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AVANCES DE
INVESTIGACIÓN

**REGIONAL POLICY AND THE
INFORMATION SOCIETY¹**

It is a great pleasure to revisit the field of theoretical and pragmatic reflection on regional policy. I am convinced that my synthetic paper published in 1987 [Kuklinski, 1987] could be treated as a *sui generis* historical introduction to the present con-

tribution on Regional Policy and the Information Society. I would like to accept the following topical outline of this contribution :

1. Regional policy — a conceptual framework [Stiens, 1994].
2. The classical model of regional policy as developed by the industrial society and the welfare state.
3. The new emerging model of regional policy as developed by the information society and by the global developmental scene [Guinet, 1995].
4. The quartet of regional policies in Europe.
5. The integrated regional policies as a challenge for the European Union.
6. The role of the European Union in the promotion of a new model of regional policies [Simmie, 1997].
7. The role of regional policies in the development of information societies in Europe.
8. Research priorities.

Annex — The three scenarios of European development.

1. Regional policy — a conceptual framework

Regional policy, broadly speaking, is as old as the state. It can be defined as the art of applying various governmental approaches to different parts of a country. In this sense, we can discuss regional policies not only in contemporary states but also in the Roman Empire.

The notion of regional policy and the term itself, however, relate to the experience of the twentieth century. Regional policy initially emerged as a deliberate effort by the public authorities, and especially national governments, to diminish the disequilibria between regions by applying specially designed instruments. In most cases, the goals and fundamental functions of regional policies.

The pioneering state is, as a rule, to be traced to Western, Central European and North American experiences in the 1930s. After the Second World War, and especially in the 1950s and 1960s, the concept of regional policy was almost universally recognized and applied. Naturally, successes and failures were strongly affected by economic, social and political conditions prevailing in various countries.

The general history of regional policies remains to be written. In another context I have outlined the research priorities in this field [Kuklinski, 1983]. In this history the important distinction between explicit and implicit regional policies should be recognized. I have expressed the following opinion [Kuklinski, 1983]:

"In most cases we are restricting our attention to explicit regional policies, in other words, to policies which are so called in official documents and in academic publications which describe, analyze and evaluate those documents. This is a nominalistic approach. However, we should promote the application of a substantial approach in this field. This approach recognizes not only the existence of explicit regional policies but also implicit regional policies which, in many situations, are a very important

¹ Publicado originalmente en: European Parliament-European Commission, *Proceedings of Third European Union/Central and Eastern European Countries Society Forum*, Brussels, 9-10 October 1997.



factor of change in the regional reality of a very given country. The analysis of implicit regional policies is very difficult and the spectrum of those policies is very broad. It is rather the invisible part of the iceberg.

By implicit regional policies I mean the locational and regional consequences of all important decisions in the socio-economic sphere, formulated and implemented by central and regional authorities of a given country."

Let me mention just as example, the employment policies, agricultural policies, industrialization policies, social policies, foreign trade policies, and so on.

This opinion —expressed in 1983 is valid today not only in relation to regional policies designed and implemented at the national level but also in relation to regional policies of the European Union. In the framework of the European Commission the distinction between explicit regional policies developed in the framework of DG XVI and implicit regional policies developed by all other DGs is very important.

The hypothesis should be tested — that the implicit regional policies of the European Commission are a much stronger instrument of transformation of the regional reality than the explicit regional policies of DG XVI.

In the framework of the goal-setting processes related to regional policies, the distinction between socially and globally-minded regional policies is of crucial validity. The socially-minded regional policies are seen as a contribution to the implementation of the general idea of inter-personal equality. For such policies the reduction of interregional disparities is the cornerstone. The essence of globally-minded regional policies is to create the regional locomotives of successful performance on the global competitive scene. In the European Commission it would be extremely difficult to find an integrated model of regional policies.

In this place, let me mention only the difference between implicit globally-minded regional

policies of DG IV and explicit socially-minded regional policies of DG XVI.

Last but not least, in the discussion on regional policies in Europe we should note the shift in the perception of regions. In the classical regional development doctrine, the leading analogy of the region was a quasi state. Now we should consider regions also, or first of all, as quasi-firms. This observation may be found in the path breaking paper of S. Boisier [Boiser, 1992] introducing the concept of regional management in the following context:

"A vision of the region as a quasi-firm means applying some corporate procedures to the region *mutatis mutandis*, particularly those of the "large corporation", one of the few contemporary organizations that uses the modern concept of planning effectively.

This leads to the conclusion that regional development management —as opposed to the former conventional concept of planning— must define a strategy which contains the following set of variable pairs for every region:

- 1) Products and markets.
- 2) Projects and financing.
- 3) Human resources and employment.
- 4) Corporate image and promotion.

"Go out and compete", a must in this day and age, means developing a regional corporate image that serves as a basis for "marketing" the region and its products. The regional corporate image requires —once again— building a solid regional identity and constantly playing up the uniqueness of the region's products. It explains, for example, the intrepid battles for "trademark" or for a monopoly on origin as with French cognac, Manchego cheese —from Castilla-La Mancha— or Chilean pisco.

Forging a corporate image and using it as a basis for promotion is not the task of a regional government alone. This is one of the areas where coordination between the public and private sectors should be most fruitful. Instead of the traditional factors of location, all based on

the Fordist paradigm, what are of the interest to transitional capital today are precisely those new regional "economic foundations", among which a consensual regional development strategy appears to be one of the most vital.

Clearly, regional development management based on quasi-firm approach requires professional skills that are different from those that are today typical of the regional technocrat or bureaucrat, and clearly entails a quest for a way of running a regional government that is completely different from that in the past.

In this context, a regional government must not only work together with the regional citizenry—particularly in the private sector—; the strategic running of a regional government must go beyond specifying the set of four pairs of variables mentioned above, to associate itself strongly with the formation of synergic agglomerations [S. Boisier, F. Sabatini, A. Sojo and P. Vergara, 1991], the establishment of interactive networks and the buildings of modern infrastructure that facilitates competitiveness.

This is, therefore, the dual contemporary vision of regional management: a quasi-state politically and administratively and a quasi-firm in terms of development strategy. As will be seen below, this dual vision has considerable implications for the administration of regional development".

To my knowledge, this shift in the perception of regions is not reflected in the huge documentation produced by the European Commission.

2. The classical model of regional policy as developed by the industrial society and the welfare state

In the paper presented at the Plenary Meeting of ARL [Kuklinski, 1999], I have formulated the following generalization:

"Two ideological and pragmatic principles were incorporated in the construction of the Keynesian Welfare State:

- the principle of full employment and
- the principle of social justice.

These two principles were applied not only to the sphere of interpersonal relations but also to the interpretation of the regional scene, and especially to the relations between strong and weak regions.

The Doctrine of Diminishing Interregional Disparities was generally accepted as the theoretical and pragmatic foundation in the broad domains of regional policies and regional planning.

The essence of this doctrine may be formulated as follows:

For political, social, moral and economic reasons the society and the state should not tolerate such movements of the spontaneous market forces which generate and multiply long-term disparities between more and less developed regions.

Two types of disparities were recognized :

1. relatively shallow disparities of quantitative character
2. relatively deep disparities of quantitative and qualitative character.

The disparities of the second type were described as gaps. The classical example is the case of Italy where a gap is dividing the country into Mezzogiorno and Central and Northern parts of the country.

In such situation we also use the concept of dual economy and dual society. The classical Doctrine of Diminishing Interregional Disparities¹ is a product of the Keynesian Welfare State.

It is not an accident that the crisis of the Welfare State is, at the same time, the crisis of the theory and practice of the DDID."

The socially-minded regional policies were developed by the industrial society and by the welfare state. The crisis of these two institutional foundations is creating an empirical and ideological crisis of socially-minded regional policies in Europe. The analysis of the crisis in the different European countries is outside the framework of this paper. Let me present only some general observations:

¹ The concept of the Doctrine of Diminishing Interregional Disparities has two dimensions:

a) the cognitive dimension as an inquiry into the changing nature and scale of interregional disparities: b) pragmatic dimension as a political and institutional programme implementing the idea of diminishing interregional disparities in a given country or group of countries.

- a. the empirical dimensions of this crisis are more evident than the ideological dimensions. In other words, the ideology of socially-minded regional policies is surviving more often than the empirical evidence of the diminishing interregional disparities.
- b. the Netherlands are the best example of the shift from socially to globally-minded regional policies. Twenty years ago, the Dutch were worrying about how to diminish the disparities between Randstadt Holland and the eastern provinces of the country. Now the Dutch are concentrating attention on policies and activities which improve the competitive advantage of Randstadt Holland in relation to New York, London, Paris, Tokyo.
- c. DG XVI is now the most outstanding institution in Europe promoting ideologically and empirically the model of socially-minded regional policies.

To use the term of Gunnar Myrdal, DG XVI is "swimming against the stream". We should answer the question —is this approach "a virtue", "a mistake" or both "a virtue" and "a mistake"?

3. The new emerging model of regional policy as developed by the information society and by the global developmental scene

The last quarter of the 20th century is a great *Sturm und Drang* Period. This historical turning point can be described as a quartet of mutually interrelated transitions:

- from Fordism to Post Fordism;
- from Modernism to Post Modernism [Chojnicki, 1995];
- from the Keynesian Welfare State to the Shumpeterian Workfare State [Cooke, 1995];
- from industrial to information society [Wierzbicki, 1996].

De facto, these four transitions are the expressions of different dimensions of the same

great historical turning point which is manifested in the profound metamorphosis of the global competitive arena as presented in a recent OECD study [Guinet, 1995] where we find the following information:

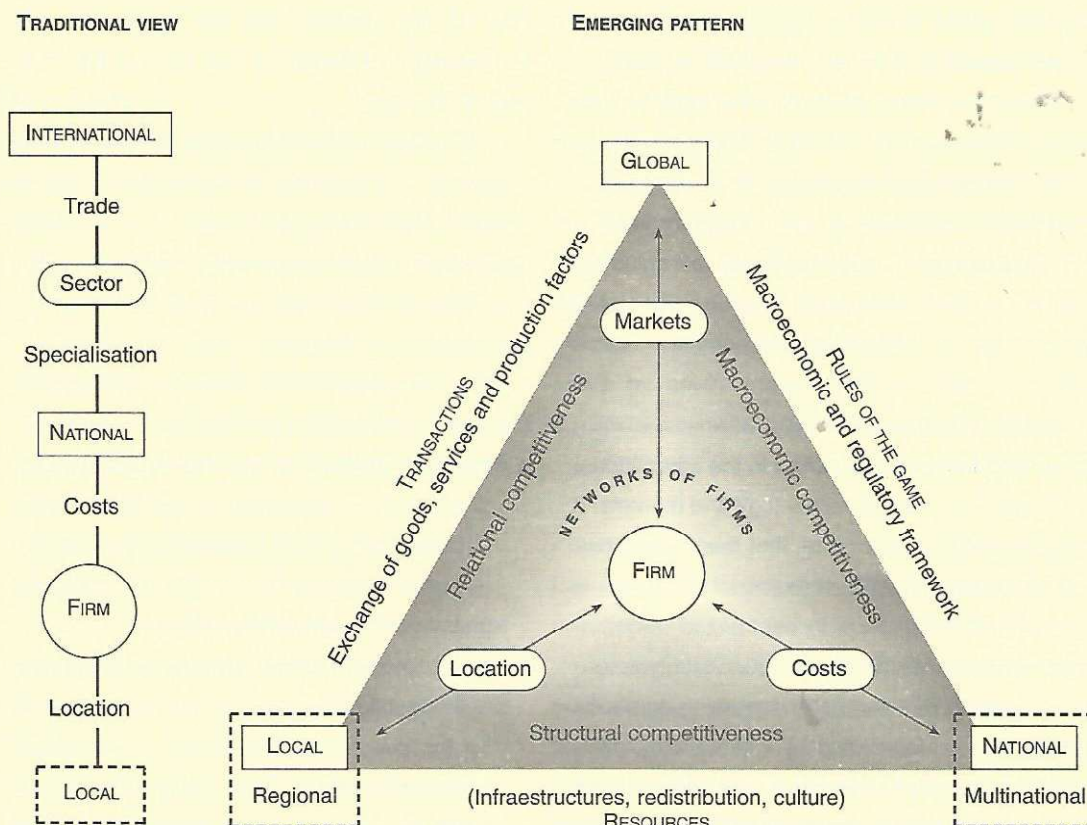
"First, the scope and intensity of productive sector competition have as a whole increased under the combined effect of deregulation and the increasing capabilities of new participants in the world markets.

Second, the competitive arena is undergoing a profound metamorphosis only covered partly by the word "globalization". Chart 1 gives a simplified picture of what is happening. Although the situation is hypothetical, it suggests a host of practical implications, especially since the competitive arena's new geometry allows many more variations than the old for each individual market, and more combinations of these variations for the market systems that make up national economies. For example, the conventional interpretation of trade in terms of comparative advantage is now challenged. A country cannot be said to have a factor endowment; it has rather a selection of factor endowments since firms handle local or national resources differently, while of course processing them, according to each firm's character, which is not exactly the same as its sectoral or national status.

The number of possible combinations among firms' particular assets and local/national resources is multiplied even further if the global nature of the market and company strategies is taken into account. International differences in factor endowment, besides the result of more complex interactions in multidimensional continuum, become perceptible only at more and more refined levels, as it is shown by the development of intra-branch trade.

These levels can sometimes even be situated in intra-firm rather than market transactions. The interpretation of trends in revealed comparative advantages, which are subject to

CHART I
THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE COMPETITIVE ARENA



Source: OECD Secretariat

regular statistical monitoring, becomes problematic since the relation between what is known and what is compared becomes more and more tenuous."

The new geometry of the competitive arena is creating new conditions for regional development and regional policy where a shift from passive support measures to active self-reliance strategies is being observed. This shift is outlined, in dramatic terms, by P. Nijkamp [Nijkamp, 1994].

"In the past decade the scope and substance of regional development have dramatically changed. The traditional viewpoints and policy strategies on problem regions —characterized by high unemployment, low income and low productivity, poor accessibility and insufficient level

of public services— have shifted from passive support measures to active self-reliance strategies. The awareness has grown that regions are no islands in a calm sea, but part of a spatial economic network dominated by competitive forces [Nijkamp, 1993]. Regions which —thorough their competitive advantage —are able to attract a considerable share of the national and international market will become the winners in this game [cf. Biehl, 1986; Porter, 1991]. Thus regions may in principle be regarded as islands of innovations and entrepreneurial spirit in a broader spatial network context."

S. Boisier [Boisier, 1997], in his last paper, is extending his arguments into the challenging field of the new epistemology of regional development.

"Both from the macro standpoint, and whether we take the academic point of view or the political one, there are reasons for serious concern about territorial development—in the broad meaning of the term—in every country.

From the macro point of view, political and economic trends in the world at large are bringing about significant changes in political geography, generating simultaneous but apparently contradictory processes whose tendency is to blur the concept of the nation-state produce structures which may be likened to supranational quasi-states—such as the organizations of the European Union—and vitalize sub-national territories and cities as new actors in the international competition for capital, technology and markets. It may be added, furthermore, that there is a growing perception that the objective of competitiveness is irreconcilable with centralized decision-making structures, an observation that gives reason to predict widespread and growing demands for decentralization including, undoubtedly, political/territorial decentralization, that will increase the importance of territorial management.

From the micro point of view, there is growing recognition of the simple but powerful fact that the ability of individuals, whoever they may be, to realize their life projects, depends to a significant degree on what is happening in the physical or territorial "environment" in which they are living. Periodic evaluation of this relationship, often producing a negative conclusion, is at least part of the reason for many migration decisions.

The speed of change in today's world does not affect just the material sphere; it also affects the sphere of ideas and concepts or, in more general terms, the knowledge and paradigms that enclose them. In fact, not only does humanity's accumulated knowledge double in ever shorter time periods, but at the same time part of that knowledge becomes obsolete and loses its ability to offer explanations and codes of conduct. A great part of our former knowledge about the phenomenology of regional

development has become irrelevant as a result, among other reasons, of the change from "closed" economic conditions to "open" ones, and of the effects that the Scientific and Technological Revolution has had on the "friction of distance".

This explains the epistemological renewal now underway. The scientific fundamentals of what is known about "regional" issues are changing apace, and it is difficult to predict any final or definitive result. Perhaps the only thing that is clear is the absurdity of remaining stuck in the past."

The observations and reflections presented in this paper lead me to the following conclusions :

- a. the development of the information society and the metamorphosis of the global competitive arena create conditions for the emergence of a new model of regional policy: the globally-minded regional policy;
- b. the cornerstone of this policy is the recognition of the fact that in the XXI century the region will be the direct actor performing on the global competitive arena. This competitive region must be, at the same time, a Regional Innovation System [cf. Braczyk & Heidenreich, 1992; Galar, 1997; Cooke, 1995];
- c. the European countries and the European Union will—sooner or later—be obliged to internalize the ideology and the modus operandi of this model;
- d. it means not that the territorial cohesion of the Enlarged European Union is an issue without important economic, political, social and cultural dimensions.

However, the main problem in this field should not be seen in the framework of the classical discussion on interregional disparities. The main problem in this field is the territorial cohesion in Europe.

4. The quartet of regional policies in Europe

The EGO of regional policies in Europe is determined by the performance of four actors:

- The Regions,
- The State,
- The Transnational Corporation,
- The European Union.

The regions

United Europe of the future is sometimes envisaged as a *de facto* federation of regions and a *de iure* Confederation of States. In this context, 3 scenarios are emerging, following the 3 scenarios of European development (see Annex):

- Europe as a "federation" of strong and weak regions in the Franciscan Scenario;
- Europe as a "federation" of strong regions in the Darwinian scenario;
- Europe as a "federation" of innovative learning regions in the Thurowian scenario.

Anyway, the competitive region as an actor of the global competitive arena will be an important element of the European landscape of the 21st century.

The national states

The globalization trends are reducing the role of the national states as the *EGO* of regional policy. It would, however, be wrong to accept a nihilistic approach in this field. The national state will not evaporate from the map of Europe of the 21st century.

The transnational corporations

Each transnational corporation, and especially each grand transnational corporation [Barnet & Cavanagh, 1994] has a regional policy defined as the ability to practice the application of different approaches to different parts of the globe.

The regional reality of Europe—the regional patterns of the European development—will be more and more determined by the scope and power of regional policies designed and implemented by the transnational corporations [Phelps, 1997], which are especially important in

the fields related to the processes of the creation and diffusion of innovation [Sigurdson, 1996].

The European union

The enlarged European Union will face a dramatic dilemma: the socially versus globally-minded regional policies. Contrary to optimistic and perhaps naive expectations of the potential new members of the European Union, the Union, under the pressure of globalization trends, will be pushed into preference for the globally-minded regional policies.

5. The integrated regional policies as a challenge for the European union

As already observed —*hinc et nunc*— in the European Commission it would be extremely difficult to find an integrated vision of regional policies.

Cum grano salis we can say that DG XVI is dedicated to explicit socially-minded regional policies. It would be extremely interesting to prepare an inventory of implicit regional policies implemented *de facto* by the respective DG-is. I would guess that in the field of implicit policies the globally-minded regional policy is stronger than the socially-minded policy.

In other words, the institutional divergence between explicit and implicit regional policies is *aggravated by the substantial divergency between socially and globally-minded regional policies*. In the evaluation of this *status quo* two approaches are possible:

- a) these divergences are the expression of pluralism which is a very sound phenomenon both in Europe and in the European Commission;
- b) these divergences are the expression of institutional inconsistencies which diminish the role of the European Commission as an actor transforming the regional reality in Europe.

Following the arguments presented in this paper, I am inclined to think that in the new future the model of globally-minded regional



policies will assume the prevailing position in the framework of the European Commission *in toto*.

I am convinced that this model will also be a much better vehicle for the integration of the explicit and implicit regional policies than the model of socially-minded regional policies.

6. The role of the European union in the promotion of a new model of regional policies

The dilemma of socially versus globally-minded regional policies is a global problem. I think, however, that the best intellectual and pragmatic framework for the discussion about this problem is the Atlantic Community incorporating Europe, North America and Latin America.

The European Commission should sponsor and Atlantic Meeting of an Expert Group, on a new model of regional policy for the information society of the 21st century.

The intellectual pragmatic triangle Europe-North America-Latin America is a vehicle which should be successfully used not only in the field of regional policy.

There is a great deficiency of Atlantic interactions in our present experience!

7. The role of regional policies in the development of information societies in Europe

The European landscape could be seen as the mosaic of three elements:

- primo — residual and shrinking islands of agrarian societies;
- secundo — grand and shrinking islands of industrial societies;
- tertio — quickly expanding islands of information societies assuming a dominating position in a growing number of European regions.²

The patterns of this mosaic demonstrate a strong regional differentiation with different power

of the 3 Societies in different parts of Europe.

Our knowledge on the changing nature of the European space [Kukliński, 1997] would be immensely enlarged if a grand-scale empirical study on the European landscape could be designed and implemented. This study would also be a contribution to the changing delimitation of the developmental gap separating the European centre from the European peripheries.³ (See Map 1.)

We will probably discover that in the European centre the information society is already prevailing and the pockets of agrarian and industrial societies are very small.

In the European peripheries, and especially in East-Central Europe, Eastern Europe and in Mediterranean Europe we will still find many islands of the agrarian society and quite large territories covered by the industrial society. In the European peripheries the emerging and quickly growing islands of the information societies are definitely weaker than the parallel phenomena in the European centre. Nevertheless, the dynamics of the information society is probably opening new opportunities for the European periphery to diminish its relative backwardness in relation to the European centre.

In this context, we should prepare a comprehensive cost benefit analysis of the implementation of the new model of globally-minded regional policies in Europe. This model would be liberated from the obsession of interregional disparities.⁴

This model would promote the development of regional locomotives of successful performance not only in the European centre but also in the European periphery, accelerating the rate of expansion of the growing islands of the information society.

The globally-minded of regional policy is a better vehicle for the absorption of the innovative capacities created by the information society that is the classical model of socially-minded regional policies.

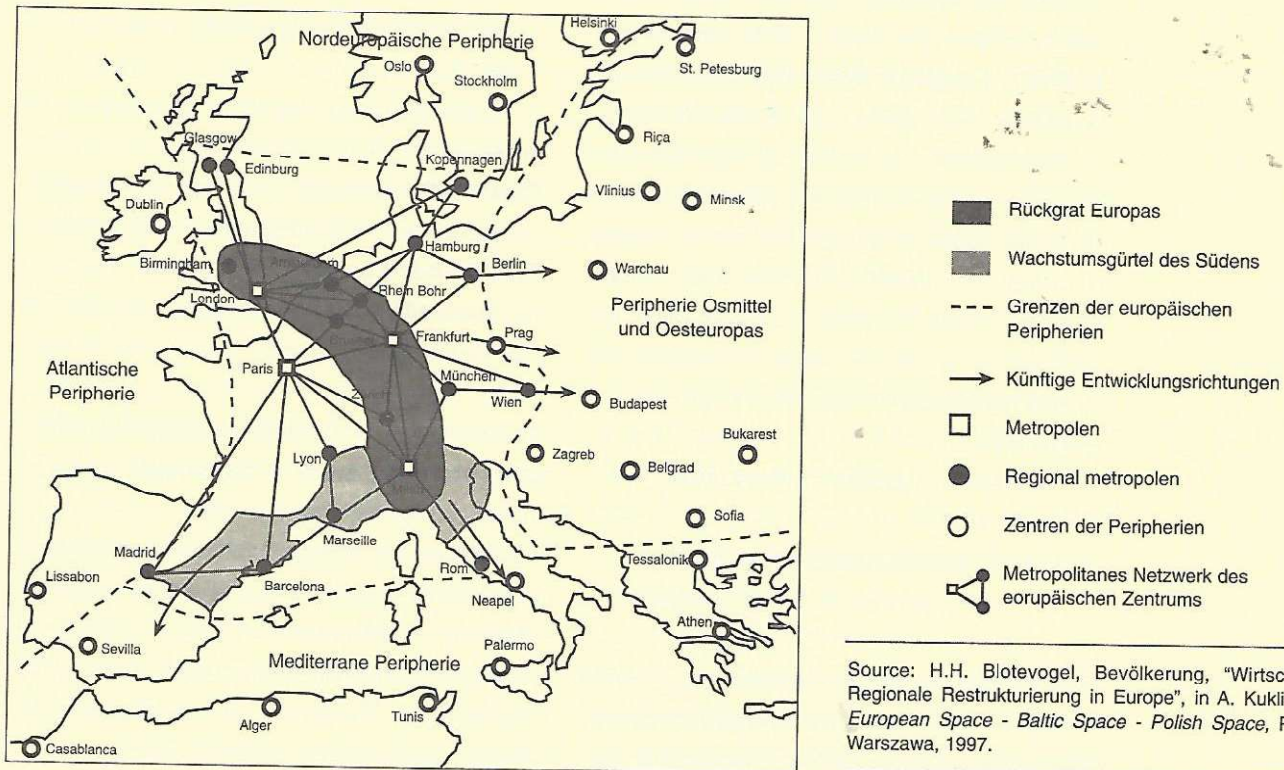
² Compare: Ministerium für Wirtschaft Mittelstand und Technologie des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalens-Kultur und Medienwirtschaft in den Regionen Nordrhein-Westfalens, Düsseldorf, 1995.

Compare also: "Internet Communities, How They're Shaping Electronics Commerce", *Business Week, European Edition*, May 5, 1997. Compare also: L. Lindenberg, "The Growing Importance of Culture in Planning and Development", in A. Kukliński, ed., *European Space - Baltic Space - Polish Space*, Part Two, op.cit.

³ For comparative reflection on the Center —Periphery Gap in North America— see: "The Border-Gleaming factories and fast growth but also drugs and poverty. The US Mexican border is a supercharged economy where First and Third Worlds meet", *Business Week, European Edition*, May 12, 1997.

⁴ Please compare, however, the recent discussions on poverty issues in US and in Latin America — R. J. Samuelson, *Money Doesn't Matter but Character Does*, *New York Times —Latin American Poverty*— both in I.H.T., May 7, 1997.

MAP I
ZENTREN UND PERIPHERIEN IN EUROPA



Source: H.H. Blotvogel, Bevölkerung, "Wirtschaft und Regionale Restrukturierung in Europa", in A. Kukliński, ed., *European Space - Baltic Space - Polish Space*, Part One, Warszawa, 1997.

8. Research priorities

I hope that this paper has opened some elements of a new vision of theoretical reflection and empirical studies related to the information society and regional policies. Maybe this vision can be outlined in the form of the list of research priorities organized along the following topics:

- The growth, decline and survival of agrarian societies in Europe.
- The growth, decline and survival of industrial societies in Europe.
- The development of information societies in Europe.
- The changing mosaic of the European landscape (the regional pattern of the "cohabitation" of agrarian, industrial and information societies in Europe).
- The European landscape and the centre-

periphery gap in Europe.

- The dynamics of regional development in agrarian, industrial and information societies.
- The changing models of regional policy. The new model related to the realities of the information society.
- The changing nature of knowledge and the emergence of new paradigms.

This list of research priorities could be tested, *inter alia*, at the Atlantic Meeting of the Expert Group, on a new model of regional policy for the information society of the 21st century.

Conclusion

I am very grateful for the inducement to write this paper on regional policy and the information policy. This task was a real challenge for my mind, my knowledge and my intuition, which is always so important in our intellectual and pragmatic activities.

The critical reader of this paper will answer the question to my success or my failure in meeting this challenge. Anyway, I would like to ask to compare this paper with my earlier contributions on regional policy published in 1970 [Kuklinski, 1970] and in 1987 [Kuklinski, 1987].

We have the opportunity to find out to what extent the author was able to grasp the change of almost Three decades in the field of regional development, regional policies and regional studies. In this comparison, please take into account that the present paper on regional policy and information society has a limited status of a first draft.

Warszawa — Zoliborz. June 2, 1997.

Annex: Three scenarios of European development of the 21st century ⁵

The complicated history of Europe is probably unique in the dimension of its wealth and diversity [cf. Davies, s.f.]. Europe is a pluralistic continent. This pluralism means not only the broad diversification of the experiences of the past but also the broad field of opportunities and choices emerging in the future.

I think that the internal logic of transformation and the global challenges are well expressed in the three scenarios [cf. Kuklinski, 1997] of European development.

- a. The Franciscan Scenario
- b. The Darwinian Scenario
- c. The Thurowian Scenario

a. The Franciscan Scenario

The welfare state was one of the greatest institutional innovations of the 20th century. It was an important instrument to eliminate the suicidal mechanism of social autodestruction incorporated in the philosophy of the 10th century *laissez-faire* capitalism.

The welfare state was a response of the Great Western Liberal Democracies to the three challenges of the dramatic experiences of the 20th century :

- 1. the Great Depression of the early Thirties,
- 2. the experience of World War II,
- 3. The challenge of the quasi-socialist ideology and practice generated by the Soviet Empire of Evil.

There are many important chapters in the development of the welfare state : The New Deal of F.D. Roosevelt, the British Chapter started during the World War II, The French Chapter, The Dutch and Swedish Chapters and —last but not least— The German Chapter, of the *Soziale Marktwirtschaft*. The ideology of the Welfare State was deeply incorporated in the value judgements and institutional solutions developed in the framework of the consecutive incarnations of the European Union.

In this spirit, we should discuss the Franciscan Scenario as a scenario of the European development of the 21st century. In this Scenario, the European Union will transform itself into a federal welfare state, following the best traditions of the national welfare states of the 20th century.

Prima facie, this scenario is totally unrealistic. The last quarter of the 20th century has generated a deep crisis of the welfare state which — according to the neoliberal thinking— will lead to the total destruction of the welfare state in the beginning of the 21st century.

It is true that the inefficient and degenerated versions of the welfare state will be rejected and eliminated. But it is also true that the question how to put “some humanity into efficiency” will remain as an important European question of the 21st century. This means that the Franciscan Scenario should not be eliminated from the scope of our attention. This is the scenario of social justice, social cohesion and social solidarity.

A realistic view of this grand dilemma of the European Development was expressed by H. Tietmayer, the President of the German Bundesbank [Friedman, 1997]:

“I am not saying the welfare state has no future, but that we must be competitive in

⁵ Compare: A. Kuklinski, 1997, ed. *European Space - Baltic Space - Polish Space*, Part one, Part two, Warsaw.

the end", he said. "Each country, therefore, can only afford as much of a welfare state as it is able to finance without harming its competitiveness. And that is very difficult for people to understand. A new thinking is necessary. A lot of people think it is the end of our way of life. That's not my point. My message is that we must be more realistic". "The new realism", he added, "is starting in Europe on wages, on labour costs, on social security and on reducing budget deficits."

b. The Darwinian Scenario

Europe must face the challenges of the global competition which will be stronger and more ruthless in the 21st century than it was in the 20th century. In this scenario, the European institutions will have no other choice than to support the development of the most efficient social and entrepreneurial actors, local, regional and national communities; in other words, the European institutions will promote "survival of the fittest" who will win in the competitive struggle on the global scene.

The Darwinian Scenario is not an abstract phenomenon. It should be analysed in the context of the new Darwinian vision of the global society. Such a vision was presented by I. O. Angel [Angel, 1996]:

"Peter Drucker has a very interesting forecast. He says that humanity is polarizing into two employment categories : the intellectual, cultural and business elite; the mobile knowledge workers, and the rest, in immobile service workers.

Routine production services can either be replaced by robots or exported anywhere on the globe, and wages in this sector are already beginning to converge world-wide to Third World levels.

Inevitably the slow redistribution of wealth that has occurred over the last century is being reversed, rapidly.

Societies are stratifying and new elites are appearing. The future is inequality: at the very bottom of the heap, Western societies are already witnessing the emergence of a rapidly expanding under-class."

I. O. Angel is concluding his analysis by formulating an ominous question mark: "How long before the notion of "Human Rights" is as outdated as the 'Divine Right of Kings'?"

The Darwinian Scenario is supported by the fatalistic logic of globalization.

It is also the surrender of the unique features of the European culture and civilization facing the challenges of the global scene. Nevertheless, this is a very important scenario, deserving a very serious attention in our studies.

c. The Thurowian Scenario

The brainstorming book *The Future of Capitalism* could be seen as a starting point of the third scenario —The Thurowian Scenario— following the name of the author of the book, Lester C. Thurow. L.C. Thurow is dramatically exposing the weakness of contemporary capitalism and the necessity of a profound metamorphosis of this system. The essence of the Thurowian philosophy of development is presented in the following way [Thurow, 1996]:

"Technology and ideology are shaking the foundations of twenty-first-century capitalism. Technology is making skills and knowledge the only source of sustainable strategic advantage. Abetted by the electronic media, ideology is moving toward a radical form of short-run individual consumption maximization at precisely a time when economic success will depend upon the willingness and ability to make long-run social investments in skills, education, knowledge and infrastructure. When technology and ideology start moving apart, the only question is when will the "big-one" —the earthquake that rocks the system— occur. Paradoxically, at precisely the time when capitalism finds itself with



no social competitors —its former competitors, socialism and communism, having died— it will have to undergo a profound metamorphosis.”

To my mind, the Thurowian Scenario is probably the best scenario for the future of Europe. It is the scenario of “long-run social investments in skills, education, knowledge and infrastructure”.

These three scenarios should be seen as the instruments of prospective thinking about the future of Europe. In this intellectual framework it is useful to see three different routes of the European development.

In pragmatic terms, we should rather anticipate that the future of Europe will incorporate an amalgamation of the Franciscan, Darwinian and

Thurowian approaches and motivations. It is extremely important, however, which of the 3 approaches will be the leading one, and which approaches will have only a smaller or bigger countervailing power.

The concept of the three scenarios can be applied not only in prospective thinking, it can also be applied to the evaluation of contemporary ideology, documentation and activity

- of DG IV Competition is close to the Darwinian Scenario
- of DG XVI Regional Policies are close to the Franciscan Scenario
- of DG XII Science and Technology are close to the Thurowian Scenario.

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