TERRITORIAL SOLIDARITY AND WELFARE STATE AS AN APPROACH TO CATALAN NATIONALISM

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I. INTRODUCTION

A nation-state could be defined as the highest level in which a specific territorial order is bounded by an economic system, institutions, government, political representation and cultural meanings. However this conception of nation-state has been lost, demystified, by new spatial scales (as Regions and the European Union), in which similar normative and solidarity arguments could be used.\(^1\) As a result, the scope of welfare state as part of the process of boundary building has been affected by the same spatial scales. Therefore, some problems and interesting questions can be posed, such as: What forms of citizenship and nationality are growing at sub-state level? Are those consistent with normative conceptions of solidarity and social citizenship? If not, how could they be? How welfare state should be mobilized as part of the solidarity affective identity and national identity by political entrepreneurs or nation-builders? Did these share affective identities reinforce nationalism?

This paper first examines those questions approaching the concepts of solidarity, social citizenship and welfare state, before making an approximation of the rescaling of the nation state conception as well as the sense of territory and solidarity. The case of the use of territorial solidarity and welfare state as means in Catalonia nation building elites will finally be presented.

\(^{1}\) KEATING Michael, Rescaling the European States. The Making of Territory and the Rise of the Meso, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 156.
II. SOLIDARITY, SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP AND WELFARE STATE

Three notions mold the interpretation of "solidarity": Social Justice (that could be the relief of poverty or greater equality applied to all humanity), and politics (seeing that states redistribute incomes to maintain the loyalty of social groups with a potential disruption of the economic and social equilibrium). The third element is economic performance (enhanced through investment in human capital to overcome the market failures).

On one hand, the idea of social citizenship was formulated in the aftermath of the Second World War as a third set of rights, following legal and political rights. Social rights pose a serious challenge to the market economy as the basis for distributing resources. According to this view, citizens’ social entitlements and rights ought to be provided by a unitary administration of public services and only centralized governments could redistribute resources and command the authority to overcome the market. In consequence, welfare state was centralized and functions of market were at the same national-state level, meanwhile welfare state could improve the economic performance investing in human capital (efficiently). On the other hand, social rights could help to legitimate the political order, because contending social groups could share a common political and social space and integrate it into the constitutional order. Then one of the principal roles of welfare state has been to promote integration between different social segments, classes and/or religious groups, and at the same time, this means the role of social welfare in the integration of nationally and territorially diverse societies.

Seeing that, many European welfare states have provided solidarity as a community of belonging to the state, the institutional basis for policy as a set of institutions, and the state as a Sovereign unit within the international order; both connotations were part of a process of polity building. This has tended to make equality and homogenization as synonymous notions. Subsequently, by the

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3 Market failures related to economic risks that bring unemployment and/or illness in the population
4 So the (Keynesian) welfare State link economic management and social provision, in the manner that labor could balances “social wages”, against the limits imposed by the capitalism, so business was assured by social stability and necessary public’s goods in exchange for taxation to support welfare (Marshall, T.H., 1992. Citizenship and social class mentioned in KEATING Michael, "Social citizenship, solidarity and welfare in regionalized and plurinational states", in Citizenship Studies, Vol. 13, No. 5 October 2009, p. 501).
seventies, national integration apparently was completed within the states of Europe in that it combined a functional integration (extension of markets) with an institutional (expansion of state) and a normative one (diffusion of culture and political belief).

Still, *Territorial management* is another element that helps to maintain the unity of a state (*Rokkan and Urwin 1983 and Keating 1988*) since practices, policies and institutions, given by state elites, aim to maintain territorial integrity. Therefore, the strategies of decentralization, central-local intermediaries and regional policies were important in multinational states, which retained historic-territorial fault lines. Thus, culturally distinct territories were also accommodated through territorial management, as representatives of the periphery brokered territorial interests at the centre. These sought to balance development through restricting growth in wealthy regions and promoting development in poorer regions, so producers in wealthy regions could be assured that money transferred in subsidies would come back in the form of state public goods. This is the Logic of Spatial Keynesianism.  

### III. THE NEW TERRITORIAL POLITICS OF SOLIDARITY AND THE RESCALING OF WELFARE STATES

But in recent times, nation-building projects have emerged within and across the states and, in those cases; “Spatial Keynesianism” is not the link between the Welfare State and territorial management anymore. European and Global Markets have induced what has been referred to as the “*race to the bottom*”, which means that States, Regions and Cities seek to gain competitiveness by cutting welfare standards. Two factors can be held accountable for this situation: first, the fact that states and regions must be forced to maintain a minimum of social services and gain competitiveness, and secondly, states should reduce social welfare costs by decentralizing the regions and localities as a mean to attract and retain investors. These circumstances suggest that, both at the State Level and at the European Level, there have been changes in the way that a region were equipped to compete within European and global markets, and at the same time competition is presented as a *dominant*

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7 *Ibid* p. 501  
8 *Ibid* p. 503  
and normatively superior mode of social interaction.\textsuperscript{11} This last argument has posed difficulties to the idea of the state-nation and welfare state as universal frameworks of public action and normative order in which assumptions of solidarity, institutions and citizenship at state level are suffering of boundary transformation and economic competition.\textsuperscript{12}

Furthermore, social demands and the rise of inequalities constitute a threat to territorial solidarity. At the same time, territorial distribution of expenditure has become an essential issue as devolution creates institutional actors, and reinforces territorial interests.\textsuperscript{13} In principle, territorial solidarity could be balanced by providing blocks grants (legal transfer), which devolved governments are free to spend according to their priorities.\textsuperscript{14} However, this situation causes problems in the Fiscal System as well as in the transfers of resources to the poorer regions. Even when the equalization of fiscal system could be arranged, defining needs is more subjective and political.\textsuperscript{15}

Consequently, national solidarity is giving space to regional egotism by the reemergence of politics of identity, especially, when wealthy regions do not observe a shared culture or identity for territorial transfer, and even more when there are less economic inputs in the shape of orders of theirs products.\textsuperscript{16} Nevertheless, Keating\textsuperscript{17} stands that both -the Sub-State Level and the State-level- are political communities which can equally claim to be the basis for solidarity, and in fact in the pluri-national states, the terms of nation and political community are disputed, as are boundaries of belonging.

\section*{IV. CATALAN NATIONALISM AND TERRITORIAL SOLIDARITY}

Two historical major points can explain the rise of the Catalan nationalist support recently: first, since Spain economic crisis, social solidarity is used by Catalan nationalist politicians as an argument to create and to reinforce the sense of Catalan nation. Second, the Constitutional Court issued a sentence of the Catalonia’s Statute of Autonomy that greatly promoted a pro-independence

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{11} KEATING Michael, "Social citizenship, solidarity and welfare in regionalized and plurinational states", op. cit., p. 504.
\bibitem{12} MORENO Luis, op. cit., p. 7
\bibitem{13} KEATING Michael, “Rescaling the European States...”, op.cit., p. 158
\bibitem{14} KEATING Michael, op. cit., p. 157
\bibitem{15} KEATING Michael, op.cit., p. 159
\bibitem{16} \textit{Ibid.}
\bibitem{17} KEATING Michael, op. cit., p., p. 157
\end{thebibliography}
discourse based on two thesis: *Catalonia would only be able to ensure a proper welfare state if it is detached from Spain*, and the idea that a Catalan State is indispensable for the economic and political growth of the Catalan nation.\(^\text{18}\)

But this does not mean that Catalan nationalists are more or less attached to solidarity; that is the reason why it is mandatory to distinguish between inter-territorial solidarity (between regions) and intra-territorial solidarity (within the region), because, those who put pressure for less inter-territorial solidarity (redistribution) could be more inclined to share resources internally or just the opposite.

\textbf{a) Inter-territorial solidarity}

Although *Catalonia* was not granted a special fiscal autonomy\(^\text{19}\), there is a growing consensus between political parties (business and labor) that they pay too much into the Spanish treasury and do not get back a proportional return. The Catalans want more fiscal autonomy and less equalization payments to the rest of Spain, which implies the launch of a system in which Catalonia collects its own taxes and passes on a sum to Madrid for common services (as Basque Country).\(^\text{20}\)

As it was showed by “*the revolt of the Rich*”, politicians in *Catalonia* argued that they could not afford to finance transfers to poorer regions, given their own need to compete internationally.\(^\text{21}\) The Circle of Catalan Business (*Cercle Català de Negocis*) is one of the leaders of the economic campaign in favor of the Catalan State. As a business association, their arguments are that the only fair financial system is one based on Catalonia independent fiscal resources, and Catalonia will never be competitive because it lacks an independent political structure.\(^\text{22}\)


\(^{21}\) Ibid161

\(^{22}\) ALVAREZ SOLER Laura, *op. cit.*, p. 9
Although the law of the financial system has been revised several times since it was first approved in 1980, experience shows that the impairment of the wealthiest regions has done nothing but growing. In this case, one can certainly argue that Spain’s financial system does not guarantee equality among its citizens, regardless of which autonomous community they live in. In addition, the system lack of transparency, the absence of mechanisms to maintain vertical equilibrium across the different levels of the administration and a significant deficit of fiscal autonomy and responsibility on the part of regional governments. Politicians in Catalonia, indeed, still believe in inter-territorial solidarity, but argue that transfer should be transparent, territorial redistribution should be limited in proportion of the money per capita to spend and that the transfers to poor regions could lead into a path of dependency for poor regions.

b) Intra-territorial solidarity

The “Generalitat” of Catalonia has been able to assume primary responsibility for the support and provision of health and social services, but generally within frameworks established by the central government, upon which it is highly dependent for funding. Nevertheless, political uniqueness and a strong autonomy decision making process developed a process of welfare building that has further increased the differences between Catalonia and the rest of Spain. This means a race to the top in welfare provision, with limitation to the scope created by institutional constraints.

Catalonia as a wealthy region with strong identities could show internal territorial solidarity and the argument about globalization and neo-liberal economic, as well as the common notion that the stability of the Catalan welfare state has become increasingly jeopardized by a financial system that does nothing but exacerbate the economic situation, have been used by different leaders of political parties as CiU, and others that have historically advocated independence, including the republican leftwing ERC (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya) and even those new-born parties in

23 ALVAREZ SOLER Laura, op. cit., p. 9
24 KEATING Michael, Rescaling the European States..., op. cit., p. 162.
26 VAMPA David, op. cit., p. 18.
27 The welfare system in Catalonia could be defined as gésion empresarial which favors horizontal subsidiarity between public and private sectors and a system of healthcare based on mixed organization (sistema mixto de organización).
28 KEATING Michael, Rescaling the European States..., op. cit., p. 163.
favour of Catalan independence, such as Solidarity for the Independence (SI) or Regrouping (Reagrupament), but also the several institutions and reputed members of the economic and business sphere.

It is against these economic conditions that a new form of nationalism was born. Moreover, it has brought a significant growth not only of Catalan nationalism, but also of desire to achieve a Catalan State, which is increasingly being portrayed as the only possible way to overcome seemingly eternal cultural and economic repression.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{29} ALVAREZ SOLER Laura, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 7.
V. CONCLUSION

Regions and stateless nations have a strong sense of identity; this might replace the state level identity as the focus for solidarity. So, this could be the case of Catalonia, as a devolved territory engaged in nation building. Owing to the fact that, in the scenario of the Catalonia Autonomous Community, the decision-makers and decisions making process have proved to be effective ‘laboratories of democracy’ and ‘layers of accountability’, as they have made with the development of a welfare state and social policies. This means that the Catalanian’s experience is an example of how to use welfare provision to build their identity, citizenship and solidarity government. For nation-builders payoff for innovation could exceed past advantages of having central elites deciding on regional policies and the allocation of public money. In other words, the Catalan’s independent movement is a case that shows how welfare state conception could be mobilized as part of the solidarity affective identity by political entrepreneurs or nation-builders to reinforce nationalism.

I. BOOKS


II. ACADEMIC ARTICLES


III. WORKING PAPERS


- VAMPA David, *Territorial mobilization and sub-state welfare governance in Italy and Spain comparing four regional case studies*, European University Institute, Paper circulated at the 2014 ECPR Conference, Glasgow, United Kingdom.

IV. ONLINE RESOURCES
