



## Globalization and the Progressive Imagination

This is an archive of what was posted on the old GPEIG web site in 2005

[Keith Pezzoli](#) and [Michael Hibbard](#) organized a: Globalization and Progressive Imagination Roundtable, for the [2005 Annual ACSP Conference](#): "Preserving the Future"

The roundtable is sponsored by the Global Planning Educators Interest Group (GPEIG). Confirmed Roundtable participants: Victoria Beard, Gill Chin-Lim\*, Hema Dandekar, Michael Hibbard, Keith Pezzoli, Kami Pothukuchi, Bish Sanyal and Weiping Wu.

We are hoping that the roundtable, together with this website and our Progressive Imaginations [blog](#), will inspire a longer term historical-comparative, global discussion aimed at clarifying notions of "progressive" in both theory and practice. The field of planning has its roots in progressive impulses -- and in the U.S., in the Progressive reforms of the early 20th century. But what does progressive (and Progressive) mean in the early 21st century? The intent of the roundtable is more exploratory than it is definitive. In other words, we aren't on a crusade to establish a definitive blueprint or guidebook as to what constitutes progressive. That's not practical (nor wise) for many reasons. Our overarching question can be stated as follows: How is our conception of the "good society" changing in the wake of an increasingly globalized economy, ecology, culture, etc.; and how might we better fashion ethically progressive "actionable vision" under such dynamic, complicated, multiscalar, even confusing, circumstances?

**\*NOTE:** [Gill-Chin Lim](#) was the very first one to sign up for this roundtable ( one week before his tragic death). We are leaving his name among those who will be participating as he will be with us in spirit. This is what Gill said about the theme: "Globalization and the Progressive Imagination : I certainly believe that globalization has stimulated progressive imagination of planners and other related fields. Within planning, the global process has obliged planners to have a broader definition of planning, to expand their domain of knowledge, to develop new analytical methods, to explore new teaching methods and to establish globally appropriate professional ethics and norms" (Gill-Chin Lim, Feb. 3, 2005).

**Abstract** (draft 1.0, to be modified by roundtable participants)

The term "progressive" is coming back to life. It is used in an increasingly wide range of academic, grassroots, institutional, policy and planning contexts. One can find a growing number

of works titled, for instance, progressive globalization, progressive governance and progressive regionalism (Jacobs et al. 2003; Schroder et al. 2002; Sites 2004). There are progressive manifestos, guides, historical reviews, web sites, activist groups and organizations. Keith Pezzoli and Michael Hibbard have organized this roundtable to explore emergent meanings of progressive in the context of urban and regional planning theory and practice. We know that the term progressive is problematic. It is often referred to as a left-of-center approach to revitalizing social democracy (Etzioni 2000; Giddens 2003). But globalization complicates matters. Familiar political categories of left versus right, and liberal versus conservative have blurred in some key respects. Interlocking problems of poverty, injustice, growth machine politics, consumerism and environmental degradation defy easy solutions; and there is no singular progressive champion to save the day. Workers of the world unite is a nice slogan, and it bears merit, but it is an insufficient measure on its own. The same can be said of hopes pinned solely on free market dynamics, the mobilization of civil society, regulatory innovation, technological magic, the entrepreneurial discipline of globe-girdling corporations, or the ingenuity of the so-called creative class. We are compelled to search for new understandings that are more nuanced, networked, systems-oriented, holistic, ecological, interactive and relational. This is easier said than done.

The field of planning has its roots in progressive impulses -- and in the U.S., in the Progressive reforms of the early 20th century. But what does progressive (and Progressive) mean in the early 21st century? The participants of this roundtable include (list the participants here: Pezzoli, Hibbard, others to be named). Our intent is more exploratory than it is definitive. In other words, we are on a quest to establish a definitive blueprint or guidebook as to what constitutes progressive. That's not practical for many reasons. Instead, we hope to energize discussion around the notion of a progressive imagination as applied to urban-regional planning/development in the context of globalization. Our overarching question can be stated as follows: How is our conception of the "good society" changing in the wake of an increasingly globalized economy, ecology, culture, etc.; and how might we better fashion ethically progressive "actionable vision" under such dynamic, complicated, multiscalar, even confusing, circumstances? To approach these questions, the organizers of the roundtable will seed the discussion with a set of three vignettes or cases that highlight controversies surrounding: (1) the role of research universities, (2) activist scholarship, and (3) the philosophy of science. These vignettes will be posted in advance of the conference on the Global Planning Educators Interest Groups (GPEIGs) web site.

**NOTE:** Related to this roundtable, a panel (focused on Progressive Regionalism in Global Perspective) is also being organized for the ACSP conference. To learn more about the panel proposal visit the Progressive Regionalism [website](#), and/or [blog](#).

Also Visit the Progressive Imaginations Blog, [click here](#)

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Links:

Planners Network

<http://www.plannersnetwork.org/pnetwork/www/>

Progressive Planning Magazine

<http://www.plannersnetwork.org/pnetwork/www/>

The Real Utopias Project

[http://www.versobooks.com/series/real\\_utopias.shtml](http://www.versobooks.com/series/real_utopias.shtml)

Progressive Directory, Institute for Global Communications (IGC)

<http://www.igc.org/index.html>

List of "Most Popular Progressive Websites", Published 6/30/04 by CommonDreams.org

<http://www.commondreams.org/headlines04/0630-20.htm>

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