Multiple identities and global meso-communities

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Abstract

Social impacts associated with new telecommunication innovations greatly affect both globalisation and territorial identities. Apparently contradictory trends bring with them elements of rapid social change and political uncertainty. This chapter reflects on the conjunction of both dimensions of the local and the global, and carries out a prescription of the progressive consolidation of a new cosmopolitan localism.

A theoretical review of the concept of multiple identities precedes a subsequent discussion on the effects of globalisation, the extension of market values, and the relative loss of power by the nation states. Subsequently, the focus is set on the growing role played by the global meso-communities. These can be small nation-states within regional supranational blocks, stateless minority nations, sub-state regions and large conurbations, and seem to be better equipped to maximise developments related to global action and local identities.

References made to the European Union context seek to illustrate how the interaction of the processes of bottom-up transnationalisation and top-down devolution of powers have made possible a more effective access of civil society to multi-level decision-making. The new cosmopolitan localism translates into a growing adjustment between the particular and the general in the gradual development of Europeanisation.

INTRODUCTION

Modernisation brought about the idea of all-embracing state national identities rooted in both cultural and civic axes. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, such identities are openly questioned and have become problematic. While being corroded by the forces of globalisation they are also subject to fragmentation, competition and overlapping elements of a multiple and diverse nature. Unquestionably, there is a noticeable strengthening of sub- and supra-state identities. The discontinuity and dislocation of social arrangements provide that different identities relate to each other in quite an unpredictable manner.

As a matter of fact, citizens face a situation of advanced modernity with a degree of perplexity. They have discovered new horizons in the understanding of their own collective and individual life within a climate of uncertainty and rapid change. To a large extent, all these transformations have been accentuated by the telecommunications innovations.

In plural societies individuals are tied to cultural reference groups that might be in competition among themselves. This results in a multiplicity of socio-political identities, dynamic and often shared, which not always are expressed explicitly. Therefore, identity markers are malleable and the intensity of their manifestation greatly depends upon contingent circumstances (Barth, 1969, Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Brass, 1991, Cohen, 1992,).

For social scientists a considerable problem arises on establishing boundaries and degrees to citizens' self-identification, and on interpreting those causes for politicisation and mobilisation related to territorial identities (Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990). In fact, identities are shared in various degrees by individuals as they are subject to constant internalisation by group members (Melucci, 1989; Giddens, 1991; Smith, 1991; Greenfeld, 1992).

The interaction between the local and the global, the revival of territorial identities, and the increasing incidence of the meso-level in contemporary life concentrate the primary interest of this chapter. The focus on territoriality should not be considered as the neglect of other forms of functional identity politics also affected by globalisation (class, gender or religion). However, in this chapter the main area of analysis concerns identity and territory, and the spatial context of reference is in most instances that of the European Union.

In the first section, a theoretical review of the concept of multiple identities precedes a reflection on the implications of globalisation, the extension of market values, and the relative loss of power and influence by the nation-state. The third section focuses on the growing role played by the global meso-communities in the context of the European Union. This development seems to be in line with a trend towards what can be labelled as a new *cosmopolitan localism*, which seeks to make the general and the particular politically compatible.

DUAL AND MULTIPLE IDENTITIES IN COMPOUND POLITIES

The revival of ethnoterritorial identities has coincided with an increasing challenge to the centralist model of the unitary state. In plural polities,[1] decentralisation, federalisation and subsidiarity seek to accommodate a response to the *stimuli* of the diversity or plurality of the polities involved. These comprise groups and countries with differences of language, history or traditions, which are often reflected in different party systems, channels of elites' representation or interests' articulation (Keating, 1998, 2001; Moreno, 1999; Safran & Maiz, 2000; Loughlin, 2001).

There is a growing attachment of citizens to communities at local and meso-level. By meso-communities we refer to those sub-state polities situated in a somewhat equidistant position between the nation-state (be it unitary or multinational),

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[1] We refer to this notion, of a more general natural, based upon the ancient Greek idea of *politeia*, understood as a legitimate constitutional political body. Let us remind that most modern nation-states were built during the period 1485-1789. According to Stein Rokkan, the second phase of nation-

transnational regional bodies (APEC, EU, MERCOSUR, NAFTA), and other international frameworks (GATT, IMF, OECD, WB, WTO). Territorial identities associated with these communities have provided new political underpinnings for citizens and groups. Arguably, some 'small' nation-states, which are already integrated in transnational contexts of governance as the EU, and which have 'lost' substantial powers as former sovereign unitary states, could also be included in the meso-level category for the simplest reason of their size and their societal homogeneity (e.g. Denmark, Finland, Ireland, or Luxembourg)[2]

Citizens in multinational and compound national states[3] often incorporate in variable proportions, both sub-state/ethnoterritorial[4] and state/national identities. The degree of internal consent and dissent in these plural polities has in the concept of *dual identity* or *compound nationality* a useful methodological tool for socio-political interpretations[5].

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building, the subsequent processes of mass democratisation and the construction of welfare states completed the main four-stage political development in contemporary Europe (Flora *et al*., 1999).

[2] The 'No' result in the Danish Referendum to ratify the Maastricht Treaty in June 1992, as well as the 'Yes' ratification of the same Treaty with opt-outs in a similar referendum held on May 1993, can be regarded as expressions of the uneasiness of this 'small and homogeneous' European state to accept the loss of traditional sovereign powers. The negative outcome of the Referendum on the Nice Treaty held in Ireland in June 2001, could also be interpreted, among other considerations, as a refusal towards fiscal harmonisation within the EU and fear about future majority voting by EU decision-making institutions. However, the referendum held in October 2002 produced a clear pro-EU result.

[3] In 1991, Daniel Elazar concluded that nearly 40% of the world's population lived in countries formally self-labelled as federations, while a further 33% were states that had adopted federal forms and practices. With the disappearance of the Soviet union and Yugoslavia such figures should be revised. However, Russia maintained its political organisation as a federation. Other countries, such as Belgium, Spain or South Africa, have joined both sub-categories as federations or federal-like countries.

[4] By ethnoterritorial we refer to an identity dimension where conflicts and political mobilisations are developed and have as their chief social actors those ethnic groups which possess a geographical underpinning. Such a spatial reference is identifiable within the boundaries of a polity, usually of a compound or plural composition (Moreno, 1986; Rudolph and Thompson, 1992).

[5] The example of Spain is illustrative. In all seventeen Spanish Comunidades Autónomas (sub-state regions and nationalities) there is a high proportion of citizens who claim some form of dual self-identification. The question addressed to them in successive polls has been as follows: 'In general, would you say that you feel...(1) 'Only Andalusian, Basque, Catalan, etc.'; (2) 'More Andalusian, Basque, Catalan, etc. than Spanish'; (3) 'As much Andalusian, Basque, Catalan as Spanish'; (4) 'More Spanish than Andalusian, Basque, Catalan, etc.'; or (5) 'Only Spanish'. In the period October 1990-June 1995 a degree of duality was expressed by around 70 per cent of the total Spanish population (i.e. categories 2, 3 and 4). Approximately 30 per cent of all Spaniards expressed a single identity ('Only Spanish', or 'Only Andalusian, Basque, Catalan, etc.') (Moreno, 2001a). For an analysis of the case of Catalonia see Moreno, Arriba and Serrano (1998). In the case of Scotland/United Kingdom, surveys using a similar scale were first carried out in the mid-1980s (Moreno, 1986: 439-441).

Dual identity citizens within multinational states share their institutional loyalties at both levels of political legitimacy with no apparent fracture between them. The task of identifying and measuring the notion of dual identity is far from simple. The changing nature implicit in such a duality greatly complicates matters. Thus, positive perceptions about the intervention of the national state by individuals in sub-state stateless nations or regions can result in a loosening of their self-ascribed local identities with a corresponding reinforcement of their sense of membership within the national state, and vice versa. Changes of degree in one or the other components of the dual identity are produced according to subjective perceptions, often collectively shaped. In fact the reinforcement of one identity upon the other may well result in the complete disappearance of such the compound nationality. Arguably, this could have been the case for some groups living in countries subject to processes of de-colonisation, ethnic cleansing, or sectarian political violence (e.g. Commonwealth dominions, ex-Yugoslavia, or Northern Ireland).

The existence of this compound nationality in some European countries has had an institutional correlation in the setting-up of regional legislatures and governments (e.g. Spain's *Comunidades Autónomas* or UK's devolved administrations). These processes of decentralisation of power have not only preserved meso-level identities but have also projected the political aspirations of these sub-state communities, which have given priority to cultural, educational, linguistic, and media policies. The role of these self-governing institutions in the production and re-production of, for example, Basque, Catalan, Scottish or Welsh identities has been very important (Giner, 1984; Moreno, 1995; Keating, 1996; Guibernau, 1999; Martínez-Herrera, 2002).

But supra-national levels of ascription can also integrate both state and sub-state identities in apparent conflict among themselves. The question remains on whether two or more identities (state national and sub-state), which could be subsumed in one referred to a larger entity (e.g. European), would overcome their possible relationship of incompatibility between them: what could be in a multi-level EU the result of an interplay between exclusive forms of self-identification such as, for example, Basque-Spanish, Corsican-French, Flemish-Belgian, Padanian-Italian, or Scottish-British? The response cannot be simply dismissed as a political oxymoron.

In the context of state political arenas, the quest for self-government and home-rule by regions and meso-level communities is in full accordance with the variable manifestation of such duality in citizens' self-identification: the more the primordial ethnoterritorial identity prevails upon modern state identity, the higher the demands for political autonomy. Conversely, the more characterised the state national identity is, the less likely it would be for ethnoterritorial conflicts to appear. At the extreme, complete absence of one of the two elements of dual identity would lead to a socio-political fracture in the pluriethnic state, and demands for self-government would probably take the form of secessionist independence. In other words, when citizens in a sub-state community identify themselves in an exclusive manner, the institutional outcome of such antagonism will also tend to be exclusive.

Contemporary liberal thinkers have greatly revitalised the debate regarding individual rights and collective identities.[6] Many of them can be labelled as 'liberal nationalists' (Tamir, 1993; Miller, 1995). Some have argued persuasively for the case of multiculturalism and the politics of recognition for minorities (Taylor, 1992; Kymlicka, 1995; Walzer, 1997). However, some of their normative analyses insist upon the 'improbability' of accommodating distinct societies and ethnoterritorial groups within multinational polities. National and state developments of Québec and Canada can provide analytical cases to reflect upon the moral foundations of asymmetrical territorial accommodation (Gagnon, 2001).

In the context of a transnational institutional aggregation, as the EU, identity politics and territorial claims face the complex challenge of being accommodated within a multi-tiered framework of governance. In this respect, Europeanisation implies a confluence of resources and outputs and comprises countries sharing a somewhat common

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[6] Already in the 1960s, Glazer and Moynihan (1963) questioned the very nature of the assimilationist melting pot in the USA. In their study on the city of New York, they concluded that prejudice and discrimination among descendants of Afro-Americans, Jewish, Irish, Italians, or Puerto-Ricans were more noticeable than their common features as American citizens. Later on the assimilationist 'melting pot' was proposed to be a pluralist 'salad bowl'.

historical development and embracing values of democracy and human rights of an egalitarian nature.[7]

If it is certain that we witness a growing attachment to supranational levels of civic membership and institutional development, this process goes hand in hand with a strengthening of meso-level identities. As a result, citizens in advanced industrial democracies seem to conciliate supranational, state and local identities, which majority and minority nationalisms often tend to polarise in a conflictive manner. The emphasis on territorial identities and polities showing a significant degree of internal diversity ought not to be placed merely on distinctiveness, but also on those relationships of interaction and congruence.

Arguably, some authors are of the opinion that political accommodation to secure institutional stability in plural societies or polyarchies is almost impossible, and is bound to result in either the break-up of the polity or the consolidation of a type of hegemonic authoritarianism for the maintenance of the state's unity (Dahl, 1971; Horowitz, 1985). This chapter sustains the view that co-operation and agreement may not only overcome conflicts and divergence within plural polities, but can also provide a deepening of democracy by means of favouring the participation of citizens at all possible levels of institutional life and political decision-making. Such developments usually fit better in multinational polities where internal ethnoterritorial and cultural diversity are politicised, and territorial accommodation is made possible by decentralised structures of government.[8]

GLOBALIZATION, MARKET VALUES AND THE NATION-STATE

At a time when certain universal visions of human existence seemed to indicate a fusion of both individuality and globality, group affinities have returned to the fore as

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[7] However, the concept is far from being precise and clear-cut. It is multi-semantic and subject to various degrees of understandings and interpretations. Europeanisation is not a static concept, but a rather dynamic idea to found expression in the gradual development of common institutions in Europe (e.g. Agreement of Schengen, Court of Justice, Euro currency).

[8] For Juan Linz federalism and federal-like arrangements can consolidate liberal democracy in multinational polities (1997). For an analysis of the process of decentralisation and federalisation in the case of Spain, see Moreno (2001a, 2002).

main protagonists of social life. Other alternative views have envisaged a process of transit to a post-modern relativism. All things considered, citizens around the world revive old particularities and communal roots. In this way spatial references multiply so that their social existence can be legitimised through a re-assertion of collective identities.

Cultural myths and group affiliations continue to offer a substratum for the management of individual anxieties and aspirations. European societies, in particular, seem to reinforce secular ties of integration within the family,[9] or to recreate medium-sized political communities as was the case in the early Modern Age.[10]

However, divergent effects resulting from the gradual configuration of the *global village* advanced by Marshall McLuhan can be observed. In the first place, the globalisation and internationalisation of trade encouraged by the telecommunication innovations are decisively affecting the economy world-wide, and have brought about a deep restructuring of contemporary capitalism. Other related developments have led some authors to point out that we are witnessing the emergence of a *net society* characterised by the exchange of transactions of an informational nature (Castells, 1997).

Nowadays, individuals and groups have immediate access to a wide range of endless data, information, and news generated in the remotest corners in the earth. The integrated networks of personal computers, TV terminals, and Web servers allow for a reciprocal and fluid communication between the house or workplace and the multifaceted external world.[11] One consequence of these technological developments

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[9] This is the case of South European countries. In Spain, for instance, three quarters of secondary education students consider the family to be the principal source of socialisation and a locus where "...all important things in life are said to be orientations towards future life" (CIS, 1996). In Italy, 93% of the respondents in a national survey expressed their trust in the family as compared to 20% who declared to count on the state (*La Repubblica*, 29.Nov.02)

[10] As said above, this is particularly relevant concerning major conurbations, regions, stateless nations, and small nation-states. Within the context of the British Isles such typologies can be illustrated with reference to Greater London, the North East of England, Scotland, and the Republic of Ireland, respectively.

[11] Immanuel Wallerstein, pioneer in putting forward the world-system approach that emphasises a global rather that a state-centric perspective (1974), already underlined the growing importance of

is a higher degree of democratisation in the processes of dissemination and exchange of information.

A myriad of facts, including those related to cultures and collectives all over the world are now available to the general public. The 'digestion' of such avalanches of information increasingly conditions economic, political, and social activities. The restriction of information and representation images characteristic of power practices in the past has been progressively replaced by the efficient management of overwhelming masses of information produced swiftly and without restraint.

The drive towards rebuilding relationships between the in- and out-spheres of human existence is shaped by citizens' internalisation of practicalities and values related to a global context affecting matters of everyday life. Market values of an individualistic and self-interest nature seem to have permeated citizens' attitudes and perceptions worldwide.[12] Identities are in the midst of such a process of re-definition, with crucial derivations for political culture, social mobilisation, and political institutions.

As things considered, the most important factor in all aspects of globalisation can be considered as perceptive (Strange, 1995). Interpretations claiming that a blurring of local markers would follow the globalising trends should nevertheless be qualified.

Indeed, national economic policies are becoming more and more dependent on external factors and constraints beyond their control (Camilleri & Falk, 1992; Schmidt, 1995). But geographical mobility does not solely affect capital flows. Other production factors are also concerned, such as industrial components and parts manufactured in cheap-labour countries and imported subsequently for assembling, marketing, and

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households as 'part and parcel' of the world economy, as a basic units of production (Wallerstein, 1984).

[12] This statement should be qualified regarding popular sentiments held in some European countries where globalisation is felt as a flood of ideas representing an increasing alien lifestyle imported from North America. Often happens that globalisation and the universalisation of the North-American experience of de-regulation are made synonymous concepts (Fligstein, 1998).

sale in core industrial countries. International freight and a legion of stateless managers are other factors that are becoming increasingly transnational.[13]

Financial globalisation has meant a transfer of authority and power from the nation-states to the markets. The very patterns of economic competition are to comply with the new rules of global markets and the strategies of transnational corporations. Some authors are of the opinion that global capitalism is deprived of any sense of territoriality. On selecting locations for investment, analysts consider first and foremost the level of profit that they expect to achieve. Indeed, they have a much wider perspective than that determined by purely national interests.[14] But there are other crucial elements related to levels of social cohesion, the absence of political turmoil, or the stability of the institutions of the candidate countries which also need to be assessed. Other cultural aspects, such as educational systems or national languages are important too. Furthermore, the processes of decision-making for investments are greatly exposed to the input made by the media and opinion leaders, neither of which can be considered territorially 'neutral'.

National governments still maintain their nominal sovereignty empowering them to negotiate new economic frameworks. At the same time they also bargain with the transnational corporations. However, their economic manoeuvring to put forward innovative polices outside global demands is becoming rather limited. Failure of the programs for indicative planning implemented by the first Mitterrand Government in the early 1980s illustrated the 'persuasiveness' of the external constraints posed on the national sovereignty in the most statistic country in Europe.[15]

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[13] Boeing, for instance, decided to drop its labelling as an 'American corporation'. Note that many of the components for their planes are produced in a dozen different countries outside the USA. However, other companies take advantage of being a multinational consortium, as is the case of Airbus, the commercial arch-rival of Boeing.

[14] William Greider (1997) holds the view that capital movements only take into account the potential level of profits disregarding geographical criteria. In any case, the recent economic crises in Japan and South East Asia seem to corroborate the axiom that the international financial markets are unstable by nature.

[15] French Governments after the Second World War put into action plans for economic growth. These were to be implemented in a hierarchical manner by the powerful French public sector, and were 'indicative' of the industrial priorities to be taken by private businesses. The model worked satisfactorily in the post-war period allowing the French economy to perform at a good level. Right after the Socialist victory in the 1981 General Election, the Mauroy Government attempted a different path away from the policies of economic austerity followed by the neighbouring European countries.

Together with the limits posed upon nation-states' sovereignty by the internationalisation of the financial markets, the regions and large cities have also exerted pressure on central governments for decentralisation and autonomy. Both actions are having great repercussions on the traditional powers of nation states. Increasingly, sub-state mesogovernments and local authorities do not require the rationalising intervention of central bureaucracies and elites. In fact, the rules of the *New World Order, Inc.* often concern the action and policies of these sub-state layers of governments. They can activate policies of industrial relocation or attraction of foreign capitals without the role of intermediaries at the state's centre. By means of local incentives, urban re-development plans, or favouring corporatist agreements with trade unions and industrialists, mesogovernments and metropolitan authorities can have direct negotiations with the transnational corporations involved.

As a matter of fact, meso-governments do not restrict their action to the domestic arenas. They tend to project themselves as international actors and regard paradiplomacy as an important activity for the promotion of their interests. Territorial politics in advanced industrialised societies are undergoing a fundamental change with respect to their relationship with the 'external'. International processes, globalisation and the construction of continental regimes are becoming elements central to the study of regionalism and stateless nationalism (Lecours & Moreno, 2003).

EUROPEANISATION, SUBSIDIARITY AND MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

Against this background of internationalisation, the role played by medium-size polities is acquiring relevance in most aspects of contemporary life. The renewal of community life at the meso-level derives mainly from the combination of two main factors: a growing rejection of state centralisation coupled with a strengthening of supranational politics, and a reinforcement of local identities and societal cultures with a territorial underpinning.

Not long after their initial implementation French economic policies suffered a Copernican turn and were to align themselves with the course of action taken by the rest of the central European economies.

Mesogovernments are no longer dependent on nation-building programmes of the like carried out during the XIX and XX centuries. Their own entrepreneurs, social leaders and local *intelligentsia* have adopted many of the initiatives and roles once reserved for the 'enlightened' elites, who in the past held the reins of power at the centre of their nation states. Positions of influence are now more evenly distributed in central, meso-level and local institutions. Furthermore, the co-option of regional elites to the central institutions of government is no longer the exclusive route available to 'successful' political careers.

The supranational framework provided by the European process of convergence brings with it a 'new' element of further cosmopolitanism to meso-communities and local institutions. At one point, and in the face of hard economic competition from other world regions, the very idea of a 'fortress Europe' was proposed by some analysts. According to this view, the secession from the international world arena would preserve the maintenance of the European welfare regimes. An economic 'wall' around EU member states would guarantee the social rights achieved by generations of Europeans. It would also stimulate a balanced growth, which, in turn, would create new employment coupled with job-sharing and the reduction of working time. Immigration would be tightly regulated. Undoubtedly the implementation of this 'virtuous circle' would mean a U-turn in the cosmopolitan approach of the European culture and a de-naturalising change in its value-system. Besides, the current level of Europeanisation would render the establishment of a strategy for achieving a monolithic autarchy unfeasible. The very idea of a 'fortress Europe' cannot be embraced as a workable scheme, despite pressures produced by an increasing xenophobia in reaction to an intensification of illegal immigration. The common European matrix for human rights of an egalitarian nature should prevent such a development.[16]

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[16] Some authors are of the opinion that an ever-latent possibility of rivalries between nation states is always potentially explosive (Chomsky, 1994).

However, efforts of Europeanisation in order to build up a macro community of trusts, which would dismantle internal boundaries,[17] need to be reoriented towards transferring more responsibilities to the meso-layer of government. Among others, two factors can be identified as having greatly contributed to enhance the significance of sub-state communities: (a) The re-assertion of territorial identities, and (b) The implementation of the principle of subsidiarity. Let us briefly review both elements:

(a) *The reinforcement of local identities* has provided civil societies with a more participative and active role. Examples in Western Europe do not circumscribe to electoral deviations from national patterns (CiU-Catalonia, CSU-Baviera, Lega-Northern Italy, SNP-Scotland). Social movements and industrialists of the 'new economy' have found a more flexible context for action at the regional level. Central state apparatuses are often clumsy and inefficient in dealing with bottom-up initiatives. Medium-size nation states (Denmark or Finland), stateless nations (Catalonia or Scotland), regions (Brussels or Veneto) and metropolitan areas (London or Berlin)[18] are well equipped for carrying out innovation policies in a more integrated Europe. In particular, the quest of medium-size communities to run their own affairs and to develop their potentialities outside the *dirigiste* control of central state institutions is a generalised trend throughout the European Union.

Many signs seem to point towards the rise of a European type of communitarianism, which should be regarded in quite a distinct fashion from that prescribed in North America for local communities (Etzioni, 1993). In the case of the USA, many of the communitarian experiences may be regarded as reactions to specific social cleavages and pressing social fractures (the criminalisation of social life), as

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[17] Along the lines of Stein Rokkan's 'macro-model of European political development', the accommodation of cleavage structures forged in centuries of history appeared to be a pre-requisite to any political attempt to dismantle internal boundaries in a supra-national Europe (Flora *et al*, 1999).

[18] Other conurbations, such as those of Madrid and Paris are also re-creating local civic cultures alongside their cosmopolitan traditions. Despite the lack of single identities or ethnic uniformities, large conurbations are in a similar position to that of the meso-communities as regards running their own affairs, and in many cases hey attempt to develop their potentialities outside the *dirigiste* control of the central state institutions. A different issue is the location of central bureaucracies (or 'Eurocracies', as is the case of Brussels) in their territories. Likewise, some of the officials of the central institutions cannot refrain from having a traditional perception that capital cities are the very representation of the nation-state.

instrumental means of socialisation in response to urban constriction (suburban isolationism), or as alternative lifestyles to dominant values (possessive individualism). In this respect, North-American communitarianism can be seen mainly as socially defensive.[19]

In the EU, territorial identities are mainly pro-active. They are not mere mechanisms of response for controlling the informational avalanche generated by the telecommunications revolution. The reinforcement of sub-state territorial identities is deeply associated with powerful material and symbolic referents of the past (culture, history, territories). But they seem to have engaged in a process of innovation departing from a common ground and seeking to overcome the de-naturalising effects of global hypermodernity.[20] However, their manifestations do not take refuge in a reactive parochialism. They emerge, therefore, as 'project identities' characterised in many instances by pro-active attitudes.[21]

(b) *The principle of subsidiarity* was enshrined in the Treaty of European Union of 1992, known as the Treaty of Maastricht. It provides for decisions to be taken transnationally only if local, regional or national levels cannot perform better. In other words, the preferred locus for decision-making is that closer to the citizen, and as local as possible. State political elites, reluctant to further the process of European institutionalisation, interpreted the subsidiarity principle as a safeguard for the preservation of traditional national sovereignty and, consequently, the powers to intervene centrally.

Up until recent years, the case of the United Kingdom was paradigmatic concerning the refusal by the state-centred elites to implement downwards the rational of

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[19] Other functional identities linked to various dimensions of social life, such as cultural forms, gender, religion and individual sociobiological conditions can also be interpreted as new forms of 'resistance' (Kilminster, 1997).

[20] De-naturalising is used here to mean the deprivation of the rights of citizenship within an established democratic polity.

[21] According to Manuel Castells (1997) 'project identities' do not seem to originate from the old identities of the civil societies in the Industrial Age, but from the development of current 'resistance identities' against the informational avalanche. This argument is rather circular as regards its territorial dimension. In the case of the USA sub-state spatial identities are not commensurable with the type of collective identities deeply rooted in the *volkgeist* of the diverse European peoples.

European subsidiarity. According to such interpretations, defended by Thatcherism, the legislative supremacy of Westminster should be preserved from supranational intervention and regulation originated at the 'federal' institutions of the European Union. However, the devolution of power from the centre of the British state to the constituent nations of the UK, and to amalgamated local authorities like the Greater Council of London, could not be denied taking into account the same argumentative grounds. The process of devolution of powers, which has developed in the UK since the arrival of New Labour to power in 1997, can be regarded as the implementation of the subsidiarity rationale *tout-court*.[22] The dilemma remains as regards the role to be played by the English regions in the future governance of the UK within the EU.

Subsidiarity favours the participation of sub-state layer of governments in the running of public affairs, although global ones are also included. At the same time, it is to encourage intergovernmental co-operation on the assumption that the role of the national states would be less hierarchical than it has been up until now. Territorial identities would be intertwined in a manner that would express the degrees of citizens' loyalties towards the various sources of political legitimisation: municipalities, regions, nations, states, and European Union. Accountability and territorial institutions would consequently reflect the political expression of people's identities and democratic participation.

Immigration from non-EU countries has certainly had an impact on the growing feelings of xenophobia in Europe. Nevertheless, immigrants who are willing to take on those values of civic pluralism and tolerance find no major difficulty of integration in the economic and social life at their first 'port of entry', i.e. local and meso-communities.

CONCLUSION: A NEW COSMOPOLITAN LOCALISM

The processes of bottom-up transnationalisation and top-down devolution of powers have allowed a considerable extension of a type of European *cosmopolitan localism*.

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[22] Of special relevance is the issue of state welfare nationalism, developed as national-building policy after the Second World War, and the quest for further autonomy in the area of social policies claimed

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.

European *cosmopolitan localism* mainly concerns medium-sized polities, within or without the framework of a state. In the 'Old Continent' it can be detected in small nation-states (Denmark, Eire, Luxembourg), stateless minority nations (Catalonia, Flanders, Scotland), but also in regions (Brussels, Languedoc, Veneto) and conurbations (Berlin, London, Madrid). The latter, in particular, seem to follow a pattern of re-creating those political communities which flourished in the age prior to the New World discoveries (Italian city-states, Hanseatic League, principalities). However, and in contrast with the *Renaissance* period, there is now a common institutional tie inherent in the process of Europeanisation. The majority of the EU peoples have internalised European institutions, albeit rather loosely and gradually. The European Court of Justice and the Schengen Agreement can be regarded as steps advancing firmly towards the very idea of European transnationalisation.

Democratic accountability and the full involvement of citizens were given priority by Prodi's European Commission in a fully-fledged statement at the beginning of the millennium (Commission, 2000). The ways and means by which territorial subsidiarity and democratic accountability are envisaged in the future European governance concerns the decentralisation of day-to-day programmes and tasks. The difficulties of implementing transnational policies from Brussels, particularly in the area of traditional national sovereignty such as social welfare,[23] were implicitly acknowledged in such a statement. Further to this, the agreement taken at the 2000 Nice summit in order to work out a EU treaty in 2004 based upon a new intergovernmental balance of powers seems to give support to the quest for more extensive decentralisation.

Europeanisation should be regarded as a process of multi-level governance incorporating existing cultural systems and collective identities of both national and

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by devolved parliaments, as is the case of Scotland (McEwen, 2002).

[23] This area of social policy-making is highly shaped by local cultures and life styles, and is less likely to be dealt with in a homogeneous and decentralised manner from a supra-national entity (Moreno,

sub-national levels. In this way, it would avoid to be realized as an exogenous process, which is superimposed on the internal interaction of communities with long-standing cultures and history.[**]

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