Reflexive Minority Action

Minority Narratives and New European Discourses

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Cultural minorities react differently to globalizing forces. While globalization has been seen mainly as a negative influence on integration in multicultural societies, the late-modern perspective of reflexive human action shows a different picture of how some cultural minorities adapt to social change induced by globalization. This paper examines the reflexive actions of cultural minorities seeking to eke out strategies for coping with social changes. This will be discussed in terms of minority narratives influencing European discourses on cohesion, citizenship and the environment. It will demonstrate that some minorities seek new spaces for politics in an effort to influence bottom-up democratization through politicization of regional territory, through the reframing of ideologies, by mobilizing intra-regional networks and through intra-state politics. It will maintain that such bottom-up minority mobilization is fuelled by reflexive citizenship acts seeking to transform institutions and strategies. The basic argument is that human reflexivity is at work in the dialectics between cultural minorities and institutions facing social change due to globalization.

Introduction: Minorities and Social Change

The world looks more uncertain today than ever before. At the end of the last Century, scholars gloomily spoke of the end of the “nation-state”¹ and the “end of history.”² Others warned about the end of ideology and that globalization was now a matter of culture; cultures against cultures in a “clash of civilizations.”³ These were of course sweeping statements about a world that was becoming much more inter-connected and perhaps inter-dependent for good and for bad. Cosmopolitans would say it is good; particularists would say it is bad. Often cosmopolitans are elitists who favour open economic markets, whereas particularists represent non-dominant groups without a voice of

1 J-M. Guehenno, *The End of the Nation-State*, trans. Victoria Elliott (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1995).

2 F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (Free Press, 1992).

3 S.P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations,” 73:3 in *Foreign Affairs* (1993), 22–49.

power. The ramifications of global developments on the future of human society were however realistically linked to risk, and a new paradigm, the “risk society,” was introduced.⁴ This picture is gloomy especially because it includes numerous cultural minorities facing arguably double struggles to adapt to these social changes both as human beings and as members of minorities.

Social change is a phenomenon that often makes people insecure, even if it is not easy to determine how insecure our world has become. While states and governments are retooling to deal with “contingency politics,” meaning politics that take into account the unexpected, the accidental, and the unforeseen,⁵ it is becoming common knowledge that principles are contested and identities are more complex than portrayed in the literature. Conflicting values have led scholars to argue for “incommensurability,” that mutual comprehension is difficult and at times particularist commitments are mutually exclusive.⁶ Illiberal cultural practices thus make transcultural justice problematic, and divergent personal judgements create normative dilemmas because dissenting voices remain suppressed by a hegemonic dialogue. Thus social change often has greater influence on minorities than on the members of the majority, especially if members of minorities do not have the social and human capital to build capabilities that help avert negative influence. Moreover, it is also increasingly accepted that the ontological diversity of human nature means that identity will always meet difference,⁷ that culture should not be essentialized⁸ and that “groupism”⁹ is one of the most controversial aspects of late modern life and politics. These demands for understanding the facts of late modernity, or the idea that the present time is interpreted in light of historical reinterpretation and the confluence of cultural, social and political currents, according to some scholars, require reflexive thinking and reflexive action. There are, therefore, two variables at least in the study of social change that influence the understanding of minorities’ ability to adapt; these are the external forces that bring on the changes and the reflexive actions that meet these changes.

4 U. Beck, *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity* (Sage, 1992).

5 For issues of contingency, see R. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989).

6 J. Grey, *Endgames. Questions in Late Modern Political Thought* (Polity, 1997).

7 See William E. Connolly, *Identity\Difference. Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*, expanded edn, (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2002[1991]).

8 A. Phillips, *Multiculturalism without Culture* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

9 R. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Harvard University Press, 2004), 3–4.

External forces refer to phenomena that take place outside society and which have the ability to influence society. In this paper, the force in question is globalization in its several forms. Reflexivity in terms of human action is a social theory concept based on the idea of individual autonomy. In this paper, the individual autonomy of cultural minorities is examined in terms of the outcome that their reflexive action may have on institutions coping with social change. The paper begins with a brief discussion of definitions of the structure of external forces (globalization) and the reflexive actors (cultural minorities), followed by a short section about academic approaches. The main part of the paper will discuss three discourses relevant to understanding the reflexive nature of the actions of one sub-category of cultural minorities, Europe's "traditional minorities." The central question is whether cultural minority reflexivity can be put to work in the social change processes caused by global external forces. The Conclusions will offer a few thoughts on this and argue that a new set of Terms of Reference is needed for studying minorities.

Variables: External Forces

Being a composite and very complex force, it might be instructive to break down globalization into the several forces that are relevant to the present topic. First, in the European political science debate on cultural minority existence, globalization may be equated with Europeanization. This is not an attempt to blur the line between Europeanization and globalization, but globalization is a compounded concept. By Europeanization is usually meant that the moral, political and economic power of the developed part of the European Continent influence the remainder – and less developed – part of the Continent in terms of values and norms.¹⁰ There is thus an Orientalism present in the forces of

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- 10 For theories on Europeanization, see R. Ladrech, "Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France," 32:1 in *Journal of Common Market Studies* (1994), 69–88; T. Börzel, "Towards Convergence in Europe? Institutional Adaptation to Europeanization in Germany and Spain," 39:4 in *Journal of Common Market Studies* (1999), 573–596; T. Risse, M.G. Cowles, and J. Caporaso, "Europeanization and Domestic Change: Introduction," in M.G. Cowles, J. Caporaso, J. and T. Risse (eds.), *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 2001), 1–20; A. Héritier et al., *Differential Europe. The European Union Impact on national Policymaking* (Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 2001); C. Radaelli, "The Europeanization of Public Policy," in K. Featherstone and C. Radaelli (eds.), *The Politics of Europeanization* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003), pp. 27–56; I. Manners, "The normative ethics of the European Union," 84:1 *International Affairs* (2008), 45–46. See also Manners, "Normative

Europeanization. Moreover, it is more than mere EU integration. Globalization as expressed through Europeanization is more prominent in the cultural minority debate because it has more direct influence on the lives of members of cultural minorities, both in terms of legal protection and cultural development. While minority issues are still considered a matter for national governments, institutions at the supra-national level often set the stage for how governments should address minority issues. This is at least the case for non-discrimination of certain minorities of various backgrounds, including cultural groups, which is now dictated by two EU Directives as well as the Union's new strategy on Roma integration. And in the case of the cultural rights of national minorities, several inter-governmental treaties impose on governments to protect these, such as the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). Thus, in Europe cultural development, or the preservation and promotion of minority cultures, in relation to international power structures is seen mainly through the European lens. Yet, when it comes to issues of financing minority cultures in the time of economic crises, the global economic situation is often blamed. Therefore, any analysis of cultural minority mobilization in Europe must engage with both the forces of Europeanization and of globalization.

Secondly, globalization as a concept shares some of the forces assigned to Europeanization, including the Orientalist view of transfer of ideas and ideals from the developed to the developing world. Where Europeanization has by and large been linked to development through democratization, globalization is usually seen in a much more expedient light.¹¹ Globalization is linked to the necessity of financial and economic transnational exchange, and for this reason it makes more sense to speak of global politics rather than globalization. However, there is limited empirical data showing the direct cause and effect of the process of globalization. Nevertheless, cultural exchange is often seen as an outcome of this economic exchange rather than the opposite. As discussed in the Introduction, the negative side of globalization in relation to cultural minorities has had an impact in the public space; xenophobia, Islamophobia and general hostility towards foreigners have become the order of the day in many European societies. With regard to Europe, it is questionable, however, whether this is as a result of increased economic exchange across borders, i.e. globalization, or whether it is a result of the growing divide between North and South.

Power Europe: a Contradiction in Terms?," in 40:2 *Journal of Common Market Studies* (2002), 235–258.

11 D. Held, A. McGrew, D. Goldblatt and J. Perraton, *Global Transformations* (Polity, 1999).

Thirdly, the North–south divide refers to the gap in development between countries of the North, such as Western Europe and the United States of America as well as Canada and Japan, and the South, representing countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. The debate on the development gap was first started by a commission of statesmen lead by the German Chancellor Willy Brandt. In a 1980 report, the commission highlighted the failure of the world economic system to provide social and economic equality for humanity. Arguing that the economic trends needed to be reversed, and that solutions and strategies needed to be urgently implemented, the Commission warned that growing income disparity of the Northern and Southern Hemispheres would lead to financial and economic instability as well as the growing problem of poverty. They further argued that there is a mutual interest for developed and developing countries to deal with the burning issues in order for humanity to survive the “immense risks threatening mankind.”¹² They believed that co-operation was the tool to create change and facilitate world-wide growth and development. To enforce one state model of development onto another was deemed unnecessary. The report made recommendations in a number of areas of concern, including poverty, health, housing, equality, migration, the environment, disarmament, trade and energy. Above all the report was an appeal to all world leaders and people from every strata of life to participate in the shaping of a common future for the world.

In the three decades after 1980, much has been done to close the gap between North and South. International organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as well as key United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Development Program, have worked with both sides of the development gap to improve the situation. But results have been mixed. The inability to overcome problems has created a flow of migrants from the South to the North. Economic inequality but also violent conflicts in both Africa and Asia have pushed destitute groups towards the European Continent. The insecurity and unwillingness of European countries to welcome the destitute has created a new environment of antagonism in the public sphere. And unlike the minority rights regime adopted by European governments for members of minorities holding citizenship, there does not exist a comprehensive minority protection scheme for the so-called third country nationals. At best, governments have been willing to adopt certain anti-discrimination measures but this does not require governments to be pro-active in order to overcome discrimination.

12 *The Brandt Report* (MIT Press, 1980).

Definitions: The Reflexive Actors

As noted, reflexivity is a late modernity¹³ view of individual autonomy. It denotes a characteristic that is required of human beings living in the complex world of late modern society. In particular the confluence of the cultural, the social and the political in the changing social sphere contributes to the need for enhanced reflexivity. Reflexive action can thus be both negative and positive. According to experts, a low rate of reflexivity results in an outer-direction of the individual's identity, whereas a high rate of reflexivity results in independent action forming pro-actively and inner-directed autonomous identity.¹⁴ More technically, reflexivity cancels out the cause-and-effect view of human action by arguing that the bidirectional effect of reflexivity renders cause and effect capable of changing roles. This has been seen as negative by some anthropologists whereas culturalists consider it a positive process.¹⁵

One of the main challenges of understanding cultural minorities in Europe – whether the reference is to migrants, immigrants or long-time residents – is the multi-faceted nature of minority identity. The term, cultural minorities or cultural groups, is actually quite broad and thus quite vague because arguably all people are carriers of cultural characteristics whether they belong to a minority or the majority. In Europe, the term refers to a number of identity minorities, and in international law it is divided into more specific definitions. International law thus operates with concepts based on specific characteristics and ascriptions, such as religion, ethnicity, race, language, national allegiance, sexual orientation, etc.¹⁶ For analytical purposes, one might make a distinction between “old” and “new” minorities. This is a controversial typology but nonetheless at times helpful. While “old” minorities refer to groups that have become minorities due to the European history of battles for sovereignty over territory, “new” minorities refers to those groups that have made conscious decisions to move to European countries. The latter category is technically called immigrants, while the former may technically be referred to as *autochthonous* or “traditional” minorities. In this paper, the discussion of reflexive action in relation to external forces is focused on traditional minorities, because their

13 For a discussion of late modernity, see G. Delanty, “Modernity” in *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1st edn, 2007).

14 A. Giddens, *The Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford University Press, 1991).

15 See P. Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Polity, 1993) and *The Rules of Art* (Polity, 1996).

16 See International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 27 or the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.

narratives have provided some empirical evidence of reflexive action, albeit very limited.

By traditional minorities is understood those minorities who live traditionally in a homeland territory from which they derive their identity as members of a certain nation, territory or language group. The homeland territory is usually situated in regions whose sovereign allegiance and belonging have been contested among competing sovereign states. Often the territory has been contested through bellicose means thus rendering the minorities of the region objects of wars and eventually of settlements. At times the settlements have resulted in transfer of sovereignty to new rulers, thus incurring a need for minorities to change allegiance to the new rulers or flee the territory. In Europe, traditional minorities include, but are not excluded to, national minorities, such as the Germans in Belgium, Denmark or Poland, the Austrians in Northern Italy or the Catalans in Spain. Included are also ethnic minorities, such as the Sinti and Roma or the Russian speakers in the Baltic states. Language minorities, such as the Bretons, the Welsh or the Frisians are also considered traditional minorities. And finally, the indigenous groups of Northern Scandinavia are technically speaking traditional minorities, although some indigenous groups contest the label minority.

Throughout European history, traditional minorities have provided shifting narratives which have been interjected into the European political discourses. Although history is a major factor in the identity of traditional minorities, some of the observations made in this paper are also relevant for other cultural minorities, such as immigrants, because the focus is on minority actors and actions in terms of global politics. Thus, the broader aim is to begin a new research framework that examines whether reflexive actions by minorities are influencing contemporary discourses seeking to cope with institutional adaptation to social change induced by external forces.

Approaches: Narratives and Discourses

There are several ways of studying reflexive action of minorities, both quantitative and qualitative. Either way, the research results will feed into the overall picture of the existence of minorities. One might call this the “narratives” of minorities. Specifically, when wishing to study reflexive human existence, it is important to look at members of minorities as subjects, rather than objects. Studying objects provides only one side of human nature; the inactive existence. Studying humans as subjects, on the other hand, allows for analysing active existence. It is the active nature of the narratives that provide a picture

of reflexive action. Moreover, narratives of minorities do not exist in a vacuum but are situated in larger contexts which one might call discourses. Before proceeding, it might be helpful to pause to define briefly “narrative” and “discourse.”

Narrative is a word borrowed from the science of history or historiography. Essentially it is the method of storytelling which organizes chronologically a single coherent story. Usually it is descriptive rather than analytical; it is concerned with people not abstract circumstances; and it deals with the particular and specific rather than the collective and statistical. Basically, one could argue that we are all storytellers. Historiographers would like to think that it is a tool exclusively to their discipline which has been cultivated by historians of eminence, such as Thucydides, Gibbon and Macaulay. This method gave way in the 20th Century to a hegemonic force of “new historians” who favoured a method of quantitative detail and cause-and-effect analysis. The science of history thus became influenced by a methodology informed by the natural sciences, i.e. positivism. This changed in the 1960s and 1970s when new historians began returning to the method of storytelling because they wanted to discover “what was going on inside people’s heads in the past, and what it was like to live in the past, questions which inevitably lead back to the use of narrative.”¹⁷ In short, historians of the narrative tradition rebelled against the reliance on positivistic methods based on quantitative and cause-and-effect analysis.

Similar sentiments were felt in other disciplines of academia, and in the social sciences narrative is used in a similar manner but perfected to include not only story telling but also the power of stories and the stories of power, of individuals and groups. Human geography for instance is about the way people live, and several sub-fields provide tools to understand cultural or political aspects of human geography. Post-structuralists operate with concepts such as genealogy and geography combining them as the narrative of any given phenomenon. Political sociology also provides good methodology for understanding narrative. It looks at how major social trends can affect the political process, as well as exploring how various social forces work together to change political policies. Essentially, the change towards narrative in historiography coincided with the constructivist revolution in the social sciences.

In relation to traditional minorities and the narratives which they represent, the constructivist approach of human geography and political sociology is helpful in that it provides the tools to account for the historical events of traditional

17 L. Stone, “The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History,” 85 in *Past and Present* (1979), 3–24 at p. 13.

minorities as actors constructing their communities and community relations. Narratives of traditional minorities are, therefore, the stories of the existence of minorities as groups, actors and subjects of larger forces. These forces may be likened to discourses which as an analytical tool can provide for an understanding of how power influences minority narratives.

A discourse is not a debate or a discussion. It is not a chain-of-texts or articulations of opinions. It is a space where forces of power vie for hegemonic positions in the formation of a polity that aims to govern certain aspects of human life. This is of course crudely put. More correctly, experts would state that a discourse is neither an organizing centre nor is it a structure. A discourse does not promote meaning; it informs social interaction. It does not prescribe cognitive action; it influences it.¹⁸ The identity of a discourse is constructed through political struggles and is also transformed through political struggles. In fact, discourse identities compete for hegemonic position through political struggles. Moreover, a discourse does not presuppose order; it is defined by the presence of conflict or divergent opinions. Thus, the hegemonic identity or position of a discourse changes when it is confronted with conflicts or divergent views it cannot bring under control. It follows that discourses are relational, and their identities are formed through differentiation from other discourses. In a way, discourse identities compete for space on the political horizon by articulating concrete positions within a realm of non-fixed activity. Hence, discourses and their identities become fixed through the relationship with other discourses which together constitute a totality called a discursive formation.

Examples of discursive formations where traditional minorities have been seen as objects are the older discourses of the 19th and 20th centuries. The historical development of traditional minority narratives in 19th and 20th Century Europe follows in many ways the war-and-peace history of Europe, or in modern political science terms, security and justice. From the Peace of Augsburg (1555) to the Dayton Peace Agreement (2005), the securitization of minorities has been steady. Today, this security discourse is exemplified in the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). After the adoption of the United Nations' (UN) Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948) a justice discourse developed which sought to protect members of traditional minorities as individual human rights holders. The hegemonic agent of this discourse is the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for

18 J. Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse. Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek* (Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1999).

the Protection of National Minorities (1995) and the monitoring system thereto attached. In these discourses, the focus on traditional minorities has shifted from religious minorities to national or linguistic minorities. Throughout, minorities have been a hot political agenda item often situated at the top of the agenda for military and inter-state war settlements. Consequently, the existence of minorities was seen as threatening European security and peace. The events in the Balkans at the end of the 20th Century helped cement this view. As traditional minorities were subjected to the on-going power struggles of the day, the focus on security and later on justice was a natural but not necessarily a comprehensive approach.

Unlike the security and justice discourses of the previous centuries, 21st Century discourses involve minority narratives that describe reflexive action. This is not to argue that minorities have not been active in the security discourse; ethnic conflicts have involved minorities but it is questionable whether this has been on the basis of reflexive, autonomous action. A major argument of this paper is, therefore, that the new discourses show minorities from a different perspective. This requires an analytical approach which examines minorities as subjects.¹⁹ In the next Section, three such discourses and their incorporation of minority narratives are discussed.

New European Discourses

All European discourses are in the nature of things built around the issues that concern Europe's future. This is also the case of the new discourses. 21st Century discourses aim at building institutions that can cope with social and political changes induced by global forces. There are three contemporary discourses that incorporate articulations of reflexive minority action narratives. These are the cohesion discourse and the European citizenship discourse as well as one global discourse, the environmental discourse. The first two are power formations that seek to cement full integration through democratization of the European Continent, and the third is a direct response to the global threat of environmental degradation. With regard to the two European discourses, the main structure is of course the EU but other structures, such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE also form part of the frame.

19 See T.H. Malloy, "National Minorities in the 21st Century Europe: new discourses, new narratives?" in *ECMI Issue Brief*, No. 24 (ECMI, 2010).

The Cohesion Discourse

The cohesion discourse in Europe forms around the EU's territorial cohesion through regional policies that aim to bring EU member states closer together economically and socially. Solidarity between member states is an important articulation of this discourse. In addition to territorial cohesion, social cohesion and social unity are other specific articulations of this discourse. Thus, the cohesion discourse involves a complex matrix of institutions, policies and agendas, including the EU's Agenda 2020 and the Regional Policy as well as the Schengen Agreement and other inter-governmental agreements, such as the principle of subsidiarity of the Maastricht Treaty (1991). These agendas and policies open up for new spaces for politics that allow for actor input in new ways.

One new political sociology approach to re-examining Europeanization proposes a new framework for studying "EU political capacity" as both a social construction and a resource for regional actors in developing their strategies of engagement.²⁰ Arguing that since existing institutional dimensions have been extensively studied and with mixed results through the lens of multi-level governance, this approach goes beyond deterministic approaches and finds new ways of understanding the relationship between European integration and regional governance. In particular, the focus is on processes of change as exemplified in regional *ex post* and *ex ante* strategies of EU engagement based on interactions between formal and informal polity-making, as well as identity construction and ideologies about EU polity-building. In particular, emphasis is upon four political processes of change, (1) the politicisation of regional territory, (2) the framing and reframing of ideologies of EU polity-building, (3) the forging and mobilisation of intra-regional networks and (4) intra-state politics.

The first, the analysis of the politicisation of regional territory involves studying regional actors and the way in which they use the notion of the region's territory in their strategies. Of importance is to describe territorial ideologies as well as linkages to EU integration while also identifying other types of European inter-dependence. Describing both actors and visions provides the researcher with opportunities to identify new dynamics of both *ex post* and *ex ante* strategies for regional EU integration and ultimately for assessing regional EU capacity.

The second set of processes of the framework relates to the existence and application of ideologies of EU polity-building in regional governance.

20 C. Carter and R. Pasquier, "Introduction: Studying Regions as 'Spaces for Politics': Re-thinking Territory and Strategic Action," 20:3 in *Regional and Federal Studies* (2010), 281–294.

By ideology is meant that regional actors may hold “a certain vision of the integration project, albeit a latent (and contested) one” and consequently projected Europeanization might be facilitated by an imagined understanding of the effects of European integration.²¹ The question is whether regional actors have such a vision about the common good of EU integration or whether they see it as a problem. The direction that regional actors take in this regard exposes the extent to which regional strategies are a result of *ex post* or *ex ante* processes with *ex ante* processes requiring the existence of an ideological drive.

The third, the process of mediation, in which actors develop a vision for future development strategies may also explain how policy makers adapt to social and economic changes. Here, the question is whether actors seek greater empowerment in the overall EU integration process, as distinct from within specific policy areas. Variables include networks and partnerships between local governments, socio-economic actors as well as interest and industry organizations in various policy fields. Questions to answer are whether these linkages merely problematize regional development and/or seek to legitimize their own position through references to territory.

The fourth set of processes is intra-state territorial politics. This includes inter-governmental arenas as well as the set of rules and policy procedures which shape inter-actions between regions and central governments. Relevant is how these actors may influence EU processes within national states in terms of formal and informal co-operation, and how power is assigned not only through delegation of competences but through patterns of regulation. Common to these processes is that cultural exchanges facilitate the outcomes. One might argue that a phenomenon of inter-cultural power exchanges take effect.

Recent research from the border region between Denmark and Germany has shown that traditional minority narratives speak to this phenomenon of inter-cultural power exchanges. This is the story of the national minorities contributing to building anew the “old” Danish–German border region and transforming it into a European “cross-border regional space for politics.”²² Within the framework of EU integration, regional development became a priority for actors on both sides of the border. This resulted in a concerted actor effort to define a new cross-border regional profile that could promote the region as both “modern” and “European.” In particular, the transformation of the border itself from a security border to a Schengen border provided architects

21 Carter and Pasquier, 281–294.

22 T.H. Malloy, “Creating New Spaces for Politics? The Role of National Minorities in Building Capacities of Cross-Border Regions,” 20:3 *Regional and Federal Studies* (2010), 335–351.

with new resources to seek to institutionalize this identity. At the same time, new actors became involved in cross-border interactions. Importantly, these included national minorities who sought to give cultural impetus to local politics. Drawing on unique social capital, including natural bridge-building with kin-state cultures, as well as a collective identity that was increasingly being framed as “European,” national minorities created a specific cultural role for themselves in a space where regional politics and minority politics were viewed as sharing common goals. In particular, this included the goal to bring about prosperity through the revival of a cross-border regional identity, based on joint histories and inter-culturalism. Although today this is still largely an elite phenomenon that may take some time to reach into mainstream society, a new regional identity based on a hybridity of culture and territory appears to be in the making. The Danish–German border region may, therefore, be a unique example of the new dynamics of Europeanization and reflexive minority action.

The Citizenship Discourse

The European citizenship discourse has formed over the last couple of decades and often takes its clues from the public debate on EU constitutionalism and the so-called “democratic deficit.” The Maastricht Treaty is seen as the watershed that began the citizenship discourse. It aimed to address the problem of democratic deficit which put the EU on the path towards a constitution. Thus, the EU’s approach is civil society oriented and aims to overcome the gap between the EU and its citizens. It focuses heavily on activating citizens to become involved. With the (reformed) Lisbon Treaty, the EU provided citizens with the option to petition the European Commission through the so-called European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI), a tool by which one million citizens can sign a recommendation or request to the Commission on specific issues. The EU has also designated 2013 as the Year of the European Citizen promoting hundreds of projects seeking to activate citizens to participate. It is, therefore, not a normative discussion of citizenship rights and the legal ramifications for those who are not included in the EU polity because of being excluded from holding citizenship in one of the EU member states. Rather, it is a discourse articulating ideas of reflexive action. Two new approaches to studying citizenship speak to this European discourse.

The first, the notion of “acts of citizenship” is a theory, which will help assess what types of actions transform social institutions and people.²³ The theory

23 E.F. Isin, “Theorizing Acts of Citizenship” in Isin and Nielsen (eds.), *Acts of Citizenship* (London: Zed Books, 2008).

offers conceptual tools to ascertain how citizens and non-citizens can enact themselves as citizens, meaning how do they bond and become activists in various areas of public life. Three principles define the approach. Firstly, to investigate acts of citizenship is to interpret them through their grounds and consequences, which includes subjects becoming activist citizens through scenes created. Secondly, acts of citizenship must be recognized as acts that produce actors who become answerable to justice against injustice. And thirdly, acts of citizenships do not need to be founded in law or enacted in the name of law. In short, acts of citizenship are those acts that transform forms and modes of being “political” by bringing into being new actors as activist citizens through creating new sites and scales of struggle.

The second approach relevant for traditional minority citizenship research looks for new spaces for citizenship in terms of the new transnational demands that individuals’ identities require.²⁴ This refers to the overlap of memberships that many individuals now experience as a result of higher mobility and open borders. This is a pluralist notion that connects the global and the local, or the international and the national. Thus, it overcomes one-dimensional and binary thinking through the pluralist approach to time and space. It allows for a multi-dimensional view of personal identity and loyalty. In practice it requires the inter-action between national policies so it is not a post-national citizenship. With regard to minorities, whether traditional or immigrants, this approach speaks to the transcultural nature of identities. In so doing, it argues for new dimensions of democracy, or even reconceptualization of democratic theory.

Traditional minority narratives are stocked with stories of civil society actions. In fact, traditional minorities are likely to accumulate more social and human capital than the average citizen due to the nature of minority actions.²⁵ In order to preserve their culture and language, minorities are often forced to be more involved in their own society than the average member of the majority. Members of minorities often volunteer in their community. Reflexive minority capital and participation are thus the key words in the new narratives that traditional minorities represent in terms of citizenship.

24 J. Blatter and A. Schlenker, “Between nationalism and globalism: Spaces and forms of democratic citizenship in and for a post-Westphalian world,” in *Working Paper* No. 6 (Institute of Political Science, University of Lucerne, 2013).

25 T.H. Malloy et al., “Competence Analysis: National Minorities as a *Standortfaktor* in the German-Danish Border Region” (EURAC Research, 2007). <www.landtag.ltsh.de/export/sites/landtagsh/parlament/minderheitenpolitik/download/kompetenzanalyse_en.pdf>, visited on 13 August 2013.

Taking again the example of the narratives of the three national minorities in the Danish-German border region, the national minorities have exhibited reflexive citizenship skills, in particular in terms of drawing on their cultural as well as social and human capital when participating in local politics.²⁶ The human and social capital of the national minorities in the Danish-German border region is evidenced in the large self-administration of institutions, such as educational and social care facilities.²⁷ The self-administration of such institutions alleviates the majority society from significant burdens in terms of both finances and structures, because the self-administration of those institutions would otherwise require public administration that was funded by the national government. Moreover, human capital is evidenced at the level of political participation both through the political parties and the corporate institutions. Their political participatory competence is a sign that they possess the human reflexivity needed in a democratic society that wishes to encourage not only representation but also participation.

A strong example of reflexive action at the European level is an initiative started in 2011 by the umbrella organization of national minorities in Europe, the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN). The initiative of an ECI aims to collect one million signatures in order to petition the European Commission. Essentially, the ECI allows one million EU citizens to participate directly in the development of EU policies, by calling on the European Commission to make a legislative proposal. The aim is to reinforce citizenship of the EU and to strengthen the democratic functioning. An ECI invites the European Commission to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties. Requests can only ask the Commission to act within its legal powers. Signatures must be collected within a 12-month period and from a minimum of seven countries. The minority ECI was submitted to the Commission and opened for signatures on 15 July 2013.²⁸ It requests the Commission to work for a package of minority protection measures that will benefit all the European minorities as well as regional and minority languages. The package should include measures for both large and concentrated minority communities as well as small language communities in Europe.²⁹ The package has been named the Minority SafePack Initiative.

26 Malloy, *supra* note 23. See also Malloy et al., *supra*.

27 Malloy et al., *supra* note 26.

28 FUEN, 'Pushed the Button' press release 16 July 2013. <www.fuen.org/news/press-release-archive/>, visited 12 August 2013.

29 See also <www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3BehZKvA7U>, visited on 12 August 2013.

The Environmental Discourse

The environmental discourse actually started at the global level before it became embedded in European politics. At the global level, it became articulated in a discourse of global disaster through the so-called Rio Process which started in 1972. In the EU it is still a non-directional discourse where no member state or main actor is able to take the lead. A strategy has been devised in 2001, and the idea of Sustainable Development is now the mantra and a full EU strategy. The notion of sustainable development of the environment has been a global concern since the Brundtland Commission's report (1987). Familiar minority narratives that speak to the environmental discourse are in fact not European. To the Zapatistas in Mexico, the destruction of the jungle for oil extraction and large-scale logging were some of the core issues that motivated their freedom movement.³⁰ Native Americans in other parts of the Western hemisphere are known for a moral concern for the Earth that provides for more natural management of the environment than any environmental agency could muster.³¹ However, work is done in Europe to turn Europeans into Green citizens and Green virtues are fostered to make Europeans protect the Earth for future generations. To traditional minorities who live in homelands from which they derive their identities, the environment is particularly important. This means that the protection of the environment is often intrinsically linked to the protection of the minority culture because the survival of the cultural identity is dependent on the survival of the homeland, i.e. the region's environment.

The notion that identity formation is linked to the territory of a homeland is explored in political philosophy.³² Territory on this view both sustains one's identity and excludes other identities. Territory derives from the Latin *terrere*, meaning to frighten, to terrorize, to exclude, and *territorium* is a place from which people are warned. Thus, to occupy territory is to receive sustenance and exercise violence, and to be territorialized is to be occupied by a particular identity. Identities are thus constructed through territorialisation, and the health and the wealth of territory becomes an important part of the individual's self-understanding. Protecting the territory which provides this nurture becomes essential. In the case of traditional minorities this is often referred to

30 M. Becker, "Rhizomatic Resistance: the Zapatistas and the Earth Liberation Front," 2:2 in *Green Theory and Praxis: A Journal of Ecological Politics* (2006), 22–63.

31 N.B. Stransky, "The Disaster of Coercive Institutional Socialization: Alaska Natives and Environmental Emergency Planning," 2:1 *Green Theory and Praxis: A Journal of Ecological Politics* (2006), 2–30.

32 See W.E. Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralization* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1996), xxii.

as the homeland. The narratives of traditional minorities in Western Europe show increasing interest in protecting the homeland territory. Participation in the environmental sector, therefore, becomes a natural next step in the active and reflexive strategy for cultural survival.

A green strategy for minority homelands is increasingly employed.³³ For instance, German minority farmers in Denmark have taken the lead in bringing Danish agriculture into the organic realm as well as in creating bio-energy. In Germany, an environmental wing of the Danish minority has created a grass-root organization following the “think globally, act locally” mantra of the new environmental movements. The North Frisian minority is directly involved in the protection of the islands off the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein. They participate in a Euro-region, the Wadden Sea Region, which consists of a number of the islands off the west coast of Northwest Europe. The aim of this Euro-region is the preservation of the biodiversity in the wading waters off the coast. Indeed, in Northern Italy, the German-speaking minority living in the Province of Bolzano in South Tyrol has installed green infrastructure on the skiing slopes. In fact, a member of the Green party in South Tyrol has proposed an entirely different type of minority, not defined by ethnicity or allegiance to a nation but by the biosphere that it inhabits, the Alps. The Saami population of northern Scandinavia and northern Russia have also become active in environmental protection precisely because the lands from which they traditionally derive their living and identity have increasingly been expropriated by governments for activities likely to destroy the environment. In other words, the narratives of indigenous people and traditional minorities are defined by reflexivity about environmental protection.

Conclusions: New Terms of Reference

There seems no doubt that social change is happening and most likely due to external forces, such as globalization. This paper has discussed the reflexive actions of cultural minorities in the effort to eke out strategies for coping with the social changes incurred by external forces. This process has been described in terms of the reflexive actions of traditional minority narratives influencing European discourses on cohesion, citizenship and the environment. It has been demonstrated that traditional minorities seek new spaces for politics in an effort to influence bottom-up democratization of the European Continent

33 See T.H. Malloy, “Minorities and Green Political Thought: Normative Challenges to an Ideal Ethics?,” in *ECMI Working Paper*, No. 49 (ECMI, 2011).

through the politicization of regional territory, through the reframing of ideologies, by mobilizing intra-regional networks and intra-state politics. It has been maintained that the bottom-up behaviour is fuelled by reflexive citizenship acts seeking to transform institutions by transnational knowledge and allegiances. And it has been shown that traditional minorities have become reflexive about the environment; in particular, the environment of the territory from which they derive their self-identification. These processes of cultural minorities' reflexive action are contributing to the new management modes required in a world of contingency politics aimed at protecting social institutions during periods of external pressure. Hence, human reflexivity is at work in the dialectics between cultural minorities and majority institutions facing external forces causing social change.

It is now possible to argue that a new set of Terms of Reference is needed for the study of cultural minorities and globalization. What would these new Terms of Reference look like? What would be required for studying these phenomena? A broad label for what would be required is critical thinking and theorizing. More specifically, critical theory must be explanatory, practical, and normative at the same time; it must explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify the actors to change it, and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation. It must focus on human beings as producers of their own historical form of life. Searching for reflexive action is thus a good beginning. But also critiquing mediocre theories of social transformation, including sweeping statements about globalization is necessary. I have suggested that the new narratives of cultural minorities are a good place to begin. With regard to traditional minorities this includes searching for new narratives of political action and inter-cultural power, of acts of citizenship and transnational minority capital as well as ecological identities of territory. And by placing these narratives in contact with the meta-discourses of social and political changes it seems more likely that new behaviour is detected, and perhaps new theories of cultural minority power are unpacked.

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