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**CATALONIA'S IN(TER)
DEPENDENCE AND
EUROPEANIZATION**

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Catalonia's in(ter)dependence and Europeanization

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Abstract

Some weeks after the referendum on independence was held in Scotland, Catalonia's institutions of self-government promoted the celebration of a similar consultation. Despite that it was declared illegal by the Spanish Constitutional Court, the Catalan *Generalitat* went ahead with the idea of organizing a public consult, which finally took place 'informally' on November 9. A majority of 80 per cent of those who participated in the consult voted for secession ('Yes' to both submitted questions to the electorate on self-determination). Turnout was around 37 per cent of the registered voters.

Interdependence in the Old Continent goes beyond internal boundary-building and the establishment of self-centered compartments of governance, as happened with the old Westphalian nation-states. Catalans have reiterated their support for encouraging further Europeanization, a process which many aim to make congruent with territorial subsidiarity and home rule.

The paper focuses on how the meaning of independence been constructed in contemporary Catalonia. It also elaborates on the relationship between independence and interdependence in the context of the ongoing process of Europeanization and the preservation of the European Social Model (ESM).

Introduction

Following developments in Scotland which culminated in the popular vote on independence on 18 September 2014, Catalonia's institutions of self-government promoted the celebration of a similar referendum. Despite that it was declared illegal by the Spanish Constitutional Court, the Catalan Government of the *Generalitat* went ahead with the idea of organizing a public consult, which finally took place 'informally' on November 9. A majority of 80 per cent of those who participated in the consult voted for secession ('Yes' to both submitted questions to the electorate on self-determination).¹ Turnout was around 37 per cent of the registered voters.

Popular consults on independence in Scotland and Catalonia took place when the financial crisis unleashed in 2007 had raised serious questions about the capacity of formally independent states to carry out sovereign economic policies in the context of globalization. In the Old Continent, the process of Europeanization had already brought to the fore the interdependence of EU economies and the need to work together in order to preserve the European social model.

Interdependence in the Old Continent goes beyond internal boundary-building and the establishment of self-centred compartments of governance, as happened in the past with the old Westphalian nation-states. Catalan nationalism itself has made strong statements about the desirability of encouraging further Europeanization, a process which ought to make congruent territorial subsidiarity and home rule with European framework legislation and continental institutions.

The first part of this paper focuses on how the meaning of independence has been constructed in contemporary Catalonia. Internal conflicts within Spain and the lack of territorial accommodation, together with a long-standing centre-periphery controversy, have fuelled in Spain's claims for secession by some Catalan nationalists. The subsequent section concentrates on the challenges of interdependence that European subsidiarity, multi-level governance and the preservation of the European Social Model (ESM) imply for stateless nations like Catalonia. Concluding remarks reflect

¹ The sequence of the questions was as follows: "(a) Do you want Catalonia to become a State? (Yes/No); If the answer is in the affirmative: (b) Do you want this State to be independent? (Yes/No). You can only answer the question under Letter (b) in the event of having answered "Yes" to the question under Letter (a)".

on how 'cosmopolitan localism' can optimize both independence and interdependence in the global context.

The home rule movement in contemporary Catalonia

In modern Spain, there has been a traditional lack of congruence --or a 'non-congruence'-- between political and economic powers. Catalonia and the Basque Country, the two Northern peripheral Spanish communities with full ethnic potential, have remained as two of the three economically most dynamic territories of Spain, the third being the region of Madrid. This non-congruence has traditionally nourished the centrifugal tendencies put forward since the end of the 19th century by a strong independent movement in both Basque Country and Catalonia.

Economic modernization during the 1800s intensified internal divergences in Spain and greatly contributed to the development of Catalan nationalism. The industrial Catalan take-off, as compared with the rest of Spain, is best illustrated by the fact that in 1862, 41 per cent of the power produced in Spain for industrial use was located in Catalan territory.² The demographic increase of the population of Catalonia between 1787 and 1857 was nearly 90 per cent (i.e. from 875,388 to 1,652,291 inhabitants). Such figures corresponded to 7.8 and 10.7 per cent of the total Spanish population, respectively.³

The reactive centralizing Spanish nationalism deployed during the Restoration (1876-1923) coincided with the loss of Spain's status as a colonial power. In 1898, the Spanish-American War resulted in the relegation of Spain to the second division of world politics, something which gave impetus to Catalan nationalism. Furthermore, the establishment of universal male suffrage in 1890 had the notable effect of placing incipient *Catalanisme* squarely in the Spanish political scene. The disparity between Catalonia's social structure and that of an impoverished rural Spain was an important factor in the rise of Catalan nationalism (Giner, 1980). Differences in socio-economic composition between Spain's two major cities, Madrid and

² The manufacturing industries fuelled the Catalan economy and the sizeable number of immigrants from other neighbouring Spanish regions, such as Valencia and Aragon, outnumbered those Catalans who emigrated to Latin America, primarily Cuba, Argentina or Uruguay (Moreno, 2001)

³ The city of Barcelona, alone, increased its population between 1830 and 1877 by 155 per cent (i.e. 97,418 to 248,943 inhabitants).

Barcelona, also became increasingly evident.⁴ These elements fuelled a sense of hopelessness amongst members of the Catalan elites, who put their influence and electoral support behind home-rule parties.

On April 14th 1931 the Spanish Second Republic was proclaimed. On the same day the Catalan nationalist leader, Francesc Macià, Catalan nationalist leader *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC), the pro-independence party which had won in Catalonia the local elections, declared the creation of the Republic of Catalonia within the framework of a Spanish Confederation. After negotiations with representatives of the central government, the *Generalitat*, Catalonia's government of medieval origin, was re-established. Such compromise avoided the unilateral declaration of Catalonia's independence. In spite of its short existence, the Second Republic (1931-9) contributed greatly to the resolution of ethnoterritorial conflict in Spain. The most notable achievement was the design of the state as a regional model, situated somewhere between a unitary and a federal country. This constitutional change led to statutes of autonomy for Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, the three of them came later to be known as 'historical nationalities'.

The ethnoterritorial issue played a crucial role in the process of political polarization which led to the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), a conflict that had also international connotations and was the prelude to WWII. After the long dictatorship of General Franco (1939-1975), the broad party political consensus that made the drawing up of the democratic 1978 Constitution possible, also brought with it an element of ambiguity in the formulation of the territorial organization of the Spanish state. Catalan nationalists actively participated in the elaboration of the constitutional text which was widely supported in Catalonia.⁵

In general terms, the home-rule-all-round process in Spain during the 1980s and 1990s succeeded in meeting the political aspirations put forward by 17 sub-state nationalities and regions which came to compose the federalizing *Estado de las Autonomías* (State of

⁴ Between 1877 and 1920, the proportion of Madrid workers in the industrial sector grew considerably from 18.4 to 42.5% of the workforce, but remained behind Barcelona in this respect, with 37.1% in 1877 to 54% in 1920. Perhaps it was more significant that the proportion of 'unproductive' middle classes in Madrid, consisting of civil servants, members of the Armed Forces and domestic staff (23.6% in 1877 and 15.3% in 1920), was greater than that of Barcelona (5.9% in 1877 and 5% in 1920). (Data taken from Linz 1967: 209).

⁵ On 6 December 1978, over 90% of Catalan voters approved the 1978 Constitution. Turnout was around two thirds of the registered electorate.

Autonomies). Such aspirations were articulated around common cultural, historical, linguistic, and political facts that any person in those territories could assume and become identified with, regardless of his/her origin, family homeland, or ancestors' background. Some minorities of citizens identified exclusively along ethnoterritorial lines (e.g. "I consider myself only Basque, Catalan or Galician"). They generally claimed political independence for their territories. However two-thirds of all Spaniards expressed a 'dual identity' or 'compound nationality'. This dual identity incorporated both regional and Spain-wide identities in various degrees and without apparent contradiction between them.⁶

From the viewpoint of the powerful Basque, Catalan and Galician nationalisms, Spain ought to be constitutionally composed according to linguistic lines, including the 'historical nationalities' plus the rest of Castilian-speaking Spain.⁷ Such sub-state nationalisms have always been more inclined to the establishment of confederal options of accommodation in Spain --or outright independence of their territories-- rather than working out federal arrangements *tout court* (Moreno, 2001).

In the mid-2000s, some 25 years after the beginning of the home-rule-all-round process, initiatives were taken by regional parliaments to reform their own constitutional laws (*Estatutos de Autonomía*) in order to gain more autonomy (Catalonia, 2006;

⁶ What later became known as the "Moreno question" was worded as follows: "In general, would you say that you feel...1. Only Basque, Catalan, Galician, etc.; 2. More Basque, Catalan, Galician, etc., than Spanish; 3. As much Basque, Catalan, Galician, etc. as Spanish; 4. More Spanish than Basque, Catalan, Galician, etc.; 5. Only Spanish. The purpose for conducting such survey questioning was to assess the degrees of self-government aspirations: the more the primordial regional (ethnoterritorial) identity prevailed upon modern state identity, the higher the demands for political autonomy would be. Complete absence of one of the two elements of dual identity would lead to a deep socio-political division. If this was the case, demands for self-government would probably take the form of a claim for outright sovereignty and independence (Moreno, 1986).

⁷ *Castellano* (Castilian), most commonly known elsewhere as Spanish or *Español*, is Spain's official language. Nonetheless, regional languages are co-official in the territories where they are spoken, namely, Aranese (*Aranés*, a variant of Occitan) in Catalonia; Basque (*Euskera*) in the Basque Country and Navarre; Catalan (*Català*) in Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, and the Valencian Community (officially as *Valenciano*); and Galician (*Galego*) in Galicia. Asturian (*Asturianu*), though not official, is a 'protected' language in Asturias⁷. There are also some surviving minority Romance languages or dialects such as Astur-Leonese, Leonese, Extremaduran, Cantabrian, and Aragonese. Unlike Aranese, Basque, Catalan/Valencian, and Galician, these minority languages have no official status because of their very small number of speakers.

Andalusia, 2006; Valencia, 2006; Aragon, 2007; Balearic Islands, 2007, Castille and Leon, 2007, and, later on, Extremadura, 2011). On 27 September 2002, the *Lehendakari* (President) of the Basque government made a statement before the Basque Parliament proposing a new Pact for Cohabitation (*Pacto para la Convivencia*) to be based on the free association and co-sovereignty between the Basque Country and Spain. According to the *Lehendakari*, Juan Jose Ibarretxe, the citizens of the Basque Country were entitled to self-determination. On 11 September 2008, the Spanish Constitutional Court rejected the possibility of holding a "sovereignty-association" referendum along the lines of Ibarretxe's proposals and similar to the one organized in Quebec in 1980.

Catalan political forces agreed on the need of reforming the 1979 Statute of Autonomy. On September 30, 2005, the Catalan Parliament passed the proposal of a new constitutional law with the approval of 120 deputies to 15. The Statute draft was later negotiated with the Spanish Government. In the preamble of the new Statute, Catalonia was defined as a 'nation'. A majority of Catalans approved it in the referendum held on 18 June 2006.⁸ Some of the provisions of the new Statute were challenged by the conservative Popular Party and by neighbouring regions such as Aragon, Balearic Islands and the Valencian Community. On June 27, 2010, and after more than four years of deliberations, the Spanish Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional several articles of the new Statute, other than the self-definition of Catalonia as a nation.

The ruling of the Constitutional Court of the 2006 Catalan Statute had repercussions not only in Catalonia but in the whole of Spain. In fact, the reform of Catalonia's constitutional status within Spain had been regarded as a bilateral attempt to change indirectly the 1978 Constitution, which enshrined 'solidarity between regions' (Colino, 2009). A centralistic view seemed to prevail in the Court's decision, particularly among members who were regarded to be sympathetic with the views of the Popular Party. Renewed criticism in Catalonia on the Court's sentence strengthened notably the political support for independence and greatly increased disaffection towards central state institutions. On 11 September, 2012, on occasion of the *Diada* (Catalonia's National Day) a big demonstration in the streets of Barcelona⁹ expressed the alienation of many Catalans with the

⁸ Nearly three in four voters supported the new Statute. However the abstention was very high (51%), which meant that just one third of the registered electorate voted for it.

⁹ There was no little discussion about the number of people who joined the demonstration. According to the local police, there were around 1.5 million

Spanish central institutions. When the President of the *Generalitat*, Artur Mas, sought to negotiate with Spanish President, Mariano Rajoy, a new fiscal pact by which Catalonia could receive more financial powers and fiscal revenues --to a level similar to the ones enjoyed by the Basque Government-- the response by the PP central government was a plain refusal to any compromise. Distrust mounted between Spanish and Catalan Executives.

A renewed claim of right for independence spread in Catalonia, where nationalists were able to mobilize increasing numbers of Catalans demanding independence. Nationalist parties and civil associations were very effective in articulating sentiments against Spanish central authorities and in favour of independence. Such feelings revolved mostly around identity politics, as Catalonia was considered not to be part of Spain and did not want to belong to it.

The context of the economic crisis initiated in 2007 had provided the PP Spanish Government with new arguments for policy recentralization, something which accentuated the climate of acrimony in Catalonia (Muro, 2015). Nationalists conveyed the idea that Catalonia would do much better on its own. After all, Catalonia's \$390 billion economy is about the same size as Portugal's. With a population of 7.5 million inhabitants --around 16 percent of the Spanish total-- Catalonia would rank above the average of EU countries. Nationalist mobilization sought to maximize the 'window of opportunity' created with the economic crisis by extending the idea that an independent Catalonia should avoid being exploited by the rest of Spain. The cliché allegation, 'Espanya ens roba' (Spain robs us) was coupled with a strategy of 'Yes, we can' for the achievement of independence.

Not surprisingly, during the few years which followed the ruling of the Spanish Constitutional Court on the new Catalan Statute the percentage of those considering themselves as 'Only Catalan' rose significantly. According to the survey carried out in November 2013, 31 per cent of Catalans felt "Only Catalan", more than three times the percentage recorded in the mid-1980s (see Table 1). It can be deduced from these figures that the increase in Catalans' exclusive self-identification has been mainly reactive and has grown rapidly in recent times. Greater numbers of Catalans have interpreted the refusal of the Spanish central elites and, in particular, the rejection by

demonstrators, a figure raised up to 2 million by sources of the Catalan Government, and lowered to about 600,000 according to the delegation of the Spanish Government in Catalonia.

the central Conservative Rajoy Government in 2012 to decentralise further fiscal powers, as a political humiliation against Catalonia.

Table: Responses in Catalonia to the question: “In which of these five categories do you include yourself?” (1985 and 2013)

| | 1985 (%) | 2013 (%) CEO | 2013 (%) CIS) |
|--|----------|-----------------|------------------|
| I consider myself only Catalan | 9 | 31 | 21 |
| I consider myself more Catalan than Spanish | 24 | 27 | 21 |
| I consider myself as much Spanish as Catalan | 47 | 33 | 40 |
| I consider myself more Spanish than Catalan | 7 | 2 | 5 |
| I consider myself only Spanish | 12 | 4 | 9 |
| Don't knows / No answer | 1 | 3 | 4 |

Source: Moreno (2014).

At the end of 2015, nationalists were supporting the celebration of elections in Catalonia of a ‘plebiscite’ nature. The idea behind this proposal was for the *Generalitat* to declare independence if a majority of the Catalan parliamentarians were elected from parties advocating secession in their political manifestoes. After the election, they would be expected to carry out the so-called DUI (Declaration of Unilateral Independence).

All things considered, social climate in Catalonia has showed a certain level of political exhaustion. The effects of the economic crisis and the spending cuts introduced by the Catalan nationalist Government in social services have combined with the exposure of corruption cases, such as the one concerning Jordi Pujol. The former President of the *Generalitat* during 1980-2003, and father figure of contemporary Catalan nationalism, confessed publicly in 2014 that he had been hiding abroad money and assets away from the control of Spain’s tax authorities. This scandal caused no little criticism among the nationalist ranks and contributed to cool down the climate of euphoria promoted by those groups in favour of secession.

Europeanization and decentralization

Developments around the turn of the millennium, and particularly since the outbreak of the 2007 financial crisis, have dramatically exposed the limitations of the nation-state as a sovereign actor in

global economics. Models of British 'command-and-control' majoritarian democracy, as well as of Jacobin vertical diffusionism of power, seem to be in terminal retreat, a development taking place in parallel to Europeanization (Loughlin, 2007). In this respect, the institutionalization of the European Union can be regarded as a compound of policy processes conditioning in no small measure the formal sovereignty of the member states (Piattoni, 2010).

The constitution of the United States of Europe ought not to be considered the end result of the process of Europeanization. The neo-functional school of thought has generally adopted the view that universal progress requires a kind of integration, equivalent to cultural assimilation, along the lines of the 'melting-pot' experience (Glazer and Moynihan, 1963). An alternative view of non-homogenizing integration puts the emphasis on the historical, psychological and social characteristics of a plural Europe. From such a pluralistic perspective, European convergence can only succeed by taking into account both the history and the cultural diversity of the mosaic of peoples forming the Old Continent (Moreno, 2003).

Within the EU, the ongoing re-scaling of nation-state structures and political organization is in line with Europe's principle of territorial subsidiarity. Processes concerning the 'unbundling of territoriality' are having a direct impact on citizens' living standards and expectations (Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Kazepov, 2008). This crucial tenet of Europeanization establishes that policy decision-making should be located at the level closest to the citizen. In other words, the purpose of subsidiarity is to limit the power of central authorities by assuming the criteria of 'proximity' and 'proportionality'. Furthermore, subsidiarity aims to provide a protective measure against over-expansion of European control in matters resting upon the jurisdiction and prerogatives of each layer of government. It also encourages co-ordination to manage growing interdependencies.

Political communities are constituted by individuals ruled and represented by the structures of a political system, whether supranational, national or subnational (sub-state) (Easton, 1965). Political interdependence concords with the notion of multilevel citizenship, which can be conceptualized as a compound of collective attachments favouring both supra-national legitimacy and sub-state democratic accountability in the implementation of public policies (Berg, 2007). Autonomy, devolution, and subsidiarity seek to accommodate institutional responses to the *stimuli* of the diversity or plurality of the polities involved. These often comprise local, regional and national political communities with differences in identity, history, language, or traditions, which are reflected in different party systems,

channels of elites' representation or interests' articulation. In plural Spain, for example, a variety of political communities were constitutionally established at the meso-level after the inception of the 1978 Constitution (17 *Comunidades Autónomas*). Despite their differences in institutional arrangements and policy preferences for autonomy, they all embraced interdependencies and expressed a common aspiration to enhance 'bottom up' Europeanization.

In Catalonia, claims for 'top down' territorial subsidiarization of public policies have been put forward not only by nationalists, but also by federalists and other autonomists. Throughout Spain, meso-governments and local authorities often feel that they do not need *par force* the rationalizing intervention of central bureaucracies and elites in the exercise of their autonomy. In general terms, sub-state autonomous political communities in the EU enjoy economic and political security offered by the supra-national EU institutions, in a post-sovereignty era of progressive transnationalization and increasing interdependence (Keating, 2001; Moreno and McEwen, 2005).

Citizenship can be seen as the product of nested identities formed at the various contextual levels of citizens' political attachments (supra-state, state, sub-state) (Faist 2001; Díez Medrano and Gutiérrez 2003; Bruter 2005). Those multiple identities expressed by Europeans are inserted in a variable continuum of territorial belongings and affinities grounded in values of human rights and solidarity. Both civil and political rights are being increasingly accomplished at the meso level of the EU's member states. As it could not be otherwise, the exercise of civil and political rights has "spilt over" into social citizenship at the regional level (Jeffery, 2009)

Territorial subsidiarity goes hand in hand with the second guiding principle of Europeanization: democratic accountability. There cannot be any further development of politics in Europe if decisions are taken behind-closed-doors, as often happens in our often opaque state-centred polities. Democratic participation and citizens' involvement in public life is quintessential to the very preservation of the European Social Model (ESM). Multi-level citizenship is set to incorporate not only multiple memberships to European nations (state or stateless) and regions and localities, but also to integrate a common baseline -- mixed and cross-bred in many instances-- that conforms to the axiological pattern of the European Social Model. Above other considerations, the ESM appears as a common value-system, which makes transnational solidarity possible (Gould, 2007). It also legitimizes the redistribution of resources and vital opportunities characteristic of European welfare systems.

Convergence and political interdependence within the EU is not an incentive for internal boundary-building and the establishment of self-centred compartments of governance, as happened with the old Westphalia nation-states. Europeanization reaches out citizens in the Old Continent as a whole, something which shows the fact that already over half of the legislation in people's daily life has a European matrix. Fight against fiscal evasion, to mention a pressing policy related to the financial crisis unleashed in 2007, is just inefficient if all European countries and territories are not involved in a common stance (European Commission, 2013). Following to the subsidiarity rationale, it is counterproductive to impede or curtail self-government in political communities such as Catalonia. But it is also unrealistic not to envisage an interdependent Europe without redistribution of income transfers between territories and multi-level citizens (Ferrera, 2008).

The academic debate on whether decentralization constrains redistribution is an unfinished one. Likewise, there are not consistent empirical findings lending support to the proposal of a "positive sum" arrangement by which the allocation of the functions of redistribution should be allocated to the macro levels (European, state) and those concerning the policy provision to the micro levels (regional, local). Concerning public spending in multi-tiered systems of government, there is a body of cross-national literature which has sought to understand the factors that influence levels of expenditure, as in the case of welfare policies and services (Hicks and Swank, 1992). Such a literature has a long-standing trajectory but has often concluded that decentralization constrains the expansion of public economies. Further arguments point to the contention that rescaling can have more powerful negative effects than any other institutional variable; greater than factors such as the level of corporatism in decision-making, the nature of the electoral system, or a presidential system of government. However, decentralised countries with a longstanding record of public involvement, such as Australia or Canada, demonstrate a greater positive correlation between public spending and redistribution (Obinger et al., 2005).

In addition to the structure of the state --or a union of states as the EU-- redistribution may also be affected by the diversity of its internal composition. In this regard, it has been argued that the degree of redistribution is more limited when there is a high degree of heterogeneity. Public policies and spending designed to recognize and accommodate internal diversity are contented to be detrimental to the stability of those compound polities, with numerous consequences. They may have: (i) a crowding-out effect, diverting energy, money, and time for the recognition of diversity and the

legitimizing of asymmetries; (ii) a corroding effect, eroding transversal trust and solidarity amongst citizens living in different locations and milieus; or (iii) a misdiagnosis effect, with solutions shifting attention from individual inequalities to those emphasizing territorial particularities between regions or nations. However, the causal relationship between public spending and redistribution has not been empirically sustained.¹⁰

For meso-communities in decentralized countries, such as Catalonia, the form of devolution is an important area of analysis in assessing policy outcomes. Some findings point to the fact that countries in which responsibility for spending is decentralized, but responsibility for revenue-raising is centralized, tend to spend more than other countries, other things being equal. By contrast, in countries where both revenue-raising and spending are decentralized, expenditure levels appear lower (Rodden 2003). Allegations by Catalan nationalists that 'Spain robs us' have put forward not only the complaint that Catalonia contributes 'disproportionately' to the general tax revenue and receives much less from the central treasury. It also claims that both tax collection and expenditure should be decentralized as in the Basque Country.

Let us remind that, according to the *concierto* financial agreement with the Spanish authorities, the Basque government enjoys full fiscal autonomy in all taxes except VAT (regulated by the EU). This allows for considerable spending discretion and makes the system more accountable to its citizens. The fact that the Basque Country and Navarre (the two *Comunidades Autónomas*) do not contribute to the vertical equalization scheme to provide equal public services all over Spain creates comparative grievance, particularly in Catalonia. As a richer *Comunidad Autónoma*, Catalonia contributes a larger share of their revenues to poorer regions. This unequal economic imbalance is only sustainable, it has been argued, because the Basque Country and Navarre just represent together around 8 per cent of the Spanish GDP (Colino, 2012).

In Spain, autonomy in public expenditure is viewed as part-and-parcel of political autonomy by both richer and poorer meso-communities. It is also a sensitive political issue on articulating the redistribution and transfer of funds from the former to the latter. As a constitutional principle, the ultimate goal of equalization concerns the attainment of a common level of basic services, the procurement of citizenship rights, and an adequate distribution of the financial

¹⁰ This has been analysed, for instance, in the relationship between multiculturalism and the welfare state in contemporary democracies (Banting and Kymlicka, 2006).

burdens. Most equalization systems seek to redistribute fairly the available general financial resources, something which in the case of Catalonia and Spain has created no little antagonism and confrontation. Criticisms are usually voiced by meso-governments when they feel that the equalization system is too redistributive and lacks clear distributive criteria so as to motivate the subsidized and more deprived regions to improve their performance. The latter generally demand a higher level of public spending to empower them for catching-up with the other political communities. But redistribution may also come in the form of central public investments in large infrastructure projects, which may be discretionary and subject to criticisms from the 'donor' territories. Some other national programmes under central state responsibility may enjoy a great deal of legitimacy, particularly in 'recipient' *Comunidades Autónomas*, as is illustrated by welfare expenditure concerning old-age pensions, social security benefits, or unemployment benefits.

As elsewhere, Europeanization and decentralization interact with each other in Spain on matters involving variable degrees of independence and interdependence in political decision-making. Policy choices are increasingly shaped by externalities generated globally. Concerning Catalonia, most questions at stake on in(ter)dependence relate to the degree of self rule and shared rule. Late political mobilization by Catalan nationalists has challenged attempts to recentralization by claiming the right of Catalonia to secede from the rest of Spain. Future developments will have consequences for territorial politics, particularly as regards the level of Catalonia's self-government and co-decision with Spanish and European institutions to implement policies and political arrangements.

Concluding remarks

The supra-state institutional framework provided by the European Union has certainly reinforced sub-state identities. Decentralization has become a major embedding factor in contemporary political life in Europe. The quest of meso-communities, such as Catalonia, to run their own affairs and to maximize their potentialities outside the *dirigiste* control of central state institutions is an observable trend in the Old Continent. The reinforcement of sub-state territorial identities is deeply associated with powerful material and symbolic referents of the past. In fact, the processes of bottom-up Europeanization and top-down decentralization have allowed a considerable extension of a type of European *cosmopolitan localism*. This is reflected in both

societal interests, which are aimed at developing a sense of local community and at participating simultaneously in the international context. There is, thus, a growing adjustment between the particular and the general (Norris, 2000).

Independence and interdependence align themselves with the notions of self-rule and shared rule which combine in the various types of federal-like systems around the world (Moreno and Colino, 2010). Far from being coherent and uniform, societies not only exhibit diversity but also generally develop mutually interdependent and interacting structures and cleavages. Parties have major impacts on intergovernmental relations and on the representation of territories in the state-wide and EU institutions. In Spain, state-wide parties co-exist with Catalonia's based parties at the sub-state, state, and EU levels. As could not be otherwise, inter-party competition is an important factor shaping political outcomes and policy decisions at the various intergovernmental instances where decisions are negotiated.

In the case of Catalonia, the 2010 ruling of the Constitutional Court on the reform of the 2006 *Estatut d'autonomia*, has had a great impact in the frustrated expectations of a majority of Catalans who had endorsed the new Statute in a public referendum claiming more self-rule. A centralistic view has prevailed in the decision of a Court that is composed by a majority of members *de facto* appointed by Spain's two main parties (PP and PSOE). Renewed criticism in Catalonia on the political bias expressed by the Court's sentence has strengthened notably the political support for independence and has increased disaffection towards central state institutions (although it is to be seen whether such a shift of mood is merely transitory or has a long-lasting impact).

Spain faces a variety of challenges on how to integrate --rather than to assimilate-- existing political communities with collective identities forged at the various levels of political legitimacy. If achieved by degrees of independence and interdependence it would avoid to be seen as a superimposition upon the democratic interaction of communities with long-standing historical trajectories, as the Catalan case illustrates. As European partner region, Catalonia will continue to furnish inputs for the articulation of territorial subsidiarity and democratic accountability, the two principles on which further Europeanization rests upon.

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