

Proposal for a special session on
„Diversity in competitive systems – ecological and economic perspectives’
at the ISEE-Conference, Montreal, 11-14 July 2004

Organizers:

*Stefan Baumgärtner** and *Richard B. Norgaard*[§]

* Interdisciplinary Institute for Environmental Economics,
University of Heidelberg, Bergheimer Str. 20, D-69115 Heidelberg, Germany,
phone: +49.6221.54-8012, fax: -8020, email: baumgaertner@uni-hd.de

§ Energy and Resources Group, University of California, Berkeley,
310 Barrows Hall, MC #3050, Berkeley, CA 94720-3050, USA,
phone: +1.510.642-3465, fax: -1085, email: norgaard@socrates.berkeley.edu

Abstract: We want to discuss whether, to what extent, and how the ecological perspective on biodiversity can serve as a fruitful heuristic for the analysis of economic diversity. We use the term ‘economic diversity’ to encompass product diversity, technological diversity, institutional diversity, as well as diversity of preferences and preferences for diversity. Our working hypothesis is that a number of arguments about the role of biodiversity in ecosystems carry over to the role of economic diversity in competitive economic systems. Just as in ecosystems, diversity plays an important systemic role in economies. It provides insurance, it may stabilize the economy, it can make it more resilient, it can enhance its efficiency, it is the basis of technological innovation and evolution of an economy. Thus, we claim, economics may benefit from adopting a systems perspective on diversity.

Keywords: competition, cooperation, diversity, ecology, economics, efficiency, evolution, resilience, system

Contributions to the session:

1. Diversity, efficiency, resilience and competition in economic and ecological systems – The research agenda

*(Stefan Baumgärtner, University of Heidelberg, Germany, and
Richard B. Norgaard, University of California, Berkeley, USA)*

2. Self-organization, transformation, cooperation and (ecological, social) community structure

(Lee Worden, Princeton University, USA)

3. The role of diversity in socio-economic systems

(Igor Matutinovic, Center for Market Research, Zagreb, Croatia)

4. Diversity, production and efficiency of national economies

(Paul Templet, Louisiana State University, USA)