Nationalist Neoliberalism?
Minority Nationalism, Competitiveness and the Urban Question

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1. Neoliberal Governance Restructuring

2. Nationalism and (Neo-)liberalism

3. Geographies of Minority Nationalism and Uneven Development

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## Neoliberal Governance Restructuring

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<td>Examples</td>
<td>Heavy industry concentrated in few places…</td>
<td>UE Regional Policy Third Italy Decentralisation in France, UK, Spain, Italy…</td>
<td>ESPD Dutch Randstand New macro-regions (e.g. euro-regions)</td>
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- State rescaling and the resurgence of regional/local governance (Jessop, 2007)
- Competitiveness new mantra:
  - OECD Competitiveness
  - EU Lisbon Agenda…
- Competitiveness is “local”
Neoliberal Governance Restructuring

• Neoliberal Rolling back/out (Peck and Tickell, 2003)
• Neoliberal everywhere and nowhere (Peck, 2001: 441)
  • neoliberal cities,
  • neoliberal regions,
  • neoliberal states,
  • neoliberal Europe,
  • neoliberal worlds…

BUT … neoliberal nationalism?

Oximoron?

Neoliberalism – emphasis on markets and competitiveness
Nationalism – barriers to market
Nationalism and (Neo-)Liberalism

- Minority Nationalist literature focus on cultural, political, civic or ethnic perspectives

BUT

- the economy plays a vital role of nationalist projects:
  - Flemish nationalism and the KBE (Oosterlynck, 2007)
  - Quebecoise sovereignty and Monetary Integration (Helleiner, 2003)
  - Lisbon Agenda and Minority Nationalism

HOWEVER in most of the literature:

- Economy is left a part or just as a justification – economy as static context
- Economic minority nationalism equated with protectionism or mercantilism – ignores the existence of (neo-)liberal policies
- Cultural aspects as a selling point of economic distinctiveness – ignores inner contradictions (i.e. the language problem, immigration, what is part of the “national” economy?…)

THUS

Do demands for regional autonomy based on distinctive cultural identities resonate with liberal economic discourses and the increasing integration of the world economy?
Geographies of Minority Nationalism and Uneven Development

Analysis of minority nationalism focus on

- the relation between “nation”-states and sovereignist regional projects
- (in western countries) wealthy sovereignist regions
  - Catalonia, Basque Country, Padania, Flemish, Quebec, Vermont…

Tendency to:

1. Economic nationalism as single-sided – national uneven development
2. Internal Geographies of minority nationalist projects
Geographies of Minority Nationalism and Uneven Development

1. Economic nationalism as single-sided

Struggles between nation-state governments and regional nationalist projects

- neoliberal nation-states not as nationalist
- multiculturalism/cosmopolitanism – neoliberalism (Zizek, 1999)

HOWEVER

- evidence not so clear (Helleiner and Pickel, 2006)

i.e. Mergers and Acquisitions

- Few liberal heavens (e.g. UK)
- Abertis/Autoestrade-Endesa/Enel (Spain/Italy)
- Financial industry Italy
- Gaz de France/Suez
- Eon…

- National-state uneven development
2. Sovereign economic imaginaries and the urban question:

- how nationalist projects articulate their inner territories (i.e. cities and city-regions)?
- Regions and nation-states as coherent but heterodox territories
- Conflicts between “multicultural” “global” enclaves and mono-cultural visions. E.g.:
  - Brussels
  - Montreal
  - Barcelona
  - Milan

What are the geographies of economic nationalist projects? In particular, what implications do they have for the strategies of cities located in these regions to become full members of a global city network?
Researching Minority Nationalism and Economic Projects

**Cultural Turn**
- Postmodern thought

**Political Economy**
- Classical Political Economy
- Marxism

**Ontology**
- Pluralistic view of the world
  - No universal knowledge possible
- Universalistic view of the world
  - Universal knowledge

**Knowledge is situated**
- Reality exists only in the eyes of the beholder (subjective constructivism)
- Inevitable contextuality and historicity of knowledge

**Epistemology**
- World co-constituted by material and semiotic processes

**Critique of...**
- Modern rationality
  - Positivism
  - Categories and methods of orthodox political economy
  - Universalism
- Relativism and anti-materialism of cultural turn

**No Explicit Methodology:**
- Anything goes playfulness, (discursive) deconstruction
- Critical Realism
- Dialectics
- Quantitative analysis

**Main methodology**
- Articulation
- Dialectics
- Semiotic Analysis

**Main Research Questions**
- Analysis of "otherness" and politics of difference
- Cultural Construction of Identity
- Discursive formation of...
- How social processes and subjects are materially and immaterially co-constituted within capitalist social relations
- Contradictory character of capitalist social relations:
  - Crisis tendencies of Capitalism
  - Material production of uneven development

**Cultural Political Economy**

The actual mobilization of “culturalized” economic strategies can be seen as ‘a hybrid process of aggregation and ordering that cannot be reduced to either [ideas of culture, politics or economy] and, as such, requires the use of a unitary term such as’ ideas of cultural economy politics.’

The Fordist Order

“The economy” as fordist manufacturing

“The political” as distributing growth

Culture as fine arts/popular cult.

The Neoliberal Order

“The cultural” as integral part of the “economic”

The political as technique
2. Representations-of-space (Lefebvre, 1974)

is only encountered through the understanding and abstractions contained in plans, codes, and designs that shape how we conceptualize ordered space’ (McCann, 1999: 172).

For Lefebvre, this is the dominant form of space and it is intrinsically discursive.

3. ‘spatial policy discourse’

The discourse analytical framework as an operational and analytical tool for probing at the ways in which spaces and places are re-presented in policy discourses in order to bring about certain changes of socio-spatial relations and prevent others (Richardson and Jensen, 2003: 17).
Catalan Nationalism and Neoliberalism

Spanish Neoliberal project
• through EU’s integration (1986)
• EU as anchor to neoliberalisation

BUT
• liberalisation + privatization + financialisation – spatial and power concentration
• UE funds + modernization + real estate + owners public companies: new capitalist class
• New (neoliberal) Spanish Economic Nationalism
• Catalan elites start to feel “unfairly” treated – 2001 back to struggle
• 2003: sovereignist government in Catalonia: new regional constitution, emphasis on infrastructure
• M&A battles
Catalan Nationalism and Neoliberalism

New national discourse in Catalonia:

“first we need to grow, then we will redistribute” (J. Montilla, Regional President of Catalonia, 2004)

“to recover the initiative in the 21st century economy is a challenge which can only be expressed in one concept: competitiveness” (J. Montilla, Regional President of Catalonia, 2006)

- KBE-Catalonia – Lisbon Agenda
- New territorial organization – parallel to ESPD- EU
- New infrastructure – around Barcelona
- Developing new regional charter – reinventing nationalism

Explore redefinition of nationalism in the light of competitiveness discourse

Look at the uneven development produced by it

Conceptualise nationalist neoliberalism
Catalan Nationalism and Neoliberalism