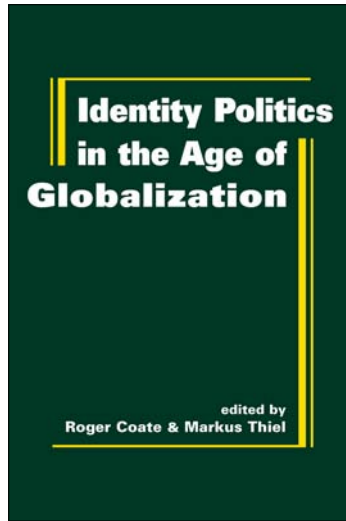


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Identity Politics in the Age of Globalization

edited by
Roger Coate
and Markus Thiel

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1

Identity Politics and Political Identities: Local Expressions in a Globalizing World

Markus Thiel and Roger Coate

The resurgence of identity politics of various groups aided by processes of globalization is one of the major puzzles of the contemporary political world. From indigenous groups fighting against corporate power to gay-rights movements seeking equality to political dissidents publicly denouncing authoritarianism, political action based on collective identity promotion is evident everywhere these days. On the other hand, the 2008 U.S. presidential campaigns supposedly transcended issues of race and gender because of the candidates' universal appeal irrespective of their characteristics. Yet as was clearly illustrated with the vice-presidential nomination for the first female Republican candidate vying for votes against an African-American Democratic one, identity politics are not only an important, but also contentious, political dynamic in our age. In today's world, emphasizing and mobilizing identities of various kinds seem to be a constituent part of global politics. Be it in the domestic realm or in transnational and regional affairs, the significance and utilization of collective identity as a marker of political activities are evident everywhere, with some analysts projecting a new, global 'clash of peoples' as a result (Muller 2008).

This has not always been the case. Identity politics—broadly defined as political action oriented on the needs, values and interests of particular collective groups possessing a shared identity—have received growing attention in the past three decades in the academic realm and public discourse. The acceleration of processes of globalization and

cultural homogenization acted as catalysts of identity politics and has impacted on them, lending new urgency to issues of identity and its nexus with politics. As a result, the relationship between globalization, identity, and social movements has been noted as an important area of future research (Bernstein 2005). This volume concentrates on two major questions worth exploring in this context: first, how are collective identities being experienced, framed and utilized in identity promotion and maintenance and secondly, how are globalizing features such as the mediatization of politics, the spread of international norms and support by intergovernmental institutions and non-governmental actors being instrumentalized by various identity-based groups. This book explores collective identity configurations as they play out in the globally expanded political environment involving to a greater degree mass media, IGOs and INGOs, rather than focusing on constitutive identitive characteristics or movement strategies alone. A brief primer on collective identities and the theoretical framework surrounding identity politics below is of essence to correctly assess the repercussions of such actions.

The use of the term “identity politics” to describe identity-based political activities originated in the 1960s with the civil rights movement in the United States, although collective political groups and social movements representing particular identity-related causes have existed throughout history (Calhoun 2004). In a first wave, these groups aimed at inclusion into society and nondiscrimination, whereas in recent years, a more assertive stance has taken hold among them, requesting acceptance or recognition as different (Isin and Wood 1999, p. 14). Nowadays such collective group representations are based on a diverse array of identity markers, including gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, culture, and other shared characteristics, such as being disabled or chronically ill. The definitions for identity politics are as numerous as the groups conducting such action, from philosophical definitions highlighting the ambivalent liberty-threatening character of identity-based demands to the post-structuralist or neo-marxist critique of class-based politics to the social-movement inspired literature we are drawing upon (Bernstein 2005). The lack of an international relations and political science body of work stems from the fact that identity-based groups only recently began to utilize the effects of globalization transnationally, and that the post-modern and constructivist literatures challenge forms of essentialism. Our aim here, however, consists less in exploring the constitution of collective identities but rather how such collectives experience and transform their identities in the international environment. These groups represent to a certain extent a minority

struggling for, at the minimum, equal treatment, recognition or other social-justice causes. At times these demands are extended to include affirmative treatment (e.g. with gender or racially based groups) and/or territorial autonomy (e.g. with many ethno-cultural groups). In this sense, research on identity politics focuses on “how culture and identity [...] are articulated, constructed, invented, and commoditized as the means to achieve political ends” (Hill and Wilson 2003, p. 2).

The number of groups concerned with identity politics is very large, and the emergence of largely normative global human rights standards have pushed issues of recognition, preservation, and resource allocation to new heights. The abundance of collectivities bound together by a shared identity facet based upon differentiating characteristics from the majority population is confusing at best and has led to a somewhat biased overuse of the term “identity politics,” coupled with the assumption that these groups are too diverse to be conceptually compared as to their expectations, goals and performance. It can be said, however, that these groups are joined by their belief that their belonging to politico-cultural identities contain valuable resources for social change and that they need to be actively involved in obtaining their goals (Preston 1997). They should be distinguished from more professionalized public interest groups or power-acquiring political parties, although admittedly, identity-based groups are often simultaneously social movements. Identity politics, however, are also distinct from social movements because they exist independent of a postulated opportune political structure (Tarrow 1994) and prove often more durable than issue-based movements. Collective identities and the ensuing identity movements, while in itself socially constructed “arise out of what is culturally given” (Johnston and Klandermans 1995)—they evolve out of socially engrained and ritually reinforced group affinities. The theoretical underpinnings supplied by social movement theorists specifying political opportunities, mobilizing structures, cultural framing processes and contentious interaction between state and movement aid in the analysis of identity politics in changing socio-economic environments. Even globalization has been examined in its impact on social movements (Guidry et al. 2000). Yet these movement structures have been questioned in recent years (Goodwin and Jasper 2004; Kriesi 2007), and it is our contention as well that identity politics cannot easily be reduced to the issue politics of most social movements, nor do identity-based groups pursue necessarily postmaterialist objectives typical of (new) social movements. In light of the augmented prominence of medialized politics, discursive opportunity structures, in

creating enabling political and social public spheres, are significant promoters of identity politics as well (Koopmans et al. 2005).

Members of such a group generally share a social positioning in relation to the self-identification of other societal groups as not only sharing common traits, but often also as being oppressed or marginalized i.e., they constitute collectivities that are often defined by social or political inequality and encumbered with ambiguous or negative representations by the wider polity (Williams 1998; Woodward 1997; Ingram 2004). This does not mean that identity politics represents simply protest by oppressed minorities, nor are concerns for recognition or competition for resources sufficient explanations for the prevalence of collective identities: “Like identities, identity politics in itself is neither positive nor negative. At its minimum, it is a claim that identities are politically relevant, an irrefutable fact. Identities are the locus and nodal point by which political structures are played out, mobilized, reinforced, and sometimes challenged” (Martin-Alcoff and Mohanty 2006, p. 7). Groups exercising identity politics should also be differentiated from non-identity based groups who agitate on behalf of humanity in general, such as environmental groups or the peace movement (Harding 2006), which are often summed up as ‘new’ social movements (Melucci 1996; Kriesi et al 1995).

One important discussion in the theoretical treatment of identity politics concerns the apparent dichotomous reactive effects of identity politics: while the almost universal acceptance of fundamental equitable democratic values has become a main focus of liberal democracies, “claims for the recognition of group difference have become increasingly salient in the recent period, at times eclipsing claims for social equality” (Fraser 1997, p. 2). This debate has been taken up by political theorists, philosophers, and social theorists, who have recognized the underlying tension between these two societal processes as constitutive elements of contemporary political discourse and practice that do not have to contradict our conception of liberal democracies as long as civil rights are not obstructed by the choices people or governments make in practice. This claim is based on John Rawls “overlapping consensus,” (Kenny 2004) exemplified, for instance, by gender parity laws in Europe. If every person is an individual with a unique set of identity markers, it seems reasonable to expect to live with the tensions created by the pressure for recognition as special or different as long as there exists some degree of solidarity regarding equal coexistence in society and before the law. Sometimes, the argument is put forth that identity politics may be illiberal because of its emphasis on special privileges. In our opinion, this holds not true as a

vibrant civil society adds towards a democratic ideal, and the salience of identity promotion, even when facing difficult domestic circumstances, proves that it remains a constant concern for such groups. This specific notion also distinguishes the cases in this book here from movements based solely on opposition towards a government or another entity.

With respect to the “political” connotation in identity politics, it appears that while some of the literature on identity politics deals concretely with the political implications of minority rights, much of it is confined to an ontological debate in political theory and philosophy (Kenny 2004; Ingram 2004) or it is treated within the fields of anthropology and ethnology (Martin-Alcoff 2006), often by utilizing singular case-studies with little room for generalization. Some valuable efforts were made in the field of ethnic politics or nationalism research, for example recent investigations exploring the impact of cultural variables on the outcomes of ethnic conflict in a comparative manner (Ross 2007; Brubaker 2006). This literature, however, tends to include only one aspect of identity politics, race or ethnicity. In contrast, our project attempts to conceptually position identity politics in the political sociology and international relations realm by examining the common political structures and processes that a variety of marginalized groups create and face in a globalizing environment.

This book sets out to deliver a much-needed comparative analysis of identity politics in an attempt to discern identitive structures and differences in the utilization of globalizing processes across various regions, rather than focusing on the intrinsic origins of these movements—or identities—in specific cases. While a review of the vast literature on globalization (Held et al. 1999) is impossible here, some major effects of the global technological, economic, political, and cultural transformations are addressed insofar as they influence the political actions of identity movements, as such a discussion is lacking in the camps of pro- and anti-globalization scholars (Stieglitz 2003; Bhagwati 2004). We concur with recent analyses of globalization who attest that we find ourselves in a third-wave ‘transformationalist’ age (Tarrow 2005; Martell 2007), a stage in which state sovereignty is increasingly shared with other international actors such as IGOs and NGOs, but which also leads to greater risk for the maintenance and protection of cultural and social identities because of competitive neo-medievalist tendencies in the emergence of various (non-)state actors jousting for influence, and the homogenizing influence of a Westernized harmonization of politics, economics and culture. Yet at the same time, the threat of homogenization is not indicative of the rise of such movements alone; groups promoting their identity tend to be concerned

with more tangible self-asserting claims than, for instance, much of the current anti-globalization movement with its all-encompassing socio-economic focus against neoliberal capitalism. All of these movements experience 'glocalization' in that local, regional and domestic identities and cultures are increasingly created and modified in reference to external global structures (Robertson 1994). This produces qualitatively different configurations of identity politics under the impact of globalization, and presents novel challenges for states as well.

Returning to the foundational sociological literature, classic social movement theory evolved out of the struggle for economic justice and labor rights. Yet socio-economic class is not covered as a separate identity marker for political groups in this work. Economic structural indicators have been found to have an effect on the total population, and in the related literature issues, uneven economic development tend to be left out as a sole base for identity politics (Benhabib 2002; Nederveen Pieterse 2007). It has been simultaneously argued, however, that "the social valuation placed on personal attributes such as skin color, ethnicity and gender [...] is determined by the individual's objective class position" (King 2004, p. 189). Traditional movement activity relating to social class has been largely channeled into political parties, from the inception of the conservative and social-democratic parties to the stratified party spectra found today in multi-party democracies. While it is established that class is in many regions somewhat institutionalized through political parties, many other social minority groups still largely act through social movement organizations (Verloof 2006). Sociology, which provides the theoretical backdrop for identity-based action, thus distinguishes between traditional class-based social movements advocating social equality and so-called 'new' social movements that are rather concerned with postmaterial and identity-related issues (Melucci 1996). This distinction has been often criticized on grounds that the line between these two kinds of activity is too blurry, though for our approach this basic distinction holds true as identity maintenance and promotion as the main concern is *the* essential feature of identity politics.

Furthermore, critical theory has proposed that the fact that every individual sells labor, exploits it and is involved in consuming commodities and services creates a homogenizing class positioning process for every individual (Harvey 2000), albeit to different degrees in developed and emerging economies. This in turn provides for structurally similar issues of economic inequality independent of a country's stage in economic development. In this volume, macroeconomic conditions are taken into account only as they bear on

the resource mobilization of individuals and groups in these varying socio-economic regions. Equally, spatial relations of collectives and their environment are a universal feature of identity politics (Maier 2007), particularly when they are connected to economic conditions i.e., economically advanced or deprived regions inhabited by a single ethnic minority (Jenne 2007)—as is the temporal factor in the collective interest aggregation (Preston 1997).

Gender is a noteworthy category of identity politics as numerically, women represent the largest contingent of a ‘minority’—in absolute terms, they actually consist of almost half of the world’s population (United Nations 2008). While globalization certainly augmented competitive pressures and exposed women to some negative socio-economic risks, many also profited from the empowering effects of globalization: “Globalization breaks through cultural barriers and transports images and ideas on television and the Internet [...] It often runs up against archaic social ideas that cement drastic inequality between the sexes. Globalization attacks backward gender roles in Vietnam, encourages women in Yemen to shed their veils and gives European women economic power” (Supp 2009, p. 2). Such processes do not always work in a facilitating fashion, though: Changing cultural roles initiated through international human rights norms prove particularly contentious when confronted with pre-existing patriarchal gender norms, as pointed out in the chapter by Manuela Picq focusing on indigenous women in the Andean region.

Nationalism may be the most compelling force for identity-movements in existence, but it is only partially concerned in this work where it expresses the cultural and/or spatial autonomy of a minority vis-à-vis the government. Globalization has significantly challenged the dominance of nation-state discourses and weakened the autonomy of most countries on the globe, weaving them into an interdependent web of economic and social transnational relations. Here, it will not be treated in its role as a master-identity for a nation-state as this has been sufficiently explored in the ethnic nationalism literature (Anderson 1991; Brubakers 1995; Jenne 2007), but rather explored in its meaning for sub-nations within existing state structures which may feel emboldened by the weakening of traditional state governments and the facilitated cross-border linkages with their kin. Nationalist policies as expressed by cultural minorities are crucial aspects as they express opposition to the majority government or collective action aimed at self-expression (see the chapter on the Hungarian minority by Eloisa Vladescu).

Similarly, religion is a universally recurring identity position that has fundamental implications for majority-minority relations and thus will be explored within this project in the framework of Turkey's Gülen Movement, analyzed by Nuray Ibryamova. Religious adherence has become one of the strongest identity markers in a world of various religious-ideological markets and the ability to spread promotional messages more easily than ever. The playing up of religious identities provides stability and cohesion for communities in a seemingly plural, secular and dangerous world, and religious motivations often contribute to the (de)legitimization of existing political systems.

With respect to a further differentiation of the fundamental qualities of identity politics, the question becomes apparent whether democratic governance (i.e. the guarantee of popular sovereignty, civil liberties and functioning state institutions, among others) makes a difference in how identity-based political groups behave and attain their objectives. While it is our conviction that liberal democracies enable to a greater degree the formation of identity-based groups because of the existence and promotion of a pluralistic civil society consisting of a variety of actors, the absence of such guarantees also provokes political activity in non-democracies such as, for example, Arab countries (Mandelbaum 2007). In that sense, identity politics are prevalent and active in both, democratic and autocratic countries, but they face different challenges from state governments depending on the political ideology. Consequently, we opted for the inclusion of cases displaying both, democratically and (semi-)autocratically led country examples, as the government structure is a determinant variable and thus part of our theoretical model below.

As pointed out earlier, this project builds largely upon social movement literature, but with the salience of individual and collective identities at the heart of identity politics, social constructivist thought, rather than primordial essentialism offers ontological answers to the (re)construction of these identities which are expressed in identity politics. Not only that, the ongoing transformation of society by governments, elites and civil society determines the necessity and place of identity politics in public life. In this context, social relationships are based fundamentally on the formation and maintenance of social identity groups and networks through which individuals and groups go about satisfying needs and values. By including states, their structural non-state environment consisting of norm-creating and -diffusing IGOs and INGOs as well as the identity movements themselves advocating media-supported rules of engagement, we recognize the added value of constructivist ontology for this kind of comparative analysis (Green

2002). Although individuals negotiate their various identity-facets in many different interactions in daily life, a 'primary' identity is theorized to frame others (Castells 1997), which allows for collective identities to become regularized over time so that individuals' roles in them become institutionalized (Tilly 2005). The resulting movement-organizations are an expression of this identity as related to the larger social environment and the role expectations associated with them.

Yet in order to avoid an 'essentialist trap', one should keep in mind that identity, in contrast to its institutionalized representation, is never a fixed concept of social life. In complex social systems individuals tend to associate with a wide array of ever-changing identity groups. With respect to any particular issue, individuals may be involved in a broad spectrum of social relationships associated with differing identities. The range of identities is limitless, but for the purposes of this study, culture, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and clan are among the most relevant. Individuals may also associate together in response to negative identities, that is, identities they see as threatening. Despite the sometimes held post-modern notion that identities are too fluid as to be conceptualized, a lot of stimulating work has recently been produced that aims at conceptualizing identities for research (McDermott et al. 2006) and that operationalizes context-based collective identities (Rousseau 2006). This project, however, is mainly concerned with the repercussions of identity-maintenance and promotion in interaction with other actors such as states, (I)NGOs, IGOs etc. rather than on their intrinsic origins. Having reviewed some fundamental concepts surrounding identity politics and the corresponding theoretical backdrops, we concentrate in the following section on the configuration of such political expressions as they play out in variously globalized settings.

The Configuration of Political identities in their Environment

An important cornerstone for understanding the role of identity movements in their political and societal environment is the way they function in aggregating and articulating interests. In this regard, Almond, in his seminal work on comparative politics, found it helpful to differentiate four main types of structures involved: institutional groups, anomic groups, associational groups and non-associational groups (Almond 1960, p. 33). Institutional groups are formally organized bodies with professional staffs whose main missions are something other than interest articulation, and yet they can and often do serve as a base of operation for a subgroup to engage in such political activities,

including legislatures, political executives, bureaucracies, and churches. Anomic groupings are rather spontaneous societal and populist phenomena often materializing, for example, in demonstrations (Almond 1960, p. 34). Of most interest for the reader should be the last two categories: associational interest groups and non-associational groups. Associational groups are the specialized structures of interest articulation—i.e., trade unions, business associations, gay rights groups, ethnic-based organizations, associations organized by religious denominations, civic groups, and the like. Non-associational groups are based in more traditional conceptualizations of identity and embrace kinship, ethnic, regional, religious, status, or class groups whose configuration is relatively informal and interest articulation function irregular. These latter types of aggregation, (non-)associational groups, most often dominates the scholarly focus and conceptualization of civil society and identity politics, although we find the distinction in Almond's work somewhat rigid in that a person's associations with an identity group is more freely-determined than conceptualized above. Still, the basic premise that identities are relational (Tarrow 2005) holds true and contributes to the explanatory framework built here. In large parts of the developing world, classic associational groups are not the predominant form of social identity. Interest aggregation and articulation occur more commonly through traditional non-associational groupings or institutional groups. Processes of globalization may be changing this orientation. The strength of identification with any particular identity-grouping is relative in social time and space and may vary significantly with the particular issue at hand and how that issue is framed in political discourse and practice as it relates to political stakes in question (Vanhala 2009). A given issue, such as globalization and the resulting homogenization of cultures, may trigger one identity and elevate it above all others.

Recognizing the fluidity of identities, their (de-)construction and re-construction, the question remains if they are given or people consciously acquire a certain inclination toward aspects of their existence? Recent postmodern literature has pointed out that most identity markers are assumed or instrumental in that even ethnic or racial characteristics can be (de-) emphasized or played up/down (Benhabib 2007; Pieterse 2008). However, the choice of group belonging—associating, in the sociological realm—is contingent upon some semblance of a liberal democratic system that delivers citizens with roughly equal participatory options regardless of their ethnic background or linguistic affiliation, something we do not always find in the treatment of, for example, indigenous people in the developing

world. It is certainly true that in consolidated democracies, particularly if they are multiethnic or multicultural to some extent, the self-professed recognition of societal diversity has taken precedence over egalitarian aspects. But if one were to look at the bread-and-butter issues that come with belonging to a certain identity group, e.g. in racial job discrimination, the problematic becomes apparent. Ingram (2004) goes further than Almond and discerns two different kinds of membership in “affinal” collectives that have a common interest or ideology and in “structural” groups whose shared bond is a result of conditions beyond their choice: gender, sexual orientation etc. This distinction is important as it determines the efficacy of such groups: successful mobilization is theorized as possible only if a certain extent of positive reframing of a particular group’s identity can occur, as a negatively viewed one encounters too much public opposition (Schneider 2005)—even if one belongs to it without having had a choice of belonging.

Despite the fact that social constructions such as “race” or “gender” should be carefully applied so as not to become labels themselves, they represent collective identities that feminist or ethnic emancipatory groups use themselves and, as such, they are legitimately utilized here. In addition, these identity markers are often coupled with a certain class positioning deducted from belonging to an identity group, thereby aggravating the often detrimental consequences of being part of such minorities. At times it is not only a question of self-profession of these identities, but individuals are just as often labeled by others as belonging to several or only one group, which often is decisive when, for example, second-generation immigrants have to negotiate their bicultural backgrounds upon entering the labor market. How these various identity facets are prioritized in the political arena is dependent on the individual (case). Furthermore, the expression of particular identities regularly suppresses other roles, where dominant identities are politically instrumentalized. Some analysts correctly argue that ethnic or gender minorities are “trapped in a matrix-system of intersecting oppressions,” as pronounced by feminists suggesting an intersectionality of conjoining identity facets (Hill Collins 1990). Many minority groups, however, have actually achieved a surprising level of recognition and legal-political protection in democracies, independent of their belonging to one or more groups. On the other hand, the distinction between structural and political intersectionality, referring to the negative impact of normative standards of society as well as to the political agency of governments respectively, deserves attention (Verloo 2006) insofar as it accentuates the detrimental effects of possessing multiple identity attributes in society and before the law.

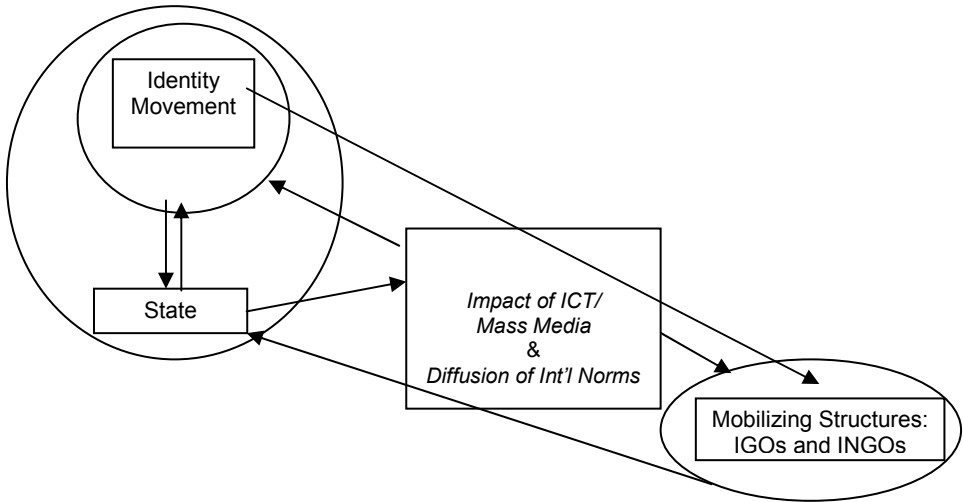
Leaving the debate about the nature of identity politics, which has been criticized in light of its philosophical nebulosity and lack of empirical reality (May et al. 2004) and returning to its configurations, one of the major commonalities of groups pursuing identity politics is the goal of recognition as in need of protection from discrimination. It includes “anti-discrimination measures, culturally sensitive interpretations and applications of laws, exemptions from certain rules, groups-sensitive application of public policy, additional rights and resources, fostering public respect for marginalized identities, ensuring their adequate representation in public institutions” etc. (Parekh 2008, p. 42). Communities that have not (yet) experienced such inclusive treatment are prone to develop low self-esteem, self-imposed isolation, and potentially self-hatred and thus will be more disadvantaged to unify as a pressure group to advance their concerns. At the same time, groups and the individuals within them who might avoid societal (let alone familial) clashes or culture wars by keeping a low profile are more exposed once they work toward recognition as they ‘disturb’ the mainstream conception of a unified or majoritarian socio-political community.

In that respect, a major factor in the political situating of identity politics concerns the majority-minority position of such groups. Such actions are mostly brought forth by minorities facing exclusion, indifference, or discrimination by the rest of the population. While there exist some identity politics originating from majority populations, these do not deserve rectifying measures; for instance, being a Caucasian male in the United States does not present the same kind of problematic situatedness that being an African-American or Hispanic women does (the same goes for disability, sexual orientation, ethnic minorities, or an intersectional combination of these). By treating the various factors of origin only as they relate to their identitive performance in the exertion of identity politics, we concentrate mainly on identity framing and interest aggregation and its effects on the political environment, based on the notion that identity politics “provide messages for the political system about needs that are unmet or ignored” (Kenny 2004, p. 126). Globalization in particular aided such movements by providing accessible media and activist platforms as well as intergovernmental support through which they can amplify their claims. This theorem has been termed the ‘boomerang’ model of transnational activism. It emphasizes how domestic groups appeal to external supporters in order to affect pressure on and change by the antagonizing government, thereby ‘externalizing’ the issue at hand (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Tarrow (2005) went further by estimating the efficacy of externalization,

making it dependent on a certain kind of movement using a specific strategy, such as information politics in human rights issues. While the boomerang model of transnational advocacy network activity supplies us with the basic strategic dynamics of identity politics, there are still many unanswered questions regarding the direction and strength of movement identities and the accompanying utilization of legitimizing identities, that this book attempts to shed light on. One novel aspect that warrants further investigation in this volume is the extension of supportive international agents from previously theorized smaller entities such as kin-states or NGOs to transnational regional and/or global media, INGOs and IGOs, in effect creating more leverage for identity-based groups than before.

Taking into account the particular challenges and opportunities globalization presents for identity politics and recognizing the constitutive effects of culture on mobilizing societal structures, the model below illustrates the main theoretical components which are examined by the case-studies in this volume based on the political process model highlighting political opportunity structures such as national cleavage orientations, institutional structures and the configuration of power (McAdam 1996; Goodwin and Jasper 2004). Despite the limited utility of the political process model for identity politics—identities are more than issues that simply ally with political forces or cleavages along a political spectrum—our basic model recognizes the distinction between *cultural-discursive processes* through media and norm diffusion on the one hand and more classically oriented *mobilizing structures and political opportunities* brought about by the involvement of IGOs and INGOs on the other. There is no linearity or exhaustiveness implied, as each group conducting identity politics experiences its own set of structures and challenges to a different extent. It does, however, go beyond theoretical elaborations and previously stated assumptions by extending underrepresented facets of analysis such as the impact of media presence and the internationalization of global human rights norms and activities, attempting to facilitate a cross-national analysis of various forms of collective identities:

Figure 1. A 'Glocalized' Identity Politics Model



Cultural-Discursive Processes

In looking at the first set of intermediary variables, some of the major exogenous environmental characteristics and cultural-discursive practices of identity politics determine how group claims play out differently in their socio-cultural environment, i.e. their communities and public spheres. Media utilization and media impact—the mediatization process by which reality and reactions are increasingly constructed by mass media—is of particular importance in creating discursive opportunities in the ever changing spheres of public exchange and contestation (Habermas 1989), as are political cultures and civil society relations.

One major advantage for identity politics groups nowadays is the comparative ease of mobilization aided by the availability of information and communications technologies (ICT) such as, for example, internet calls, phone banks and video cell phone transmissions. In the Global North, the leadership in movements is often equipped with better access to an audience to recruit new members or to raise awareness for their specific cause and thus seek allies through these technologies. But between 2000 and 2004 alone the gap separating the developing and the developed countries shrank in terms of mobile

subscribers, fixed telephone lines, and internet users. Mobile phone usage has led the way in bringing access to the Global South. By the end of 2005, for example, about 15 percent of Africans had cellular phones, thus skipping land-based telephones completely. Cellphone industries, because of their low-cost availability, serve as globalizing 'leveler' enabling increased political participation. Nonetheless, in terms of internet subscribers and server connections the "digital divide" continues to persist, with developing countries ranking two-thirds lower than the market leader, the United States (Economist Intelligence Unit 2008), and fewer than two out of one hundred persons are on line in Africa as of yet. While developing countries have started to catch up and sometimes leapfrog in the application of communication technologies, access to the internet in particular remains limited to a privileged few, compared to the widespread use of electronic media in the Global North (International Telecommunications Union 2006). However, in regions such as, for example, Sub-Saharan Africa the number of computers available is often quite limited, may be restricted to paying customers, and may limit access to a very short time per visit. This disparity in access complicates political mobilization and information dissemination amongst fellow group members as well as with the rest of society in underdeveloped regions. Yet it also aided the mobilization of rather sinister identity-based violent movements, such as Al-Qaeda, which networks with the help of communications technologies.

Related to the previous point, the role of the media in creating public discourses is of central significance for how identity politics may play out. In contrast to past decades, the ubiquitous presence of mass media and the 'new' web and satellite-based media (Kahan 1999) provide for fast and extensive outreach for political minorities. Thus, mass media or participatory, local media outlets are not only instruments to gain visibility for a cause or to provide a common reference point—the media access, but the media make use of identity-based groups to gain readership and create a public discourse supportive or defensive toward these—the media portrayal. The role of these outlets is actually more complicated, in that media portrayal is influenced by many societal, private and governmental actors and thus, can result in a forged identity that might be disadvantageous in cases where assimilation of identity groups is an objective (Madianou 2005), e.g., with the media portrayal of ethnic minorities in their host societies. Through regulatory intervention, governments possess a significant degree of influence over mass media (Smith 2008) and thus, are in a position to elevate media coverage of certain identity groups in a positive or negative way. The variety of media outlets existing in every country contributes to the

shaping of a public sphere amenable or hostile to these groups, and, as we have seen in the case of significant events such as the Olympic Games 2008 in China or the Iranian election protests in 2009, even extends worldwide and puts international media-pressure on governments. The number of civil protests has increased all over the world and in particular, in authoritarian systems, and so has the number of broadcasted uprisings—which have doubled in China from around 60,000 to 120,000 over the past 10 years (Tsai 2009). At the same time, media concentration in the hands of private companies in Canada or the United States, or governments in the case of Russia and Venezuela, or a combination of both—in Italy under Berlusconi—delimits the diversity of these outlets and potentially skews the portrayal of identity-based groups and thus, impacts on their efficacy in pursuing their objectives. The role of the mass media in terms of the pervasiveness of technology and increase in plurality of outlets (Castells 1997) in local, regional, national and even international public spheres augmented tremendously with globalization; yet this aspect has been consistently under-analyzed in the past, particularly as the proliferation of ICTs introduced a variety of novel contributing variables for such research, including automated non-human agents and programs (Eriksson and Giacomello 2009).

Internationally advocated human and minority rights norms and their diffusion through transnational actors present another novel facilitating factor utilized by identity movements. Constructivist scholars see norms even co-constitutive, alongside actor identities, in the generation of collective interests and behavior (Kowert and Legro 1996), while others specify a three-pronged procedural sequence of norm emergence, cascading, and internalization for transnationally diffused norms (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Analysts of globalization have proposed that identity-based action aims at normative goals such as equality, diversity and democratization (Croucher 2004) as well as other protective and participatory standards as these are goals from which such groups profit. In an illustration of this change, for example, the UN's call for a third of parliaments to be made up of female representatives by 2020, together with the diffusion of gender quota norms resulted in a significant increase of female parliamentarians globally (Tripp and Kang 2008). In this regard, are international human and minority rights norms decisive or significant for identity politics? It appears as if such rights norms are only insofar effective as the resulting claims are backed by credible enforcement, such as judicial proceedings and the possibility of multilateral sanctions. The UN-sponsored Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been signed by a multitude of states, but only few governments actually care or react if a minority

group should invoke these. The situation is slightly improved in places, where enforceable legal instruments are available for individuals and groups to obtain a legal backing for their case, as for instance with the Council of Europe's European Court of Human Rights. Nevertheless, in the past decade a qualitative enhancement, even if still largely rhetorical and discursive in nature, has evolved in the international community with the increasingly propagated 'responsibility to protect' and the related contentious concept of humanitarian interventionism. Besides being contested on grounds of non-intervention and cultural relativism, these norms are difficult to put into practice, so that institutional structures of supervision such as independent regional or domestic courts are still the best defenders of human and minority rights. One incursion has to be noted, though: it appears that Islamic courts can be problematic in this regard as their application of Sharia-law may interfere with commonly acknowledged human rights norms. Even then, though, international pressure by the UN and governments can result in positive outcomes, e.g. in the case of a female rape-victim who was pardoned by the Saudi King after an international outcry following her sentencing of 200 lashes because of supposed 'offensive' behavior (she was in the presence of non-related men). On a larger scale, unfortunately, we also see the tendency for small and medium power-states to submit to the potentially detrimental influence of emerging superpowers such as Russia and China regarding international humanitarian crises in Sudan, Kosovo or Georgia (European Council on Foreign Relations 2008). As major economic forces, many states increasingly won't dare to go against these countries' emphases on non-interference in 'domestic' issues, resulting in a new challenge for the spread of international norms promoting identity-politics.

Mobilizing Political Opportunity Structures

In contrast to the socio-political environment in which identity politics are discursively contested and promoted, mobilizing opportunity structures in the social movement literature are defined as distinct from the above set of characteristics as "the kinds of structural changes and power shifts that are most defensibly conceived of as political opportunities that should not be confused with the collective processes by which these changes are interpreted and framed" (McAdam 1996, p. 25). They contain the second set of structural intermediary variables that determine the configuration of identity politics under globalizing conditions.

The evolution and form of government is a primary determinant predictor of domestic identity politics dynamics, resulting in dissident groups challenging autocratic systems to classic identity-based movements proliferating in liberal democracies. Governments are the most important factor influencing the accommodation or political mobilization of such groups. They constrain a movement's strength by creating an institutional environment that is more or less permissible with regard to, for example, access to political institutions and elites, expression of policy preferences, devolution of political power and redistribution of material resources. The state government has been named *the* critical variable in the understanding of identity-based politics in the South (Jega 2000), but the same rings true for countries in other stages of socio-economic development. Most advanced economies today are governed by liberal democracies, and as such they are contingent upon and supportive of a pluralistic civil society, including minority groups. Pluralistic multi-ethnic states adhering to democratic principles are theoretically advised to govern under a consociational scheme (Lijphart 1977) as it enables power-sharing for different cultural groups. On a minimum level, such consensual forms of government stray away from majoritarian populism and guarantee every citizen equal rights in front of the law. Full civil rights in such a polity, however, require that "wherever a dominant public culture creates disadvantages for legitimate cultural minority practices, public policies ought to accommodate and compensate minorities" (Bauböck 2007, p. 99). This sort of affirmative action by governments can only occur where a consolidated liberal-pluralistic system of governance is in place, with a willingness to take on minority demands. It is our understanding that the trend towards popular support for democracy globally (Diamond and Plattner 2008) and the resurgence of identity groups promoting specific and equal rights go hand in hand. As part of this process state institutions themselves may place certain positive or negative values on group identities, for example, being underrepresented or deviant, which in turn fosters identitive groups (but does not generate them, as with social movements—see Lam's chapter in this volume).

Here again, the question of the compatibility of religious identity politics with the state order needs to be raised and differences noted: while liberal-pluralistic states exercise a widespread separation of state governance and religious observance—the "separation of church and state"—we find in many developing countries, particularly in those with a Muslims majority, a conflation of the legal and religious order, for instance in the extreme case of Malaysia, whose constitution declares all Malaysians to be Muslims as well (Eickelman and Piscatori 2004, p.

104). The religious case study in this volume, however, represents the opposite, a religious movement acting within the parameters of a secular Muslim state, Turkey. On the other hand, even consolidated democracies visibly express the cleavages that result from the separation of church and state, e.g., in the debates about the place of religion in several recent U.S. presidential races or in the writing of the (failed) European Constitution.

In contrast to the mixed reaction that religious identity movements may experience, the discrimination against ethno-political minorities remains a particular problem in the developing world through political discrimination by governments, affecting Latin America and Caribbean minorities the most, followed by minorities in Asia. In line with pluralist-liberal prescriptions, Western democracies initiated accommodative strategies so that ethno-political conflicts there substantially declined (Gurr 1993; Kymlicka 2008), as confirmed by Vladescu's Transylvanian case study. As is often the case, governments in the Global South suffer various pressures ranging from economic development, which is closely tied to the global trade system, to the creation of a stable state guaranteeing security internally as well as externally. The majorities of state governments in the developing world were established in the postcolonial period, which explains some of the assertiveness of governments to preserve state unity against the demands of multiple ethno-political groups which could potentially destabilize the country. In that regard it is notable that democracies do not automatically favor accommodation if the cost to the state's integrity is too high. Conversely, authoritarian leaders may make concessions if they deem this strategy less costly than investing scarce resources in combating such groups (Gurr 1993, p. 294). The various institutional groupings that surround and/or make up "the state"—militaries, political parties, bureaucracies, legislatures and, most importantly, judiciaries—may serve either in facilitating or inhibiting roles in identity politics group formation, maintenance, and growth, as will be varyingly showcased in our case studies.

Under the impact of regional integration—in itself a parallel development to globalization in that it occurred mainly in the past few decades and often constrained state governments—, many countries, particularly in Europe under the EU umbrella, allowed for unprecedented minority rights as showcased by activists, judges and interest group representatives (Prügl and Thiel 2009). They also incorporated devolutionary approaches in their dealings with autonomy-seeking ethno-cultural minorities and hence, found a relative peaceful way of accommodating these demands. Groups pursuing identity politics

in unitary countries are more often than not threatened with forced assimilation, whereas in states participating in regional integration, normative and material resources are available to guarantee the basic welfare, recognition and continuance of these groups. Furthermore, depending on the constitutional model found in these states, devolved governance allows for the accommodation of identity-based demands for self-rule, as regional governments in many areas of the world have become the mitigating agency between the demands of ethno-cultural groups and the central government (Castells 1997).

Related to the previous aspect, the engagement of national governments in larger international organizations, and with (I)NGOs and other groups that show an increased concern for equal rights aids identity groups in the achievement of their objectives. The number of NGOs accredited in consultative status with IGOs skyrocketed in the past two decades, thereby attesting to the increased professionalization of these groups (Smith 2008), and provided a 'glocal' platform for social change at in the name of many identity-based movements. A search for identity-related NGOs with consultative status at the UN-ECOSOC division reveals that over one third of all NGOs, 1063 out of 3051, are related to identity-issues based on indigenous people, women, minority groups etc., most of which gained 'special' status only in the past 10-15 years (UN DESA 2008). IGOs, in turn, increasingly seek to utilize the expertise of NGOs and movement actors in their aid and development programs. For instance, the impact of the EU not only on its member states, but also in its dealings with the recipients of European development aid reflects a commitment to equality and the building of a pluralistic civil society as explicitly expressed in the Cotonou-agreements for the Union's former colonies (European Commission 2000). On the flipside, the benevolent influence of this intergovernmental organization is a result of the realization of the damage that occurred through the previous colonial politicization of ethnic and cultural identities. Another noteworthy example includes the UN Development Program, which focused attention on empowering women alongside the spreading of human rights norms and thus stimulated the work of feminist NGOs and identity-related movements. The U.S. Agency for International Development played a similar role during the Clinton Administration with regard to HIV positive groups in Africa, providing them support needed to attend major AIDS conferences outside their countries and become linked with larger transnational social movement activities (Gordenker et al. 1995). But aside from these flanking support measures, the impact of these external agencies or democratizing superpowers (Mandelbaum 2007) remains

subordinate to the extent of openness that can be provided by the domestic government. It is also the national government that allows the extent of NGO activity to a different degree: particularly in emerging semi-authoritarian countries such as Russia, China or Venezuela, the restrictions placed on domestic and foreign NGOs limit the influence of these agencies.

Political, social and economic elites acting upon issues of recognition and equal treatment for citizens are common in states and they have only gained more visibility with the internationalization of media and politics. Without them, ordinary members of a particular identity group would not be able to sufficiently mobilize for their cause, since elites from a minority group possess the information as well as access to material and media resources necessary for the organization's success. However, while in the developed world, these elites are just some of the many societal actors working on behalf of their particular constituency, in the developing world they face a higher degree of opposition because they demand ideational and material resources that the constituency was often excluded from in the past, or because they contest the structuring of traditional, pre-modern societal hierarchies. In this context, access to elites with their capacity to influence political agendas and the framing of issues in political discourse can be important. In the developing world, processes of economic globalization, coupled with adjustment programs and development issues, incur high costs such as labor right disputes, an increase in crime or government cuts in welfare etc (Stieglitz 2003), which make identity politics occur more frequently, particularly if these processes are based on an already unequal social stratification. This social disparity, coupled with a large peasantry, evolved on the basis of a neo-feudalistic clientelistic system, in which socio-economic disadvantaged strata of the population were conditioned to rely on the favors and support of dominant colonial and post-colonial economic and political elites, which in turn profit from the accommodation of these collectivities, thereby avoiding domestic conflict. Clientelism suppresses and at times, corrupts the expression of group identities by coopting these in order to avoid having to deal with their demands of recognition and economic or political participation. To add to this dilemma, group identities seem to become more rigid under conditions of scarcity, which coincide with some of the global economic fluctuation: "In struggling over scarce resources relating to needs fulfillment or other related goals, groups often create exclusive and rigid identities" (Polkinghorn 2000, p. 154). The temporary inflationary rise in food prices, for example, or the deterioration of availability of public goods during World Bank

mandated adjustment programs leaving out some ethnic groups or women disproportionately are just a few examples of how economic relations based on a clientelistic system can spur identity-based activity. In the Global North, these issues are mitigated in a pluralistic or corporatist governance system to the degree that political and judicial oversight prevents such abuse.

Citizenship policies and related legal norms and practices of political ownership and control are the main instruments to enable minorities, naturalized citizens as well as permanent residents to attain a degree of rights and duties common to liberal democracies. Historically, women have achieved such inclusion through the suffragette movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With it came the provision of fundamental equality, if not (yet) on a societal level, then at a minimum before the law, what Mouffe calls with respect to identity politics “equivalence without eliminating difference” (1995, p. 38)—a sort of nominal but not social equality. There are, however, two incursions to be noted: First, the design of citizenship policies has often been used to exclude ethnic (for example, in the case of Russian minorities who attained rights in the Baltic states of Latvia and Estonia only under EU pressure), cultural (the Kurds in Turkey are still fighting for full recognition) and/or even social minorities (in the case of the U.S. immigration legislation for homosexuals).

Second, while there might be far-reaching attempts by governments in the developed world to prohibit discrimination (as significantly expanded in the far-reaching antidiscrimination provision for EU citizens in the European Union’s Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999 and the Charter of Fundamental Rights), societal biases and the ensuing socio-economic inequality cannot be prevented by governmental regulation—in addition to the fact that up to now, citizenship policies in the EU are still legislated nationally. Citizenship remains an important link connecting identity groups and their larger political environment, and even as we have seen the emergence of multinational legal citizenship schemes in recent years in the Global North, the social and cultural citizenship aspects of individuals remain bounded by the limitations of self-professed and externally determined “belonging” to such a collective group. Hence, the increase in global migration has spurred a construction of physical and legal barriers to keep poorer immigrants out (Klusmeyer and Aleinikoff 2001). In the developing world, citizenship policies may be more closely linked to the government—or the majority perception of threats to the survival of the nation or its control over socio-economic and political resources and the allocation of values. In this regard, such policies may also reflect the identity group’s relative

economic strength and social standing in relation to important kinship groups, clans, and other traditional groups in a state.

It appears that political parties, no matter if in power or otherwise participating in the political process, represent both an obstacle and an area of involvement for identity politics. Political parties have often evolved out of larger labor and/or ethnic movements whose activities became institutionalized over time. However, for “new” social and/or ethnic issues, such as migrant rights or gender-based social equality the creation of political parties does not automatically remedy the deprivation experienced by minority groups. For instance, many ethnic parties evolved in the 1990s in Latin America around ethnic cleavages, therefore attesting to the evolution of indigenous political mobilization in this region. At the same time, one of the major cross-cutting factors for the emergence of these movement parties was that non-indigenous parties had abused and “exploited” their constituents; even natural allies such as the leftist parties did so by placing party loyalty over allegiance to the collective identities of the indigenous movements (Van Cott 2005). In the case of equality movements based on gender or sexual orientation, ideologically compatible parties increasingly take on the demands of these groups but subsume them under their programmatic ‘leftist’ hierarchy and thus, often dilute the movements’ objective. Political parties, thus, are limited in their ability to incorporate identity-based demands because of the necessity of appealing to a larger populace.

Cultural-discursive processes initiated by the role of the media and the diffusion of international norms, and political (opportunity) structures as expressed through a country’s government, its politics and involvement in transnational governance and activism represent the most significant structural conditions determining globalized identity politics. Yet there are other contributing factors at work as well, which will be shortly detailed in the following section in the interest of a holistic view.

Additional Factors Influencing and Advancing Identity Politics

In contrast to the discursive nature of media utilization and norm diffusion or political structures provided by states, INGOs and IGOs, one of the additional constraints of the societal environment lies in the degree of compatibility of the national as well as local political culture—defined as the patterns of orientation towards political objects and action (Almond and Verba 1963)—with the goals and aspirations of identity-based groups: a major distinguishing factor in these two

environments results from the liberal-pluralistic conception of civil society found in most consolidated democracies, which promotes tolerance and thus is, at least theoretically, an enabling factor for all sorts of identity politics. Identity-based movements not only attempt to correct injustices in the political sphere, their activism also translates in the social realm, into societal discourses and cultural expectations: “Social movements such as Gay Liberation, Feminism and Black Activism have consciously challenged dominant morality and definitions of norms and conventions relating to sex, gender and family relations” (Hirst 2004, p. 82). Contributing to this challenge to existing domestic mainstream norms is a seemingly evolving global public opinion (Parekh 2008) interacting with domestic ones, even though the impact of it is, at least at this point in time, negligible.

Thus, a liberal civil society with multiple interest and associational groups represented—more likely to be found in advanced industrial societies as a result of socio-economic modernization and cognitive mobilization (Inglehart 1997)—will be more amenable to new identity movements than one in which there exists a combination of collectivist hierarchical societal stratifications and limited material and political resources such as, for instance, in the postcolonial societies of Latin America (see the case study of Ecuador), Africa (see the South African one) or Asia (the case of Hong Kong). The political cultures in these countries often makes it harder for identity politics groups to push successfully for the promotion of what these groups perceive as much-needed equality with regard to subsistence rights, not to mention the social and political rights that are claimed by identity politics groups in the North. As Ottaway and Carothers (2000), based on Almond’s distinction have demonstrated, civil society in the developing world is dominated by institutional groups such as bureaucracies, churches, and political parties, which exist in complex interrelationship with kinship, ethnic, regional, religious, status, class and other non-associational groups—in contrast to the rather fluid movement activity in politically consolidated, liberal-democratic states. Moreover, when associational groups do exist and penetrate society, these often tend to have firm cultural and/or religious foundations that inhibit or delay the development of identity-based associational groups which may not fit the mainstream societal model. In (semi)authoritarian systems, the normative standards for a pluralistic recognition of identity politics is not embedded in the governing context, as countries such as China or Iran have repeatedly denied rights to ethnic or sexual minorities.

A factor that shapes identity-based collective action irrespective of the national political culture is the degree of competition among existing

civil society actors such as other movements, churches and NGOs. One of the effects of globalization resulted in the marked increase of (I)NGOs, particularly in the post-cold war period and in the run-up to the new millennium. The more numerous civil society actors who appeal to the goals of a collective group are, the harder it can be for identity politics to be noticed and gain material and ideational support from the environment. The prevalence of a range of identity-based groups actually denotes a bi-directional argument in this regard: “The flourishing of myriad kinds of argument and politics, including many instances of coalitional activity with liberals, socialists, or ethnic minority women, suggests that movements of identity are contributors as much as obstacles to associational plurality” (Kenny 2004, p. 99). On the other hand, certain civil society actors that might not pursue the exact same goal but offer support for the objectives of an identity politics group might well be a valuable ally for the cause. Religious organizations in particular have often fulfilled a detrimental and/or beneficial role in the way they have opposed (e.g., the gay rights movements in Eastern Europe) or supported (e.g. through application of liberation theology for the South American indigenous poor) identity politics.

On an individual level, people belonging to particular collectives seem to attempt to congregate in or move consciously toward areas that reflect a desired socio-political climate in which their demands for recognition and rights are better accommodated. This mobility results often in the concentration of identity-groups in specific areas or even a move towards other countries with a more suitable socio-political climate, as evidenced by the build-up of large ethnically homogenous quarters in many cities throughout the world, the congregation of sexual minorities to urban areas or the migration of ethnic minorities from their unwelcoming homes to more liberal host countries. While such personal-political mobilization is occurring in both the developed and the developing world, the differences in prosperity account for the relative degree and success of such dislocations. With regard to the political interaction of these individuals, those with higher incomes and more education end up having less exposure to cross-cutting political communication i.e., they tend to remain more among people of their own view, just as people with high level of political activism and knowledge do (Mutz 2006). This finding suggests a counterintuitive effect of the individuals pursuing identity politics: while they need to reach out to other political actors, minority group members tend to remain among themselves and thus, limit their interaction with the outside world on which they place demands—resulting in a

strengthening of their identity yet a diminishing of their action repertoire. The thesis just put forward, however, reflects largely on identity politics in the developed world. In regions where large masses are impoverished and without higher or even secondary education, political demands are likely to be expressed in a more direct way to outreach to the conventional addressees such as governments and other civil actors.

In sum, individual choices of societal belonging and collective national cultures are additional environmental determinants that impact on the strength of identity politics and can have both, a positive and/or negative influence on the efficacy of identity politics. The aspects mentioned above are in part conditions that are well established in the literature—such as, for example, the mobilizing opportunity structures found in domestic governments—but some are also under-analyzed, as in the case of globalizing features such as the impact of international organizations upon identity politics. Taken together with the first set of cultural-discursive variables specifying media impact and norm diffusion, these provide an innovative comparative framework for the exploration of identity politics under conditions of political globalization.

Conclusion: Identity Politics as Challenge for Social Sciences

Let's revisit the main research question and see if there are discernible commonalities and differences recognizable in how identity politics play out under the impact of political globalization? Some analysts argue somewhat generalizingly that the answers “depend on [the] cultural and political context” (Gurr 1993, p. 320) and that “social specificity determines the actual development of a movement, regardless of structural sources of discontent” (Castells 1997, p. 245). In this sense, we embed our work in a sociologically inspired, constructivist perspective rather than a rationalist one focusing on preferences and interests alone. On the one hand, it is certainly true that each individual case of identity-based conflict in a state is subject to a variety of economic, political, societal, and cultural factors existing there, which is why we find a case-study based approach most appropriate for this kind of contextual analysis. On the other hand, the aspects developed in our model and detailed above show that, despite differences in the actual outcome, identity politics go through similar processes of framing and utilization of new, facilitating opportunity structures provided by internationalized media and transnational governance. They experience comparable structural challenges in the pursuit of their demands,

varyingly influenced by exogenous and domestic variables and mobilizing structures. The bifurcation of these constitutive variables into cultural-discursive and on the other hand, mobilizing structural ones, recognizes the distinction between the diversity of cultural-discursive practices on the one hand, and commonality of political constraints, on the other. Taken together, they produce a comprehensive view of identity politics in the age of globalization and add to the existing social science literature on identity-based collective action.

Identity politics as “recognition of difference” remains difficult everywhere independent of space but beyond encouraging the self-actualization of a specific group it contributes to a more pluralistic society, which in turn strengthens democratic, human and minority rights. But is identity-based politics then a universal phenomenon or rather an “export” of the developed world, spread through the globalizing internationalization of norms and rules? We believe that while collective identity groups have been pursuing their goals as a result of marginalization in more traditional settings as well (by politicization of their status or the threat of territorial secession, for example), processes of globalization have certainly aided in the visibility and instrumentalization of certain identity groups, as, for example, in the case of HIV/AIDS activist groups in South Africa or indigenous Andean women, such political action is increasingly based on organizational and normative models originating in and supported by the Global North. Furthermore, the spread of democratic norms to many previous autocratically governed states popularized liberal pluralistic conceptions of domestic societies. Democratic values such as tolerance and equal representation, together with strategies such as power sharing and mainstreaming, which originated in liberal Western democracies, have become widely accepted—and maybe even globally, expected—features of governments. Few states can afford to exclude identity-based groups from their political and civil rights without being internationally blacklisted by activists, NGOs, IGOs or the international media and risking sanctions by powerful states in the international community.

The model sketched above can be applied to most identity politics groups, no matter if they possess minority status in a domestic polity or if they are a transnational migrant group establishing their demands in the host society. Identity politics in the Global South contain political objectives that, because of the underlying economic deprivation, focus more often on material and economic resource allocations than their counterparts do in advanced democracies. For the latter, ideational issues of recognition and societal status are as important as material redistribution or political participation. One unifying denominator

remains the experience of belonging to, and to a various degree identifying with, these groups. Yet all of these groups share a qualitatively different and novel international environment that is less hierarchically structured, provides more avenues for identity promotion and in general, seems more supportive of rights-based identitive assertions.

Identity politics then could, in a globalized world in which domestic identity groups are influenced and supported more and more by international nongovernmental and intergovernmental coalitions representing these identities transnationally, be less about socio-political autarky or territorial secession, which at times can result in the extremist identity politics of civil wars and genocide, but about equal political and social rights within states or regions. In fact, the globalization of democratic and human rights regimes may erode the power of state-targeted identity-politics because of the circumvention by transnational identity-based coalitions who appeal directly to larger, more influential regional or intergovernmental institutions such as the UN, the EU, etc. Factors such as the accessibility of governmental channels or national political culture, however, will remain important domestic determinants, while at the same time culturally based non-associational groups are by nature more traditionally and spatially oriented and thus will more often than not prefer isolated autonomy or exclusion over inclusionary recognition. In this context, an important question that drives our future research is how the process of defining and perceiving globalization by these collective groups influences the efficacy of their utilization of media or IGOs and NGOs. What are the underlying dimensions of how globalization is perceived by these groups as opposed to how globalizing opportunities are responded to?

Political science or sociology, in their emphasis on national institutions and structures, has not been able to account for the preeminent salience of identity politics in the age of globalization. Hence it is here that International Relations and Political Sociology can stretch beyond the domestic governmental framework under which identity politics occur and operate. The above mentioned factors are an attempt at theoretically exploring the (dis)similarities of such actions in an abstract and comparative manner, while at the same time refocusing the subject of identity politics from a Western-centric view to the rest of the world. The objective is to compare identity politics across regions with the intent to uncovering discernible socio-discursive and structural similarities as well as contrasts among 'glocal' identity politics and in that context to propose a parsimonious model to guide future research.

In the following chapters, we provide evidence that this model bears fruit.

Chapter Previews

The following chapters consist of case-studies based on the changing structural and procedural political configurations under which identity politics play out in a globalized world. Each consists of an identity movement promoting an important, socially engrained identity facet yet all of these experienced tremendous changes and challenges in the past few years. A selection of prevalent identity-based political groups in a variety of settings across regions aids in comparing and contrasting how globalizing influences impact the activities of these collectivities. All of our case studies come from pluralistic states comprising of multi-cultural or -ethnic societies, representing globally significant ethno-cultural, gender, democratic, and religious minorities. In addition, the transformation of state identity in its response to domestic challenges and international expectations is taken into account as well. The cases below explore the evolution and transformation of identity movements through part process-tracing, part discourse analysis, informed by and responding to the model outlined in this chapter.

Manuela Picq describes how indigenous politics achieved recognition and a new voice to express the interest of indigenous, rural sectors in Ecuador after electoral reforms in the 1980s. Indigenous women present not only a topical collective, but also a double identity combining ethnicity and gender. Her chapter analyzes the tensions between ethnicity and gender in the complex political cultures that prevail today in Ecuador. The case study of Ecuador reflects a larger reality in the Andean countries, in which women are increasingly trapped between competing discourses of local identity and internationally claimed human and women's rights, suggesting an external impact on cultural practices prevalent in indigenous cultures there.

In the following chapter, Wai-man Lam and Kai-Chi yan Lam examine Hong Kong's civil society groups asserting their regional democratic identity vis-à-vis the Chinese government after the handover from Britain to China in 1997. Civil society there represents a semi-autonomous realm, independent of state control, and provides the basis for social movement-based identity politics. Hong Kong is famous for its relative political liberalism and consensual politics, and exemplifies the politics of democracy groups under pressure. Their contribution

sheds light on the potentials and constraints of East Asian identity-politics in relation to governmental attempts to limit democratization.

In Europe, the EU enlargements in 2004/7 have been characterized by aspirations for the just treatment of ethnic minorities, in particular the significant Hungarian Diaspora living in Transylvania and other Eastern European regions. Eloisa Vladescu probes the country's capacity to recognize the significance of identity politics in preparation to EU integration and shows that the dominant elites' ability to respect minority rights will ultimately determine how effectively states such as Romania will consolidate its democracy in the face of minority rights norms and policies prescribed by international organizations such as the EU.

In his examination of South Africa, Vlad Kravtsov analyzes how much (state) identity factors into the formation of transnational HIV/AIDS policy coalitions. His case study defies simple norm diffusion explanations. He details the activist conditions there surrounding the HIV/AIDS crisis, which resulted in a leadership-advocated "anti-treatment" coalition, and highlights the clash between the state's and the activists' identity constructions in the post-apartheid era.

Lastly, Nuray Ibryamova explores a religious identity movement, the Gülen Movement in Turkey, which has become the most prominent socio-cultural force in Turkish society today representing patriotic-conservative values in view of Turkey's acceptance as EU accession candidate since 2005. Yet, secular state and religious group identity tend to clash there because of the movements' wish for religious expression.

The editors' concluding chapter summarizes the individually treated constituent parts of globalized identity politics above, and reviews the applicability of the 'new' identity politics determinants laid out above. By including the homogenizing processes of mediatization of politics, the support by international organizations and activists and the diffusion of human and minority rights norms, it delivers a comparative synopsis detailing the rise of dissimilar local, regional and state identity expressions under comparable larger structural processes of economic, social, technological and political globalization. Finally, it offers a critique at the existing schools and a research agenda for an extended view of 'glocal' identity politics in a transformationalist age.