Prospectus for:

Political Geography of Cities and Regions: Changing Legitimacy and Identity

Kees Terlouw

Blurb

This book analyses the use of spatial identities to legitimise the changing political role of cities in relation to territories. The relation between cities as organisers of economic networks and the political territories in which they operate is always contested. The legitimacy of neoliberal policies on urban competitiveness are now challenged by national populism and global climate activism. This book analyses this as a new phase in the confrontation between relational and territorial perspectives on legitimacy and identity.

These differences are based on coherent and contrasting moral systems which can be condensed in a general typology. This typology is a useful tool to study the different roles of both perspectives in different political and historical contexts. This book analyses the trajectories of the Amsterdam metropolitan region in the Netherlands and the Ruhr metropolitan region in Germany. Over time, both have been exposed to a growth of urban autonomy in the early modern period, subjugated to the territorial control by the nation state during the period of industrial modernity, transformed by neoliberal urban policies the current period of late modernity, and now coping with the dual anti-liberal counterrevolution of ‘populists’ and environmentalists. This shows that the dominance of the territorial and the relational perspective is always contested and incomplete and results in different arrangements of how legitimacy is constructed and identities are used.

This book gives a grounded geographical perspective to the recent challenges to legitimacy and use of identities. It is valuable for students in human geography, political and social sciences and the politically interested educated public willing to invest time to look beyond the national political headlines on neoliberalism, ‘populism’, nationalism and globalisation.

Keywords
Legitimacy, identity, territory, metropolitan regions, cosmopolitanism, ‘populism’, neoliberalism, industrial modernity, late modernity, circular economy

Statement of aims
This book gives a much needed geographical perspective to the current crisis of the neoliberal regime which is predominantly examined from national political arena’s. This books looks beyond the headlines and the heated ideological debates on globalisation and ‘populism’. These are analysed in this book as the recent expressions of a deeper rooted opposition between the moral guidelines of the territorial and relational perspectives, with different views on the identity of the community and what makes government legitimate. This book places the current crisis in legitimacy
and identity in an historical perspective by analysing earlier shifts in dominance between these perspectives in early, industrial and late modernity. By adopting an urban instead of a national perspective, it shows how different communities deal with these differences. Living together in a shared regional space facing problems directly affecting the daily life of ordinary people, for instance by building windfarms and housing estates around cities, makes it sometimes easier to accommodate these different perspectives.

Table of Contents

1) Looking beyond populism to local conflicts and compromise
2) The relational and territorial perspectives on legitimacy and identity
3) Early modernity and urban autonomy
4) Industrial modernity integrating cities in the national territory
5) Late modernity: urban competitiveness fragmenting the nation
6) The formation of metropolitan regions: expanding relations
7) Challenging the metropolitan region: local resistance identities
8) The ways ahead: territorial closure versus circular economy
9) Conclusion: an endless cycle of territorial and relational hegemony?

Chapter Synopses

1) Looking beyond populism to local conflicts and compromise
The triumph of the city as the cradle for economic development, liveability, social justice and political effectiveness, has become the dominant discourse to legitimise liberal policies and cosmopolitan identities. This chapter starts with a short review of this discourse and how this is used in the city marketing in Amsterdam and the Ruhr region. Then attention shifts to the emergence and responses to the national ‘populist’ revolt. The aim is not to give a complete review of the literature on this topic, but to focus on spatial aspects. The geography of this discontent amassing outside the metropolises and its anti-urban character are discussed. This is partly based on diverging economic opportunities and the loss of control over daily life, but the focus is on the political polarisation of attitudes towards globalisation, territory and community. To contrast this general polarisation in society this chapter will briefly discuss the example of Buiksloterham, a redeveloping neighbourhood with industrial roots in Amsterdam, where groups from these different backgrounds work together.

This introductory chapter ends with an outline of the rest of the book. The more fundamental differences between the relational and territorial perspective are discussed in the next chapter. Then attention shifts to how the relation between these two perspectives have changed over time and affect the relation between cities and their regions in Holland and the Ruhr.

2) The relational and territorial perspectives on legitimacy and identity
This chapter takes a step back from the current political debates. It starts with Jonathan Haidt’s evolutionary perspective on the development of two moral systems. He links this to the genetic
differentiation in humans through which some perceive unfamiliar situations more as a threat, while others regard it more as an opportunity. How complex differences in moral systems can emerge from these small genetic variations is discussed. These differences are linked to a similar distinction Jane Jacobs makes between the guardian and commercial systems of survival. She also stresses that society depends on some sort of combination between these complex moral systems. The rest of this chapter discusses how these general differences between the relational and territorial perspective can be linked to different forms of spatial identities and to different views on legitimacy. This chapter summarises this in a typology of about a dozen different aspects in which the relational and territorial perspective on legitimacy and identity of cities and regions differ from each other. This forms the framework for the next chapters which analyses how urban-regional relationships are conceptualised in the Amsterdam and the Ruhr region and how the general balance between the importance of the relational and territorial perspectives has changed over time.

3) **Early modernity and urban autonomy**
This relatively short chapter starts with how in the 16th century the merchants in Amsterdam in alliance with other groups legitimised their revolt against their territorial ruler, the King of Spain. An analysis of the key documents legitimising this revolt shows not only the shift in perspective from the territorial to a relational perspective, but also the redefinition of territory as sovereign territory. This illustrates the key point made also by Jane Jacobs that society needs both perspectives and that these constantly react and feed upon each other. This is further exemplified by the developments in the Ruhr region in this period where urban autonomy also increased, but which, through territorial fragmentation, hindered the old Hanseatic trade relations. The different contexts in which urban autonomy increased resulted in very different political practices and discourses on legitimacy and identity, focussing on different aspects of the typology developed in the previous chapter. This is also reflected by the different ways in which urban merchants in Holland and the Ruhr region build their manors in the neighbouring countryside and the character of their relationship with the nearby local agrarian communities.

4) **Industrial modernity integrating cities in the national territory**
This chapter analyses how the urban-regional relationship has developed during the formation of the territorial nation-states in the last centuries. These nation-states are still around, but, as will be discussed in the next chapter, its spatial policies of national integration have been turned around in the last decades. This chapter starts with the industrialisation of the Ruhr region in the context of the Prussian dominated formation of the German nation-state in the late 19th century. It analyses how the Prussians used the emerging German national identity and played the conflicting local identities of competing company towns in the Ruhr, to legitimise their political control over this concentrations of proletarian migrants in the Ruhr region. This is reflected in how in the Ruhr region new workings class neighbourhoods were constructed. This chapter subsequently analyses the legitimation in the Netherlands of redistributive policies to spread economic development from cities like Amsterdam into the Dutch national territory. This is partly based on an analysis of key planning documents on the role of cities and the national territory using the typology developed in chapter 2. But also a more detailed comparison is made between how in Amsterdam and in the Ruhr region working class neighbourhoods were conceived and constructed. This chapter ends with a comparison of how national identities were formed in the Netherlands and Germany. Their national identity discourses were legitimised to protect traditional rural regional identities and to control urban relations within the national territory.
5) Late modernity: urban competitiveness fragmenting the nation
This chapter starts by outlining the transformation over the last decades from industrial to late modernity. It analyses the shift in legitimacy of the organisation of society from social and territorial equalisation to the current dominant logic of social action based on being singularly outstanding and successful in competition. This is the foundation of what Andreas Reckwitz characterises as a society of singularities which drives individualisation, economic neo-liberalism, social liberal cosmopolitanism and the fracturing of politics. This late modernity is based on the new urban middle classes. Following this analysis of how this late modern social order is legitimised, attention shifts to the changing role and use of identities. The subsequent discussion of the general changes in the role of identities in society is based on authors like Zygmunt Bauman, Manuel Castells and Anthony Giddens. This covers topics like nation, individualisation and lifestyle. Special attention is given to how this affects places and spaces. The emergence and evolution of place promotion, place marketing, and place branding is discussed, partly based on a research project I am involved in as co-promotor [https://www.researchgate.net/project/Pat-019-09986-0]

6) The formation of metropolitan regions: expanding relations
This chapter analyses the growing importance of metropolitan regions. It start by discussing how the general trends discussed in the previous chapter are linked to the worldwide rise of metropolitan regions. It analyses recent, mostly economic, discourses which are used to legitimise metropolitan regions by outlining the economic benefits of the shift from individual urban competitiveness to urban regions. This is based on expanding urban networks through for instance extended supply chains and the evolution of innovation networks driving the expansion of metropolitan regions. This is subsequently applied in the analysis of the formation of the Amsterdam metropolitan region. This transformed the old concept of the Randstad, which was central in the spatial planning in the Netherlands under industrial modernity. The analysis focusses on how the Amsterdam metropolitan region now legitimises itself and how it positions itself towards different local and regional, national and European identity discourses. The typology developed in chapter 2 structures this analysis. The last part of this chapter studies the creation of a new regional identity in the Ruhr region. This was used to legitimise the shift from a wholesale restructuring of the regional economy suffering from industrial decline, towards the celebration of singular locations, local initiatives and cultural events as narratives on which a new regional identity discourse is based.
This and the next chapter builds on a paper I recently published in GeoJournal [https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-019-09986-0]

7) Challenging the metropolitan region: local resistance identities
This chapter analyses the local resistance to these expanding metropolitan regions. It starts with the political discussions over the new post-industrial identity of the Ruhr region. It analyses the degree to which groups outside the new urban middle classes identify with this new regional identity. It focusses on the contested legitimacy of housing projects in the Emscherpark, the icon of the new Ruhr regional identity. This section is partly based on research I and my students have conducted in the context of many fieldtrips to this area. The next section gives a detailed analyses of how the opposition to the construction of new housing estates for the new urban middle classes in the Amsterdam metropolitan region is legitimised to protect local, non-urban identities. This section builds on some detailed research I and my students have conducted over the last years. The typology developed in chapter 2 is used as a tool to analyse the different outcomes of these
conflicts. This chapter ends with a more general discussion of the conditions which encourage the construction of these kind of local resistance identities in the Ruhr and Amsterdam region. It revisits the literature on late modernity discussed in chapter 5. Especially helpful is Andreas Reckwitz’s analysis of the reasons behind this escalation in mutual devaluation. He regards this polarisation as a consequence of the current social order based on competing singularities. He analyses the polarisation between the cosmopolitan new urban middle classes and the old working and middle classes fearing declining into the precariat. This general framework helps to better understand of the formation of these local resistance identities and the de-legitimation of cosmopolitan urbanisation in metropolitan regions.

8) The ways ahead: territorial closure versus circular economy
This chapter looks beyond the current situation to possible future changes based on recent developments and initiatives. Both national populism and global environmentalism oppose neo-liberal globalisation and their growing support indicate a widespread resurgence of the territorial perspective. Both challenge the hegemony of the relational perspective in late modernity, but have diverging views on many other aspects legitimising policies. They also disagree on the role of the national and the global in their identity discourses. This chapter compares these two discourses based on the typology developed in chapter 2. It then analyses how these populist and environmentalist movements transform the functioning of the Amsterdam and Ruhr regions. It analyses for both metropolitan regions how the dominance of populist and localist parties in some municipalities hinder the development of regional projects, like wind and solar farms. This chapter ends with analysing different forms of local initiatives to promote the transition to a more circular economy in both the Amsterdam and Ruhr region. Using again the typology developed in chapter 2 the differences between the more pure projects run by activists resulting in enclavism, are compared with initiatives involving a wider range of local and regional stakeholders. This section will be partly based on coming student research on some redeveloping neighbourhoods in the Amsterdam harbour area. Also some urban agriculture projects in the Emscherpark in the Ruhr region will be discussed.

9) Conclusion: an endless cycle of territorial and relational hegemony?
This relatively short concluding chapter will review the similarities and differences between how the relational and territorial perspectives are used to legitimise the relationship between cities and regions during these four periods of modernity discussed in this book. It also gives an overview of how the dominant types of spatial identity discourses have been transformed between these periods. The shifting scalar focus and relation between urban, regional, national and European elements of identity discourses is discussed. The main conclusion of this book is that how legitimacy and identities are constructed changes over time. There is a cycle between the dominance of the territorial and relational perspective, but in each period there evolves a very specific arrangement between these perspectives. The current decline of economic and cultural liberalism is therefore unlikely to herald a return to warmongering nation-states and xenophobic nationalisms, but offers new opportunities to choose between a multitude of different futures. These will not be shaped by acrimonious ideological debates, but will possibly arise out of the messy compromises on which the everyday life in local communities is based.