REBORDERING THE PERSPECTIVE ON THE EU: A VIEW FROM THE SLOVENIAN PERIPHERY

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Abstract

This paper investigates the prospect of the revival of the European integration project in light of current experiences of global financial crisis. It is argued that the crisis has left an uneven mark on the European community of member state publics, a mark which has introduced a new division between the allegedly diligent North and lazy South. Moreover, the experience of public humiliation of the peripheral states in crisis, i.e., Greek, Cyprus, Spain, Slovenia, perceived as coming from the centres of the EU and the North, has made it difficult to continue with the construction of the postnational constitution, as suggested by scholars of the EU. Rather, EU public is witness to the rise of the condition of internal postcoloniality whereby the periphery has become the resource (in economic, financial and cultural-moral sense) for the reproduction of the power regimes of the centre. Therefore, in this paper, it is claimed that leading European intellectuals who are concerned with the future of the EU, and propose scenarios of bottom-up reconstitution, should consider their own location and build an intellectual transversal which will include critical voices with peripheral experience of second-class citizenship.

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This paper addresses the question of the future of the EU in relation to the formation of the European public sphere. The question is approached from the perspective of the role of intellectuals in and from small nations, in particular the member states that are on the periphery of both intellectual governance and decision-making as regards EU integration processes. It is argued that the current European project needs a fresh perspective and that this perspective can yield public trust only insofar as it is based on principles of an inclusive, polycentric and pluralistic model of negotiation of the European future. This means a profound rearrangement of the relationship between the centre and the margins and a new critical dialogue between intellectuals of the "core" (i.e. France, Germany, the UK) and the peripheral nations.

The argument is derived from critical observation of the state of current European integration in response to the global financial crisis and an emerging condition that I will call European *internal postcoloniality*. This condition, I will show, is an emerging "structure of feeling" among the publics on the southern borders of the EU, whose experience of the global crisis has been associated with a deep trauma of humiliation (Smith 2013). Humiliation has included both a sense of unjust and unfair division of the burden of austerity measures between the financial elites and the ordinary people and of the degradative attitude of the European "centres" of power towards the most unfortunate member states. Dealing with this trauma will be an essential part of progressive post-crisis development and a hopeful scenario of resuming the process of EU integration towards a European society, once national financial economies have been at least minimally consolidated.

To be able to move beyond this collective sense of injustice on the periphery, the EU needs publicly to acknowledge the state of crisis of the European project and to announce its commitment to managing the post-crisis condition. I argue that this process should include both reconciliation and reconstruction, which are integral to the successful re-articulation of the idea of building a common European public sphere. Two elements can be identified as most critical. First, among the publics of the peripheral nations of the last enlargement, such as Slovenia, there is a strong sense that the European project has been defined, governed and controlled from the centre of Europe. Western European states, in particular France and Germany (Habermas 2012; Beck 2013; Smith 2013) are seen as dictating the pace and the rules of integration, and the emerging postwar European landscape has been increasingly perceived to be the outcome of conditions imposed by hegemonic forces of the centre. In part, this is related to the pre-EU-membership memories of the actual or perceived servility of national elites to the EU, as, for instance, in accepting the dictates of "EU conditionality" (Ette and Faist 2007).

Second, and related, the global financial crisis has revealed that the "reward" for going through this early "integration through humiliation" stage, namely the building of a transnational EU society with a common European public sphere based on shared loyalty and mutual solidarity, has been nothing but a political myth. At the time of writing, it has become clear that the idea of one European society, based on the social contract as defined by the Maastricht Treaty (with the list of core European values) is a phantom construct implanted in the national publics of the EU member states, a wishful projection with no special responsibilities attached to it. The discourse of austerity, dictated from the financial centres (IMF, European Central Bank, Deutsche Bundesbank), made this clear to the humiliated

on the peripheries, while adding to this the image of a new geographic anatomy of inequality, an image providing scant comfort. The post-Cold-war ideology that posited the uneven histories of relations between the West and the East as the major obstacle to a fully integrated European society has given way to a new division taking the form of a conflict between the allegedly diligent Protestant North and the relaxed and lazy South.

The current attempt at redrawing a map of inequalities, associated with discourses of morality and guilt, calls for a critical intervention by intellectuals. Intellectuals in leading "core" member states have already reacted to the emerging hegemonic map of a post-crisis EU with a strong critique of the current one. However, the intellectual engagement needs to undergo a transformation, too. As Kuipers has self-critically argued recently, many European academics fail to reflect upon the "hegemonic system of which we are part" (Kuipers 2014, 78). However, whereas she refers to a "cloak of universality" of the knowledge produced by European scholars, which often lacks consideration of relevance for transnational publics (e.g. "from where we are writing," "for whom are we writing"), the notion of "European academics" is, in my view, equally imbued with neo-colonial power-knowledge, which hegemonises *within* the EU (or Europe). European academia continues to be seen in the privileged social terms of class, race and gender, as well as geographic locations in the West. Theoretical contributions intended to have a real impact on social experiences and the "practical knowledge" of EU citizens can only be intellectually and publicly effective if the core intellectual sphere profoundly opens up towards researchers and the publics on the periphery of the EU. This means that, to be able to resolve the challenge of the future of the EU, political and intellectual reconstruction of the EU will have to begin by dissipating the trauma caused, in part, by the legacies of internal postcoloniality in the realm of the production of public knowledge and the EU public. Consequently, perhaps for the first time, the future of the EU will indeed be in the hands of its postnational public.

The Idea of the EU Constitution: A Misguided Decade

In his famous article "Why Europe needs a constitution," Jürgen Habermas was among the first to pave the way to thinking of the EU as a postnational democratic political project. In his essay, as well as in later works (Habermas 2001b, 2009, 2011, 2012), Habermas notes that the idea of egalitarian universalism, which has been an integral part of the national project and ethno-national solidarity, is being challenged by individualism and multiculturalism. Solidarity can no longer be rooted in the idea of a shared past, since the European people are heirs to many pasts, and, as in the case of European citizens from former European colonies, also to histories of mutual collisions. Moreover, globalisation has forced nation states to open up to multiple identities and new forms of cultural life (Habermas 2001a, 84). Therefore, the dominant cultural communities, which in the past were also the sole agents of developing a shared political culture, now need to let go of this historically made connection and begin to insert solidarity into a more abstract frame. This would also be the basis for the new postnational constellation of the EU, whereby we, in Habermas's words, the heirs of "late barbarian nationalism," are yet again faced with a task similar to that of the early nationalists – to create solidarity among strangers (Habermas 2001a, 103).

Instead of building on a humanist idea of solidarity, however, engineers of the European project have taken a different path. The Maastricht Treaty speaks directly of shared "great values in common," the "core values" and the "shared legacy of classical civilisation" (Shore 2006, 13). The intent, as Shore writes, was to "help forge a collective European consciousness and identity," as well as to "reconfigure the public imagination by Europeanising some of the fundamental categories of thought" (ibid., 15). However, the shared values soon become re-narrated into a shared European identity, which becomes constructed less as a civic-political entity and more as a cultural tie among the diverse national heritages of the member states (Vidmar Horvat 2012). Instead of working towards laying the ground for democratic development by invoking humanist philosophical traditions of, for example, Kantian global justice or Gadamer's broadening of horizons, we are, at the beginning of the 21st century, witness to the rebirth of a 19th-century myth-producing machine that envisions Europe as a "mosaic of cultures" engraved with shared "cultural roots" and a common heritage (Pieterse 1991, Shore 2006).

It could be argued, however, that the past decade's reversion to cultural identity as a common ground on which to build solidarity and identification among Europeans was a misguided effort. It may have been introduced with good intentions to overcome the democratic deficit, to compensate for the lack of political engagement by raising cultural consciousness (Vidmar Horvat 2012). The engineers of this "cultural turn" in the EU politics of identity may have also counted on a therapeutic effect. As Zygmunt Bauman has observed, "It has been the erosion of 'we-can-do-it' self-confidence that triggered a sudden explosion of acute interest in a 'new European identity,' and in 'redefining the role' of Europe in order to match the current planetary game – a game in which the rules and stakes have drastically changed and continue to change, albeit no longer as a result of European initiatives or under Europe's control, and with minimal, if any, influence by Europe itself" (Bauman 2012b, 3). However, the EU culturalist rhetoric has produced a wide communicative gap between values and practices, between ethics and politics. On the one hand, while fortifying the discourse of respect for others (including the cause of global justice), the EU has been selectively closing its external borders while silently creating internal "apartheid" (Balibar 2004). On the other hand, and most importantly for this argument, the opening towards Eastern Europe reconstituted the meaning of the EU "borderland" (ibid.). In the immediate period after the last two enlargements in 2004 and 2007, some saw the eastward enlargement of the EU as the entry phase into a new history wherein the periphery countries would become the defining spaces of the postnational European empire (Delanty 2007; for more on this, see also Vidmar Horvat, 2009). Today, it can be concluded that the periphery, both the "new" post-socialist (e.g. Slovenia) and the "old" (Spain, Greece, Cyprus), has indeed become a centre, but not in the sense of providing a new strong zone of EU internal development and outward expansion: the periphery has become a challenging borderland, announcing the potential rebirth as well as the collapse of the EU project.

Post-Westphalian Public?

The project of creating a "European public" seemed much more democratic. Again, it is legitimate to be suspicious about good intentions when the initiatives come from the political elites. As Splichal put it, at one point, it was unclear

"whether the EPS is quasi 'imposed' and 'essentialised' by the EU or the researchers involved in trying to investigate it" (Splichal, quoted in Krzyzanowski et al. 2009, 1). Moreover, as Koopmans and Erbe (2003) warned very early on, "there has been a tendency in literature to view the notion of a European public sphere in a narrow way, derived from an ideal-typical conception of the national public sphere." Thus, the authors continue, the probability of the development of transnational media or transnational collective action is usually seen as thwarted beforehand – primarily by linguistic barriers. This view "is deficient because it basically envisages Europeanisation as a replication, on a higher level of spatial aggregation, of the type of unified public sphere that we know – or think we know – from the nation-state contexts." The perspective is based on "an idea of the nation-state that presupposes a degree of linguistic and cultural homogeneity and political centralisation that cannot be found in many well-functioning democratic states" (Koopmans and Erbe 2003, 3).

Authors who seem to be more positive about the prospect of an emerging transnational European public employ an elitist perspective. Schlessinger, for instance, has argued that, "despite persistence of national interests and agenda, elements of a European civil society have begun to emerge, particularly within political and business elites" (Schlessinger, quoted in Downey and Koening 2006, 167). He finds proof for his claim in the rise of "an *Economist*-reading transnational European political and business elite that indicates how a European public sphere, or, more precisely, a complex sphere of connected national publics might develop" (ibid., 167). In his view, this potential should be further developed by the dissemination of a European news agenda and in a way that will allow national audiences to experience their citizenship as "transcending the level of the member nation-states." Similarly, Gerhards (2000, quoted ibid.) has proposed a two-way process that would involve, on the one hand, "an increased proportion of coverage of European themes and actors," and, on the other, "the evaluation of these themes and actors from a perspective that extends beyond the own country and its interests" (ibid.). The elitism (and nationalism) of this approach is evident if we ask the simple question: who are the national audiences (and the interests of their countries) and what are the "European themes?"

Habermas's model of "postnational constellation" seems to be more open when he considers how to turn national media into motors of Europeanisation. "A real progress would be if national media reported about key controversies in other member states, so that national public opinions would come close to the same set of questions, regardless of their origin" (Habermas 2001b, 7). This proposal allows us to despatch the much too often implied binary model of merging the national with the European communicative space, and to contemplate communicative loyalties as being formed transversally and transnationally. Yet, normative legitimacy and political efficacy, on which this model is based, are hard to defend. As Nancy Fraser has argued, in communicative arenas "in which the interlocutors are not fellow members of a political community, with equal rights to participate in political life" (Fraser 2007, 8), there is a major obstacle, which relates to the question of how to overcome a Westphalian political imaginary when building a post-Westphalian order.[1]

The fundamental issue, then, is who will be the future political subject. "Taking the democratic principle seriously would require," Splichal writes, "that the ranks

of those who should be entitled to participate in decision making should run even beyond resident noncitizens and nonresident citizens – to include all those outside the state's boundaries who may be impacted by the state's decisions" (Splichal 2012, 153). So far, national public spheres continue to be selective and show little evidence of opening up the space for new (post)national subjects within the existing national contexts. A substantive piece of research on citizenship tests in four member states (France, Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK), presented in the *International Journal on Multicultural Societies,* for instance, shows a continuation of discriminatory requirements to have, for example, a knowledge of the national history of the host society that would be hard to find among existing citizens. Moreover, the emphasis on a written test makes the editor of the special issue wonder whether this is part of state policy, "a desired side effect of the test, even if it would never be publicly acknowledged as strategy" (Wright 2008, 5), namely to deter the illiterate and uneducated. When states do seem to be showing a welcoming attitude towards immigrants, however, other mechanisms of conditioning identity and belonging may be in place. Nikunen and Hortsi's study (2013) of Finnish media coverage of the anti-immigrant movement shows how the modern notion of a balanced public culture (a pro- et contra-approach) is employed to preclude the option for a multiplicity of voices and multi-level processes of negotiation that would take precedence over the dominant cultural view with regard to the integration of immigrants. Martinez Guillem reports a similar situation in the case of Spanish public broadcasting, which aims at reconstructing public understanding of citizens' identity among the host community; this remodelling, however, is marked by a selective view of immigrants who are made acceptable by being presented as like "us" (Martinez Guillem 2013, 624).

Even immigrants, until recently seen to be the most appropriate, postmodern nomadic subject (Kristeva 1993), are hardly the model subject for the postnational order. The subjugation to the collective status of a homogeneous subject notwithstanding, a recent study shows that, as transnational subjects, immigrants live a "multi-contextual" life, which is situated in a redefined relationship between transnational locality and "mediated" transnationalism. As key agents of transnationalisation who create "social fields that *cross national boundaries*" (Andersson 2013, 392; italics in original), they evade firm classifications of belonging. As Andersson's comparative study between two migrant experiences convincingly shows, "Deterritorialization is conditional, depending on sociocultural resources and, as is highlighted here, experiences from earlier life stages" (ibid., 400). This means that bonds of loyalty and solidarity are unfolding in mediatised spatial contexts that are shifting and contested, affected by history and memory, and thus are far from being predictable sources for the potential public governing of the post-Westphalian, postnational citizenship.

Finally, the last financial crisis perhaps revealed one of the most critical problems of the European public sphere, that is, that there existed very limited, if any, intellectual interest in the post-Westphalian subject that would simultaneously also be a subaltern citizen within the dominant national societies – a critical voice with the legal status of belonging but no social and/or political power. As the above studies of the EPS indicate, the postnational constellations that are being proposed deal mainly with transformations of the existing, dominant modern national citizen into a postnational one, rely for this on mainstream media, and assume that their

transnationalisation will automatically lead to new bonds of loyalty and solidarity among the members of once-national publics.

The Crisis of the EU: Intellectual Engagements

The above critique notwithstanding, transnationalisation so far remains the most powerful critical tool in defending the democratisation of European society. Transnationalisation, in Splichal's view, is perhaps the only way to save the European public sphere:

> *Quite clearly, Europe is facing the emergence of a form of transnational social space by which (some) nation states are both weakened and strengthened at the same time (while others, particularly less developed and less powerful states, are primarily harmed). In that process, a European public sphere may develop either 'at the expense' (as a negation) of national public spheres or as the savior of the genuine public sphere* (Splichal 2012, 149).

Triandafyllidou et al (2009) have employed a method of deconstruction to suggest how alternative thinking about Europe may result in a different perspective on the European public sphere. The authors focus on episodes of crisis. As they argue, diachronic and longitudinal examinations "of the context-specific negotiations of different values at times of crisis" allow for assessments of "whether Europe still remains the sole 'invention of nation-states' […] or whether it has already become a concept for a post-national way of thinking and talking about Europe" (ibid., 6). This view seems productive, especially if we adopt critical theory's conceptualisation of the public as a product of public address to groups of people, who, by recognising their shared interests and concerns, constitute themselves *qua* public (Kuipers, 2014, 78). In this sense, it is important not only to deconstruct mechanisms of crisis but also public intellectuals' attitude towards reconciliations. If we adopt the idea that moments of crisis provide an opportunity to unearth the processes of struggles (over values and ideals), then the last financial crisis, which has, in the view of many, created conditions for the crisis (if not the fall) of the EU, presents an important terrain on which to test both propositions.

Indeed, leading European intellectuals have suggested just that: that the financial crisis has reopened the idea of Europe as a postnational constellation. Jürgen Habermas's response to the current situation in the EU has been that the European postnational constellation is being threatened by executive federalism – and from there to the "intergovernmental supremacy of the European council that runs contrary to the spirit of the [Lisbon] agreement" (Habermas, in Limone 2012a). In a 2012 interview for *Der Spiegel*, Habermas expresses his contempt for the European political elites who, in his view, have no substance or convictions. What we are witnessing in the EU at present is a coup d'état staged by technocrats, he argues. Moreover, the leading political figures (such as Merkel and Sarkozy) have been pushing the European project towards the stage of a post-democratic development, with the impoverished role of the European Parliament, "an odd, suspended position" of the European Commission and the Council as a "governmental body that engages in politics without being authorized to do so" (Habermas 2012b).

Ulrich Beck goes further in pointing to the cause of the political crisis. In his view, "Germany has actually created an 'accidental empire'" (Beck, in LSE 2013).

There is no master plan behind it, he argues: there is no hidden intention to occupy Europe and, hence, the idea of a "Fourth Reich" is a misplaced one. However, imperial tendencies are displayed in gaining economic power. The governing discourse under which this internal colonisation of the EU is taking place has revolved around "a new line of division between northern European and southern European countries," Beck writes. The line of demarcation implies a moral divide:

> *The German objection to countries spending more money than they have is a moral issue which, from a sociological point of view, ties in with the 'Protestant Ethic.' It's a perspective which has Martin Luther and Max Weber in the background. But this is not seen as a moral issue in Germany, instead it's viewed as economic rationality. They don't see it as a German way of resolving the crisis; they see it as if they are the teachers instructing southern European countries on how to manage their economies.*

From the sociological point of view, Beck argues, a fact of the matter is that "we are experiencing the redistribution of risk from the banks, through the states, to the poor, the unemployed and the elderly. This is an extraordinary new inequality, but we are still thinking in national terms and trying to locate this redistribution of risk in terms of national categories (ibid).

Dennis Smith, in dialogue with Habermas and Beck, provides another critical response. Habermas, in Smith's words, "places great hopes on the learning being done by Europe's political elites, as their constitutional lawyers educate them to be more cosmopolitan-minded" (Smith 2013). Beck, on the other hand, he argues, "focuses on crucial unlearning being done by Europe's national electorates as voters lose their faith in rigidly market-driven policies" (ibid.). The result would be "reform-minded political leaders and organized groups of citizens" determined to act transnationally, creating conditions for a "new social contract between newly enlightened European governments. This would promote transnational democracy, providing protection and support to all within a framework of European solidarity" (ibid.).

For Smith, however, a more profound decision needs to be made, namely of the type of citizenship on which this postnational constellation would be based. His argument rests on two historically specific backgrounds: first, on the proliferation of neoliberal global capitalism, which has transformed citizenship into a supplemental form of market consumerism; and second, on the notion that solidarity will have to find a way around stereotypes that are being circulated by media and national governments about the diligent North and the easygoing South. "Many German 'puritans' have a strong and fixed opinion that all Greeks (even all 'Southerners') are lazy and untrustworthy" (ibid.). Postnational ties of solidarity will also have to be built upon recognition of the condition of humiliation, which has been especially severe in the peripheral southern member states:

> *The sense of degradation is intensified by memories of the EU's promise to provide a post-humiliation polity for its citizens. Humiliation is a very dynamic process: it demands action to overcome a condition that is, by definition, unacceptable. We should expect the dynamics of humiliation to figure largely in European politics over the next few years* (ibid.)

In sum, whereas for Habermas and Beck, the future of the EU will depend on the pedagogical reformation of the political elites (a kind of a postnational

Bildung project), for Smith, the future rests in the decision between either market or social citizenship. Interestingly, all three authors note that the current divisions within the EU concern value politics and prosper on the enhancement of national stereotypes – as the means to cover up the true causes of the crisis and gain public legitimacy for austerity measures. The solution they envision is placed in the realm of the political, and, although acknowledging the post-Westphalian age (especially Habermas), they remain keen to search for solutions in the rational conduct model of communicative public exchange that has been constitutive of the modern nation state: to reiterate Fraser, especially Habermas and Beck continue to rely on the Wetsphalian subject as the agent of building the post-Westphalian polity.

A View from a Peripheral Public Sphere

Of the three scholars, it is only Smith who shows a sensibility to the development of the experience of humiliation that is unique to the peripheral South in crisis: Greece in particular, but also Spain, Cyprus and, lately, Slovenia. There is a growing sentiment in the region that the EU is evolving into a transnational community based on injustice and promoting a financial oligarchic, rather than a people's, Europe. The sentiment is widespread and concerns the peripheral states' own self-understanding as much as solidarity with the others in the regional community of the humiliated. I call this emerging structure of feeling the condition of internal postcoloniality.

The current system of financial help is "based on the commitment of the member states in an extremely vulnerable condition, which is that, in exchange for help, they are willing to accept a conservative austerity economy politics which they would never agree upon in times of normal democratic processes." This view by financial expert Igor Vuksanović, which was published in the Saturday supplement of the Slovenian national daily *Dnevnik*, also includes a remark about a "bitter aftertaste one gets around the growing tectonic gap between the North and the South of the continent." Reviewing the "solution" in Cyprus, the author finds the directness of the current masters (especially German-speaking) of Europe to achieve a "voluntary agreement" astonishing. Importantly, he also notes how legitimacy for this "obsession with economy at the cost of welfare" is defended in their own national publics with the help of the media. It is hard not to notice how, in the German press, in the "past six months, one could not read the word 'Cyprus' without reading in the same sentence also of 'oligarch,' 'Russia,' 'money laundering.'" That this is an aspect of a demonisation politics of one state becomes clear, in Vuksanović's view, when one searches in vain for a similar analysis on banks in Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Austria and Belgium, where "wealthy French, Germans and Italians are hiding their money." The pattern, he concludes, indicates what will be the "general approach of the EU when a small and irrelevant country is concerned" (*Objektiv*, 30. 3. 2013, 12). In a similar tone, a report in a supplement of the daily *Večer*, published on the same day, concludes that the "Cypriots agree with the father of Protestantism, even though they are orthodox themselves. The devil speaks German" (*V soboto*, 30. 3. 2013, 1).

Often, a critical public shows resentment towards their own national elite. It is in this context that the condition of postcoloniality becomes most directly expressed. According to Simona Levi, the leader of Spanish Party X, speaking in an interview

for the weekly *Mladina*, the current government "manages the Spanish state as some kind of peripheral colony by the dictate of the EU." The only concern of the national elites "is to respond to the demands of Germany and France which run contrary to the interests of Spanish farming and fishery; and to collect the money intended for the development which usually ends up in the pockets of the domestic corrupted individuals" (*Mladina*, 3. 1. 2014, 41).

However, there is also a voice of solidarity in humiliation. For example, in *Letters from Greece*, published in a six-month period in the daily *Delo*, reporter Boštjan Videmšek documented a painful account of daily tragedy as lived by the impoverished Greeks. "For four years, Athens has been the crying capital of Europe," he writes in a November 2012 letter. Earlier in April, he lists his observations: "too tired to scream and destroy. Too many ruptured lives to have any kind of illusions"; "Greece is defeated and humiliated"; "a laboratory of catastrophic capitalism"; "German protectorate" and "Suicide in the name of a whole class." When he returns in May 2013, he reports: "Greece on its knees: A large Brussels lie about the end of the crisis." The *Letters* undermine the governing perception of the growing divide between two European cultures and instead, by documenting the life-worlds of ordinary people and critical intellectuals, create a striking journalistic account of the roots of suffering and humiliation.

As the above titles indicate, the peripheral view of the reporter (and, in a limited sense, also of the national daily) interprets the EU crisis in terms of European values of justice, social welfare and solidarity. The sentiment of solidarity has spread in other directions, with political connections also to the South as well as the North. Therefore, the participants of the Slovenian uprising (*vstajništvo*) in response to the austerity measures launched by the Slovenian government in 2012, have, in their slogans and political demands, continuously expressed solidarity with the humiliated Greeks. Aleksis Cipras from Greek Syriza visited Slovenia in June 2012, but in November 2013 Northerns leading activist Hoerður Torfason from Iceland was also hosted in Ljubljana. National dailies have reported Iceland's courageous experiment in turning down neoliberal demands imposed on their state and have been debating the prospect of the trans-European "left" parties joining forces in the coming 2014 parliamentary elections. This selection of "allies," however, indicates that solidarity is a tie that binds together publics united in a shared transnational experience of humiliation.

Condition of Postcoloniality

Why would these instances of Slovenian media coverage of events in other pockets of austerity within the EU carry relevance for European intellectuals? For Habermas, as we have seen, the main blame for the faltering project that Europe has become lies with political elites and the media, who are unable to commit to a larger European vision, instead of a nation-centric one. Consequently, he also believes that "the more the national populations realise, and the media help them to realise, how profoundly the decisions of the European Union pervade their daily lives, the more their interest in making use of their democratic rights also as EU citizens will increase" (Habermas, 49). Is this the case?

The European Union is about enemies becoming neighbours, Ulrich Beck states. "The second purpose of the European Union is that it can prevent countries from

being lost in world politics. A post-European Britain, or a post-European Germany, is a lost Britain, and a lost Germany. Europe is part of what makes these countries important from a global perspective." Therefore, in his third point, Beck emphasises that

> *we should not only think about a new Europe, we also have to think about how the European nations have to change. They are part of the process and I would say that Europe is about redefining the national interest in a European way. Europe is not an obstacle to national sovereignty; it is the necessary means to improve national sovereignty. Nationalism is now the enemy of the nation because only through the European Union can these countries have genuine sovereignty* (Beck, in LSE 2013).

Beck suggests that we need to also redesign European modernity, which has been the invisible current of its global expansion. As Bauman succinctly puts it, "Europe invented *global* solutions to *locally* produced problems – but after developing and implementing them for a couple of centuries, Europe ultimately forced the rest of humanity to desperately seek *local* solutions to these g*lobally* produced problems" (Bauman 2012, 3). Whereas Bauman's concern is planetary, thinking of how other parts of the planet have been turned into sources (of cheap energy, minerals, commodities, inexpensive labour), Beck thinks regionally: "Reinventing modernity could be a specific purpose for Europe" (Beck, in LSE 2013).

Most directly, Beck speaks of (yet another?) "grand narrative of Europe," this time focusing on a bottom-up approach to democratic development:

> *So far we've thought about things like institutions, law, and economics, but we haven't asked what the European Union means for individuals. What do individuals gain from the European project? First of all, I would say that, particularly in terms of the younger generation, more Europe is producing more freedom. It's not only about the free movement of people across Europe; it's also about opening up your own perspective and living in a space which is essentially grounded on law"* (ibid.).

Beck's address therefore is to citizens who have been, in Dennis Smith's typology (2013), lost in schizophrenia between promises and deliveries.

> *European workers, but also students as well, are now confronted with the kind of existential uncertainty which needs an answer. Half of the best educated generation in Spanish and Greek history lack any future prospects. So what we need is a vision for a social Europe in the sense that the individual can see that there is not necessarily social security, but that there is less uncertainty. Finally we need to redefine democracy from the bottom up. We need to ask how an individual can become engaged with the European project* (ibid.).

Is this analysis from a leading European sociologist already a sign of the arrival of the era of the post-Westphalian intellectual? Is this intellectual able to think beyond the European paradigm of modernity and against a Eurocentric focus expressed by Etienne Balibar as "we, the people of Europe?"

It is beyond the scope of this paper to present the issue in all its complexity but I would like to illustrate a fragment of it by looking into another project of "revival"

of Europe, this time coming from central European intellectual circles. In the collection of essays *Yet another Europe after 1984*, several authors, following the legacy of Milan Kundera, express regret that, despite early beliefs to the contrary, the idea of central Europe has been left out of the European project. Yet, there are many lessons to be learned from the post-imperial rearrangements in both East and West. Schöpflin, for instance, notices a historical mix-up in terms of hegemonic divisions between the West and the East of Europe. He argues that, after the collapse of the socialist states, postsocialist citizens "had to learn an entirely new set of cognitive, semantic, and intellectual skills" (Schöpflin 2012, 23) to be able to participate in Western-style democracies. As a result of globalisation, however, Western Europe is experiencing an openness of societies that is similar to the legacies of central Europe. "The well-established states of the West have begun to lose their discursive hegemony, are beginning to experience social segmentations (in part from the parallel societies produced by immigration) and are, as a result, displaying similar symptoms of insecurity and anxiety about their cultural reproduction" (ibid., 29). The West, Schöpflin writes, resembles central Europe, while central Europe is becoming its subaltern (ibid.).

Auer in the same volume claims similarly that "We are all Central Europeans now" (Auer 2012, 51–65). "Central Europe has moved to its southern, northern and western peripheries (at least for the time being)," he writes (ibid., 54). This displacement from the (once) centre to the periphery is accompanied by the fear of degradation. Greece, which likes to see itself as the birthplace of European democracy, is thus "forced to endure public humiliation by using its democratic instruments in crude violation of its democratic spirit" (ibid.).

One way to define this emerging historical situation, including the public sentiments described in the previous section, is through the notion of internal colonialism. The concept has been applied in many contexts and different world regions (originally, South Africa and Mexico, in Europe most eloquently also by Michael Hechter in the case of Scotland) and refers mainly to intra-state exploitation of regions or groups of people deemed civilisationally less developed and thus suitable to be relegated to subjects to be controlled. Often this status has been conferred on disempowered minorities and people on the margins. In the wake of the post-Westphalian order, it could be argued that internal colonialism now refers to postnational constellations, in which states, whose sovereign power has been reduced by processes of globalisation, take advantage of the "uneven development" of this dispossession among the states in their immediate surroundings. In this light, Beck's claim that Britain and Germany can only maintain their state sovereignty as part of the EU may be seen as lacking sensitivity to the peripheral and subordinate member states. More to the point, as far as Germany is concerned, its superpower position within the EU, combined with full sovereignty, is already the existing "state of the art." Sovereignty within the EU (and because of it!) has been lost by the states forced into "voluntary agreements" to protect the interests of the centre.

Concluding Thoughts: Periphery as Method

What, if any, is the role of small nations and the intellectuals from these states on the periphery of the EU? In his essay on the role of the intellectuals today, Habermas

notes how the media, especially television, have subjugated the power of critical voices to the power of persuasion of the (visual) performance. The intellectual as celebrity has become a postmodern phenomenon that has not only deconstructed the modern understanding of science as a (public) vocation but has also contributed to the ever-present propensity of the intellectual to indulge his or her own vanity. "This element of self-promotion inevitably transforms the judging public – which takes part, before the television, in debates over issues of general interest – into a viewing public as well." However, for the sake of a good reputation, the intellectual "must address a public composed, not of viewers, but of potential speakers and addressees who are able to offer each other justifications. This is, ideally, a matter of exchanging reasons, not of hogging the limelight through a carefully staged performance" (Habermas 2009).

As mentioned at the beginning, the public is not something (or someone) that just exists out there; it has to be invited into existence, composed of individuals sharing similar concerns, and motivated to engage in the debate. The "avantgardistic instinct for relevances," which the intellectual possesses as the raw material "to be worked up about critical developments," has to be combined with a set of "unheroic virtues," Habermas concludes: sensitivity to damage to the normative infrastructure of the polity; the anxious anticipation of threats to the mental resources of the shared political form of life; a sense for what is lacking and "could be otherwise"; a spark of imagination in conceiving of alternatives; and a modicum of the courage required for polarising, provoking and pamphleteering. The unheroic virtues, however, do not unfold in an empty social space, lacking either history or memory. On the contrary, "the mental resources" are defined by historical experiences and cultural understandings of the shared platforms from where "polarizing, provoking and pamphleteering" can be set in motion. In other words, the intellectual does not just enter the public arena to share with his audiences the avantgardistic instinct based on his professional reputation (and/or fame), but does so from a specific location of institutional and cultural power.

Two methodological issues arise concerning the value of the intellectual's reputation. The current sociological progress from national to postnational constellation, as we have learned from Habermas and Beck, is the movement between two historical experiences of modernity. Although acknowledging fragmentation and the multicultural identity of the postnational subject, both authors seem to rely on certain legacies of political culture with the domicile in Western democracies. The political geography of transnationalism, even when conceived in the cosmopolitan tradition, epistemologically refers to ideas that were being launched in parallel with Westphalian nation-state-building and politics. When conceiving a post-Westphalian order, the current sociological imagination, especially in communicative forms of deliberation and participation, seeks to find a transnational platform for the public that would follow this model of modernity.

In the manifesto "We Are Europe," prepared by Ulrich Beck and Daniel Cohn-Bendit on the occasion of the European Year of Volunteering for Everyone,[2] the problem is laid bare. The project can be seen as an important intellectual effort to reconstitute the European public sphere. Moreover, it contains the creative energy of the popular, which is evident in the closing sentence of the document: "But Europe is also about irony; it is about being able to laugh about ourselves. There

is no better way to fill Europe with life and laughter than for ordinary Europeans to come together to act on their own initiative." The allusion to a Bakhtinian carnivalesque suggests solidarity with the subaltern, to use the postcolonial theoretical term. However, there is a certain naivety embroiled in this vision of the bottom-up civil society, as well as a sense of intellectual desire to be in the driving seat of engineering a new, active European citizen. In my understanding, the intellectual reconstitution cannot begin without a simultaneous process of intellectual reconciliation. For the solidarity and the irony in the carnivalesque are possible in circumstances in which the public (including intellectuals) shares the experience of humiliation; and this refers to the intellectual class as well.

As the intellectual project *Yet another Europe* implies, this is far from being the case. After the "revolutions of 1989," "old Europe" failed to ask any of the relevant lessons to be learned from those revolutions. "Europe also missed the opportunity to use this historic moment and experiences from democratization efforts in Central and Eastern Europe to address problems of democratic deficit within the EU – problems that, two decades later, remain unresolved" (Žagar 2012, 87). This, as Žagar continues, is a persistent predicament on the part of Western thought – namely, the inability to use historic opportunities and integrate others' cognitions and experiences. "Both the East and West, as well as Central Europe, lacked the will and ability to consider, accept, and integrate non-European, particularly non-Western traditions, experiences and achievements into political, social, and economic development or to develop strategies, policies and practices of diversity management that would promote the voluntary, equal, and full integration of immigrants and immigrant communities" (ibid.).

Second, reconciliation thus implies a process of de-colonisation and de-imperialisation; to reiterate important postcolonial author Kuan-Hsing Chen (2010), it involves "the intellectual undoing of the cold war." Transnational order does not mean a borderless situation; on the contrary, "Borders play a key role in the production of the heterogeneous time and space of contemporary global and postcolonial capitalism" (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, ix). As Mezzadra and Neilson argue, borders have become a vital theoretical tool to challenge "some of the most cherished notions and theoretical paradigms produced by political economy and social sciences"; they propose the concept "multiplication of labour," which signifies the "geographic disruption that lies at the core of capitalist globalization" (ibid., x). In a similar vein, the political and cultural geography of the EU will be a vital aspect on which to build solidarities and resist politics of internal colonisation and subalternisation, whereby migrant labour and citizenship-worker are the defining dyad of the postnational capitalist world. For this new development to be accounted for, we will need new theoretical tools of thinking about the civilisational constellation of the continent, one which will process from taking the notion of border as the method of analysis and not a given fact.

Small nations, with their positions on the fringe of the history of the post-World War II making of the EU, can provide a historical and cultural resource for the redefinition of the postnational constellation as the post-Western bordered territory. But this can be a workable model only insofar as they resist stepping into the centre themselves. That is, they must define their participation on the basis of remaining on the periphery, yet with a power to constantly challenge and move the centres.

This furthermore refers to the position of the subaltern, whose democratic politics continues to be governed by bonds of identification with all the existing subalterns in the specific national and political contexts of defining common societal good; and with all the prospective new subaltern groups and individuals, who are yet to cross the borders of the EU.

This will demand courage on the part of the transnational civil society. In terms of the *Bildung* politics of the postnational subject, it will also require a historical reversal – to uncover the civic legacies that were once successful in disposing elites in their attempts to colonise the future, since 1984, in the peripheries of Europe more than anywhere else.

Notes:

1. In her earlier critique, Fraser contests the Habermasian model with the Gramscian concept of subaltern counter-publics, existing within the Westphalian territorialised political community. In her later work, she radically redraws the concept of the public itself, divorcing it from both the citizenship and territoriality of the nation state. "Public opinion is legitimate," she writes, "if and only if it results from a communicative process in which all potentially affected can participate as peers, regardless of political citizenship" (ibid., 22; italics in original). In a similar way, public opinion must be aligned with transnational public powers, "which can be made accountable to new democratic transnational circuits of public opinion" (ibid., 24).

2. http://manifest-europa.eu/allgemein/wir-sind-europa?lang=en; accessed 26.2.2014.

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