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Retooling the machine: economic crisis, state restructuring, and urban politics

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'You don't have to be a postmodernist', Harvey Molotch argues, 'to suspect efforts that cast all cities as uniform in their response to larger economic changes' (1990: 175). Nor, of course, do you have to be an unreformed structuralist to discern intriguing parallels and telling similarities in the responses of contemporary cities to wider forces, such as neo-liberalism and economic globalization. Nowadays most places, it seems, have their very own booster committees, complex networks of public-private 'partnerships', and entrepreneurial urban strategies. Indeed, Harvey (1989) has even suggested that a generalized transition is underway from an urban managerialism of the (Fordist) past to an urban entrepreneurialism of the (post-Fordist?) future. Harvey's concern is not simply with local features of this transition but also extends to the inter-urban context in which they are embedded. He writes that, as

'inter-urban competition becomes more potent it will almost certainly operate as an "external coercive power" over individual cities ... [bringing] them closer into line with the discipline and the logic of capitalist development [while inducing] ... repetitive and serial reproduction of certain patterns of development (1989: 10).

Such serial reproduction may extend beyond the seemingly ubiquitous world trade centres, 'pomo' shopping malls, and waterfront developments (on which, see Harvey) to embrace the very institutions and practices of urban governance. Structures and strategies of urban governance may be copied not so much because they demonstrably 'work' but merely because their advocates have won out in the battle for ideas in response to shared problems. As Molotch notes:

even if similar policies are pursued across place and time, those policies may be dictated not by underlying logics but by mundane politics. Sometimes this repetition of the same policies across places stems from pluralistic greed and similar class configurations, or more innocently because of social contagion that spreads among decision-makers otherwise uncertain how to proceed. The failure of our grand theories to explain these types of phenomena now leaves intact the task of explaining how differences in places are going to come about and how political initiatives, historical idiosyncrasies, physical constraints, or just plain luck affect outcomes (1990: 176-177).

In reaction to this alleged failure of 'grand theory' to explain the macro-necessities dictating new forms of urban regime, interest has burgeoned in the micro-level diversity of structures and strategies of urban governance (see Judge et al., 1995). This interest has diverse origins and is reflected in various intellectual and methodological currents -- for example, regime theory and growth machine analysis in the USA as opposed to local governance research in the UK. Notwithstanding such differences, there is widespread and overarching concern with the diverse 'internal' architectures of urban coalitions and city elites. Indeed, regime theory deems it to be axiomatic 'that policy is shaped by the composition of the governing coalition and by the nature of the relationship between coalition members' (Stone, 1991: 294).

It is this urban regime academic 'growth industry' that prompts our remarks in the current chapter. Whilst accepting the value of much urban growth machine and urban regime analysis, we reject the tendency to treat urban dynamics as really existing in isolation from wider economic and political forces and processes. We also reject the tendency to focus on local actors and agency to the exclusion of local structures and/or to regard the latter as highly malleable at the hands of local elites. In opposing this agency-centred localism, however, we are not advocating some form of global structuralism. Instead we want to explore the dialectic among different spatial scales of economic and political organization and emphasize the mutual constitution of structure and agency across different levels. Thus we attempt to integrate some insights from recent urban political analysis with regulation theory (to provide economic context) and neo-Gramscian and Offean state theories (for political context). Indeed we would suggest that the regulation approach and neo-Marxist state theories can together provide an appropriate theoretical basis for a reinvigorated and analytically more powerful urban regimes approach. Such theoretical moves are an essential step in re-linking the chain of logic which runs from strategic

context to strategic capacity and thence to strategic action, a chain which -- while perhaps underdeveloped in cruder structural theories of urban politics -- has been effectively broken in more recent 'agency-oriented' approaches.

Moves to bring urban diversity back in should complement, rather than occur at the expense of, concern with wider practical, organizational and institutional contexts. In re-integrating analyses of these latter issues into the study of urban politics, we give due recognition to past work on growth machine and urban regime approaches; but we also maintain that this reformulation can contribute new insights and arguments into a debate that has been running for some 20 years. It is in this spirit that we will now consider (a) the relative strengths and weaknesses of growth machine theory (Section I); (b) the spatio-temporal specificity of growth machine theory in relation to American Fordism (Section II); (c) the potential contribution of the regulation approach and neo-Gramscian state theory to urban regimes analysis (Section III); (d) the crisis of the national economy and national state associated with Fordism and the associated re-orientation of urban politics (Section IV); (e) the narrative or discursive mediation of this re-orientation (Section V); and (f) the Manchester Olympics bid as an exemplar of the nature and limits of the new urban economic development and urban governance structures (Section VI). We conclude with observations on a possible research agenda.

I. Revisiting Agency-centred Localism in Growth Machines and Urban Regimes

The highly focused concern of growth machine and urban regime analysts with the architecture of city politics has obvious advantages; it also involves obvious disadvantages. In particular, while regime studies have produced deep and nuanced accounts of the structure and dynamics of some urban coalitions, they reveal much less about the wider economic and political context within which urban strategies are formulated (cf. Stoker, 1995; Ward, 1995a; Jonas, 1996).

This neglect may be partly deliberate. For US regime theory, if not growth machine theory, is rather introspectively 'concerned with the possibility that local politics really does matter ... [by implication because] the economic imperative is pliable within limits' (Stone, 1991: 290). Urban economic fortunes are always, of course, politically (and, we would add, discursively) mediated at the local level. For local politicians anticipate and/or react to the political repercussions of economic processes or events; just as local economic forces are

concerned with the economic repercussions of political processes and events. But this implies in turn that the economic and political are mutually, albeit indirectly, constitutive. Now, while urban regime analysts are not unaware of this co-constitution, they often have a blinkered view of what this entails. They proceed from the unquestioned assumption of 'a liberal political economy [which combines] ... a set of government institutions controlled to an important degree by popularly elected officials ... [and an economy] guided mainly, but not exclusively, by privately controlled investment decisions' (Stone, 1993: 2). In this context Stone regards urban regimes as mediating 'organisms', intervening between (given) imperatives of accumulation and (indeterminate) local political outcomes in such a way that 'urban regimes are potentially an autonomous force' (1993: 2). For urban regime analysts, then, and, to a substantial degree, also for growth machine scholars, it is the structuration of local political relations which merit empirical analysis and provide explanatory power:

What makes governance ... effective is not the formal machinery of government, but rather the informal partnership between city hall and the downtown business elite. This informal partnership and the way it operates constitute the city's regime; it is the means through which major policy decisions are made ... [Consequently] informal arrangements assume special importance in urban politics (Stone, 1989: 3).

I focus on the actions of growth entrepreneurs and how they intersect with political actors ... More than any other significant set of urban actors, the growth builders must interact with local government as part of their business routine ... Even when their activities generate no controversies at all, each such interaction influences implementation procedures, sets precedents for how things are done, establishes relations between officials and citizens, and alters spatial relations and the social conditions the built environment imposes ... [Such] developers' maneuvers [are] the baseline of the urban process (Molotch, 1993: 32).

The avowed mistrust of structuralist analysis which inspires both regime and growth machine analysis is often generalized to more covert (but nonetheless effective) mistrust of any concern with broader structural constraints. This is clearly reflected in the privileged roles assigned to (local) politics and (elite) agency. As Molotch insists, '(t)here is plenty of human agency in this version of political economy. Where there is similarity across places, it derives from shared institutional contexts and parallel patterns of volition, rather than

iron-like determinisms of hidden hands or exogenous constraints' (1993: 31; cf. Judd and Parkinson, 1990; Swanstrom, 1993; Stone, 1995). This emphasis on the autonomy of local elites and regimes is a salutary corrective to forms of structuralism which emphasize the autonomous logic of a global capitalism, the all-pervasive, homogenizing sovereign authority of the national state, or the hegemony of supra-local (if not always global) cultures and discourses. But this valuable corrective does not mean that the wider imperatives of inter-urban competition, state restructuring and capital accumulation can be safely set aside whilst examining the internal dynamics of urban politics; nor, likewise, that the choices pursued at local level can be safely examined as if they were uninfluenced by extra-local policy models, paradigms, or discourses. For there is always a two-way, if typically asymmetrical, flow between local economic, political, and ideological forces and those existing on supra-local scales (Harvey, 1989; Preteceille, 1990; A.N. Other 19**).

Yet the methodology of growth machine and urban regime analysis dictates that common structures and strategies of urban governance are interpreted, not in terms of the impact of extra-local forces such as inter-urban competition, but instead in terms of basic similarities in local institutional contexts and norms of elite behaviour. For example, DiGaetano and Klemanski conclude their comparative study of the two 'motor cities' of Birmingham, England, and Detroit, Michigan, by arguing that the two 'regimes formed ... in remarkably similar ways' (1993: 381). They also claim that, by focusing on how local ruling alliances

come together and carry out governing strategies, we can better understand a city's capacity to cope with social change, whether that city is in Britain or the United States. The difficulty in comparing urban politics across nations stems principally from the differences in intergovernmental systems ... However, regime theory approaches city governance from the bottom up. The local polity, not the nation state, is the object of analysis ... [R]egime theory can be employed to compare governance in cities that operate in substantively different systems of central local relations and local government authority (DiGaetano and Klemanski, 1993: 381-382).

The limitations of both approaches emerge clearly in their several attempts to 'develop' local political analysis through proliferating case studies and through the purely taxonomic 'adjustment' of regime typologies (see DiGaetano and Klemanski, 1994; see also Harding 1995; Ward, 1995b). Instead of revealing the causal processes operating within growth machines or urban regimes more generally, then, such methods produce a series of

inferences from case studies undertaken to verify, illustrate, or exemplify the value of the corresponding conceptual apparatus that informed the research. Thus Harding maintains that the limited penetration of the growth machine concept in UK studies stems from its application 'post hoc, to redescribe urban phenomena' (1995: 48); and Stoker notes that regime analysis 'suffers from the tendency of most of its main propositions to emerge inductively from observation of the urban scene' (1995: 64). Rarely do such case study practitioners interrogate their conceptual apparatuses or try to relate their detailed findings to more abstract accounts of, say, capital accumulation or state restructuring (see Cox, 1991a, 1991b). Instead their bottom-up analyses tend to assign causal power to local political networks; and thereby suggest, unintentionally perhaps, that spatial variations in urban fortunes are merely a by-product of the geography of charismatic city leadership. Thus, coupled with the continued caricaturing (and often straightforward denial) of structural imperatives, 'theories' of urban governance often fail to provide penetrating theoretical analyses with general import, succumbing instead to empiricism and 'excessive localism' (see Harding, 1995; Stoker, 1995).

II. Relocating the Growth Machine

Despite its open mistrust of structuralist explanation, the growth machine literature is, as we will argue below, quite consistent with more abstract features of capitalism. This is particularly evident when allowance is made for the fictitious nature of land as a commodity (cf. Harvey, 1982). But the consistency of growth machine explanations with such abstract features does not mean that they are the only possible explanation: alternative accounts may well be more appropriate for other times and places and even for the home domain of urban regimes theory itself. Apparent consistency should not lead us to short-circuit analysis by over-generalizing growth machine models to times and places where they have little purchase. In this context we would suggest that the growth machine model does, indeed, offer a concise, but powerful, explanation for urban growth dynamics in America during the rise, golden age, and initial crisis of Fordism in local political systems in which supra-local (federal and state governments) had only a limited direct role to play in urban economic development.

But it is the very background conditions which explain the strength of the growth machine model that also limit its applicability beyond US Fordism. The peculiarities of 'Americanism and Fordism' which engender common tendencies across almost all American cities have

led some enthusiasts of the 'growth machine' model to extend it elsewhere. Interestingly similar errors were sharply criticized in the 1930s by Antonio Gramsci in his prison notebooks. He argued that American Fordism was privileged because it had a simpler class structure than Europe, which meant that its hegemony could more easily be rooted in the factory. We would add that the same simplicities and the open frontier also made it easier for urban growth machines to emerge and enjoy real political autonomy. Efforts to establish Fordism in Europe, however, would, according to Gramsci, need far greater state intervention and more extensive ideological mobilization by new intellectual forces (Gramsci 1971: 285). Such early critiques aside, it is clearly important to examine the historically specific conditions under which US Fordism was established and American cities developed local accumulation strategies consistent with the general dynamic of the Fordist accumulation regime.

Such arguments have not been lost on growth machine theorists themselves. Indeed, Vicari and Molotch (1990) have recently emphasized that the growth machine should not be over-extended, suggesting that US-style urban growth machines are most likely to emerge where (a) local governments have taxation powers, depend on the local tax revenue, and have primary responsibility of land-use control; (b) there is relatively weak integration between the tiers of government (so local government is relatively autonomous); (c) there is weak party organization; and (d) there is no political party which is 'anti-growth'. In these conditions, they argue, entrepreneurs are most able to manipulate spatial relations and, we would add, political systems. These four conditions help us to 'unpack' growth machine theory and see how far temporal and spatial shifts may affect the likely emergence of growth machines.

First, there is wide variation in the extent to which local governments have tax-raising powers as well as in the proportion of total income received from tax. In Britain, for example, local taxes of all kinds now typically account for less than a quarter of all local government spending; and, in Germany, there has been a strong emphasis on progressive redistribution and the equalization of conditions across the Länder. Further, given the crisis of national Fordisms and the increased salience of structural competitiveness between space economies on various scales, control over land-use may be less significant for growth coalitions even in the USA. Nowadays the supply side -- in its integral, social sense -- matters far more to place-competitiveness than does the mere physical supply of land. This is reflected in increased interest in, and emphasis on, the 'competition state' at the

national (and at least in Western Europe, supra-national) level and the 'entrepreneurial city' at both regional and local levels. Accordingly, a superior place product (and this now means more than a good building) starts to matter more than the capacity to determine the flow of people (as tenants, consumers, customers) past and/or to individual buildings, complexes, or built environments of similar (standardized, Fordist) design. Speculation in spatial structure takes new forms in which integral economic dimensions are highlighted and narrow built environment issues are secondary (except, perhaps, at the most mobile, least skilled end of after-Fordist divisions of labour). ADAM - CHECK PARENTHESIS

Second, integration among tiers of government clearly varies across space, the position of city governments within the USA is anomalous compared to Europe. For example, while France and Britain all have strongly centralized relationships, Germany privileges a complex central-regional balance of governmental power. More generally, political dynamics differ across national state systems. Even if British and American Fordism had been economically identical, for example, the very different national political structures would ensure that urban political forms varied considerably. Furthermore, the temporal shift from Keynesian-welfarist state forms to more liberal, workfare forms means that the relationship between the tiers of government -- even in the USA -- has become more important, due to the 'hollowing out' of the national state and increased emphasis on state and local responsibilities (see Section IV).

Third, party systems and political parties can make a difference. Parties often have distinct spatial programmes (the British Conservative Party during the 1980s effectively privileged the South of England over the rest of the UK, Peck and Tickell, 1995) and can develop hegemonic positions which define the terms of reference for business elites (see, for example, Vicari and Molotch, 1990 page 610, on the ways in which Italian parties defined the 'conventional wisdom'). Furthermore, a crisis in party systems at national or local level may create more opportunities for growth coalitions, but these opportunities may favour different forms to Fordist-style growth coalitions. CAN WE GIVE EXAMPLES? Fourth, still following the clues provided by Vicari and Molotch (and not going beyond them), anti-growth coalitions are more likely in economies and/or polities where growth is regarded as destructive of traditional ways of life and is restricted (whether for physical and/or regulatory reasons) confined to specific spatial areas. In addition, the end of Fordism has also seen the growth of an anti-modernist, anti-growth (whether capitalist or socialised)

politics, exemplified by the still disparate green movement. COULD BE EXPANDED IF WE'RE ALLOWED MORE SPACE

III. Regularizing Urban Regimes and Building Hegemony

Prompted perhaps by these theoretical and methodological shortcomings, there have been several recent attempts to deploy regulationist concepts in urban political analysis. Such attempts serve two different purposes. First, they provide a means of linking urban politics to broader economic tendencies (e.g., by referring urban regimes to Fordist or post-Fordist accumulation regimes, to national or regional variants thereof, or to different spatial logics). And, second, they provide a means to link agency and structure in the study of urban governance via the concept of 'mode of regulation' (with its implicit concern with the role of structural forms in providing a framework for 'regularizing' practices and institutionalized compromises). These uses are evident in a series of suggestive contributions to regime analysis (Lauria, 1994; 1996; Ward, 1995a); growth machines (Low, 1994); and the study of local governance (Duncan et al, 1993; Hay, 1995; Painter, 1995; Painter and Goodwin, 1995).

These objectives cannot be achieved, however, just by noting some intriguing complementarities between growth machine and/or urban regime analysis and key regulationist concepts. Indeed there are at least three obstacles to such a quick 'conceptual fix'. First, whereas the micro-economic foundations of the regulation approach are grounded in the labour process, the micro-economic foundations of growth machine theory are grounded in the transformation of the built environment and, to the extent that they exist, those of urban regimes analysis are grounded in the space economy (DO YOU AGREE?). There is still considerable theoretical work to be done in providing clear linkages between these processes (but see, for example, Harvey 1982). Second, there are major tensions between the regulationist programme with its residual structural biases and the still rather eclectic body of work on practices of urban governance (cf. Jessop, 1995). And, third, as the regulation approach is primarily relevant to the economic context (albeit in inclusive, integral terms) of urban regimes, its use in studies of urban regimes needs to be complemented by a more sophisticated analysis of the political domain. This latter task is the contribution, as one of us has argued elsewhere, of neo-Gramscian state theory. We comment briefly on the relevance of the regulation approaches and state theory to urban regimes analysis.

Regulation theorists examine the historically contingent ensembles of complementary economic, and extra-economic mechanisms and practices which enable capital accumulation to occur in a relatively stable way over long periods, despite the fundamental contradictions and conflicts generated by the capital relation itself (cf. Aglietta, 1979; Boyer, 1990; Lipietz, 1987). While regulation theory tends to focus on national accumulation regimes, or on 'pluri-national' modes of growth and international regimes favourable to national accumulation, two of us have argued elsewhere for a more considered focus on local modes of growth and their associated modes of regulation (Peck and Tickell, 1992, 1994; see also Goodwin and Painter, 1996). This is not to argue that local modes of growth somehow exist in isolation from encompassing economic space(s), nor that local modes of regulation operate purely at local level(s). Far from it. For local modes of growth are inserted into a 'tangled hierarchy' of regularising and regulatory practices.

Self-evidently, some distance remains between the respective approaches advocated by regulationists and analysts of urban governance. While not wanting to polarize the positions unnecessarily, we would note that the regulation approach puts more emphasis on structure, macro-economic forces and large-scale institutional mediations, while governance theories are more directly concerned with agency, meso-political forces and local-scale capacities. But while the regulationist approach is open, in principle, to issues of local agency, albeit embedded within a conception of uneven spatial development (see Painter and Goodwin, 1995; Peck and Tickell, 1995), residual antagonisms to more structuralist accounts still pervade much contemporary research on urban governance. Much of this research continues to foster an exaggerated analytical opposition between 'autonomous' local development (or 'local leadership and politics matters') and structural determination of local fortunes (or 'local leadership and politics is irrelevant'). Crudely, either cities are seen as 'the helpless pawns of international finance, industry and commerce [or they] are in a position to mediate and direct their own destinies' (Parkinson and Judd, 1988: 2; see also Smith, 1988; Cooke, 1989; Fainstein, 1990). For Judd and Parkinson (1990), problem cities share the common characteristic of 'leadership deficit', while it is seen as no coincidence that cities more successful in capturing economic growth tend to possess a pro-active elite group that can 'speak for the city'. Likewise, for Molotch (1988: 42), the activities of elites are concerned with 'coupling local agendas with national and international systems of production'.

While virtually all localities may be run by growth machine elites, there are differences in the quality and quantity of growth that each urban area can plausibly attract. If this were not the case, we would have to argue that the relative size of cities is simply a result of the energy and cunning of their property entrepreneurs vis-à-vis their counterparts elsewhere (Molotch, 1988: 29).

The neo-Gramscian approach may prove particularly useful in overcoming this residual antagonism on the part of urban governance researchers to structural arguments. For Gramscian analyses are explicitly concerned with the role of political, intellectual, and moral leadership in actively conforming economic and political practices and institutions to the long-run demands of capital accumulation and political domination. In this sense neo-Gramscian theorists could well ascribe a leading role to local 'elites' but would also link their actions to broader structural constraints and social relations. In line with Gramscian analyses, we suggest that urban regimes can be fruitfully analysed in terms of strategically-selective combinations of political society and civil society, government and governance, or 'hegemony armoured by coercion' (Gramsci, 1971: 271 and *passim*). This approach emphasizes the interdependence of ethico-political and economic-corporate forces (political society + civil society), allows more weight in the exercise of political power to non-state forms (government + governance) and stresses the importance of values, norms, vision, discourses, linguistic forms, popular beliefs, etc., in shaping local accumulation strategies and their related modes of growth. In this spirit, we also argue that urban regimes may be linked to a local hegemonic bloc (or, as Lipietz 1994, refers to them, a 'regional armature'), and to an 'historical bloc (or that complex, discordant, contradictory unity of a mode of growth and its mode of economic regulation) (Jessop, 1996a). We would also argue that 'bringing Gramsci back in' to analyses of local governance provides a coherent theoretical framework which is both useful for exploring the various dimensions and modalities of urban regimes and consistent with the regulation approach to 'integral economics' (see Jessop, 1992, 1996a).

Combining the regulation approach and neo-Gramscian state theory could prove useful in recoupling agency and structure in urban regime analysis. Urban elites emphatically do possess agency. But it is essential to recognize that they also occupy positions within networks, structures, and meaning systems that significantly constrain their range of feasible actions and the longer-term consequences of the choices that they make. In this

sense local economic and political forces may well make their own history but they do not do so in circumstances of their own choosing nor, indeed, in circumstances which they can ever fully comprehend. Of crucial significance in this regard are cities' relative place within the spatial division of labour (itself a complex, overdetermined phenomenon) and the institutional forms and wider political forces that shape local politics (likewise complex and overdetermined in their path-dependent development and current dynamics). These structural contexts provide more than the scenic backdrop for local growth machines to act out petty dramas -- they are structuring in complex yet significant ways. Some of the current work on urban regimes and growth machines has lost sight of these vital connections. What is required to correct this is a thorough reconceptualization of structure and agency in urban politics. It is far from adequate just to summon up regulationist concepts -- let alone simply to use regulationist language -- as if this will provide all the answers. For the three reasons noted above, this is unlikely to provide more than an abstract, structural context for studying urban governance. We need to move beyond such structural contextualization, however fine-grained it may be, to consider the changing strategic contexts in which urban actors (individual and collective) shape urban fortunes.

Indeed, with their heavy emphasis on human agents, an understandable reaction to rigidly structuralist approaches, growth machine and urban regime theories alike also implicitly invoke a voluntarism which is difficult to sustain in abstract theoretical terms -- let alone in concrete circumstances. For example, while a range of case studies (particularly from within the urban regime rather than growth machine approach), discloses that urban political forms are varied, thereby highlighting what we might refer to as 'micro-diversity' (see for example, Wagner et al, 1995; *****), there are still many features common to the political 'will' of urban regimes within and across western nations. Thus there is a general emphasis nowadays on enhancing the role for business, a growing emphasis on place marketing, rhetorics of urban entrepreneurialism, and so on. These shared features are indicative of common evolutionary trajectories (or what we might refer to as 'macro-necessity'). This coexistence within and across western societies of both micro-diversity and macro-necessity has emerged because urban political systems are responding to a set of extra-urban transformations (economic, political, etc.) which provide structural and/or strategic constraints on local action. This indicates the need to explore the relationship between micro-diversity and macro-necessity. In pursuing this apparently self-contradictory theoretical goal, we will significantly modify both elements of the paradox. Thus we suggest, first, that the real scope for micro-diversity is constrained by significant

macro-level phenomena whose impact will emerge *post hoc* if it is not taken into account *ex ante*. And we suggest, second, that the 'iron laws' of macro-necessity are sufficiently contradictory in structural terms as well as dilemma-ridden in strategic terms that they typically operate through a *discursive closure of opportunities* which still leaves some, albeit limited, scope for micro-level variations (cf. Jessop 1985).

There are four closely linked aspects that we wish to highlight in developing this approach to the paradox of micro-diversity and macro-necessity: (a) the structural constraints placed on actors, especially those which are beyond the scope of the actors' influence; (b) the strategic context which is open to their influence within given spatial and temporal horizons of action; (c) the strategic capacities of the various actors concerned, including learning capacities; and (d) the actual strategies or tactics they pursue in specific conjunctures. In any complex situation, the strategic context depends upon acts of simplification which attempt to isolate a subset of causal factors (and therefore ignore other causal factors) which may be susceptible to some influence. It is in this context that the role of techno-economic paradigms, hegemonic modes of regulation, societal visions, etc., can have a significant impact on local actors' interpretation of 'what is to be done'. Conversely, in so far as such discourses are widely shared and thereby constrain strategic actions, they will contribute to the cohesion and reproduction of the structures within which localities and local agents are embedded. Thus strategic actions at local level, whether in the pursuit of growth (as Logan and Molotch contend is the case in the United States) or in the pursuit of grants (as we have argued is the case in the United Kingdom, see Peck and Tickell, 1995; Cochrane et al, 1996), may serve to reproduce the very structures from which they seek to escape. This is even more likely, as we shall see below from the Manchester Olympic bid, when the key local actors and their strategic opportunities are heavily constrained by the exercise of extra-local authority and/or imperative allocation of extra-local resources essential to the success of local strategies.

IV. Reviving Urban Regimes in Response to National Crisis

In retrospect, the period between 1945 and the early 1970s was highly unusual in the history of advanced western capitalism. For it was a period in which the national economy was the taken-for-granted object of economic regulation and the national state was the taken-for-granted subject of political action. This taken-for-grantedness of national space provided a specific strategic context for the consolidation of the Keynesian welfare state in

all its rich cross-national diversity. The 'problem of growth' seemed to have been solved by Fordist-Keynesian macro-economic policies and the institutionalization of collective bargaining around wages related to productivity and inflation. At the same time, a social consensus appeared to have been forged: through state welfare in Europe, in the USA through corporate welfare. In this context the local state served primarily as a relay point for national Keynesian-welfare policies and their micro-level adaptation to specific local circumstances. As Fordism-Keynesianism began to unravel during the 1970s (Tickell and Peck, 1992; Jessop, 1993), however, the national economy and the national state lost their centrality as geographical relations were reorganized. Important here is the dialectic of globalization and regionalization in both the economic and political spheres -- processes which have undermined the coherence of national production systems and the sovereignty of national states. Although the national arena remains important as the site for discursive struggle, one of us has argued elsewhere that national states have become 'hollowed out':

power has been ceded both to supranational institutions and to local states because states can no longer act as if national economies were virtually closed and their growth dynamic were autocentric. On the one hand, international trends ... mean that firms can escape national control and national economic policies no longer work so well ... On the other, it no longer appears so self-evident that the national economic space provides the best starting point for pursuing growth, innovation or competitiveness (Jessop, 1994a: 5).

Globalization and its counter-tendencies are not leading to a complete loss of power for the national state but, rather, to a qualitative reorganization of its structural capacities and strategic emphases. Paradoxically, these have 'been both curtailed and expanded, allowing it to continue to perform a range of functions, which cannot be sustained any longer in isolation from global or regional relations and processes' (Held, 1991, 208). Thus the erosion of one form of national state should not be mistaken for its general retreat. Indeed, as the frontiers of the Keynesian welfare national state are rolled back, the boundaries of the national state are being re-articulated with other levels and forms of political power. In addition, the national state remains the primary site for the crucial generic function of securing social cohesion in socially-divided societies and is still the most significant site of struggle among competing global, supra-national, national, regional, and local forces (cf. Poulantzas 1973; also Jessop, 1995; Dicken et al, 199*).

It is in the context of generalized state restructuring that the transformation of urban politics needs to be understood. Some have claimed that the above-mentioned politico-economic changes have given local states an enhanced role in the world economy. For example, consistent with those seeking to make growth machines and regime analysis internationally portable, Mayer argues that cities and regions

have become direct players in the world economy. The particular location of a place within the international division of labour under conditions of heightened inter-urban competition thus not only sets certain constraints, but itself becomes an asset to be exploited on the basis of locally-determined priorities ... By identifying the particular strengths and assets a city or region has to offer (to investors etc.), local political actors can exact payments and concessions, and can exert leverage over supra-local actors (1992: 263, 269, emphasis added; see also Stoker, 1990; Stoker and Mossberger, 1992).

Such claims are, to say the very least, debatable. First, while cities and regions may now be competing with each other more fiercely than before, it is dubious whether they now have significantly greater power than in the past. If national states are insufficiently powerful to define and realize economic policies as they could in the golden era of the Keynesian welfare state or to prevent transnational companies from engaging them in regulatory arbitrage, it is hard to believe that local states will prove more successful. This does not exclude other attempts to manage the uneven development of capitalism, of course; but these will be quite different from those associated with the Keynesian-welfare period of Fordism. Moreover, for the vast majority of cities and regions, the competition engendered is at best a zero-sum game and at worst destructive (Schoenberger, 1991; Swyngedouw, 1992; Tickell and Dicken, 1993).

Second, by stressing the relative autonomy of local state actors, Mayer seems to commit the same fallacy as students of US urban politics: that when local state officials determine local 'strategies' and have a local 'vision' that they are acting in an autonomous fashion. If European countries such as the UK or Germany appear to be becoming more like the USA, it would be mistaken to believe that this is because local states are becoming more powerful as national states become less so. To reiterate, although, as Judd and Parkinson (1990) emphasize, 'politics matters' and political agents do have significant degrees of freedom in what they can achieve, this by no means justifies urban regime theorists to

overlook the facts that, first, urban politics are effectively licensed by the national state; and, second, elites do not simply wield personal power, they wield positional power. It is essential to pay due regard to the broader structural and strategic contexts in which local elites define and pursue local economic strategies and to understand the extent to which their success depends on factors which lie well beyond the local level.

Nor can one ignore the discursive constitution of local strategies and their relation to wider structural and strategic forces. Reading some of the more audacious claims about urban political transformation, one could be forgiven for believing that the emergence (or, in the US case, deepening) of elite partnership politics reflects some kind of structural imperative (or macro-necessity) in contemporary liberal democracies. In this sense urban regime or governance theorists would seem to be complicit in the redefinition of the macro-necessities of contemporary capitalism. Stoker, for example, claims that, although 'significant differences persist from country to country, it is clear that the need for some form of public/private cooperation exists in all advanced capitalist societies' (1995: 54). Likewise Judd and Parkinson suggest that '(p)olitics certainly matters, even when the "city as a whole" is the unit of analysis: One of the most important outcomes of local politics is the emergence of an elite constellation or coalition that can speak for a city' (1990: 15). Such claims invoke an image of urban politics as relatively autonomous. In reality, local politics exist within a complex hierarchy of state structures and can only exist by reaching an accommodation with other elements in the hierarchy. Put simply, local politics does matter, but these politics are structurally constrained by both local and extra-local economic forces and also, critically, by the changing forms of local license permitted by national states. While it is rare to find tiers of local government being abolished because they are out of step with national government's objectives (the obvious example is the abolition of the Greater London Council and other metropolitan authorities in England in 1986??), national governments do enjoy strong disciplinary powers rooted in their control over the disbursement of public funds, the legislative process, and so on. This is not only the case in Western Europe but also holds (though less patently) in the United States. To take but one example, Minneapolis had to transform its approach to economic development during the 1980s as federal aid was reduced by two thirds in the fifteen years up to 1990 and as the 1986 Tax Reform Act removed the advantages of city bonds (Schwartz, 1995).

V. Re-narrating Urban Economic Development

We have argued above that the scope for successful local economic development strategies is shaped both by changing structural constraints and by shifts in the discursive construction of strategic opportunities. We have also argued that, although strategies change in response to political elites' perceptions of the political repercussions of structural economic change and emerging strategic opportunities, these must be translated into capacities for action if they are to permit effective action. In the next section we will exemplify some of the problems involved in translating new strategies into effective action; but here we first consider how changing opportunities come to be constituted in and through changing narratives of city development.

Since the heyday of growth machines in postwar US Fordism, there have been major shifts in cities' roles as subjects, sites and stakes in economic restructuring and securing structural competitiveness. They have cultivated an image of being pro-active in promoting the competitiveness of their respective economic spaces in the face of intensified international, inter-regional, and intra-regional competition. The dynamics of such competition, and the sources of competitive advantage, remain hotly contested, by both commentators and policy-makers, but they are rarely understood any longer solely in terms of speculative property-led development. Even where development is property-led (as in the case of science parks or shopping malls), the discourse surrounding it is invariably linked to enhanced competitiveness (in terms of complex, 'structural' rather than simple, factor-cost competition), to the uneven development and spatial restructuring associated with the demise of Fordism and transition to a possible (perhaps imaginary) successor (sunrise-sunset, sunbelt-rustbelt, etc.), and to the general impact of the dialectic of globalization and regionalization on spatial divisions of labour.

The shift from the city as a property-developing growth machine to a more entrepreneurial role may be explained in terms of the discursively-mediated crisis of Fordism-Keynesianism. This crisis is not reducible to problems of micro-economic productivity or macro-economic stagflation, it extends into a wider crisis of regulation rooted in combined in market, state and governance failures. First, market-driven restructuring was spatially uneven, leading to economic, social and political crises. Second, the Keynesian national welfare state was undermined by a crisis in the 'taken-for-grantedness' of the national economy as a site of economic reproduction, regulation and governance, leading more generally to economic planning and legitimacy crises. Third, there was a crisis of tripartite

forms of economic and political coordination (whether in their social democratic or corporatist forms). Let us emphasize that these failures did not, in themselves, dictate any particular response, let alone a shift to new forms of urban regime. For this to have occurred, the failures needed to be translated into specific policy problems that 'require' new forms of urban regime.

It is here that narratives of, and the constructions put upon, crisis can actually make a difference to the political responses to political-economic change. The crisis tendencies of Fordism-Keynesianism have been interpreted through an intersection of diverse economic, political and socio-cultural narratives (personal, organizational, and meta-narratives) which seek to give meaning to current problems by construing them in terms of past failures and future possibilities (see Somers, 1995). A central role in the reshaping of urban regimes is played by emerging discourses of the enterprise culture, enterprise society, innovative milieux, networks, strategic alliances, partnerships, governance, and so on. These discourses are rendered more plausible (and hence given the appearance of inevitability) by the emerging geo-economic meta-narratives concerning the crisis of Atlantic Fordism, globalization, triadization, communist collapse, the end of the Cold War, the 'emergence' of East Asia, and so on (see Jessop, 1996b; Dicken et al, 1996).

It is in this context that narratives of the city are being scripted which stress: (a) that cities and regions have an enhanced significance, at the expense of the national economy, as sites of economic competitiveness (see, for example, Mayer, 1994); (b) that competition should be understood in integral economic, Schumpeterian terms where new economic, social or political 'combinations' at the urban level provide competitive advantage (see, for example, xxx); (c) that local governance is replacing local government as the most appropriate conduit for promoting redefined economic competitiveness; and (d) that international factors bear upon local economic performance as sources of threats and opportunities. Each of these shifts has implications for the viability of growth machines.

In general, post-growth machine initiatives share an entrepreneurial concern to create these new combinations of economic and extra-economic factors in an attempt to enhance local competitiveness. While some of these initiatives aim to secure dynamic (or strong) competitive advantages for the city, for example by promoting measures to enhance structural competitiveness, others aim to gain static (or weak) advantages, for example by aiming to secure a slice of mobile investment by either deregulation or boosterism.

Inevitably, there are large elements of continuity between some of these strategies and the strategies pursued by growth machines, but there are also significant elements of discontinuity: the political and economic context to urban politics has been transformed, as has their narrative significance.

Given the pervasive sense of postwar economic and political failure, if cities and regions are to escape the consequence of this failure, they are allegedly forced to modify economic strategies, economic institutions, modes of governance and the form of the state. These must be redesigned to prioritise 'wealth creation' in the face of international, inter-regional and intra-regional competition, since even left-politicians seem to accept that this is not only the prior condition of economic growth, but also of social distribution and welfare (see Coates, 1996). Fosler, for example, claims that

the new institutional capacities include a conceptual reorientation of the economic role of governance; the ability to generate and apply knowledge across a broad range of policy areas; fashioning new mechanisms and approaches to leadership and decision-making; redesigning systems and strategies for getting results; and creating more effective means of performance assessment and accountability (Fosler, 1992, page 4; see also Osborne and Gaebler, 1993).

These narratives lead, inter alia, to the discovery of the entrepreneurial city as a new phenomenon and its inevitabilization on practical, if not normative, grounds. In turn this process has foreclosed discussion and debate over alternative ways of defining and resolving current problems. In arguing for a strategy for institutional change, Fosler highlights the normative consensus which has emerged on the need for new institutional arrangements. However, as the precise forms required remain unclear, there is increasing pluralization among recent experiments with different forms of governance in 'entrepreneurial' cities and regions. This reflects yet again the dialectic of macro-necessity and micro-diversity to which we referred above.

VI. Reconsidering Business Leadership

To understand the nature and limits of business leadership in urban growth coalitions, local political initiatives must be related to their wider economic and political contexts. These should be understood in terms of conflicts between different growth discourses as

well as between different institutions. Thus, the empowerment of business elites through partnership arrangements can be seen to have been licensed by the state in the sense that their members have been given a legitimate platform from which to present analyses of, and solutions to, policy questions. Thus, in the area of urban policy, we must examine not only how institutions have been restructured in line with the 'needs' of business, but also how such 'needs' are themselves defined through political discourse.

At stake here is the deliberate restructuring of the strategic and discursive selectivity of the state and the broader political system. In Gramscian terms this involves re-articulating political and civil society, government and governance, the respective weight of coercion and hegemony. More specifically, in Offe's terms, it involves a shift in the mode of political rationality, as the national state imposes new ways of constituting, channelling and meeting political demands. In response to the crisis of the Keynesian welfare state, the national state has redefined its object: no longer is it 'to satisfy demands but to shape and channel them so as to make them satisfiable' (Offe, 1985: 225). Just as state power may be devolved to interest groups, it may also be retracted, as representational status is withdrawn or internal rules are altered in order to make internal consensus harder to achieve (e.g., under recent employment and trade union reform legislation). The development of political forms in Britain which resemble US growth coalitions or regime politics has occurred in large part because the Conservative Government has sought to incorporate business interests through new, bipartite relationships with 'non-representational' capital. For example, the guidelines for Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), which have assumed control of training previously under direct state control, require that the controlling boards must have a two-thirds employer majority and that employers sit on the TEC as individuals, not as representatives of business organizations (Peck, 1992). Similar arrangements have been introduced across broad swathes of state activity, from police committees to health authorities, from housing action trusts to further education colleges (see Davis and Stewart, 1993; Morgan and Roberts, 1993).

The current political capacity of business elites in local and regional politics derives in large part, then, from the state's attribution to them of 'public status'. It depends less on the native 'energy and cunning' of its individual members and more on their effective 'licensing' and legitimation as decision-makers by the state. This may take either a concrete institutional form (as decision-making powers or resources are devolved by the state), or a more nebulous ideological form (as the state confers upon individuated

business elites 'voice' in discourses of economic development and urban regeneration). It follows that partnerships between local elites and public authorities are by no means a structural imperative of liberal democracies, as Stoker and Judd and Parkinson imply: they have actually been quite consciously promoted by political and intellectual opinion-makers in national -- as well as local -- politics.

If partnership now matters, then, it is because it has been made to matter. In Britain, for example, local states are ineligible for discretionary (national) government funding unless they bid in concert with business partners (Ward, 1995b; see also Peck and Tickell, 1995). The European Commission also insists on the formation of regional partnerships (sometimes including social partners) as a precondition of EU funding. It is therefore partial to claim that

governance is broader than office holding. The actions of office holders qua office holders are at most only an anaemic version of leadership [...] Office holding bestows authority, but the authority conferred is highly limited ... Energetic governance requires more than office holding can provide. The weakness of formal authority gives added importance to the personal leadership of prominent urban actors, especially in the loosely structured context of local politics in America' (Stone, 1995: 96).

While Stone is right to highlight the existence of intellectual, moral and political leadership, this account overlooks the fact that elites wield positional as well as personal power and that dynamic personal leadership is insufficient to secure effective governance. An entrepreneurial urban agenda needs political space for the operational autonomy of growth machines and not just economic space on which they might work their transforming magic. Hence there is a need to dismantle structures of urban managerialism and create (impose) conditions for negotiation and network formation at the local level.

This does not imply that the local does not matter. Local political actors are not mere marionettes, exercising muscle solely in response to extra-local activity. As Cox and Jonas (1993: 14) have argued:

Institutional arrangements can serve to create local social relations which also entrap. The creation of a particular scale division of labour within the state, for instance, provides an institutional horizon around which individual agents plan, develop

expectations about the future and allocate resources accordingly. ... Judged at a high level of abstraction there is no necessary relation between local interests and local jurisdictional arrangement. At a more concrete level, however, the relation between the two loses its contingent character and serves to give concrete form to the local interest.

We now consider the claim that "(r)egime theory has the capacity to travel. ... [In] its concern with the blending of capacities between governmental and non-governmental actors, regime theory would seem to highlight processes which are now more to the fore in the British system" (Stoker, 1995, 69). We do so by briefly exploring the political manoeuvres surrounding Manchester's failed bid to host the Olympic Games in 2000.

At first sight, the Olympic bid process underlines claims that British urban politics are becoming more like those in the US: pro-growth, dominated by business, departing from the British party-political norm, and, despite the continued concentration of power at central government level, tending towards relative disintegration at local governance level. Manchester's Olympic bid was locally judged to be less about sport than about economic growth and -- in the context of a declining economy -- regeneration. The bid was initiated, and run, by people from the private sector, although there was strong moral and material support from both local institutions of governance (the local authority, the local urban development corporations) and, later, national government. Support for the bid was not politicized and attracted all-party support. In a very short time the Olympic bid acquired almost hegemonic status: it was regarded as self-evident that winning the Olympics would be good for Manchester, a truth proclaimed by companies supporting the bidding process. True to growth machine theory, there was heavy representation from local construction companies, regional utilities, the only bank with local headquarters, and the local media. Likewise there as strong support from those institutions that Logan and Molotch (1987, page 75) view as 'auxiliary players': the universities, organized labour (inasmuch as the regional TUC supported it), and corporate capitalists. The Olympic bid also saw the City Council's senior officers and political leaders take part in transforming the modus operandi of local economic development. The new approach would be based on elite networking, opportunism, and a more entrepreneurial approach on the part of officers and the whole organization.

Yet, recent Manchester politics, particularly those played out in the Olympic bid, also show that, however great the superficial convergence of state structures, growth machine theory is far from an adequate explanatory framework. The bid actually demonstrates the limitations of local strategic capacity. This conclusion would still hold even if the Olympic bid had been successful: for success would have depended just as much on playing the game according to rules and on a playing field shaped by extra-local forces. Both sets of partners -- public and private -- had only limited control over the development process. At its most benign, this might result in a mutually beneficial local pooling of resources and influence; but it could just as often ensure that both parties' goals are undermined. This possibility could occur through subordination to the (geographic) centre or through constraints rooted in the wider -- global -- rules by which the place-marketing game is being played. Obsessive concern with how power and control are being redistributed locally can mask the full extent to which the locus of power has already shifted away from all local actors, whether in business or local government. Despite this, in the new language of partnership, it must be presented as a process of local negotiation.

It's very difficult, in some of the partnerships that we have, to say that the control is absolutely here [with the City Council]. You can say, if it comes to some of the schemes, that the control is with the Council, ... you can say that control is with central government, ... you can say it's with the people who are actually running the bid ... [In reality] they're partnerships where people have vetoes (Councillor, Manchester City Council).

Few in the city were inclined (or, indeed, sufficiently knowledgeable) to question this informally-regulated system of local checks and balances as long as there was still some prospect of winning the Games nomination. Eyes were being firmly fixed on the big picture -- the possibility of winning the Games and the need to maintain a unified voice during the bidding period. It was deemed counter-productive and even treacherous to question the politics or finances of the bidding process during a time of maximum global exposure. Any bid for the Olympics must, above all, be about 'feel-good politics' (see Hill, 1992). Thus the bidding process exerted a kind of local hegemonic discipline on urban political actors: it was taken as axiomatic in Manchester that the city's ability to 'deliver' the Games depended on the continued strength of its new 'partnership'.

Despite the emergence of what looked like a more vibrant localized politics, Manchester's Olympic project was heavily dependent on the decisions of national political actors. Manchester's 'new money' was, of course, anything but, since it was top-sliced from urban spending programmes (Dalby, 1993) and Manchester achieved the unique position of having its own expenditure line in the Department of the Environment's published spending plans (DoE, 1993). Thus Manchester's Olympic bid must be seen as part of a wider reorganization in the funding and delivery of urban aid, as part of what Stewart sees as a competitively- (and centrally-) orchestrated 'new localism [based on the] decentralization of administration as opposed to the devolution of power and influence' (Stewart, 1994, p. 143). Despite this state-sponsored rush to form partnerships, local business coalitions are still very fragile. In fact, they often rupture when confronted with divisive issues or challenges of political priority-setting (Peck and Tickell, 1994, 1995).

In short, while there are superficial similarities between urban governance in the US and urban regimes emerging in the UK, this convergence is due neither to the actions of autonomous political elites nor to the dominance of local property interests. Instead they have arisen from changing structural constraints, the redefinition of strategic contexts, changed modes of political rationality on the part of the British central state and the European Commission, and the gradual adaptation of local states to these constraints as they seek to manage the repercussions of uneven development in ways that sustain local political legitimacy. We would particularly highlight the following factors: (a) the crisis of Britain's flawed Fordism and of its associated Keynesian-welfare national state, which has prompted demands for supra-national crisis-management and also generated space for regional and local resurgence; (b) the discursive constitution of new policy paradigms which emphasize flexibility and entrepreneurialism as appropriate responses to the rigidities of a crisis-prone Fordism and the increased significance of structural competitiveness in international, inter-regional, and, indeed, intra-regional competition; (c) the tendential hollowing out of the national state -- a process which, at least in the United Kingdom, is nonetheless regulated by the national state through enhanced central control over the legitimate forms and objectives of local authority economic intervention as well as through vigorous promotion of the shift from local government to quite specific forms of local governance; (d) the parallel promotion by the European Commission of local and regional partnerships -- motivated, however, by a desire to weaken national states and secure support for a 'Europe of the regions'; (e) the search by local authorities themselves for some autonomous political space in which to continue to deliver goods and services to

local communities and secure re-election in a period of after-Fordist crisis; and (f) the emergence of new forms of 'political capitalism', i.e., the search for new opportunities for profit through support for specific political projects (including politically-administered recommodification) and wholly or partly state-financed economic undertakings.

Whilst this explains the contingent necessity of the *emergence* of new urban growth machines, it is far from explaining their *survival* despite limited success. This depends on the hegemony of a symbolic politics which requires the appearance of action as a form of crisis-management. The search for new technical and spatial fixes, the formation and reformation of partnerships, the cultivation of city pride and place-marketing are plausible political alternatives to the despairing recognition of local disempowerment in the face of globalization and national economic decline. There are enough cases of success that others are encouraged to emulate them -- thereby overlooking the zero-sum character of so much inter-regional and inter-urban competition.

VII. Conclusion: Spaces of Regulation/Places of governance

The growth of urban business elite activity in Britain should not be interpreted as involving a unilateral convergence US models prompted by the emergence of similar economic threats or opportunities. Rather, it is intricately and inextricably related to the restructuring of the state in Britain; and to related struggles around the reconstitution of central-local relations. Two conclusions follow.

First, business elites have been incorporated into the political process by the state as a means of furthering the restructuring of the state apparatus. In part this is inspired by Thatcherite admiration of the free-wheeling, neo-liberal, market-driven model (itself an ideological construct) allegedly found in the United States. But the very attempt to recreate this American idyll in Britain involves direct state intervention. Specifically, it has entailed the recruitment of business leaders onto local organizations, orchestrated directly by central government, with a view to redefining both the institutional form and the policy orientation of the (local) welfare-workfare state.

It follows, second, that the political power of local business elites does not derive from some form of autonomous political capacity on the part of the business community, but is in effect 'licensed' by the state; it is the power of a structural-strategic position within a

broader political system. Specifically, central government has created a series of (discursively as well as materially constituted) 'platforms' from which business leaders can exercise political influence, albeit within a set of (centrally) predetermined parameters.

Much of the rhetorical appeal of urban regimes rests on the assumption that somewhere, beyond the political posturing of the council chamber and the interminable bureaucracy of the town hall, lies a nirvana of shared beliefs and community interests; the task of business is to lead the way (cf. Stone, 1995 on leadership). But rhetorical appeals to localism, to social responsibilities, to partnership and to shared visions are one thing, the complex and often acrimonious reality of local politics and governance failure is another.

Endnotes

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