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Power, Discourses and City Trajectories

MARK BOYLE AND ROBERT J. ROGERSON

In 1997, the Committee for Sydney, a newly formed partnership of private sector interests within the city, invited tenders to assist in the development and enhancement of Sydney's role as a 'world city'. The outline argued that most of the other major cities of the world – such as Barcelona, Paris, London, Rome and Venice (the cities mentioned by the Sydney Committee) – had already developed long-term strategic plans designed to ensure their status in the global economy. Recognizing the absence of just such a strategic vision and aware of the impending opportunities associated with the hosting of the 2000 Olympic Games, the Committee called for research to be undertaken: to benchmark Sydney against other world cities; to examine its capacity to grow as a centre for global capital; and to suggest strategies through which the city could be repositioned as a world city.

The research programme defined by the Sydney brief serves to draw attention to several issues which are at the forefront of contemporary urban studies and around which we wish to construct this chapter. First, it highlights the manner in which contemporary cities are defining their futures relative to global capital and emerging international divisions of labour. Second, it points to the consciousness within cities of the need to compete with other rivals to secure a future role and, therefore, of the importance of formulating coherent city trajectories to gain competitive advantage. Third, and perhaps most importantly for the discussion in this chapter, the brief illustrates the way in which, although recognizing the possibility of marginally different strategies, the Sydney partnership provides no opportunity to question the underlying language or logic of the need to be positioned relative to global capital.

Indeed, in the policy literature, it is now becoming impossible to read accounts of the fortunes of most Western cities without encountering such phrases as 'city competition', 'city imaging', 'benchmarking', 'market niche' and 'hallmark events'. So pervasive has been the adoption of this vocabulary that it has given birth to a whole new area of what might be termed 'instrumental knowledge'. For instance, urban 'handbooks' now adorn book shelves providing lessons and practical instruction on how to organize local economic development strategies (Blair, 1995; Blakely, 1989; Duffy, 1995) whilst business schools now run courses on the techniques of urban regeneration. The rise of such terminology has given birth to new areas of expertise within city councils and universities. The discourse of globalization and localization, therefore, sits at the heart of contemporary ways of thinking about the city.

Likewise, beyond the policy literature it has been argued that in the past two decades inter-city competition for economic development has become 'the' major activity of urban governance (Cox, 1995). Across advanced capitalist cities, the net effect has been the creation of what Cox (1993) terms a whole New Urban Politics (NUP). Written around the NUP as a building block, and breaking down the title of this chapter – power, discourses and city trajectories – into its constituent concepts, we wish to rework literature on the politics of local economic development from the vantage of a new perspective. Referred to herein as the discourse perspective, we seek to examine the multiple ways in which the notions of 'power' and 'discourse' interweave with the production and legitimation of city development trajectories. In so doing, we first explore the way orthodox policy literature has used the NUP to understand the formulation of city trajectories. We then seek to move beyond existing accounts by approaching the NUP as a language or vocabulary, or what we will term a discourse. In charting a path from the orthodox perspective of the NUP outlined in the first

section to our alternative, discourse analysis of the NUP in the third section of this chapter, we do so by critically evaluating one of the more seminal examples of the discourse approach in urban studies, that provided by Beauregard (1993). We end by offering some tentative conclusions regarding issues requiring future development within the discourse perspective.

DISCOURSES AND URBAN GOVERNANCE

The New Urban Politics: The Orthodox Policy Perspective

According to Kevin Cox (Cox 1993, 1995; Cox and Mair, 1988; Cox and Wood, 1994), there has been something of a convergence in *orthodox policy* studies of the city during the past decade. Cast initially in terms of the impact of the new international division of labour on the so-called 'world cities' (Friedmann, 1986; Friedmann and Wolff, 1982), this literature has expanded to argue that the fundamental context in which all cities are currently acting is the heightened mobility of capital. The capacity of transnational corporations to switch their operations around the world has created a truly global economy, in which the world has become a single location for production outlets. Whilst there remains considerable debate over the definition and meaning of the phrase, this *globalization of capital* is argued to lie at the heart of contemporary urban restructuring.

Catapulted into such a context, many cities find their bargaining position in relation to capital substantially weaker. The capacity of capital to switch locations engenders a competition between places to secure investment. As such, the task of urban governance has increasingly become the creation of urban conditions sufficiently attractive to lure prospective firms. Whether this entails alterations to the city's image through manipulation of its soft infrastructure (cultural and leisure amenities, for instance) or a refashioning of the city's economic attractiveness (through provision of grants, property, transport facilities, or tax abatements, for instance) localities are now having to offer ever more inducements to capital to secure development and growth.

It is this self-perpetuating competition between localities that Cox refers to as constituting a New Urban Politics (NUP). Cox (1993: 45) summarizes conventional wisdom thus:

1. The economic space within which cities are situated is subject to change.
2. This change is a result of an increased footlooseness of capital with respect to cities as possible sites.
3. Within cities, there are a variety of economic interests which, as a result of immobility, are dependent upon the health of the urban economy. These include property owners, some businesses – such as banks and newspapers – local governments, and local residents. Taken together, Cox argues, these agents constitute 'cities' or 'communities'.
4. Changes in the space economy as a whole provide threats and opportunities to these economic interests.
5. These interests work through city governments in order to channel investment into their particular city through appropriate infrastructure, taxation, and regulatory practices.
6. Policies of this sort bring them into competition with corresponding 'cities' or 'communities'.

As an extension of the NUP thesis, it is worthwhile noting that faced with an uncertain future in the global division of labour, places are not only competing with each other to catch the eye of global capital. Inter-city competition in this context is also extended to include competition for *consumer expenditure* (or what Harvey (1989a) calls the 'tourist dollar') and for a role in the *spatial division of labour created by the state* (the allocation and reallocation of different state functions to different areas). So precarious has the economic health of cities become and so pervasive the competition ethos, that whilst there might be an emphasis upon one, every city is likely to be active on all three of these fronts. And, in yet another twist to this evolving story, it is possible to identify a different and fourth form of competition; that involving efforts to secure what are often termed 'prestige' or 'flagship projects'. Whether funded by the state or more likely by international bodies which organize events such as the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings, or jazz festivals, the importance of hosting a major leisure, cultural, sporting or political event to a city's profile has generated in itself an intense competition between localities to win the right to hold such events. What makes this form of competition different from the other three forms is that for such prestige events, it would appear that places are competing for the 'raw materials' themselves needed to facilitate a competitive edge in their efforts to lure other forms of capital and expenditure. Whilst recognizing these different types of inter-city competition, in turning to consider the question of city visions and trajectories, we focus more narrowly on global capital – the first of the four forms outlined above.

The NUP, City Visions and Trajectories

A key tenet of the NUP agenda is that there has been a shift in the position of cities away from local, regional or national roles towards roles ascribed by the global economy. As the Sydney tender with which we started this chapter illustrates, within the NUP there is a perceived acceptance that a position of marginality relative to the global economy is inappropriate for a thriving, dynamic and visionary city. In other words, city visions are fundamentally concerned with the degree of marginality/centrality of the city in relation to global capital.

Arising from both the engagement with the wider global setting and from the need to respond to the demands of capital, city visions are being shaped by the requirement not merely to attract capital investment in its many forms but also to adopt some of the characteristics of this capital. Not least, as Harvey (1989b) argues and Sassen (1991) exemplifies in relation to London, New York and Tokyo, cities have had to struggle to find a response to the values and virtues of flexibility and volatility, of instantaneity and disposability, which have become hallmarks of postmodern society and economy. The accelerating rate of change in production and consumption needs, aided by technological advances, has meant that city agencies attempting to engage with capitalist systems have, too, to respond to their volatility and dynamism. The extent to which capital is indeed so spatially mobile (Cox, 1995; Gertler, 1988; Schoenberger, 1988) and production opportunities so flexible (Allen and Massey, 1988) cannot be assumed unproblematically. Nevertheless, few observers would doubt that capital is more dynamic and volatile than in past decades. Equally, other dimensions of the postmodern condition – such as disposability and instant obsolescence of commodities – also reinforce the instability of capitalist systems.

As Harvey (1989b: 286) notes in relation to the corporate sector's response to market conditions, 'volatility, of course, makes it extremely difficult to engage in any long-term planning'. And as he continues for those attempting to undertake such 'designing' – acknowledging that in the postmodern condition there is no planning only designing – 'learning to play the volatility right' is now crucial for success within the market place. Harvey indicates that 'this means either being highly adaptable and fast-moving in response to market shifts, or masterminding the volatility' (Harvey, 1989b: 287). The former position encourages the taking of short-term gains – for example, in the form of acquisitions, or mergers – with the acceptance that visions and strategies will have to adjust rapidly and frequently to make most benefit of the volatility of market needs and tastes. The latter, masterminding change, is more long-term and strategic for here the intention is to manipulate the market's tastes, opinions and needs to fit into the shape which the organization has designed. Such a strategy involves the construction of symbols and images as well as the redevelopment of the 'product' itself (see also Zukin, 1995).

Just as such ideas have an immediacy to companies developing a blend of long-term and short-term opportunistic strategies in the market place, so too are there parallels in the form of trajectories adopted by city designers in their attempts to position their location relative to capital opportunities. Traditionally, city 'planners' have been more comfortable with the adoption of long-term visions. With long-lead times for the development and implementation of infrastructural projects and the need to gain and hold local political support, most city planning has been seen to require a long-term vision. However, with the growing volatility of capital, and the rise of city competition, the adoption of long-term planning can appear to be at odds with the flexibility and mobility which capital demands.

Significantly, therefore, city agencies in an increasing attempt to offer the characteristics of place which capital desires are adopting characteristics of this capital – such as its volatility. Employing Harvey's distinction between the short-term strategy of responding to volatility and the long-term mastering of volatility, there are – like the limited number of global corporates able to master the tastes and opinions of capital – likely to be only a few cities able to have sufficient 'power' to fashion or manipulate the desires of capital over the long term. With command and control functions, as well as a concentration of key producer services, research and development functions, innovative centres of culture and crucially the capability to control and shape the informational economy (Castells, 1989), global cities are one clear example of locations which *may* have sufficient power to 'mastermind' volatility.

On the other hand, for most other cities, the lack of a pivotal role in mastering capital may result in each having to adopt a more short-term and less ambitious vision. For these cities, there may indeed be no coherent vision as the timescale involved in responding to capital is so short and the need for flexibility so great that the very notion of a vision or sense of direction becomes an anathema. Instead, a development path might be taken which is constructed around an ability to take short-term gains whenever and wherever they are available. As such the city's trajectory is shaped more by the imprint of each opportunity than by an overarching blueprint. In the following

section, we explore further some of the possible consequences of adopting the distinction between visions based on masterminding and those based on opportunism via two selected case studies: Atlanta and Glasgow.

Atlanta

Atlanta, with its significant role as a centre for global capital – 'Atlanta International' as the place marketeers would like all to believe – has characteristics more typical of a global city than Glasgow. As befits the NUP agenda, the city has many of the appearances typifying a place successfully competing with other cities: a long history of public–private partnerships; entrepreneurial form of governance; and an inward investment strategy led by 'urban rentiers' (Logan and Molotch, 1987). Encouraged by the pro-growth leadership of the mayor's office and by significant national financial investment, Atlanta's international credentials have blossomed in the past decade, pulling significant investment from Canadian, European, Japanese and Asian firms into the city. The city, too, has long adopted the need for civic boosterism and place marketing, contentedly crafting together the notion of 'the city of dreams' with an ability to envision the future. Over the decades, Atlanta's history has been one of a series of successive visions of organized promotion and redevelopment, using its own distinctive history and location in the 'South' of the USA to bring the city to the threshold of 'the next great international city'. As the most recent academic interest in Atlanta testifies (Allen, 1996; Bayor, 1996; Rutheiser, 1996), the spectacle of the Centenary Olympic Games in 1996 represented the 'outing' of the city in terms of its goal of attaining international status.

In many respects, thus, Atlanta portrays the appearance of a city with a long-term vision and a successful engagement with global capital. Rutheiser's detailed chronicling of Atlanta's development and place marketing history up to and including the Olympic Games offers, however, an alternative reading. In *Imagineering Atlanta* he explodes what he sees as a myth that there has been a unified, collective vision and carefully crafted trajectory for the city. In its place, Rutheiser places 'emphasis on the conflicts and contradictions of the different mythologies that have been elaborated over the years through a multiplicity of media' (1996: 14). Drawing on local accounts and interviews, council records, private papers and media reports, he portrays a more speculative, opportunistic form of urban regeneration, sparked at times by the public sector and at other times by individuals in the private sector, and lacking a coherent vision of the future.

Whilst it may be debatable that all elements of the redevelopment of Atlanta can be seen as contested in the way that Rutheiser suggests, his account undoubtedly makes the notion of a coherent, long-term trajectory and vision for Atlanta problematic. In the context of this chapter, we have drawn on *Imagineering Atlanta* less for its detail and more to suggest that Atlanta, which apparently has the potential to have a vision based on being more masterful over capital, can also be interpreted as a city operating in the same opportunistic manner as those located more marginally relative to the world economy.

Glasgow

The Glasgow of the 1970s and early 1980s has been ubiquitously portrayed as a city in decline. With the decline of the traditional pillars of shipbuilding on the Clyde, the steel industry and associated works inland, and a demographic decline (Damer, 1990; Gibb, 1983; Lever, 1990), Glasgow was, as Cheshire et al. (1986) indicated, one of the least economically healthy cities in Europe. As such, Glasgow had many of the features of a city located towards the margins of the new global economy – a location all the more poignant, given that its former role as 'The Second City' of the Empire (Oakley, 1965) remained part of the not too distant memories of many of its citizens. Despite the lack of hard evidence, the negative image associated with this decline has been recognized by those in local government to be a significant barrier to new investment and to the path out of the spiral of decline. In an attempt to breach this perceived barrier, the Labour administration of the local council in the early 1980s adopted a new vision for the city. Under this vision, the city was to be repositioned as a leading 'European city', at the heart of the European economy and successfully competing for European inward investment (Rogerson and Boyle, 1998).

In the form of construction of new physical infrastructure and a variety of cultural projects, the concrete articulation of this vision has not always been coherent. It has included, for example, both city centre redevelopment as part of a post-industrial vision focused on office development and retail consumption, and the provision of arts and cultural infrastructure (Boyle and Hughes, 1994). The manifestations in terms of cultural provision have been mixed – short-term, high profile events such as the 1990 Year of Culture and the 1999 Year of Architecture, funded primarily from the public purse, alongside longer-term provision with private sector funding in, for example, multi-screen cinemas as the hub of area regeneration. The office and retail

elements in the city centre have been transformed with new glass-fronted, postmodern architecture in office complexes set alongside the cleaned Victorian facades retained to portray the city's heritage and vernacular styles. New shopping mall developments such as those at St Enoch's and the soon to be completed Buchanan Galleries sit alongside the chainstores of the high street, with high rates of turnover and vacancies. In addition, the attempt to change the image – reflected in promotional and marketing campaigns, the most renowned of which was the 'Glasgow's Miles Better' campaign of the 1980s, re-invented in the 1990s – has frequently accompanied and even led the re-creation of the city's profile locally and internationally.

It is not the intention here to debate whether such an interpretation is sustainable or to explore further the complex articulations by many observers of the vision and trajectory adopted by Glasgow (Boyle, 1993; Boyle and Hughes, 1994). As a city striving to find a new, post-industrial form and adopting elements of place marketing, Glasgow has been seen to be archetypal. As a city away from the core of the global economy, however, Glasgow would appear to lack the power required to master the needs of this capital and thus it could be anticipated that it would require to have the characteristics of the short-term approach. In some respects, the attraction of the spectacles of the Garden Festival and the Year of Culture, for example, has been viewed as a form of just such short-term, opportunistic regeneration (Keating, 1988).

Alternatively, these events can also be seen to be part of a long-term vision, one that is built on a re-imaging and re-aestheticizing of the city as a cultural centre in the international scene. Thus, for example, in writing in the early 1990s about arts events such as Mayfest and the Garden Festival, Boyle and Hughes (1991: 219) noted that they were part of such a strategy and that 'Glasgow's role as the European City of Culture 1990 represents the latest stage in an intensive campaign to regenerate the city'. Or as Booth and Boyle (1993: 33–4) note in relation to the bidding for the 1990 title of Year of Culture, 'the bid emphasized the importance to the city of developing cultural tourism . . . the arts would be used as an additional strand of economic planning directly through the attraction of tourists to the big event . . . the mere fact of winning the title inevitably conferred a comparative advantage upon Glasgow through the recognition of its cultural specialization'. In this reading there appears, despite the city's marginal ability to fashion capital, a vision and trajectory which has a greater degree of permanence than would be suggested by a short-termist perspective.

These two examples have been, of course, highly selective, both in terms of their representation of different types of urban areas, and in the interpretative readings of the regeneration projects they present. As such we could be accused of trying to make the 'facts' fit our notions. Whilst detail is of relevance, what we wish to conclude from these thumb-nail sketches is more general. First, even within one overarching agenda, that of the NUP, it is problematic to assert relatively simple relations between cities, their trajectories and global capital. Second, even within one city, competing interpretations of short- versus long-term strategies are possible, and, as in the case of Glasgow, the rhetoric employed by key players may confuse the issue further. Rutheiser's account of Atlanta suggests – like Davis's account of Los Angeles (1990) – that with meticulous trawling of alternative sources, such as media, private papers and council records, it is possible to explore 'behind' the public exterior to postulate different readings of city visions and regeneration projects. Understanding the way the volatility of capital, city visions and trajectories impinge on each other, therefore, is problematic, but worthy of further exploration.

THE DISCOURSE PERSPECTIVE IN URBAN STUDIES: BEAUREGARD'S *VOICES OF DECLINE*

The above account provides a mere skeletal outline of the manner in which the NUP agenda is creating a context within which city authorities are charting out development trajectories and imagining what their potential futures might be like. For those inspired by what might be termed *orthodox policy* analysis, and by implication arguably for most analysts both inside and outside the academy, the NUP thesis is lived largely as a *given*. By this we mean that it is treated as 'the true and accurate' account of the plight cities face, and as an objective evaluation of the policy options that need to be considered. In this section, we now wish to jolt the reader into a different epistemological framework which provides an altogether different starting point for the interpretation of the NUP agenda. In so doing, we are not necessarily arguing for a rejection of the NUP agenda but do wish to challenge the apparently accepted wisdom that it is *the* only way of viewing the city. Specifically, we wish to reflect upon what the NUP framework might look like if viewed as a *discourse*.

Whilst the discourse approach is now well established in many sub-areas within the social sciences, it seems that the boundaries around the field of urban studies have been somewhat impermeable to its infiltration. One notable exception

to this observation has been the work of Robert Beauregard. In his ground-breaking book *Voices of Decline*, Beauregard (1993) indeed argued that he was prompted to write the work because of 'the failure or urban theory to confront in any meaningful way the issue of representation' (Beauregard, 1993: xi). He continues: "If urban theory were to be advanced, and our understanding of cities improved, theorists would have to confront the tension between interpretive strategies and objective analyses' (p. xi). In this section, we will use *Voices of Decline* to introduce the basic tenets of the discourse approach in the sphere of urban studies. Whilst Beauregard's analysis is exceedingly rich and full of nuances, we will isolate four aspects which help to define the foundations of the discourse perspective to the study of cities.

In *Voices of Decline*, Beauregard's empirical focus is upon North American cities generally, and the larger conurbations specifically. Although the book has the sub-title 'the postwar fate of US cities', Beauregard's reflections extend back to the late nineteenth century. When reviewing a mass of writings and discussions on North American cities, including those by city officials, civil servants, newspapers and magazines, Beauregard was struck by the manner in which one could discern major sea changes in the way cities were being 'understood' through time. For the most part, the emphasis was firmly upon 'decline'. More particularly, cities were being understood in terms of the manner in which they were disintegrating and failing to reproduce themselves successfully. However, across time, the concept of decline being deployed appeared to vary. As he investigated these various concepts of decline in more detail, Beauregard became convinced that instead of approaching writings and discussions on the fate of cities as if they reflected some underlying reality, a better approach would be to reflect upon the manner in which they were actively representing cities in certain types of ways. More forcefully, Beauregard (1993: 6) became concerned with the manner in which the mass of texts he examined were actually *creating a reality* for urban populations:

> [my] interpretive reading is premised on the notion that the discourse is not simply an objective reporting of an incontestable reality but a collection of unstable and contentious interpretations. The ways in which urban decline is represented are always problematic, and although a commentator might claim privileged access to a 'self evidently solid ground of meaning', no commentator can successfully defend that exalted position.

The claim that 'language' (textbooks, political manifestos, political speeches, newspaper and magazine articles etc.) should be understood as actively *constructing cities* provides the first cornerstone notion of the discourse perspective. As Parker (1992: 4–5) notes, more generally, 'discourses do not simply describe the social world, but categorize it, they bring phenomena into sight. A strong form of the argument would be that discourses allow us to see things that are not "really" there, and that once an object has been elaborated in a discourse, it is difficult not to refer to it as if it were real.'

Second, on the basis of this point of departure, Beauregard then attempted to delineate and reflect upon the various discourses which have underpinned policy approaches to the North American city. Throughout the book, Beauregard adopts a consistent perspective on the role of discourses of urban decline in framing the policy process. According to Beauregard (1993: 5), 'the meaning of the discourse . . . can be found in the ways that it conveys practical advice about how we should respond to urban decline and mediates among the choices made available to us, the values we collectively espouse, and our ability to act.' Discourses on urban decline, therefore, both recognize different ideas about precisely what is declining and why, and produce as a result parameters within which 'sensible' remedial measures might be undertaken. By way of illustration, Figure 26.1 attempts to summarize the main discourses recognized by Beauregard: including discourses that functioned as a prelude to the full development on the notion of decline that marked the post-war era; the turns and twists taken by the discourse since 1945; and the recent revivalist discourses which suggest that, at least for some, the fall of the largest cities in North America is being reversed. From Figure 26.1, one can begin to get a sense of the key themes associated with the more important discourses, what urban problems these discourses 'identify', and what policy solutions they implicitly, and often explicitly, advocate.

Whilst the above two points try to capture the nature of discourses on the city, Beauregard explores two other key aspects of the approach concerning relationships between discourses and various power relations in the city. Third, although for the most part implicit, Beauregard's study makes use of the particular account of power outlined by Michel Foucault. For Foucault, power should be regarded as insidiously distributed throughout society and as such should be conceived of as a *capacity* to generate knowledge and action: 'power produces knowledge, and knowledge presupposes and constitutes relation of power . . . truth is already power' (Matless, 1992: 46). The value of this perspective is that it suggests that knowledge and power are two sides of the same coin and therefore have to be studied together. The very existence of a

DISCOURSE	INDICATIVE QUOTES	DEFINITION OF PROBLEMS AND FRAMING OF SOLUTIONS
Prelude to post-war decline: the progressive era **1880–1930**	*The warnings were tempered by a spirit of reform and the belief that the problems increasingly concentrated in large cities could be solved. Most intellectuals, many government officials, and almost all reformers were committed to bringing order to the unruly city of industrial capitalism, yet leaving intact the basic economic relationships that created great wealth and, through exploitation, brought poverty. Civic responsibility embodied in 'scientific government' and compassionate welfare agencies was the preferred path, and optimism the guiding light. (p. 59)*	Definition of problem: Overly fast growth of cities leads to overcrowded slums. Moral corruption both within the state and civil society make cities 'dangerous' and 'sinful' places and a threat to civilization Framing of solution: Modernist faith in the capacity of the state to control and channel growth. Scientific and organizational advances of corporate capital help the engineering of better cities
Prelude to post-war decline: a temporary problem **1920–1950**	*The discourse on cities that occurred prior to the Second World War then, had none of the pervasive pessimism to which people in the post-war period would become accustomed. Few commentators in the pre-war discourse doubted the potential for subsequent reinvigoration. Certainly many had been fearful of the effects of decentralization and the twin problems of slums and blight in the city's central areas, but they also, as had those in the earlier decades of the twentieth century, believed in the powers of human intervention to resist such decay. Urban growth had been interrupted, not deflected, and during the late 1940s commentators were generally confident that a return to economic prosperity would preserve the city. (p. 99)*	Definition of problem: Urban growth had been temporarily restrained by the effects of the great depression and the Second World War Framing of Solution: Post-depression and post-Second World War recovery would ensure the continuation of healthy urban growth
Escalating downward: potentially irreversible problems **1945–1960**	*As the nature of urban decline changed, and its pace quickened, its perception was transformed, and the optimism of former years weakened. One commentator . . . in one of the earliest appearances of the phrase, believed that cities were 'in throes of urban crises'. The city was increasingly viewed as incapable of overcoming the endemic problems of blight, slums, and urban sprawl. This made urban decline no longer a temporary aberration, brought about by years of depression and war, but a chronic national condition. (p. 15)*	Definition of problem: City was suburbanizing itself to death. Out-migration was selective, involving mainly young middle-class families. In-migration of negroes from southern states to older industrial conurbations in the north brought new class and racial problems Framing of solution: National debate centred upon whether to rebuild existing cities, construct new suburban cities and allow existing cities to pass into a less central role, or to abandon big cities altogether
From one crisis to the next: the racial roots of urban decline **1960–mid-1970s**	*The discourse shifted abruptly from the physical state of the city . . . The slum problem was transferred into the ghetto problem . . . Urban decline was no longer a list of curable ills but a fundamental contradiction. Negroes became the scapegoats for urban decline and linked to race, urban decline could not be overcome by simply adding capital and households to the city. Institutions and behaviours transcending the spatial bounds of the city had to change and change in ways that redirected decades of prejudice, discrimination, and oppression. (pp. 64–5)*	Definition of problem: Negroes made the slums and the slums could not be cured without dealing with the problems of racially generated poverty. Towards the end of the period, the negro problem was linked to the fiscal crises faced by so many cities which came more to the foreground Framing of solutions: Fundamental employment and civil rights needed to be established to overturn racial discrimination. Then, with the race problem solved, the slum or ghetto problem might also be solved
Rising from the ashes: glimmer of a future **1970–1990s**	*This feverish revival produced a peculiarly 1980s representation of the city. On the one hand, revitalization displaced decline as the central theme of urban commentary. On the other hand, renewed investment and the cessation of massive population loss, not to mention a rediscovered in-migration of middle-class households, brought to the fore many long forgotten consequences of growth. Many commentators, additionally, found it difficult to overlook an increasingly visible, bothersome, and deepening bifurcation of the city into rich and poor. A fascination with ranking cities on their 'livability', however, blurred widening inequalities within cities, and thereby rescued revival from its critics. During the 1980s, critical commentary, no matter how pessimistic, simply could not dislodge the discourse from its new found hopefulness. (p. 256)*	Definition of problem: The quality of life available in a city, its leisure and cultural amenities, and its overall image, were vital in attracting business and people back to it. The timing was right to represent the city to the world as a place of life and vitality Framing of solution: City marketing exercises were to represent the city as a place in which to consume and be entertained. The city could be shown to offer new lifestyles which were attractive to those bored by life in suburbia

Figure 26.1 Beauregard's framing of 'post-war' discourses of urban decline in the United States (constructed from Beauregard, 1993)

discourse leads one to question the sources of power that have both produced and reproduced that discourse. In turn, accessing the sources of power that lurk behind certain 'ways of seeing' the world often involves asking the question: which categories of person benefit, and which lose, from the existence of these particular types of discourse? Often, the sources of power involved are institutional. Analyses of discourses, therefore, proceed by interrogating the institutional sources that benefit from the circulation of particular 'ways of seeing'.

Additionally, Beauregard draws attention to the often conscious efforts made by those institutions empowered by the discourse to promote their 'ways of thinking' and therefore to suffocate the development of alternative representations. Such institutions might indeed engage in propaganda exercises designed to promote and naturalize the discourse that they so rely upon. This act of denying contemplation of alternatives 'smothers the actual causes of our discontent. It stifles an awareness of how cities might be different. As a result, we are *unable to imagine* cities where shared prosperity, democratic engagement, and social tolerance are the norms and not the exceptions. To allow cities to be the discursive sites for society's contradictions is to be imprisoned in the cynicism of urban decline' (Beauregard, 1993: 324, emphasis added).

Despite all the twists and turns it has taken in its historical evolution, the discourse of urban decline may, at one level, be approached in terms of the manner in which it functions to legitimate capitalist development. One aspiration of the discourse, it would seem, is a search for solutions to uneven development both inside and outside cities which do not fundamentally question or thereby threaten the basic capitalist processes. As Beauregard argues (1993: 306), 'if people cannot be convinced that decline is inevitable, at least they might come to believe that it is tolerable; if not natural, at least reversible; if not curable, at least isolated and contained.' This is an intriguing argument. It suggests that even when drawing attention to capitalism's worst eyesores, the discourse should be approached as reproducing capitalist social relations, by virtue of the fact that it offers solutions 'within the system'. For Beauregard, nevertheless, discourses of urban decline are not only concerned with the power relations embedded in the class structure of capitalist cities. Beyond questions of social class, discourses have to be read in terms of their role in shaping other social relations, not least those based upon ethnicity and gender, and to these one might add age and disability, among others.

Fourthly, and finally, of course the hegemonic status of any discourse is never complete, and despite the best efforts of the institutional support apparatus which grows up around any discourse, there always exists the possibility that alternative representations will grow in persuasiveness. Indeed, when 'cities' are read from social positions at the margins of the dominant discourse, it is possible that representations will become a source of conflict. According to Jackson (1991: 200), such conflict should be thought of as constituting a *cultural politics*, defined as the 'domain in which meanings are constructed and negotiated [and] where relations of dominance and subordination are defined and contested'. The rise of a cultural politics over the way cities are represented constitutes a most fundamental and serious challenge to the established 'order'. Not only is dissent towards this order made visible but the very cultural foundations which support and legitimate its existence are questioned. It is indeed only during such a crisis of representation that the deeply naturalized discourses which buttress relations of domination become disturbed. The interrogation of fundamental concepts which then follows may be read as a moment of emancipation for the oppressed, at least at the level of consciousness.

RE-READING THE NUP AGENDA

For the most part Beauregard's focus has been upon discourses of urban decline. Perhaps because of this emphasis, we feel that his attempt to read recent revivalist agendas from the vantage of the discourse perspective remains underdeveloped. In particular, Beauregard's reading fails to foreground the central importance of the *metaphor* of *commodification* in recent and more optimistic statements on the city. In this final section, we therefore wish to turn attention to the discourse of revival and to present a fuller exposition of what a discourse reading of the NUP agenda might look like.

On the basis of the approach sketched out by Beauregard, a discourse perspective would approach the NUP agenda not as an objective analysis of the effects of globalization and the new international division of labour on the city and as an important context in relation to which cities have to formulate imagined futures. Instead, the approach would see this agenda as a *social construction*. In other words, as a discourse, the NUP represents the city in certain types of ways, therein providing an analytic logic in which problems are defined and policy measures framed. Place marketing and the aspiration to assume certain roles in the emerging global division of labour come to be seen as 'natural', 'obvious', 'self-evident' and 'legitimate'. Treated as a discourse, analysts would then seek to uncover

the sources of institutional power that lie behind it, and the propaganda devices used in its production and reproduction. Finally, assuming that hegemonic status for the discourse is never total, the perspective would call upon research to search for the possibility of a cultural politics in which alternative readings of the city may succeed, however limited, in threatening the discourses' underlying assumptions and logic.

The NUP Agenda as a Discourse

What kind of social construction of the city does the NUP define? In trying to approach the NUP agenda as a discourse, it is useful to begin by locating it within a wider discursive field, often labelled somewhat haphazardly as 'Thatcherism' or 'Reaganism'. This wider discursive field involves ideological shifts within the state more generally. It has been dominated by a 'new right agenda', which champions the importance of the market system and of the necessity of freeing up private agents from state regulations. Given the importance of the local state as an ideological battleground (Duncan and Goodwin, 1988) and the political importance of the problems of inner city and urban decline, it was perhaps inevitable that new right thinking would establish an agenda to be applied to cities (Barnekov et al., 1989; Peck, 1995; Peck and Tickell, 1994).

Central to the NUP agenda is the representation of cities as *commodities*. The metaphor of 'commodification' is used to construct cities as akin to any other good which sits on a supermarket shelf. Places are represented as existing in an open competition with one another to lure private investment. They must act in subservient ways to consumers, and deploy their resources to make them more competitive in the open market. Place marketing itself is the embodiment of new right thinking. Mobile capital and tourists are the highly flexible consumers, places are the product, and local institutions and organizations are the manufacturers, marketeers and retailers. The key move in the NUP agenda, therefore, is the representation of place as a commodity in a highly competitive market place.

Given that the commodification metaphor is the central representation which underpins the NUP agenda, further strands of thought and argument about the city as a commodity therein follow. If one returns to some of the ideas outlined in section 1, once the metaphor of the commodity is revealed, it then becomes apparent that many of the ideas contained in the NUP agenda can be read as derivative of this basic notion. The following brief examples illustrate the most pertinent ideas in this context.

1 Like brands in most spheres of the market today, 'consumer' loyalty to places is never secure, and consumers are indeed becoming increasingly subject to whimsical shifts in taste. Places, therefore, are extremely vulnerable to the fast turnover times that mark the consumption preferences and habits of mobile capital, tourists and a range of other consumers. Places need to be aware that their futures are being determined by laws of the market place which can be likened to those that prevail in the case of more 'normal' commodities, and need to plan for such insecurity (Harvey, 1989a).

2 Commodities should be marketed, not merely advertised. For place marketeers, this is an important distinction. To promote a place simply on the basis of its existing attributes amounts to little more than an exercise in advertisement. 'Marketing' cities in contrast encompasses the much larger idea that commodities are *produced* to meet market demand. A survey of the market precedes the production process itself, and goods are produced in the way a priori consumer demand dictates. The notion of place marketing, therefore, suggests that cities not only should sell what they already are, but must change to become what the consumer requires. Places, thus, need to be produced to the specifications of mobile capital, tourists, etc. (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990).

3 As markets enter maturity, product specialization occurs. Firms find their own niche in the market and attempt to serve only a sub-section of the whole population of consumers. Places, likewise, are representing themselves as offering particularly suitable locations for different economic sectors, for units at different stages in the production process, and for tourists with particular tastes. As it evolves, place marketing is increasingly playing the game of the specialization of the commodity (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990).

4 Many commentators have noted that commodities are increasingly being traded not according to their functionality, but according to their image. That is, consumer taste would appear to be sensitive to the aesthetic dimension of commodities as well as their use values (Featherstone, 1988). Places would seem to be no different. Not only are they creating the hardware (infrastructure, tax arrangements, labour laws etc.) which will attract inward investment, but they are also, as a central part of their work, using image building techniques to produce soft infrastructure to create more conducive aesthetic environments. This is clearly in recognition of the fact that consumers favour not only the functional aspects of the city, but also the gift wrapping that accompanies it (Boyle, 1997).

5 Just as corporate secrecy is vital in securing market edge in the more orthodox commodity

markets, so too is corporate secrecy a central aspect in the commodification of place (Wood, 1993). Localities now jealously guard market research on the latest locational requirements of mobile capital and tourist consumption tastes, and information on projects to upgrade the local hard and soft infrastructure is treated as confidential. And, as with inter-firm rivalry, inter-city competition generates its own ways around this problem; including locating staff moles in competitors' cities, and recruiting staff from these cities.

6 Finally, whilst the essence of new right thinking champions the supremacy of market forces, like other market places, there is considerable debate between cities over the extent to which the state is subsidizing one city at the expense of others. Just as differential state intervention in areas such as coal production, farming and fisheries, creates great inter-firm rivalries, so too in the case of place marketing claims and counterclaims over the differential benefits ascribed to different localities by central government abound. The commodification of place, therefore, has not been immune from the language of subsidy and the vocabularies which have developed in other sectors of the economy over unequal state intervention in markets.

In summary, the NUP agenda can be seen to create a particular root metaphor of the city which therein informs how the city is to be understood, and the kinds of policy interventions required to 'correct' any problems it experiences (Sadler, 1993). This metaphor treats the city as a commodity. Its survival is contingent on competition with other commodities (cities) for a share of the market. To the extent that cities are rendered marginal by the wider political economy, the framing of the problem in this way leads to the conclusion that salvation will only come through the market. And, only through place marketing and the transformation of the city into something the consumer wants, will the city survive.

Institutional Power and the NUP Discourse

Beyond examining the NUP agenda as a 'way of seeing' cities, discourse analysts are interested in the sources of institutional power that both produce and reproduce the discourse. Of course, in so doing, these institutions legitimate their own activities and secure advantages for themselves. In short, the discourse perspective proceeds by asking the question: which types of organization benefit from the circulation of this 'way of thinking'? By seeking to examine the various *communities of interest* which lie behind the representation of cities as commodities, the discourse perspective promotes the idea that far from painting a 'true' or 'real' or 'objective' picture of the world, representations are best thought of as comprising 'situated knowledge', that is, knowledge rooted in the social positions occupied by a variety of institutions and organizations. If power and knowledge are two sides of the same coin, then the key question to be asked is: what sources of power lie behind the idea that cities are fundamentally market places for consumer groups?

Clearly, if one thinks of the capitalist world in general, the democratically elected local state would appear to be the main institution that draws authority from and gives authority to the NUP discourse. It is this authority that can be found most often championing the discourse and defending its integrity and plausibility. Further, it is this institution that can be seen to benefit in both fiscal and electoral terms from the boosterism which forms a central element of the discourse. Nevertheless, depending upon which region of the capitalist world is being examined, there exist at least two other categories of institution which draw upon the discourse as a source of legitimation for their involvements in the governance of the city (Harvey, 1989a). First, in some nations, responsibility for formulating local economic development strategies falls primarily to a number of central government quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations (quangos) which often bypass the democratic local state. Particularly in the United Kingdom (Peck, 1995; Peck and Tickell, 1994), it would appear that the local state has steadily become replaced by a network of central government bodies which have been 'parachuted' into cities without the consent of local people. These bodies have arrested many of the functions previously controlled by the democratic local state. These bodies include and are exemplified by the Urban Development Corporations, Training and Enterprise Councils and Local Enterprise Companies that now plan so much of the economic development work undertaken in British cities. Much of this work both draws upon and reproduces the NUP discourse.

A second category of interest group served by the NUP discourse is that of the variety of forms of local capital which benefit from this particular type of local accumulation strategy. Although not the only capital to benefit, North American studies, in particular, point to the disproportionate economic rewards to accrue to factions of *locally dependent capital*. Cox and Mair (1988) define local dependency to mean the degree to which certain factions of capital are wedded to the overall economic health of a locality. This weddedness may derive from the fact that substantial amounts of fixed capital have been invested or that the firm has a

number of non-substitutional exchange linkages (with the local market, local labour, or local suppliers). Among the more important locally dependent capitals to benefit from the NUP discourse are property developers, banks, utility companies and local newspapers (Cox and Mair, 1988).

That such fractions of capital benefit can be observed from the manner in which they themselves actively promote 'readings' of the plight of cities which fall within the terms of reference of the NUP discourse. This would seem to be particularly important in the North American context. Logan and Molotch (1987) argue that a distinctive feature of the governance of North American cities is the manner in which locally dependent capitals form into coalitions to articulate strategic policy visions for the future of their cities. These coalitions, pressing for development which serves their interests, lobby the local state to follow policies for growth. Inevitably, to a large degree this entails an interpretation of the city consistent with the NUP discourse. Logan and Molotch (1987) characterize these coalitions as '*growth machines*'. Whilst *growth machines* do exist in other national contexts, albeit in a modified form, it would appear that their spontaneous formation and sheer power is a distinctively North American phenomenon (Rogerson and Boyle, 2000; Wood, 1996). Consequently, locally dependent fractions of capital may represent both a source of the discourse, and a beneficiary.

According to literature produced within the political economy tradition, therefore, the hegemonic status of the NUP discourse can be argued to be a reflection of the power the local state, quangos and growth coalitions have in promoting their own reading of the city. It is primarily the interest of these bodies that the representation of the city as a commodity serves. This is perhaps most evident in recent literature on the manner in which these bodies are active in propaganda exercises intent on selling their reading of events to the local population more broadly. One of the most fertile research areas within literature on the New Urban Politics has been that which seeks to examine the role of civic boosterism in the politics of local economic development (Cox and Mair, 1988). It is in this context that analysts have sought to examine the role of place marketing exercises *within* the city. In the account offered in the first section of this chapter, it was suggested that place marketing is viewed in the NUP agenda as an instrumental tool in making localities more competitive when prospecting for capital, state functions, consumer expenditure and further prestige projects themselves. At their most ostentatious, however, place marketing exercises can have effects *within* cities functioning as a form of civic boosterism or, as Boyle (1997) calls them elsewhere, Urban Propaganda Projects. Here the manufacturing of a form of local consciousness which minimizes conflicts and galvanizes local support in line with the NUP agenda helps secure legitimacy for the agenda. As Philo and Kearns point out (1993: 3):

> There exists a social logic in that the self promotion of places may be operating as a subtle form of socialization, designed to convince local people, many of whom will be disadvantaged (by both globalization processes and local economic development projects themselves) that they are important cogs in a successful community and that all sorts of 'good things' are really being done on their behalf.

Within the political economy literature, thus, the NUP discourse is argued to be a central ideological tool used by the capitalist state, and by locally dependent capital, to secure local support and legitimacy for actions primarily designed to serve their interests. Place marketing has to be understood as playing a dual role in this context: on the one hand acting as a tool utilized in the strategy; on the other hand, in the guise of local boosterism, functioning as an ideological lubricant. Of all the discourses on the city examined by Beauregard (1993), there can surely be no other which makes such an ostentatious display to secure legitimation and self-fulfilment. Of course, this claim does not assume that every local group will be seduced by the discourse. It is towards those instances when conflict has broken out over the NUP agenda therefore, that attention now finally turns.

The NUP Discourse and Social Conflict in the City

To the extent that the NUP discourse is changing the way in which cities are being conceptualized, and therein governed, it would be fair to say that it has in turn become a central focal point within which new types of social conflicts are emerging. Given the emphasis within the discourse reading on the notion that all knowledge reflects established positions of social power, the rise of altogether new types of urban conflict not surprisingly emerges as an area of central concern within the approach. In this final section we wish to consider briefly, from the vantage of the discourse perspective, how the various conflicts that are emerging might be understood.

In so doing, a typology of potential conflicts is presented. A review of studies undertaken to date suggests that conflict may revolve around three major issues. These can be ordered in terms of how 'fundamental' they are. First, the NUP agenda has material consequences for different

population groups within cities and therefore has prompted a series of conflicts over redistributive concerns. At the simplest level therefore, it can be said to have triggered a *politics of redistributive justice*. For example, there is a growing literature pointing to the existence of protests which focus upon the extent to which local economic strategies are diverting resources away from local welfare provision and towards the assistance of selective capitalist interests (Kenny, 1995; Rutheiser, 1996). Harvey calculates that this amounts to nothing less than a transition from urban managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989a; see also Cox and Mair, 1988), and points to the macro-economic shifts across the economy from labour to capital which it brings. Inter-locality competition in this regard is seen to induce a redistribution of state expenditure away from labour and towards capital, as yet more inducements have to be offered when prospecting for business. Since all localities are involved, place marketing has the potential to become a zero-sum game, with each locality having to divert ever greater resources simply to stand still. Related to such protests, there may also arise a class based politics rooted in the nature of the economic strategy pursued. The pursuit of a post-industrial strategy may fail on a number of counts: (a) in the context of zero-sum competition for investment, the volume of new jobs created may not be sufficient to replace old ones lost: (b) the nature of jobs created may entail poor, low paid, menial, part-time service sector employment. There may be opposition, therefore, from groups for whom the trickle-down philosophy carries little weight (Imrie and Thomas, 1993; Leitner and Garner, 1993).

Second, at a more advanced level, by commodifying place, the NUP discourse fails to acknowledge the various other non-market relationships that exist between populations and cities. Particularly, sections of the population for whom the city has *use values* and not merely *exchange values*, can often prompt what we will refer here to as a *cultural politics of place*. A sophisticated account tracking the development of conflicts over how places are to be represented – as commodities with exchange values or living environments with use values – has been that provided by Logan and Molotch (Logan and Molotch, 1987). Logan and Molotch identify a variety of ways in which place performs a central role in people's efforts to make a life, ranging from concrete and practical issues like people's use of local facilities (shops, playing fields, schools etc.), to more sophisticated notions such as the ways in which social relations, situated in places, provide people with a sense of civic pride and identity. The insensitive ways in which the commodification of places threatens and undermines these all-important but fragile use values breeds tensions and leads to conflicts.

An example of the way in which the NUP discourse and place marketing have led to the development of a cultural politics of place, can be seen in Boyle and Hughes's (1991, 1994) work on Glasgow (see also Hewison's (1987) more general study). In their study of Glasgow's role as European City of Culture 1990, Boyle and Hughes sought to demonstrate how the event was hijacked by the NUP agenda and used as an exercise in place marketing for economic development. The result was that many groups in the city complained that the real, organic culture and heritage of the city was being excluded in favour of a sanitized version of consumer culture for the comfort of incoming business people and tourists. This led in turn to a heated and controversial debate on what the 'real' Glasgow was and whether its socialist past was being disrespectfully cast to one side. Whilst city authorities conceived of all aspects of the city as constituting a resource base to be used to sell their commodity (including the city's culture and heritage), for others, civic identity represented a use value that could not be disposed of so cheaply.

Finally, at the most fundamental level, the vigour with which the NUP agenda promotes the view that there is only one response to the globalization of capital – namely the commodification of place – suffocates groups with more imaginative responses. Opposition might arise therefore, challenging the view that there are no alternatives for cities. Alternative representations of what globalization means for cities might give birth, therefore, to a *cultural politics of the NUP agenda itself*. Such a politics would foreground the subversive potential of representations which create alternative responses to globalization forces. By constructing a different and more imaginative account of the plight cities face, these representations take to task ways of thinking which the NUP simply naturalizes. Given the hegemonic status of the basic thesis underpinning the NUP, it has to be said that there are few examples of conflicts at this level. Nevertheless, two examples can be cited.

Wills (1995) has argued that there exists the possibility that labour movements might in future play a more active role in combating the globalization of capital and the regressive social consequences inter-city competition generates. Her focus was upon the way in which companies with branches straddled across the world, attempt to play off workforces at each branch by threatening to transfer work to another site unless the local workforce agrees to changing labour conditions and practices. According to Wills, labour movements need to organize more effectively across national boundaries. If workforces presented a

united front and were prepared to agree on a basic minimum social standard, the capacity of firms to make such threats would be greatly reduced. Pan-national coordination of the labour movement, therefore, represents a challenge to the assumption that the only solution to globalization is inter-city competition for the scraps which fall off the capitalist table.

A second example which challenges the basic representation of the world created by the NUP discourse can be found in the growth of LETS – the abbreviation Lee (1996) gives to local exchange employment and trading systems – in Australian, New Zealand, British, United States and Canadian cities. To be sure the number of people involved in LETS is miniscule. The importance of the LETS scheme, however, lies in its promotion of the idea that local communities can shield themselves from the ravages of global capitalism by formulating alternative systems of work and reward. LETS represent attempts by local communities, which might not be able to purchase work formally through the capitalist economy, to de-couple themselves from this economy and to create local forms of social and economic organization which facilitate the 'purchase' of work outside the normal concept of a currency (Pacione, 1997). Those participating in LETS give and receive all kinds of goods and services through reciprocal arrangements which do not involve a transfer of money.

Such a typology of the conflicts surrounding the NUP discourse provides a framework to guide future research. It should be noted, however, that the apparent ranking of forms of conflict from the least to the most fundamental and 'advanced' is not meant to carry any evaluative content. Each type of conflict is important in its own right. The construction of the categories in this way is meant to capture how they might be seen within a discourse reading. Conflicts over redistributive concerns do not challenge the NUP discourse directly. They point to the effects or consequences of the discourse in practice. Conceivably, redistributive concerns might be addressed within the terms of the discourse; for instance, by tinkering to ensure the proper workings of the trickle-down mechanism, or by attempting to secure a different role in the emerging global division of labour. Conflicts at this level, therefore, do not challenge the cognitive framework espoused by the discourse, but instead encourage technical fixes within its terms of reference. The second and third types of conflict, in contrast, do entail challenges to the representational qualities of the discourse: the second focusing more narrowly upon the metaphor of the commodification of place; the latter seeking to question the entire way of seeing of the discourse itself. As such, these latter alternative political challenges are arguably more subversive since they attempt to undermine the NUP at the level of representation.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have attempted to explore the way in which urban studies might profitably develop a new framework of analysis based upon the key concepts of power, discourse and city trajectories. We have argued that a discourse approach moves beyond orthodox policy analysis of the city in a number of key respects. Whilst such orthodoxy has tended to focus on the formulation, implementation and impact of different policies on the city, a discourse reading focuses less on policy practice and more on the cultural constructions of the city which policy naturalizes. Furthermore, it calls attention to the notion that all cultural constructions are underpinned by sources of institutional power. Instead of studying policy in action, therefore, a discourse reading foregrounds the ways of seeing cities assumed in policies, and the idea that ways of seeing always derive from an underlying position of power. Focusing primarily on the NUP agenda, we have tried to exemplify what such an approach might look like. Whilst we have raised a variety of concerns, we will conclude by drawing attention to three aspects of a discourse reading of the NUP which require development.

First, whilst Beauregard represents one of the few studies that attempt to trace the genealogy of the various discourses of the city, the whole question of writing historical geographies of the NUP discourse – and discourses of the city more generally – remains a fertile, unexplored area of research. For instance, much work still requires to be done examining the locations of origin of the NUP discourse and the geography of its diffusion. To what extent, for instance, did the discourse derive from a select number of US cities such as Baltimore, Minneapolis and Pittsburgh, diffusing, first, through the de-industrializing cities of North America and then on into the UK, through cities such as Glasgow and Sheffield? Further, it is likely that the evolution of the NUP discourse has been tortuous, encountering a variety of different local conditions and oppositions and, at least in the innovative stages, struggling to secure hegemonic status. As such, it may also be necessary to write the genealogy of the NUP discourse with reference to the historical geography of different forms of opposition in particular locations.

Secondly, in tracing out the 'key players' in particular cities who have championed the NUP agenda, and shaped its rise to fame, it would be fair to say that work to date has been biased to

the political economy perspective, and as such, has approached this task within the terms of a materialist framework. That is, emphasis has been placed upon large political bodies and certain fractions of capital as the primary producers and beneficiaries of the agenda. Whilst such work has contributed greatly to our understanding of the capitalist power relations reproduced by the NUP discourse, it has done so at the expense of a thorough analysis of the many other power relations with which the discourse interacts; such as those formed around gender, ethnicity, age and disability. This is not to say that all research has ignored the importance of other power relations. It is simply to state that the origins of the NUP are taken most often to signify the rise to power of certain fractions of the state and certain types of capital. Genealogies, therefore, require more innovative ways of studying the sources of power lying beneath the NUP discourse.

Finally, given the status of the NUP discourse as *the* agenda cities have to work with, future work needs to be careful in not assuming that the discourse will lead to certain concrete outcomes in different types of cities. As noted in the first section of this chapter, some recent studies of the NUP have worked with the explicit assumption that in engaging with global capital, strategic trajectories open to cities are conditioned by their differential abilities to master global capital. For instance, there is an acceptance that some cities, such as the global cities, can construct a coherent 'blueprint' based upon a mastering of capital's volatility and flexibility, whilst for other cities strategies are, at best, short-term and opportunistic or fragmentary. The connections between the NUP discourse and the strategies pursued by different cities is seen to be more contingent than is found in this narrow reading, and is thus worthy of future research.

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