SYMPOSIUM – REVIEW/1

INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL TRANSNATIONALISM: A RELATIONSHIP TO WORK ON.

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In the late afternoon of the 15th of April 2019, the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris was on fire, with terrible images of the blaze circulating around the globe. Shocked and feeling bereaved, many European citizens followed the tense media coverage, hoping that the Cathedral would not collapse. European media described the Cathedral as an iconic symbol for the "whole European culture and society". On that evening, posts on social media around Europe were massively containing sentences like "a piece of our history is burning, we feel all French and Parisians". If asked at that time about European belonging and identity, most Europeans would have probably felt European as their first choice; the French would have probably being the exception feeling more French than European. This kind of events tend to uplift collective identity and feeling of belonging to the same community. This is to say that although attitudes and feelings are very important to understand social and political change, they often prove difficult to measure, and remain contingent upon external events.

Resulting from a European comparative project, and written by some of the most prominent leading scholars in the fields of mobility and social inequality, the book *Everyday Europe. Social Transnationalism in an unsettled continent* explores the construction of a European society primarily through the lens of practices. The shift of attention from attitudes to practices is part of a relatively recent stream of research developed beyond migration studies within the frame of transnationalism from below (Kennedy and Roudometof 2002; Smith 2002), horizontal transnationalism (Recchi 2015; Mau 2010; Heidenreich 2019; Andreotti et al 2014) or social transnationalism, as it is called in this volume. This approach focuses on the everyday behaviours and social worlds of individuals (not only migrants) examining transnational activities at the micro-level, which are more stable over time and "easily" measurable compared to attitudes. It also considers how these practices are linked or embedded in social, organizational and institutional structures. This approach helps making the link between the micro activities of citizens and the structure within which they are embedded, and contribute to produce and/or reproduce. Nevertheless, as Favell and Recchi note in the introduction, *Everyday Europe* also addresses the feelings and attitudes about Europe and the European Union, in an ongoing constructive tension.

This volume presents rich, original data about the existence of a variety of transnationalisms as far as Danish, British, German, Italian, Spanish, and Romanian citizens are concerned. It shows that practices of transnational mobility vary significantly in terms of their diffusion and frequency, and they are highly influenced by colonial legacies. The British specificity is always a case, and the Brexit question addressed throughout the chapters. The book also demonstrates that European citizens tend to travel and establish relations next door, highlighting Germany's central geographical position as a key social and political asset. Furthermore, the authors illustrate that mobility acquires different social meanings according to the populations and countries at stake. The focus on Turkish and Romanian migrants living in other European countries shows that they often adopt transnational behaviours more similar to the host countries' citizens than to those of their co-nationals living in the country of origin. On the whole, *Everyday Europe* tackles a great deal of issues concerning the importance of State, how this affects micro transnational practices, and how the latter contribute to structure transnational patterns. Europe is analysed within the international picture, considering how its citizens are related within and outside it.

In this contribution, I discuss two issues that seem to me at the core of the discussion: 1) the importance of inequality to understand the variety of transnationalisms, considering both the social and territorial inequality; 2) the relation between attitudes and

practices with reference to the European identification and solidarity. This has to do with social capital and the need to invest on it, and this is again strictly related to inequality.

Mutually reinforcing social and territorial inequalities

One of the most debated issues related to the European project, and the widespread of transnational practices, as well as the organization of a transnational space as a new scale, is the emphasis on the élite and the class nature: to what extent this is concerning only the élite and the upper classes, while "people" are largely set apart. The topic has gained new interest with the rise of the national sovereignty over supranational institutions, European Union in primis. The most evident expression is the rise of populism in many EU countries with the slogan "national residents first".

Several studies using both standard dataset (the European Social Survey, the Eurobarometer), and ad hoc surveys have dealt with this issue. There is rather strong evidence that transnational practices are not limited to the top five percent of the population, although they do not pertain to the whole population either (Mau 2010; Delhey, Deutschmann and Richer 2014; Favell and Guilardon 2011).

Most Europeans are used to some transnational practice, but much depends on the kind of practices under observation. Scholars identify two dimensions of transnational practices: transnational relations, and transnational mobilities that can be unpacked in virtual and physical ones. Virtual mobilities are the ones that can be carried out from your sofa, and "only" entail the use of ICT technology (internet). The physical ones entail travelling (long and short trips), and living abroad for longer than three months. When considered separately, empirical findings on these types of transnational practices are much more nuanced, and the rate of transnationalism drops consistently. Physical mobilities are markedly correlated with socioeconomic status, and income in particular; the better-off are more likely to cross border than the rest of the population. No surprise indeed, as travelling needs money, although mobility costs have decreased a lot in the last decades. Furthermore, the more educated are willing to be professionals or managers working for multinationals that are requiring geographical mobility, further increasing their degree of transnationalism.

Results are less clear-cut for virtual mobility, again depending on the kind of practice. European citizens are widely used with Skype, watching foreign channels, and social media to communicate with people abroad, regardless their socio-economic status.

Delhey et al. (2014), using the Eurobarometer 73.3 dataset, distinguish between "class variables" and "social difference or heterogeneity variables". The former refers to income, education, labour market position, while the latter refers to age, gender, and ru-

ral-urban cleavage. The authors remark the importance of both the class and the heterogeneity variables to adopt transnational practices. However, there is not much discussion on how these two dimensions interact, for instance how the urban-rural cleavage can amplify the class effect.

In *Everyday Europe*, Salamońska and Recchi (2019) do not engage in the discussion about class and heterogeneity, however they consider the impact of income, education, and labour market status on transnational social practices. Consistent with previous studies' findings, they identify education as the outmost variable: there is no form of cross-border practice (relational, virtual or physical) where "the more educated do not have an edge over the less well educated" (pag. 81). Hanquinet and Savage (2019) similarly find that education is the crucial variable in the cultural and transnational consumption patterns. Overall, education makes a real difference as it highly increases the likelihood of adopting transnational practices.

Acknowledging the risk of ecological fallacy, I introduce here territorial inequalities relating them to education and income as important conditions fostering transnational practices.

Over the past four decades, though extreme poverty has declined, territorial economic inequalities have risen on a global scale (Picketty 2013; Milanovic 2015). Europe is the word-region that managed to kept economic inequalities under control thanks to its welfare policies, but it has witnessed a great process of internal differentiation with the rise of strong inequality between countries. Where you are born, besides your social class, matters a lot in terms of your life chances to access good services, to adopt transnational practices, and overall your quality of life (Milanovic 2015). Denmark and Romania represent the two poles of this differentiation within Europe.

Looking at the diffusion of transnational practices, Romania, Italy and Spain always score poorly while Denmark and the UK score high with a relevant gap. If we take transnational relations and short mobility practices as example, Italy scores first in the percentage of citizens without any transnational relation (more than sixty percent of the population) just before the Romanians, while the Germans, Britons and Danes score significantly lower with less than forty percent (Savage et al. 2019). Romanians crossing borders for visiting foreign countries are less than one third of the population, the Spaniards and the Italians less than forty percent. Danish citizens crossing borders almost double (more than seventy percent) (Salamońska and Recchi 2019). This ranking is confirmed by all data about transnational practices, with small variations in the countries' positions, not challenging the general conclusions (Delhey et al. 2014). Matching these

data with national education level and standard of living, it seems that countries with higher levels of both also have higher degree of transnationalism[1].

Differences within the European Union have always existed, and have been made only further visible with the enlargement to Eastern European countries. So why this sudden concern? The problem lies in the trend of inequality, as the authors of Everyday Europe argue. Data about the European Union show that there was a convergence between countries up to the Nineties, while over the last two decades, and in particular from the crisis on, this convergence has come to a halt, and it has even reversed. European societies are distancing themselves in their economic and social standing.

At least two processes seem at work as far as territorial inequalities. The first one, that I have already mentioned, is the differentiation between countries; the second one is the differentiation within countries.

The differentiation between countries have increased during and after the economic crisis. South European countries were more severely hit by the crisis – Greece, Spain and Italy – paying the highest price in terms of expenditure cuts (Taylor-Gooby, Lereuth, Chung 2017), increasing poverty rates, income stagnation, access to services and raise in social problems (van Kersbergen and Hemerijck 2014; Lobao 2016). A major effect has been the new raise of migratory flows of young educated populations to Northern Europe, with capital cities as preferred destinations (Pugliese 2018). Mobility in these countries means firstly migration. The lower capacity (capability?) to travel both for short and/or long trips, and the more frequent association of travel to economic migration affects people's perception of mobility. In Everyday Europe the authors suggest that when mobility is well widespread, as in Denmark, it becomes a life style, people identify weekends and holidays abroad with feelings of freedom. When mobility is not widespread, it is more frequently associated to migration, a condition of "necessity and constrain", and it becomes a political issue connected to economic, financial, social policies and austerity more in general.

The second process at work is the differentiation of local contexts within countries, again triggered by the economic crisis. Some local contexts were more able than others (and more endowed with institutional, economic and political resources) to tackle the challenges of the crisis and of the austerity wave (Cucca and Ranci 2016, Le Galès 2017, Johansson and Panican 2016). The report on the State of European cities shows that cities were more able than rural areas to create growth, and this higher performance is due to the economic advantages of cities, including education, innovation, and speciali-

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[1] The relation between education and transnational practices definitely needs further attention and investigation as Delhey and colleagues (2014) find that the gross enrolment rate in tertiary education is, surprisingly, negatively correlated with transnational practices at the macro level.

sation. In particular, the report stresses that metropolitan areas are the centres of education, have fewer early school leavers, have more residents participating in education or training (p.84). The percentage of people with a good level of education or training is reported as significantly higher in cities (47%) than in rural areas (27%) or in towns and suburbs (33%), and conversely early school leaving is reported more frequent in rural areas (12.4%) than in towns and suburbs (11.9%) or cities (10%) (UnHabitat 2016).

The existing literature on transnational practices does not discuss the territorial dimension at either micro or macro level. The volume Everyday Europe, using some qualitative accounts, suggests that there is not much difference between urban centres and the province as far as transnational practices are concerned (pag. 177). Though, more systematic knowledge is needed on this point, as it would be interesting to understand more on how the place of residence interacts with class and the adoption of transnational practices, their diffusion and quality. Furthermore, the link between micro and macro factors definitely needs further investigation, as it can help in better explaining the differences (cleavages?) between social and political attitudes and behaviours in the different territorial contexts, for instance metropolitan and non metropolitan areas.

Social and territorial inequalities can lead to the undermining of social cohesion, and increasing frustration and/or dissatisfaction among citizens on a double level.

In Northern European countries – like the Scandinavian Peninsula, Denmark or the Netherlands –disadvantaged people who are not able to adopt otherwise common transnational practices may feel frustrated and dissatisfied. These feelings can easily turn into lesser identification with the European project, less solidarity, leading eventually to protests.

In Southern or Eastern European countries, where transnational practices are less widespread and still a small group's prerogative, the most disadvantaged do not even have the capacity (or capability in the Amartya Sen's meaning) to aspire to transnational practices (Appadurai 2004). Rather, it is more likely that the middle class groups living in urban and richer areas begin to feel excluded, adding a further element of difficulty to the question of the "ceto medio" (Bagnasco 2016).

In both cases, feelings and perceptions of being left behind, even though affecting different social groups across countries and with a variation of intensity, can encourage disaffection to the European project.

European identification, solidarity and social capital.

In times of European crisis and discourses about the loss of European identification and solidarity, at least three distinct volumes collecting original data find consistent, and

still relatively high levels of both (Recchi et al. 2019; Heidenreich 2019; Lauhsen and Grasso 2018). Recchi and colleagues find that levels of identification with the European Union are above the fifty percent in all surveyed countries. Over seventy percent of respondents agree that solidarity is an important aim of the European Union, except for the UK where the percentage stops at 61.5%. When it comes to financial support, Gerhards and his colleagues (2018) find that the majority of all citizens across the EU are in favour of aiding other countries within the EU, and this is true for the majority of people in each individual country. Authors also find relatively high support for a European welfare state, reducing territorial and social differences within Europe, while less support is found for solidarity towards non-European groups and countries.

Some differences exist among countries: South European respondents always present higher percentages of support for in-group members, while Northern ones, and Germany in particular, lower ones. Conversely, around the eighty percent of the European population would be sad or very sad about the dissolution of the European Union (Recchi et al 2019), and the Germans would be as disappointed as the South Europeans.

Despite its problems, the preservation of the European Union remains important to most of its citizens. To some, its existence has never been up for discussion. Yet, over the last two decades, the identification and support for the EU has not been increasing, but it has even decreased; the exit voices have become louder. Once again, the trend is worrying, even more so as it is happening despite the increase in transnational interactions and networks across Europe. From the Fifties of the last century, the construction of the European identity has been rested on the idea that dense cross-borders social exchanges between European citizens were creating trust, and feeling of belonging, fostering the European identification and, by this way solidarity (Deutsch 1953). Put simply, the more people cross interact to each other, the more they should become aware of their common values, interests and experiences, sharing trust, belonging to Europe, and supporting each other. The mechanisms go from practices to attitudes of belonging and solidarity[2]. Much of the political, social and economic policies and programmes of the European Union fostering mobility were based exactly on this conviction.

Empirical studies confirm this positive correlation, albeit with some caveats (Fligstein 2008; Recchi 2015; Kuhn 2015). We have already seen that transnational practices are not equally widespread among the population in terms of social stratification and social differences, so feeling of identification and solidarity are more likely to develop in certain social groups than others. Furthermore, purely economic exchanges seem less able to

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[2] Some other studies focus on the importance of fiscal and redistributive policies to foster feeling of European identification and solidarity, yet results show that this impact is highly mediated by education. Only the most educated and aware are likely to increase their feeling of belonging to the EU.

create feelings of identification, integration and solidarity; it is above all exchanges related to the sociability sphere (friends, relatives abroad and trips to other European countries), which are important to foster those feelings.

Pötzschke and Braun's chapter in Everyday Europe also confirm the positive correlation between transnational practices and European identification, though they express further words of cautious. They write that the explanatory power of these variables (transnational practices) is fairly limited to foster European identification, and in any case they confirm that European identification adds a further layer of complexity without replacing other territorial belongings (Diez-Medrano 2010; Cicchelli 2012; Pendenza Garcia-Faroldi 2015).

Diez-Medrano, Ciornei and Apaydin (2019) add another piece of the puzzle considering the impact of transnational practices on three dimensions of solidarity: solidarity as a general aim of the EU, solidarity in case of natural disasters, and financial solidarity across European countries. Transnational practices are not able to explain any of the three forms of solidarity. The authors find some support, although not conclusive, for identity and self-interest theories: the more people identify and belong to the European Union, the more solidarity they express (identity theory), and the more people are likely to need support from the others, the more they are likely to support solidarity (self-interest theory). Respondents in poorest countries therefore express more support to solidarity than those in wealthier countries.

The relations between transnationalism, identity, self-interest and solidarity, and the underlying mechanisms however are far from clear and need to be further unpacked with future research. Furthermore, the opposition between identity and self-interest theories can be odd, both being important and relying on partially different mechanisms. This opposition and the debate about creating feeling of belonging, trust, shared values, self-interest, and solidarity recall the social capital ones, and its opposing forms, quite popular in the Nineties of the last century and at the beginning of the new millennium (Andreotti 2009).

Indeed, all these concepts are related to different forms of social capital both in its micro and macro perspective, and to the mechanisms of its creation. James Coleman identified two main forms of social capital: primordial and organizational social capital opposing each other (1990). A by-product of spontaneous social interactions, the first one creates favourable social conditions for unplanned cooperative interaction. The latter is the product of purposive formal organizations. Similarly, Carlo Trigilia identified two micro mechanisms in the creation of social capital (2005). Creation by belonging occurs when individuals share the belonging to a specific ethnic, religious, territorial

group. In this case, social capital arises from the informal and unplanned social interactions characterized mainly by strong and dense networks. The second micro mechanism is the creation by experimentation. This is based primarily on the existence of weak and occasional ties, but likely to repeat, thus structuring "social bonds that go beyond the single transaction, making possible more complex and risky cooperation" (Trigilia 2005: 35). In this case, social capital is the outcome of cooperative social relations (between individual and/or collective actors) that do not necessarily entail a previous knowledge or a common belonging, and are set up to reach a common aim/interest. There is an instrumental interest at the origin of the relations, and they can arise from formal organizations albeit feeling of reciprocal trust and solidarity can also develop. This is the most interesting case as it shows that trust and solidarity can be built through positive repeated social exchanges when there is a common interest. These two mechanisms are not oppositional or alternative, rather co-existing. The same goes for the two forms of social capital sustained by different social structures, and as Bagnasco (2006) highlighted several years ago, in contemporary societies they are even mutually constitutive, and "what is important is understanding how the two of them combines" (p. 412), and at what conditions.

The nation-state is a case in point of this coexistence as, according to James Coleman, it retains certain primordial social components and some properties of organizational social capital, with an ongoing tension between the two (Coleman 1990: 660). The European Union similarly retains both components, the question is again how to combine and integrate the two.

Most of the debate emphasizes the loss of shared values as well as declining feeling of belonging, and solidarity; yet much less attention is given to the formal organizations (or the lack of them!), their design and capacity to coordinate and provide adequate services for their constituents in need. These organizations require rational (social and financial) investments; politics with policies play a major role in the construction of these formal organizations. The conditions that enable these investments should be a matter of priority.

In Everyday Europe's conclusions, Ettore Recchi argues that social and territorial inequalities hamper those crucial conditions. The increased differentiation among countries and the regional differentiation within them have indeed brought about a divergence of interests that challenge the capacity to find a common aim/interest, undermining the capacity to build trust and cooperative relations by experimentation. The reduction of inequalities is therefore a priority for the sake of the European project, and this reduction requires continuous investments on both components of social capital. On the one hand, it is still necessary to invest on the European identity components, and expand the population involved in the "everyday Europe" acknowledging that this can no longer be

bounded to the European context, but needs to transcend its borders. Data suggest that living outside Europe increases feelings of European identity and belonging (Salamońska and Recchi 2019). On the other hand, strong investments in the formal organizational components, as welfare policies, providing support for its members are highly needed also to consolidate the identity components.

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