

EDITORIAL

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In a world where the need for international cooperation has never been greater, globalisation is generating communities that are not modelled on the traditional criteria of national identification and belonging. In addition, the relation between Nation and State is becoming problematic also because, as David Held points out, the efficiency of institutionalized multilateral cooperation has stalled due to rising multipolarity, more difficult problems, institutional inertia and institutional fragmentation. In several ways, even the European Union is exemplifying this “gridlock”. Since the European Union is an unfinished project, it might be necessary to affirm the policy of interests with a policy of identity which re-emphasizes the political project of European unification alongside distinct national identities, that in turn, as Martinelli underlines in his essay, refers to loyalty and a shared commitment to cultural values such as: fundamental human rights, civil liberties, democratic political institutions, rule of law, freedom of movement of people, goods and capital, social justice and non-violent resolution of conflicts.

In this issue of “Glocalism”, there are several case studies of new global identities and communities that seem to challenge the evermore formal role played by political institutions, whose inefficiency is so relevant as to generate both a global “gridlock” and the EU crisis already mentioned. On one hand, there is the example of African refugees in Israel who seek to become a part of the Israeli collective by adopting commodity and consumption patterns and what they perceive to be the attributes of the desired lifestyle in the host country. On the other hand, in Europe (where Germany has the highest number of immigrants) even though there are hints of a partial disintegration of the fault lines between immigrants’ self and what they perceive as “German”, it seems that there is an emergence of a new inclusive narrative of “Germaneness”.

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As in the aforementioned case, always in Europe, Turks (technically white “Caucasian”) do not fit neatly into Western racial categories. With the increasing normalization of racist discourses in Western politics, their assumed religious and geographical identities categorise “secular” Turks along with their Muslim “others” and crucially suggest a “non-white” status. In the new “after 9/11” context, for Turks who explicitly refuse to be presented along with “Islamists”, “whiteness” becomes an act of belonging to “the West” instead of the world of terrorism.

The example of the Uruguayan Law on Afro-descendants, issued in 2013, provides affirmative action to favour Afro-descendants and to recognise their contributions to national culture and identity. In a very different dynamic outside of the Nation-State action, it is possible also to reflect on how a new and hybrid idea of cultural identity called “Italicity” is progressively redefined by the processes of individual and collective identity construction through globalisation.

Two other very different reflections related to the idea of identity as a complex cultural construction have been worthwhile to investigate. On one side, we considered the cultural policy promoted since its inception in 1992 by the Nigerian film industry named Nollywood. Thanks in large part to the popularity of the highly affective and dramatic narrative conventions, the industry has perfected itself by producing films that depict the African immigrant lived experience in American cities like New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Atlanta, combining both local and global settings, cultural attitudes, identity politics, and the protean nature of everyday life in America. Nollywood films are able to show African immigrant characters’ complex emotional, epistemological, and phenomenological responses to both the urban spaces they inhabit and the African spaces they left behind.

From another perspective, it has also been useful to consider works that deal with personal experiences (as in Salman Rushdie’s writings) in order to understand how memoirs, essays and novels contribute to the appreciation of the contradictions in his outlook of life. Rushdie’s family experiences enable the author to make an effort to observe and consider an objective and tolerant judgement of British lifestyle and culture. However, his isolation from society in Britain despite his struggle for adaptation to British cultural values, causes contradictions in his cultural identity as is



well shown by comparing some of his works preceding *Two Years, Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights* (2015), where he justifies his cultural ambivalence in relation to the dynamism of contemporary world.

All these essays seem to enlighten the prismatic category of identity, but also testify that in the last decades “identity” has become a catchword that could explain almost any political or cultural development. Therefore it may be useful even to discuss the existential and social dimensions of identity and to decode the relational and historical conditions of their construction. Because identity is based on a social relation and is the embodiment of power structures and discourses, we can possibly imagine new global identities and communities compatible with human emancipation only if they are able to insert into the particularity of their identity the respect of universal global humanity.

