



Assessing Meso and Micro-Competitiveness Boosting Policies, in Stra. Tech. Man Terms

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the basic conditions for the necessary redeployment of the concept of competitiveness under the current conditions of the restructuring of globalization dynamics, where national, regional and local socio-economic systems are inevitably part of an increasingly profound process of organic global reshaping. In this direction, there is a growing demand for a new logic of developmental economic policy, where the stimulation of the competitiveness of locally operating business entities, the strengthening of local productive socio-economic schemes and the increase of attractiveness for new investments, acquire progressively increasing importance in terms of planning and articulating economic policy. The composite concept of competitiveness at its three levels of analysis (macro, meso and micro-level) is being examined, and a new approach is proposed, based on the evolutionary combination of specific entrepreneurial skills, their specific socio-economic framework and the specific global industrial dynamics they embody and aim for. Finally, the Stra.Tech.Man approach and the Local Development & Innovation Institutes (LDI) are presented, as useful dimensions in the effort of strengthening the local business systems, in terms of meso and micro Competitiveness.

Keywords: Competitiveness, Developmental Economic Policy, Globalization Dynamics, Local Development & Innovation Institutes (LDI), Macro-Meso-Micro Analysis, Stra.Tech.Man Approach.

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1. Introduction: Basic analytical dimensions

Nowadays, the global economy is in a phase of seeking a comprehensive restructuring and reconstitution towards the creation of a new, long-lasting development model, following the manifestation of a structural socioeconomic crisis and the respective efforts to escape it (Abélès, 2008; Adda, 2012; Gadrey, & Jany-Catrice, 2012; Lin, 2011).

It seems that one of the most sustainable ways to get out of the current global restructuring crisis is to systematically assimilate a new organic way of perceiving innovation across all the different socio-economic organizations and systems of the planet and at all their operational levels (Arkolakis, Ramondo, Rodriguez-Clare, & Yeaple, 2013; Bozio, Irac, & Py, 2014; Peri, 2005). And, in a more general sense, this

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restructuring will require a consolidation of a new way of perceiving and managing change, that is caused and reproduced in all aspects of socioeconomic reality (Bloom, Sadun, & Van Reenen, 2012; Chaney, 2016).

According to the central axis of this article, all the previous restructuring steps require drastic redeployments in the way the socioeconomic organisms perceive and synthesize their strategy (STRATEGY), their technology (TECH-nology) and their management (MAN-agement) at all level of action (STRA.TECH.MAN) (Vlados, 1992a; Vlados, 1992b; Vlados, 1996; Vlados, 2004; Vlados, 2005; Vlados, 2007; Vlados, 2012; Katimertzopoulos, & Vlados, 2017; Vlados, Deniozos, & Chatzinikolaou, 2018a; Vlados, Deniozos, & Chatzinikolaou, 2018b; Vlados, Deniozos, & Chatzinikolaou, 2018c; Vlados, Deniozos, Chatzinikolaou, & Demertzis, 2018a, 2018b; Βλάχος, 2006; Βλάχος, 2007; Βλάχος, 2014; Βλάχος, 2016; Βλάχος, 2017).

In this critical phase of transition, the challenge of stimulating competitiveness in holistic terms seems to acquire new dialectics. This new approach of competitiveness leads to multiple conceptual and theoretical repositionings (Acemoglu, Gancia, & Zilibotti, 2015; Acemoglu, et al., 2016; Altomonte, et al, 2016; Alfaro, & Charlton, 2013).

1.1 National, regional and local socio-economic systems in organic restructuring

This phase of crisis in globalization and the current search for a way out of it, inevitably leads all national and local socio-economic systems of the planet, in a process of deep structural restructuring. It is almost impossible for any socioeconomic organism to escape the imperative need for effective adaptation to the new emerging data.

And the attempt of the national and local systems to exit their crises is necessarily attempted within a particularly complex and constantly evolving global environment, where the individual, spatially established, socio-economic systems try to manage and assimilate internally the new external challenges (Moreau, 2015a, 2015b; Graz, 2013; Picketty, 2013; Norel, 2009) (see Figure 1).

Ultimately, all the partial phenomena of development/crisis, on a global scale, prove that every socioeconomic formation constructs its own evolutionary path of development and crisis, which is based on ideological, political, institutional and structural specifications and options. And, in the end, you always become 'what you produce'. Therefore, the benefits of globalization are always for those who invest in their competitive production (Rodrik, 2011).

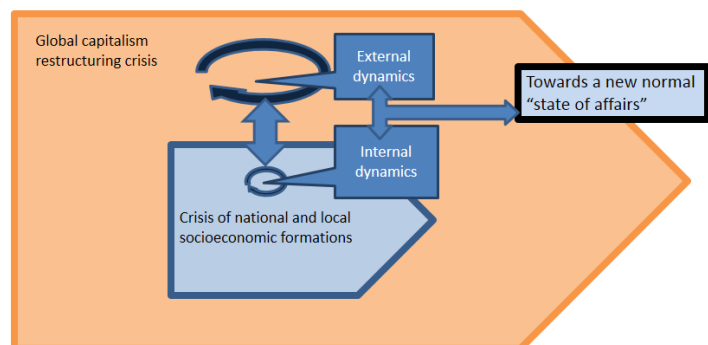


Figure 1: The restructuring crisis of global capitalism

Every region in our planet is characterized by specific developmental perspectives. And it is fundamental nowadays that no socioeconomic system, of every kind and size, can expect substantial economic development in the absence of a productive grid that is competitive. And this competitiveness will always result from the specific innovative entrepreneurship that the socioeconomic environment is able to host and nourish (Aghion et al., 2015; Brynjolfsson, & McAfee, 2015; Carlino, & Kerr, 2015; Hall, Mairesse, & and Mohnen, 2010).

1.2 In the pursuit of a new logic of developmental economic policy

Most of the effective economic policies on the planet seem to converge in a new understanding. This new logic is able to surpass all the simplifications and 'myopia' of the past industrial policy, which was characterized by a Keynesian approach, mainly of ethnocentric interpretation (Guellec, 1999; Jones, 2001; Maddison, 1995; Saint-Paul, 1997). In this new developmental perspective, there is a dialectical continuity in all spatial levels of development (global, regional, national and local). On this basis, we can imagine a 'developmental triangle' that, first, aims to stimulate the competitiveness of the locally operating business entities, second, to strengthen the local productive socioeconomic grid and, third, to increase the attractiveness of the socioeconomic space for new investments (see Figure 2 below).

In this approach also, it seems that the most important aspect is now attributed to the structuring of an innovative institutional framework that reproduces and is fueled by the continuous strengthening of the established innovation potential. Therefore, the local innovation system—the clusters and ecosystems that includes and mobilizes—seems to be of crucial importance (Balland, Boschma, & Frenken, 2015; Breschi, & Lenzi, 2015; Brossard, & Moussa, 2014; Ravix, 2014).

In practice, the established entrepreneurship, the locally-operating business and the co-evolving ecosystem seem to become the structural center, the ‘cell’ of the developmental process itself (in sectoral, cross-sectoral and sub-sectoral terms). And the most dominant developmental component in this ecosystemic perspective is the innovative potential that it being composed, diffused and reproduced.

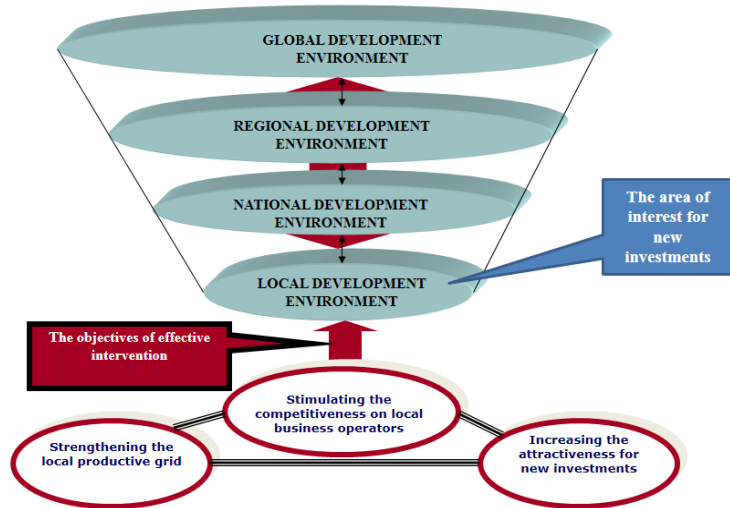


Figure 2: The tight interaction of different territorial levels of development and the effective developmental intervention in the globalization phase

2. Development, competitiveness and institutional dynamics in the contemporary literature

In this kind of evolutionary approach, economic development is always a combination of moral and social changes that enables a population of socioeconomic organisms to cumulatively increase their real total product (Perroux, 1969): This definition of Francois Perroux gives an insight about the different natures of economic development and economic growth. Surprisingly enough, the traditional and conventional ‘economic paradigm’ in economic analysis confuses these two different economic processes (Aoki, 2001; Bosworth, & Triplet, 2001; Latouche, 1989; Ward, 2004).

This over-simplistic interpretation is unable to observe that economic growth refers only to the sustainability, over a period of time, of a nation-state’s index (or indices) of a specific economic size or flow. Economic growth, therefore, is mostly observed with the real gross domestic product (GDP), usually divided by the country’s population (per capita GDP). On the contrary, the concept of economic development can only be linked to the economic evolution and progress; that is, the change of events and structures, tied to each other, as opposed to a random succession, within the irreversible historical time. Ultimately, the process of economic development always carries a potential structural and qualitative transformation and upgrade of the socioeconomic system (Ruttan, 1998).

Although, in the long run, there is no economic development without a parallel economic growth, the two concepts must be analyzed distinctly. The conventional discipline of economic growth seems traditionally to be depleted in the study of the accumulation of quantities. However, economic development refers to much deeper qualitative and structural socioeconomic transformations and imposes policies that go beyond some simple quantitative interventions, implementing institutional changes in an integrated reform framework that structurally rearranges the development model (Amsden, 2001; Bardhan, & Udry, 1999; Rodrik, 1999).

Why, then, is this analytical level of reproduction being reproduced in the myopic and unproductive equation of the concepts of economic development and growth? This is usually the case for the followers of the "conventional", traditional neoclassical vision as:

- They consider that many critical issues in developmental dynamics, such as distribution, poverty, technology, political power, crisis, innovation, and so many other socio-economic dimensions, are - and must be - “outside the interpretative field” of “pure” Economics.
- They assume, usually silently, that the development process is a non-historical, uniform, continuous and mechanistic process of simple quantitative accumulation, carried out within a static framework of unchanged social forms and political priorities.

- They argue that the exclusive study of market flows - and not the study of the complex socio-economic structures underlying these flows - is sufficient to capture the economic progress of a society.
- They believe that economic growth is simply “a matter of time” for an enlarged economy: the wealth provided by economic growth “will necessarily and automatically be diffused” at all levels... Any deviations from the “rule” and any heterogeneities “will be assimilated and disappear in the future”...
- In final analysis, for most of them, developmental economics are shaped as a “discount” of Economics to politics and ideology ...
This confusion should be avoided - and it will be avoided - in the current theoretical approach of the development process.

2.1 What does the holistic theoretical approach to the development process mean?

In particular, the scientific view of the development process must be the field of study that is interested at the same time in the interpretation of resource allocation processes and economic change in the least developed countries and in the production of sustainable development strategies and policies (Assidon, 1992; Hunt, 1989; Sen, 1983). It is not only the increase in wealth and income per capita a sufficient condition for developing a sustainable spiral of economic development in the poorest societies of the planet. Deeper structural changes are also needed in less developed socio-economic systems to systematically increase their potential in the fight against poverty and deprivation (Gillis, et al., 1992). And, above all, to their ability to effectively innovate and manage change successfully.

The classic relative approach of Nathan Rosenberg and L.E. Birdzell, Jr. (Rosenberg, & Birdzell, 1986) is highly enlightening, as it reminds us that economic growth is a form of change, and since change is never limited to the economic sphere of life, it is inevitably expanding into social and political aspects. Naturally, and in a parallel conceptual direction, development economics can not and should not be reliably perceived as a “purely technical” field. Instead, growth inherently has an indelible value as it stems from the specific social realities to which it refers (Stiglitz, 1989).

In the light of the previous observations, the developmental importance of the institutional foundation of development (Acemoglu, & Robinson, 2005; Acemoglu, & Robinson, 2012; Crouch, 2005; Lordon, 1994; Petit, 2006; Rodrik, Subramanian, & Trebbi, 2004; Rutherford, 1996; Rutherford, 2011) becomes clear, and in this sense, development intervention should primarily aim at removing institutional barriers and deficiencies, when they are detected in a socio-economic formation, and at all its operational levels. Thus, the confirmation of the most important developmental importance of structural policy as opposed to simple conjuncture.

Ultimately, looking for competitiveness in a new institutional perspective and as the critical backbone of the development process with a holistic perspective, emerges as a matter of fundamental importance in the articulation of growth dynamics at a global level.

2.2 What does competitiveness mean in particular?

Competitiveness can be defined, in overall terms, as the ability of an economic unit, enterprise, socio-economic organism, region or nation, to be superior, to being more efficient than other similar units, in terms of a commonly agreed target indicator (Algan, Cahuc, & Shleifer, 2013; Amador, Cabral, 2016; Cheptea, Fontagné, Zignago, 2014; Costinot, & Rodriguez-Clare, 2014; Hanson, Lind, & Muendler, 2015; Leromain, & Orefice, 2014).

More specific, the major goal of enterprises is profitability, while nations’ a high per capita income. In a broad context of perception, it can therefore be said that the competitiveness of each socio-economic formation, and at every level of analysis, is linked to its ability to survive, reproduce and develop, within the evolving conditions of its external socio-economic environment. And, of course, it is always about an external socio-economic environment where production capacities remain limited, survival opportunities are not abundant, and there is a conflict for the acquisition and distribution of available goods in terms of remaining scarcity.

In this way, there could be a first approach to the “competitiveness” of a socio-economic formation by examining the degree of coverage of the dynamically evolving needs of its members and

participants. This depends on the size of its production capacities and, by extension, on its innovative potential. In this sense, the problematic of competitiveness is clearly emerging as one of the most prominent development issues.

More specific, according to several converging approaches, the competitiveness of a nation is the extent to which it can, under free and fair market conditions, produce goods and services that respond to international markets, and at the same time, increases the real income of its citizens³. Competitiveness at national level is therefore based on higher productivity performance and the ability of the economy to shift production into high productivity activities, which in turn can generate high levels of real wages. Under this approach, competitiveness is not just a measure of a nation's ability to sell abroad and maintain its trade balance: By contrast, competitiveness is matched with rising standards of living, increasing employment opportunities and the ability of a nation - State to serve its international obligations. In this direction, for the most part, all modern "macro-economic" developmental definitions of competitiveness are being structured.

Nevertheless, many modern analysts now have legitimate criticism of the "close" macroeconomic view of competitiveness. They call for a fuller approach to the problematic of competitiveness in deepening the study in terms of enterprise (micro-level) and sector or/and regional level (meso-level) (Hamel, & Prahalad, 1993; Morvan, 1991). In this respect, competitiveness at the enterprise level is approached as the ability of the firm to perform better than its competitors (higher productivity and / or greater efficiency in the use of its capital and / or greater market share and / or higher sales & profits, etc.) based on its competitive advantages and its available innovative potential. Of course, the spatial level of articulation of micro-competitiveness varies and can be approached at national, regional and international and global levels (Adelstein, 2005; Dosi, & Winter, 2003).

At the same time, competitiveness can also be approached at sectorial and local level (what, in general, is called Meso level). In its "classical" version, this direction of study contributes to traditional industrial politics. It selects, proposes and strengthens some sectors of economic activity that are of strategic importance for future national economic development (Balland, 2012; Broekel, 2012; Pisani-Ferry, 2016).

2.3 Competitiveness as an analytical category is of significant importance?

No matter how "paradoxical" such a question sounds, for most people these days, there are clear disagreements in the relevant international bibliography, over the last several years.

Looking at the theoretical development in its conceptual foundations, Michael Porter (Porter, 1990) initially criticized the concept of competitiveness. In his critique, he concludes that if the main economic objective of a country is to create a high and growing living standard for its citizens, then the ability to achieve it, is not dependent on the amorphous perception of competitiveness but on the productivity with which, its resources (labor and capital) are being employed. Ultimately, according to Porter, productivity is simply the main determinant of a country's standard of living for a long time.

In parallel to Porter's criticism, Paul Krugman (Krugman, 1991; Krugman, 1994; Krugman, 2008) argued that the definition of a country's competitiveness is problematic, as opposed to its approach in terms of business. According to Paul Krugman's view, in particular, the concept of competitiveness itself is unnecessary, since for the economy, the important things are productivity, income distribution and unemployment: If these go well then there is not much more to stumble. If these do not go well, nothing is possible to do well. In his view, productivity is not everything, but in the long run it ends up being almost everything.

Therefore, Krugman's argument leads to the conclusion that competitiveness is a "dangerous obsessive idea" and the working hypothesis that supports, it is wrong. Finally, in his earlier approaches, Krugman focuses on the importance of internal-domestic factors, arguing that, ultimately, the world is not as "interdependent" as we believe, and that international trade between countries is not a zero-sum game, as a growing national economy assists the development of its neighboring economy and vice versa.

³ Review of findings of the President's Commission on Industrial Competitiveness (1985). Available at: <https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/HRG99-75.pdf>

The "other side", on the other perspective, does not lack essential arguments. In particular, "critical critique" of the concept of competitiveness has several supporters. According to Burton (Burton, 1994), the difference between Krugman and supporters of the concept of competitiveness, is simply a difference of degree. He argues that Krugman, with an emphasis on domestic productivity, detracts from the importance of international trade in the US economy. On the contrary, supporters of the concept of competitiveness, emphasize both dimensions, internal and external. In turn, Burton considers that the concept of competitiveness is particularly useful for several reasons:

- It allows very different people (researchers, business executives, public officers...) to think about their performance, in an international competitive environment and to try to follow world-class standards.

- Broaden the attention beyond trade, in issues related to technology, education and the quality of investment.

- Although its benchmark is international, it does not stop focusing on domestic dimensions (productivity, investment).

In the same direction, Preeg (Preeg, 1994) strongly criticizes Krugman's views on competitiveness. In principle, he questions the quantitative justification of Krugman's position on the small importance of US foreign trade in relation to its GDP. He denies Krugman's qualitative assessment that there is no causal link between international trade and national productivity. Preeg argues that the use of a measure of national purchasing power reflecting standard of living and a measure of national output such as productivity, does not adequately capture the effect of international competition on national productivity.

Yoffie (Yoffie, 1993a; Yoffie, 1993b), in the same logic, considers that global competition and competitiveness, stem from the combined interaction between business strategy, state policies and industrial structures. In this way, it opposes the theories of competitiveness that are "rigid" focusing on the factors of production. Yoffie therefore proposes under this orientation, a framework for the analysis of international competition, which includes five dimensions:

- Country's advantages
- Structure of industry sector
- Organizational and strategic business features
- State policies
- The "inertia" (historical heritage, "physiology" in our approach) of the business.

In turn, Best (Best, 1990) in the "New Competition Approach", starts from the study of the modern American economy, and considers that its most important problem is the relative deterioration of its production capacity and not the insufficient savings in the interior or external debt. His approach focuses on the sphere of production and on the role of the internal organization of the business: So, its analysis has a clear micro and strategic orientation. The dominant contemporary phenomenon, according to Best, is the emergence of "New Competition", distinguished by the old one in four points: the organization of the enterprise, the forms of coordination at the various phases of the production chain, the organization of the sector and the types of industrial policy.

In more detail, he finds the overthrow of the "old competition" axioms. "New Competition", in its perspective, proposes strategic interventions at all four levels and is characterized by market-shaping actions, as opposed to simply responding to market developments. At the same time, it calls on businesses, to try to change the "rules of the game", instead of following them "passively". In this way, Best's approach conflicts with the three "axioms" of traditional competitiveness analysis:

- Technological development is linear
- Technological diffusion follows a cycle of 25 to 50 years
- Organizational skills are not important to understand the competitive advantage.

Best thus highlights, the complex evolutionary nature of the contemporary phenomenon of competition and cohesive competitiveness.

It is therefore sufficiently clear from previous approaches, that the narrow view of macro-competitiveness of a country, for years and from multiple sources in the international literature, has been the subject of substantial criticism and overcoming. On the contrary, the microeconomic competitiveness perspective, with a clear institutional and evolutionary orientation, appears to have gained a growing interest over time.

3. Towards a new methodology macro, meso and micro dimension in the articulation of a "new logic's" economic policy

Of the most important aspects in the study of economic science, in total, is the distinction of its basic analytical levels. In principle, the macroeconomic approach concerns this specific approach to economic phenomena in their overall, cumulative economic dimension: It refers to the study of the factors that determine the aggregate flows and sizes of the economic system under consideration, such as employment and inflation, total savings the economy, total consumption & investment, etc.

3.1 The boundaries of macroeconomic policy and the roads of its essential enrichment

It is difficult to deny that achieving the economic equilibrium of the system is of enormous importance, in the structural and long-term development of the business of one place. In principle, it is the main pillar for the creation of a strong socio-economic development model, where economic balance meets, produces and reproduces social cohesion, political stability and continuous technological improvement of the system, as a strictly necessary term in the long-term cross-sectoral development, and thereby safeguard and enhance business profitability. Should not be forgotten that macroeconomic policy undoubtedly, directly and in the short term, influences the world of business: through monetary policy, through interest rates (Shane, 1996), through taxation (Schuetze, & Bruce, 2004) and through the consolidation of climate stability or not (Parker, 1996; Stiglitz, 2002). But in any case, the macroeconomic approach can not exhaust the problematic of a modern economic policy in the era of globalization.

In practice, it is very important that the articulation of Micro-economic and Meso-economic policy gradually emerges, which is based, in turn, on the Micro- and Meso-term view of economic dynamics. The microeconomic approach is, in principle, a specific approach to economic problems, which focuses on the analysis of the behavior / action of the units operating within the economy (individual and enterprise). It refers to the study of factors that determine the relative prices of goods and inputs, focusing on the relevant markets: Microeconomics focuses on the specific rather than on the general.

The main differences of the macroeconomic and microeconomic approach, are therefore that macroeconomics deals with the study of economic phenomena on a global scale as a set of flows and processes at the level of a national economy, while microeconomics deals with economic phenomena, not from the point of the overall data, but focusing on the units of economic activity, on the "cells" of the economy, i.e. on how it works, with what logic it chooses and how the individual household or individual enterprise acts. The fact that micro-economy is interested in the unit of economic activity, gives it the character "micro". Whereas, because we are interested in macroeconomics for the large measures and processes of the whole economy, we are talking about a "macro" view.

In this dichotomy, meso-economic approach can be said that refers to this specific approach to economic phenomena, in their intermediate, dynamic & evolutionary socio-economic dimension (Mann, 2011; Yew-Kwang, 1986). It refers to the study of the factors that traditionally define the structural dimensions and the "intermediate" sizes of the economic system under consideration, such as the sectors of economic activity, their concentration, the localities in which they accumulate and penetrate, as well as the evolving forms of competition and innovation in their interior (Angelier, 2002; Stead, Curwen, & Lawler, 1996).

According to the rationale chosen in this paper, we support that modern economic policy for business should use all three approaches in a synthetic way. In particular, modern economic policies, claiming higher efficiency, seem to be comprehensively compiling their intervention at all three levels, in a combined and coherent way, in the context of the current dynamics of globalization (see Figure 3).

Overall, the process of choosing modern solutions of economic policy, in the modern phase of globalization restructuring, seems to require an enriched systemic thinking that will include the

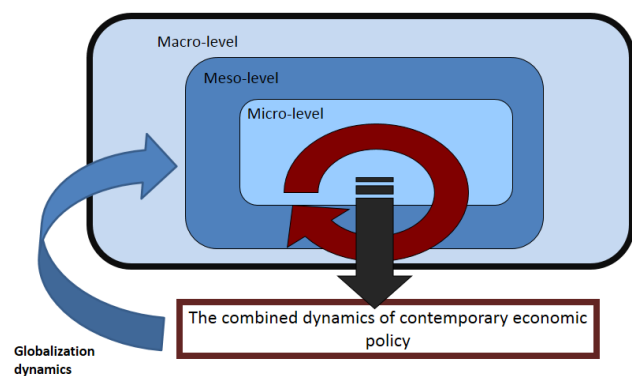


Figure 3: The necessary composition of all the analytical levels in the structuring of modern economic policy

assessment of the potential impact of each intervention on the organic whole of the socio-economic grid and not only on a narrow area of the specific economic problem. In this way, resolving development problems through economic policy, is always emerging as a dynamic-evolutionary process (Boulding, 1991; Friedman, 1998; Hodgson, 1993; Toulmin, 1982).

In practice, fragmented and tightly embedded economic policies, do not seem to be able to provide long-term development solutions. They must be re-positioned on a new perspective. Ultimately, it is not enough to try to analyze the "partial", within certain "autonomous" analytical scientific views of modern socio-economic science. Furthermore, someone must try to interpret the constituent parts of the socio-economic subject in question in a consistent, dialectical way.

3.2 The analytical penetrance of micro-competitiveness

For several decades, since the late 1980s, micro-competitiveness approaches seem to be of particular interest, for a minority but particularly fruitful part of the relevant research community. Under this stream, the "micro-orientation" of the MIT approach has been recorded in "Made in America" (Dertouzos, Richard, Lester, & Solow, 1989), in the late 80's. Specifically, the relevant research committee of the US MIT University, researching the industrial competitiveness, is redirected and focuses now on a micro-economic approach to the competitiveness problem. The committee accepts that improving the macroeconomic climate is important and necessary but not in itself sufficient to solve the problem of a country's productive performance. Thus, attempts to examine the variety of factors, whose combined action leads to the conception, design, development, production and marketing of products and services that, in practice, realize the competitive potential of the economy. The interest directly touches the theme of the articulation of the business strategy.

In parallel, there is also the, timely near-by approach of F. Chesnais (Chesnais, 1986). The researcher argues that international competitiveness of national economies is shaped by the competitiveness of the companies operating within them and exporting. In the long run, he considers that a country's competitiveness is the accumulation of the competitiveness of the businesses operating within it and, ultimately, the expression of their dynamism in terms of administrative practices, investment and innovation capabilities. He does not, however, neglect the importance of structural factors, in establishing a country's international competitiveness, where long-term investment trends, pace and composition of investment, technical infrastructure and the flexibility and sufficiency of productive structures, are of great importance too. Finally, he considers that external factors (broad economic and social framework) of a country define the concept of its structural competitiveness.

At the same wavelength is the micro-approach of Reve & Mathiesen (Reve, & Mathiese, 1994) a few years later. According to Reve & Mathiesen, the industrial competitiveness of a country or a wider economic area, is simply a matter of how competitive its own businesses are. For them, macro-approaches to competitiveness are characterized as "traditional" and outdated, as they are depleted in the analysis of the "macro-conditions" of competitiveness, mainly in the relative prices of productive factors and, in particular, labor, capital and energy; neglecting to look deeply at what is happening within sectors and businesses. Reve & Mathiesen therefore propose a policy that starts from the micro-level of competitiveness at the operational and sectoral level, in other words at the micro- and medium-level, according to the perspective developed in this research.

Similarly, the interesting "functional" approach to competitiveness, according to Lall (Lall, 2001), concludes with a convergent conclusion. According to this approach, industrial competitiveness means, developing relative efficiency along with sustainable growth. In this sense, competitiveness is more defined as a process and can be evaluated in terms of the relative path it deters rather than its outcome.

Overall, as you can see, a large number of valuable research contributions, more than forty years old duration, are at the heart of this proposal, which seeks to articulate an economic policy to strengthen the competitiveness of our small and medium-sized enterprises, focusing on micro- and meso-level actions, interested in the 'qualitative', cognitive and structural reinforcement of their productive grid and by directly enhancing their strategic, technological and managerial potential, deeper than the traditionally "monarchy's assumption" of conventional macroeconomic policy optic.

It is estimated that the main issue now becomes framed, within the framework of a modern effective economic policy, systematic assistance in structuring and reproduction of competitive business advantages. In this direction, the coexistence of clusters and business networks, appropriate institutional

redeployments by the state and appropriate private investment from abroad and within the country, are the key vehicles - instruments for creating value and wealth in a country.

The best achievement of the goal, is when the socio-economic system builds competitive advantages that already has, and also when it creates/recreates new suitable bases for building new ones. This creation of advantages, requires systematic, long-lasting and coordinated strategy and action in systematic co-operation, between the private and public sectors (Delapierre, & Milelli, 1995; Michalet, 1999; Spilanis, & Vlado, 1994; Storper, 1997).

3.3 The prospect of developing a new synthetic approach to competitiveness in the globalization restructuring process

There are many "modern approaches" to economic policy, which continue to follow the path of a superficial and mechanistic approach, both theoretical and analytical, proving in practice that they are dichotomous and not enough sufficient. In these, competitiveness is either perceived only as a closed property of the socio-economic area (see most of the "national space"), or competitiveness is only perceived as a closed property of the enterprise (see more often the "national enterprise"). In the background, both of these two-dimensional approaches to competitiveness, are analytically inadequate and, by extension, can only remain extremely ineffective and in any attempt to consistently conceive developmental phenomenon within globalization.

It can be perceived that within the same socio-economic area, nationally or locally, there are always, and at the same time, companies that are more and more competitive and successful. In fact, there is never a single, homogeneous competitiveness, in the whole of a socio-economic area, regardless of the specific enterprises operating within it. Nor is there a single, competitive and homogeneous competitiveness for an enterprise, regardless of the particular socio-economic countries in which it is established and operating. Competitiveness does not arise only from one or the other, in an isolated and separate way. The creation of competitiveness requires a dialectical synthesis of all its individual dynamic components. Competitiveness, should be a dialectical synthesis between an enterprise - socio-economic area of action and specific sectorial/industrial dynamics, integrating it as an evolutionary set within the global dynamics.

All these three evolutionary dimensions (business, socioeconomic area, branch of activity), in their dialectical synthesis, are those that generate and reproduce competitiveness. Therefore, they should be considered in the context of any substantial developmental vision, within globalization: Socioeconomic area - Business - Branch of productive activity, always integrated as a dynamic-evolutionary ensemble.

4. Conclusions and analytical perspectives: The STRA.TECH.MAN approach and the Institutes of Local Development and Innovation (ILDI)

According to the above, it becomes understandable why the problematic of competitiveness in globalization today, redefines and restructures -directly and indirectly- the theoretical and practical challenges of modern economic science. The stake here is so important, because someone in a truly evolutionary way of understanding the process of creating competitiveness, now has in his/her hands, a credible holistic "compass" to understand coherently the overall developmental dynamics in the context of globalization restructuring and to manage to articulate a high efficiency developmental economic policy.

According to the overall view of the present research, therefore, an integrated approach to competitiveness and production of the global development phenomenon in the globalization restructuring phase - including and reproducing it - must have a character (Βλάχος, 2006):

- Multilevel and synthetic: Since its articulation requires reconciliation and structural coordination between macro, meso and micro vision of the developmental phenomenon
- Holistic: As it always arises and is being reproduced by the overall socio-economic system, dialectically involving its symbolic, moral, legislative and institutional dimensions and not just "narrow economic" ones.

- Organic: Since it is always concerned about evolutionary socio-economic entities, based on their constant adaptation to uncompromised systemic conditions, which are increasingly articulating globally.
- Strategic, Technological and Managerial, in terms of Managing Change that causes and reproduces: Since it can never be perceived as automatic, exogenous and mechanistically predetermined, it is always produced under the influence of specific choices and behaviors of the individual actors of action - space-producing sectors and which reproduce unceasingly its heterogeneous character.

In this direction, modern economic policy with focus the support of enterprises at “source”, in the “cell”, could be said to have a multiform and long-lasting past as a necessary component of global economic policy in many countries around the globe (Acemoglu, Aghion, & Zilibotti, 2006; Aghion, & Howitt, 1990; Aghion, Boulanger, & Cohen, 2011; Hannon, 1997; Iansiti, & Levien, 2004; Moore, 1993; Moore, 1998; Power, & Jerjian, 2001) (see Figure 4).

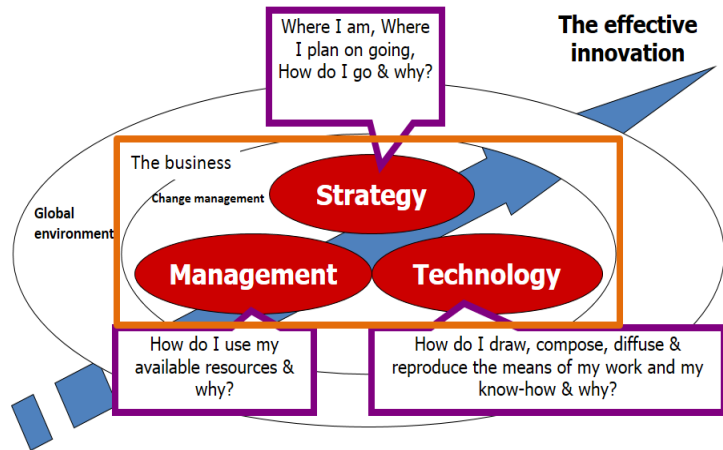


Figure 4: The stra.tech.man core of the firm

This is because, ultimately, it seems that at the innermost level of each organization, at the level that it creates its strategy (STRATEGic component), its technology component (TECHnological component) and management (MANagerial component), and to the point where (STRA.TECH.MAN synthesis) identifies the matrix of its innovative potential and its adaptive capacity. To this kernel the articulation policy has to focus, creating a framework of medium-environment enhancing mechanisms, capable of directly boosting the core of micro-competitiveness of the locally based enterprise, in terms of STRA.TECH.MAN, according to the logic shown in the following figures.

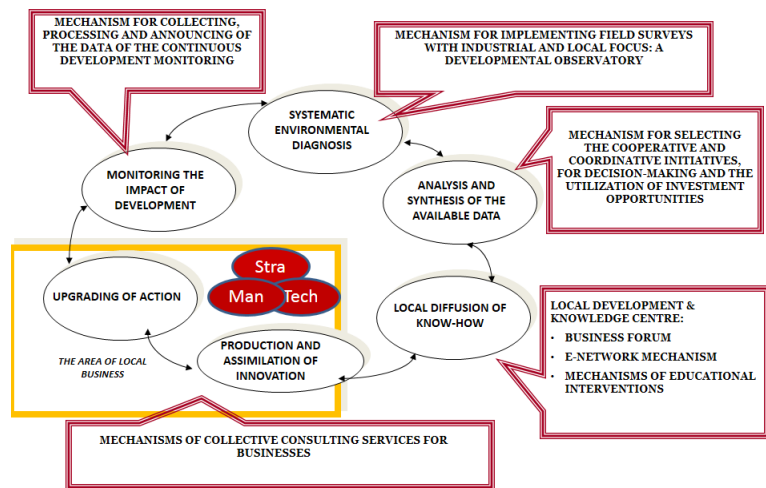


Figure 5: The 6-link chain of the local institutes of development and innovation mechanism

Stra.Tech.Man and the Mechanism of the Institutes of Local Development and Innovation (LDI) have been founded in this direction (Katimertzopoulos, & Vlados, 2017; Vlados, Deniozos, & Chatiznikolaou, 2018a). More specifically, the Institutes of Local Development and Innovation (LDI) are sustainable mechanisms of developmental co-ordination, boosting and diffusion of information and modern operational knowledge, with an innovative entrepreneurship focus and locally-installed businesses extraversion.

Furthermore, LDI is a mechanism with a regional and local focus, provides a "point of contact" of coordination of all actors, organizations and services (similar to "Citizens Service Centers") related to the innovative and developmental characteristics of various regions of a country (see above Figure 5).

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