



Progressive Regionalism: Mediating the Global/Local Dialectic?

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Preserving the Future ([conference web site](#))

Moderator/Discussant: Rajendra Kumar, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, kumarr@mit.edu

Regional Planning Yes - But For What?

Baker, Douglas C. [Queensland University of Technology]

Heywood, Phil [Queensland University of Technology]

The Question Concerning Regionalisms: Planning, Design, And Theory As Technologies Of Place

Canizaro, Vincent B. [University of Texas at San Antonio] Paper not presented

Detroit's Regional Planning Regime: History, Politics, And The Limits Of One-Size-Fits-All Regionalism DANieri, Philip J. [University of Michigan]

Transcending Regionalism: (A Canadian Perspective On Building Blocks And Ties) Toward A More Global Consciousness. Wight, Ian [University of Manitoba]

Panel Abstract (by Ian Wight)

How might the 'global' be best negotiated in the context of progressive regionalism? The panel will explore aspects of a response that would frame progressive regional planning as a vehicle for better mediating what may be conceived as the underlying global/local dialectic. This formulation attempts to put localisation on a par with globalization, in a fundamental 'unity of opposites' relationship, nullifying any totalitarian tendencies.

Globalization is all around us - literally and figuratively - but many cannot easily embrace it, and all it means. The 'global' can seem so much larger, higher and broader than our usual 'local' reference points. Yet, could it be that 'the global' might actually be best approached as very 'down-to-earth' - where ordinary mortals live and work and act - as part of a regional crossroads of sorts - with globalization being conceived as being on a par with its inter-linked opposite - localization. The 'crossroads' metaphor connotes more horizontality - a more level, more human field of endeavour. Compare this to the otherwise too easy conception of the 'local' and the 'global' being at opposite ends of a world-scale 'elevator' - embodying hierarchy, with the global operating over and above the local.

The panel will consider the notion that globalization cannot be disassociated from localization, and that the global and the local are more on an interactive par - rather than scales, and poles, apart - especially as a framework for action. The pairing should be considered not so much as a 'one-or-the-other' opposition going head to head, but as going hand-in-hand - feeding off, and into, one another. Neither merits characterisation as superior, or more elevated, than the other – their inter-relationship being perhaps most usefully conceived not as dichotomous competition but as a dialectical interaction.

Rene Dubos' well-worn phrase - 'Thinking Globally; Acting Locally' – may need re-thinking from this perspective. Ashwani Vasishth, drawing on an ecosystem conception, has noted, as a consequence, that: "... the very ideas behind the words 'local' and 'global' become highly contingent on purpose and on perspective, and intricately connected... the notion that we should 'think globally, act locally' becomes less than adequate, and we may need to settle for some less catchy but more pragmatic version - perhaps one that says: think at the scales that count, and act at the levels that matter" (Vasishth 1996). To what extent might 'the regional' be a scale that counts, and a level that matters, when mediating the global/local dialectic?

Vasishth, Ashwani 1996 'Think Locally, Act Locally? An Ecosystem View of Scale in Environmental Planning'. Paper presented at the ACSP/AESOP Joint International Congress, July 25-28, 1996 Toronto, Canada.

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

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>

RADIO POWER NETWORK, Progressive Talk Radio **[ON AIR]**

News, Commentary, Liberal Talk Shows, Exploring Progressive Politics & Culture

http://www.radiopower.org/liberal_links.html

Activist Scholarship: Making Social Movement Theory Matter

<http://www-personal.si.umich.edu/~garrettk/SMSconference/>