

Stretching the concept of citizenship in Spain on the threshold of the 21st Century*

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Abstract: The Spanish Constitution that was approved in 1978, after Franco's forty-year dictatorship, gave the autonomous regions freedom to implement their own policies in specific social domains. Although it would be difficult to speak of a full-fledged federal system of government, it is true that sub-state authorities have gained substantial ground in terms of organizing areas of civic life such as the health system, education, housing policies, etc. Simultaneously, traditional views on citizenship—which linked it to the Nation-State—have also been eroded “from above” as supra-national entities such as the EU, the UN, and Human Rights organizations have issued norms and regulations that have had a significant impact on our understanding of the concept. It remains unclear, though, whether these new forces shaping contemporary citizenship(s) are all pushing in the same direction.

Key words: Spain of the autonomous regions, Decentralizing trends, Effects on citizenship, Supra-national organizations, Challenges in different types of diversity

Resumen: *La Constitución española de 1978, aprobada tras el fin de la dictadura franquista, confirió a las comunidades autónomas notable libertad para definir sus propias políticas en determinados ámbitos. Aunque sería difícil hablar de una forma de gobierno federal, es cierto que las autoridades regionales han conseguido sustanciales cuotas de poder en áreas como la sanidad, la educación o la vivienda. Al mismo tiempo, las definiciones tradicionales de ciudadanía —vinculadas casi siempre al Estado-Nación— se han visto también erosionadas «desde arriba» ya que entidades supranacionales como la UE, la ONU o algunas organizaciones de Derechos Humanos han generado directivas y normas que han tenido*

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un profundo impacto sobre nuestra concepción del término. Sin embargo, no está del todo claro si todas estas nuevas fuerzas que dan forma a la(s) ciudadanía(s) contemporánea(s) la(s) están empujando en la misma dirección.

Palabras clave: *La España de las autonomías, Elementos de descentralización, Efectos sobre la ciudadanía, Organizaciones supranacionales, Diferentes tipos de diversidad y sus retos.*

In the post-modern era, the new form of citizenship is marked by decentralization and the differential self-assertion of issues, partly in response to the inherent tendencies of globalization itself, such as the weakening of Nation-States and the greater social differentiation that is tending to take place worldwide as a result of the new model of production.

Martín HOPENHAYN, “Old and New Forms of Citizenship”

The aim of European integration is intrinsically linked to the task that almost all 27 EU member states now face on the home front. That is, developing policies for the social inclusion of linguistic, religious, cultural and traditional minorities as well as of a steadily growing number of residents of immigrant origin.

Charles WESTIN, “European Integration”

I. Introduction: The Changing Faces of Citizenship

For quite a long time, citizenship was a marginal and neglected topic in the social and political sciences. This was due primarily to the fact that the definition of the term was rather narrow and one-dimensional. A citizen was simply somebody recognized as a legitimate member of a ‘polity’ which, as the modern world conceived it, most often coincided with the Nation-State. Throughout the greater part of the 19th and 20th centuries, membership in the socio-political body of a country bestowed on the citizens a number of rights—and obligations—that allowed them to participate actively in the civic life of the nation. Conceived as such, citizenship constituted a form of social categorization and closure, whereby members were defined as insiders—or citizens—while non-members were outsiders—aliens or denizens—. But this understanding of the critical role played by the Nation-State in terms of protecting the basic rights and freedoms of its subjects faced a partial crisis in the last decades of the 20th century, when it became apparent that new forces—both global and local—are having a profound impact on how people can now gain access to those rights. Hopenhayn affirmed a few years ago that “Now that the old century is ending and a new one is beginning, many people

feel that citizenship is being rethought, rewritten and reinscribed in new spaces, without giving up its historical content”¹.

While never losing sight of the historical legacy left by the Westphalian system, scholars such as Jürgen Habermas and Yasemin N. Soysal have been contending since the early 1990s that in order to reach a full comprehension of citizenship dynamics in our contemporary world one needs to transcend the perspective of the Nation-State as the basic unit of social and political analysis². These authors maintain that phenomena such as transnational exchanges, international migrations, and human rights regulations are contributing to the blurring of the line between citizens and non-citizens. Of course, it would be naïve to imagine that the old conception of citizenship as a form of social closure in liberal democracies would vanish overnight. In fact, a substantial part of the recent literature on citizenship has centered precisely on the ways in which class, gender, and race/ethnic barriers have determined—and still *do*, to a great extent—who was to be considered a member and who was not³. It is true, however, that many of the books devoted to the theme of inclusion in Citizenship Studies have also dealt with the strategies used by different segments of the population in Western democracies to try to breach these barriers. In Glenn’s synthetic account of the struggles of women and people of color in the U.S. for their labor and citizenship rights in the early decades of the 20th century, one notes that in some instances policy shifts antedated the sea-change that was going to take place in the late 1960s and 70s in the wake of the Civil Rights movement⁴. It is undeniable, though, that the real transformation of how citizenship is conceived in the social sciences has taken place only over these last twenty years, in which identity politics and multiculturalism have had a tremendous impact on majority-minority and native-immigrant relations. Jeffrey Alexander argues in his recent book *The Civil Sphere* that, whereas up to the mid-1980s the primary modes of incorporation of newcomers and minorities into the public/civic sphere was through assimilation or

¹ HOPENHAYN, M., “Old and New Forms of Citizenship”, *CEPAL Review*, no. 73, April 2001, p. 116.

² See HABERMAS, J., “Citizenship and National Identity: Some Reflections on the Future of Europe”, *Praxis International*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1992, pp. 1-19 and SOYSAL, Y.N., *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe*, The Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1994.

³ See, for example, SHKLAR, J.N., *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1991; CASTLES, S. and DAVIDSON, A., *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging*, Routledge, London and New York 2000; GLENN, E.N., *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2002.

⁴ *Ibid.* GLENN, pp. 6-17.

ethnic hyphenation, nowadays multiculturalism provides a smoother transition⁵. Canada is, of course, the country that has been most successful in implementing a multicultural model that provides space and recognition for the rights of minority groups to be incorporated into the socio-political script of the nation⁶.

As the first epigraph introducing this article clearly suggests, then, the concept of citizenship has been influenced lately by a number of worldwide processes that have ostensibly expanded—and frequently complicated—its meaning. Thus, for example, the increasing respect for human rights and the adoption of democratic values in many areas around the globe—as well as the above-mentioned recognition of cultural/ethnic difference—are encouraging many States to start granting some basic political and civil rights to non-nationals. In addition, it is a fact that some international organizations conduct a kind of ‘global surveillance’ and would not hesitate to report and denounce States that are violating certain political or cultural rights of their residents. Some scholars have explored the possibility of a new understanding of citizenship that moves beyond the limits of State borders⁷. Although the institutionalization of those civil-society organizations on the international stage is not fully accomplished yet, so that it is difficult to think of a trans-state citizenship in the near future, we have seen a few developments—such as dual and supranational citizenships—that seem to head in that direction. Finally, another reason impelling us to rethink citizenship is that, as T.H. Marshall affirmed more than five decades ago, there are certain social and economic rights that need to be brought into the picture—besides the civil and political rights covered by the traditional concept⁸. This seems particularly urgent at a time when the globalization of finances and the acceleration of all sorts of trades have made it impossible for national administrations to protect the economic and social entitlements of their citizens. We have learnt these last two decades that a crisis in one part of the planet may have

⁵ ALEXANDER, J.C., *The Civil Sphere*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2006, especially pp. 450-458.

⁶ For an enlightening collection of essays on multiculturalism, see TAYLOR, C. *et aliter*, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. and intro. by A. GUTMANN, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1994. It was Taylor’s former student Will Kymlicka, however, who first made famous the phrase “multicultural citizenship” in his path-breaking book under that title published in 1996.

⁷ See HOFFMAN, J., *Citizenship beyond the State*, Sage Publications, London and Thousand Oaks, CA, 2004 and KEANE, J., *Global Civil Society?* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003.

⁸ MARSHALL, T.H. And BOTTOMORE, T., *Citizenship and Social Class*, Pluto Press, London, 1987 [1950].

adverse consequences for the levels of employment or the interest rates in another, and so Nation-States have seen their power to control their citizens' wellbeing dramatically eroded. In order to defend themselves against the often damaging effects of these global processes on their social rights, citizens must either establish alliances with international, non-governmental organizations that are able to mobilize massive support and to have a global impact or, alternatively, re-orient their understanding of the concept of citizenship to think of themselves as active members of a "radical democracy" that would need to fend for itself against those imponderable external factors⁹.

Even if it is true that the processes of "decentralization and differential self-assertion of issues" characterizing citizenship these last few decades are observable worldwide, there are areas of the globe in which, for historical and political reasons, these processes have been much more evident. Of course, places in which the actions of the citizens are *not* directed toward a single interlocutor (be it a State, a regional Administration or a supranational institution) but are instead scattered among different realms of negotiation are likely to produce individuals whose participation and sense of belonging will shift strategically from one field to another depending on interests and circumstances. In her ethnographic and structural analysis of the lives of women in Asian-Pacific countries, Aihwa Ong convincingly demonstrated that individual choices have great impact on human mobility and capital investments, and on how these may, in turn, generate tensions between personal and national identities¹⁰. The kind of "flexible citizenships" that Ong discusses in her work can also be observed in some regions of Spain where citizens take part in forms of communication and association in the social and political realm that do not always coincide with the sphere of the State. Not only that, but aspects of cultural differentiation and self-assertion that in the past were viewed as belonging to the private/subjective realm, such as religious practices, ethnic goals or sexual choices, are now the object of public treatment since they often seek to change public opinion and prevent the stigmatization of specific social groups. As we will see below, in order to enjoy full citizenship people are no longer happy with just recognition of their membership in the polity of a particular Nation-State. Isin and Wood have cogently argued that since our identities are nowadays

⁹ Chantal Mouffe and Neil Gilbert argue that there is a need to recover a broader social democratic ideal instead of letting neoliberalism replace the state by making private, selective provisions. See MOUFFE, C. (ed.), *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship and Community*, Verso, London, 1992.

¹⁰ ONG, A., *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 1999.

multifaceted and also malleable, there is no way in which citizenship can still be understood as a one-dimensional and static category¹¹.

It is unquestionable that Spain has been for centuries a highly diverse, multi-ethnic nation in which different human groups and cultural traditions have coexisted. It is true that legal citizenship (or nationality) has traditionally derived from membership within the Spanish nation and, therefore, all individuals under that umbrella enjoyed a series of common entitlements. However, besides this link with what we now call the State, people also maintained a strong affiliation to more ethno-territorial stories and ancestral myths that were singular to smaller communities and defined their particular values and aims. Authors such as Richard Delgado, Renato Rosaldo and the aforementioned Aihwa Ong have noted that it is difficult to talk about full citizenship if one does not take into account those cultural differences that sometimes prevent certain groups from fully identifying with the goals of the majority group¹². This was evidently the case of the Catalans and the Basques on the Iberian Peninsula, who have historically insisted that the State should provide their peoples with the right to a specific socio-cultural membership as part of their citizenship. One could argue that the '*fueros*', a set of laws—mostly fiscal—which were specific to an identified region or estate since the late Middle Ages, served to some extent to satisfy the needs of differentiation of particular communities in such areas as tax duties, inheritance laws or the types of judicial sentences their inhabitants could receive¹³. But, of course, ethno-territorial minorities in Spain have come to play a significant role in the management of what we have called citizenship dynamics only well into the 20th century.

II. New Forms of Governance in Spain: The Role of Autonomous Regions

The end of Generalissimo Franco's forty-year dictatorship (1936-1975) meant a definite turning point in the relations between the central Government in Madrid and the regions on the periphery of the country. As is widely

¹¹ ISIN, E.F. and WOOD, P.K., *Citizenship and Identity*, SAGE Publications, London and Thousand Oaks, CA, 1999.

¹² DELGADO, R., "Citizenship" (pp. 247-252); ROSALDO, R., "Cultural Citizenship, Inequality, and Multiculturalism" (pp. 253-261); ONG, A., "Cultural Citizenship as Subject Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States" (pp. 262-293) in TORRES, R. *et aliter* (eds.), *Race, Identity, and Citizenship: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishers, Malden, MA and Oxford, 1999.

¹³ See MCALISTER, L.N., *Spain and Portugal in the New World*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1984. According to this author, certain regions of Spain were more prone to send citizens to the New World precisely because of those differentiations that the '*fueros*' (or charters) marked.

known, one of the dictator's main aims during his rule was precisely to smash and erase any signs of alternative identities in the 'new nation'. Thus, the populations of regions such as the Basque Country, Catalonia or Valencia saw the expression of their local cultures—language, folklore, institutions, etc.—heavily repressed and, in some cases, there were attempts to alter the demographic composition of whole areas by bringing in people from other parts of the country¹⁴. Although it has been claimed by some historians that the last years of Franco's regime witnessed a relaxation of the policies trying to turn the nation into a culturally-uniform and centralized State, the fact is that ethno-territorial minorities began to gain some visibility and political predicament only after his demise. As Preston has explained, it was only during the Transition Period that a more tolerant and moderate attitude emerged toward minority cultures emerged, allowing them to recover some of their downtrodden traditions and '*derechos forales*' (statutory rights), and giving them a basic level of political autonomy from the central Administration¹⁵.

The Spanish Constitution of 1978, apart from "wishing to establish justice, liberty and security, and to promote the welfare of all those who form part" of the State¹⁶, included a whole chapter (no. 3) devoted to the rights and responsibilities of those regions that decided to constitute themselves into 'Autonomous Communities'. The idea was that those contiguous provinces that shared common historical, economic, and cultural features could gain access to a certain degree of self-determination and decision-making, always under the auspices of the Spanish Parliament. Although this shift or opening up was perceived as insufficient by some of the regional parties and civic organizations, it must be said that it was quite a significant step since it granted those autonomous Administrations the possibility of developing their own statutes and deciding on such critical issues as their denomination, territorial limits, and governing institutions (Art. 147). David Brighty, former British Ambassador to Spain, has argued that despite some evident shortcomings, the movement toward decentralization that the Spanish Constitution marked at the outset of the Transition Period had a positive impact on most regions—both 'historical' and newly-constituted¹⁷. Not only were they able to retrieve some of the cultural elements that had been censured and repressed during Franco's regime but, looking into the future, they could also partly establish what the

¹⁴ PAYNE, S., *Facism in Spain, 1923-1977*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 2000.

¹⁵ PRESTON, P., *Las tres Españas del 36*, Debolsillo, Barcelona, 2003.

¹⁶ *Spanish Constitution*, "Preamble" by Enrique Tierno Galván, p. 5.

¹⁷ BRIGHTY, D., "Devolution Provides Lessons for Other Countries", presentation given at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, February 1999.

socio-political priorities of their citizenry were to be. As will be seen below, the fact that the Autonomous Regions were given freedom to decide on such important areas as education, public works or local economic development has had a paramount influence on the new forms of citizenship that have begun to emerge across the country. Nobody would argue nowadays that we could refer to a single and uniform type of citizenship in Spain, since a mere glimpse at the diversity observable in terms of discourses, local practices, and distinct cultural formations would point in the opposite direction¹⁸.

1. *National Sovereignty and its Sensitive Areas*

While it is a fact that Article 148 of the Spanish Constitution gave the Autonomous Communities competence to implement their own norms in up to twenty-two different areas, it would still be difficult to contend that the country has become a full-fledged federal system these last thirty odd years. On the one hand, it was evident from the start that not all the Autonomous Communities wanted to reach the same degree of self-government, with the so-called ‘historical nationalities’ (Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque Country) and, interestingly, Andalusia opting for a fast-track, simplified process that made their Statutes effective much more quickly. Moreover, the Basque Country and Navarre were rather exceptional cases because, apart from being granted autonomy the same as the other regions, they also retained some of the fiscal and economic statutory rights they had enjoyed since medieval times. One other reason that has interfered with the devolution of power to the Autonomous Governments is that Articles 148 and 149 of the Constitution, in which the competences are distributed between the State and the regions, include a number of grey areas that are unclear as to who has the power to legislate. According to Keating, there has been “continual competition” between the newly-constituted Autonomies, which want to catch up with the powers enjoyed by the historical regions, while the latter insist that their *hecho diferencial* (differential rights) should not be granted to all the others¹⁹. What seems undeniable is that frequent asymmetries have resulted in the rate of transference of power to the Autonomies these last twenty years, and few regions can be said to be completely satisfied with the quotas they have

¹⁸ MORENO, L. “Local and Global: Mesogovernments and Territorial Identities”, in SAFRAN, W. and MAIZ, R., *Identity and Territorial Autonomy in Plural Societies*, Frank Cass Publishers, London and Portland, OR, 2000, pp. 61-75.

¹⁹ KEATING, M., “Federalism and the Balance of Power in European States”, Paper prepared for SIGMA, OECD Head of Publication Service, Paris, 2007, p. 22.

achieved. As recent events in Catalonia have shown, there is a perennial sentiment in some regions that the frame of the Constitution can respond only very inadequately to the claims and demands coming, primarily, from ‘historical nationalities’²⁰.

As has become evident in the introduction to this article, there is a general inclination today to associate the expansion and/or erosion of the traditional concept of citizenship to forces that are external to the borders/boundaries of the Nation-State, such as financial globalization, human mobility and the ICT revolution. Nevertheless, Westin also clarifies in the second epigraph to this contribution that “There is an increasing number of Europeans who today feel excluded [or misrepresented] by the dominant national community of the state in which they hold citizenship”²¹. The Britons, Saami, Sorbs, Romas or Basques are peoples who have lived for centuries in their current Nation-States, yet they do not identify themselves with their countries’ predominant national identity, and so they keep struggling to see their cultural and economic rights recognized. Most often the problems derive from a rather confusing division of powers which has allowed—in Spain, for example—that, despite the devolution of competences in several fields, the State still manages to retain the right to pass so-called ‘framework laws’ that can deeply condition the specific policies promoted by the regions. Sia Spiliopoulou has recently raised the point that “The conceptual relationship between territorial autonomy and the empowerment and cultural protection of minorities still remains unexplored in international law today, as is the conceptual relationship between the components and alternatives of territorial and non-territorial autonomy”²². In this regard, it is little wonder that the Catalans and the Basques have been protesting these last two decades—especially during the right-wing government of J.M. Aznar in the early 2000s—about that power to subtly abuse the ‘residual competences’ left to the State to recentralize certain responsibilities. Predictably, these transfers in power often concerned areas which directly or indirectly touched upon identity questions that were especially sensitive to the Autonomous Administrations.

In spite of the important tensions caused by the overlapping in competences, most analysts have agreed that “The Spanish system of autonomous

²⁰ BURGÉN, S., “Catalan Independence Rally Brings Barcelona to a Standstill”, *The Guardian*, 11 Sept. 2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/sep/11/catalan-independence-rally-barcelona>

²¹ WESTIN, C., “European Integration: A Matter of Acknowledging Identities”, *IMISCOE Policy Brief* no. 14, November 2008, p. 3.

²² SPILIOPOULOU, A.S., “The Unclear Relationship between Territorial and Non-Territorial Autonomy and Minority Identity”, *Newsletter, EURAC Institute for Minority Rights*, no.1, 2012, p. 1.

communities has been a success”²³ and has ultimately managed to balance centrifugal and centripetal forces in the system. Specialists have argued that the main rationale behind the move toward decentralization after the long dictatorship was political and intimately related to the significant levels of diversity of the human groups coexisting on the Peninsula²⁴. Still, it was also clear that from a social and economic point of view there were domains that could be more easily and efficiently managed by regional and local administrations that were closer geographically and culturally to the constituencies to be served. Moreno has noted that the Spanish model, although never including the term ‘federal’ in any of its constitutional provisions, is very similar to a devolutionary federalist system in that we can find two tiers of government—central and regional—that have distributed their competence through a top-down process bearing in mind the organization of social life²⁵. Thus, competences connected with the more day-to-day activities, such as education, transportation, urban planning or the health system have been transferred to the Autonomous Administrations, as well as the power to establish their own institution and public social services. In this sense, it is not surprising that since the beginning of democracy in the late 1970s, the differences in expenditure between the central and the local administrations have very much leveled out: in 1980 the central Government spent approximately 90% of the national budget while by 2000 that figure had been reduced to 50%. Needless to say, this significant redistribution of economic power and its associated changes in areas such as employment, family life and public services had immense influence on the type of citizenship the different communities were able to develop. These specificities have been most noticeable in aspects such as the linguistic and educational policies, the ‘familiarist’ welfare arrangements, health programs, tax policies, and plans for local infrastructures. Despite the remarkable steps taken toward decentralization and recognition of national minority rights during the last thirty years, one still sees that there are sensitive areas in which the central Government has been slow and reluctant to concede more power to the Autonomies²⁶. Although the

²³ KEATING, M., *op.cit.*, p. 24. See also the same author’s discussion in “La integración europea y la cuestión de las nacionalidades”, *Revista Española de Ciencias Políticas*, n.º 16, 2007, pp. 9-35.

²⁴ VINUELA, J., “Fiscal Decentralization in Spain”, IMF Publication, 2000, pp. 1-5. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/2000/fiscal/vinuela.pdf>

²⁵ MORENO, L., “Ethno-territorial Concurrence in Multinational Societies: The Spanish *Comunidades Autónomas*”, in GAGNON, A. and TULLY, J. (eds.), *Multinational Democracies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001, pp. 201-221.

²⁶ ALONSO SANZ, I., “La descentralización española y el Estado autonómico actual: Una visión presupuestaria”, *Revista Internacional de Presupuesto Público*, n.º 72, March-April 2010. <http://www.asip.org.ar/es/content/la-descentralizaci%C3%B3n-espa%C3%B1ola-y-el-estado-auton%C3%B3mico-actual-una-visi%C3%B3n-presupuestaria>

general impression is that substantial room has been provided for minority populations to develop their own cultural and socio-political projects, there are still competences that have been a source of friction between the central Administration and the Autonomous Regions, since they have great impact on the kind of citizenship that people can develop.

2. *Challenges of Managing a Multicultural and Plurilingual State*

Westin has complained that although a common vision seems to have guided—at least until recently—the project toward European integration, the same could not be said about the efforts of several nations to improve their social cohesion²⁷. As some authors have maintained, this failure has been due in some cases to the confusing relationship between their promotion of a fairly homogeneous national identity and their attempts at being more open to cultural diversity. This has certainly been the case in Spain where, while clear signs were being emitted suggesting that the State was willing to give more competences to the regions, other political moves revealed reluctance on the part of the central Government to give up quotas of power in certain fields. To start with, there were notorious overlaps in domains such as tourism, agriculture, public works or even the Social Security system, which has made it increasingly difficult to adjust the budgetary figures for both Administrations. As stated above, there have been several cases in which, although in theory the Autonomous Communities were empowered to define the policies, the State has managed to limit their competence by passing some ‘transversal’ legislation that countervailed their decisions²⁸. Predictably, this fact has caused a great deal of disappointment and frustration in the regional Administrations, which have often seen their plans and expectations upset by measures that restricted their powers. One only needs to take a cursory look at the cases of conflict of competences taken to the Constitutional Court by the Autonomous Communities to realize that, since the mid-1980s, this legal battle has been one of the main sources of contention between the different administrations²⁹.

Furthermore, during the early 1990s, when the Autonomies were hoping to use the constitutional prerogative to approve a statutory reform to its full extent, the central Government preferred to pass an organic law giving a

²⁷ WESTIN, C., *op. cit.*, p. 5.

²⁸ ALONSO SANZ, I., *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

²⁹ CARRASCO DURÁN, M., *El reparto de competencias entre el Estado y las Comunidades Autónomas sobre la actividad económica*, Generalitat de Catalunya-Tirant lo Blanch, Valencia, 2005.

homogeneous and closed package of transferences to all the Communities, regardless of their nature. Of course, this move received, a very critical response from the historical ‘nationalities’ because it not only set a clear ‘ceiling’ (cap) to the kind of competences that they would be able to gain in the future, but it also restricted any reform of their statutes to an underlying principle of ‘reasonable equality’ that clearly constrained their aspirations to retain the differential rights³⁰. Thus, while the two major national parties were exploring the best way to bring to an end the development of this pseudo-federal model of State, the historical Autonomous Communities showed great dissatisfaction with the slow pace with which some of the competences had been transferred and the fact that future statutory reforms had been *de facto* blockaded. The first few years of the 21st century saw the approval of proposals to revise the current model of autonomous government by the Basque and the Catalan Parliaments, granting—at least to some of the regions—a more independent management of their institutions and finances, and exclusive power over some of the competences that were still being contested³¹. These proposals were turned down by the Spanish Parliament, since they were perceived as attempts to undermine the unity of the nation that the 1978 Constitution guaranteed. As some specialists have remarked, at this stage the limits of the present system seem to have been reached and new alternatives need to be sought to satisfy the different constituencies.

Luis Moreno has argued that what he calls “ethno-territorial concurrence” (or cooperation) can not only help to overcome tensions in plural societies, but should even contribute to strengthening democratic principles as it encourages the participation of the citizens at different levels³². As this author sees it, the Spanish model of autonomous regional governments has allowed most minorities to develop a working form of ‘dual’ citizenship, which permits the incorporation of elements of both the local/ethno-territorial and the state/national identities. There is evidence that seems to support this view since decentralization in fields such as institutional development, education, management of the cultural heritage, health and the fiscal system has been clear. Nevertheless, one can also see signs of that age-old fear on the part of the State that a second—or third—round of decentralization and ceding further quotas of power to the Autonomous Administrations may result in undesirable asymmetry and fragmentation. Vinuela has pointed out that aspects such as the decentralization of public expenditure and the greater

³⁰ AJA, E., *El estado autonómico: Federalismo y el hecho diferencial*. Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 2003.

³¹ TREMLETT, G., “Basque Plan is Treason, Say Critics”, *The Guardian*, 27 October 2003. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/oct/27/spain.gilestremlett>

³² MORENO, L., *op. cit.*, 2001, pp. 201-203.

income tax autonomy after the mid-1990s may be having negative effects in terms of the poor management of human resources and the increasing difficulties in controlling regional debt³³. Although some of the national parties advocate it, a return to a more centralized form of government would not be a solution because it would wake up old ghosts that nobody wishes to see again on the political scene. Moreover, as will be seen below, new global elements have entered the socio-political life of the country that would not recommend a regression to earlier stages in which issues such as the administration of justice, civic rights and membership or institutional representation were solely in the hands of the State. In Keating's opinion, the two alternatives open to Spain at the moment are either to favor a fairly uniform federation of autonomous regions all sharing similar economic and political goals or a more asymmetrical and plural union—as supported by the Catalans, the Basques and segments of the Left—in which the various regions could have a different relationship to the center³⁴. Needless to say, in whichever direction the politics of the nation decide to head in the future, this will have a profound impact on the type of citizenship that individuals are able to develop in the different parts of the country.

III. Other Factors Contributing to Decentralization

If the general trend during the Transition and post-Transition period in Spain has been towards a decentralized, quasi-federalist model of State due to the pressures exerted by the peripheral regions, we should not forget that, simultaneously, other processes were taking place at a supra-national level, impinging on the citizenship that Spaniards were likely to develop in the last two decades of the 20th century. With the accession of the country to the European Community—later to become the EU—in January 1986, Spain finally achieved a long wished-for incorporation into a continental institution that would hopefully put an end to its secular social and economic isolation³⁵. In principle, the positive effects of the integration were mostly expected in the field of economics, with the modernization of the country's industrial base and infrastructures, as well as the opening of its companies to broader trade and investment markets. However, as Jordán and other scholars have argued, there were other considerations, such as the quick democratization of the country and the adaptation of the country's institutional and legal structures, which were

³³ VINUELA, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 22-25.

³⁴ KEATING, M., *op. cit.*, SIGMA paper, 2007, pp. 25.

³⁵ TAMAMES, R., *La Unión Europea*. Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1994.

equally weighty in the decision³⁶. There is no denying that the nation benefited immensely from the integration, as it facilitated the adoption of a more liberal economic policy and encouraged businessmen to take action in sectors unexplored before. We need to bear in mind that the incorporation was being negotiated while the country was submerged in a deep economic crisis due to skyrocketing oil prices and an industrial reconversion in the late 1970s. Nevertheless, the country made an effort to meet the demands of the Community in terms of bilateral liberalization requisites and to prepare the ground for the achievement of a Single European Market³⁷. The key political figures in Spain were convinced that this was a train that they should not let go by if they wanted the country to play some role in the construction of a new Europe that could compete with the other global actors—even if this vocabulary was not yet much in use at the time.

Again, although the emphasis is often put on the economic leap that the country experienced as a result of its inclusion in the European project, one should not forget that other aspects of the national character were also profoundly influenced by the process. It is true that the Spanish accession coincided with a change in the economic cycle that helped to restructure the outdated productive system of the country and to improve the competitiveness of some of its industries. Moreover, since 1988 structural funds had been funneled into many of the peripheral areas of the EU in order to achieve greater social and economic cohesion, and the southern European nations received a substantial part of those funds³⁸. Even nowadays, it is not unusual to come across billboards planted on construction sites in the Basque Country informing us that those works are being partly financed by the EU. And, of course, other opportunities that membership in the Union has brought about have been as critical in the transformation of our citizenship. For one thing, the possibility of crossing the nearby border with France more freely has changed the weekend habits of many Basque families, and the nation's participation in the birth of the European Monetary Union, which allows us to use the same currency in most of the surrounding countries, has brought numerous advantages. As Jordán puts it, the Spanish society has learnt these last two decades “to cope

³⁶ JORDÁN, J.M., “Balance de la integración de España en la Unión Europea”, *Información Comercial Española*, n.º 811, 2003, pp. 113-132.

³⁷ TOVIAS, A., “The Southern European Economies and European Integration”, in COSTA, A. and SEVERIANO, N. (eds.), *Southern Europe and the Making of the European Union*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, pp. 159-181.

³⁸ GARCÍA SOLANES, J. and MARIA-DOLORES, R., “The impact of European structural funds on economic convergence in European countries and regions”, in MEEUSEN, W. and VILLAVERDE, J. (eds.), *Convergence Issues in the European Union*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, 2001, pp. 334-358.

with the guidelines and the rules of the game within the European context” and Spain’s presence in the EU has helped the country to adapt to the globalization process taking place worldwide³⁹.

1. *The European Project*

According to some specialists, Spaniards have been able to construct their identities as a multilevel process or, to put it differently, as the development of concentric circles that express the multiple allegiances of the people. Although the Spanish Constitution grants sovereignty only to the State in issues of nationality, borders, etc., the fact is that the juridical position of individuals does allow them the right of political involvement in different entities—beginning at the municipal level and reaching the EU sphere—which fosters the formation of a ‘multilevel citizenship’. In the early 1990s, the Constitutional Court ruled that the treatment of citizens’ rights and duties did not need to be uniform, since that would be incompatible with the varying degrees of autonomy in the regions. The only limitation to these diverse allegiances would be necessary in cases in which disproportionate divergences in treatment could affect the basic conditions of equality that all citizens should enjoy. In an article published in 1999, Llamazares and Reinares noted that in fact Spanish citizens saw no contradiction when they declared themselves identified with both their country and the European project⁴⁰. While some traditional views held that there is an inevitable trade-off between different identities when they coexist in a single person, it actually seems that two distinct identities may be positively combined to reinforce each other. In the case of Spain, this was probably made possible an exclusionary and self-enclosed type of citizenship which over long decades had hindered any attempts at changing the uniform identity supported by the State. Ramón Tamames and others have noted that the enthusiasm shown by the country in signing the Maastricht Treaty can only be explained by the recent history of a nation that had been deprived of the most basic freedoms and rights⁴¹.

If most Spaniards have admitted a degree of attachment to Europe and the construction of its new identity, this feeling became even stronger in the case of the peripheral populations. Of course, there were groups among these minorities that were so exclusively focused on their sub-

³⁹ JORDÁN, J.M., *op. cit.*, p. 130.

⁴⁰ LLAMAZARES, I. and REINARES, F., “Identificaciones territoriales, ciudadanía europea y opinión pública española”, in LLAMAZARES, I. and REINARES, F. (eds.), *Aspectos políticos y sociales de la integración europea*, Tirant lo Blanch, Valencia, 1999, pp. 179-199.

⁴¹ TAMAMES, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 3-8.

national identities that they did not seem much interested in developing other affiliations. Also, in a few instances, the integration into the EU had negative effects on local economies, as quotas were set for produce such as fish and milk. Although Autonomies heavily dependent on these industries, such as Galicia or the Canaries, were less enthusiastic about the supranational identification with the EU, most sub-state governments have stimulated their peoples' association to the European project⁴². The Catalans, above all, have favored the creation of a discourse that connects them directly to a larger entity, both modern and democratic, which is thought to facilitate the achievement of some of their aspirations⁴³. Because Europe is perceived as a new framework of reference that, to a great extent, has abandoned the forms of sovereignty of the traditional Nation-States, some minorities see in it a new space in which their identities can be more easily accommodated⁴⁴. No doubt, as Beck himself has admitted, there is a grain of political idealism and utopia in the belief that Europe may gain greater power by transcending the homogenizing inclinations of traditional States and relying more on networks and cooperation. While it is true that some of the latest events seem to be pointing in a different direction⁴⁵, it is also true that many Europeans have kept their faith in the possibility that this new entity, more prone to defend democracy, multilateralism, human rights and the rule of law, could in fact provide spaces for the construction of a 'Europe of the peoples'.

Philosophers such as Habermas and Innerarity have expressed the view that new forms of citizenship are possible in this European environment in which variegated identifications and commonalities seem to be at work. Nevertheless, as Gerard Delanty and others have also contended, it is not as if Europe had completely rid itself of all the prejudice that caused tremendous turmoil and bloodshed in the past⁴⁶. It is not hard to see that beneath Europe's veneer of unity and welfare, there are also exclusionary dynamics—both *ad intra* and *ad extra*—and xenophobic attitudes, especially against Islam, which seems to have become the enemy to be pursued today. Delanty observes that while the Union has tried to leave behind the

⁴² LAITIN, D.D., "The Cultural Identities of a European State", *Politics and Society*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1997, pp. 291-294.

⁴³ The *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*, which was adopted in 1992 under the auspices of the Council of Europe and Spain ratified in 2001, would be an example of that progressive attitude toward minorities.

⁴⁴ BECK, U., "La Europa cosmopolita", *Claves de la Razón Práctica*, n.º 155, 2005, pp. 18-24.

⁴⁵ ROBINSON, S., "The Incredible Shrinking Europe", *Time Magazine*, 8 March 2010, pp. 15-18.

⁴⁶ DELANTY, G., "Conclusion: Towards Post-National Citizenship", *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality*, MacMillan Press Ltd., Basingstoke and London, 1995, pp. 156-163.

uglier aspects of Westphalian nationalisms, it is still unclear whether those ethnocentric ideals have really disappeared from the picture: “Europe emerged from the disunity among nation-states, but ultimately reinforced them”⁴⁷. It can hardly be denied, though, that very important steps have been taken in terms of the socio-economic cohesion and demilitarization of the continent, and groups that had been vulnerable before—such as women or national minorities—have achieved rights that would have been unthinkable for our grandparents. Most important of all, as Touraine has argued, the European ideal is allowing us “to live simultaneously at various levels of political and social organization”, and this fact is certainly helping us to escape, at least partly, from the hegemonic ideology of traditional Nation-States⁴⁸. It may be true, however, that in order to articulate those multiple—or nested—citizenships in the European Union, one cannot lose sight either of phenomena that are taking place in other regions of the globe, and are definitely having an impact on those identity formations too.

2. *Elements of Globalization: Migration*

Elisabeth Meehan noted in the early 1990s that the European Community had become a worldwide reference in terms of promoting social policies meant to prevent inequalities of class, gender, and ethnicity, especially in the workplace⁴⁹. Indeed, one only needs to consider the rising levels of the workers’ participation, social assistance and women’s presence in the labor market to realize that our status as citizens has been deeply affected by directives and regulations passed at the supranational level. It is debatable, though, whether these chances of defining new forms of citizenship have been equally accessible to the over 400 million residents of the Union, since there are still social categories that remain marginalized and are not given the opportunity to participate actively in the socio-political life of the community⁵⁰. As mentioned earlier on, there are phenomena connected with globalization—such as the circulation of symbolic goods, the extended use of communication technologies, and increasing human mobility—that often complicate the granting of certain economic, social, and cultural rights to all collectives. This has been particularly difficult in countries such as Spain where, in barely over two decades, we have moved from a situation of almost total economic isolation and fairly balanced

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁴⁸ TOURAINE, A., *Qu’est-ce que la démocratie?* Fayard, Paris, 1994, p. 22.

⁴⁹ MEEHAN, E., *Citizenship and the European Community*, SAGE, London, 1993.

⁵⁰ CASTLES, S. and DAVIDSON, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 10-23.

migration flows—with a small surplus of emigrants—to one in which companies have begun to turn multinational and the number of immigrants settling in the country has been by far the highest in Europe. If, as we have seen above, managing the internal diversity of the nation has been by no means easy, these global processes have further complicated the efforts to accommodate cultural differences. Zapata has recently argued that given the kind of institutional ‘walls’ that the Spanish State has built this last decade in matters of immigration, it is very difficult to think of policies that would really tackle the problems of an increasingly diverse population⁵¹.

Coinciding with Spain’s incorporation into the European Community, the number of migrants entering the country began to grow exponentially, and during the last decade it has well surpassed the rate of 0.5 million per year. Most of these immigrants came from South American countries, although a substantial number of them were also from Romania, Morocco or the U.K. In principle, this change in the migratory trends was positive since it compensated for declining fertility rates in the country and fed a labor market that was still booming well into the 2000s⁵². In fact, the children of migrant parents account for up to 82% of the demographic growth of the country this last decade, and there are economic sectors such as construction, hostelry, and agriculture that have only been able to sustain their business thanks to the cheap labor provided by migrants from underdeveloped regions. By 2005, Spain had become, in absolute numbers, the third country in the world in the reception of immigrants since 1990—only behind the U.S. and Germany—, and the first in relative numbers⁵³. Although it is true that migration into the Basque Country has never reached the magnitude that it has had in other areas of the country—in which it could sometimes come close to 20% of the total population—, still there is no doubt that the demographic composition has been profoundly altered. As Cristina Blanco has argued, due to the recurrent failures of the Spanish State to establish a well-defined migration policy, the Basque Autonomous Community has been compelled to develop its own integration plans⁵⁴.

Unlike other European nations with a longer tradition of migration, Spain was somehow caught by surprise in the early 1990s by these waves of economic migrants that were attracted by the new buoyancy of the country.

⁵¹ ZAPATA, R., “Diversidad y política pública”, *Papeles*, n.º 104, 2008, pp. 93-104.

⁵² IZQUIERDO, A., “Inmigrantes y habitantes”, *El País*, Opinión, 23 January 2000. http://elpais.com/diario/2000/01/23/opinion/948582005_850215.html (last accessed 10/06/2012).

⁵³ DIVISIÓN DE POBLACIÓN DE NACIONES UNIDAS, *Migraciones internacionales por países*, 2005. <http://publications.worldbank.org> (last accessed 10/06/2012).

⁵⁴ BLANCO FERNÁNDEZ, C., “Inmigración extranjera en el País Vasco: Estrategias políticas para la gestión de la diversidad”, *Política y Sociedad*, vol. 45, n.º 1, 2008, pp. 187-203.

Confronted with this reality, the two major political parties came, on most occasions, to disagree on the policy measures and legislative shifts that the new situation demanded, thus simply delaying decisions and having to resort to extraordinary measures—such as regularization amnesties—that never settled the issue⁵⁵. Although, in principle, the central Administration had all the competences in matters related to immigration and Foreign Affairs, it was soon apparent that the regions and municipalities would need to design their own plans of action in order to safeguard the basic rights of the newcomers. The absence of any coordination between the central Government and sub-state authorities made it evident that each Community was going to establish its own integration policy, in some cases blatantly going against the kind of views supported by the national Government. Thus, for example, while the Catalans seemed more interested in articulating a *‘fer pais’* (or nation-building model), in the Basque region a principle of ‘inclusive citizenship’ was adopted, which basically considered all residents as citizens, regardless of their origins and legal status⁵⁶. According to some policy-makers, the adoption of these generous measures—all foreign residents enjoyed full access to public social services— in many parts of the country had an *‘efecto llamada’* (or pull effect) that made it even more difficult to manage the phenomenon properly. Not only that, but in areas in which the local minority culture was at risk, the sudden arrival of immigrants could aggravate their problems. Will Kymlicka and others have looked in some detail into the issues that come up when multicultural—or ‘multinational’—states become also poly-ethnic due to migration⁵⁷. While many scholars would affirm that the combination of these different types of diversity may prove incredibly enriching to a country, the fact is that hitting the right balance regarding the legitimate entitlements due to each group is not easy.

IV. The Effects of Diverse Forces on Citizenship

Given the title of this contribution, one would expect the various decentralizing factors that have been considered so far to have had an expansive effect on citizenship, since most of them have tended to unlock it

⁵⁵ APARICIO, R., “Towards an Analysis of Spanish Integration Policy”, in HECKMANN, F. and SCHNAPPER, D. (eds.), *The Integration of Immigrants in European Societies: National Differences and Trends of Convergence*, Lucius & Lucius, Stuttgart, 2003, pp. 213-252.

⁵⁶ See GOBIERNO VASCO, *Plan Vasco de Inmigración 2003-2005*, Departamento de Vivienda y Asuntos Sociales del GV, Vitoria-Gasteiz, 2003.

⁵⁷ KYMLICKA, W., *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1995.

from the traditional container of the Nation-State. This view would certainly be supported by some of the advocates for cosmopolitanism, who often refer to new forms of citizenship and participation that allow individuals to change their allegiances with relative ease and to perceive themselves as part of a single global culture⁵⁸. But, of course, we also know that people do not always make the effort to inform themselves about the critical changes in their society, nor do they necessarily exhibit a willingness to take part in the civic and political life of the community. Robert Putnam, for example, has shown that citizens in the U.S. are becoming increasingly disconnected from the organizations—neighbors, family, clubs, and government—that give sense to a democracy and often withdrawing completely from the public sphere⁵⁹. Although it may be true that this loss of trust and confidence in some of our institutions may not be as profound on this side of the Atlantic, there have been signs these last two decades that suggest that we may be going in a similar direction. That is, while we seem to have succeeded in creating the instruments—communication technologies, grassroots organizations, etc.—to increase our social capital, there seems to be an opposing force that drives us to fend for ourselves and our closest kin, showing little engagement with the issues that are most urgent for our society. Barber and his followers have been arguing that some of the civic values and democratic virtues that have been deeply eroded by libertarian models and exclusive communities can still be saved, if only we go back to some of the basic principles—inclusiveness, deliberation, commonality, learning, and empowerment—on which civil societies were built⁶⁰. But, of course, it would be ingenuous not to admit that there is some inertia, sometimes coming from traditional institutions and other times from unfettered economic dynamics we have set in motion, which clearly run against the fundamental civic rights and responsibilities.

1. *A Few Impending Dangers*

In his in-depth analysis of the definitions of citizenship in France and Germany, Rogers Brubaker warned us about the undesirable effects that linking citizenship to different types of “social closure” and “pre-existing cultural idioms” may have on long-term immigrants in European

⁵⁸ APPIAH, K.A., *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., New York, 2006.

⁵⁹ PUTNAM, R.D., *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 2000.

⁶⁰ BARBER, B.R., *A Place for Us: How to Make Society Civil and Democracy Strong*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1998.

countries⁶¹. This author's legal and cultural approach to the question of the entitlements of migrant workers in countries with a fairly long history of immigration shows us that real socio-political participation and the development of a sense of belonging are seriously hampered by legal frameworks and discourses that would put the emphasis on particular bloodlines or shared cultural elements. Although it is true that some corrective formulae have been introduced in several nations to try to shun the blatant signs of discrimination against foreigners, it is still evident that some countries are more hostile to newcomers than others, and that this fact has a profound influence on how inclined they are to get involved in the civil and political life of the host society⁶². Spain is again a case in point since, while the last two decades of the 20th century the country had a regime of migration which, if not explicitly welcoming, was fairly accommodating, by the first years of the new millennium it had become clear that the State was favoring a restrictive shift in policy. Generally, the reasons given for this shift were either related to the social costs—especially in education, health, and social services—that, allegedly, the immigrants were adding to the nation's expenses, or to the menacing image that was associated to foreigners in the wake of the terrorist attacks on New York, Madrid, and London. The problem was, of course, that the State did not seem legitimized by then to make any substantive decisions on the topic since, as pointed out earlier on, it was mostly the Autonomous Communities that had attended to the newcomers' needs. In this regard, it was to be expected that when the central Government had tried to regulate migration by introducing laws that favor certain types of foreigners or restrict the conditions to change their status, the regions have opted for skewing some of these regulations and arguing that the path of the migrants' integration was now in their hands. These contentions only come to demonstrate that, as Bauböck explains, a migration perspective on social transformation usually “highlights the boundaries of citizenship and political control”, thus setting the limits for different forms of participation⁶³. One wonders, however, whether the institutions involved in these tensions are really thinking of the duties and rights that their citizens should be given or, rather, they are just considering quotas of sovereignty and power that they can use for their own purposes. I have argued elsewhere that quite often discussions

⁶¹ BRUBAKER, W.R., *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA and London, 1992.

⁶² ODMALM, P., *Migration Policies and Political Participation: Inclusion or Intrusion in Western Europe?* Palgrave MacMillan, London, 2005.

⁶³ BAUBÖCK, R., *Migration and Citizenship: Legal Status, Rights and Political Participation*, Amsterdam University Press, IMISCOE Reports, Amsterdam, 2006, p. 16.

about the adequacy of certain policies barely manage to disguise the struggles to accrue higher levels of power and legitimacy between different Administrations⁶⁴.

Obviously, the theme of migration proves especially prickly in the context of debates about citizenship because of the intricate connections with cultural difference and identity issues. It is hard to think of another topic that would arouse such radically different responses precisely because transnational or ‘translated’ human beings seem more likely both to exercise new forms of citizenship and be victimized by particular conceptions of citizenship. This does not mean, however, that sedentary populations are not the subject of diverse allegiances and types of association—after all, little more than 3% of the world population decides to move to other countries. As we have seen in the case of the Basques, these last three decades have allowed them to enhance their sense of belonging to a particular community but also to engage with supranational entities that have contributed very definitely to the socio-economic development of the region. Telecommunications, corporate networks, and an ever-growing diaspora are the reason that, as Saskia Sassen has put it, we are witnessing a noticeable de-territorialization of citizenship⁶⁵. These multiple connections and affiliations can be extremely enriching and empowering if one learns to maneuver in this cosmopolitan scenario. Yet, as the title of Sassen’s eye-opening book also suggests, the experience can become quite disorienting if one gets trapped in the pseudo-legal jargon of global markets and civic rights organizations. It is not unusual to discover that although these entities have come to supplant the obsolete and inefficient mechanisms of the old Nation-States, in the end they are also developing their own strategies to include those citizens—or should we say, consumers—who fit into the profiles they have predesigned. One needs to be aware, therefore, that a multiplicity of levels does not necessarily make us freer if they only lead us where some elites have always wanted us to be.

V. Closing Remarks

Departing from a consideration of how in recent decades we have been compelled to redefine the concept of citizenship and its relation to national identities, this article has attempted to show that, although

⁶⁴ IBARROLA, A. and BLAVE, R., “Haciendo lo correcto por las razones equivocadas: Políticas de inmigración en Euskadi a comienzos del nuevo milenio”, *Revista Española de Estudios Norteamericanos*, n.º 23-24, 2002, pp. 217-232.

⁶⁵ SASSEN, S., *Losing Control?: Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996.

global and local processes are creating new potential to develop forms of civic engagement that were not even conceivable for members of earlier generations, these more inclusive versions of citizenship are not so easily materialized. It has been observed that the sanctity of national boundaries and the hegemonic power of the Nation-States have been questioned and reframed from both within their confines and from supranational organizations—such as the EU or the UN—which have established new rules and guidelines as to the kind of duties and rights that different collectives should be granted. It has become evident, for instance, since the 1980s that Basque people have achieved greater quotas of autonomy to decide on issues pertaining to urban organization, health services, the educational system and the management of the cultural heritage that have had a significant influence on the kind of citizenship fostered in the region. One only needs to look into the differences in how the budgets are structured in the different Autonomous Communities around the Peninsula to realize that their inhabitants must have set their priorities on rather specific areas regarding services and obligations. Although there were domains such as borders, international affairs, migration, the administration of justice or the military forces that, as we saw, were competence only of the central Government, these were rather limited in comparison with the matters that have already been transferred and are being managed from the sub-state Administrations. It is clear that this decentralizing trend has brought substantial benefits to the citizenry in the sense that these closer institutional entities seem to be more aware of and responsive to the needs of particular populations. We have also seen, however, that contestation is not unusual over who has legitimate power to make decisions in certain areas—especially, if they are somehow related to identity issues. Sometimes due to clear overlapping in the legislation and loopholes that the involved parties always manage to find or to create, it is clear that in Spain there is still some way to go in the matter of how to accommodate regional difference in a fair manner.

It has also become evident, on the other hand, that the incorporation of Spain into the European Community in the mid-1980s not only contributed decisively to the rapid modernization and democratization of the country, but also gave most of its citizens the possibility of building multiple allegiances to institutions, thus promoting more complex forms of citizenship. This was particularly important in a nation that had been characterized by an age-old economic and social isolation that condemned the majority of its population to rather limited choices in terms of class, religious, ethnic, and other affiliations. No doubt, most Spaniards would highlight the economic benefits that the integration into a supranational institution brought to the country via structural funds, bilateral business

deals and the monetary union. Nevertheless, we have also noted that the EU has become a reference in other spheres in which their directives and recommendations have proved much more progressive than the legislation passed at a state level. No wonder, then, that the Autonomous Communities have often looked up to the Union—rather than to the Spanish State—as a model, since its approach has usually been more prone to multicultural and multilateral solutions to problems. It must be said, though, that from the beginning of the financial crisis four or five years ago, we are being privy to a regression to attitudes that had been common in Europe in the first half of the 20th century, in which populist and fascist ideologies gained ground. Thus, a cautionary note needs to be sounded in regard to some of the globalizing processes that, although in appearance seeming to promote more flexible and fluid forms of citizenship, may easily revert to segregating and discriminatory practices that we thought were things of the past.

We have observed that these times of economic crisis may be conveniently used by authorities to justify measures and policies that tend to set back in place boundaries that earlier decades of prosperity had managed to pull down. For example, we have witnessed these last few years a revival of ‘nativist’ or ‘ethnocentric’ movements that present immigrants as an invasion or a threat to the local cultures and, therefore, they should be strictly screened in order to serve only the needs of the receiving society. Of course, no mention is made in these anti-migration tirades of the important contributions that the newcomers have made to the national economies or to keeping the demographic balance of the countries in good shape. More broadly, there is also a tendency to lose sight of global processes in our postcolonial era, processes that would explain human and capital movements as the natural result of the systems that Western countries have been implanting around the globe. But it is not just non-nationals who are suffering the consequences of this involution or regression towards paradigms of the past, the rights of the autochthonous populations are quite often affected too. Second-class (or limited) citizenships have started to become a staple feature of some European societies as some vulnerable groups—the youth, civil servants or pensioners—are beginning to realize that their civic (and even human) rights are not so much in the hands of States—or sub-national and supranational institutions—but rather in those of corporations and business associations that have taken advantage of the often market-friendly regulations. It is important, therefore, that we study how the rules of free trade and open markets intersect—and sometimes clash—with those apparently more flexible and expansive forms of citizenship that have been discussed in this article.

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