judgment. Note that in this formulation, class becomes only one possible dimension of social existence out of a multiplicity of other actual and possible dimensions. • This nexus of economic, social, and cultural relationships constitutes a creative field or environment within which complex processes of entrepreneurship, learning, and innovation occur. Geographers have a special interest in deciphering the spatial logic of this field and in demonstrating how it helps to shape locational dynamics. • In combination with these modalities of economic and social reality, we need to reserve a specific analytical and descriptive space for collective action and institutional order at many different levels of spatial and organizational scale (the firm, the local labor market, the region, the nation, etc.), together with a due sense of the political tensions and rivalries that run throughout this sphere of human development. By the same token, a vibrant economic geography will always not only be openly policy-relevant (Markusen 1999), but also politically engaged. A key question in this context is how to build local institutional frameworks that promote both economic success and social justice. • We must recognize that social and economic relations are often extremely durable, and that they have a propensity to become independent in varying degree of the individuals caught up within them. This means that any normative account of social transformation and political strategy, must deal seriously with the idea that there are likely to be stubborn resistances to change rooted in these same relations. The solutions to this problem proposed by sociologists like Bourctieu (1972) and Giddens (1979) suike me as providing reasonable bases for pushing forward in this respect, for they explicitly recognize the inertia of social structures while simultaneously insisting on the integrity of individual human volition. Unfortunately, these solutions (most especially the structure-agency formulation of Giddens) have been much diluted in recent years by reinterpretations that lean increasingly heavily on the agency side of the equation, partly as a reflection of the cultural turn, partly out of a misplaced fear of falling into the pit of determinism.5 Invocations of unmediated agency (or, for that matter, neoclassical utility) as an explanatory variable in social science are often little more than confessions of ignorance, in the sense that when we are unable to account for certain kinds of relationships or events, we are often tempted to faIl back on the reassuring notion that things are thus and so for no other reason than because that's the way we want them to be, irrespective of any underlying structural conditions. • A corollary oftl1e structured organization and sunk costs of social lite is that economic relationships (especially when they are locationally interrelated, as in the case of a regional production system) are likely to be path-dependent. This observation suggests at once that an evolutionary perspective is well suited to capture important elements of the dynamics of the economic landscape (cf. Boschma and Lambooy 1999; Nelson and Winter 1982). It follows that any attempt to describe the economic landscape in terms of instantaneous adjustment and readjustment to a neoclassical optimum optimorum is intrinsically irrelevant. • All of these moments of economic and social reality occur in a world in which geography has not yet been-and cannot yet be-abolished (Leamer and Storper 2001). The dynamics of accumulation shape geographic space, and equally importantly, geographic space shapes the dynamics of accumulation. This means, too, that capitalism is differentiated at varying levels of spatial resolution, from the local to the global, and that sharp difterences occur in forms of life from place to place. Indeed, as globalization now begins to run its course, geographic space becomes more important, not less important, because it presents ever-widening possibilities for finely-grained locational specialization and difterentiation. Critical analysis of these possibilities must be one of modern economic geography's principal concerns. • Finally, I want to enter a plea for methodological variety and openness. One corollary of this plea is that economic geographers need to recover the lost skills of quantitative analysis, not out of some atavistic impulse to reinstate the economic geography of the 1960s, but because of the proven value of these skills in the investigation of economic data. The steady erosion of geographers' capabilities in this regard over the last couple of decades is surely a net loss to the discipline.

#### Competitiveness isn’t illusory – infrastructure strongly affects economic performance.

Ron **MARTIN** Economic Geography @ Cambridge **‘6** in *Economic Geography: Past Present and Future* eds. Sharmistha Bagchi-Sen and Helen Smith p.162-163

However, just as in a Coasian view of the world, where it is the organisation of productive assets in a firm that gives rise to the analysis of the firm as a unit of production, so nations, regions and cities too can be seen as collections of assets, variously organised, so that it is reasonable to think in terms of the competitiveness of that bundle of assets, even if Krugman is right in advocating caution about making analogies between the firm and the nation or region. Furthermore, although most regional units used for policy and analytical purposes are based on political or administrative boundaries that need bear little correspondence to economic relationships, there are certain features about such 'official' regions that do give them some measure of meaning as economic entities. Thus regional authorities often have tax -raising powers and responsibilities for spending on public services, utilities and infrastructure, all of which impact on local firms. Also, as noted above, regional authorities and bodies are becoming increasingly active in other areas of local economic governance, whether as the delivery agents of decentralised national government policies, or as active policy agents in their own right and capacity. It may be that regions are difficult to define as 'essential' economic units, but the fact is that a process of 'regional institutionalisation' of policy intervention and responsibility appears to be underway that is endowing politically and administratively defined regions with some degree of functional economic meaning. It is as part of this institutionalisation process that regional authorities and bodies are busy devising policies to improve and upgrade the competitiveness and productivity of the businesses, workers and organisations in their jurisdictions. If only because of this rise of the region as an arena of economic governance and intervention, and the increasing trend for policymakers to think of regions as the sites of competitive advantage, it is important to appraise the different senses in which the term 'regional competitiveness' is used.

#### Permute – green transport attaches sustainable economy to principles that have broad legitimacy and a chance of success.

John **BARRY** Reader in Politics @ Belfast **‘7** “Towards a model of green political economy: from ecological modernisation to economic security” Int. J. Green Economics, Vol. 1, Nos. 3/4, 2007 p. 460 [**acroynym clarified**-Turner]

Viewed by itself, EM [ecological modernisation] is a reformist and limited strategy for achieving a more sustainable economy and society, and indeed, questions could be legitimately asked as to whether the development of a recognisably ‘green’ political economy for sustainable development can be based on it, I nevertheless contend that there are strategic advantages in seeking to build upon and radicalise EM. While there are various reasons one can give for this, in this conclusion I will focus on two – one normative/principled, the other strategic. From a strategic point of view, it is clear that, as Dryzek *et al.* (2003) have shown, if green and sustainability goals, aims and objectives are to be integrated within state policy, these need to attach themselves to one of the core state imperatives – accumulation/economic growth or legitimacy(Barry, 2003b). It is clear that the discourse on EM allows (some) green objectives to be integrated/translated into a policy language and framework which complements and does not undermine the state’s core imperative of pursuing orthodox economic growth. Therefore, in the absence of a Green Party forming a government or being part of a ruling coalition (or even more unlikely, of one of the main traditional parties initiating policies consistent with a radical understanding of sustainable development), the best that can be hoped for under current political conditions is the ‘greening of growth and capitalism’*i.e.*, EM. On a more principled note, the adoption of EM as a starting pointfor the development of a model/theory of green political economy does carry with it the not inconsiderable benefit of removing the ‘anti-growth’ and ‘limits to growth’ legacy, which has (in my view) held back the theoretical development of a positive, attractive, modern conceptualisation of green political economy and radical conceptualisations of sustainable development. Here, the technological innovation, the role of regulation driving innovation and efficiency, the promise that the transition to a more sustainable economy and society do not necessarily mean completely abandoning currently lifestyles and aspirations – strategically important in generating democratic support for sustainable development, and as indicated above, important if the vision of a green sustainable economy is one that promotes diversity and tolerance in lifestyles and does not demand everyone conform to a putative ‘green’ lifestyle. Equally, this approach does not completely reject the positive role/s of a regulated market within sustainable development. However, it does demand a clear shift towards making the promotion of economic security (and quality of life) central to economic policy. Only when this happens can we say that we have begun the transition to implementing the principles of sustainable development rather than fruitlessly seeking for some ‘greenprint’ of an abstract and utopian vision of the ‘sustainable society’.

#### Competitiveness discourse key to mobilizing resources and political coalitions.

Ron **MARTIN** Economic Geography @ Cambridge **‘6** in *Economic Geography: Past Present and Future* eds. Sharmistha Bagchi-Sen and Helen Smith p.170-171

Similarly, the study of regional competitiveness also opens up opportunities for a greater engagement by geographers with public policy research and debate, of the sort argued for by some commentators (such as Markusen 1999; Martin 2001). As noted above, regional competitiveness policy has tended to rush ahead of theoretical understanding and the evidence base. Economic geographers can make valuable contributions on both fronts. There is a pressing need to constructively interrogate the meaning and nature of 'regional competitiveness', both to provide a fIrmer base for understanding regional differences in economic success and for informing policy discourse. A geographical-theoretic perspective, for example, would not only highlight the importance that place makes to economic organisation and performance, and thus how local context matters even in an increasingly global world, but also - to pick up the argument made by Porter - how the processes influencing competitive advantage operate and interact at various spatial scales. It would also highlight the need to include intraregional (or intra-urban) socio-spatial distributional issues into any defInition and analysis of regional or city competitiveness. Economic geographers are likewise well placed to engage directly with policy discourse, not only because competitiveness policy is itself increasingly regional and city -based, but because such policies are often predicated on an explicit comparative argument, involving direct comparisons between individual regions and cities. Geographical research can help reveal the scope for and limits to this 'benchmarking' and use of 'exemplar' places that seems now to be an essential part of competitiveness policy at national, regional and city levels. Certainly, if done properly, regional benchmarking can help identifY a region's or city'S competitive strengths and weaknesses, and hence form the basis of policy formulation and priorities. It can help mobilise and articulate the interests of the key actors and groups in the regional economy: the local business community, workers, and public and private institutions. And it can help a region's business, political and social communities forge a common sense of purpose in terms of ambitions for the future, and in presenting the region to the global market place, even in lobbying efforts to influence government policies and the allocation of resources. Regional benchmarking can facilitate the development and ongoing review of a vision defIning the region's role in a world economy characterised by a steadily increasing and ever-shifting division of labour. But such benchmarking is fraught With dangers and limitations. What precisely does it mean to compare one city, one region, with another? While it is certainly instructive to examine and learn from successful regions, policymakers should be wary about treating them as exemplars that can be easily replicated or imitated in their own region. Policies rarely travel well: successful strategies developed in one region need not transplant easily into other regions (especially in other countries). Indeed, given that many of the sources of regional competitive advantage are locally based and embedded, policies necessarily have to respond to, and take account of, regionally-specific circumstances. Together with the problems in defining, measuring and explaining regional competitive advantage discussed in this chapter, it follows that there is unlikely to be any 'one size tits all' strategy for enhancing regional competitiveness. Different regions will face different problems, different types of competition, and require somewhat different policy mixes and emphases. Economists prefer universal tendencies and transferable policies: economic geographers have a comparative advantage in recognising and demonstrating the difference that place makes. Whether we like it or not, whether we agree with it or not, competition is an integral feature of economic, political, social and cultural life . It is not simply a neoliberal invention. Economic geographers have an important role to play in elucidating the nature of and limits to the idea of 'regional competitiveness', as a way of thinking about the economic landscape, as an empirical process, and as a form of policy thinking.

### Perm Ext.

#### Permutation is superior – proposing alternative economic narratives does nothing.

John **BARRY** Reader in Politics @ Belfast **‘7** “Towards a model of green political economy: from ecological modernisation to economic security” Int. J. Green Economics, Vol. 1, Nos. 3/4, 2007 p. 447-448

Economic analysis has been one of the weakest and least developed broadly areas of green/sustainable development thinking. For example, whatever analysis there is within the green political canon is largely utopian – usually based on an argument for the complete transformation of modern society and economy as the only way to deal with ecological catastrophe, an often linked to a critique of the socioeconomic failings of capitalism that echoed a broadly radical Marxist/socialist or anarchist analysis; or underdeveloped – due, in part, to the need to outline and develop other aspects of green political theory. However, this gap within green thinking has recently been filled by a number of scholars, activists, think tanks, and environmental NGOs who have outlined various models of green political economy to underpin sustainable development political aims, principles and objectives. The aim of this article is to offer a draft of a realistic, but critical, version of green political economy to underpin the economic dimensions of radical views about sustainable development. It is written explicitly with a view to encouraging others to think through this aspect of sustainable development in a collaborative manner. Combined realism and radicalism marks this article, which starts with the point that we cannot build or seek to create a sustainable economy ab nihlo, but must begin from where we are, with the structures, institutions, modes of production, laws and regulations that we already have. Of course, this does not mean simply accepting these as immutable or set in stone; after all, some of the current institutions, principles and structures underpinning the dominant economic model are the very causes of unsustainable development. We do need to recognise, however, that we must work with (and ‘through’– in the terms of the original German Green Party’s slogan of ‘marching through the institutions’) these existing structures, as well as change and reform and in some cases, abandon them as either unnecessary or positively harmful to the creation and maintenance of a sustainable economy and society. Equally, this article also recognises that an alternative economy and society must be based in the reality that most people (in the West) will not democratically vote for a completely different type of society and economy. That reality must also accept that a ‘green economy’ is one that is recognisable to most people and that indeed safeguards and guarantees not just their basic needs but also aspirations (within limits). The realistic character of the thinking behind this article accepts that consumption and materialistic lifestyles are here to stay(so long as they do not transgress any of the critical thresholds of the triple bottom line) and indeed there is little to be gained by proposing alternative economic systems, which start from a complete rejection of consumption and materialism. The appeal to realism is in part an attempt to correct the common misperception (and self-perception) of green politics and economics requiring an excessive degree of self-denial and a puritanical asceticism(Goodin, 1992, p.18; Allison, 1991, p.170–178). While rejecting the claim that green political theory calls for the complete disavowal of materialistic lifestyles, it is true that green politics does require the collective reassessment of such lifestyles, and does require a degree of shared sacrifice. It does not mean, however, that we necessarily require the complete and across-the-board rejection of materialistic lifestyles. There must be room and tolerance in a green economy for people to live ‘ungreen lives’ so long as they do not ‘harm’ others, threaten long-term ecological sustainability or create unjust levels of socioeconomic inequalities. Thus, realism in this context is in part another name for the acceptance of a broadly ‘liberal’ or ‘post-liberal’ (but certainly not anti-liberal) green perspective.1

### AT: Competitiveness Models Flawed (Krugman)

#### Krugman’s model is flawed – regional competitive advantages assist growth.

Allen **SCOTT** Urban Planning @ UCLA **‘6** in *Economic Geography: Past Present and Future* eds. Sharmistha Bagchi-Sen and Helen Smith p. 64-65

Four specific lacunae of the core model merit turther attention in this connection: First, the model identifies productive activity only in terms of monopolistically competitive tirms with fixed and variable costs. In its initial tormulation it makes no reterence whatever to the dynamics of the social division of labor and the networks of transactional relations that How trom this process. In later tormulations (e .g. Krugman and Venables 1996; Venables 1996) an intermediate goods industry is assumed by fiat to exist in the model. However, the model is silent on the endogenous relations that exist in reality between the vertical structure of production and spatially dependent transactions costs. These relations tend to be of special interest and importance in clustered economic systems where intra and inter-firm transactional structures are usually extremely complex (e.g. Scott 1983). Accordingly, the model pays inadequate attention to the wider logic of locational convergence/divergence, and, in particular, it is deficient in its grasp of the individual regional economy as a source of competitive advantage (cf Porter 2001 ). Second, these tailings are compounded by the model's neglect of local labor market processes, such as information flows, job search patterns, labor-force training, and so on (Peck 1996). True enough, Krugman pays lip service to the existence of processes like these, but makes no effort to incorporate them into the workings of the core model. Third, region -based learning and innovation processes are conspicuous by their absence from the core model. A consequence of this absence is that the core model pays little or no attention to patterns of temporal change in the qualitative attributes and competitive advantages of regional production systems. The rich parallel literature by economists such as Jatle et al. (1993), Audretsch and Feldman (1996), or Acs (2002) on regional innovation systems compensates in some degree tor this omission, but the model itself remains more or less impervious to conceptions of technology-led growth (Acs and Varga 2002). Fourth, given its resolute commitment to microeconomic forms of analysis, the model actively suppresses the possibility that collective region-based strategies of economic adjustment might playa role in the construction of localized competitive advantages (Neary 2001). In practice, such strategies are often highly developed in regions with active production systems, both in the private sphere (e .g. interfirm collaboration), and in the public sphere (e.g. local economic development and training programs under the aegis of regional agencies) . Numerous researchers have shown time and again that strategies like these are critical to the creation of regional competitive advantages and an important tool in the search tor improved rates of local economic growth (Bianchi 1992; Cooke 1999; Saxenian 1994; Storper and Scott 1995). Some of the lacunae pointed out here can no doubt be dealt with in part by appropriate reformulations of the model (such as the introduction of commuting costs to reflect the spatial organization of local labor markets, or explicit reference to coalition formation processes), but at the cost of enormous increases of algebraic complexity. The Krugman model is for the most part a black box that occludes what by many accounts must be seen as some of the most important aspects of regional economic growth and development. As such, it casts only a very limited light on the full play of externalities, competitive advantage, and locational agglomeration in economic geography. Needless to say, the model is silent on wider social and political issues of relevance to the analysis of agglomeration, such as, tor example, region -specific forms of worker socialization and habituation, the emergence ofl ocal governance structures, or the historical shifts that occur periodically in technical -organizational structures of accumulation, and that greatly impact regional trajectories of development.

#### Competitiveness is economically important – the quality of networks determines capital investment and growth.

Roberto **CAMAGNI** Department of Management, Economics and Industrial Engineering, Politecnico di Milano **‘2** “On the Concept of Territorial Competitiveness: Sound or Misleading?” *Urban Studies* 39 (13) p. 2397-2398

In this field, two opposite and extreme positions confront each other. On the one side, the pessimistic one, merging (and sometimes adding up) different and disparate concerns, from the survival of local cultures to the fear about the economic and political power of multinational corporations, from the possibility of environmental dumping to the challenge of emerging countries to employment levels in rich countries. On the other side, the optimistic, ‘don’t worry’ position, claiming that open markets have sufficient self-adjusting mechanisms to ensure local well-being and that the law of comparative advantage will assure each country a role in the international division of labour, irrespective of its international competitiveness. On the political side, what has been called ‘localisation’—namely, ‘the growing desire of people for a greater say in their government’ (World Bank, 1999) through higher levels and effective ways of participation in decision-making (OECD, 1999a)—derives exactly from a growing feeling of insecurity among citizens about the capability of governments to take care of them and rightly interpret their needs. In fact, globalisation affects their lives in many respects, destroying the shelters once provided by physical space (local captive markets), by local specificities (consumption and production habits), local organisational models and the ‘patriotism’ of local forms. On the other hand, national governments increasingly give up policy tools that in the past proved effective, from monetary policies (attributed to supranational authorities, managing wide—optimal?— currency areas), to fiscal policies (due to tight budget constraints), from exchange rate policies (in monetary unions) to many industrial policies (replaced by common supranational regulations and trade agreements). Concerns are real, at least because they in fact exist, and are rational in many respects, as will be shown later in the paper; demands for greater participation and regional federalism are also perfectly correct, the danger residing in possible policy outcomes totally oriented towards defensive attitudes, separatism and closure—the regional equivalent of national protectionism. On the purely economic side, one may judge opportunities and threats generated by globalisation as equivalent, balanced and therefore neutral in terms of spatial effects. But this judgement changes radically if one considers some new, qualitative aspects of the present international economic picture: the increasing importance of knowledge factors, of immaterial elements linked to culture, taste and creativity in present economic processes and the characteristics of what could be called the production function of these elements and the ways of their accumulation. In fact, these immaterial elements develop through slow learning processes, fed with information, interaction and long-term investments in research and education (Amin and Wilkinson, 1999; Keeble and Wilkinson, 2000). Like all learning processes, they are inherently localised and cumulative, as they are embedded in human capital, interpersonal networks, specialised and highly skilled local labour markets and local innovative milieux (Camagni, 1991b; Lundvall and Johnson, 1994; Asheim, 1996). When analysed in an international perspective, technical progress ceases to be a public good, perfectly mobile and accessible to everybody; on the contrary, it circulates rapidly only inside some restricted networks, as it requires high-quality immaterial assets in order to be properly adopted and its profits appropriated (Savy and Veltz, 1995, ch. 1). While forms can access an increasing stock of codified knowledge, they require greater investments in tacit knowledge, such as human capital, management and organisation, to derive tangible benefits from technological change and innovation. … Firms may now benefits less from imitation and ‘free’ technology spillovers, as they require substantial investments in innovation and in cooperation and networking to access the stock of global knowledge (OECD, 1999b, p. 3). We see here a complex dialectics and confrontation between the hyper-mobility of some production factors and the territorial ‘anchorage’ of some others, which act as crucial location factors for the more advanced production processes. The likely result is the cumulative strengthening of the centripetal forces of growth (scale and scope economies, all sorts of increasing returns) and the centrifugal forces of territorial exclusion and decline. It is perfectly true that technologies and capital goods may be marketed and utilised almost everywhere (better: they have to be used everywhere, as they impose internationally shared standards in product and process quality) and that telecommunication networks and facilities are (more or less) ubiquitous, but the skills and relational capital required for their proper or innovative use are by no means available everywhere (Graham, 1999).

#### Competitiveness is crucial for growth – different technological strategies affect future growth.

Roberto **CAMAGNI** Department of Management, Economics and Industrial Engineering, Politecnico di Milano **‘2** “On the Concept of Territorial Competitiveness: Sound or Misleading?” *Urban Studies* 39 (13) p. 2400-2401

(3) Krugman warns us against a fast acceptance of the policy implications of the ‘strategic trade theory’, to which he himself gave relevant contributions. In a world of increasing returns (at the firm level and at the level of the local milieu), where history, chance, accident and policy intervention explain international specialisation and trade patterns better than factor proportions or the attributes and inherent differences of single countries, strategic industrial policy could be very effective and justified. Krugman’s opposition in this case regards the difficulty, costs and risks involved in attributing to a public administration the choice of sectors and products that will prove successful in the future. I think though that some risks are worth taking up, especially if the target is not a product but a technological  lie`re, and if the strategic approach means taking into account the potential effects of general political decisions, not directly concerned with tariffs or export support. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the explicit political decision by the Italian government to postpone the introduction of colour-tv broadcasting meant imposing a competitive disadvantage on the domestic electronic industry that was never later made up, with wide negative external effects on the entire technological trajectory. Conversely, in many countries, the early introduction of environmental regulations on emissions meant the early development of an environmental technology industry, taking advantage of all kinds of positive feed-back effects. Certainly, a careful assessment of alternative strategies should be made (for example, military expenditure vs medical care and research), but it is the kind of evaluation that public administrations should normally make, in all intervention fields (for example, in infrastructure provision). Moreover, intervention policies may well be horizontal, nonsectoral policies, like those addressed to the improvement of the quality of production factors: human capital, social overhead capital, regional accessibility, information and communication networks, to which we can add institutional interventions on rules and regulations. These are not policies targeted (selectively and ‘strategically’) to specific sectors, but may be crucial for many important ones.7 Is this neo-mercantilism? Once again, yes, in the progressive sense of historical mercantilist thought and practice. We owe to the mercantilist view the abatement of feudal restrictions on goods mobility inside each country, the improvement of internal infrastructure in order to enhance accessibility to (national and international) markets, the utilisation of the trade surplus in order to widen money supply, reduce interest rates, speed up investments and encourage entrepreneurship (Tiberi, 1999). (4) Considering not just international trade patterns (as in international trade theory) but also factors movements, and international capital flows in particular, a competitive production system may mean not just a good export performance but more interestingly an international attractiveness with respect to both ‘real’ and ‘financial’ capital. This last fact may easily turn a potential export surplus into a trade balance deficit, allowing the country to pay for its (cheap) imports and for a rising standard of living through the international trust of the capital markets (the present condition of US external accounts comes close to this last picture). This is why competitiveness and technical change should never be hampered in an open country, through any sort of social resistance to change. David Ricardo, the father with Robert Torrens of the comparative advantage principle, even if convinced of the job-killing nature of technology, in his famous chapter “On machinery” affirmed that The employment of machinery could never be safely discouraged in a State, for if a capital is not allowed to get the greatest net revenue that the use of machinery will afford here, it will be carried abroad, and this must be a much more serious discouragement to the demand for labour, than the most extensive employment of machinery (Ricardo, 1817/1971, p. 388).8 Leaving the assumption of factor immobility of the abstract model of international trade and assuming a dynamic perspective, the relevance of concerns about the efficiency of the local production sectors vis-a`-vis the other countries appears very clearly: not only will a reduced efficiency hamper external demand, but it will force both capital and labour to migrate, as it will be shown later on.

#### Technological changes lock-in economic competitiveness. Infrastructure change can create positive economic feedbacks.

Ron **MARTIN** Economic Geography @ Cambridge **‘6** in *Economic Geography: Past Present and Future* eds. Sharmistha Bagchi-Sen and Helen Smith p.168-170

The 'dynamic adaptive capability' of regional economies is therefore of central importance. By this is meant the capacity of a region's firms, industries, and institutions to sense opportunities (market, technological, organizational), to nurture, adapt and regenerate their knowledge assets and competences, and to develop and enhance the organizational capabilities that translate that knowledge into effective actions. This general notion applies to individual firms, to whole industrial sectors, to social and public institutions, and to policy-making bodies alike. It reflects the capacity of firms to experiment with and shift: to new product-specific capabilities; for industrial sectors it has to do with the success with which the firms in that sector are able to move into new markets, or upgrade existing ones; it has to do with the capacity of local entrepreneurs to identity and venture into new products and technologies; and it has to do with the capacity of institutions of all kinds to be receptive to change and new opportunities. In short, the greater the dynamic adaptive capability of a region's economy and socio-institutional base, the more likely it is to maintain or enhance its relative competitive performance over time. In other words, regional competitiveness should be seen as an evolutionary process (Boschma 2004). Economic geographers have barely begun to explore the full scope of 'evolutionary economics' (of which there are several different variants, including neo-Schumpeterian, institutionalist, game-theoretic, and complexity-theory based, for example), but it is clear that evolutionary economics contains several concepts, analogies and metaphors that bear directly on tlle definition and explication of regional competitiveness. Evolutionary theory forces us to think carefully about what economic competition means, the basic economic units that evolve - such as firms, routines, institutions - and what the mechanisms of regional structural, technological and institutional change are. Essentially, economic evolution is about innovation and adaptation, and how these drive the direction and nature of structural change. Understanding the processes that determine patterns of innovation and adaptive structural change across regions should therefore throw valuable light on why regions differ in competitive advantage, and moreover, how and why patterns of regional competitive advantage shift: and change over time. Economic geographers put particular emphasis on innovation as a source of regional performance. But what determines regional differences in innovation? Evolutionary theory stresses the importance of variety as a source of novelty. This accords with a Jacobsian view of economic change, whereby innovation is promoted by local economic diversity and heterogeneity, since this maximises both the scope for interaction and the variety of market opportunities for new ideas. Many successful large city-regions fit this model. In contrast, numerous economists and economic geographers have tended towards the Marshall-Arrow-Romer view that innovation is stimulated by local economic specialisation, where it is driven by intense rivalry between, and knowledge spillovers amongst, local firms in the same industry (or in closely related industries). This is essentially the assumption employed by Porter in his cluster model of regional competitive advantage, and by economic geographers in their studies of high-technology regions and districts. Certainly some successful regions and localities fit this model, although economic landscapes everywhere are littered with old specialised regions and localities that were once innovative leaders, but which have long since lost their prominence and are today's problem areas. So local economic specialisation is not of itself a guarantee of sustained competitive advantage. This relates to another central idea of evolutionary economics that is highly pertinent to the question of dynamic regional competitiveness, namely that of path dependence. The concept of path dependence is intended to capture the process by which the evolution of the economy is always the contingent outcome between change and inertia. Economic choices and opportunities are always conditioned to some extent by dependence on past structural, institutional, social and technological developments. The economy is an irreversible historical process, in which at any point in time the state of the economy depends on the historical adjustment path taken to it. Technology and institutions are two of the primary 'carriers of history' that result in path dependence . And both are characterised by tendency for 'lock-in', that is for particular patterns of behaviour, technological organisation, economic specialisation, institutional arrangements and the like to become selt~ reproducing over time, despite other possible patterns, activities and arrangements. The neo-Marshallian and related local external economies referred to earlier tend to impart such lock-in, as do other forms of inter-relatedness amongst local firms, sunk costs, and institutionalised social routines and networks. Lock-in, in fact, is a pervasive feature of socioeconomic life. In a regional context, the emergence of economic, technological, social and institutional structures can be heavily dependent on local context, but once established, the very interactive, situated and continuity-preserving nature of socio-economic activity is such that there are likely to be a tendency for the selected structures to get 'locked in' . Regional economies everywhere inherit the legacy of their past development. Geographers invoking the concept of , lock-in' have invariably tended to ascribe negative or sub-optimal connotations to it, to view it as a barrier to change - the 'weakness of strong ties' argument. But this is too one -sided a reading: 'lock-in' can also be a positive feature , the source of increasing returns and competitive advantage. Indeed, this is how selfreinforcing development is typically initiated, and almost every regional economy - highly successful as well as less prosperous - displays attributes and examples of lock-in. What matters is why and under what circumstances lock-in turns from being a positive process into a negative one, and why this varies across regions, how some regions have proved better able to escape negative lock-in and to foster new paths of development and competitive advantage: in short, why some regional economies are more adaptive than others.