Regulatory Imaginaries and the Challenge of Post-Disciplinarity

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Cultur**e**al Political Economy - I

- A broad 'post-disciplinary' current in institutional and evolutionary political economy

- Studies semiosis (*Sinnmachung*) and structuration as complementary forms of complexity reduction

- Makes 'cultural turn' in economic and political studies to enhance their interpretive and explanatory power

- Connects semiosis to interlinked dynamics of economics and politics and puts them in their wider social settings

- Based on dialectic of path-dependency and path-shaping of *semiosis* and *structures* that is mediated through specific forms of selection, variation, and retention

Cultur**e**al Political Economy - II

- Studies role of semiosis in *construing* and *constructing* economic, political (and social) 'realities'

- Notes that, while *all* construals are *equal*, *some* are *more* equal than others; aims to explain this through dialectic of cultural (semiotic) and social (extra-semiotic) factors

- Applies evolutionary approach to both sets of factors: starting from *variation* in construals, what factors shape their differential *selection* and subsequent *retention*?

- Emphasizes that these factors are not purely semiotic: they may be *extra-semiotic* (material, social, agential)

Putting the 'C' into CPE - I

- CPE studies how semiosis reduces complexity of a world pregnant with many possibilities for action (or inaction)

- Lived experience and social imaginaries are effects of semiosis rather than of pre-given mental or conceptual categories; they also have extra-semiotic dimensions

- Semiosis of lived experience and social imaginaries is causally effective *and* meaningful. Events and processes and their effects can be interpreted *and*, in part, *explained* by form and content of its practices

- Lived experience and social imaginaries are incomplete, flexible, even contradictory, and can change through direct experience, learning, critique, and contestation

Putting the 'C' into CPE - II

- All construals are *equal* (semiotically); but some are *more equal* than others in the constitutive, constructive effects.

- The key question is how construals are mediated: how do they vary, why are some selected as basis for action, why are some retained and institutionalized as bases for attempts to construct (transform) natural and social worlds

- Only construals that grasp emergent extra-semiotic features of the social world as well as mind-independent features of the natural world are likely to be *selected* and *retained*

- Some in turn produce changes in the extra-semiotic features of the world and in (always) tendential social logics

Putting the 'PE' into CPE

- CPE insists on ontological specificities of at least some *emergent* aspects of the form, content, and logics of social relations of 'political economy' and its products

- As *enforced selection*, economic imaginaries ignore key features of actually existing economies, which continue to have real effects, including:
  - contradictions, dilemmas, and paradoxes
  - extra-economic conditions of existence and effects
  - spatio-temporal depth, breadth, rhythms, sequencing , etc

- So CPE studies structuration and dynamic of economic (and economically-relevant or conditioned) activities, thereby contributing to *Herrschafts-* and *Ideologiekritik*

Regulation or Governance?

- Governance is complex art of steering multiple agencies, institutions, and systems that are both operationally autonomous from one another yet structurally coupled

- Societal complexity intensified by growing functional differentiation in increasingly global society, leading to widening/deepening of systemic interdependencies across various social, spatial, and temporal horizons of action

- This undermines basis for anarchy of market and top-down coordination by single authority of given social formation, let alone at peak of a world society that is still divided by national states jealous of their declining sovereignty

Conditions for Effective Governance

- Simplifying models and practices that reduce complexity of the world and are congruent with real world processes as well as relevant to the objectives of the actors concerned;
- Developing capacity for dynamic social learning about causal processes and forms of interdependence and possibilities of coordination in a complex, turbulent environment;
- Building methods for coordinating actions across different social forces over different spatio-temporal horizons, and over different domains of action; and
- Establishing common world view for individual action and system of metagovernance to stabilize key players' orientations, expectations, and rules of conduct.

Performativity of Governance

- Governance is often analysed in superficial taxonomic, typological or descriptive terms but durable forms of governance have performative, constitutive effects

- Modes of governance partly co-constitute objects of governance, initially as imagined problems and practices, later through instantiation as actual objects & practices

- Successful governance requires suitable governing subjects and governable subjects:

- Would other modes of governance be more appropriate – provide better formal and substantive match?

Governance and Domination - I

- 'The problem solving bias [in steering theory] stems from fact that steering theory does not ask, whether political actors are primarily oriented to the solution of societal problems, but presupposes that this is their dominant goal and that societal problem solving is the central activity of politics and administration' (Mayntz 2001)

- This makes steering theory crypto-normative. It is latest in long line from Plato and Aristotle onwards that sees the purpose of the state as maximizing the common good and steering as being concerned with the whole societal system (ibid.).

Governance and Domination – II

- The focus on political effectivity reduces governance to means of collective problem-solving. Self-regulation, partnerships, and networks are also seen in terms of optimal outcomes.

- No interest in *cui bono*, quality of experts, interests of key players; or in selectivity of the problem diagnosis, its ideological colouring, role of special interests, etc.

- "Things look quite different when viewed from Weberian *Herrschaftssoziologie* or Marxist class theory" (e.g., elected dictatorships of Saddam, Milosevic, Mugabe, &c)

- But 'we' cannot combine *Steuerung*- and *Herrschaftstheorie* – so be aware of the selectivity of one's approach (Mayntz 2001)

Governance and Governmentality

- Governmentality covers discourses and practices of state formation, statecraft, state's role in strategic codification of micro-powers, and overall projection of state power

- Governmentality covers problem of macro-intelligibilities as well as of micro-powers: so how do we understand strategic codification of different disciplinary techniques and other forms of governmentality?

- State power as key emergent field of strategic action that Foucault links to capitalist political economy and interests of rising bourgeoisie

Governmentality as Statecraft

- Foucault never regarded state, capital, or bourgeoisie as pre-constituted, treating each of them as emergent effects of multiple projects, practices, and efforts to institute and institutionalize political power

- Called for study of how the immanent multiplicity of relations and techniques of power are
  - 'colonised, used, inflected, transformed, displaced, extended, and so on by increasingly general mechanisms and forms of overall domination ... and,
  - above all, how they are invested or annexed by global phenomena and how more general powers or economic benefits can slip into the play of these technologies of power' (2003: 30-1).

Deep Complexity and Governance

- Deep complexity has many aspects, including:
  - Irreducible cognitive and practical complexity relative to aspirations and capacities of actors who are trying to define and solve complex problems
  - Producing complex problem situations that require second-order reflection on how to handle complexity
  - Requiring a wide ranging set of operations to reduce disorganized complexity (see Delorme 2010)
- While deep complexity is a special case of complexity reduction, it is central to learning in 'deeply ill-structured problem situations' – such as crises that are structurally rooted and also linked to crises of crisis-management

Complexity and 'Ideologies'

REP. WAXMAN: Do you feel that your ideology pushed you to make decisions that you wish you had not made?

MR. GREENSPAN: remember what an ideology is: a conceptual framework for people to deal with reality. Everyone has one. You have to - to exist, you need an ideology. The question is whether it is accurate or not. ... I've found a flaw. I don't know how significant or permanent it is. But I've been very distressed by that fact ... A flaw in the model that I perceived as the critical functioning structure that defines how the world works, so to speak (Congressional Hearing, 23 Oct 2008)

Chair, Federal Reserve, 1987-2006

Complexity and Social Imaginaries

- The real (natural and social) world cannot be understood in all its complexity in real time: we must simplify it to be able to 'go on' in the world

- What Waxman and Greenspan call 'ideologies' are best seen as personal frameworks shaping 'lived experience' and, as in their case, as 'social imaginaries' (broadly defined) for dealing in a simplified way with reality

- Complexity is also reduced via social structuration, i.e., limiting *compossible* sets of social relations in time-space. This works at the level of social structure – and sets constraints to drawing and implementing lessons

CPE on Contested Social Imaginaries - I

- Actors can 'go on' in world because they adopt, wittingly or not, specific 'social imaginaries' as entrypoints and standpoints to reduce complexity and make it calculable.
- These involve selective observation of real world, reliance on specific codes and programmes, use of particular categories and forms of calculation, sensitivity to specific structures of feeling, reference to particular identities, justification in terms of particular vocabularies of motives, efforts to calculate short- to long-term interests, and so on.
- Remember that not all social imaginaries are equal; nor are they all 'organic', i.e., capable of selection and retention

CPE on Contested Social Imaginaries - II

- Imaginaries are not pre-given mental categories but creative products of semiotic *and material* practices that have more or less performative power
- They have central role in struggle not only for 'hearts and minds' but also over exploitation and domination
- Social forces try to make one or another imaginary the hegemonic or dominant 'frame' in particular contexts and/or to promote complementary or opposed imaginaries. Success may lead to a 'historical bloc'
- Such struggles occur through semiosis, structuration, particular technologies, and specific agents

Mediatization

- Lived experience of crisis is necessarily partial, limited to particular social segments of time-space

- Sense of overall dynamics of crisis is heavily mediatized, i.e., depends on specific forms of visualization and media representations

- Different actors have different access to representations and narratives of crisis: mass media often present very different crisis accounts from specialized, insider media

- Crisis responses and learning reflect articulation of personal narratives, organizational narratives, media representations, and meta-narratives ....

Policy Matters

- When crisis-management is reduced to issues of the best *policies,* defined through "governing parties", then opportunities for more radical solutions are marginalized

- Limiting crisis-management to search for correct policies implies that crisis is due to incorrect policy rather than being rooted in deeper structural causes, linked to patterns of economic, political, and social domination

- This may be reinforced by "urgency" of crisis: contrast crisis of Fordism with crisis of finance-led accumulation. Policies will be develop differently with time factors.

Forums also matter

- Powerful narratives without powerful bases from which to implement them are less effective than more "arbitrary, rationalistic and willed" accounts pursued by the powerful

- Even if insufficient access to leading global forums, there is scope for counter-hegemonic narratives and, notably, sub-hegemonic narratives, i.e., accounts that are widely accepted in regional forums and subaltern organizations

- This also requires concern with the architecture of global, regional, and national organizations and with opportunities to jump scales in order to pursue solutions at the most effective scale (or scales) of action and intervention

Politicization

- Politicization enters through disorientation produced by crisis and, hence, space opened up to contest previously sedimented meanings

- This is a question of discursive contestation and can occur in many different fields on many different scales

- Insofar as immediate crisis-management and future crisis-avoidance and/or crisis-management involve the government or meta-governance co-ordinated by state, second-order politicization also becomes important

- This is where political as well as policy learning matter

Imaginaries and Ideologiekritik

First-order critique

- Reveal fallacies, contradictions, incoherence, tensions, tacit assumptions, etc, in a given social imaginary

Second-order critique

- Reveal ideal and material interests promoted by a social imaginary (including its fallacies, etc.) and its shaping of lived experience in specific conjunctures, longer periods

Third-order critique

- *Ideologiekritik* connected to *Herrschaftskritik*, i.e., role of ideology in sustaining particular patterns of domination

Governance as a Diagram of Power

- Governance coordinates social relations characterized by complex reciprocal interdependence

- Four main forms have been identified:
  - *anarchy* of exchange (invisible hand),
  - *hierarchy* of command (iron hand)
  - '*heterarchy*' of reflexive self-organization (visible handshake),
  - '*solidarity*' of unconditional loyalty-trust (tacit handshake)

- This typology can be seen as a 'diagram' of power in more Foucauldian terms with multiple instantiations

Four Modes of Governance

	Exchange	Command	Dialogue	Solidarity
Rationality	Formal and procedural	Substantive and goal-oriented	Reflexive and procedural	Unreflexive and value-oriented
Key Medium	Money	Coercion	Meaning	Commitment
Ideal type	Derivatives	Sovereign State	Open Network	Requited Love
Criterion of success	Efficient allocation	Effective goal attainment	Negotiated consent	Unconditional commitment
Main sign of failure	Inefficiency	Ineffectiveness	"Talking shop"	Betrayal
Other Failings	Market inadequacies	Bureaucratism, corruption	Distorted communication	Co-dependency; asymmetry

Two-Dimensional Hybridity

Secondary Role of	Primacy of Profitable Exchange	Primacy of Command	Primacy of Dialogue	Primacy of Solidarity
Exchange	n.a.	Mafias, New Public Management	Benchmarking, Good Governance	Trade Unions, Syndicalism
Command	Firms, Mixed Economy	n.a.	PPPs, Deliberative Democracy	Bund, Self-Regulation
Dialogue	Guanxi, Network Economy	Party, Soft Law, Cooperative State	n.a.	Community, Communitarianism
Solidarity	Cooperatives, Social Economy	Commune, Subsidiarity	Social movements, Civil Society	n.a.

Governance Failure

- *Steuerungsansatz*: governance failure due to complexity, cognitive limitations, inadequate specification of problem, poor choice of instruments, failure of cooperation, etc

- Approach raises question of governability: but not related to specific objects of governance, structural contradict-ions, strategic dilemmas, discursive paradoxes, etc.

- *Herrschaftssoziologie* or Marxist form analysis poses governability differently. Ungovernability of objects of governance not reducible to complexity; also involves inherent features of specific objects (otherwise reduces problems to knowledge, not ontological/ontic features)

Governance Failure and Learning

- There is a major problem in studying learning – can the learning process be separated from outcomes or do new policies suffice to indicate learning has occurred?
  - New policies may not derive from learning but from random variation, trial-and-error experimentation, unrelated changes in personnel, shifts in agency responsibility, new 'buzzwords' or fads, and so on
  - Learning may not be translated into new policies: there is a difference between 'identifying lessons' and 'acting upon them' and there are many possible intervening factors in this regard
- Agents may lack capacity (technologies, suitable leverage points, or access to power) to act on lessons learnt; the powerful may block action where it hurts their interests

Learning Failure

There are many ways in which learning may be ineffective:

- Simplistic conclusions
- Fantasy lessons
- Falsely generalized lessons
- Turbulent environments
- Rhetorical learning
- Limits on learning due to prior policy/political commitments
- Politicized learning that reflects power relations
- Ideological barriers to learning
- Social barriers and rigidities that block active learning
- Codified lessons miss tacit, implicit lessons/practices

Power and Learning Failure

- Power is the ability *not* to have to learn from one's mistakes (Deutsch 1963: 37).

- Elites may try to impose costs of their mistakes onto others

- Entrenched blocs, durable alliances, and/or temporary coalitions of the powerful may seek to allocate costs of crisis management/ adjustment and also shape learning processes

First Order Meta-Governance

Meta-Exchange	Meta-Command	Meta-Dialogue	Meta-Solidarity
Redesign individual markets De- and re-regulation Re-order market hierarchies	Organizational redesign. Re-order organizational ecologies. Constitutional change	Re-order networks. Reorganize conditions of self-organization New forms of partnership dialogue	Develop new identities and loyalties Old to new social movements New forms of solidaristic practice

Failure of First Order Meta-Governance

- Each first-order form of meta-governance can fail
- This reflects contested approaches to meta-governance, competing meta-governance imaginaries, problem definitions, projects, governing subjects and governable subjects, some of which may be 'arbitrary, rationalistic and willed' rather than potentially realisable
- It also reflects inherent ungovernability of some objects , some subjects (e.g., resistance), and absent Archimedean point from which to pursue meta-governance projects
- (Meta-)governance sometimes works only by deferring or displacing problems, partially and provisionally. Study spatio-temporal envelopes that delimit zones of stability

Second-Order Metagovernance

- Collibration is re-ordering relative weight of alternative modes of governance (Dunsire)
- Can be seen as 'third-order' governance based on observing how first-order modes perform and how second-order attempts to improve them succeed or fail
- Involves reflexive governance of articulation of social conditions and relations and their modes of governance
- NB: there is no master meta-governor, no single summit from which meta-governance is performed: meta-governance itself is highly contested, reflects changing equilibrium of compromise

Further Thoughts on Collibration

- First order meta-governance is redesign of each mode of governance to improve its operation in light of its specific criterion of success at relevant scale of

- Second order meta-governance aims to re-balance role of each mode within a given set of *meso-level* relations

- Third order meta-governance is *macro-collibration* and is usually conducted in shadow of hierarchy, i.e., under guidance of the 'state' as addressee of demands 'when all else fails'

- Globally, macro-collibration is promoted by hegemonic state(s) in inter-state system and/or contested on basis of international, transnational, and global social relations

Modes of Collibration

- Provide ground rules for governance

- Create forums and/or organize dialogue among partners

- Ensure coherence of regimes across scales and over time

- Re-balance power differentials and regime strategic bias

- Modify self-understandings on interests, identities, etc

- Subsidize production of public goods, organize side-payments for those making sacrifices

- Exercise "super-vision" (seeing more, supervising), permitting expansion, shrinkage, or adjustment

- Identify final responsibility when governance fails

Collibration Failure

- If governance and meta-governance fail, so does collibration. This leads to continual *fuite en avant* as individuals, organizations, and social forces seek to escape effects of failure.

- There is no escape from this treadmill: it is rooted in deep complexity and hypercomplex problems.

- The only rational response is romantic public irony:
  - Expect failure, act *as if* you intend to succeed
  - If you are bound to fail in metagovernance, do at least choose your mode of failure
  - Choose to fail wisely, i.e., fail together through participation, dialogue, and collective intelligence
  - This will reduce the chances of failure!

Conclusions

- Given problems facing a single moment of mode of governance (and metagovernance), challenges of multi-spatial meta-governance are good entry point for study, especially if going beyond single site case studies

- This research agenda also enables links to wide range of classical (old and modern) theories, some (but not all) emerging theoretical and policy paradigms, significant changes in forms and dynamics of economy (including changing bases of competitiveness and competition), and new forms of governance failure

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