

Pluralism and the economic geography of development

Paper for the Annual Conference of the Association for Heterodox Economics, City
University, London, 15-17 July 2005.

Hugh Goodacre

Abstract

Economic geographers have long sustained an intense critique of the neoclassical orthodoxy that grips the economics discipline, zealously defending their pluralist traditions against the ‘monism’ of neoclassical initiatives such as Paul Krugman’s ‘new economic geography’. However, centralisation of theoretical and methodological issues has limited, constrained and fragmented this critical literature, deflecting the focus of attention away from some basic issues of political economy. This is particularly evident in the case of the economic geography of development, where a general failure by geographers to focus sufficiently sharply on the political economy and historical legacy of colonialism has all-too-often led them to replicate some assumptions of the economic orthodoxy of which they are otherwise such trenchant critics.

Contents:

Introduction
Krugman’s ‘new economic geography’ as economics ‘monism’
Economic geography – ‘immanent critique’ of the economic orthodoxy
Economists and geographers in inter-disciplinary standoff
Pluralism and inter-disciplinary ‘imports’
Pluralism and ‘mid-range theory’
Economic geography and the territorial integrity of the nation state
Pluralism and colonialism
Pluralism, the peripheral state, and socialism
Conclusions

Introduction

Economic geographers have long sustained an intense critique of the neoclassical orthodoxy that grips the economics discipline. This critique, whose roots can be traced back to the anti-positivist turn that swept many social sciences in the late 1960s, has in recent years been illustrated in an acute form by geographers' responses to the 'geographical turn' in economics exemplified by initiatives such as Paul Krugman's 'new economic geography'. So devastating is this geographical critique that it must surely appear convincing to all but the most dogmatic adherents of the economic orthodoxy. However, it will here be argued that the centralisation of theoretical and methodological issues within the geographic literature has limited, constrained and fragmented their critique, and has deflected the focus of attention away from some basic issues of political economy, notably those that arise in connection with the economic geography of development.

Accordingly, in what follows, the monism-pluralism debate will first be outlined, largely through reference to Krugman's initiative and geographers' responses to it. The tradition of pluralism within economic geography will then be explored in more detail, critically assessing its claims to constitute a viable alternative to the neoclassical orthodoxy. In conclusion, it will be suggested that there has been a general failure by geographers to focus sufficiently sharply on the political economy and historical legacy of colonialism, and that this has all-too-often led them to replicate some crucial assumptions of the economic orthodoxy of which they are otherwise such trenchant critics.

Krugman's 'new economic geography' as economics 'monism'

Krugman's 'new economic geography' appears to offer a promising opportunity for constructive interchange between economists and geographers, not least in respect of the economic geography of development. For example he calls for a return to the historically-oriented approach of pioneers of development economics such as Myrdal and Hirschman, arguing that his aim is to gain them the attention they deserve by reformulating their ideas in the mathematical, 'maximizing-minimizing' terms regarded as essential for acceptance within the economic mainstream. (Krugman 1995: chapter

1.) Furthermore, he has, in his journalistic writings, taken a strongly oppositional stand on a number of economic and political issues of current concern, in the course of which he has explicitly repudiated the neo-liberalism of the so-called ‘Washington Consensus’ (see, for example, *New York Times*, 9 August 2002, cited in Peet *et al.* (2003: 216)). Such a standpoint appears to suggest not only a rejection of the conservatism that has customarily prevailed within the economic orthodoxy but also a turn towards radical traditions of the kind that are familiar within economic geography.

The outcome has not, however, been so fortunate. Krugman’s concept of history has turned out to be drastically reductionist, his attitude to geographers dismissive to the point of hostility, and his commitment to the established principles of mainstream economics inflexible to the point of dogmatism.

The key to understanding Krugman’s standpoint is the quintessentially neoclassical nature of his underlying theory and method, in which the basis of a theory lies in ideas which are avowedly simple in the extreme (to the point of being ‘silly’), upon which is constructed a mathematical superstructure of daunting complexity (Krugman 1995: chapter 3). Thus, the basic building block of Krugman’s geographical initiative is a simple two-location model, in which an initial ‘symmetrical equilibrium’ between two identical two-sector locations is disturbed by some chosen factor – commonly a change in transport costs – with the result that they become differentiated into an exclusively manufacturing ‘core’ and an exclusively agricultural ‘periphery’. (Fujita *et al.* 1999: chapter 5, and, more briefly, Krugman 1995, 1998, 1999, 2000; Venables 1998; Schmutzler 1999; Meardon 2002.) That such a simple idea was formerly considered intractable to incorporation within a neo-classical framework was due, Krugman argues, to technical problems which have now been solved by the use of new “analytical tricks” in mathematical economic modelling

The approach displayed in this simple core-periphery model is elaborated by Krugman with great ingenuity to address a range of spatial-economic issues at all levels of scale. Thus, he puts forward a model of ‘globalisation’ in terms of the effects of the long-term reduction in transport costs – “first caravels, then steamships and railroads, then air freight...” – these transport costs being used, by extension, to represent transaction costs as a whole. From this point of view, globalisation is merely a stage at which the core-periphery model has gone into reverse, since transport (and/or transaction) costs have

declined so far that manufacturing firms desert the core to benefit from lower production costs in the periphery. (Fujita *et al.* 1999: chapter 14.)

Krugman's initiative provides a ringing endorsement of the fundamentals of mainstream economic analysis, and, while it has provoked some fairly sharp criticism from other economists, such criticism has generally been advanced on the basis of a broadly supportive standpoint. It is otherwise with the response of geographers, who have taken the opportunity to revitalise and elaborate, often in outspoken terms, their longstanding and unshakable conviction that their "theoretical and empirical pluralism offers more explanatory scope than the theoretical monism of the 'new economic geography'" (Martin 1999: 80; see also Martin and Sunley 2001: 158).

Economic geography – 'immanent critique' of the economic orthodoxy

The distinctive identity of economic geography as a sub-discipline has been developed in the course of such an explicit rejection of the theoretical and methodological principles prevailing in the discipline of economics that the economic geography literature and the 'geographical turn in economics' may in a sense be read as "immanent critiques of one another" (Clark 1998: 76, one of a series of critical responses to Krugman's initiative, which also includes Martin and Sunley 1996, Dymski 1996, Martin 1999, and Boddy 1999).

This was not always the case. Prior to the late 1960s, geographers had been devoting much effort to assessing and incorporating formalistic models of spatial-economic behaviour, notably those inherited from an approach, developed largely by German writers, known as 'location theory'. This enterprise gave economic geography the aspect of a positivistic discipline, ripe for closer theoretical and methodological association with mainstream economics.

This orientation was, however, quite abruptly repudiated as a result of a sharp turn towards a radical approach with roots in Marxian, Myrdalian and other such historically-oriented and discursive bodies of theory. The outcome has been the consolidation within the sub-discipline as a whole of a core literature which remains fiercely defensive of its anti-positivist traditions. (See the three handbooks or 'companions' – Lee and Wills (eds) 1997, Sheppard and Barnes (eds) 2000, and Clark *et al.* (eds) 2000 (a rather special case, as discussed below), and the two readers, Bryson

et al. (eds) 1999 and Barnes and Sheppard (eds) 2004; see also Peck and Yeung 2003.)

By the same token, while mathematical modelling was advancing towards its present dominance within the economics discipline, it was becoming a minority pursuit within economic geography (see Sheppard and Barnes (eds) 2000: chapter by Plummer).

Instead, the sub-discipline has been swept by a series of waves of theoretical and methodological initiatives expressed in discursive form – Marxism and its derivatives such as regulation theory, a post-modernist ‘cultural turn’, an ‘institutional turn’, and so on. These developments have been associated with debates around a multitude of inter-disciplinary concepts, flexible specialization to name but one. Perhaps the only thing shared in common by all these initiatives, debates and concepts is that none of them have ever found a place in mainstream economics.

In assessing the outcome of this intellectual trajectory with respect to the geography of economic development, it is necessary to compare the very different history of another relevant sub-discipline, namely development economics. Here, historically-based and structural approaches to development had already been firmly established during the formative years of the sub-discipline in the early post-war period, long before the anti-positivistic turn within economic geography. It was from development economists that the economic orthodoxy faced much of its most determined criticism during the period when it largely endorsed the neo-liberal policy environment of the 1980s, the so-called ‘Washington Consensus’. The ensuing ‘Post-Washington Consensus’ has been an essentially defensive move, designed to co-opt as much as possible of the heterodoxy by subsuming elements of its criticisms (see Fine 2001: chapter 8). Development economics has thus played a relatively prominent role in the history of the economics profession as a whole. In contrast, the field of economic geography continues to this day to be preoccupied (at any rate in its approach to development issues) with theory and methodology rather than policy; as a result, it has been perceived as little or no threat to the orthodoxy, which has, in consequence, largely ignored it.

Economists and geographers in inter-disciplinary standoff

Krugman’s ‘new economic geography’ is only one among a whole range of initiatives by economists aiming to ‘colonize’ neighbouring disciplines and re-cast them in accordance with the methodological principles prevailing within economics itself -- the new growth theory, the new development economics, the new economic history, and so

on – a strategy which has been termed the ‘new economics imperialism’. (For a more extended list of such ‘news’, see Fine 2002a: 15, who describes them as an “epidemic”.)

Krugman has been particularly unabashed in making it clear that the intention of such ‘imperialism’ is nothing less than utterly to supplant the traditions native to the social science concerned, finding the incumbent discipline of economic geography a particularly suitable target for such extirpation, due to its long-term and inveterate criticism of neo-classical economic doctrine. His standpoint towards its practitioners is consequently dismissive in the extreme, and he brands its endeavours in recent decades as nothing but an “anti-model, anti-quantitative backlash”, making it clear that, in his eyes, this is effectively synonymous with a wilful rejection of scientific method, and that he regards the theories in question as not worthy of even the most cursory investigation (see Krugman (1995: chapter 3), and, for critical responses, Martin (1999: 82) and Boddy (1999: 817); compare Overman (2003), an apparently unique example of a careful review of the geographical critique by a mainstream economist).

Geographers are, of course, eager to give as good as they get. They do not, in fact, acknowledge Krugman’s ‘new economic geography’ to be geography at all, preferring to label it ‘geographical economics’. They see his use of *a priori* concepts to construct abstract and scale-independent geometrical landscapes as the very opposite of the geographical project, which is to substantiate the specificity of ‘real places’ at different levels of scale. (Martin 1999; see also Dymski 1996; Martin and Sunley 1996; Clark 1998; Boddy 1999; Sheppard 2000; Thrift 2000; Olsen 2002: 154; Sheppard 2003). For geographers, space is “socially constructed”, or “part of a larger social narrative” (Barnes *et al.* (eds) 2004: 172). For example, globalization cannot meaningfully be approached without bringing to bear a range of methodologies, to show how results in “landscapes of socio-economic power, where islands of extreme wealth are interspersed with spaces of poverty, social exclusion, and the erosion of the socio-economic fabric”. (Swyngedouw in Clark *et al.* (eds) 2000: 543.)

As far as geographers are concerned, Krugman, far from putting forward anything ‘new’, is merely reverting to ideas long ago assessed within geography, but rejected when they turned away from such monist positivism in the 1960s. His initiative is thus seen “dated, historically and intellectually”, “simply building formal models of old and familiar ideas”, a “bad case of intellectual isolation”, guilty of “outrageous claims of priority” and “selective myopia”, a case of “mistaken identity”, with results that are “not

particularly novel and their empirical applications trivial”, an attempt to return to the methodology of “theory-enslaved idealised facts”, and so on. (Sunley 2000: 190; Peet 2002: 389; Berry 2002: 359; Martin 1999: 67; Sunley 2000: 197, citing Clark 1998: 83 and *passim*.)

The result is that both sides now hold positions which are highly developed and logically impregnable in their own terms, with economic geography firmly established as a determined exponent of empirical orientation and theoretical pluralism in the social sciences, and Krugman conversely being an “exemplar of progress in social science”, insofar as this is seen as the systematic modelling of the economy in logically consistent (preferably mathematical) terms (Meardon 2002: 217). Thus, “the two sub-disciplines are not on the same page, philosophically or methodologically”; “they are not even as ships that pass in the night, but rather are plying their trades in different oceans”. (Peck 2000a: 63; Hoare 1992.)

Yet, paradoxically, there is also a sense in which the two sides in this debate have something in common, which is their shared prioritization of theoretical and methodological questions at the expense of policy issues. Krugman’s motivation in this respect may well be to demonstrate that, whatever the appearances, he does not intend to repudiate market-based economics as such, and that not only can he sustain a project which meets the standards of formal elaboration expected within the economics profession, but furthermore that his theory ultimately rests on the bedrock of the market-based principles of neo-classical economics. His critics from within economic geography also have their own reasons for keeping the focus on theoretical and methodological issues, for it is here that they consider much of the strength of their sub-discipline to lie.

The two sides in this monism-pluralism debate are thus, for utterly different reasons, ideal sparring partners, each taking the opportunity to promote the principles on which they defend the identity, cohesion and traditions of their respective disciplinary heritage – Krugman, by insisting on the strict application of the inflexible principles of neo-classical economics, and the economic geographers, by tirelessly asserting the benefits of their diverse and pluralistic experience, not least through the publication of their handbooks, ‘companions’, readers, and other multi-author -- and multi-perspective -- compilations.

Pluralism and inter-disciplinary ‘imports’

Krugman’s attitude to economic geographers exemplifies the notoriously dismissive attitude of the economic orthodoxy towards its neighbouring disciplines, so that when he questions the capacity of economic geographers to develop a “unified, sensible tradition”, it is easy to brush the suggestion aside as no more than a typical example of the dogmatic and intolerant monism of the economic orthodoxy. However, it is not only from a neo-classical standpoint, nor indeed only from outside its own discipline, that questions have been raised regarding the capacity of economic geography to generate a “unified, sensible tradition”. It is, for example, a Marxian critic writing from within the field itself who has labelled it “fashion-prone”, commenting that “for many a geographer, it is very hard to keep up with the endless re-formulations of spatial or geographical perspectives and theoretical influences... Whims and preferences fade in and out in tune with the tumultuous re-ordering of tastes and interests in modern society” (Swyngedouw 2000: 41). Similar complaints have been made that the discipline is inclined to accept the principle that “anything goes”, and that it is characterised by “trendy and fast-moving jargon that constantly evades any rigorous evaluation” (Martin and Sunley 2001: 149), or, alternatively, that it is “fidgety and somewhat unruly” (Sheppard *et al.* 2004: 5). The literature certainly gives the impression that its undoubted vitality relies to a large extent on generating a proliferation of theoretical and conceptual initiatives rather than on stable, cumulative and mutually-interactive bodies of research and discussion.

The most immediately apparent consequence of this theoretical and methodological pluralism is the degree to which economic geography turns to other disciplines for inspiration. Various described as multi-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary, and cross disciplinary (Martin 2000b: 82, Dymksi 1996: 447, and Mellinger *et al.* 2000: 193 respectively. See also Martin 1999: 66.), this tendency has led one economic geographer to comment that the discipline is forever “consciously importing concepts, theories, and ideas from neighbouring fields of inquiry into the very core of our discipline while few are ever exported”, or, in short, that it displays a “negative intellectual balance of trade” (Maskell 2001: 340; see also Barnes and Sheppard 2000b: 3), a situation which inevitably intensifies the plurality of perspectives deployed within the sub-discipline.

A number of such inter-disciplinary ‘imports’ from neighbouring disciplines were of Marxian type, such as elements of Wallerstein’s ‘world systems theory’ from

international political economy, Marxist unequal development theory, French regulation theory, with its focus on 'post-Fordism', followed by a late 1980s 'cultural turn', subsequently rolled over into 'institutional turn', both of which have drawn on the empirical literature on flexible specialisation in new industrial districts to introduce terminology and conceptual apparatus from institutionalist currents in sociology and institutional economics. (Webber 2000: 502; Martin 1999: 73; Sadler 2000: 327); Crang 1997: 3-15; Martin 2000b: 77f and *passim*; Amin 1999, 2004 *repr.*: 49-51; Barnes, Tickell *et al.* 2004: 16f.) The resulting "umbrella approach" epitomises not only the sub-discipline's continuing adherence to methodological pluralism in general, but the particular contribution to that pluralism of the propensity to 'import' which is such a distinctive feature of its relations with its neighbouring disciplines.

Pluralism and 'mid-range theory'

The pluralistic approach within economic geography has been hopefully labelled 'synthetic' rather than eclectic, but this only begs the question of where, when and how the eclectic mix may be supposed to have been synthesised. One approach to this question is to set limits to the degree to which synthesis is necessary at all. Thus, economic geographers "often engage in mid-level theorising", with or without explicit reference to the 'middle range theory' of the sociologist Merton. For example, economic geography has been described as situated in the context of "the tension... between fine-grained case studies and stylised facts", or between "the myopia of theory's advocates and the unbounded naiveté of pluralism"; equivalently the argument is advanced that "theorists pursue 'truths' in part by setting aside the quest for Truth", or that the aim should be "a semi-disaggregated but analytically coherent set of categories". (Barnes and Sheppard 2000b: 7, and compare Sheppard *et al.* 2004: 2 ("variegated"); Fine and Leopold 1993: 43-45; Peck 2000a: 61, and similarly Hanson 2000: 481; Clark *et al.*, eds 2000: Preface, viii; Clark 1998: 78; Dymski 1996: 448; Storper 2000: 163.)

However, despite the claims to occupy such a mid-range territory, the outcome is overwhelmingly biased towards the 'unbounded pluralism' or 'fine-grained' end of the range, and it is almost as an aside that an economic geographer acknowledges that "there is arguably a need to impose some overall conceptual coherence" (Martin 1999: 80; see also Thrift 2000: 689). Such a need is commonly marginalised or even ignored, in favour of the celebration of the claimed benefits of the application of "numerous logics", "a wealth of situated methodologies", "post-positive and interpretative

epistemologies”, or a “variety of epistemological and methodological perspectives”. (Dymski 1996: 447; Amin and Thrift 2000: 7; Hanson 2000b1: 481; see also Barnes and Sheppard 2000b1: 6 (“philosophically diverse”), Hudson 2002: 124 (a “multiplicity of epistemological, theoretical and methodological approaches”), and Sheppard *et al.* 2004: 4 (“an unprecedented diversity of approaches”).) The benefits of such ‘logics’, ‘methodologies’, ‘epistemologies’ and ‘perspectives’ are, of course, quite simply anathema for the economic orthodoxy by the mere fact of being expressed in the plural. However, a more considered critique of such pluralism is also possible, as will now be argued with respect to the geography of development

Economic geography and the territorial integrity of the nation state

The editors of one of the recent compilations on economic geography state that “as an approach, political economy is pervasive: it is how economic geography is now done”. However, they provide only the vaguest of ideas of what the essential characteristics of political economy are, singling out nothing more specific than its “insistence that the political and the economic are irrevocably bound”. How these respective spheres are defined, and the manner in which they are ‘bound’, are then represented as matters of debate among various different traditions, notably Marxism (broadly defined to include its derivatives such as regulation theory), an analytical or formalistic approach, and the ‘cultural turn’. (Barnes and Sheppard 2000b: 5f.) In what follows, it will be argued that this fragmented and indeterminate conception of political economy allows the categories of analysis forged by its classical pioneers to be wrenched from their original context and subjected to theoretical degradation and methodological dismemberment, with catastrophic consequences for the analysis of the economic geography of development today.

Krugman’s ‘new economic geography’ inherits the standpoint on international political economy of Ohlin, who, in his seminal work of 1933, represents international trade theory as no more than “an application of the theory of interregional trade to a special case, where the regions are different countries” (Ohlin 1933: 68). Krugman similarly glosses over the distinction between nations and regions, so that “international trade theory is simply international location theory”, though raised to a higher scale (Fujita, Krugman and Venables 1999: 239). National frontiers are referred to as “arbitrary lines called borders”, which “do not introduce qualitatively new issues” over and above those

existing at the regional and urban levels. Accordingly, there is no “inherent importance in drawing a line on the ground and calling the land on either side two different countries”. (Fujita, Krugman and Venables 1999: 259, 309, 240, 239f; Krugman 1991: 71f, and, similarly, Krugman 1998: 14.)

Krugman’s claim to address ‘international’ issues consequently rests on a misnomer; his aim is, on the contrary, totally to separate economic analysis from any consideration of the political sphere, which is, precisely, the sphere in which nation states and their mutual relations are constituted. The observation that economic transactions increasingly over-ride the barriers posed by state frontiers does not justify proceeding directly to Krugman’s wider political-economic conclusion that the concept of state sovereignty has thereby become obsolete.

It is disappointing in the extreme to find that, for all the contrast in research traditions, epistemology and ideological stance, the economic geography literature effectively concurs with Krugman’s standpoint in this respect. In characteristically varied terms, economic geographers have argued that the state, though admittedly not in “terminal decline”, is “losing its taken-for-granted status as the pre-eminent political authority”, that it is only one element in a “complex multi-layered system of political authority in which states are just one among a number of structures with influence over ‘their’ space”, that “regions and not countries are the real units of economic analysis”, that there is a “breakdown of sequestered territorial boundaries”, or a “decreasing relevance of national boundaries”, that nation-states are in decline as “the dominant locus of economic activity”, so that “regional economies rather than national economies are now the salient foci of wealth creation and world trade”, and nation states are, accordingly, referred to by such terms as “governed spaces”, “territories”, or “bounded systems of governance”. (Painter 2000: 374f and 360, and similarly Amin and Thrift 1997: 149-151; Acs and Varga 2002: 134; Amin 2000: 672 and 2002: 584; Clark *et al.* 2000: 9; Martin and Sunley 2003: 6, which includes further similar citations from works of Ohmae, Coyle, Storper, Porter and Scott; see also Dicken 1994 [2004]: 137 (citing a 1991 work by Reich); Dicken and Malmberg 2001: 360.)

Pluralism and colonialism

So totally have economic geographers succumbed to the idea of the obsolescence of the nation state that it has even been stated quite simply that “the re-emergence of economic

geography can be argued as being due to the increasing economic significance of sub-national and supra-national regions relative to the nation state”, or, more one-sidedly, as a “wealth of regions” approach (Clark *et al.* 2000: 10; Amin 1999 [2004]: 53; see also Amin 2000: 681-683). This situation has had the effect of further constraining the approach to the geography of development, since, as is widely recognised by economic geographers, implicitly or even explicitly, the types of sub-national region in question, along with the associated analytical concepts and methods – flexible specialisation, institutionalism, etc. – apply “only in relatively developed countries” (Asheim 2000: 428. See also Amin 1999 [2004]: 58, Gibson-Graham 1996 [2004]: 86, Scott 1988 [2004]: 125, and McDowell 1997 [2004]: 316), and that, more broadly, many fields of concern among economic geographers reflect the limitations of a “privileged Western interest” (Hamnett 2003: 1, 3).

Given the limitations of such a perspective, it is not surprising that a low priority is attached to the question of the political economy and historical legacy of colonialism, even within the literature on the geography of development. Indeed, the very concept of colonialism itself has been subject to extreme depletion, commonly being confined to metaphorical functions only. The term has been used, for example, to denote the ‘masculinist’ and Eurocentric character of discussions of competition, while the term ‘post-colonial’ is likewise used for “a body of work... which questions dominant notions of gender and work in order to include social categories such as race and ethnicity” (Sheppard 2000b: 182; Oberhauser 2000: 61; see also Sadler 2000: 331, Schoenberger 1998 [2004]: 389 (who uses the alternative term ‘post-imperialist’, and, for a critical response, Peet with Hartwick 1999, and Peet *et al.* 2003: 223).

Deconstructionist and other post-positive currents of thought focusing on discourse and meanings are accordingly advanced as the alternative to ‘colonialism’ thus defined. Such a perspective obviously provides an inadequate basis on which to connect with the material aspects of the global economic inequality bequeathed by the colonial period; nor, for that matter, does it offer a clear focus on ‘race and ethnicity’ issues, rooted as these are in colonial history (a fact which is totally ignored by Kain 2000). This is not to deprecate the contribution of feminist scholarship to, for example, an understanding of the role of women in development (see Oberhauser 2000: 67-71 and Carney 1993), let alone to belittle the efforts of those who have sought, in various ways, to comprehend race and ethnicity issues.

In consequence of the resulting depletion of the concept of colonialism, the subject is forced out to the margins of the discipline, where it shares the ground with women's issues, racism, the environment and other issues which, despite the best efforts of all concerned, inevitably assume the character of denizens of a theoretical fringe.

Pluralism, the peripheral state, and socialism

The depletion of the concept of colonialism reflects the fact that the economic geography literature has, in general, been as disposed as is the economic orthodoxy to take as its central point of reference the US and the other major countries of the global core. A consequence of this is that it has advanced no distinct analytical framework within which to address the behaviour of the peripheral state, which thus inevitably appears as a deviant from an assumed norm. Such a standpoint paralyses any approach in normative or legal terms to the international context in which the pattern of global inequality has in reality been determined, since both that inequality and efforts to mitigate or counter it have involved state action at every stage, whether by the states of the global core on the one hand, or of the global periphery on the other.

It is indeed disappointing to find that none of the wide selection of approaches on offer within the pluralistic sub-discipline of economic geography has hitherto proved capable of conceptualising the role of the state in a subordinate or peripheral country. It is true that such a state may display negative and coercive characteristics which are all-too-closely analogous with those of the core or dominant countries (ethnic exclusivity, ('masculinism', etc.), but this should not be allowed to obscure from view the fact that the peripheral state is, nonetheless, the inheritor, no matter how hesitant or even backsliding, of the process of decolonisation, and, by virtue of that fact, has a potentially positive role to play in challenging the further peripheralisation and subordination of its country.

It is in this connection that the analytical problems arising from the adoption of the concept of 'globalisation' become apparent. The concept was, after all, originally formulated as a weapon in the armoury of neoliberal ideology, and, in particular, to displace "the far more politically charged concepts of imperialism and neo-colonialism" (Harvey 2000 [2004]: 25). It was, thus, inextricably linked with the message that the market is, and should be, sweeping away the nation-state, and furthermore – and utterly crucially – that it is more especially the nation-state in the periphery, rather than the

core, which 'should' be swept away in this way. This latter point has not been adequately noted within the critical social science literature, which largely fails to appreciate that a paramount aim of the core is to prevent the peripheral state from asserting such power as it has to resist further peripheralisation, or, in other words, to prevent it from playing its role as inheritor of the decolonisation process.

The most conspicuous examples of states resisting incorporation into a global core-periphery pattern have been provided under the banner of socialism. Whether or not the states claiming this designation have been justified in doing so is not the point in the present context; what is important here is that they have not only been perceived as, but also treated by their opponents as, states defending a socio-economic system irreconcilably antagonistic to that prevailing in the core, and that they have, for considerable periods of time, resisted peripheralisation on the core's terms. The continuing effect on global economic geography is incalculable. An outstanding example is that of the smaller East Asian states, particularly those which pioneered the 'East Asian development model' (formerly 'miracle'). It is a cartographically unmistakable fact that these states form an arc, or 'cordon sanitaire', around the former Soviet Far East, China, and Indochina, just as it is a historically undeniable fact that, far from being cases of "independent development" (Walker 2000: 122f), they were, throughout the cold war period, massively subsidised by the US, both directly and (through unimpeded access to markets) indirectly, as a crucial element of the US policy of 'containment' of, and competition with, the former socialist bloc (or blocs). For example, as the economist Jeffrey Sachs has pointed out, the impetus for land reform in south Korea, to which he ascribes enormous importance in setting it on its 'miraculous' course, "came from several sources, including the example of North Korean land reform in 1946" (Sachs 1987: 299-301 and 323).

That a Western economist such as Sachs should even to allude to these profound effects on the 'miracle' states of the presence on their borders of a rival socio-economic system is, of course, highly exceptional. However, it is disappointing to find that the critical geographer literature is if anything even less inclined to confront this subject, with references to the historical context in East Asia being either confined to passing remarks, such as general allusion to the region's "moment of opportunity" (Brohman 1996: 119) or vague comparisons with "excluded" Africa (Agnew and Grant 1997: 219), or else, more commonly, totally ignored (as in Hsing 1996 [2004] (on Taiwan) and Abo 2000 (on south Korea)).

It is only to be expected that the economic orthodoxy should be afflicted with a blind spot for the significance of socio-economic developments outside the capitalist countries, foreordained as it is by its very nature to adopt the “politically-loaded vision of flat-earth market rule” (Peck *et al.* 2004: 253). That economic geographers have shown themselves equally reluctant to make a decisive break with such a ‘flat earth’ standpoint in this respect reveals the limitations of their radical traditions, due to the predominance of theoretical and methodological issues that reflect a “privileged Western interest” only.

Conclusions

It has now been argued that the economic geography literature, despite a spirited and convincing critique of neo-classical economics on theoretical and methodological grounds, has established a tradition which, while radical in language and terminology, has failed to engage to any substantial degree in policy issues existing outside the academic world, a failure that is particularly evident in respect of the geography of development and its outstanding feature, global inequality.

This lack of engagement has had the effect of isolating economic geography from those developments which have in fact had the most impact in rolling back the extremes of the market-based standpoint against which they inveigh. For it was precisely “the significant historical and prospective role of developmental states” which constituted the principal oppositional element in the increasingly untenable situation confronting the former Washington Consensus – a situation in which it “could not prevent the emergence of the increasingly influential stance of its opponents” (Fine 2002c: 2065), and had to retreat to the more defensive stance embodied in the ‘Post Washington Consensus’.

Indeed, further developments are bound to force any such manoeuvres in that quarter even further onto the back foot. For example, as one commentator on the waning influence of the Washington Consensus suggests:

The developing world is now looking to China as an exemplar of a new ‘Beijing Consensus’, deploying capitalism not as an end in its own right – but as a means to an end. It is because privatisation works that you do it; it is because financial deregulation does not that you have to proceed with caution. (Will Hutton, “The Great Mall of China”, *The Observer*, 9 May 2004, the term ‘Beijing Consensus’ has been current in this context for some years; see, for example, Singh 2002.)

Such a situation has a significance which goes further than any debate over particular issues such as the rights and wrongs of privatisation and financial deregulation as such, which is that the terms of such debates are no longer being dictated exclusively from Washington.

This development cries out for a critical response from within the social sciences, yet in the case of economic geography, such a response is continually being limited, constrained and fragmented by the failure to confront the fundamental issues of the political economy of colonialism and its historical legacy. Fatally hesitant in turning to what is, in reality, bound to be an essential central element in overcoming the legacy of the colonial period – the states of the periphery – economic geographers are left with nothing to turn to for the implementation of their proposed ‘opposition to globalisation’ but such high-sounding but amorphous categories as a “democratic alliance of social movements” (Peet *et al.* 2003: 223), the “global communities world-wide” (Glasmeier and Conroy 2003), and so on. However, not only do these categories lack any status at all in terms of the fundamental principles of political economy, but they also reflect, despite the apparently progressive terminology, a ‘privileged Western’ standpoint which is as reluctant to acknowledge the legitimacy of the assertion by peripheral states of their territorial integrity as neo-liberalism is to tolerate it.

Any attempt to construct a radical internationalist approach to the geography of development in the world today thus faces two major obstacles. On the one hand, there stands the unreconstructed market fundamentalism which underlies the orthodoxy’s geographical turn, even in its ostensibly post-neo-liberal forms such as Krugman’s initiative. On the other hand, there stands the apparently irremediable absorption of the sub-discipline of economic geography in the assessment and reassessment of theoretical and methodological issues, at the expense of a focus on the struggle for development in the form in which it takes place in practice outside the academic sphere, and in particular outside the countries of the global ‘core’. This orientation diverts attention from the wider implications of the geographical turn in mainstream economics, which is that, by denying the role of colonialism in generating the global inequality of today, it contributes theoretical and ideological endorsement for neo-colonial and colonial revanchist policies which threaten to roll back former advances towards a more equitable post-colonial world order.

Bibliography

- Abo, Tetsuo (2000) "Spontaneous integration in Japan and East Asia: development crisis and beyond". In Clark *et al.*, eds: 625-648.
- Acs, Zoltan J. and Varga, Attila (2002) "Geography, endogenous growth, and innovation". *International Regional Science Review* 25: 132-148.
- Agnew, John A. and Grant, Richard (1997) "Falling out of the world economy? Theorising 'Africa' in world trade". In Lee and Wills, eds: 219-228.
- Amin, Ash (1999) [2004] "An institutionalist perspective on regional economic development". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 23: 365-378. Reprinted in Barnes *et al.*, eds (2004): 48-58.
- Amin, Ash (2000) "The EU as more than a triad market for national economic spaces". In Clark *et al.*, eds: 671-685.
- Amin, Ash and Thrift, Nigel (1997) "Globalisation, socio-economics, territoriality". In Lee and Wills, eds: 147-157.
- Amin, Ash and Thrift, Nigel (2000) "What kind of economic theory for what kind of economic geography?" *Antipode* 32 (1): 4-9.
- Asheim, Bjørn T. (2000) "Industrial Districts: the contributions of Marshall and beyond". In Clark *et al.*, eds: 413-431.
- Barnes, Trevor J. and Sheppard, Eric (2000) "Introduction: the art of economic geography". In Sheppard and Barnes, eds: 1-8.
- Barnes, Trevor J., Tickell A, Peck, Jamie A. and Sheppard, Eric (2004) "Paradigms lost". In Barnes *et al.*, eds (2004): 13-18 (Introduction to Part 1).
- Barnes, Trevor J., Peck, Jamie A., Sheppard, Eric and Tickell, Adam, eds (2004) *Reading economic geography*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Berry, Brian J. L. (2002) Review of Fujita, Krugman and Venables (1999) *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 92 (2): 359f.
- Boddy, Martin (1999) "Geographical economics and urban competitiveness: a critique". *Urban Studies* 36: 811-42.
- Brohman, John (1996) "Postwar development in the Asian NICs: does the neoliberal model fit reality?" *Economic Geography* 72 (2): 107-130.
- Bryson, John, Henry, Nick, Keeble, David and Martin, Ron, eds (1999) *The economic geography reader: producing and consuming global capitalism*. Chichester, etc.: John Wiley.
- Carney, Judith (1993) [2004] "Converting the wetlands, engendering the environment: the intersection of gender with agrarian change in the Gambia". *Economic Geography* 69: 329-348. Reprinted in Barnes *et al.*, eds (2004): 220-234.
- Castree, Noel (2000) "The production of nature". In Sheppard and Barnes, eds: 275-289.
- Clark, Gordon L. (1998) "Stylised facts and close dialogue: methodology in economic geography". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88 (1): 73-87.
- Clark, Gordon L., Feldmann, Maryann P. and Gertler, Meric S. (2000) "Economic geography: transition and growth". In Clark *et al.*, eds: 3-17.

- Clark, Gordon L., Feldmann, Maryann P. and Gertler, Meric S., eds (2000) *The Oxford handbook of economic geography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Corbo, Vittorio, Goldstein, Morris and Khan, Mohsin, eds (1987) *Growth-oriented adjustment programmes. Proceedings of a symposium held in Washington DC, February 25-27 1987*. [Washington]: IMF, World Bank.
- Crang, Philip (1997) "Cultural turns and the (re)constitution of economic geography". In Lee and Wills, *eds*: 3-15.
- Dicken, Peter (1994) [2004] "Global-local tensions: firms and states in the global space-economy". *Economic Geography* 70 (1): 101-128. Reprinted in Barnes *et al.*, eds (2004): 137-150.
- Dicken, Peter and Malmberg, Anders (2001) "Firms in territories: a relational perspective". *Economic Geography* 77 (4): 345-363.
- Dymski, Gary A. (1996) "On Krugman's model of economic geography". *Geoforum* 27 (4): 439-52.
- Fine, Ben (2001) *Social capital versus social theory: political economy and social science at the turn of the millennium*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Fine, Ben (2002a) *The world of consumption: the material and cultural revisited*. Second edition. London and New York: Routledge.
- Fine, Ben (2002b) "They f**k you up, those social capitalists". *Antipode* 34 (4): 796-799.
- Fine, Ben (2002c) 'Economics imperialism and the new development economics as Kuhnian paradigm shift'. *World Development* 30 (12): 2057-2070.
- Fujita, Masahisa, Krugman, Paul R. and Venables, Anthony J. (1999) *The spatial economy: cities, regions, and international trade*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (1996) [2004] "The economy, stupid! Industrial policy discourse and the body economic". A reprint of Gibson-Graham (1996): 92-119. In Barnes *et al.*, eds (2004): 72-87.
- Glasmeyer, Amy and Conroy, Michael (2003) "Globalisation: Faustian bargain, development saviour or more of the same?" In Peck and Yeung, *eds*: 182-215.
- Hamnett, Chris (2003) "Contemporary human geography: fiddling while Rome burns?" Editorial. *Geoforum* 34: 1-3.
- Hanson, Susan (2000) "Transportation: hooked on speed, eyeing sustainability". In Sheppard and Barnes, *eds*: 468-483.
- Harvey, David (2000) *Spaces of hope*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Selection in Barnes *et al.*, eds (2004)
- Hoare, Anthony G. (1992) Review of Krugman (1991). *Regional Studies* 26 (7): 679.
- Hsing, You-tien (1996) [2004] "Blood, thicker than water: interpersonal relations and Taiwanese investment in Southern China". *Environment and Planning A* 28 (12): 2241-2262. Reprinted in Barnes *et al.*, eds (2004): 362-374.
- Hudson, Ray (2002) Joint review of Clark *et al.*, eds (2000) and Sheppard and Barnes, eds (2000). *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 27 (1): 123-127.
- Kain, John (2000) Racial and economic segregation in US metropolitan areas. In Clark *et al.*, eds: 518-537.

- Krugman, Paul R. (1991) *Geography and trade*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, and Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Krugman, Paul R. (1995) *Development, geography and economic theory*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press.
- Krugman, Paul R. (1998) "What's new about the new economic geography?" *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 14 (2): 7-17.
- Lee, Roger and Wills, Jane, eds (1997) *Geographies of economies*. London, etc.: Arnold.
- Martin, Ron (1999) "The new 'geographical turn' in economics: some critical reflections". *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 23: 65-91.
- Martin, Ron (2000b) "Institutional approaches in economic geography". In Sheppard and Barnes, *eds*: 77-94.
- Martin, Ron and Sunley, Peter (1996) "Paul Krugman's geographical economics and its implications for regional development theory: a critical assessment". *Economic Geography* 72 (3): 259-92.
- Martin, Ron and Sunley, Peter (2001) "Rethinking the 'economic' in economic geography: broadening our vision or losing our focus?" *Antipode* 33 (2): 148-161.
- Martin, Ron and Sunley, Peter (2003) "Deconstructing clusters: chaotic concept or policy panacea?" *Journal of Economic Geography* 3 (1): 5-35.
- Maskell, Peter (2001) "The firm in economic geography". *Economic Geography* 77 (4): 329-344.
- McDowell, Linda (1997) [2004] *Capital culture: money, sex and power at work*. Oxford: Blackwell. Pages 11-42 reprinted in Barnes *et al.*, eds (2004): 315-328, under the title: "Thinking through work: gender, power and space".
- Meardon, Stephen J. (2002) "On the new economic geography and the progress of geographical economics". In Boehm, *et al.*, *eds*: 217-239.
- Mellingner, Andrew, Sachs, Jeffrey D. and Gallup, John (2000) "Geography and economic development". In Clark, Gordon L. *et al.*, *eds*: 169-94.
- Oberhauser, Ann M. (2000) "Feminism and economic geography: gendering work and working gender". In Sheppard and Barnes, *eds*: 60-76.
- Ohlin, Bertil (1933) *Interregional and international trade*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Olsen, Joshua (2002) "On the units of geographical economics". *Geoforum* 33: 153-164.
- Overman, Henry G. (2003) "Can we learn anything from economic geography proper?" London: London School of Economics and Political Science. Centre for Economic Performance, Discussion Paper 586.
- Painter, Joe (2000) "State and governance". In Sheppard and Barnes, *eds*: 359-376.
- Peck, Jamie A. (2000a) "Doing regulation". In Clark *et al.*, *eds*: 61-80.
- Peck, Jamie A. and Yeung, Henry W.-C., eds (2003) *Remaking the global economy: economic-geographical perspectives*. London: Sage Publications.
- Peck, Jamie A., Barnes, Trevor J., Sheppard, Eric and Tickell, Adam (2004) "Bringing in the social". In Barnes *et al.*, eds (2004): 251-256 (Introduction to Part 4).

- Peet, Richard (2002) Review of Clark *et al.*, eds (2000). *Economic Geography* 78: 387-392.
- Peet, Richard *et al.* (2003) *Unholy trinity: the IMF, World Bank and WTO*. London: Zed Books.
- Peet, Richard with Hartwick, Elaine (1999) *Theories of development*. New York and London: Guilford Press.
- Sachs, Jeffrey D. (1987) "Trade and exchange rate policies in growth-oriented adjustment programmes". In Corbo *et al.*, eds: 291-325.
- Sadler, David (2000) "Concepts of class in contemporary economic geography". In Sheppard and Barnes, eds: 325-340.
- Schmutzler, Armin (1999) "The new economic geography". *Journal of Economic Surveys* 13 (4): 355-379.
- Schoenberger, Erica (1998) [2004] "Discourse and practice in human geography". *Progress in Human Geography* 22 (1): 1-14. Reprinted in Barnes *et al.*, eds (2004): 389-402.
- Scott, Allen J. (1988) [2004] "Flexible production systems and regional development: the rise of the new industrial spaces in North America and Western Europe". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 12 (2): 171-183.
- Sheppard, Eric (2000a) "Geography or economics? Conceptions of space, time, interdependence, and agency". In Clark, *et al.*, eds: 99-119.
- Sheppard, Eric (2000b) "Competition in space and between places". In Sheppard and Barnes, eds: 169-186.
- Sheppard, Eric and Barnes Trevor J., eds (2000) *A companion to economic geography*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Sheppard, Eric, Tickell, Adam, Barnes, Trevor J. and Peck, Jamie A. (2004) "From distance to connectivity". In Barnes *et al.*, eds (2004): 331-335 (Introduction to Part 5).
- Singh, Kavaljit (2002) "From Beijing Consensus to Washington Consensus: China's journey to liberalisation and globalisation". *Asia-Pacific Research Network* 7. www.aprnet.org.
- Sunley, Peter (2000) "Urban and regional growth". In Sheppard and Barnes, eds: 187-201.
- Swyngedouw, Erik (2000a) "Elite power, global forces, and the political economy of global development". In Clark *et al.*, eds: 541-558.
- Swyngedouw, Erik (2000b) "The Marxian alternative: historical-geographical materialism and the political economy of capitalism". In Sheppard and Barnes, eds: 41-59.
- Thrift, Nigel (2000) "Pandora's Box? Cultural geographies of economies". In Clark *et al.*, eds: 689-704.
- Venables, Anthony J. (1998) "The assessment: trade and location". *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 14 (2): 1-6.
- Walker, Richard A. (2000) "The geography of production". In Sheppard and Barnes, eds: 113-132.
- Webber, Michael (2000) "International political economy". In Sheppard and Barnes, eds: 499-518.