

The struggle to belong
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**Cities and Countries in the Atlantic Heartland: Still Managed
by the Markets?**

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Abstract

Naomi Klein (2007) has argued that the financial crisis should be for Friedmanism – i.e. neoliberalism – what the fall of the Berlin Wall was for authoritarianism: an indictment of an ideology. In this paper I argue that the ideology of neoliberalism may have failed, but that neoliberal practice is alive and kicking. What if we are still “Managed by the markets”, to borrow Gerald Davis (2009) expression and neoliberal practice is continuing to shape places around the globe, not only American cities hit by the foreclosure and budget crises, but also European cities hit by the sovereign debt crisis that equally feeds into a budget crisis? The so-called “Keynesian solution” at the federal level in the US is a joke. It is welfare for the rich and capitalism for the poor. On the local level, the same happens in the US as happens in most European countries on both the national and the local levels: government budgets are cut back. On both sides of the Atlantic market orthodoxy is being furthered rather than limited. The big crisis of our time did not become a crisis of the hegemony of neoliberalism because actually existing neoliberalism is flexible enough to influence policy in another way than through the mantra of free markets: it thrives on presenting existing social-economic conditions as failing and neoliberalism as the best solution.