Territory and Democratic Politics

A Critical Introduction

Oscar Mazzoleni

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Preface

The book provides a comprehensive and updated introduction on territorial-oriented approaches in studying democratic politics. Whereas it engages the limits of the mainstream literature avoiding territorial dimensions, this contribution contends the relevance of the concepts of territory and territorial space for understanding crucial issues in contemporary politics from a sociological point of view. The book furnishes a conceptual frame as well as a timely highlighting on traditional and new topics as the territorial state-building and its rescaling, the transformation of democratic citizenship, the relevance of territorial voting, the territorial dimensions of populism and the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic taken as a global territorial crisis. Dealing with some classic and recent contributions in sociology, political science, geography, history and international relations, the book discusses the rising scholar debate around territory and territoriality that has developed over the last few decades.

This contribution is an outcome of a long intellectual path mainly connected with the activities of the Research Observatory for Regional Politics at the University of Lausanne. Some of its contents have been already presented in courses and lectures at the Institute of Political Sciences of the University of Lausanne, at the Department of Sociology of California-San Diego, the New School of New York, at the Universities of Torino, Padova and La Sapienza of Rome, as well as at the Conferences of the Political sociology network of the European sociological Association, the Political Sociology Standing Group of the European Consortium of

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Oscar Mazzoleni degree in sociology and anthropology, Ph.D. in contemporary history, is a professor in political science and political sociology at the University of Lausanne, where he leads the Research Observatory for Regional Politics. He was invited as a visiting professor and research fellow at the Universities of Columbia, Laval, Geneva, Groningen, Torino, Sorbonne-Panthéon- Paris, Science-Po-Paris, European University Institute of Florence and Cornell University. His research has been published in "Perspectives on European politics and Society", "Government and Opposition", "Party Politics", "Swiss Political Science Review", "Comparative European Politics", "Territory, Politics, Governance", Regional and Federal Studies", "Nationalism and ethnics politics", "Journal of Borderlands Studies", among others. He is co-author and co-editor of several books, including "Understanding Populist Party Organisation" (Palgrave 2016), "Regionalist Parties in Western Europe. Dimensions of Success" (Routledge 2017), "Political Populism. A Handbook" (Nomos 2017 and 2021), "The People and the Nation. Populism and Ethnoterritorial politics in Europe" (Routledge 2020), "Sovereignism and Populism. Citizens, Voters and Parties in Western European democracies" (Routledge 2022) and "National populism and borders. The politicization of cross-border mobilisation in Europe" (Elgar 2023).

Why and How Territory

Abstract This introductory chapter highlights the relevance of the territorial dimension in contemporary democratic politics and how it can be incorporated into a conceptual configuration of a territory-oriented approach in political sociology. It also emphasises the need for an interdisciplinary dialogue between political sociology and the humanities—in particular, with geographic scholarship—to better understand the complexities of the territorial dimension in democratic politics.

Keywords Territory · Political sociology · Interdisciplinary dialogue · Democracy

This book argues for the importance of a territory-oriented approach to understand contemporary democratic politics. Political sociology does not ignore the notions of territory, territorial space and territoriality in topics such as state-building, immigration, nationalism and identity, as highlighted in the recent *New Handbook of Political Sociology* by Janoski et al. (2020). However, the literature sometimes fails to focus specifically on the conceptual meanings, political relevance and heuristic uses of territory in the understanding of democratic politics (Detterbeck & Hepburn, 2018). Above all, the territory is assumed as a reified, fixed and immobile space (Foucault, 1980: 70). For example, in the case of voting analysis,

one of the classic topics in political sociology and political science, it was recently suggested that "public opinion scholars had largely lost sight of the fact that the places where people live, and people's identification with those places, shape public opinion and political behaviour" (Munis, 2022: 1057).

The book argues that territorial spaces are constantly changing phenomena with more or less contingent or consolidated characteristics. Territory is a complex concept that arises from the ongoing interaction between the natural environment and human actions. For social and political sciences, territory is a space of social, cultural and political practices and representations shaped by institutions, political actors and citizens. It is also a space that contributes to forming political action and its orientations. In other words, territory is a crucial link between society and politics. However, owing to a lack of attention from many scholars and its complex and polysemic meaning, it is essential to thoroughly examine the relevance of the territorial dimensions of politics, as well as the conceptual aspects and analytical strengths of territory-oriented approaches to democratic politics.

The book has three main goals. First, it emphasises the shortcomings of the prevailing unterritorial perspectives and explains why territory is so important to studying contemporary political challenges. Second, it provides a conceptual tool for developing a territory-oriented approach to political analysis. Third, the book provides some examples to illustrate how a territory-oriented approach can be useful in understanding issues like the state-building of liberal democracies and their current transformations, the challenges of democratic rights in a global era, the salience of territorial voting, the linkages between territory and populism and the key role of the territorial dimension in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Complexity and Interdisciplinary Dialogue

Why is territory still relevant in a global era, despite the apparent weakening of the territorial states and the strong influence of changeability and mobility on shaping social relations and political outcomes? For decades, territories have been closely associated with nation-states or national states, but recent changes such as the end of the Cold War, new forms of globalisation, EU supranational integration, institutional decentralisation and the digital revolution, but also securing and protectionist tendencies, have led to a theoretical redefinition of the link between territory

and politics. Above all, there is a growing concern about the relationship between states and territory, particularly in light of the decline of the Westphalian state model. Contemporary reflections on territory stem from a recognition that the traditional concept of the territorial state has been surpassed. While territory was once seen as a space somehow corresponding to the perimeter of nation-states, there is now a rising awareness that territory is a more complex and contested concept, having undergone a process of relative emancipation from the state (Agnew, 2005).

New meanings and a common sense have emerged that differ from the traditional understanding of territory. In the past, public institutions associated with territory were primarily the state or nation-state, but this is no longer the case. Today, when we speak of territory in political language, we typically refer to local and regional powers or belonging. This shift in usage entails addressing themes such as the "rediscovery of the territory", which involves viewing roots and communities as places with strong emotional connotations and rediscovering environmental protection and the enhancement of local heritage. Geographers and urban planners have become experts in advocating for these issues in recent years (Delaney, 2005).

In Europe, the changing nature of territorial states following the processes of decentralisation and devolution, as well as the redefinition of institutional competences following the establishment of supranational bodies like the European Union, have greatly transformed territorial spaces and their uses. Political scientists have argued that this territorial rescaling has transformed the role of nation-state in terms of policy-making and political mobilisations (Keating, 2013). The transformation of territorial states has also been related to the rise and success of regionalist, nationalist and populist actors, who often politicise territorial dimensions in their anti-establishment claims. Meanwhile, environmental issues have become a central part of the political agenda. In general, various aspects of the evolution of contemporary societies and politics seem to be boosting the relevance of territorial aspects, though in a dynamic way.

How can we grasp such diverse topics and questions? This book adopts a strategy of introducing and discussing a configuration of concepts linked to the concept of territory. This approach allows to develop a territory-oriented approach to politics that can adapt to the different research questions. This strategy is based on interdisciplinary dialogue with reflections and debates that have developed over the past few decades in some

disciplines, particularly geography, urban studies, philosophy, historiography, political science, international relations, economics and, of course, sociology. Key representatives of this heterogeneous legacy include Jean Gottmann, Michel Foucault, Henry Lefebvre, Robert David Sack, Claude Raffestin and, more recently, Stuart Elden, John Agnew, David Harvey, Jacques Lévy, Saskia Sassen, Neil Brennan, Michael Keating, Charles S. Maier and Paulina Ochoa Espejo. Geographic scholarship has played a crucial role in recent decades by renewing itself and fostering rich interdisciplinary interactions with the humanities (e.g. Storey, 2020). Although the representatives of territorial scholarship are not always consensual or homogenous, they provide the reflections and analysis to better understand territories in their complexity, as both changeable and permanent spaces and as material, practical and symbolic phenomena. This set of concepts, such as borders, place, territorialisation, scale and network, are key elements to understand the concept of territory.

The Chapters

The main goal of this book is to provide an introductory but essential overview. Drawing inspiration from various perspectives, this book explores the sociological and political significance of the concept of territory in understanding democratic politics. It focuses specifically on the state-building process and the territorial rescaling of democratic systems in European countries, democratic rights, voting behaviour and anti-establishment politics.

The chapter addresses the question of why the link between territory and politics has often been overlooked in political studies in recent decades and why there is now a growing interest in territorial issues. The third chapter takes an interdisciplinary approach to explore the polysemic meaning of the concept of territory and how it relates to space, political institutions, strategy, appropriation, place, borders and networks. The fourth chapter deals with the historical sociology of the territorial state by revisiting the Westphalian model and examining how it helps to understand recent challenges. As the paradigmatic example of institutionalised territorial space in modern times is the state, it is important to discuss its connection to ongoing transformations. The fifth chapter focuses on the relationship between citizenship, nationality and territory. It examines

how a territorial approach to politics deals with the concepts of population, people and citizenship in an era of global migration and highlights relations and tensions in relation to democratic rights.

The sixth chapter explores how analyses of political divides (e.g. between centres and peripheries or urban and rural areas) continue to shape voting preferences in contemporary democracies. Although globalisation and urbanisation have transformed territorial ties in profound ways, voting behaviour is still influenced by the places where people grow up and live. The seventh chapter discusses the role of territorial dimensions in understanding discourses and success of political parties are often defined as populist, nationalist or sovereignist. It argues that populism and territory are intertwined concepts and goes on to discuss the concept of territorial populism. The eighth chapter contends that the COVID-19 pandemic represents the most significant global territorial crisis of our time and uses conceptual tools to show how a territorial approach to politics can help us understand this crisis, which has shaken the lives of citizens, challenged governments and shaped new patterns in political contention. The final chapter highlights the key features of territory as a key concept that plays an intermediate analytical role between society and political institutions and proposes three ideal types of territory—stability, contingency and politicisation—as a framework for a future research agenda.

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Strength and Limits of Unterritorial Approaches

Abstract The relevance of the notion of territory is often overlooked in political sociology. This chapter explores how powerful scientific narratives like nationalist methodology, mass society, globalism and theories of audience democracy contribute to neglect the concept of territory. At the same time, the chapter stresses how recent transformations in contemporary democracies would provide rising relevance of territorial-oriented approaches.

Keywords Methodological nationalism · Mass society · Audience democracy · Nationalism · Security environmental issues

The starting point of any territory-oriented approach is the recognition of the political relevance of territorial challenges. However, this relevance is far from taken for granted in current political research on European democratic politics. In general, contemporary political sociology focuses on the dialectic between society and politics and does not always ascribe a specific role to territory in this dialectic. Political science is mainly concerned with the role of political systems and the state, while often territory is assumed to be merely a proxy for an area of jurisdiction. More broadly, with a few exceptions, a reflective notion of territory is

not an integral part of the prevailing approaches to the study of contemporary politics. On the contrary, in social and political sciences, there is an influential but heterogeneous stream arguing that territory is irrelevant (e.g., Keating, 2018; Kolers, 2009: 68). In this chapter, we discuss some influential academic narratives underpinning dominant trends in unterritorial approaches. We will discuss some of these narratives before addressing some territorial issues challenging unterritorial perspectives in contemporary democracies.

Methodological Nationalism and Mass Society

There are two important academic narratives underscoring research on democratic politics in the twentieth century. The first is represented by so-called methodological nationalism, which is a viewpoint that takes for granted national boundaries, understood as spaces "naturally" delimited by the nation-state. According to this theoretical perspective, which is often used implicitly, political action is framed in a nation-wide perspective. The assumption is that the nation, the state and society are conflated into the same entity and that the latter would constitute the "natural" foundation for the investigation of political and social sciences (Chernilo, 2007). Methodological nationalism is not concerned with the point of view of political actors; rather, it is an epistemological assumption. Territorial state is implicitly understood as a taken-for-granted nation-state with undisputed borders and seen as a neutral substratum or as a mere container of national political processes (Taylor, 1994).

Methodological nationalism entails significant consequences. The first is the belief that the national space represents the only way to organise and delimit modern society. The second is the strong tendency to detach social and political sciences from the study of international relations. According to this interpretation, scholarships would be concerned exclusively with what happens within the territorial nation-state, while international relations would focus solely on relations between states, thereby excluding or marginalising hybrid phenomena like cross-border or transnational relations (Agnew, 1994). Third, society is seen as an area coinciding with the boundaries of the nation-state without examining the premises and consequences of this delimitation (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). According to the sociologist Ulrich Beck, this axiom is shared not only by classics of sociology such as Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons but also by contemporary philosophers such as John Rawls. Rawls's theory of justice

does not take into account the relations between societies or the porosity of national borders. Implicit in this is "the principle of mutual determination between state and society: the territorial nation-state is both creator and guarantor of individual civil rights and citizens organize themselves with the help of national political parties to influence and legitimize state actions" (Beck, 2006: 27).

The pervasiveness of methodological nationalism reflects the persistent stability of institutional borders of Western European states after the Second World War and the absence of war on and between territories for decades (Strandbjerg, 2010: 49). However, there is also an underlying Western Eurocentrism. After the Second World War, Western Europe saw a trend towards resolving territorial disputes between states, breaking away from centuries of conquests and conflicts. But this trend is certainly not common in other regions of the world, including Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, methodological nationalism represents an a-geographical and unhistorical assumption, but it also predictably attaches greater importance to political phenomena that have a national spread or prominence than to what happens in certain subnational areas, thereby underestimating micro-regional and local dynamics while overestimating a nation-state's role in unifying and homogenising territories under its jurisdiction (Keating, 2018).

The second narrative that contributes to avoiding relevance to the territorial dimensions of democratic politics is inspired by the notion of "mass society". Although the concept dates back to the American political sociology of the 1950s (Kornhauser, 1960) and this label has almost been lost in recent times, its contents substantiate one of the most widespread and widely shared narratives today in contemporary social and political science: Bureaucratisation, secularisation and consumer society would have contributed to shaping an atomised and homogenised individuality, dissolving or sidelining the communitarian ties of individuals with the territory and places they belong to. Two academic trends have contributed to reinforcing the importance of such as narrative: The first is the importance of the economic paradigm of the rational choice, which assumes as its unit of analysis a de-territorialised individual whose belonging, networks and collective mentalities are not considered relevant to their choices and behaviours. The second trend is the split between territory and space. "Massification" has not necessarily erased the notion of space, as it has given it a purely physical or abstract connotation of a more or less neutral container, or, again, of a background on which social

and political facts are grafted. Although it is difficult to find statements denying the relevance of the spatiality of social and political phenomena as such, it is also true that an "unterritorial" spatiality is often assumed to be a notion situated upstream or downstream from political practices and representations.

GLOBALISM AND THE DECLINE OF THE NATION-STATE

The third powerful narrative that ignores the relevance of the concept of territory in contemporary democracy research is linked to the emergence and consolidation of the concept of globalisation and its ideological assumption as "globalism" (Steger, 2002). The concept of globalisation has had a variety of uses and interpretations. For instance, some scholars believe the process of globalisation dates back several centuries. However, it seems well established that the most recent phase of globalisation accompanied the consolidation of the financial market economy, neoliberalism and the digital revolution. During the historical period that the historian Eric Hobsbawm calls the "short century" (1994), there was a certain alignment between state, nation, society and economy. The economy was international, but its regulation for the large part of the twentieth century was strongly managed within the nation-states that set boundaries between the domestic economy and external trade. Recently, the transnational mobility of capital has greatly increased. Acting as both a cause and an effect of the diminished regulatory capacities of nation-states, their welfare regimes and the pacts between capital and labour that had characterised the post–Second World War era were strongly challenged by global forces, both from a material and an ideological point of view. In becoming the key narrative of the past few decades, globalism, that is the ideology of world's free market, has brought with it its own interpretations, which have further contributed to legitimising unterritorial approaches to democratic politics (Steger & James, 2019: 114). Moulded in economic, social, cultural or technological transformations, globalisation is seen as a challenge to the historical role of the nation-state as an institutional construct capable of shaping societies and territories. The narrative of the market-oriented global world also fits with the "peaceful" geopolitical period that followed the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the development of European integration: All of those processes would have produced a profound break in the role of states and national borders and implies the rise of a

supranational power, that is, the institution of the European Union and the decline of nation-states.

Not all narratives emphasising the impact of global transformations contend a marginalisation of the nation-state. According to a "moderate" version, the globalisation of the past few decades has brought about a real global and transnational shift with the weakening of the national territorial state's sovereign power, although it has not lost its relevance and continues to exercise many of its traditional powers (see, for example, Hirst & Thompson, 1996). Instead, a more "radical" or globalist narrative sees the decline of states and the borders between them as a prelude to their irrelevance. The current globalisation would have replaced a "supposed territorial order of the world" with a "world of flows and absent borders" (Agnew, 2018: VIII). This thesis is supported by "Borderless World", a bestseller published in 1990 in which American essayist Kenichi Ohmae argues that economic transformations have made analyses of contemporary societies based on national borders unnecessary. Transnational corporations, the real actors of today's capitalism, act more and more freely in a set of different locations and compete with each other in a rising global market. In a globally interconnected economy, businesses and consumers are more closely intertwined than ever before, while politicians, bureaucrats and the military structure are losing their relevance. All of this has happened because of the opening up of the world economy and the increase in trade between nations, which in turn has been driven by rapid developments in communication technologies. In 2005, the influential American journalist Thomas Friedman published "The World is Flat", in which this narrative is taken up and deepened. Friedman's book, which was also a bestseller, was a harsh and radical public critique of contemporary geographical thinking. His argument was that the current evolution of society has rendered geographical divisions and borders between different areas of the world meaningless, as the digital revolution, economic exchanges and increased mobility have led to an unprecedented circulation of goods, information, services and people. The irrelevance of territorial space and the overcoming of distances are also consequences of processes of homogenisation of cultures and lifestyles in a context of convergence of economic policies based on the primacy of the market economy and competitiveness. In this way, globalisation represents a radicalisation of mass society, where flows and interconnections replace any territorial roots for individuals and collective bodies.

THE END OF THE IDEOLOGIES
AND THE RISE OF AUDIENCE DEMOCRACY

A fourth narrative is also key to understanding the marginality of territory-oriented approaches in political sociology. This narrative is strongly connected to mass society and influenced by the thesis of the "end of ideologies", that is the humanistic ideologies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were becoming irrelevant in contemporary politics (Bell, 1960). Meanwhile, in the 1950s and 1960s, an influential strand of electoral studies highlighted how support for political parties in the first part of the twentieth century in Europe was marked by deep cultural and social rifts, a consequence of the conflicts that had marked the rise and consolidation of "mass" democracies (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). The clash between state and church, along with the industrial revolution, contributed to the development of territorially connected political cultures, as part of belonging to different ideological families capable of securing voting loyalty. This narrative had been adopted to interpret the persistence of party systems between the 1920s and 1960s in many Western European democracies. By contrast, in the 1990s and 2000s with the spread of the narrative of globalisation and individualism, as well as a renewed interest in the idea of the "end of ideologies" (corresponding to the collapse of Soviet communism), there was scepticism towards the salience of collective identities and ideological belonging in explaining current trends in political behaviour and the evolution of party systems. In studies of elections, parties and political organisations, there is a growing consensus that candidates, leaders and individual issues prevail over ideological attachments. One of the main explanations for the decline of "party democracy" has been framed around the concept of "audience democracy" (Manin, 1997), which emphasises issue voting and political personalisation, with a decreasing role of party loyalties but also social and cultural identities. This shift has diminished the influence of ideological traditions, as well as regional or local roots in politics.

However, even in recent years, there have been numerous studies focused on territorial components: In many areas of social and political science, a prominent wisdom of the relationship between society and politics has imposed itself based on social fluidity and the changeability of opinions attracted by a shifting and (to some extent) ephemeral political supply. This wisdom is based on the distinction between social ties and territorial ties, between spaces and flows, on the one hand, and

territory and places, on the other. This distinction renews a traditional dichotomy between community and society that has been present since the classical sociology of the early twentieth century. This perspective might suggest that society lacks places, has individuals without community ties and flows weaken communities, memberships and traditions to the point of making them insignificant in the explanation of contemporary phenomena. Implicit in this juxtaposition between places and flows is the idea that place is the expression of a deep-rooted attachment, while flows have been regarded as contingent, characteristic of a "liquid" modernity (Bauman, 2000) that has imposed itself on contemporary society. In this sense, there is a strong convergence between narratives related to nationalist methodology, mass society, globalism and audience democracy, although they do have not the same concern about the relevance of the nation-state in shaping democratic politics.

Territorial Challenges

In the scientific narratives mentioned above, the territory is often an implicitly neutral geographical area defined by institutional jurisdiction. It is given a passive role and viewed as a "natural resource", a substratum available to individuals and groups with "floating" belongings. However, the lack of relevance of territorial dimension within scientific realm seems paradoxical regarding socio-political realities: to some extent, for ordinary people and political actors, territory—as form of spatial belonging or proximity and place where they live and do political activities—is part of their experience and discourse. Of course, those advocating for unterritorial narratives might argue that territorial dimensions have not disappeared but are losing relevance given the major historical transformations that have occurred in the past few decades in contemporary democracies. However, this is precisely the point: current democracies are confronted with some crucial territorial challenges. Thus, without denying the transformation that the nation-state model has inherited from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the relevance of historical shifts that have taken place, especially in terms of the deconstruction of the relations between territories, society and politics, one might question the heuristic capacity of unterritorial perspectives to deal with key transformations of liberal democracies.

Let us go back to the early 1990s, not long after the break-up of the Soviet Union, with the experience of the first war in Iraq and the rise of

an apparent American unilateralism. This time was marked by the advent of the e-economy and increasing volatility in the world economy when financial flows and forms of trade seemed to become increasingly fluid and dominant over the "material" economy. At that juncture, the celebrated book "The End of History" by American essayist Francis Fukuyama, which came out in 1992, was representative of a widely held belief. The author argued that the last stage of historical evolution involved the global success of liberal democracy, which had rid itself of its antagonists. Liberal democracy was an ideal that had finally been achieved, in line with the technological progress driven by advanced capitalism. However, Fukuyama later revised this view in light of the tensions and crises that have continued to emerge. One of his last books is entitled "Identity", a notion that was introduced as early as the 1970s and that has become increasingly popular in sociological and political publications in recent years (Fukuyama, 2018). This notion emphasises collective belongings and emotional concerns, as well as tensions in which the free-floating and full-mobile individual and "peaceful" nation-states are moulded. The main consequence is the challenge of the dominant narratives of the 1990s in Western countries.

Neo-Nationalism and War

In unilateral globalist narratives, the challenge of the centrality of the nation-state as the (only) legitimate space for political action went along the naïve (or optimistic) assumption that this trend does not imply resistance and conflict in the name of the nation. In fact, unlike what happened with the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the weakening of nation-states' capacity to engender belonging and loyalty does not always imply peaceful or democratic outcomes. These narratives included the re-emergence of nationalisms even in the heart of Europe, which highlighted the extent to which the processes of consolidating liberal democracy had to come to terms with the appeal to tradition, identities and territorial boundaries. Of course, there are different forms of nationalist ideology, and some of them take an openly violent form such as civil war and genocide.

The comforting visions of a European continent on the road to a radiant destiny have been disrupted by ongoing territorial conflicts in recent decades. Just when the end of the Cold War seemed to give way to a pacified world, the war in Yugoslavia, a state with a multinational,

multi-ethnic and multi-religious character whose gradual dissolution was marked by the resurgence of nationalist parties, independence referendums and a bloody civil war (e.g. Baker, 2015), provides an obvious counterpoint. Faced with a passive, powerless Western Europe, repression and genocide aimed at redrawing territorial power and collective identities unfolded in the former Yugoslav lands. Outside Europe, in 1994, two years after the end of the Yugoslav state, one of the most ferocious acts of bloodshed in twentieth-century African history took place in Rwanda: The genocide of the Tutsis, which was fuelled by ethnic hatred, claimed over half a million lives in a few months and led to a change in government. More recently, Russia's attacks on Ukraine showed that traditional war among nation-states in the name of seizing territory is still part of European history. While some conflicts have a local or regional impact, others, such as the recent evolution of the Ukrainian war after the invasion by the Russian army, have a transnational and global impact.

However, nationalism and ethnic conflict also follow more peaceful paths. In northern Italy, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the emerging Northern League contributed to a re-politicisation of territorial issues, also as an effect of the geopolitical changes of those years on the Western party system. In the vacuum left by the major parties that had previously marked the country's history, the Northern League made a breakthrough and has been one of the longest-lived regionalist parties in the West. Although it is no longer its warhorse, the strategy implemented around the mid-1990s was defined around the idea of a Padania as the basis of a new state to be founded by seceding from the Italian state. In many parts of the world, various independence movements have fought and continue to fight in the name of common interests and identity roots. Catalonia and Scotland are the best-known examples in Europe. Despite their ideological differences, they both want to reclaim sovereignty for themselves in the name of a nation with little or no recognition, based on the right of self-determination for peoples. In some cases (e.g. Scotland in the 1990s), the central state has acquiesced to at least some of the demands by allowing for the establishment of the Scottish Parliament as part of devolution and greater regional powers. In other cases, as in Catalonia, the recognition of certain rights and autonomies risks clashing with the prerogatives of the central state, as happened with the political-institutional clash, the condemnations of Catalan leaders and the social and institutional crisis that followed the 2017 independence referendum. Thus, nationalism is a kind of offensive ideology but also a defensive one,

as in the case of traditional wars among two nation-states (e.g. the Russo-Ukrainian War), but also within an institutional framework, as in the struggle for national self-determination in Scotland or Catalonia. Nationalism, including the recent upsurge of nationalistic sentiment in Europe, is always embedded in conflict over territorial conquest and control.

WALLS AND SECURITY

The securitisation of borders and the assertion of territorial defence are reflected in the "return" of borders and wars. Although border issues have never stopped being relevant, global changes after the end of the Cold War led to a decrease in attention on them. However, "The Obsession of Borders", published in 2017 by geographer Michel Foucher, reminds us that the world has some 250,000 kilometres of fences between nation-states, including about 30,000 kilometres that were drawn between the 1980s and 2000s. After 9/11, terrorism was the main reason for this acceleration, but increasing (legal and illegal) flows of people and goods have also played also a crucial role (e.g. Schain, 2019).

The European Union has followed only slightly a different path. In the 1990s and early 2000s, during a period of significant expansion of foreign trade, the EU took unprecedented steps on the continent by concluding agreements that allowed for the free movement of people, capital and goods between member states, as well as the abolition or near-abolition of customs controls between the Schengen treaty states. At the same time, however, there was also a reverse process that put border controls back, reinforcing bordering policies concerning non-EU territories and people. While military and economic borders lost their relevance without disappearing entirely, the traditional function of police control was reaffirmed (Andreas & Snyder, 2000: 219). The territorial space—no longer only national also but international or rather transnational—continues to be protected from those who consider themselves unfit for access. Despite the free movement between member states, a process of re-nationalisation of migration policy has taken hold, this time towards flows of people from the world's poorest countries, based on the principle that global openness must imply a strengthening of the nation-state's internal cultural cohesion through an effective system of filters and exclusions that redraws its borders (Sassen, 1996; 2015).

The years following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Germany and the end of the Soviet Union and its influence

over states behind the Iron Curtain shifted the geopolitical balance of power in favour of the United States, which seized the opportunity to consolidate a phase of détente in international relations that had already begun in the second half of the 1980s. The Start agreements, the most important of which was signed between the United States and the Soviet Union just before the latter's collapse in 1991, were aimed at reducing weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons in particular. After the arms race of the Cold War, détente was happening on a global level. In Western Europe, the increase in European integration (i.e. the enlargement of the union) consolidated the pacification process in relations between the member states. That phase was significantly disrupted by the 11 September 2001 attack on the Twin Towers in New York City. For the first time, the greatest military and economic power on the planet had been attacked on its own territory. Moreover, the enemy to fear was not a traditional state but a terrorist network capable of overcoming the defences of the world's greatest superpower. The response was a reconfiguration of territorial security policies inside and outside state borders. The trauma of 9/11 marked the start of a vast programme of reinforcing land and air borders, including the construction of a 1,100-kilometre border with Mexico: The fight against illegal immigration, crime and terrorism converged in the name of national security.

Although an emerging new Cold War era seems to shape geopolitical trends as a consequence of the Ukraine-Russia war, this does not imply a unilateral confirmation of the monopoly of force in the hands of the state. Moulded by neo-liberal ideologies, which assume that the private sector is more effective and efficient than the state apparatus, the private sector has been given parts of security policies that were once the prerogative of state bureaucracies (e.g. Hall & Biersteker, 2002). While the state is not reducing its commitment to security, taking into account the increase in military spending worldwide, what is happening is a redefinition of the state's monopoly in the management of ground-level coercion. Security policies have been partially privatised or transferred to supranational structures (Nalla & Gurinskaya, 2020). In recent decades, we have observed the rise on the international scene of global security multinationals and private military agencies that have played a crucial role in the "war against terror" in many parts of the world. In parallel, local communities that are denied access to satisfactory levels of public policing have developed forms of self-defence on their territory, demonstrating how public security and

territorial control confirm the role of territorial spaces, albeit in a new form (Wood & Dupont, 2006).

Environmental Issues

Territorial issues also take on new relevance through the emergence of environmental challenges and their influence on local, national and international political agendas. The issue of environmental pollution and, more generally, the ecological challenge have had mixed political fortunes since the 1960s when the first warnings of environmental risks linked to the development model of industrial and post-industrial societies emerged. Nowadays, climate change tends to shape the governance agenda across the world (Bulkeley & Newell, 2023).

Environmental issues in a broad sense highlight the importance of territory and the need for a territorial approach to policy from several points of view. Firstly, it shows how there is no clear-cut boundary but rather a strong interweaving between human action and the natural environment, i.e. the living territory; the survival and reproduction of human action also depend on the latter. Environmental issues revolve around the preservation of natural resources. Secondly, it highlights how economic activities have obvious environmental impacts, confirming the close links between economic production and its location. The environmental issue shows the variability and interdependence of the impact of climate change with respect to different social, economic and political contexts. The consequences of climate change are transnational—that is, they affect different territorial spaces simultaneously. What happens in the European Alps (e.g. the melting of glaciers) does not have the same geopolitical influence as the destruction of the Amazon rainforest or the retreat of Antarctic ice, even though these changes both affect the climate of a wide range of territories around the globe. At the same time, we note that it is first and foremost the nation-states that are called upon as the main actors responsible for action against climate change, although this is also done through difficult international and supranational collaboration. Unsurprisingly, local and national governments, as well as supranational institutions, play crucial roles in environmental issues. Meanwhile, as the Kyoto Accords of 2007 and the Paris Agreement of 2015 have shown, institutional concerns about global warming tend to conflict with economic interests, and that is reflected in many political arenas, including

where NGO and environmental movements stressing spatial inequality and justice (Almeida, 2019; Carmin & Agyeman, 2011).

Environment and climate are inherent to territory as a space of life and as a political space. On the one hand, Avery Kolers (2009: 8) underlines the strong connection between land, terra and territory:

> First, we live on land – we, our homes, our belongings, and things we build individually and collectively, take up space. Hence the physical extension of terra *firma* is a good whose distribution matters to everyone. Second, land is composed of resources that we need in order to survive, prosper, and express ourselves; literally, the land constitutes both our physical bodies and virtually every material good we can find or fashion. Hence secure access to good land, land we can use to do the things we care about, is essential to our capacity to make our way in the world. Third, land and its properties – its location, its material composition, who or what lives on it – are essential to a vast array of world systems, such as nitrogen and carbon cycles, water purification and storage, ecosystems, and the production of oxygen, without which we would not exist. All the value of territory is built on these three foundations.

This perspective can be articulated, on the other hand, in a further rethinking of the relationship between nature and human activity, particularly with the debate over the advent of the Anthropocene as a new historical epoch capable of shaping not only territorial but also geological processes on Earth, which takes on new meaning in today's climate regime, but also new kind of social and political struggles (Latour, 2018; Latour & Schultz, 2022).

Beyond Unterritorial Thinking?

In sum, some narratives relating to nationalism methodology, mass society, globalism and the decline of nation-states, as well as the crisis of political ideologies, the rise of audience democracy and the weakening of political cleavages, have marginalised territory-oriented approaches. All these narratives tend to assume territory is not relevant. Of course, as we have seen, these narratives reflect partially the structure and transformations of the European democracies since the end of the Second World War: the growth of consumerism, individualism, secularisation, the stability of Western European nation-state borders, the acceleration of European integration and the increasing mobility of capital, goods and

people after the end of the Cold War. However, this is only one side of the story, as a series of anomalies have challenged the unterritorial paradigm. In the past few decades, various kinds of evidence have emerged to bring territorial issues back into the limelight, such as the return of nationalist ideologies and ethnic mobilisation, the re-emergence of walls on the European continent, war and security concerns, environmental issues and the ecological challenge. In fact, avoiding territorial belonging and roots and considering territorial borders as past episodes do not allow for a full understanding of emerging challenges in liberal democracies.

Although territorial issues have never been marginal, the increasing relevance of territorial issues suggests a re-evaluation of the research agenda in political sociology. More crucially, the question arises of how research into democratic politics can take advantage of this opportunity to consider the concept of territory more seriously and to develop conceptual tools that are more oriented around territorial issues. This means going beyond unterritorial approaches, as the notion of territory is relevant not only when nationalism, ethnic conflict and war are at stake but also more generally in understanding how individuals and groups shape their common belonging or how nation-states are transforming in a global and multi-scalar government arena.

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CHAPTER 3

Towards a Territory-Oriented Approach

Abstract This chapter discusses how the concept of territory is key to understanding contemporary democratic politics. Assuming its polysemic meaning and its different uses of the concept in humanities and social sciences, the heuristic strength of territory is identified in conjunction with a set of related concepts. Throughout an interdisciplinary dialogue, it is explored how the concept of territory takes on relevance in relation to space, political institution, strategy, appropriation, place, borders and networks.

Keywords Territory · Space · Strategy · Appropriation · Place · Border · Network

Nationalism, regionalism and migration's issues are usual areas of research in territory-oriented approaches in political sociology and political science. However, as the geographer Stuart Elden points out, this concept is largely avoided in political and social science:

> Theorists have largely neglected to define the term, taking it as obvious and not worthy of further investigation. One searches political dictionaries or introductory textbooks in vain for a conception of this notion: rather it is unhistorically accepted, conceptually assumed and philosophically unexamined. Its meaning is taken to be obvious and self-evident and can therefore

be assumed in political analysis. Political science that does discuss this notion tends to concentrate on legal issues of secession or border disputes, or problems of refugees, nationalism, and core-periphery relations rather than come to terms with the notion itself. (Elden, 2005: 5-6)

An important obstacle of in-depth reflections on the term territory is its "conceptual imprecision" (Elden, 2013: 3). In the Cambridge dictionary, territory has two main meanings: "land belonging to or under the control of a particular country" and an area "dominated by an animal or person". According to the French Larousse's dictionary, the term corresponds to a "portion of land space dependent on a state, a city, a jurisdiction"; a "space considered as a whole that forms a coherent, physical, administrative and human unit"; an "extension that an individual or a family of animals reserves the right to use"; and a "relatively well-defined space that someone attributes to himself and over which he wishes to retain all his authority".

Given the term's intrinsic polysemy, we propose that two main complementary meanings of territory are particularly relevant for political sociology. The first refers to the space of individual and collective life, its uses and boundaries in terms of position, social practices and representations. A territory is both a physical and a symbolic area and comprises a set of positions, practices and representations that are more or less trivial or more or less sophisticated and conveyed by individuals and groups. The second meaning emphasises its jurisdictional character and is linked to political institutions, in particular the state. The first highlights a "bottom-up" conception that is the active role of individuals and social groups in constructing and deconstructing territories, while the second alludes to a more "top-down" perspective focused on the role of political institutions in shaping, defining and controlling territorial spaces. Thus, to a first approximation, territory can be conceived as a concept that acts as a mediator between society and politics.

The two complementary meanings of the notion of territory allow to develop a territory-oriented research agenda capable of understanding contemporary democratic politics. In regard to liberal democracy, a relatively large consensus occurs around the normative idea that they should include a system of government based upon people's participation and regular free elections of political representatives. Of course, the implementation of this general idea varies in time and space, depending on the

emphasis on the institutions, on the power of citizens, and the respect of free speech and rights of minorities.

What is crucial is that both in normative and empirical analysis, the relevance of territory in democratic politics is avoided or made marginal by influent streams of scholarship. Meanwhile, in the past few decades, a heterogenous stream of literature—of geographers, sociologists, political scientists, geographers, economists, philosophers and historians—has dealt with the complexity and the importance of the role of territory and territoriality. Within territorial scholarship, cultural, social and political geography has a crucial role. By distancing from cartographic empiricism, a new generation of geographers has redefined the discipline through strong interdisciplinary dialogue. Geography has been renewed through a broad theoretical-conceptual confrontation, it has also provided considerable stimulus to its sister disciplines, including political sociology, which have drawn (at least in part) from the new directions of geographical knowledge.

Inspired by these contributions, this chapter will show how the notion of territory is part of a configuration of concepts that can frame the transformation of contemporary democratic politics. While the concept of territory is essential, its analytical use should not be isolated from other key related concepts and notions like strategies, appropriations, places, borders, scales and networks. Moreover, beyond traditional topics such as migration, nationalism, regionalism and border issues, all political phenomena are territorialised; in other words, it might be understood with a territory-oriented approach.

Space

The first issue is to discuss the concept of space, which is often treated as a proxy of territory. The main reason is that the definition of space remains vague or abstract. Instead, one of the major contributions of the heterogenous strand of scholarship previously mentioned is that of having questioned the concept of space and brought the concept of territory back to theoretical relevance. Inspired by these reflections, one might argue territory of territorial space does not focus on the biological, hydrographic and orographic characteristics of physical space. Space becomes territorial space or territory thanks to active human intervention—particularly when people engage with and occupy it as a space of life. More crucially, as a result of human action, the concept of territory

challenges the *geometric* connotation of the notion of space. Conceived as a geometric entity, space is a single, mathematically perfect plane, a homogeneous area that is derived from Cartesian and Newtonian conceptions and defined as an objective reality existing beyond the observer. Although the geometric view of space appears as a timeless fact, it is actually a historical product, as geographer Robert Sack (1986) pointed out. Above all, it is the outcome of construction that continues to exert its influence. This idea also accompanies the traditional conception of the nation-state as an institution striving for a homogeneous territorial space, although a similar conception can be found in certain visions of globalisation, which appears as a "continuation of Cartesian thought" (Elden, 2005: 16). Sack (1986) argues that the rise of civilisations around the world and the development of capitalism and modernity have produced major historical changes in what he calls territoriality. Family, education and workplaces tended to coincide before the capitalist era. With industrialisation, the division of labour, the expansion of territorial spaces and, in particular, the conquest of distant territories, the idea of territory as an impersonal geometric space emerged. The development of an abstract meaning of space, which originated in Europe and later spread to the rest of the world, is at the root of a depoliticised interpretation of space and, thus, of territory, which we find in both democratic political theory and representations of world geographical space. Today, a conception of abstract space, which stretches from the "nation-state" to the globe and can be subdivided, ordered and classified as a whole, is favoured by the thesis that processes of "time–space compression" (Harvey, 1990) have virtually abolished distances and effectively made simultaneous global co-presence a reality. In this view, we also find the global approaches of territoriality that are in line with the Cartesian idea according to which global space is seen "in a state-centric manner, as a pre-given territorial container within which globalization unfolds, rather than analysing the historical production, reconfiguration and transformation of this space" (Brenner, 1999: 59).

A geometric and abstract vision of space can be contrasted with a relational vision, inspired by Einsteinian relativism, that intertwines space, time and subject. This reasoning forms the basis for the renewed approaches in social, cultural and political geography. In a relational conception of space, the territory is both the cause and the effect of political action. Territorial space is an organised area in which social and political interaction takes place, but this same space contributes to shaping and transforming the action. One territory is not the same as another;

with its own characteristics shaped by human actions, every territory exerts a specific influence on another. In reconsidering geographical space, it is important to go beyond both evolutionary and theological historicism, which unilaterally ascribe importance to temporality while relegating spatial dimensions to the margins. It is also necessary to call into question the methodologies of investigation inspired by positivist epistemologies, which seek regularities in space (and time) or only statistical variability. Instead, we should rediscover subjective and intersubjective logics that help to construct the sense of singular territories through practices and representations. While arguing for the centrality of spatial dimensions does not necessarily involve embracing the concept of territorial space, they share certain assumptions that we can examine when rethinking the relationship between territory and politics. Through this approach, it is possible to consider politics from the perspective of territory.

Understood as a space of human action, territory should not be considered an objective datum acting as a passive background for such an action but as part of the action itself. Territory is not the antithesis of a nature opposed to culture (i.e. the human realm), and it should not be assumed that the space of that realm (i.e. territory) is a natural, taken-for-granted fact or "second nature", as Aristotelian philosophy might suggest; or with the concept of reification, in Marxian terms, as the result of human action that tends to present itself as a thing, independent of that action. Geographical rethinking helps to make notions such as space, places, borders and territory crucial dimensions of politics. Understood as social and political constructions, these notions are not seen merely as contextual facts but rather as dimensions that shape socio-political phenomena themselves because "where things happen is critical to knowing how and why they happen" (Warf & Arias, 2009: 1).

Political Institution and Territorial Institutionalisation

A key shortcoming in the literature on political research is that the concept of territory is conflated with that of a political institution. In other terms, territorial institutionalisation overlaps political institutions, and more precisely the so-called nation-state. However, territory is more than political institutions, as Sack (1986) suggests. First of all, territory is a space of living that is constituted by the individual who at most negotiates and consolidates their own perimeter within the relational dynamic

with other members of their family. The experience of the individual and informal groups who delimit their territory and construct it through their daily routines and mobilisations is crucial: in their home, their bedroom and their kitchen but also in the street. In this case, territorial institutionalisation, that is the routinisation of the meaning and the perimeter of the territory, is rather low, given that the latter depends on the choices— even minute and barely visible to the outside eye—of the inhabitant themself. The opposite case corresponds to a highly institutionalised territorial space: It transcends face-to-face relations, becomes a collective and anonymous phenomenon and spatially is embedded into the formal political institutions. Accordingly, the territory is institutionalised through the reproductive action of a composite set of agents of political institutions, mainly the state, supported by popular legitimacy. Between daily interpersonal experiences and political institutions, there is of course a varied set of more or less institutionalised territorial spaces.

What is crucial for territory-based political research is that public institutions are both conditions and consequences of territorial institutionalisation. As a historical construction, territory should be understood as a changing space in which political action is exercised, emphasising its contingent character but also the socio-economic and cultural conditions of its permanence. At the same time, each institutionalised territory is substantiated through the spatial control and sanctions over it but also through the dissemination of symbols, discourses and representations conveyed by the apparatuses of the state, including educational institutions and, in the case of democratic regimes, representative and governing institutions. The construction and reproduction of nation-states, as well as their action and legitimacy, are based on the definition of national, regional and local territorial spaces where democratic polity, politics and policy-making take place and assume their meanings.

Considering democratic politics through a territorial approach involves a reflective focus on the complex relations between territory and institutions and practices. Democratic states, polities or regimes are expected to circumscribe territories in which democratic opinion is expressed. However, the specific role of territorial features has often been a neglected and underestimated problem in democratic theories (Ochoa Espejo, 2020). While democratic institutions do not exist without territorial institutionalisation, a territorial approach asks for a critical analysis of the link between political institutions, nation-states and democracy. In democratic regimes, a constituency corresponds to a defined territorial space in which

competition for power is exercised. The political action of those who are elected can be exercised in more restricted or more extensive territorial spaces, which depend on the competencies defined by the state order and the margins for manoeuvring particular interests and resistances. At the same time, political institutions are not only those directly related to nation-states. For instance, the current process of restructuring European democracy, regional devolution and supranational empowerment challenged the traditional assumption that the nation-state is the unique scale of the exercise of democracy (e.g. Keating, 2018). Elections and institutional decision-making are part of regional and local territories, as all European nation-states recognise some subnational autonomy, also in accordance with EU treaties (e.g. King & Stoker, 1996). Moreover, democracy is not only a monopoly of political institutions but also an expression of alternative territorial grass-root forms of democracies (Atkinson, 2017; Kaufman & Dilla Alfonso, 1997).

Strategies and Appropriations

In looking for a territory-oriented framework for political research, we advocate for considering the territory not only as a condition or a cause but also as a product and consequence of practical and symbolic actions, production and reproduction. This is relevant beyond cases of disputed territories, where there is a struggle for control, delimitation and transformation. The first sociological question on which the territorial analysis should be carried out relates to who produces and interprets territorial spaces and how they do that.

In unhistorical approaches, the issue of who takes charge of the production of territorial space is considered irrelevant. The actor is de facto equivalent to an institution whose legitimacy is taken for granted. Instead, in a relational, actor-centred perspective based on the distinction and dialectic between structures and the strategy of actors, their characteristics, aims and ideological orientations are crucial dimensions. The concept of territorial strategy expresses "the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relations by delimiting and asserting control over a geographical area" (Sack, 1986: 19). Sociologist Henri Lefebvre underlines how political elites create and reshape territories with respect to their interest:

They seem to administer, to manage and to organise a natural space. In practice, however, they substitute another space for it, one that is first

economic and social, and then political. They believe they are obeying something in their heads representation (of the country, etc.). In fact, they are establishing an order-their own (2009: 228).

As Claude Raffestin points out, territory is the result of an action carried out by an actor or a set of actors (2019: 199). However, a territorial space is not just a by-product of a (top-down) strategy but also a result of appropriation, that is "the act of making something one's own" (Busse & Strang, 2011: 4). Every territory exists to the extent that there is a form of individual or collective appropriation. In appropriating a territorial space through a complex process of practical, cognitive, symbolic and emotional identification by political and social actors, the territory is produced. Actors define territorial space, delimit it and give it meaning through both practical and symbolic appropriation. Its construction results from strategies and appropriation of a heterogeneous set of actors: public institutions, political actors, civil society and experts, but also the inhabitants themselves, who fight to define and control the territory (i.e. its extension, its rights of access and filters).

Strategies and appropriations might be more or less conflictual or consensual. The territory is never a univocal element but the product of a more or less plural action, where diverse actors concur to provide subjective meanings defining territorial space in relation to their interests and strategies. From this perspective, territories are contingent phenomena: political forms shaped by power relations and their inhabitants. This perspective entails targeted objectives aimed at reinforcing a given territory according to specific interests and legitimising control over it. It also creates opportunities for conflicting strategies to emerge, which can challenge this control or the perimeter over which it is exercised. Thus, to understand how strategies and appropriation take place, it is necessary to question which actors are involved in the creation and reproduction of a circumscribing territory and, therefore, in the controls over it and to analyse the processes that lead certain actors to be recognised as authorities more or less appropriated by those who reside in that territory or want to access it.

PLACES

As a result of strategies and appropriations, territory tends to be translated into a set of places. Some literature, especially in the field of geography, tends to equate the notion of place with that of space, while other streams

are inclined to differentiate between the two notions. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (2001) argues that space is a more abstract phenomenon than place: The former has a general connotation and the latter a particular one. Space is everywhere, but place is somewhere. While space is the realm of the impersonal, place becomes personal when it is perceived as familiar by individuals and groups through everyday practices and experiences, as well as connections and identification. While it is easier to speak of place in spaces where there are face-to-face interactions, a nation, as an "imagined community", can also be understood as a place or Heimat, depending on the degree to which it evokes attachment and affective investment. Places are territorial spaces where localised appropriation is expressed.

However, a widespread opinion contends modernity has changed the way individuals experience places. In pre-modern times, the local dimension in the construction of collective identity was prevalent. The increased circulation of people, goods and ideas reduces the constraints of ascribed place and traditional local ways of life; it confronts different realities and opens up the possibility of contesting local meanings and constructing a different sense of place. According to the influential geographer Doreen Massey (), an advocate of a relational approach, a distinction must be made between place and locality: The latter is understood as a distinct, coherent and delimited space associated with a particular community, while place is a space of encounters, interpersonal and gendered entanglements, particular activities, connections and interconnections, influences and movements that intersect uniquely at a given time and space. The sociologist Pollini (2005) asserts that attachment to place can be read as socio-territorial belonging that is not incompatible with spatial mobility. Mobility can restrict local attachment but not necessarily prevent it. However, unlike the narrative of non-places (Augé, 2009) or the notion that places are inevitably in decline in modern societies in favour of anonymous spaces (Relph, 2008), another prominent geographer, Robert Sack, claims that human beings cannot exist without places, which, in turn, cannot exist without human beings (1997: 141). However, Sack distinguishes between "thick places", which were dominant in pre-modern societies, and "light" or "thin places", which reflect the spatial segmentation of life brought about by modernity. Thin places are characterised by a spatio-temporal concentration of self-sufficient human activities (Sack, 1997: 8), whereas "fluid" places, on the contrary, are interconnected and structure modern life: home, school, work, etc. In this regard, the concept of place is related to the social *milieu* as "a situational relationality in

which social actors are embedded", and not necessarily places based on long-term belongings (Jacobs & Malpas, 2022: 168).

Territorializations

The production of territorial space by more or less convergent or divergent strategies and appropriations can be understood through the notion of territorialisation, which designates the *action* through which a territory is *transformed*. This transformation can be read through the cycle of territorialisation, which includes forms of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation. The concepts of territorialisation and de-territorialisation, as well as re-territorialisation, inspired by the reflections of philosophers Guattari and Deleuze (1987), have been used to analyse how the territorial state controls and consolidates its authority over territorial space and its resources over time (Elden, 2013; Sassen, 2006) or to understand the actions of political actors and pressure groups contending for legitimate power over the territory (Gayer, 2014; Ng'weno 2017). Although far from having an unambiguous meaning, de-territorialisation alludes both to an action of deconstruction of an established territorial space and to the hiatus between belonging and territorial borders: hybrid forms of identity that transcend belonging and identities and coincide with delimited spaces, which may, for example, transcend the borders of the nation-state (Papastergiadis, 2000: 116).

In sociology and political science, it is argued that the consequences of political actions depend on the power of those who exercise them. Similarly, political actors, elites, experts and state officials often use strategies aimed at territorialising space to mobilise groups and individuals by boosting their loyalty and adherence, leading to their appropriation of the space. These mobilisations can have more or less accomplished and more or less shared outcomes. To achieve such results, strong legitimacy is required, which is often derived from a choral action of various actors and institutions accompanied by widespread (material, practical and symbolic) appropriation on the part of the groups and individuals on the territory. Without appropriation, ownership and internalisation, there cannot be legitimacy and recognition of the territory, its perimeter or its meaning. If the state has the right to control and exercise violence over the territory, it is because a more or less substantial part of the population living there judges or accepts this right as legitimate (Lévy,

1994: 125 ff.). Any successful appropriation implies that individuals, citizens and social groups make the territory something that belongs to them and with which they identify. This identification can be directed at an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1991) as an abstract whole that most frequently takes the form of a nation or a homeland. However, the history of territorial conflicts, irredentism and independentism suggests that territorialisation strategies can often be the subject of disputes and differentiated appropriations.

Borders

Territorial spaces are, by definition, bounded, so it is not surprising that the control and crossing of borders are keywords in a territorial approach to politics (Immerfall, 1998: 7). In theoretical conceptions of democracy based on an abstract view of the space in which it is exercised, there is a mutually exclusive view of territorial space. While borders (or boundaries) are often not deeply considered, in territorial approaches, it becomes crucial to question the concept of borders. In their current usage, borders usually delimit geographical spaces institutionally framed within neighbouring territorial states. Understood in this way, borders have recently been the subject of growing interest in various social and political sciences (Popescu, 2012; Wast-Walter, 2012). This interest has had to take account of a rather influential conception in the twentieth century that understands borders as demarcation lines based on permanence and impassability. In this still somewhat dominant understanding, borders play a crucial role in defining the role of the state as the exclusive arbiter of power and holder of the monopoly of sovereignty within its territory. With the expansion of transnational transformations in recent decades, some may have thought that borders were becoming a relic of the past. However, the direction of reflection has gone in a substantially different direction (Paasi, 2009).

Firstly, there seems to be a consensus that borders, broadly speaking, are a ubiquitous phenomenon in the structuring of human societies. The removal or weakening of one border does not prevent others from forming or the same borders from taking on different meanings over time. Borders are constructions and not a natural given. They do not disappear but are transformed by being deconstructed and reconstructed in new forms. They are not unambiguous but have many faces. They are material,

practical phenomena but also spaces of symbolic and political appropriation. Secondly, globalisation has led to big changes in the configuration of borders between states. However, there is no clear trend: While some borders have become more permeable (in particular, because of production needs and international trade), passports and customs controls have not disappeared; although there is greater freedom for the movement of people in some parts of the world, such as the area in Europe covered by the Schengen Agreement, there are also walls—literally and figuratively—being built. Thirdly, the desire to understand the transformations but also the persistence of borders between territorial states has led geographers, sociologists, historians and political scientists to rethink the very concept of borders. In this sense, following the work of geographer Claude Raffestin, borders have different functions: They should be understood both as lines of separation and as spaces of contact, with the possibility that this relationship may generate a filter effect (Raffestin, 1986; Ratti, 1990). Limitations manifest themselves in different ways, for example through social, cultural, political and economic barriers, but they can also create points of contact, mediation and communication to function as permanently negotiated intermediate spaces, as noted by anthropologist Michel de Certeau (1984), among others.

SCALES

Scale is another key concept in the territorial approach to politics. A single territorial space has always relations (and borders) with other, differentiated territorial spaces. Thus, territory is a multifaceted entity. To understand this complexity, the literature has often used the concept of scale, although there is no real consensus on the meaning of the term. In geography, it is most frequently used to distinguish between different units of scale (e.g. locality, region, nation, etc.) alluding to different sizes, powers and hierarchies. Thus, inside the jurisdiction of the territorial state, more delimited territorial spaces are played out in relations to inter- or supranational spaces. The (central) territorial state should not be confused with the diverse universe of public institutions that can operate on different and complementary scales within and beyond. Scales are to be understood as mental constructions and representations but also as practices and forms of institutional regimes. From an individual or collective perspective, some actions move on a local, neighbourhood level, while others operate on higher, broader scales.

In the relation between scales the question of the power is crucial, as a territorial space may have greater or lesser authority or legitimacy; while authority is often a legally recognised entity, power is determined by strategies, resources and the capacity to exercise control over its borders. However, the relation between scales is not conceptually univocal. Two approaches are at stake (Herod, 2011: 24). In the topographic approach, scales coincide with territorial spaces that consist of individual smooth surfaces with a defined perimeter; the topological approach implies that scales consist not of perimeters of absolute spaces of different sizes but of connections between nodes in a network. Scales are more or less long (global scale) and more or less short (national, regional, local scale). However, there is nothing to prevent us from glimpsing a third perspective, where the image of a layered set of territories that make up a multi-scalar game, where jurisdictions, rights, individual and collective forms of belonging, as well as interacting and sometimes conflicting interests, co-exist.

Multi-scalar dynamic occurs when a member of a national parliament, elected in a specific regional constituency, defends the interests of the latter in the name of a principle of fairness between EU member states through a parliamentary motion. This is a very frequent case in each of the EU's national parliaments. In this case, there are at least three scales at play: the national, the regional and the European, in a tangle in which it is difficult to establish a clear hierarchy. All of them are important, and one depends on the other. A national parliamentarian's position, competence and legitimacy to speak on behalf of regional interests derive from being elected in that specific constituency. They can also refer to the EU because the nation-wide territorial state that their parliament represents is part of a supranational institution. The combination of contiguous (but also cross-cutting and overlapping) territorial areas creates a field of negotiation and conflict, where the resources and control of the territorial space are once again contested. At the level of political analysis, there is a conflict of jurisdiction between public authorities that share and compete for the management of the territory. The actors can be institutional or associative (e.g. political parties and pressure groups) and may express convergent or conflicting territorialisation strategies.

From the perspective of a territorial analysis of political action, focusing on the interplay of scales makes it possible to examine varying strategies and appropriations, as well as the relevance, interdependence and complementarity of the different territorial spaces. This includes considering the

impact of globalisation on the nation-state (i.e. its weakening vis-à-vis socio-economic processes) and the delegation of state power to (both sub-state and supra-state) public and private institutions. In other words, the concept of scale allows us to conceive of the plurality of territorial spaces and the relativisation of the centrality of the nation-state in relation to other spatial scales that shape collective life and political action.

NETWORKS

It may be surprising that the notion of network plays such a key role in the territorial approach to politics. Territory can be characterised by exhaustiveness and contiguity (Lévy, 1994: 76–78), while a network is defined as a connection between points within a delimited area. However, territory is also a configuration of places and can be considered an extremely dense network. Moreover, the co-existence and interaction of nation-states can be read through the notion of networks. This notion is also relevant in political activism and the action of transnational protest movements in relation to the concept of a network of local and urban activists (e.g. Pirro & Rona, 2019). Moreover, network is a key concept in local studies of political mobilisation, which seeks to understand how the construction of places defined as a *milieu* is the product of a network of actors responding to different and sometimes conflicting strategies and forms of appropriation, particularly in the context of political competition (Zafirovski, 1999).

Today, network is often taken as a synonymous with the Internet, a realm of digital environment that seems to challenge and even deny legitimacy to the notion of territory. The ubiquity of Internet has raised questions about spatiality in many fields. Telecommunication systems have become the central technology of today's capitalism, not only for large and small businesses but also for the whole of everyday consumption, personal communication, entertainment and numerous other areas of social life. Indeed, for many people who spend long periods in the digital world, this environment has become such an important part of everyday life that the boundary between real and virtual seems to have almost completely disappeared. Allowing people and companies to seamlessly connect with others across the globe at the click of a button has made the digital environment perhaps the most powerful means of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation in the contemporary world (Lambach, 2020). Although hypermobility and global communication

seem to entail a neutralisation of space and distance, the use of Internet is profoundly rooted in geographical and contextual specificities (Rogers, 2013). Moreover, the strong relationship between digital and territorial dimensions in the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed the limits of any technological determinism that is the interpretation of social and political changes as a direct effect of technical progress (e.g. Molnar, 2021).

According to Sassen, we need to focus on analysing the production of the control and coordination capabilities of these technologies by the transnational corporations that manage them—that is, by focusing on the practices that concretely construct economic globalisation and global control over processes and spaces. This implies, once again, the need to turn our attention to the places where production and control of processes and production are concentrated: certain global cities that serve as localised nodes of globalisation (Sassen, 2006, 2018). By contrast, the use of new technologies is reshaping the geographies of social and political mobilisations, bringing together people who identify with common, even national, causes or identities. Paradoxically, they also allow for the re-appropriation of contiguous territorial spaces even if physical mobility is less important (Hylland Eriksen, 2007; Palmer, 2012).

Towards a Territory-Oriented Research Agenda

In this chapter, we explored the notion of territory by using a set of concepts to tackle questions related to the transformation of contemporary democratic politics. Along with concepts like strategy, appropriation, territorialisation, place, scale, border and network, territory fits with the complexity of the present-day transformation. Territory is to be understood as a cause and effect of political action—in other words, a phenomenon that is both upstream and downstream of political action. It permeates political action without being reduced to it and expresses social relations while simultaneously reacting to them (Lefebvre, 2009: 56–57). In this sense, territory is created and re-created. On the one hand, territory is a product of the actions of individuals and groups (including the elites) and an expression of the subjective meanings that inform these actions. Territory results from a combination of natural environments and human actions, as a product of strategies, forms of appropriation and places of belonging. It is a bordered, multi-scalar and networked space. On the other hand, territory is a routinised space of opportunity

and a constraint for political action: a perimeter characterised by consolidated institutions and forms of belonging that individuals, groups and institutions cannot willingly or unwillingly disregard.

The configurational use of the notion of territory suggests a series of research questions concerning the past and present dynamics of democratic politics: How are territorial strategies and appropriation implemented? How do strategies and appropriations affect, influence and control people and resources over a circumscribed geographical area? Who are the actors involved in the creation and reproduction of a circumscribing territorial space? To what extent do the political actors and citizens of a geographical area share or compete for different territorialisation, in particular territorial borders? How do new forms of territorialisation emerge as a *milieu*, that is, a network of actors moulded by specific strategies and appropriations? How do voting behaviour and protest shape (and how are they moulded by) territorial issues? How should the evolution of democratic citizenship be grasped with a territory-oriented approach? And how does territorial institutionalisation involve national states?

Territory takes an institutionalised political form when power or control over it, its resources and its population are at stake. Institutionalised territory commonly takes the form of a territorial national state, and its characteristics, its control over it, its practical and symbolic boundaries and its rights of access and presence are the result of a historical process of construction that is a key focus of the territorial approach to politics. However, the territorial space of contemporary democracies is also criss-crossed by flows of people, goods and money and characterised by customs that may be firmly established or openly contested.

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Beyond the Territorial State?

Abstract When a territory is stabilised and acquires an institutional character, it takes the form of a delimited space with fixed boundaries that is controlled by a group of people and has exclusive internal sovereignty and equal external status. The paradigmatic example of an institutionalised territorial space in modern times is the state, as it always presupposes a territory. But how does this relationship develop? This chapter discusses the role of the concept of territory in relation to the state and the historical dynamics shaping this relationship.

Keywords State · Nation-state · Territorialisation · Sovereignty · Urban powers · Nationalism · Regionalism

This chapter deals with critical analyses and reflections in contemporary scholarship, especially by sociologists, historians and geographers, as well as international relations research into the relationship between territory and state. The goal of this chapter is to highlight how the use of a territorial approach, unlike naturalising approaches, is key to understanding the construction of European states in modern times, as well as their recent transformations. We start with Max Weber's definition of the state as a "human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" (2019: 136). Thus,

Weber provides us with an ideal type of state, an abstraction. The risk of this approach, however, when the ideal is conflated with the empirical, is that the distinction between the idea of the state and its concrete articulation and transformation becomes blurred. Above all, territory is "given" and not constructed. The expression "given territory" tends to avoid how modern democratic states are embedded in territorial processes, including when rescaling, regionalisation and supranational empowering challenge the modern relationship between territory and state.

In the past few decades, various scholars have focused on the historical processes through which modern states have been constructed and shown how they are the result of a concerted effort rather than a natural trend in how societies are organised (e.g. Evans et al., 1995). Historical approaches have stressed in various ways state-building as an articulation of the "state" and the "nation", although the territorial dimension is not always highlighted. Consequently, mainstream political sociology and political science continue to use the concepts of nation-states and national states avoiding the concept of territorial state (Keating, 2017a). Instead, more than 30 years ago, Charles Tilly recommended distinguishing between some ideal types of states: (1990: 2–3): Non-national states, such as empires and city-states, that have been the most common models; national states, which are "states governing multiple contiguous regions and cities by means of centralized, differentiated and autonomous structures", are less common, and nation-states, where "people share a strong linguistic, religious and symbolic identity", are even rarer in Europe. Moreover, with the concept of a territorial state, the emphasis is on the state seeking control of territory and population and claiming mutually independent sovereignty inside delimited borders, according to the legacy shaped by the Peace of Westphalia since the seventeenth century. With the concept of territorial state, it has been focused on the transition from the feudal personalisation of power towards abstract authority over a delimited territory. Sociologist Saskia Sassen, who combined the concept of national state and territorial state, emphasises the evolution from the Middle Ages. Institutional authorities' ability to exclusively impose territorial jurisdiction (i.e. the validity of their own laws in a specific geographical area), as in the modern territorial states, is a result of a profound transformation: "The national territorial state became the final locus of authority rather than a monarch's divinity, a lord's nobility, or the claims of religious bodies. It repositioned the meaning of membership

toward a territorial collectivity derived from a complex abstract authority" (Sassen, 2006: 80). While the nation and national components stress the legitimisation of the state in terms of "character" and "will" (Agnew, 1994: 59), the territorial component underlines the state's legitimacy to control and shape its territorial area and the people within this area. Thus, the question arises of how the territorial state is constructed over time. To answer, we can distinguish, from an analytical point of view, two aspects: the state as a *construction* and the state as a *performer*.

State Construction

As a "state without territory is not possible" (Oppenheim, 1955: 451, cited in Knight, 1992: 311), one might argue that modern nation-states and national states are by-products of territorial processes, which implies a complex construction over time. Historian John Gerard Ruggie (1993) asserts that the political organisation of space takes different forms: territorialised or not, mobile or fixed, mutually exclusive or not. In the mediaeval system, authority was personalised and parcelled out within and across territorial spaces where inclusive bases of legitimation prevailed. Before the thirteenth century, there were few or no fixed boundaries between different territorial spaces shaped by competing political authorities; there were mainly transitional zones and frontiers understood as spaces with blurred boundaries (Ruggie, 1993: 150). The Peace of Westphalia concluded the Thirty Years' War and enshrined the principle of the recognition of exclusive territorial authority, which called into question the transversal logics that had previously been dominant. Thus, a new historical phase was inaugurated in which a system of territorially delimited states was constituted and progressively articulated by the separation between public and private spheres, where the private is to be understood as the space of property and economic production, which in the nineteenth century would take the form of modern capitalism and the industrial factory. By contrast, the sphere of public power became the monopoly of central authorities—or, rather, the power of the sovereign as the sole holder of legitimate force—for the various great European powers over time. This transformation involved the overcoming of the parcelling out of powers and the guarantee of the (relative) autonomy of the private sphere.

Sociologist Norbert Elias illustrates how the centrality of the monopoly concerns not only the exercise of force but also the creation and role of

an administrative system, as well as power over the army and taxation, which is a crucial component in defining the state:

> Forerunners of such monopoly control of taxes and the army over relatively large territories have previously existed in societies with a less advanced division of functions, mainly as a result of military conquest. It takes a far advanced social division of functions before an enduring, specialized apparatus for administering the monopoly can emerge (…) It is only with the emergence of this continuing monopoly of the central authority and this specialized apparatus for ruling that dominions take on the character of 'states'. (Elias, 2000: 268)

However, without spatial appropriations, the territorial state does not transform into a reified institution. The state is a cognitive and normative map in which individuals and groups believe and with which they identify. In other words, "the state is invisible, it must be personified before it can be made visible, symbolised to be loved, imagined before it can be conceived" (Walzer, 1967: 194). As the spatial appropriation of the institutional authority preceded the modern territorial state, the modern nation-state is a combination of the two components of this notion: the state and the nation. Sassen (2006: 53–54) observes how during the Middle Ages there was a call to the homeland, which was closely tied to community, while patriotism, *amor patrio*, referred to both the Christian paradise and one's places of birth and living rather than political entities. In short, in the Middle Ages, the modern concept of nation did not exist yet and would only become dominant in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, the need to build a sense of belonging to the state, particularly in disputed territorial areas, would play a central role in modern territorialisation strategies.

State Performer

To the extent is taken for granted in modern politics and society, the territorial state plays a performing role in shaping social and political practices and representations. Specifically, the state and its apparatus are both by-products and strategists of statehood. They perform territorial identities through legal rules and their capacity to consolidate and legitimise their authority through a "secular religion" like nationalism (Mosse, 2023). The role of the state in redesigning collective identities through a

nation-building strategy has been often pointed out by the literature (e.g. Cabo & Molina, 2009; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1984). The French territorial state is a noteworthy case. While it appears nowadays to be a kind of idealised model of the nation-state based on a homogeneous culture and language, the French state is a long-term strategic construction involving a composite set of conquered territories that have been annexed and integrated into an administrative state, previously consisting of more or less strong local and regional identities. In the nineteenth century, the French state did not correspond to the model of the nation-state composed of integrated inhabitants who recognised themselves in a single nation, in the state and its laws. As historian Eugen Weber writes in his classic study from the 1960s:

> [S]till around 1870, the inhabitants knew that they were French subjects, but for many of them this status was more of an abstraction. The populations of entire regions felt little identity with the state or with people from other regions. Before this changed, before the inhabitants of France could come to feel a community in the strict sense, they had to share significant experiences. Roads, railways, schools, markets, military service and the circulation of money, goods and printed matter enabled such experiences, loosening old ties and instilling a national view of things in regional minds [...]. French culture only became truly national in the last years of the century. (Weber, 1976: 476)

Weber's study, as well as subsequent studies, including by anthropologist Peter Sahlins (1989), shows how territories, particularly in their institutionalised forms, are the product of specific strategies promoted by actors, rules and devices enacted within a given spatial perimeter. These strategies do not operate in empty or neutral spaces but contribute to the construction of a new symbolic reality that interacts with subjects that have already been socialised in other territorial spaces (Anderson, 2018). State strategies of nation-building involve not only forms of physical coercion but also symbolic violence. A state territorial strategy manifests itself with all its strength when internalising disciplinary action favouring the organisation and control of individuals' behaviour (Foucault, 2014). Therefore, it is worth noting that there might be a clash of legitimacy, even beyond the French case, between those who represent the central state (e.g. officials, *préfets* and teachers) and "the barbarians", "the savage beasts". This struggle can also take on violent connotations. In France, it took almost a century of practical and symbolic concrete interventions,

threats, sophisticated administrative procedures, negotiations and various forms of repression to eradicate local identities, languages and affiliations and to impose a collective local appropriation of a unitary nation-state on the entire population across the national territory. Undoubtedly, the consolidation of national territorial identities was the result of intentional top-down strategies to uproot local identities. This process also involved a range of mechanisms and processes, including the development of railway networks, the establishment of national mass communication systems (e.g. radio and television), the institutionalisation of forms of national solidarity (e.g. modern welfare systems), a pact of non-belligerence between the business world and trade unions and the exceptional economic growth of the post-Second World War period known as the Glorious Thirty, which was based on the dominant nation-state model of institutionalised territoriality.

Sovereignty

At the heart of the dialectic between construction and performance, there is a question of sovereignty. As there is no state without territory or identification of its members to that territory, there is no territory without some form of control over it (i.e. a power that expresses itself with authority), which helps to establish borders vis-à-vis other states and power within itself. This does not mean territory necessarily forms a territorial state. According to historian Charles Maier (2016: 286), territories, as circumscribed geographical spaces controlled by borders, are not constructed solely for the sake of creating sovereign states. However, when speaking of state authority, the term most commonly used is territorial sovereignty, of which there are many interpretations, with a hard core that is little discussed: the control of authority exercised over a territory. Territorial sovereignty can be distinguished into two components: exogenous and endogenous. The first focuses on relations with the outside world, other sovereignties and other states; the second refers to the internal power of the prince, the dictator, the government, the parliament and the people. In the first case, we generally refer to national sovereignty, and in the second, to parliamentary, popular sovereignty, etc. Of these different declinations, the history of political thought has developed different and articulated keys to interpretation. As historian Giorgio Galli argues, sovereignty "is not an instance—a concept, an institution, a faculty and an empire, a methodological point of view—in itself concluded

and self-sufficient. Rather, it must be considered in its complexity" (2019: 13). Thus, a distinction must be made between absolute and relative sovereignty, which recalls a debate rooted in two opposing philosophical theses of the seventeenth century: those of Thomas Hobbes and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. While the former, who succeeded in imposing his definition on subsequent political thought, saw sovereignty as absolute and ultimate power, the latter advocated for a shared, more pragmatic version of sovereignty (e.g. Krivenko, 2020).

From a historical point of view, it appears difficult to argue that absolute state sovereignty ever existed in relation to other established powers. Indeed, a large body of historiographic and constitutionalist literature has highlighted the mythological character of sovereignty in its absolute sense, although this interpretation has continued to dominate representations of the modern state. The inter-state dynamic has always been shaped by interdependence, and consequently, sovereignty depends to some extent on the recognition of other states, which can be called into question. Meanwhile, territorial states also have to bargain with local forces, as it is not always possible to impose decisions from the centre without bottom-up legitimation, and with economic powers that prosper throughout extra-territorial relations. As Michel Foucault notes, as early as the eighteenth century, the government of the territory implied the power to discipline and regulate while ensuring the circulation of people and goods (Foucault, 2004: 31). In contemporary territorial states based on representative democracy, some other questions arise: Who wields supreme power, the citizens or their representatives? And if the state is moulded in processes of rescaling and globalisation, how can the principle of absolute sovereignty be legitimated?

De-Territorialisation and Rescaling

The territorial state's capacity to achieve legitimacy is far from linear or permanent. In the past few decades, political scientists and political sociologists have addressed the following crucial question: What is the political impact of the state's decreased control over its territorial space in relation to globalised processes and the delegation of some national state competencies to other public and private bodies? There has been a lively debate to provide answers to this question. Some believe that the nation-state has lost its essential functions, especially from a socio-economic point

of view, by giving up at least part of its ability to control the terri-
tory when compared with the past, when the social-democratic pact in
Western countries (especially in Europe) had made the state the arbiter
of the development of full employment and the welfare state during
the Glorious Thirty, corresponding to the stability of regimes resulting
from the Cold War. In the words of Jeppe Strandsbjerg, a scholar in
international relations:

> [T]here was a certain sense of harmonious correspondence between a
> world of sovereign nation-states and the cold war. The spatial image of the
> state seemed a perfect match with the spatiality of the world. To the extent
> that it was theorized at all, territorial space was implicitly conceptualized
> as a billiard ball, as a solid unit interacting with other. units according to
> the mechanical physics of Newton. The main lines of conflict were those
> between states territorially [...]. Territorial exclusivity was the rule of the
> game. The enemy was kept at bay through containment and the building
> of walls. (Strandsbjerg, 2010: 21)

The end of the Cold War marked a turning point in European history.
Territory understood as a form coinciding with the state, the organising
principle of modern societies and a functional referent of international
relations, was plunged into crisis. According to Bertrand Badie (1995),
another scholar in international relations, there has never been a perfect
correspondence between political spaces and territorial boundaries. The
territory circumscribed within state borders has certainly not represented
the entire political space because on many continents, regional powers
have a long history, but also because supranational relations precede
the current crisis of the territorial state. However, in the late twen-
tieth century, the diverging tendency has strengthened: More or less
everywhere, the control of space within precise borders defined by the
territorial state left room for a proliferation of territorial spaces with
multiple identities, which cannot be traced back to a single territorial
geography.

The strong de-territorialisation of the past few decades does not
mean the end of territorial states, but it changes the way of conceiving
contemporary states, at least among scholars who in some way demand a
territorial approach to the analysis of the state. One of the contributions
of the re-evaluation of the state in recent decades is the emphasis on its
status as a social construction. Its territoriality is not a given but the result

of the actions of its institutions and their strategies to institutionalise the territory and the state itself. These efforts may be more or less successful and may vary in terms of legitimacy and practical and symbolic appropriations. This process implies avoiding any naturalised approach to the relation between territory and state.

While the concept of territory in legal, sociological and political science scholarship is closely connected to that of the state, the recent transformations of the state ask to go beyond approaches conflating territory, sovereignty and state. As geographer John Agnew argued in his famous 1994 essay entitled "The Territorial Trap", it would be wrong to regard states as reified units of sovereign territorial space, unchanging in time, mutually exclusive and containers of society. The interdependencies between "internal" and "external"—between foreign and domestic policy—are mostly always present, even if their relevance must be historicised. Furthermore, it would be limiting to assume that the territorial sovereign state is the only possible container of society, ignoring alternative forms of territoriality, such as cities and metropoles. This reasoning applies above all as a critique of "methodological nationalism" to how it has managed to impose itself on the social and political sciences by attributing a taken-for-granted greater importance to phenomena that have a national spread or presence while avoiding regional and local relevance (see Chapter 2). Despite the persistent role of the territorial trap in scholarship (e.g. Shah, 2012), several strands have influenced the social sciences over the past 30 years. Among these strands, perhaps the most prolific have emphasised rescaling de-territorialisation with the rising power of cities and urban spaces and with new institutional arrangements among supranational (or macro-regional) and micro-regional powers (e.g. Brenner, 2004).

New Urban Powers

Urban planners, scholars of political economy and international relations, as well as historians, sociologists and political scientists, have investigated the growing role of global cities and metropolises in contemporary dynamics since the 1980s. Following the pioneering work of Henry Lefebvre, who wrote as early as the 1960s of a looming urban revolution (2003), subsequent studies highlighted several important aspects concerning globalisation processes (2009). Firstly, they underscored the increasing concentration in global cities (first and foremost, New York

City, Tokyo and London) of the headquarters of multinational corporations (i.e. the main actors of economic and financial globalisation). In other words, these studies show the extent to which globalisation has created new spaces and new hierarchies, in contrast to the narrative that the flows are distributed more or less equally around the globe. Global cities exert such a power of concentration and attraction in the production of wealth, as well as direct interrelationships between them, that they are somewhat autonomous from nation-states (Sassen, 2001).

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the network of urban centres was integrated into national territorial economies and, thus, subordinate to nation-states. However, since the economic crisis of the 1960s, urban centres, which have grown exponentially, have created their own network structure, thus forming a new scale of global economic and productive activity that is disengaged from their subordinate role to nation-states. In what has been called the archipelago of the world-city, a network of interconnected urban nodes is expressed, providing services, infrastructures, technologies, development and accumulation strategies and defining a diversified set of local and global arrangements that cross, intersect and bypass national economic territories (Brenner, 2004).

The emergence of the network of world-cities is the result of a two-fold, interrelated process: on the one hand, the deconstruction of the Fordist model and the decline of the traditional industrial factory, and on the other hand, the development of a new international division of labour that concentrates high-tech and high value-added production mainly in global cities while relegating manufacturing to peripheral and semi-peripheral areas in pursuit of profit maximisation. It should be noted, however, that neither nation-states nor mid-tier cities disappear or are relegated to a purely marginal role. The control exercised by global cities is only partial, especially because the localisation of production processes must be adapted to the specific social, political and institutional configurations of individual localities and regions. Studies on global cities sometimes present a narrative of a world without places, borders, regulation and territorial control by the state. However, others emphasise that the state and its core institutions continue to play a relevant role within the network of global cities, albeit to a lesser degree than in the era of traditional industrialism. Each global city maintains a direct and intense relationship with the nation-state to which it belongs, which is essential to compete for and foster the attractiveness of people and businesses. Moreover, states and more generally institutions located at various scales of

government play a role that remains crucial in shaping, regulating and recalibrating relations between the local and the global (Brenner, 2019).

Multi-Scaling Statehood

While the processes of globalisation do not imply a full disarticulation of territorial states, a less unitary, delegative, plural model of the state seems to be asserting itself. A *multi-scaling statehood* appears to be taking shape precisely at a time when the role of the nation-states was considered outdated, not only because of the expansion of the logic of capitalism and the development of global cities but also as a result of the de- and re-territorialisation of the powers towards a supra- and a subnational institutional articulation.

Supranational instances of governance have acquired a role never seen before in contemporary history, especially in Europe. The boost came mainly between the 1990s and 2000s with the creation and strengthening of public and semi-public institutions aimed at coordinating part of public policies that had previously been under virtually exclusive control of nation-states, such as monetary policy and trade. The example of European Union, created through the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, with increased powers over the European Economic Community that had emerged in the 1950s, or the World Trade Organization founded in 1994 are some of the most relevant examples. However, the unprecedented expansion of international cooperation, at least since the Second World War, concerns not only monetary and trade institutions but also regional and multilateral initiatives involving foreign policy, health policy, human rights, the environment and national security. Moreover, compared with the regional and multilateral arrangements of the first post-war decades, specific structures of integrated governance and supranational regulation have emerged, with decision-making processes transferred from individual nation-states to new higher-level political institutions (Gruber, 2000).

Simultaneously, a varied process of decentralisation, devolution and federalisation has taken hold in many countries: also on the European continent due to the explicit strategy promoted by the European Union (Keating, 2017b; King & Le Galès, 2017). Although the notion of a Europe of the regions will remain in some ways only a slogan, the changes that have taken place make it possible to speak of an era of regionalisation of political authority that began in the 1950s. A study covering 42 countries on different continents in between 1950 and 2006 showed that not

all of them experienced a process of regionalisation, but where reforms were carried out, which was in the majority of countries (31 cases), there was an increase in regional or at least sub-state powers. In 15 countries, a subnational institutional authority was introduced that had not existed before or had not had the same decision-making weight. The number of nation-states with regional parliaments increased from 16 to 31 (Hooghe et al., 2010: 52 ff.). In turn, the processes of decentralisation and devolution and the growing interest in federalism in recent decades in many European countries and beyond have helped to open up new fields of research and create academic journals, publishing series and handbooks specialised in the study of subnational and especially regional political dimensions (Harbers et al., 2021).

On the one hand, the re-articulation of supra- and subnational powers has led to a partial weakening of the role of the nation-state; on the other hand, new rules, regimes and mechanisms have been developed and contributed to reshaping the territory from the point of view of its management, economic role and forms of belonging. It no longer seems taken for granted that the nation-state, as a central power, holds power and sovereignty in all its traditional competencies. The state has to reckon with, then negotiate, cooperate and sometimes come into conflict with subnational and supranational powers, institutional and non-institutional powers and public powers, as well as private powers, which develop their own jurisdictional spaces that partly overlap and partly intersect with those of the nation-state. In an attempt to describe what is happening in Europe with the process of upward and downward integration, the concept of multi-level governance has been introduced, in which decision-making competencies are no longer monopolised by national governments but shared by actors at different levels, including subnational governmental bodies. As such, supranational institutions have become actors in their own right, playing a role independent of national governments and, to some extent, subnational powers. Moreover, the traditional separation between national and international politics has been challenged by pressure groups and public–private or transnational partnerships (Hooghe & Marks, 2001).

Sovereignism

The emergence of new subnational and supranational institutional powers, as well as the growing complexity and transversal logics associated with economic and urban changes, does not seem to indicate a newly established territorial order in Europe and elsewhere. On the contrary, at the level of social dynamics, uncertainty and risk appear to be the dominant figures in this historical phase (Beck, 1992; Bauman, 2007). On the political level, many responses allude to solutions relying on the same assumptions that have been weakened by the transformations or that involve radicalising the strategies already in place. According to the French scholar in International relations Bertrand Badie (2017: ff.), there is a tension between, on the one hand, a territorial, multiple and differentiated spatialities produced and shaped by the social, cultural, political and institutional processes of today's world and, on the other, the resurgence of a concept of territory based on identity and nationalist claims. This resurgence tends to either put the declining power of the nation-state back at the centre or allude to a new state for communities that denounce a lack of self-determination. As economic, institutional and cultural processes make it increasingly difficult for the nation-state to maintain control over many aspects of individual and collective life, new questions and demands arise, but they are often incompatible with the functionalist narrative of multi-level governance. Among the various forms of protest and disaffection that sociological and political literature has highlighted in recent years, political actors demanding greater sovereignty bring the issue of re-territorialisation strategies back to the centre. A disarticulated and transformed sovereignty corresponds to—or rather responds to—a sovereignism whose political objective is to re-establish a presumed lost national and popular sovereignty (Basile & Mazzoleni, 2020). Sovereignty might be presented as a matter of faith especially when vast processes of globalisation and institutional rescaling boost interdependence and uncertainty at the same time.

Sovereignism today takes the form of a varied set of political mobilisations on different scales. Despite their diversity, these mobilisations denounce "distant" power as being synonymous with anti-democratic power. In response, they call for a redefinition of borders, rights and authorities. These claims include the demand for institutional autonomy or independence, the recovery of the power of the nation-state that supposedly suffers from a declining sovereignty, as well as a struggle

for regional (linguistic, religious, cultural) identity within and against the nation-state. Thus, there are different forms of territorial mobilisation: the nationalism of majorities and that of minorities or supposed minorities, who feel threatened by the nation-state's sovereignty or who denounce the illegitimacy of the nation-state against a minority "nation" that lacks its own legitimate sovereignty. Territorial mobilisations have many motivations: the struggle for territorial justice between regions within a nation-state; greater autonomy on the part of regions of a state that feel discriminated against on account of wealth or opportunity; demands for the recognition of institutional competences within the framework of a more or less centralist or decentralised state; secession from the state to establish a new state; and the struggle to defend national sovereignty endangered by external pressures (e.g. by European integration). Thus, territorial mobilisations are forms of territorialising strategies that are conflicting and even antagonistic to the institutional context in which they are called upon to act.

Neo-Nationalism

From a historical point of view over the past century, the main form of territorial politicisation has been nationalism. While sovereignism is a more specific form of politicisation regarding territorial control, nationalism entails a broader set of cultural dimensions, including symbolic identification and belonging. Of course, there are many definitions of nationalism, and there is no doubt that a certain polysemy and ambivalence of this notion must be recognised (Connor, 1994; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1984; Smith, 1998). However, it is interesting to mention that Ernest Gellner (1983) identifies in the various forms of nationalism the claim of congruence between national unity and political unity (i.e. national integrity). The partial disarticulation between state and territory as a result of transnational economic processes, supranational integration and the dynamics of decentralisation has claimed a come-back for national integrity aimed at restoring the coincidence between nation and state or what was presumed to be such. In other words, neo-nationalism is a form of mobilisation that fights for the territory, defined by national belonging, to be matched by recognised sovereignty within the state perimeter. In nationalism, there is also the idea that this recognition is being violated or is somehow frustrated or unfulfilled, and that a reaction is needed to achieve this. It should not be surprising that this goal remains topical,

particularly because nationalism has been one of the most enduring and tenacious political ideologies in world history over the past 200 years (Bieber, 2020).

Although some narratives have tried to present a post-national image of the evolution of contemporary democracies, territory as a space of national contention and claim is far from having been consigned to the dustbin of history, even in Europe in recent decades, including open violent contentions. The etymological origin of the term territory derives from the Latin *territorium*, *terra*, dry matter as opposed to water, which shares its root with *terreo* or *terrere*, i.e. to intimidate, terrorise or keep away. The most widely discussed narrative is that of nationalism as opposed to globalisation and the weakening of the nation-state in favour of supranational powers. From the experience of the former Yugoslavia to today's tensions in the Mediterranean area and war in Ukraine, nationalist sentiments often fuel violent confrontations. Even in the pacified and reunited Europe after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union, dreams of a world without nationalist conflicts have proved elusive.

To observe nationalist controversies, political science tends to highlight the role of political actors, parties and movements, their discourses and strategies, but also to point out how multi-scalar political systems can become spaces of opportunity for these actors (Heinisch et al., 2019). Nationalism is also seen, perhaps more traditionally, from a transnational expansionist perspective (i.e. as a strategy and process of re-territorialisation that transcends a given nation-state), where what is at stake is the redefinition of the symbolic and political-institutional borders of the territory, as in the case of the plans to build a Greater Russia as a premise of the current war (Nygren, 2008) or the strategies of Viktor Orbán's government in claiming parts of Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine for the Hungarian nation, as well as Israel's vis-à-vis the occupied Arab territories. However, much of contemporary nationalism seems to develop in opposition to supranational powers, mingling in Europe with Euroscepticism, or with forms of protectionism antagonistic to free trade and its guarantors, as in the case of the measures implemented by the Trump presidency in the United States against the World Trade Organization. The geopolitical redefinition of powers, the changing territorial dynamics, the narratives of flows and contingency and the uncertainties of a more fluid social world do not take away space but in some ways tend to provide unprecedented opportunities for the various forms of nationalist

claims, which refer to lost roots, a missed autonomy and a nation-state to be safeguarded or strengthened.

Regionalist Contention

A form of territorial mobilisation that sometimes overlaps with nationalism is regionalism, which expresses the idea of defending the identity and interests of a particular region that has autonomy or sovereignty that they consider to be insufficient. The notion of "region" has a wide range of meanings in the various disciplines of the social sciences and the historical tradition of European countries. Two main meanings can be distinguished: as a macro-region, a continent or set of countries that share common traits; or as a micro-region, the expression of a circumscribed space located within a larger structure that usually coincides with a national state. A region is the result of the coming together of various concepts of space, although in recent studies focused on the processes of decentralisation or federalisation, one of its institutional translations prevails: an institutional system, as a regional government or as a group of institutions operating over a territory (Keating, 1998: 8). Broadening its connotation, the region qualifies as a more or less circumscribed spatial area where social interaction takes place, a political and institutional space or a group of institutions operating in a territory that may correspond to an administrative division with characteristics that distinguish it from other regions. However, a region is not a taken-for-granted space but the result of a set of struggles about the legitimate space of representation and power (Bourdieu, 1991). According to this perspective, the study of regions should assume them as changing and multidimensional processes, where different symbolic and legal strategies, scales and borders are at stake (Paasi, 2009).

It is no coincidence that scholars sometimes use the expression minority nationalism as a synonym for regionalism. Until a few decades ago, regionalisms in stateless regions in the Western world were considered the expression of an archaic revolt against modernity, in particular against the modernity represented by the homogenous ideal type of the nation-state. By contrast, in recent decades, there has been a diverse strand of studies that consider regionalist mobilisations as expressions of profound changes in the social, cultural, economic and institutional dynamics of contemporary democracies. In other words, regionalist claims are one of the many manifestations of the processes of globalisation and

territorial rescaling, which have imposed new challenges on the relations between centres and peripheral regions, particularly on the European continent (Keating, 1998, 2018).

The enhancement of regional traditions does not necessarily lead to the emergence of political movements and parties. Where it does happen, in a regional space with more or less distinctive cultural, linguistic or institutional boundaries, peripherality becomes a metaphor and symbol of a politicisation of both socio-economic asymmetries and specific territorial and cultural affiliations (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983). Even in the absence of a common agreement on how to characterise regionalist parties, described as autonomist, ethnic or ethno-regionalist, more or less left- or right-wing, there is a growing awareness of their importance (e.g. Dandoy, 2010). Regardless of the diversity of the forms of claim, the lowest common denominator of political regionalism is a demand for greater sovereignty and more resources, the ability to make autonomous decisions and a denunciation of discrimination or asymmetry in relation to a broader space of belonging, which is generally, but not necessarily, the nation-state (Hepburn, 2009).

Regarding the reasons for the emergence and consolidation of regionalist parties, there are several factors in the field (Swenden & Bolleyer, 2014). The most frequently evoked factors are, firstly, cultural and linguistic ones (i.e. these parties arise on a territorial substratum that is more or less strongly nurtured by minority cultural forms of belonging, particularly linguistic ones, which differ from the majority ones within the nation-state). The second type of factor is socio-economic: The causes are said to lie in forms of inequality or asymmetry with respect to the major centres. The third order of factors is geopolitical: They are linked to the decline in the role of the nation-state, economic globalisation and European integration, which have contributed to a reconfiguration of the relations between regions and nation-states. It was precisely the weakening of the centrality of the nation-state that favoured the emergence of regionalisms and, thus, of new expectations of recognition and autonomy, economically or culturally, in an increasingly interdependent world (Keating, 1998: 3). Instead of reducing mobilisation and protest, the increased autonomy of regional powers would have increased the opportunities for political actors and the expectations of citizens belonging to minority cultural and linguistic realities.

The Persistence of the State
and the Legitimate Territorial Space

In this chapter, we focused on the relationship between territory and state and saw how the evolution of this relationship varies over time. The territorial state is the modern performing construction of the institutionalised territory. We broadly traced the process of the rise, consolidation and partial questioning of the nexus between territory and nation-state. The nexus between the territorial state, nation-state and sovereignty is a historical product that is anything but a foregone conclusion. The attempt to create new loyalties in the populations living in the territory, especially through targeted strategies, has been successful in many ways throughout modern and contemporary history, and this is particularly true when it comes to states with a centralist tradition, where there have been efforts to eradicate local identities and impose a collective national identity. For centuries, the territory was identified with the state, in particular with the nation-state, but more recently, this model has been challenged—first and foremost, by the new urban, supranational and subnational powers that prefigure a new and more complex articulation of territorial spaces. In recent decades, with the strengthening of globalisation processes, the partial delegation of sovereignty to subnational and supranational entities and the rise of metropolises as the backbone of global economic processes, we have been witnessing a partial disarticulation between nation-states and territory. This implies a diminished ability of nation-states to exercise direct control over their territory.

The territorial state has not disappeared, nor has part of its power, but it is adapting to the new configuration. Although institutionalised territories existed before the territories shaped by nation-states, and institutional territorial spaces other than that of the nation-state have remained, the latter is far from being declared extinct. A territorial approach to politics suggests a double reading: On the one hand, states continue, within the processes of global, international and transnational interdependence, to produce territory and to delimit, in a more or less cooperative or conflictual negotiation, their role in controlling resources, private and public interests, access and presence of the population together with a composite configuration of public and private entities. However, the emergence of new institutional, subnational and supranational powers, the growing complexity and transversal logics and the changes in the capitalist system do not seem capable of prefiguring a new territorial order, as

shown by the various forms of nationalist and regionalist territorial mobilisation that have emerged in recent years in Europe and other parts of the world.

The territorial state, with its procedures and the actors that embody it, continues to produce territorial space. As Henri Lefebvre already noted several decades ago, "the main function of the political-state space is to regulate flows, to coordinate the blind forces of growth, to impose its law on the chaos of "private" and "local" interests; but it also has another, no less important, albeit opposite function: that of preserving fragmented spaces within their limits, of maintaining their multiple functions" (Lefebvre, 2009: 302–303). In other words, one should not too rigidly oppose a state order based on popular and national sovereignty to a model of multi-level governance. According to this interpretation, the contemporary multi-scalar state implies both homogeneous and multiple territorial spaces. This complexity explains the functionality of modern states to the development of capitalism, driven by internal economic interests and increasing interdependences. Within this complex configuration, the nation-state model appears neither defunct nor redundant but represents a persistent and highly relevant form of spatiality, complementary to regional and supranational spaces, networks and flows. The Westphalian model based on sovereign states has been called into question but has not disappeared. This is also helped by the fact that the territorial state continues to inform ordinary, everyday representations of legitimate political organisations through what has been referred to as mundane nationalism—that is, a set of symbols, norms and languages that reproduce forms of identification shaped by national history (Billig, 1995). The main consequence of territorial complexity in linking with the persistent role of the nation-state and national state is a rising contention and struggles about the legitimate space of territoriality in democratic politics. Unsurprisingly, the age of globalisation and territorial rescaling is characterised by increasing controversies in terms of sovereignism, neo-nationalism and regionalism. This does not reduce but rather increases the heuristic relevance of a territorial approach to politics.

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Changing Democratic Citizenship

Abstract Territorial approaches to democratic politics can help gain a better understanding of the rise of Western nation-building in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which has long been studied separately from the history of the modern state and democracy. This chapter demonstrates how a territorial approach to politics can facilitate a discussion of the concepts of population, people and citizenship in an era of global migration.

Keywords Citizenship · People · Human rights · Migration · Exclusionary politics

According to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, contemporary democracies should be based on the principle that every human being is equal in terms of rights and duties, regardless of their origin and residence. However, in many respects, the reality does not correspond to this principle. This is not only because of the inequalities of rights and resources among those who live permanently within current national states but also because there are inequalities in social and political rights between long- and short-term residents. The tension between democratic citizenship as a norm and its application in territorial states raises a series of relevant questions that political sociology has partially

sought to address over the past few decades: Who can access and reside in a given territory? Who is legitimately part of the political community in that territorial space? Who defines and how is citizenship defined? Does it correspond to nationality? What territorial boundaries should the *demos* have?

Many of these questions may seem unimportant in a territorial state with a stable population in a peaceful international system, but they become highly relevant when there is a reshuffling of populations, intense and unpredictable migration processes and increasing interdependence between territories and peoples belonging to nation-states and different democratic regimes. What happens when the boundaries of citizenship lose their clarity and stability, i.e. when a gap opens up between social and demographic changes and the state regulatory framework governing membership of the category of citizens with political rights?

Citizenship is a very old concept and has taken on different meanings since the times of Athenian democracy and the Roman Republic. If a hard core is to be identified, according to Marshall (1950), it denotes the status of belonging to a self-governing political community, with the rights and duties that flow from this status. However, the transformation of status, rights and territorial belongings in recent decades requires a reconsideration of the concept of citizenship. In their *Handbook of Global Citizenship*, Isin and Nyers (2014: 1) adopt a very broad definition of citizenship as "an institution mediating rights between the subjects of politics and the polity to which these subjects belong". Asking who is part of a politically defined territory brings the territory as a space for inclusion and the exercise of democratic rights back to the centre of reflection. Therefore, it becomes crucial to understand the relationship between settledness and mobility, civil and political rights, citizenship and nationality, democracy and human rights. In this sense, a territory-oriented approach to politics is crucial to understanding some of the major tensions that mark contemporary democracies.

Population and People

Asking "to whom does the territory belong?" should, at first glance, lead to a simple answer: its population. Population is a constitutive feature of any territorial unit. Usually, there is no territory without population. There are, however, several ways to interpret population. If the approach is *demographic*, population is considered in terms of births, deaths and

migration processes; if the approach is social, it focuses on groups that are less integrated, marginalised or excluded and those who do or do not enjoy full rights. The prevailing connotation of the population is that of a human group seen through its objective characteristics. The emphasis is on its qualification as belonging to a territory understood as a space over which state control is exercised: Population becomes the means by which one questions who resides there, hence, who is "controlled" by the political institutions. It matters little what the subjective opinions of the population are. Rather, the focus is on collective traits, ignoring the fact that the population is an aggregate of individuals who, at least in part, are granted the status of citizens.

When referring to the notion of citizen, the question arises as to which segments of the population present in a territory at a given time are entitled to make political decisions about that territory. Certain categories, such as minors and other persons without political rights, are excluded, even though these same categories are included in the population. This also applies to individuals and groups without nationality, which is recognised as a condition of political rights. It also applies to those who have some rights but not others to which they aspire, for example, a linguistic minority population within a territorial state.

In any case, it seems typical, and this is also true in current democratic regimes, that the decisions of a segment of the population apply to a larger whole that has no way of opposing that decision. In other words, the population does not entirely coincide with the people, that is, the entity designated as having the legitimate power to decide the fate of the community itself. As sociologist Margaret Canovan (2005) points out, each political regime in the Western tradition relies on the people as the source of legitimacy for its actions, its constitution and any changes, including state boundaries. In a representative democracy, the same normative principle also applies. At the centre is the power of democratic control of political elites through the rules and practice of elections. At the same time, political elites, once elected, are called upon to put the will of the people into practice. Although many proponents of contemporary democracies believe the real power resides—and must reside—with political representatives, this does not negate the necessary character of popular sovereignty as the supreme authority for the legitimacy of political representatives, who are selected by the people.

However, if we look at how the term is used in modern democracies, "people" is an ambiguous category. In his in-depth treatment of

the concept, Giovanni Sartori (1987: 22 ff.) identifies as many as six meanings: an entity that encompasses everyone, in principle the whole of humanity; an indistinct large part; a group of disadvantaged classes; an indivisible entity, an organic whole; an absolute majority; and a majority limited by the rights of minorities. Each of these meanings recalls different origins and reflects the multiple uses of the term in contemporary politics, words, while "people" sometimes tends to coincide with the "population" as a demographic notion, in other meanings, it is an organ endowed with political authority: people refers as a group of citizens, which are defined as a subject with rights and duties. However, in the uses identified by Sartori, it is assumed that people are a fixed entity that does not change in space and time, and that, as such, it is taken for granted, and that the exercise of popular authority occurs within an homogenous territorial space. In other words, as political theorist Paulina Ochoa Espejo (2014: 466) notes, as it is usual in democratic political theorists, the people are understood as a stable entity, defined once and for all, irrespective of the global transformation of contemporary democracies. Consequently, determining who, among the population, is legitimately part of the people as a community of citizens, that is the boundaries of the people, should be a key issue (Canovan, 1996: 18).

DEMOCRATIC AUTHORITY AND TERRITORIAL RIGHTS

The first issue concerns the collective dimension of the people as an authority called upon to decide about an established territorial space. If we start from the assumption that the people are the supreme authority politically legitimising control over a territorial space, the people are also the authority that legitimises the exercise of territorial rights. What are territorial rights? They may include a very broad and articulated set of rights: jurisdictional rights over people within the territory; jurisdictional rights over resources within the territory; property rights over resources; and who has the authority to determine residence, immigration and citizenship rights over the territory (Nine, 2012: 12). Thus, territorial rights are assumed to have the force of law over the territory understood as a homogeneous and all-encompassing entity. However, one may ask to what extent it is legitimate to claim control over resources and people (Wellman, 2020). In principle, does the territorial state always have the right to make and enforce the law on its territory? Can it exploit the natural resources available on its territory? Can it design and enforce

its immigration policy as it sees fit? Assuming that natural resources are to be understood as belonging exclusively to the country in which they are found, one would have to conclude that, for example, the Brazilian people or their representatives have the right to deforest the Amazon to increase their economic well-being. If a part of the country does not identify with the territorial state (or no longer does), which people should decide the fate of that part? Considering the Brazilian people as sovereign, however, does not necessarily include the interests of the indigenous peoples, who are also Brazilian citizens. Moreover, insofar as the exploitation of the natural resources of South America's largest democracy affects the eco-system of the entire world, a tension between state sovereignty and citizenship as a transnational phenomenon emerges.

The fact that the people can be defined by certain enduring and homogenous traits is a political construction. The people as an enduring and homogenous entity are the product of a territorial strategy that, using the instruments of law, defines and selects those who from the current population who are to be considered the people as a group with shared political authority.

The population as a demographic concept entails a strong internal heterogeneity, as happens in multinational states (which are composed, for example, of populations of different languages). High diversity also emerges in nomadic or disputed territories, where there is a jurisdictional disagreement. In the case of autonomist or secessionist tendencies, it is indeed part of the dispute to know which people have authority over the legitimate territorial space. The question is to know which democratic regime guaranteed by the national state can legitimately disregard the aspirations of a minority that considers itself discriminated against. In some ways, this is a conundrum that can only be solved through political confrontation, repression or processes of autonomy or separation. A more fundamental—but also a paradoxical—question arises: While the people are the sovereign authority, it is not clear who designates them. According to democratic principles, the people should vote to decide who forms part of the people. But if we need a vote to demarcate the demos, on what basis do we choose who gets to vote to define it? It is a vicious circle that it is often resolved with non-democratic criteria (Ochoa Espejo, 2011).

Citizenship, Nationality and Boundaries

A related key question is determining who, as an individual or group, can legitimately be considered part of the sovereign people, in other words, to whom territorial belonging and related political rights should be granted. The answer is quite simple if one is born and grows up in a more or less stable democratic regime: This is what nation-building in Europe since the second half of the nineteenth century has established in terms of a kind of overlap between nationality and citizenship in mutually exclusive belonging (Habermas, 1992).

Before the modern state, a citizen was defined by residing in the territory, having a certain socio-economic status and paying taxes (Gellner, 1983). There was a passive acceptance of many senses of belonging, and the issue of loyalty to political institutions was all but marginal. With the emergence of national states and liberal democracies since the end of the eighteenth century, however, the principle became established that citizenship primarily concerns culturally homogeneous societies founded on nation-states. The principle of national citizenship became a pillar of the development of the modern state, especially after the French Revolution (Bauböck, 1994; Mackert & Turner, 2017). However, nation-building is also a product of state action and its functioning. As Charles Maier points out: "The authority of states is generally based on the control of territory and its inhabitants. State entities, for the most part, have been seen to police the behaviour, feelings of loyalty, and often the beliefs of those residing within their borders" (Maier, 2014: 26). Indeed, the development of the modern system of states implies an increasing role of institutions in categorising populations and developing demarcations, with the consequence of making some identities more legitimate than others. This involves not only observation and mapping but also the socialisation and stabilisation of a population within a delimited territorial space (Scott, 1998: 2–3, 76–77, 81). This process is expressed, first and foremost, as the construction of a national identity and a people expressing common origins and history. National identity becomes the foundation of citizenship and an indispensable criterion for being included in the people as a sovereign authority. The issue becomes even more crucial when, with the extension of suffrage, the citizen is called upon to decide the fate of the community through the exercise of the vote within the framework defined by the nation-state. The synthesis of people, nation and (individual) citizenship reflects a continuity between

the era of nation-state consolidation in the late nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century, when European states saw the greatest national mobilisation in their history (Hobsbawm, 1994; Mosse, 2023). In this sense, the rise of nationalism, the modern state, citizenship and political democracy are closely intertwined. The argument can be expressed as follows:

> Democratic legitimacy and popular sovereignty require that persons subject to the law and state authority be included, as of right, in the process of forming and exercising that authority. The exercise of state authority primarily concerns those who live under the jurisdiction of that authority. Since states are geographically delimited communities and their borders express the limits of their jurisdictions, democratic states generally have good reason to limit participation in the political process to those who reside within their territorial boundaries. (Rubio-Marin, 2006: 129)

This model was consolidated in the twentieth century, while the notion of citizenship has been expanded as underlined by Thomas Humphrey Marshall in his classic essay "Citizenship and social class", published in 1950. The development of the "universalist" (i.e. inclusive) welfare state and economic growth after the Second World War contributed to unprecedented access to social dimensions of citizenship for a larger part of population.

However, three important challenges for the tradition model of citizenship have arisen in the past few decades. In the European continent, he first was the introduction with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 of European citizenship, allowing some voting rights and free circulation of persons for EU citizens and associated members of the Schengen Agreement. Moreover, the European national state increasingly recognised binationality, trinationality or more. European citizenship is an important example to partially disentangle citizenship and nationality, although the latter is still crucial. The second challenge is the crisis of universalist models of welfare state under the pressure of neoliberalism, which undermines inclusiveness while boosting individual responsibility and workfare as constraints for social benefits. And the third challenge is the rise of global migration, which has had a strong impact on European countries within and from outside, with an increasing proportion of foreign workers and inhabitants.

Geographical mobility has become the main feature of European integration. More and more individuals live in countries where they were

not born and raised. Population movements in recent decades have been among the most intense in contemporary history, especially in terms of immigration to Western (in particular, European) countries. The annual UNHCR Global Trends report of 2019 reveals that, at the end of that year, refugees amounted to an unprecedented figure of 79.5 million people. In its World Migration Report 2020, the UN International Organization for Migration notes that the total number of migrants represents 272 million people out of an estimated world population of 7.7 billion. While a very large majority of people globally reside in the country of their birth (96.5%), more than half of all international migrants (around 141 million) have found their way to Europe and North America.

As a consequence of intense migration processes, but also as a result of the recognition of the principle of universal human rights, which broadens the attribution of rights to people of different nationalities, the capacity for stabilisation and population control within territorial has diminished. Moreover, processes of downward and upward reconfiguration of institutional powers, as in the case of European construction, as well as the cultural fallout of globalisation, have contributed to redefining and models of citizenship in relation to rights of migrants (Isin & Nyers, 2014).

The Migration Challenge

Democratic regimes, especially wealthier countries belonging to the so-called first world, including European countries, are facing consequences of economic globalisation, the effects of wars, poverty and spatial socio-economic inequalities. Meanwhile, transnational migratory flows of people contribute to the rise of a multicultural society and in a context of strong demographic shift. An unprecedented mixture of cultures, lifestyles and affiliations goes along with a decrease in fertility and an overall ageing of the population, as well as growing labour needs. Public opinion, intellectuals and politicians are divided on how best to respond to migration challenges.

The first orientation, promoted first and foremost by economic elites and large supranational organisations, sees immigration as an economic resource. Immigration is seen as a way to meet the demand for labour in various industries and to sustain the welfare state and pension systems. It is believed that immigration can not only co-exist with but also

contribute to preserving society's standard of living and welfare. Therefore, it is considered that a more or less significant share of immigrants from Western or non-Western countries can integrate into the productive world, in particular by making up for the deficiencies of the indigenous labour force, and contribute to the financing of welfare through taxes. Here, a distinction is made between immigration and the recognition of political rights, where the latter is not considered a primary objective. Immigration need not change the boundaries of the people. The second orientation, advocated by many NGOs and left-wing political movements, is that the goal should be the political integration of migrants on the basis of the principle of people understood as bearers of human rights. This position conceives citizenship as being detached from individual nation-state membership, according to Article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "everyone has the right everywhere to the recognition of his legal personality".

The third interpretation, of which the constellation of the nationalist and sovereignist right is an expression, focuses on the danger represented by a multicultural society. In contrast to the first, this narrative sees immigration as a threat to welfare and well-being, as well as national identity. In the United States, it is a view shared by various intellectual strands ranging from the alt-right movement, with its aspiration for a right based on the rejection of equality (Main, 2018), to political scientist Samuel Huntington, whose volume Clash of Civilisations (2000) is one of the most-cited books in contemporary political science, and especially Who Are We? The Challenges of American Political Identity (2004), in which he stresses the threats to America from large-scale immigration by Latin Americans, which he says could "divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures and two languages". Huntington goes so far as to call for immigrants to be forced to "adopt English" and for the United States to turn to "Protestant religions" to "save itself from the threats" of Latin and Islamic immigrants. In France, writers Michel Houellebecq and Renaud Camus have played a prominent public role in calling out the threat that they perceive Islam as posing to the West. Camus is best known for his book The Great Replacement, published in 2011, in which he asserts the existence of a conspiracy by global elites to replace white and Christian European peoples with black immigrants from other cultures and religions, particularly Muslims.

In short, the nexus between immigration and citizenship informs one of the major ideological-political cleavages that characterise Western

democratic regimes on both sides of the Atlantic. The politicisation of immigration was anticipated in Europe in the 1960s by the movements of the ecological right, especially of German culture, influenced by eugenics. For this right wing, hostility to the arrival of immigrants was intended to protect the territory, national culture and the natural environment from foreign tendencies and demographic excesses. Like a karst river, the issue resurfaced in different forms in the 1980s and 1990s with the success of nationalist and sovereignist right-wing parties in Europe and the United States. The result was a politicisation of the link between borders, population and identity and claims for a territory understood as an authentic and ancestral bond jeopardised by multiculturalism.

One of the most relevant intellectual justifications of anti-immigrant stance is *differentialist racism* (Taguieff, 2001). This kind of racism does not claim superiority of some races over others but considers that the only way to defend one's own is to avoid any form of hybridisation that is considered unnatural—that is, it is based on a principle of territorial exclusivity, according to which the foreigner should stay at home. The territory is understood as a bordered space of national belonging, consisting of a people with a homogeneous cultural foundation based on a specific civilisation or race. It is seen as a bulwark to be defended against the arrival of different cultures perceived as a threat. In Sack's terms, differential racism strategically filters access to the territory as a protective space. This strategy stresses group belonging, such as religious communities, but also concerns individuals, hence the immigrant's ability to integrate—or rather, assimilate—national customs and traditions.

Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion

Together with racial differentialism and similar narratives, the citizenship should strictly correspond to nationality and interpreted as antagonistic to universalism and cosmopolitanism. Thus, a tension arises between the universal ideal of human rights, which advocates individual freedoms and equal rights, irrespective of religion, race, language or culture, and the defence of cultural identities and native groups experiencing forms of vulnerability. This tension is not only between universalism and particularism but also inherent in national citizenship. It could be said that the "modern form of the nation is both universal and particular" (Benhabib 2005: 674). In its universal dimension, the idea of a people as humanity emerges, whereby all human beings are bearers of rights. In its particular

dimension, people are the expression of specific rights of citizens within certain borders. This creates a tension between the rights prescribed by nation-states and the rights of those who do not benefit from despite being considered, in principle, part of humanity and entitled to rights. This tension exists between claims of territorial sovereignty and international human rights, particularly in relation to the rights of others (e.g. immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers). In this context, determining who constitutes the people and citizen today (i.e. who is also part of the political community and assumes the rights and duties of this membership) (Leydet, 2017) invokes the unresolved problem of the boundaries of the people, hence who enjoys the rights of citizenship in a changing society.

The issue is not only theoretical or ideological but also embodied in the migration policies that characterise nation-states, particularly those of the so-called first world. Each nation-state specifically regulates access to political rights for non-nationals. The main route is undoubtedly the so-called naturalisation, that is the acquisition of nationality as a prerequisite for citizenship. Some countries follow the principle of jus soli, according to which naturalisation is secured by birth in the territory, while others adhere to jus sanguinis, that is, the acquisition from a parent or descendant already in possession of nationality. However, there are wide nuances in application. For example, in countries where jus sanguinis is in force, there are many different approaches to the duration of residence and to verifying that the potential citizen demonstrates legitimate characteristics and aspirations to be part of the community. Although there is no clear trend, two somewhat opposing trends in Western migration policies seem to be emerging.

In most European countries, rules of citizenship are now more open and accessible than in the past. There are three relevant trends that corroborate this shift: The first concerns the softening, in many countries, of ethnic criteria for access to citizenship through the introduction of jus soli aspects; the second is the acceptance of dual (or multiple) citizenship, which constitutes a turning point in recent decades. Exclusive nationality had been a well-established principle in the twentieth century but is now in decline. The third aspect concerns the aforementioned role of the human rights regime, related to its increasing use in national and supranational courts as a principle for the defence of migrants' rights (Jacobson & Goodwin-White, 2018). The consequence of these trends is the formal weakening of national identity as a component of citizenship,

as well as an overall decrease in the rights and opportunities associated with citizenship as such (Joppke, 2010; Spiro, 2009).

The trend is that in many countries, policies against multiculturalism are strengthening, that is, multifaceted opposition to any extension of political rights to foreigners. The chosen path would be assimilation policies and measures to limit naturalisations, for instance by curbing the acquisition of citizenship through marriage, as is the case in the Netherlands, France and Germany (Bonjour & Block, 2016), and by instituting a general strengthening of procedures aimed at subordinating citizenship to nationality. The most recent trends observed in many Western countries, but already present in the 1990s, detect, on the one hand, a narrowing of the possibilities of entry into Western countries and, on the other hand, a legal system that is increasingly selective in terms of ethnicity, religion, nationality and social class (Ellermann, 2020; Koopmans et al., 2012; Schmid, 2020; Zapata-Barrero, 2009). Although it is undoubtedly too schematic to focus exclusively on the extension of political rights to migrants, such as policy represents a relevant issue in the tension between nationality and citizenship.

Beyond Territorial Rights?

In this chapter, we addressed some of the key issues of democratic regimes, such as the definition of the sovereign people and political citizenship. One of the crucial questions is to know who has the legitimacy to decide in the name of the people and give access to citizens' rights. Who can decide who may or may not enter the national territory, who may reside there and enjoy the rights that long-term residents already enjoy? The seemingly simple answer is "the people", since democracy means power of the people. But who are the people? The answer again, which often seems obvious, is that the people are the expression of the population that inhabits, resides or belongs to a territory where the democratic exercise takes place. But who enjoys these rights of citizenship? In other words, who is to be considered a member of the political community of a given territory? Here, the historically prevalent and still largely dominant answer is to affirm that the citizen is whoever enjoys nationality within the perimeter of the nation-state.

As we have seen, things today are a little more complicated, and all the notions that relate to the exercise of democracy have become part of an ongoing and multifaced debate. On the one hand, the notion of

the people has many more meanings than they may appear to have at first glance; on the other hand, emerging challenges produced by political, legal, economic and cultural processes pose very difficult dilemmas and controversies to be faced and overcome today, as the tension between the recognition of human rights and the expansion of migratory movements, considered by some to be indispensable from the point of view of territorial economic well-being, as well as the spread of feelings and opinions of hostility towards these movements. Crucial tensions arise also between the recognition of human rights (therefore, also of a right that cannot be precluded to people because of their cultural and religious origins) and the defence of the link between nationality and citizenship; but also between the latter link and the recognition of social and political rights for immigrants who live permanently on a territory, who work and pay taxes to the state and the wish to safeguard the rights and prerogatives of the national community. Who has the right to equally decide in a democracy concerns not only migrants but also those who reside within national states characterised by strong regional identities and claims. Therefore, the question arises as to which political authority within a differentiated national space with cultural majorities and minorities has the power to exercise territorial rights. Who may legitimately decide to exploit important natural resources that acquire world heritage status but are nevertheless located within the perimeter of a nation-state that claims absolute sovereignty over them? All these questions are nowadays open and controversial in many territorial states. They involve a debate between strategies of de-territorialisation of rights, both within and outside states, and strategies of de- and re-territorialisation that aim to re-establish control over borders and populations in a world shaped by globalisation and migrant challenges. All these questions are crucial for a territory-oriented approach to democratic politics.

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CHAPTER 6

Territorial Voting

Abstract The analysis of voting behaviour is an important component of a territory-oriented research agenda. Starting with an approach based on political cleavages, this chapter tries to demonstrate how centre–periphery and urban–rural divides continue to shape voting patterns in contemporary democracies. Although globalisation and urbanisation have transformed territorial ties in profound ways, recent examples of elections and referendums in Europe and the United States have demonstrated that voting orientations continue to be influenced by the places where people grow up and live.

Keywords Voting behaviour · Political cleavage · Urban vs rural · Periphery · Place

Processes of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation shaped by numerous socio-economic and cultural institutional challenges disrupt stability in contemporary territorial spaces, including those of territorial states. Therefore, there is a temptation to get rid of any reference to the territory as a dimension heuristically capable of grasping contemporary political events and processes. This also applies to voting behaviour, which is the main way in which citizens support political parties and contribute to selecting political elites. An influential and heterogeneous

current of political scientists asserts that voting practices do not (or no longer) depend on territorial roots. Rational choice theories argue there is no heuristic interest in connecting individual rationality and spatiality. For those who prioritise audience democracy, the importance of national traditional media coverage and social media networking has led to a decline in the relevance of places and local ties. Thus, voting preferences could be studied either through individual cost–benefit calculations or only through socio-professional or cultural conditions that are independent of the places and environments where people live. This is especially true given that nowadays, voting practices marked by greater changes in ideological-political orientations and high (albeit variable) levels of abstentionism seem less taken for granted than they did a few decades ago, at least in major European democracies.

Mainstream electoral studies have challenged some territory-oriented traditions of research that were influential in the twentieth century: The first tradition, rooted in the ecological paradigm founded by André Siegfried (1913) in France and Edward Kriebel in the UK (1916), sought to explain voting behaviour through the influence of geographical features related to demographic, economic, cultural, social or institutional aspects; the second developed from research on the "neighbouring effects" and "interpersonal influence" on voting behaviour, highlighting "communitarian" belonging and local ties in political geography, sociology and political science (Fitzgerald, 2018; Johnson, 1986; Zuckerman, 2005); the third tradition centred on the study of political cleavages and the works of political scientist Stein Rokkan in the 1950s and 1960s.

However, one might wonder whether these academic legacies have really lost their heuristic capacities. Recently, there have been notable attempts to renew territorial voting analysis, especially in Europe and other Western democracies. This chapter aims to show how the attention to territorial voting is part of marginal but important analytical approaches, in particular through the legacy of the cleavage theory and the renewal of geographic analysis, which stresses the impact of uneven economic development. In the first part of the chapter, we will discuss the limits and strengths of the cleavage theory in contemporary democracies. Next, we consider some examples of rising territorial divides in European and US politics. And finally, we explore the persistent relevance of territorial divides by highlighting their multifaceted features.

Old and Territorial Cleavages

The sociological and political scientist legacy of Norwegian scholar Stein Rokkan and his successors examined the relevance of political cleavages for understanding how social and cultural conflicts develop into opposing political alignments and translate into party systems. In modern European democracies, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, political cleavages tended to be based on strong historical turning points, such as the Industrial Revolution or the separation of church and state, with the associated consolidation of antagonistic social, cultural, religious and other groups. These groups, which had stable identities, could under certain conditions ensure loyalty to a party or an ideological-political alignment. They were also able to interpret the interests represented by this cleavage within party systems. One of the best-known outcomes of this line of research is the crystallisation of political cleavages for a significant period of the twentieth century in West European party systems (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). Rokkan distinguished two main territorial cleavages: The first was between the centre and the periphery, i.e. the contrasts that could arise between the nation-building centre and the ethnically, religiously or linguistically distinct territories within the perimeter of the state, which were subjugated to the centre; and the second related to the tensions produced by the Industrial Revolution between the urban industrial and commercial classes located in large agglomerations and the interests of the peasantry, that is, citizens engaged in agricultural production and located in rural places (Rokkan & Flora, 2007). In the recent decades, a large set of studies have shown a gradual refreezing of the traditional cleavages at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Although not everywhere, wage-earners and religious groups tend to loom less prominently in support of socialist parties and parties of the Christian tradition, respectively (Brooks et al., 2006; Best, 2011). In the 1950s and 1960s, Stein Rokkan argued that established European democratic regimes have fixed territorial cleavages, except for internal minorities and peripheries (Rokkan & Flora, 2007). Since 1970, an important stream of literature has emphasised the persistent although changing meaning of centre–periphery cleavages in relation to the rise of regionalist and minority nationalist parties in some European regions such as Catalonia, Scotland or Northern Italy (e.g. Gomez-Reino, 2018; Hepburn, 2009; Swenden & Bolleyer, 2014).

However, some empirical evidence seems to confirm the ongoing political relevance of territorial divides in Western democracies also where there are no regionalist parties. For instance, the French party system, which has undergone major transformations in recent years, offers an interesting example of these trends. While some traditional religious and social cleavages have weakened or transformed, along with the breakdown of the old parties and the rise of new ones, territorial divides seem to be taking on new significance. In France, the 2017 presidential election represented a turning point of the Fifth Republic from the point of view of the party system. After decades, the mainstream right-wing parties and the Socialist Party were excluded from the second round for the first time ever, and both came out as losers in the legislative elections as well (Evans & Ivaldi, 2018). Although in previous decades persistent territorial divides have been characterised voting behaviour, the most recent the geography of the vote, connected to new parties and socio-economic transformations, stressed significant variation between and within urban and rural areas (Batardy et al., 2017; Bussi et al., 2012). In 2017, support for Macron was around 20% in small municipalities (in those with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants it was 18.5%), while it rose to 35% in Paris. On the other hand, the vote for Marine Le Pen was close to 27% in small towns with fewer than 1,000 voters, fell to 15% in medium-large cities and almost disappeared in Paris, where she obtained around 5% of the vote (Emanuele, 2018). In Paris, voters in working-class neighbourhoods, old bastions of the left—in particular, the communist left—primarily supported the candidate of the radical left, Jean-Luc Mélenchon; the more affluent voters, who exercise highly qualified professions and live in the capital's central districts, where the PS had scored well in the past, voted mostly for Emmanuel Macron in 2017. By contrast, the lower level of support for Le Pen in the capital was mainly concentrated in the working-class areas of the banlieues. In the 2019 European elections, the Rassemblement National was confirmed as the largest French party, just as it had been four years earlier. The party En marche, founded by Macron, came in second place. The results of European elections showed similar territorial patterns to those of the presidential election. Marine Le Pen's party reconfirmed its territorial bastions in the old industrial areas of the North and East, as well as the Mediterranean basin, particularly in the regions of Provence-Alpes, the Côte d'Azur and Languedoc-Roussillon. The 2022 Presidential elections have partially confirmed the previous trends. In the first round, the support for Jean-Luc Mélenchon was

carried by dense urban areas also clearly in rural areas, the vote for Marine Le Pen was higher outside the major urban centres, while Macron's electoral results did not seem to depend on where people live. In the second round, the territorial divide appears more clearly: The votes for the radical right are clearly reinforced outside urban centres and peak in rural areas. The opposite is true for the electoral coalition led by Emmanuel Macron in the second round, which is weaker in rural areas than in the major urban centres (Brookes & Guerra, 2023).

In the United States, the 2016 presidential election marked a clear breaking point in recent political history. The unexpected victory of outsider Trump was due not only to his role as an anti-establishment showman but also to his performance as spokesman for an agenda and programme that had been widely disseminated by the Tea Party, the opinion movement that had transformed the Republican Party from within since 2010, but also by the many movements nostalgic for white supremacy, as well as the network of conservative evangelical churches. Trump's candidacy also exacerbated more or less latent territorial rifts around him. Trump's 2016 America First campaign targeted the white working class and middle class, appealed to their fears and frustrations, focused on the Democrats' broken promises and leveraged sensitive topics such as the economic decline of the world's leading power and migration flows (Lamont et al., 2017). The 2016 election consolidated a rift between two North Americas on a national scale: one consisting of the large metropolitan regions, primarily on the East and West coasts; and the other comprising small towns and rural areas. This divide had not previously been as politically strong as in the 2016 election. Residents of large urban centres and surrounding conurbations, as well as those of smaller urban areas, were the most likely to identify with and vote for the Democratic Party. By contrast, the less populous and less diverse suburbs of small metropolitan areas, the outlying areas of major cities, as well as rural counties, tended to support the Republicans (Scala & Johnson, 2017).

While the former have concentrated wealth and economic dynamism and have been global hubs of the financial and technological revolutions for decades, the latter have struggled under the burden of economic stagnation and social decline. Politicising widespread divisions in public opinion, especially in Midwestern states with strong ties to manufacturing, and where the white working-class vote was crucial, especially in the states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin (Morgan & Lee, 2018),

helped Trump to secure his 2016 victory (Abramowitz & McCoy, 2019). In 2020, after four years of increasing polarisation and an agenda marked by the issues of immigration, border closures, protectionism and criticism of the Washington bureaucracy, which Trump used to cultivate an image of himself as an outsider, the presidency went to challenger Joe Biden. Biden won mainly, but not exclusively, in metropolitan areas. Trump's defeat, which he would refuse to recognise, once again handed him the votes of the rural and less urbanised areas of the country, as well as a white vote tempted by racial segregation and a nationalist conservatism that has become dominant in the Republican Party under Trump's influence. In fact, the party of Abraham Lincoln now aligns more closely with parties like the Alternative für Deutschland or Marie Le Pen's Rassemblement National in France.

It would be incomplete to consider territorial voting only as it is expressed in elections. If we move from elections to a referendum, specifically, the one held in the United Kingdom in 2016 to leave the European Union, we find similar territorial divides. The Brexit referendum was undoubtedly a watershed moment in European history, not least because in 2021, the EU would wind up losing one of its member states for the first time in its history. Analyses have shown how the Brexit vote was a litmus test of deep socio-territorial divides within and across the UK. It was often emphasised that those who voted to leave were mainly those with low incomes, who were unemployed or had manual and low-skilled jobs or who felt their financial situation had worsened because of European integration. Level of education also played a crucial role: Those with a high level of education were more in favour of the status quo, while those with a medium–low education voted in favour of leaving the EU. Voting depended on personal characteristics but also divided voters according to their place of residence. On the one hand, urban areas that enjoyed favourable positions on an international scale—in short, that seized the opportunities of economic globalisation—and affluent localities where a highly educated and diverse population was concentrated opposed Brexit (e.g. in Edinburgh, Cambridge, Oxford and Richmond). On the other hand, areas that were sparsely urbanised or in industrial decline saw some of the highest peaks in support of Brexit.

The vote for Brexit highlights the impact of the inequality of development and opportunity between the different regions that make up the United Kingdom, as well as within regions, between large cities, smaller towns and more remote areas (e.g. Goodwin & Heath, 2016). Voters are

not only oriented based on their personal characteristics such as their level of education but also influenced by the conditions of the environment in which they live. People with high levels of professional qualifications were more likely to vote in favour of Brexit when they resided in areas with a low concentration of qualified people. In areas where a low-skilled economy was concentrated, the difference in support for Brexit between graduates and non-graduates was 20 points; by contrast, in the most dynamic areas, this difference was more than 40 points.

Multiple Territorial Divides

To some extent, the transformation of party systems in many Western countries and the renewed political relevance of territorial divides in party competition reflects the impact of restructuring territorial states and the emergence of oppositions to globalisation, migrations and supranational integration (e.g. Hooge & Marks, 2017). Whether the relevance of some old political cleavages seems to have faded, the focus has shifted to the emergence of new ones triggered by lifestyle changes (e.g. between materialist and post-materialist values) and socio-economic challenges, which are linked to the processes of denationalisation and globalisation of the economy (Kriesi et al., 2006), multi-level governance, urbanisation processes and shifting relations between the centre and the periphery within and across state borders (Ford & Jennings, 2020; Rodden, 2019). While devolution and decentralisation and multi-layered forms of party mobilisation around local and regional elections open new opportunities for territorially framing cultural and socio-economic issues (Keating, 2013), urban and socio-economic transformations tend to shape new territorial divides.

Undoubtedly, in the past few decades, many structural changes have occurred, such as the decline of old industrial sectors and growing secularisation (at least in Western Europe), as well as the restructuration of territorial state, which have had consequences in terms of political socialisation and the formation of political opinion. The Brexit vote highlights the impact of economic globalisation on wealth disparities between regions in the UK. Controlling for age, gender and education factors, people living in areas that have seen greater penetration of Chinese imports in recent years are more likely to support the UK's exit from the EU (Colantone & Stanig, 2018). Similarly, financial and digital capitalism has contributed to a growing territorial divide between global cities that

attract skills and investment from all over the world and less densely populated and rural regions, which were once centres of manufacturing but are now cut off from new global dynamics. Silicon Valley and Wall Street no longer depend on the supply of material goods from the Midwest regions but have increasingly tapped into foreign manufacturing and financial chains from Europe, the Middle East, China and the rest of Asia.

Nevertheless, it is not always clear to what extent and how such an urban–rural divide still shapes enduring political cleavages. For instance, a recent comparative research, focused on 30 European countries between 2002 and 2018 and combining aggregate and individual variables, provides evidence that the urban divide still matters. Meanwhile, outputs do not show a clear-cut opposition between urban and rural spaces but a gradient: "the clear gradient that we identify in terms of political attitudes and social values, and their correlation with different spatial scales and kinds of community—ranging from metropolitan centres at one end of the spectrum through to more remote, rural areas at the other—suggest the need for a more detailed and contextual understanding" (Kenny & Luca, 2021: 578).

Accordingly, electoral studies tend to confirm in regions that have benefitted the most from the opportunities of globalisation, inequalities in terms of educational resources have played a much larger role than in the less dynamic territories, thus highlighting the effect of the territorial context on voting orientations. A recent study in 63,000 constituencies across EU countries also confirms that support for Eurosceptic parties is mainly the result of the economic and industrial decline in combination with lower employment and a less educated workforce (Dijkstra et al., 2020; Rodríguez-Pose, 2020). These results confirm the increasing impact of the so-called left-behind territories embedded in the critical consequences of global transformations (e.g. Hendrickson et al., 2018; McKay, 2019).

Urbanisation has transformed the relationship between the inner city, suburbs and the countryside and contributed to polarising opportunities across territorial spaces. The financialisation and digitalisation of the economy have challenged the sectors and places of traditional industrial production, enhancing anxieties and inequalities. In this uncertain context, unfulfilled expectations of the political system and its representatives arise, as well as social protests against the economic elites, who are often identified, rightly or wrongly, with the urban centres and financial powers (Guilluy, 2019). The less urbanised and old industrial territories

are particularly invested with narratives stressing their status as victims, as areas on the margins, little recognised, and thus of a politicisation that results in polarised orientations compared with those expressed in more central, successful and global-oriented territories.

Structural approaches to territorial cleavages do not take into account how territorial issues have been subjectively appropriated. As globalisation and state restructuring contribute to reshaping territorial divides in a multi-scalar environment, many divides take multifaceted forms of demand for *social and territorial* justice. According to this interpretation, voters who have benefitted less from the advantages of globalisation and reside in territories that are less dynamic than the large metropolitan urban centres use their votes to express their dissatisfaction with a development model that penalises them (Naumann & Fischer-Tahir, 2013). While their limited educational or professional qualifications put them at a disadvantage in the global economy, this disadvantage also depends on the fact that the areas in which they live offer them fewer economic opportunities. Voting is not solely driven by inequality in terms of economic development, material wealth or educational resources. An important strand of electoral studies, drawing on sociological approaches to voting behaviour, demonstrates the persistent relevance of the *places* in which people live, inhabit, socialise and form their political opinions (e.g. Broz et al., 2021; Fitzgerald, 2018; Milner, 2021; Waldron, 2021). For instance, a recent comparative research conducted in the UK, France, Germany and the Netherlands shows that living in a rural or urban area counts for little on its own to explain voting for protest parties; instead, a sharper perception of the deterioration of the surrounding environment in which they live has a much bigger impact on these voters (Evans et al., 2019).

At the same time, in the politicisation of territorial divides, anti-establishment stances embodied by oppositional and anti-system actors play a crucial role. What is at stake is the contrast between who is supposed to belong to the "territory" and who is alienated from it or opposed to its interests. Such elites are identified as those opposed to the territory and its inhabitants. In this sense, we could say that the driving force behind territorial cleavages is a political response against the rebellion of the elites described a few years ago by historian and essayist Christopher Lasch (1996). According to him, the malaise of contemporary democracies is rooted in the elites' secession from the community. An anthropological study carried out in Wisconsin, one of the most contested

states between Democrats and Republicans in recent presidential elections (with 0.63% in favour of Biden in 2020 and 0.77% in favour of Trump in 2016), provides a timely illustration of this. Conducted during the Obama presidency, the study highlights the resentment of the wealthy classes and local political actors in small towns, who accuse the national government elites of aligning with "global elites" and favouring metropolitan areas and the interests of urban liberal voters (Cramer, 2016).

Thus, the emergence and consolidation of the opposition between town and country, between urban and rural, and between the centre and the periphery imply a social construction of territorial ties (e.g. Scala & Johnson, 2017). This approach does not assume contrasting and stable territorial spaces (geographical, institutional or demographic) but rather sees territorial divides taking different forms and gradients that depend on strategies and appropriations. In this way, one could, for example, highlight how contrast can take the form of a divide between rural and urban, between the inner city, suburbs and the countryside (Van Gent et al., 2014), or between the centre and the periphery, where uneven socio-economic development is combined with citizens expressing "strong place-based identities" (de Lange et al., 2022). The contrast might occur within the perimeter of the territorial state or across it and involve supranational dynamics and the global economic network. The assumption is that, in the global age, no areas have a peripheral or rural nature that, as such, expresses territorial cleavages. Rather, there are more or less authentic and self-sufficient social groups and political actors who live in a specific place and struggle or protest in the name of defending their way of life and material conditions when they feel threatened.

Rethinking Territorial Voting

According to electoral studies, some traditional identities on which political cleavages in Western European democracies were based seem to be in decline. As a consequence, some classic sociological approaches, such as cleavage theories that refer to territorial ties, have been challenged and often marginalised. However, as we have seen in this chapter, the relevance of territorial divides has not been weakened by recent changes. In contemporary democracies, not only in Western Europe, we are witnessing a phase of dissolution but also of persistence and reconstruction of territorial linkages that have relevance in electoral arenas. As territorial divides and belongings continue to shape contemporary voting

behaviour. As underlined by a rising literature, it seems indisputable that territorial divides persist or re-emerge in new politicised forms. Citizens develop bonds with the territories in which they live, share material interests and emotional ties and get political orientations:

> Place of birth and the context where individuals spend their 'impressionable years'—that is the period of late adolescence and early adulthood during which people form durable political attitudes have a significant influence… Even in some of the most dynamic and developed economies in the world, it appears that where you are born and grow up is one of the most important facts about the life of any citizen. (Kenny & Luca, 2021: 578)

There is empirical evidence that territories continue to play a crucial role in defining political conflict. Recent electoral evolutions, political mobilisations and changing party systems are characterised by specific spatial divides that differ in economic strength, population density and proximity or distance from city centres. The experiences of an old metal worker and an unemployed young man living in an economically prosperous urban centre or, conversely, a de-industrialised peri-urban area are not the same.

The decline, ideological shift or dissolution of political parties that have long shaped a particular cleavage tend to weaken but not necessarily neutralise it. While old cleavages become less relevant, as groups of voters who until recently loyally supported the party or line-up feel disoriented, lose confidence and sometimes take refuge in abstentionism, political cleavages manifest themselves in the interaction between demands from citizens and political actors, which favour the dissemination of an ideological message that politicises social conflict. In a global age, where old agrarian parties no longer exist or are very marginal, new territorial divides have formed between spaces under new political cleavages. Territorial divides can be transformed and take on new meanings as new actors emerge. Unlike rural or agrarian parties, today's regionalist and nationalist parties, especially those with anti-establishment stances, interpreted territorial divides, between the centre and the periphery or between urban and rural areas. New political formations—especially anti-establishment and anti-system parties—that can intercept the demands of a part of society can mould new territorial divides that are decisive for understanding democratic evolution and attract a part of the electorate traditionally

linked to mainstream parties. Groups of citizens and voters seem to share feelings of exclusion, loss and betrayal, which under certain conditions can turn into anti-establishment voting. To understand territorial divides, it is necessary to consider the interpersonal and emotional approach to voting analysis, including communitarian belonging, solidarity and feelings of discrimination (Förtner et al., 2021).

At the same time, there is no single way in which territorial spaces influence voting behaviour and politicise into a territorial divide. Multi-level governance and rescaling political competition also shape how territorial divides are displayed. Individuals and groups appropriate messages of contestation concerning the places they live, live and work, which in turn are articulated at different territorial scales. Different kinds of places and different groups of citizens (with more or less strong territorial ties) can be invested by territorialisation strategies, that is, the conditions that facilitate the emergence and consolidation of territorial divides capable of structuring, at least in part, political competition in contemporary democracies. Complex urbanisation processes and socio-economic dynamics reflect divisions and inequalities that are politicised in various ways, depending on the opportunities and legacies in which political competition occurs. This happens in a locally situated way but also in relation to the global transformations that have marked the evolution of capitalism in recent decades, with their profound influence on the social and cultural dynamics of the world's most remote and peripheral locations.

Recent advances in territory-oriented voting analysis suggest several important questions for the research agenda. First of all, it would be valuable to further explore the contextual effects of place on different groups of citizens, in particular how and when the "imprinting" in terms of territorial socialisation shapes political loyalties throughout different phases of life; second, it seems crucial to untangle the effects of cleavage attitudes and territorial cleavages by using more sophisticated indicators of territorial belonging; third, the role of emotional territorial belonging matters in shaping political orientations should be given more serious consideration; and fourth, more comparative research should be conducted to understand how different kinds of symbolic appropriations of territorial spaces, particularly inner cities, suburbs and the countryside, shape territorial cleavage in different ways in times of transnational changes.

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Territorial Populism

Abstract This chapter shows how territory-oriented thinking helps to enrich the heuristic strength of populism, one of the most controversial yet prevalent concepts in social and political science. It is argued that populism and territory are strongly intertwined concepts. Territory is an implicit dimension in populist rhetoric, especially when nationalist and sovereignist claims are at stake. The notion of border, which stresses the protective dimension of the territory, is also closely related to populism and contributes to enriching the analytical agenda of territorial approaches to politics.

Keywords Populism · Nationalism · Border · Political parties · Spaces of mobilisations

In Europe and elsewhere, territorial disputes are acquiring new meanings as they are exacerbated by the increasing politicisation of sovereignty and national identity. Political movements and parties have developed nostalgic agendas and discourses aimed at restoring their sovereignty, which they claim has been stolen or violated. These arguments have imposed themselves in public opinion and electoral campaigns, as well as parliaments and governments, from the local to the supranational scales, such as in the European parliament. The label that may be the most widely

used among scholars to designate these political formations, especially in the fields of political science and sociology, is populism, in particular right-wing populism. Countless studies have focused on the success of the so-called right-wing populist movements and parties in contemporary democracies. However, few studies have explicitly investigated the relationship between populism and territoriality. Therefore, this chapter seeks to highlight how a territorial approach can contribute to understanding some aspects of populism. In this chapter, we will first try to reflect on the polysemic notion of populism by defining an ideal type in relation to territory. Then we will highlight how populism can also be closely related to the concept of border in a multi-scaling environment.

A Controversial Concept

In all European countries, successful political movements and parties are speaking out against "discrimination" against the natives and the nation and asking for restrictive rights, including rights of access, for immigrants, as well as those they consider not to be legitimate members of the "true" people, such as the political establishment and supranational powers. Actors labelled as nationalist, sovereignist, far right-wing or nativist have asserted themselves in public opinion and achieved significant electoral success. Until the 1990s, the most consistent electoral support for those formations had been observed in a few Western European countries, like Italy, France and Austria. In the past decade, however, this support has spread and increased throughout Europe and other continents. These formations' success is not just electoral but implies wide policy influence and core positions in numerous national governments. The most famous case is Donald Trump's rise to the presidency of the United States, the world's largest superpower, in 2016 and his subsequent controversial tenure. In Europe, many national and regional elections, as well as the vote in favour of Brexit, in the name of a strong Euroscepticism, confirm the trend. Victor Orbán's consolidation of power during the Hungarian elections of 2014 and 2018 has received most of the attention, but there have been similar experiences in Poland, with the Law and Justice party and its leader, Jaroslaw Kaczyński. It is important to note the election of Jair Bolsonaro as president of Brazil in 2018, the most populous country in Latin America, and the rise of the Indian People's Party (the Bharatiya Janata Party) to power in 2014 in India, the second-most populous country in the world, both of which have strong nationalist connotations.

In many countries, such party formations, capable of winning elections and shaping policies and even constitutional order, have taken strong conservative and nationalist stances, shown hostility to immigrants and a multicultural society, denounced certain pillars of liberal democracy, such as the autonomy of the judiciary, and condemned the global and supranational powers, all of whom they consider enemies of the people. Of course, their electoral and political successes are not continuous or taken for granted. The recent change in the US presidency seems to counter these trends. However, Joe Biden's victory does not mean that the polarisation that had underpinned the political climate during his predecessor's term has disappeared. Moreover, it is uncertain whether similar political actors in other countries, for example in Central Europe or Latin America, will meet the same defeats.

Academic scholarship has been engaged in a persistent debate over the nature and the features of those political parties, particularly in the light of a recent political trend. The most successful and widespread notion among scholars, especially in political science and political sociology, is "populism". An enormous amount of academic research has been conducted on this topic and has focused on the nature of populist claims (such as defining it as a discourse, ideology or frame), the reasons for the success of political parties, the impact of socio-economic crises and uncertainties arising from the processes of globalisation and Europeanisation, as well as how these changes fuel anxieties among citizens and voters (e.g. De la Torre, 2019; Rovira Kaltwasser et al., 2017).

Despite growing academic interest and debate on populism and party politics, including an increasing empirical interest in the regional and subnational dimensions related to support for populist parties, especially in Europe (e.g. Heinisch & Jansesberger, 2023; Heinisch et al., 2021; Van Hauwaert et al., 2019), relatively few research studies theoretically investigate populism as a concept from a territory-oriented perspective (Mazzoleni et al., 2023). It is surprising that, when approaching the varied literature on populism, the role of the concept of territory is often marginal, neglected or even explicitly excluded. From a theoretical perspective, some approaches even posit an ontological opposition between populism and territorial space. A clear example of this is discussed by geographer Doreen Massey (1992) in relation to a volume by Ernesto Laclau (1990), one of the most influential scholars of contemporary populism. According to Laclau, the notion of politics, which is

the primary realm of populism and its manifestations, is in an antinomian relationship with space, assumed as an ipso facto depoliticised, static, a-temporal entity. In short, Laclau implicitly takes up a notion of space inspired by Newtonian physics, understood as an objective and passive entity that exists outside and beyond the subject. Space would be governed by structural laws that elude creativity and populist expression. By contrast, we argue that alternative conceptions of space—and, thus, of territorial space—can be adopted and taken as heuristically useful in understanding populist claims. In fact, one might argue that territory is inherent in populism.

Specifying Populism

For some scholars, the ongoing debate about the definition of political formations that express nationalist, sovereignist, anti-immigration and anti-establishment views is seen as unproductive or even harmful. They argue that designating a thing or phenomenon helps to construct it and suggests interpretative keys to explain its relevance, success or failure. The term "populism" is often used to highlight the opposition between a people, who are considered the repository of absolute sovereignty, and an elite, who are viewed as treacherous or unable to respond to the interests of the people. However, given the many meanings attributed to the notion of populism, the question arises as to what exactly is being discussed.

It is unclear whether populism refers to an ideology, a type of discourse or a communicative style (e.g. Heinisch et al., 2021). It is also debated whether it is a logic, a strategy, a form of mobilisation or even an organisational mode based on the central role of the leader. Moreover, it is uncertain whether populism applies to a specific family of parties and leaders that share common features, comparable to the ideological families of twentieth-century Europe. For some scholars, populism is a connotation of the right as such, and a left-wing one cannot exist. Others consider the question of whether a party is populist to be secondary; they start from the assumption that a party is or is not populist, with a kind of apriorism; for some, the problem is the lack of a general agreement among scholars, while others accept, more or less explicitly, the inevitable semantic polysemy. Meanwhile, more than the way the party acts and communicates, a large part of scholars seem to be interested in the dichotomic classification of the individual party or leader as populist

or not rather than a question of degree of populism. The dichotomic (and static) approach represents the most widespread use of the notion of populism in political science. Of course, this has huge normative implications as it can lead to the political instrumentalisation of academic discourse. The political use of the notion of "populism" is often negatively connoted in public sphere—although recently some of these leaders and parties accept being qualified as populist.

However, parties designated (justifiably or not) as populist have varying ideological origins, from the extreme right to the radical left. They also have traits that vary over time and in relation to different ideological, political, cultural, institutional and territorial contexts. Many, but not all, oppose economic globalisation and advocate for a kind of national protectionism. Some aim to revive a discourse based on the working classes fighting against capitalist elites and a welfare state based on solidarity. Some are newcomers, others have a long history and have been radicalised for some time. Their organisational patterns and history also vary: Some recover the old tradition of mass parties, while others provide lighter organisations, even adopting solutions that do not require activists to formally join the party. Most are led by a strong and charismatic leader, although in some cases, success is only partly due to the founding leader because the latter has since disappeared. The diversity of populist parties is partly attributable to the constraints and opportunities of their respective institutional contexts, party traditions and ideological influences that vary at the macro-regional, national and micro-regional levels (e.g. when populism is combined with regionalist discourse). Thus, the dominant traditions of South American populism are rather left-leaning, while European populism tends more to the right, although in recent years these trends have become more complex.

The multiple and differentiated characters of parties labelled as populist and the variety of features that the concept of populism tends to embrace can be seen either as a problem to be neutralised or as an intrinsic trait to be examined. In other words, it can be seen as an opportunity to develop a differentiated approach to the phenomena that we can analyse through the concept of populism. To pursue the latter path, one might adopt an ideal-type approach to conceptualisation in order to understand how empirical reality corresponds to a concept that has already been defined. This approach is inspired by the work of Max Weber (2011). In this framework, populism is not a thing in itself but a notion that selectively and partially describes some aspects of a political formation or leader,

regardless of whether they are nationalist, right-wing, left-wing, etc. For example, populism can be understood as a communicative style. A party or leader may be more or less populist at a given time depending on the communicative style that they use. However, this style may not always be considered populist in all contexts and at different scales. The same party may act differently on a national scale than it does on a regional scale. In other words, leaders and parties tend to adapt their style according to whether they directly or indirectly exercise governmental functions, whether they are in the majority or the minority in a coalition government or a parliamentary opposition-only role.

The advantage of an ideal-type approach is that it does not define universal validity and avoids the use of minimal definitions that attempt to encompass every form of populism and every political formation under one umbrella. This approach, which has been very influential in political science in recent years (e.g. Mudde, 2004), allows for comparative empirical analyses, at least to some extent, because of its ambition to impose a universal minimum definition, it also tends to overlook the diversity of manifestations of populism. A differentiated approach to populism, by contrast, accepts its plasticity and adaptability to concrete socio-political manifestations without oversimplifying. In other words, populism can simultaneously be an ideology, a discourse, a style, a logic, a strategy and a form of mobilisation, without one aspect excluding the other. This approach also entails the assumption that populism is an analytical category that does not exclude the adoption of complementary labels, such as nationalism (as "national populism") or right-wing populism that highlights different aspects of the phenomenon. The key is to understand which aspect of the populist phenomenon one wishes to use the appropriate definition to interpret its complexity.

THE DEFENCE OF THE TERRITORY

When considering populism as a discourse or rhetoric, one can focus on economic, cultural, emotional or constitutional dimensions. One can also highlight territorial components and define territorial populism as an ideal type. Unlike the generic meaning associated with the work of Margaret Canovan (2005), this type of populism is characterised by a defensive view of the people. In territorial populism as an ideal type, the people are defined with various terms (e.g. as the people, the nation, the

homeland, etc.) that align with the concept of a circumscribed territorial space and the natural holder of sovereignty over it. By appealing to the people rather than to the individualities of citizens, populism emphasises belonging to a group, or a community and is rooted in an idea of territorial boundaries that unites and qualifies the people, which may not necessarily coincide with the institutional borders of the national state. In contemporary democratic politics, the reference to territory is multi-scalar since the people—as true members of the constituency— can be embedded in concentric and nested spaces, such as the locality, region, nation and even beyond. This can be seen when populist rhetoric combines an anti-Islamic agenda with a call for the defence of European-Christian traditions (Marzouki et al., 2016). Similarly, the nexus of people and territory can articulate within localist and regionalist mobilisations, as opposed to other scales of identity (e.g. Heinisch & Jansesberger, 2023). Populist rhetoric often centres around resentment as the people are presented as victims, legitimate sovereigns who have been defrauded of their rights and prerogatives (Betz, 2018). In our case, the victim is not only the people in the broad sense but also their territory and living space, which has been forgotten, abandoned, discriminated and is seen as a "place of resentment" (Munis, 2022).

Within populist rhetoric, territory is also component of the Manichean "friend-enemy" logic between the people who share a common identity, on the one hand, and heterogenous and foreign entities, on the other. In this logic, there is a vertical and a horizontal dimension. The first dimension focuses on populist denunciations of the elite or the establishment—specifically, those allegedly responsible for betraying the people: first and foremost, the (political, cultural, economic) elites, who are seen as being out of touch with the interests of the people and disconnected from the territory and its inhabitants. This antagonist target also includes global powers and supranational bodies, such as the European Union, which are accused of taking away the people's sovereignty. The horizontal dimension targets groups who are not deemed worthy of being part of the people and come from external territorial spaces. This happens when the populist discourse identifies immigrants as a cultural threat, a danger to national integrity and a threat to the economic welfare or as interfering in the national labour market or illegitimately exploiting the welfare state, in line with welfare chauvinism claims.

Finally, there is another aspect of populism, which is the promise of redemption, a more or less radical breakthrough aimed at re-establishing

the sovereignty and, consequently, the power of the people over their territory. It includes regaining control over their borders, reclaiming their lost roots, sovereignty and national identity. Populism can also refer to the reconquest of the nation-state's political power as opposed to the power of supranational organisations and the regaining of economic sovereignty as a sovereignist appeal aimed at controlling the conditions of economic prosperity threatened by the enemies of the people. Populism also seeks to reclaim the authenticity of the native territorial space as the "Heimat". In territorial populism, populist discourse identifies, classifies and categorises people through the lens of its territory. Populist discourse can be translated into a territorial claim against deterritorialisation processes (e.g. distant elites, globalisation and cultural hybridisation) for re-territorialisation as re-bordering strategies, in the name of the threatened territory of the people.

Border as a Logic and an Issue

The concept of border is essential in the nexus between populism and territory (Osuna, 2022). There is no territory without borders. Moreover, although rarely highlighted, the border plays an important role in defining territorial populism as an ideal type. Generally speaking, populism expresses a *logic* to establish or redraw boundaries between groups and entities. According to Margaret Canovan, populists "wish to challenge existing political boundaries and to redraw the line of battles in a new place" (1981, p. 282). Populism can be understood as a logic, a way of interpreting reality that creates and recreates lines of demarcation and separations between an in-group (*here*) and an out-group (*there*). In other words, the logic of borders and populism are similar: people vs. elites, people vs. enemies, us vs. them, people vs. foreigners, friends vs. enemies, good vs. bad. Borders and populism also overlap in terms of their *shifting* logic. Populists often produce borders, understood as the demarcation lines of the borders that are new or, more often, recover old borders affected by transnational and rescaling transformations.

However, populism is not just a defensive response to the uncertainty caused by permeable borders, such as advocating for border closures to protect people. Populism also thrives in uncertainty. Not only it dramatises the dangers of weak borders but also can even adapt and strategically utilise uncertainty. As Paul Taggart (2000) argues, populism has a chameleon-like ability to adapt to the environment, constructing

changing discourses, myths and narratives. Populism appeals to latent concerns shared by a heterogeneous constituency (Canovan, 1981: 261–262; 2005) and provides a high degree of malleability, allowing for the mixing of contradictory ideas in a strategy of ambiguity, which stems from the fact that much more than the notions of class or nation, the concept of people lends itself even more to polysemy. Leaders use rhetoric to unite supporters behind them, thereby neutralising divisions and broadening their electoral base.

Contemporary populist discourse often focuses on *territorial* borders as an explicitly political *issue*, especially when combined with nationalist, anti-immigrant and law-and-order stances (Schain, 2019; Yuval-Davis et al., 2019). Borders are seen as symbols of a stable society, protecting its people against forces that may threaten its cohesion. Collective identities, electoral mobilisations and the legitimacy of migration and security policies are all at stake when it comes to borders. Populism often proposes restrictive policies against migratory flows, criminals and external economic threats, as well as against supranational and multilateral powers, to protect national interests and defend sovereignty, thereby constructing an exclusionary interpretation of territorial borders. In this case, right-wing populist rhetoric seeks to carve out a central role for itself in redrawing borders on the basis of so-called national preference, in the name of defending the survival of its own endangered people. In short, maintaining and controlling borders is part of a political agenda and intimately linked to national identities and distinctiveness, while their permeability is frequently presented as a threat to national interests.

The subject of borders becomes a central part of radical right-wing populist parties' or their leaders' political agenda. In some cases, the border as a separation between nation-states or other forms of statehood or collectivity remains in the background; in other cases, it comes to the fore and shapes public discourse and policy. For example, during Donald Trump's presidency, the fight against illegal immigration, asylum seekers and family reunification was symbolised by the proposed wall on the border between the United States and Mexico, which the administration said would protect the former from foreign interference. In Europe, there are other examples of similar campaigns and public policies. In Hungary, the construction of walls to prevent the influx of refugees from Serbia and Croatia was explicitly promoted in the name of defending Christian values, which were deemed to be threatened by the arrival of Muslim migrants. In the summer of 2015, as thousands of migrants were arriving

in the country, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán advocated for the construction of 170 kilometres of a four-metre-high mesh fence along Hungary's southern border with Serbia. In 2019, Orbán initiated the construction of a wall with Croatia, once again in an attempt to stem migration flows. In 2020, the issue of the border was also directly at stake in the question of sovereignty, when Brazilian President Bolsonaro stated in front of UN representatives that: "it is a mistake to say that the Amazon is a world heritage site… Dealing with such fallacies, one or the other country…fell for the lies of the press and behaved disrespectfully, in a colonialist spirit. They have questioned what is most sacred to us: our sovereignty!" In his populist discourse, both the defence of what he considered his own territory, the Amazon and the criticism of the elites (i.e. the press and the colonialists) in the name of endangered sovereignty are prominent. As we have seen with Brexit, the strategy of a country regaining control of its borders is about regaining past sovereignty (Vaughan-Williams, 2009). The border encompasses crucial issues such as immigration (the border as a barrier), law and order (borders as safeguards for an honest people), nativism as a way to protect the identity of the culturally pure people and protectionism to strengthen economic borders in international trade for preserving national interest.

Territorial Spaces of Mobilisation

Defining an ideal type of territorial populism and addressing the concept of borders as both as discursive logic and a political issue is not enough to fully understand the territory-related aspects at stake, especially when studying populist mobilisation (Jansen, 2011). Territory and its borders are not only symbolic representations but also draw a practical space of mobilisation, that is the constituency and the multi-scalar context in which party action and government policy-making take place. Each constituency presents different constraints and opportunities for political mobilisation, which has an impact on the agenda and issues framed by political actors, as well as on the spatial variation of party electoral success. The Rassemblement National (RN, formerly "Front national"), which does not have a presence in all constituencies of France, serves as an interesting example. Despite having a nationalist agenda and a very centralised organisational structure, the party adapts its message across the country. In Southern France, where its main competitors are traditional right-wing parties, RN is mainly focused on immigration and threatened cultural

identity, while in the North, in regions affected by deindustrialisation and where left-wing parties are stronger, the RN's message mainly stresses the welfare state and national preference (Ivaldi & Dutozia, 2018). Populist agendas should also adapt to multi-scaling competition—local, regional, national and supranational—by combining nationalist and Eurosceptic stances in "left-behind" regions. The Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) represents an example. It became the third-largest party in the German federal parliamentary elections in 2017, and in the European elections in 2019, the AfD was particularly successful in eastern regions. In the 2019 regional elections, the AfD won 27.5% of the vote in Saxony and 23.5% in Brandenburg, ranking second in both regional parliaments of the former East Germany. Although it is not a regionalist party, the AfD has a nationalist agenda against the EU while developing an influential advocacy discourse aimed at East German voters that can politicise resentments rooted in enduring tensions related to the country's reunification (Betz & Habersack, 2019).

Cross-border regions are peculiar spaces of political mobilisation. Borders are not only territories of military conquest but also spaces where the electoral competition takes place, such as in constituencies near national borders, where they interweave issues related to the local, urban, regional and transnational scales. In contemporary democracies shaped by global processes, a complex form of politicisation of borders emerges, highlighting their multidimensionality (e.g. Laine & Casaglia, 2017; Schain, 2019). Borders are both physical and symbolic demarcation lines, as well as spaces for contact and interaction, between cooperation and conflict (Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2002; Raffestin, 1992; Scott, 2012). Populists may have peculiar views within and across integrated cross-border regions (Lamour, 2022). In borderland constituencies, where socio-economic interdependence is high, the national border may be an issue for populist mobilisation but also a context in which barriers are not fully claimed. Integrated borderlands with multicultural and multinational constituencies may develop common cross-border interests, which could favour an adapted right-wing populist message (Biancalana & Mazzoleni, 2020).

Reconceptualising Populism

In this chapter, we sketched how a territorial approach can enrich studies on populism. Scholars are divided on how to understand populism and how to define successful parties—both in contemporary democracies in Europe and elsewhere—that adopt populist discourse, styles, ideologies and strategies. These persistent theoretical disagreements have often been seen as an obstacle to empirical analysis. However, to some extent, these conceptual and taxonomic polysemes are a result of the inescapable intertwining of scientific and political-ideological definitions, as well as analytical and normative connotations. In addition, conceptual disputes are a by-product of the complexity of reality and the importance of contextual features that scholars have to understand. Instead of pursuing the illusion of a common and universal understanding, it would be better to develop approaches that can grasp specific aspects of that complexity.

A territorial approach to conceptualising populism could be heuristically useful by taking advantage of the open and polysemic nature of the concept. Populism is not just a means of categorising individual parties with all-encompassing labels but a conceptual tool capable of providing insight into aspects of populist discourse, rhetoric, logic and mobilisation from a territorial perspective. As we showed, some definitions of populism, especially understood in terms of its discourse, rhetoric or ideology, can connect the concepts of territory and allow us to investigate antagonistic strategies for constructing territorial spaces. Inspired by the perspective formulated by Max Weber, it is useful to define an ideal type of populism that we call "territorial populism", making explicit what is often only implicit in contemporary populist discourse. This type of populism emphasises the overlap between people and territory and the demarcation between the defended territory and external threats. In territorial populism, the territory corresponds to the space of belonging for the people claimed by populist discourse, which designates its antagonists as the elites and other entities that are detached or distant from the territory that is deemed as threatened.

As borders are an integral part of territories, they are a component of territorial populism. Borders are a logical demarcation of what constitutes people and what does not, which is an intrinsic aspect of populism. However, populist discourse is often ambiguous and cannot be reduced to a simple and clear separation, as it encompasses a heterogeneous universe of individuals and groups. When issues of immigration

and national sovereignty are at stake, borders become an important part of the contemporary populist political agenda. Territorial spaces are also spaces of mobilisation where actors spread populist discourse and compete for power. Populist mobilisation occurs in heterogenous and multi-scalar territorial spaces, including "left-behind" regions, borderlands and constituencies shaped by different party systems, where nationalist and right-wing discourse adapts and takes on peculiar meanings. Defining territorial populism enables the development of a research agenda integrating the multidimensional role of territorial spaces in democratic politics. For example, it addresses the questions of how populist discourse constructs the people rooted in territorial spaces and strategically reshapes territorial rescaling against global and supranational powers, how citizen attitudes towards territorial spaces drive populist support and to what extent living in a borderland contributes to enhancing or reducing right-wing sovereignist orientations.

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CHAPTER 8

A Global Territorial Crisis

Abstract The COVID-19 pandemic was a global territorial crisis. This chapter will discuss the impact of lockdown measures and restrictions on society, government and territoriality in European countries. We will delve into how these measures changed the role of territorial states, how they reproduced or exacerbated social inequalities, how they affected the flows of goods and people and how they related to the dynamics between institutional powers and the emergence of ideological-political controversies about the political responses to the pandemic.

Keywords COVID-19 · Mobility · Crisis · Lockdown · Policy · Inequality · Territorial states

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on societies and government systems and is one of the biggest crises facing the globe since the Second World War. It is unlike any economic or social crisis experienced by current generations. Nowadays, the notion of "crisis" is overused and, paradoxically, turned into an object of normalisation (Fassin & Honneth, 2022; Holton, 1987). During times of widespread social, cultural and economic transformations, it has become commonplace to adopt the term, since unforeseeable and abrupt events, unexpected multifaceted shifts and challenging routines in different domains.

In these kinds of critical situations, it seems easy to call them a crisis. Without doubt, the COVID-19 pandemic is an example of an event that can be classified as a crisis, as it not only impacted public health but also led to institutional and socio-economic disruptions. It was also a territorial crisis, that is, an unpredictable and profound process of de- and re-territorialisation that has transformed territorial spaces through multi-faced, multi-scaling institutional and political strategies of re-bordering and de-bordering, with different and somewhat controversial practical and symbolic appropriations. The COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the most important global territorial crises of modern times. The pandemic interrupted for many months—and subsequently contributed to reshaping—global flows and mobility, which are often taken for granted in contemporary times. The pandemic brought into play the role of territorial states in the fields of security, border control and the economy: a role that unfolded, in the months of the pandemic, in all its power and uncertainties. The pandemic was a worldwide governance crisis that posed a persistent threat to large sectors of the population, leading to quick and political responses under the pressure of time and uncertainty (Lipscy, 2020). For democratic regimes, it was a crucial test on how they work under a stressful challenge (Poiares Maduro & Kahn, 2020).

In this chapter, we focus on some aspects of this crisis, showing how the experience of the pandemic can provide a further field of research for a territorial approach to democratic politics. By highlighting the main decisions in Western countries, we develop some hypotheses for reasoning about the shift brought about by the curb on mobility and lockdown policies, the uncertain role of territorial states, socio-territorial inequalities, the effect of the pandemic on flows and the relationship between supranational, national and subnational institutional powers.

Lockdowns and Re-bordering

In the early phases of the pandemic, the territorial dimensions of the crisis took their apex. In the global world, mobility transcended the division between national and international spaces, between living and working areas and between people and goods. Before the pandemic, global mobility—in particular, the freedom of movement between territories of different states—was seen as an inexorable trend and a symbol of freedom for consumers and citizens. The virus also spread through

global networks. In this sense, the pandemic is a product of the global-isation of exchanges and flows of people, as well as the interdependence between territories, ecosystems and economic systems. However, with the advent of the pandemic, human mobility has suddenly become a public problem (Cresswell, 2021). Lockdowns and other measures adopted by a majority of governments worldwide and in Europe aimed at reducing mobility became the main strategy to combat the spread of the virus. With a few exceptions, the main responses to the COVID-19 pandemic represented a complete reversal of the social and public value attributed to mobility in contemporary societies. The virus fundamentally changed the relationship between mobility and settledness.

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, no other event has had as significant an impact on territorial borders as the COVID-19 pandemic (Lara-Valencia & Laine, 2022). The closure of airports, key symbols of spatial mobility, was unprecedented in geographical extent and duration, disrupting the lives of entire populations around the globe and involving one of the largest forms of territorial re-bordering in recent history. Suddenly, the fluidity of borders for those able to move freely disappeared and was replaced by rigid filters and clear separations that had not been seen in decades. The international transport system had not experienced such a crisis since the Second World War, with a collapse in international passenger travel. Stronger controls were reintroduced upon both arrival at and departure from certain territories. Some countries, like Australia and New Zealand, even prevented arrivals from outside for years. The return of national borders, including within the EU, affected a large number of people who had not encountered such travel obstacles in a long time. In Europe, during the first phase of the pandemic, this resulted in the return of national border controls and the unprecedented suspension of the Schengen Agreement in both duration and extent. For more than a year, citizens faced intermittent restrictions on cross-border mobility.

Proximities and Distance

With the outbreak of the pandemic, flows turned from opportunity into danger. It was through the concentration of people and the density of flows that the virus was able to spread. This is reflected in the abrupt halt of a typical structural phenomenon in today's societies, namely the daily commuting of people between home and work. Restrictive policies

have altered spatial relations for millions of people, preventing them from going to their usual places of work and leisure. A significant proportion of people were forced to stay home for weeks and even months, re-appropriate private and family spaces in a different way and be excluded from professional spaces.

This has, at least in part, led to the emptying of urban centres, which are typical places for professional encounters. The call to stay home has not only given unprecedented importance to spaces of proximity but also minimised spatial mobility and social relations, resulting in the isolation of millions of people. The repercussions of this isolation are still being assessed in terms of psychology, society and politics. With more or less strong forms of mobility restrictions and the use of masks, social ties have been replaced by isolation. The meaning of "place" has evolved, shifting from being a member of the public community to avoiding contact with others to prevent infection. The pandemic has encouraged a principle of purity and the utopia of a free and independent body as a means of immunity and, thus, of biological salvation, identifying social contacts outside a close circle of family and friends as a risk to survival, especially if these contacts come from foreign, invisible or uncontrollable environments. COVID-19 also reinforced the belief that using walls and excluding strangers is an effective solution because the latter are perceived as a threat.

From an economic point of view, the shock of the pandemic has re-opened the issue of the re-territorialisation of production chains, either within national spaces or within macro-regions, such as the European Union, especially in sectors deemed vital. Problems in the transport sector have highlighted the limits of production and supply chains and the relo-cation logic on which Western economies have been structured, with their strong reliance on Asian markets. However, it would be an exaggeration to claim that the flow of goods, people and capital stopped completely during the pandemic. Individual mobility, especially out-of-work mobility, was effectively reduced, but exchanges and flows of goods and capital did not stop. They were partially reduced (e.g. transoceanic maritime transport), and the flow of goods was partly redefined. Unlike wars or famines, the supply of essential goods and services was not inter-rupted, at least in the countries of the so-called first world. By contrast, immaterial flows have strengthened in some ways, with the surge in remote work, online trade and distance learning. While the pandemic crisis has represented a major process of de-territorialisation, increasing

physical distances between people, at the same time, it has also provided an unprecedented boost to the speed and spread of digital technologies in everyday life. One of the drivers of globalisation in the past few decades, the information technology revolution, emerged strengthened from the pandemic crisis. The same technologies that favoured the narrative of the "flat world" or the "global village" have seen their role further enhanced in an unprecedented situation of restricted flows of people, providing virtual conditions for lockdown that are compatible with at least a partial continuation of economic activities. It is hard to say whether digital meetings can compensate for increased social distance, but not everyone has experienced it in the same way. For digital natives, it is easier to imagine, but for others, the obligation to use technology that they consider to be foreign may increase the uncertainties already inherent in the health, social and economic implications of the pandemic.

Socio-Territorial Inequalities

According to some scholars (Scheidel, 2017), major epidemics and natural disasters, wars, violent revolutions and the collapse of states have all contributed to reducing income, as well as wealth disparities. To some extent, the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency in Europe and the United States have called into question what had until a few months earlier seemed to be strict rules based on the primacy of fighting public deficits. To cope with the drop in consumption, the reduction in production and the employment crisis, states, aided by central banks and other international financial organisations, made available an unprecedented amount of financial support. This entailed exceeding public debt limits in contrast to the constraints that states (under the Maastricht Treaty, among others) had imposed on themselves under the pressure of neo-liberal policies. To some extent, the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a revival of welfare state policies, with more or less strong redistributive aims, especially in the form of financial aid to many of the sectors most affected by the health and economic crisis. Although social policies were apparently crucial to the effectiveness of public health (Greer et al., 2021: 16–17), the temporary and imperative state intervention was necessary for economic sustainability, and it could not overcome persistent social and territorial inequalities. In fact, while strategies to reduce inequalities require the development of policies based on solidarity between groups and territories, the COVID-19 pandemic

has been marked by a global increase in social, gender, racial and territorial inequality, poverty and food insecurity between and mainly within nation-states. While 2020 saw the sharpest increase in the wealth of global billionaires, the pandemic crisis also contributed to shutting down large sectors of the economy (Chancel et al., 2022). In many developing countries, a considerable part of the population has had to choose between reduced mobility and access to income during the first waves of the virus. Almost everywhere, remote work seems to have been a discriminator between more secure or high-value-added employees and less protected workers with manual tasks (Bonacini et al., 2021). The pandemic has revealed significant territorial gaps in health policies. Early studies show that in the United States, African-American and poor communities living in rural or suburban areas were particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is especially true in places that have fewer health services (Abedi et al., 2021; Dorn et al., 2020). An analysis of 206 regions across 23 European countries reveals that an excessive number of deaths during the first wave of the pandemic were concentrated in a limited number of regions. These regions were the largest and most highly connected, with colder and drier climates, high levels of air pollution and relatively poorly equipped health systems (Rodríguez-Pose & Burlina, 2021).

THE TERRITORIAL STATE UNDER PRESSURE

According to some observers, the political response to the pandemic has been marked by a logic of improvisation in almost all democratic countries (Bergeron et al., 2020). The crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic posed a major challenge to social and political science. Despite the general uncertainty, the dominant policies during the pandemic meant that, in the vast majority of countries, some of the mechanisms on which globalisation itself has been based were called into question, at least in part. One crucial mechanism is the role of the territorial state on a nation-wide scale. Despite the fluidity and contradictory nature of the strategies deployed and in contrast to narratives about the decline of national states, many responses to the pandemic were decided and implemented at the scale of the national state: from lockdowns to border closures, from the distribution of vaccines to people to the management and allocation of financial aid. The importance of the nation-state scale also derives from the variation in responses to the pandemic and its socio-economic consequences, caused by differences in approaches and timing. During the most acute

phases of the pandemic, most countries followed specific strategies in terms of pandemic responses. China imposed strict controls and lockdowns, in line with its authoritarian surveillance policies, while Sweden did not adopt immediate containment measures, instead relying on individual responsibility and trust in the government. The United States has relied less on containment than on vaccination plans. In this diversity, we can detect the basic tendencies that distinguish countries with authoritarian or para-authoritarian regimes from democracies and, among these, the importance of the different orientations, including the prevailing ideological ones.

Even where supranational bodies have tried to play a coordinating role, as in the European Union, the role of the nation-wide scale was central. Within the EU, the provisions that have prevailed have mainly been decided and implemented by single states, not least because competence in the field of health is a nation-wide prerogative. Moreover, at the apex of the crisis, the responses to COVID-19 further strengthened the power of national executives over parliamentary institutions. The increased relevance of executives is a long-term trend that the responses to the pandemic have made even more evident (Griglio, 2020). In most countries, especially during the first wave of the pandemic, the narrative of the urgency of pandemic responses provided de facto legitimacy for national governments to make and implement such decisions on a nation-wide scale.

However, the affirmation of the centrality of the national scale with respect to supranational instances does not imply a pure and simple "return" to the (somewhat mythological) sovereignty of nation-states, even in the healthcare sector. The events linked to the supply of vaccines or the recognition of vaccination certificates have shown that individual states have been forced to submit to the choices of pharmaceutical multinationals and seek supranational solutions to defend national interests. Moreover, while the EU has struggled (and failed, to some degree) to coordinate urgent responses to the pandemic, it has also decided to provide the most significant financial support in its history to counterbalance the socio-economic impact of the pandemic. Meanwhile, subnational scales have been crucial in linking with the national scale in policy-making. Even in federalist countries, there has not been a one-size-fits-all solution: Some have adopted highly centralised decision-making by national governments, while others have shared responsibility, at least in the

early stages of the pandemic (Hegele & Schnabel, 2021). More importantly, it has become clear, especially after the first wave, that local and regional authorities play a crucial role in implementing nationally decided measures. The effectiveness of national and regional governments in adopting, implementing and monitoring decisions to fight the pandemic has been vital (Rodríguez-Pose & Burlina, 2021). Similarly, the effectiveness of responses to the virus, especially in terms of lockdown and masks, has been strongly tied to the capacity of the central powers of the territorial state to be supported by subnational powers. The tensions between national and local governments, along with the strength of local territorial institutions, have played crucial roles in COVID-19 policy-making (Ren, 2020). Unsurprisingly, in the absence or near absence of coordination between states, national governments took unprecedented decisions that effectively bypassed their parliaments and local powers. In subsequent phases, especially since the autumn of 2020, many national governments (e.g. Italy and Germany) have been under pressure to renegotiate a semblance of dialogue between institutions, in particular with regional and local powers, regarding decisions on restrictive and closure measures and financial aid. This is to maintain the popular legitimacy of governments following the increase in social demands triggered by both the health and the socio-economic crisis, as well as the check-and-balance logic within the multi-scalar democratic territorial state.

Pandemic as Politicisation

The persistent uncertainty surrounding the different waves of the virus and institutional-political responses to the pandemic has had two main consequences. First, this uncertainty has hindered the resolution of the enormous health and socio-economic challenges facing governments. The decision-making about and the implementation and legitimation of health issues overlapped with the socio-economic crisis. Second, ideological controversies and politicisation emerged regarding the role of experts, decisions on lockdowns and loosening measures, financial aid to the economy and labour market, the supply, quality and timing of vaccine distribution and the role of multinational pharmaceutical companies. More generally, uncertainty over the pandemic and the effectiveness of policy responses have provided ample opportunity for the politicisation of health, science, economics and borders. These issues have highlighted two potential new political divides: the opposition between those who

prioritise health care and those who prioritise economic interests and the socio-economic consequences of the crisis; and the opposition between those who trust science and experts to guide political decisions and those who express scepticism towards them.

To a large extent, ideological and political controversies around policy measures have been context-dependent. In some countries and situations, the narrative of urgency prevailed, with extreme forms of media dramatisation, while in others, denialism was at its apex, as seen in Brazil, the United States during the Trump presidency and the United Kingdom during the early months of the pandemic. Trivialisation, denialism and scepticism towards medical authorities and their recommendations also became a way of criticising the political and scientific establishment. Meanwhile, conspiracy theories about the origin of the virus and its instrumental use as a geopolitical weapon by the Chinese regime against Western countries gained wide visibility and prominence, so much so that they became part of the repertoire of social and political protest. This has led to countless street demonstrations by more or less spontaneous movements and groups against the restrictive measures and vaccination campaigns of governments.

Political parties and leaders, especially those in opposition, have used the issue of the adequacy of responses to the pandemic as an opportunity to gain support from the public and at the ballot box. Among the main protagonists politicising the issue have been the parties and leaders of the so-called populist radical right (Bobba & Hubé, 2021). Many of them have responded to the pandemic through protests aimed at closing borders and by expressing hostility against immigrants, whom they scapegoat for the spread of the virus and as a threat to the welfare, or by criticising the EU or the WHO for undermining national sovereignty or making it less effective to safeguard the health of their country's citizens. In many cases, these parties opposed closures and restrictions by calling for faster re-openings or less restrictive lockdowns in the name of freedom and the economy and by echoing conspiracy theories directed at experts and the political establishment. Sometimes they have used the flexibility of populist discourse to position themselves as defenders of freedom and individual rights against excessive state power in the protection of health; in other cases, however, they demand firmer closures and criticise the governments' weakness and uncertainty. Controversies also stem from the persistent polarisation between neoliberalism and state interventionism, which involves various forms of protectionism and nationalism,

as well as social distrust fuelled by the principle of exclusionary immunity. This principle, which was prevalent during the pandemic, involves erecting protective borders as a defensive and offensive measure against any external element hypothetically capable of threatening it.

Beyond the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most important global crises of the past few decades. However, the pandemic was not just a historical turning point but also a form of radicalisation of existing trends. Regarding the rule of law and human rights, the pandemic accelerated pre-existing trends and exposed the true character of both authoritarian and democratic regimes (Grogan & Donald, 2022: 474). In some regions of the world, including Europe, a revival of the welfare state has taken place, although public aid and financing have not managed to reduce social inequalities across and among countries (Ryan & Nanda, 2022). The pandemic has also been a period of radicalisation for existing surveillance policies and the strengthening of borders between nation-states (Lara-Valencia & Laine, 2022). The pandemic has given rise to some persistent ideological-political controversies in democratic politics, including nationalism and populism, as well as conspiracies targeting the political establishment and global powers.

Meanwhile, as a global form of territorial crisis, lockdown and distancing measures represented a strong shift. The pandemic—and, above all, its responses, which evolved over many months—challenged established habits and rules, imparting new strategies of de- and re-territorialisation. Taken as a whole, the pandemic has not called into question the multi-scalarity of decision-making processes as such, but it has profoundly challenged them. In some ways, it has shown how relationships are anything but taken for granted and how decision-making power is shared between different scales of power. In the medium and long term, it is not clear whether territorialities will continue to transform, as their persistent fluidity (Murphy, 2022). After the apex of the health crisis, the transnational mobility of people has gradually been restored; however, it is uncertain whether it will reach the same level of transcontinental population movements as before the pandemic. Furthermore, it is not easy to predict how the emergency public policies adopted during the acute phases of the pandemic will more or less permanently influence the basic orientations of social, health and economic policies in the various

macro-regions of the world and individual countries and micro-regions. Similarly, in terms of economic policies, it will be important to understand the extent to which Keynesian economic–inspired policies and changes to international trade and production chains will lead to a lasting period of counter-globalisation.

In any event, it is important to note how the greatest global crisis of recent decades cannot be fully understood without a territorial approach, which means delving into the continuities and transformations affecting individuals, social groups, political actors and public institutions. The fundamental redefinition of territorial strategies and forms of appropriation at both the individual and the collective level, as well as the centrality of population and border control as subjects of public policy and controversy, are all aspects that will have to be investigated in depth to understand the greatest global crisis of recent decades, which may very well be the first real global crisis in the history of the planet.

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Thinking Democratic Politics with Territory

Abstract This final chapter summarises that territory plays a crucial role in mediating the relationship between society and politics. The key characteristics of a territorial approach to political analysis are discussed, and three ideal types are identified, which highlight a territory's stability, contingency and politicisation.

In this book, we examined the meanings, relevance, concepts and research questions related to a territorial approach to democratic politics. Using a constructivist approach, we underscored how territory, understood in a broad sense as a "portion of circumscribed space" (Elden, 2013: 66), is a result of human–natural interactions and how it plays a significant role in interpreting key transformations and events of contemporary society and politics.

We thoroughly evaluated the shortcomings of unterritorial approaches and showed that territory is often just avoided or reduced to a passive substratum—a reified context where political action occurs, where organised actors and public institutions, as well as the opinion of citizens, are

located. We also highlighted how unterritorial approaches cannot understand important issues and challenges in contemporary democracies. As we have seen, globalisation has changed but not erased the political relevance of territorial spaces or the need for a territory-oriented approach to democratic politics. The relevance of territory is demonstrated by the economic, social and political shocks of recent decades, the resurgence of nationalism and regionalist claims, the increased role of subnational and supranational powers, the emergence of new territorial divides in the electoral field, socio-territorial inequalities and new urban dynamics, the mutations of citizenship and territorial rights in the face of migration challenges, the spread of "territorial populism" and, last but not least, the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been one of the biggest territorial crises of contemporary times. Beyond unterritorial views of society and politics, this book advocated an interdisciplinary dialogue with territorial scholarship within various disciplines to enrich and challenge current views. Within this dialogue, geographical knowledge plays a significant role, especially in its innovative contributions on social, cultural and political dimensions. In this final chapter, we will focus on key analytical tools based on territory, emphasising three possible ideal types.

Between Society and Political Institutions

The concept of territory is complex and includes forms of settlement and occupation of a geographical area with its own historical evolution and specific socio-economic and cultural configurations. At the same time, territory is also a space of narratives, collective identities and scientific images, including cartographic ones shaped by complex formal and informal traditions. Given this complexity, the approach presented in this book is based on a constellation of features:

- Territory is both integrated into and made distinct from societies and political institutions. Territory is a component of social ties, as ties with territory connect individuals and collective bodies. The territorial space is both a social construction and a necessary condition of political institutions.
- The concept of territory is multifaceted and has material, practical and representational components. It is simultaneously a land with natural resources and a geographic space inhabited by a population.

It is a practical construct created by both the population, through their settlement patterns and mobility, and political institutions, through the definition and control of its borders. Territory is also an individual and collective perception; in other words, it is a discursive, symbolic and scientific map. It is a space of narratives, collective identities and scientific images, including cartographic ones.

- A territorial space is always influenced by historical and situational factors and does not maintain a static condition. Territory is shaped by persistence and transformation, as a result of the territorialising action of citizens, public institutions, political actors, experts and individuals who aim to define their belonging and actions within a circumscribed spatial perimeter. Territory is a by-product of actors' strategies and appropriations. The construction of territory involves forms of practical and symbolic appropriation, that is, creating a space of belonging or a place inhabited by individuals and groups.

- Once highly institutionalised, or routine, a territory usually translates into a legal entity intertwined with jurisdiction and sovereignty. Throughout formal rules and top-down forms of disciplines and controls, territories tend to consolidate over time and contribute to shaping the structure of opportunities and constraints for political action. However, while control over territory may be claimed, it may not be fully established. Territory is not only a space under control and a functional aspect within an institutional perimeter, such as a territorial state, but also a negotiated and/or politicised phenomenon. When territorial space is challenged, its perimeter is transformed, its jurisdiction is disputed, processes of de- and re-territorialisation display, and the structure of opportunity and constraints become more flexible.

- A single territorial space is never uniform or isolated; it is interconnected through networks linking locations and places and defined and redefined by other territories at multiple scales. Territorial states have borders with neighbouring territorial states but also border regions and, sometimes, with neighbouring territorial space defined and controlled by supranational institutions, such as the UK, Norway or Switzerland in relation to the European Union.

- Territorial space is inherently offline. However, as the digital economy hubs are located in specific urban areas of the world (Sassen, 2006: 323 ff.), online networks always connect nodes of individuals or groups located in certain places. While fluid

and contingent territorial and unterritorial spaces shaped by high mobility and global exchanges challenge the relevance of traditional territorial spaces (e.g. those defined by state borders), such a transformation does not preclude neither intra-group diversity in territorial appropriation and belonging nor forms of politicisation (e.g. in terms of nationalist and sovereignist claims).

Stable, Contingent and Politicised

In principle, within an essentialist epistemology, territory should not be considered a scientific concept due to the many definitions and somewhat contradictory meanings attributed to it. In an anti-essentialist epistemology, which does not seek a universal and unique definition, it can be useful to look for inspiration in Max Weber's approach. Among his classic sociological contributions, two key aspects are well known: his theory of the state and the bureaucracy and his theory of ideal types. In this final chapter, we argue for the importance of the concept of territory in understanding democratic politics and, at the same time, propose it as an ideal type, moving away from a reified meaning. What is crucial is that territory takes many forms and is a multi-dimensional concept. As such, it is open to different ideal types corresponding to different related notions and distinct analytic research agendas. The purpose of this book is to provide an illustration of the heuristic utility of the three main ideal types of territory, which should be considered complementary rather than alternatives.

The first ideal type, *territory as stable space*, denotes the most important political spatiality in modern times. According to this type, territory is an integral part of political institutions and the legal rules that define, control and share it. It is the product of the same institutions that can legitimise their existence through it; therefore, it presents as a take-for-granted space. The most successful example of such a territory is the nation-state. The Westphalian model, consolidated within liberal democratic regimes through universal suffrage and popular sovereignty, represents the triumph of a homogeneous and "un-scalar" model of territoriality that covers the perimeter of the state and the nation. This model embodies the institutionalisation or routinisation of territorial space as an object of control, as a contextual perimeter of social and political action and as a

stable network of places shaped by formal rules and institutional legacies. In addition, it also concerns the persistence of nationalist imaginary or banal nationalism, which reinforces the linkage between territory and state. Within this ideal type, two main research questions arise: How is the legitimate space of state power institutionalised and to what extent does it persist as such? And to what extent do state territoriality and institutionalised spatiality, as designed by nation-state organisations, continue to shape voting behaviour, political cleavages, citizenship, party mobilisation and public policies?

The second ideal type defines the territory as a *contingent and transforming space*. Territorial spaces are perennially produced and reproduced through a variety of strategies and appropriations, such as practices and representations. Under this ideal type, territory takes on multiple forms. It is fragmented, recomposed and multiplied. Territory is shaped by processes of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation that transform borders and their capacity for control. This ideal type aligns with the recent transformations of democratic regimes, where nation-state borders have become less clear-cut, a complex territorial rescaling has emerged (Keating, 2018), and the scales of action and representation of territories are increasingly local, micro-regional, supranational and macro-regional. However, within this definition, territorial spaces can evade any formal institutionalisation in sub- or transnational jurisdictional authorities. The effects of the disarticulation and re-articulation of consolidated territorial spaces concern, among others, hybrid forms of collective appropriation connected by transnational spaces or unterritorial spaces represented by online forms of appropriation. Adopting this ideal type, it would be interesting to grasp how citizens, voters and political actors adapt and transform their own territorial belonging in a global era. This is a crucial point, as strategies and appropriations of territory as an everyday practice and symbolic representations might vary depending on geographic position and socio-economic status.

The third ideal type regards territory as a *politicised space*. The persistence and transformation of territory are not natural and are often marked by conflict. Territory is a by-product of political action and struggles between actors. The practical and symbolic strategies behind the processes of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation, the limits of its extension, access rights, filters and boundaries, as well as forms of appropriation, can be analysed as arenas of struggle (Bourdieu, 1993). This ideal type would be heuristically useful for understanding the conflicts

arising within and against processes of globalisation. At a time when it was thought to disappear in immaterial flows and networks, territory has become a contested space. In the current era of globalisation, with its profound socio-economic and cultural transformations, the osmosis between nation-states and territories that characterised the evolution of Western democracies between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been partly disarticulated.

Structural opportunities for politicising territory stem from the tension between democratic decision-making that exercises its power within circumscribed territorial boundaries, and the aims of global economic powers, which tend to be less dependent on these kinds of boundaries. The consequences of partial disarticulation between jurisdictions and economic development are varied, including, for instance, inequalities between global cities and "left-behind" regions. Tensions are also growing between the law and sovereignty of single nation-states and the recognition of human rights by supranational courts, resulting in a lack of political rights for immigrants living, working and paying taxes in a specific territory. All of these tensions have created opportunities for actors seeking to protest or engage in anti-establishment politics in recent decades. The weakening of nation-states has led to an increase in autonomist or secessionist regionalisms, as well as nation-wide sovereignism that aligns with populist stances. The rising importance of defending the osmosis between people and the territory, threatened by uprooted elites or extra-territorial cultures, as a crucial component of strategies by successful political parties across Europe and other continents, also highlights the need to adopt a territory-oriented approach to politics.

Thus, the book provides and discusses some analytical tools that aim to *think territory* from a socio-political perspective and, at the same time, *think politics* from a territory-oriented approach. This entails the two-fold assumption that territorial spaces are shaped by processes, actions and strategies led by political groups and institutions, and that, at the same time, territories—as spaces of representation, a set of practices and a resource—contribute to shaping democratic structures and processes. In pursuing these aims, the book covers some crucial territorial crises, like the COVID-19 pandemic. Other recent territorial crises, however, like the war in Ukraine and global environmental challenges, were not considered in depth. Moreover, the book did not explore some crucial aspects of democratic politics, such as "unconventional" forms of action

and the significance of social movements, which are spatially rooted collective actors with transnational scopes closely related to the safeguard of territory conceived as a set of environment resources (e.g. Tokar & Gilbertson, 2020).

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