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# Phenomenology of post-Sovietism, recursions in the past and ethnicity

Giuseppe Iurato

**Abstract.** This essay is aimed to outline, from an historiographical standpoint, the chief aspects and consequences sprung out from the crucial historical transition from Sovietism to post-Sovietism, occurred mainly in certain East countries of Europe, near Russian area, just due to such an epochal historical event which has so marked deeply and specifically either society and politics, in such a manner that a typical, featuring phenomenology – which we might call *post-Sovietism phenomenology*, interesting, above all, history, politics and sociology – is, for instance, identifiable through the historiographical investigation of the data retraceable from the various contributions just recollecting in *The Ideology and Politics Journal*, a privileged place of debate where many international scholars have just analysed this crucial historical transition, and exposed their related ideas and suggestions. We restrict our study highlighting certain aspects of this phenomenology to put into evidence another historical phenomenology, that of recursions in the past that, starting just from this specific context from which it is then possible to identify typical elements which may be considered as constants of similar historical events, like *ethnicity* in case of secession or separation movements.

The many contributions published until now in *The Ideology and Politics Journal* offer, if analyzed historiographically, precious and unique data and information about a singular and crucial historical event which has occurred in the 20th-century, that related to the passage from Sovietism to post-Sovietism. All that rich and variegated amount of information, which may be pulled out from these contributions, shall enable us to identify main features characterizing, above all from the sociology and political sciences viewpoint, this fact whose specificity and singularity, just as an historical event, may justify the use of an appropriate and denoting term such as *phenomenology of post-Sovietism*, whose next historical-critical analysis may provide, on its turn, further suggestions from the historical and foundational standpoint (Rabkin & Minakov 2018, Editors' Foreword).

The historical event into question, is the known collapse of Soviet Union in 1991, with its many and deep consequences with, above all, the return to the own history for each state of the past union. Particularly important is, among other, try to understand how, along this historical process, cultures and ideologies have changed. In this regard, Mikhail Minakov (2013, pp. 1-2) first states that: «Hegel's idea that “Reason is the Sovereign of the World; [... and] the history of the world therefore, presents us with a rational process” has been denied many times by philosophers and politicians in the 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries – and the post-Soviet political reality takes an active part in this denial», hence «Hegel called for “a belief... a desire, a trust” in the fact that there is Reason in the history of the world. The post-Soviet history provides us with a rare constellation of obstacles that test such a trust». Along the same line of thought, is also placeable the idea of Meir Amor according to which the basis of rationality is, in fact, irrational<sup>1</sup> (Amor, 2018).

Yevgenia Sarapina (2013), in particular, argues on the competition between alternative versions of collective memory in Kiev after Soviet Union collapse, observing Kiev's urban space as such is the setting for the constant (re)production of its past through a system of mythologems. Along this line, the paper of Mariëlle Wijermars (2015) analyses the emergence of either the political myth of Pëtr Stolypin (1862-1911) with its recent institutionalization as an exemplary pattern for contemporary

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<sup>1</sup> See, above all, Section 2. Furthermore, the relevance of Amor's paper also relies in having put a notable relationship between demodernization and the increasing of human rights abuses.

Russian politics (and also put into a parallel comparison with the destalinization processes<sup>2</sup>), and the myth of “Time of Troubles”, both never recalled or invoked during neither Soviet Union period nor in the post-Soviet one, but rather recently re-actualized and institutionalized, above all the first, in Putin’s regime which seems to be much similar to Stolypin’s politics. Finally, (Kutuev & Choliy, 2018) analyze modernization/de-modernization phenomena<sup>3</sup> occurring in the instable post-Leninist societies which, in comparison with the Western ones, show, in some of its respects, recursions in past political regimes, as for instance manifested in mobilization processes<sup>4</sup>.

These basic historical-critical considerations, made by renowned scholars who have studied in-depth post-Soviet situation, confirm the historiographical reflections by Luciano Canfora (2018, Chps. 7, 11) on the nature of history and its route, just seen, through a meaningful geometrical metaphor, as an ascending spiral around a cylinder – i.e., an helix – that cyclically, but never at the same level, may reach a certain historical setting homologically similar (but never identical<sup>5</sup>, because placed at another different level on the cylinder) to a past setting approximately localized along the same vertical line lying on the cylinder surface. In this regard, Canfora just quotes, as an instance of the movement of history like an helix, the millenarian Russian history, hence arguing on the singular nature and the atypical structure of revolutions and their dependence on the history of the country where they take place<sup>6</sup>. Canfora, on the basis of a wide historiographical analysis, also points out the inevitability of revolutions as perennial (hence, recurrent) historical events, as due basically to the inextinguishability of human conflict.

The dissolution of Soviet Union of 1991, mainly due to the drastic economic failure for the impact of Michail Gorbačëv’s reform – which has given, for the first time in the history of Russia, public institutions aimed to democratic principles – against the previous centralization of Stalinian system, was however seen as the beginning of a new period of democracy and freedom, as well as the early steps of capitalism in Russia, on the basis of economic models of many European states. But, this very fast passage from a fully centralized power of communist government of Soviet Union to a net decentralized political system with capitalistic tendencies, led to a radical, strong and deep crisis of Russia and post-Soviet countries, never seen before. Then, those states that have not been able to quickly change the old Soviet communist settlement into a new democratic and liberalistic political system, have become dictatorships (Bellezza 2017, § 1; Schaefer 2017, § 9).

Those post-Soviet countries which have anyhow undertaken a way of reforms going beyond the old communist regime, often following European models, have had a better social-economic setting with respect to the other post-Soviet countries that have not adopted any new reform, with the result to return implicitly to social-economic forms of the old communist regime mainly having oligarchic

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<sup>2</sup> After which, Soviet system lost its typical terroristic and totalitarian features, to evolve in an heavily authoritarian and illiberal system (Galli 2011, Parte V, Cap. XIII, Sez. II, § 10.1).

<sup>3</sup> The first comprehensive reference on the reciprocal comparison of these phenomena is (Rabkin & Minakov, 2018), to which we refer for a deeper understanding of them. See, above all, the contributions of Rabkin (2018) and Minakov (2018) to this first, remarkable collective study on the new socio-political phenomenon of demodernization.

<sup>4</sup> Some studies have highlighted close relationships between the rising of mobilization and a contemporary increasing of national identity feeling (Herbst, 1990). Also, the after Soviet empire disintegration has seen a return to typical traits of traditional Russian culture and its symbolisms (Tullio-Altan 1995, Cap. 7, § 2).

<sup>5</sup> This is also in agreement with the remarkable Claude Lévi-Strauss’ statement according to which any historical event is always structurally characterized by the combination of the three main aspects, namely morphological, functional and contextual, so two historical events are identical if and only if they are such from the morphological, functional and contextual standpoint, otherwise they are not (Cardini & Liberti 2019, p. 36).

<sup>6</sup> In this regard, even first Bolsheviks who reached power in 1917, recovered czarist bureaucracy to govern the wide and complex Russian realm (Tullio-Altan 1995, Cap. 7, § 2).

nature, placing their union between a confederation and an community, namely the *Community of Independent States* (CIS), to be meant as a kind of (Russian) Commonwealth (Mammarella 2000, Capp. XXI, XXIII). At the same time, with the collapse of Soviet Union, all these constituent countries, which had either an own nationalistic identity and a Soviet one<sup>7</sup>, inside this union, now have to face the further problem to build up a new, single and stronger national identity not longer included into the Soviet one as in the past; even the Russian asked which identity they have (Bellezza 2017, §§ 2, 3).

But, during the post-Soviet period, mainly led by Boris El'cin and his closer collaborators, there were many attempts to establish relationships and links with Occidental states, until up well-known Chechnya's affaire which saw Russia involved into an hard and bloodily conflict – often due to pretentious motifs – with Chechnya, whose fates and circumstances were mainly decided by the new Russian prime minister Vladimir Putin, just chose by El'cin's family in the late 1990s. Gradually, Putin, the new muscovite “czar”, will lead fastly Russia to a new institutional setting, characterized by a return to a centralization of the powers, a pre-eminence of the Russian state (whatever ideological trend it has had in the past) coincident with Russian nation, carried out with the hegemonization of the nation, also making appeal to old Stalin methods (Corni 2017, § 4). Just at the beginnings of the year 2000, El'cin led Putin as his successor, winning easily the presidential elections also thanks to the oligarchs of El'cin's family. Soon, Putin filled that deep emptiness of law regulations of post-Soviet transition, covering almost all the institutional contexts of Russia and its wide need of reforms after the collapse of Soviet Union (Bellezza 2017, §§ 3, 4).

Putin immediately re-established energetic sector, re-nationalizing – often through Machiavellian methods, for his own profit – the many Russian energetic companies which have fallen in the hands of El'cin's family and friends (i.e., the so-called “oligarchs”), hence acquired the control of all the communication channels. He directly decided to who assign public commitments and procurements. Furthermore, he reformed, to his own gain, electoral law in such a manner that political oppositions had many difficulties to operate in parliament, instituting a his own party supported by many youth associations directly financed by him, to give a surreptitious image of democratic sustainment just by the younger ones. In a few words, Putin was restoring the old autocratic and centralized power that characterized, for many centuries, Russia and its satellite states<sup>8</sup>, so hindering manifestly those early steps of post-Soviet republics toward democratic settlements, putting into action that internal “competitive authoritarianism” which featured almost all the political life of these states which initially, soon after the collapse of Soviet Union, were aimed to establish a “multivectoral” politics (i.e., turned toward many different Occidental states, not only with United States) (Bellezza 2017, § 4; Minakov 2018, pp. 254-258).

So, with Putin and his new energetic politics which made Russia an independent and emancipated national state after SSSR collapse, a revitalization of the old Eurasian ideology, born in the czarist period, gradually rises together another ideological thought called *ruskij mir* which claims an own geopolitical area for the Russia<sup>9</sup>. In such a way, Russia preferred to establish strong relations with historical opponents to USA, like Iran and China, and, in general, trying to get a relevant role in the Asiatic region. At the same time, Putin's regime has tried, so to speak, to “culturally” conquest, in a

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<sup>7</sup> Although, the Soviet one was the predominant identity.

<sup>8</sup> Like in czarist Russia (Mammarella 2000, Cap. XXI, p. 565).

<sup>9</sup> And, this is coherent with what has been just said above, in the first part of this paper, as well as largely witnessed by the many other contributions of *The Ideology and Politics Journal*, to which we refer for a deeper historical analysis of polyhedral post-Sovietism.

kind of new colonialism, just the ex-soviet states with any sort of publications, media and other information means, exclusively working in Russian language, with the main aim to reunifying the previous post-soviet space justified with the pretext based on the alleged oblige, by the Russia, to take care of all the ethnical minorities having a some Russian origin. All that, to satisfy Putin's aim consisting in ever more seclude Russia and ex-Soviet regions<sup>10</sup> from either European Union and United States, trying to lead anyhow to himself all the governments of post-Soviet Union (Bellezza 2017, § 4).

This neo-colonial politics of Putin regime has been based, until a few days ago, on strategic tactics suitably finalized to this aim, as the increasingly energetic dependence of Europe upon rich Russian stocks and the gradual disengaging of Russia from the historical 1987 INF Treaty, already formally suspended first by USA president Donald Trump<sup>11</sup> on February 1, 2019, to which Russia replied the following day in the same manner. So, Putin has touted, in all ex-Soviet states, a kind of "sovereign democracy" under the dependence on Russian government, to hinder as well as destabilizing all the possible "democratic revolutions" – aimed to bring in democratic reforms (for politics) and liberal practices (for economy), under the instance of European and USA patterns – as occurred in Ukraine and Georgia, in such a manner to restore the old Russian hegemony in its anti-Western form. In this way, Russia (and its more faithful states, like Belarus, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan) have rejected any socio-political and economical model of Europe and USA, trying instead to restore old forms of authoritarian organizations of politics and economy set against Occidental models but, at the same time, devoid of any form of ancient socialistic ideology of Sovietism, but mainly centred on a kind of geopolitical rivalry, towards Western realm, which may be seen as beginning of a new social and cultural development route not yet in optimal equilibrium conditions (Bellezza 2017, § 5).

Therefore, what might turned to be quite interesting from this perspective, is try to descry, as far as is possible, which phenomena of recursions in the past could take place along this new development direction undertaken by Russia and its geopolitical orbit of action aimed to historically restore, yet in a not well-known fashion, ancient or past epochs and their moments, in critical comparison with the situation of other countries where this is licit to do. At the present, taking into account what has been said in the first part of this paper, it seems that the current government setting has reactivated many aspects of pre-Soviet politics, to be precise, of Russian Empire which hold for almost three centuries. But, notwithstanding the brief Leninist post-revolutionary period for Russian history with the foundation of the Russian Socialistic Republic then converged to Soviet Union in 1922, the next Stalin period was characterized by a regime type settlement turned ever more to give pre-eminence – with respect to abroad – to forms of nationalism, so gradually avoiding any contact with Western world (Natalizi 2017, §§ 1-13).

The post-Stalin setting, even if mainly based on the power of communist party and its *Presidium*, was also aimed – initially – by a decentralization tendency with respect to the strong, net and rigid centralization of Stalin regime, mainly due to the extreme indigence condition in which population laid. To this end, the prime secretary of communist party, Nikita Chruščëv, who organized the first

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<sup>10</sup> And, in this regard, very emblematic have been the cases of the interference of Russia in Ukraine and Georgia where, differently from other ex-Soviet states, the cultural influences of Europe and USA have been stronger toward liberal and democratic tendencies, and that, on the other hand, have been seen by Russia as a serious danger for the expansionist new tendencies of the Russia in re-establishing its old hegemonic aim of overall control in all the Russian area (Bellezza 2017, § 5).

<sup>11</sup> Who, as a main counterpart, is responding to Putin nationalistic pushes, in almost perfect similar fashion. On the other hand, also in many European Union states there are more or less strong tendencies to nationalistic ideologies, as clearly pointed out in (Canfora, 2018) and references therein.

post-Stalin agrarian reform, gradually gained power until to become govern leader, re-establishing the relationships with Western world, so giving an optimistic perspective for the Russia, after the obscure years of Stalin period which was heavily criticized, since 1950s. So, the many dark sides of Stalin regime were clearly denounced, but this led the opponents of Chruščëv to try to destitute him, without sorts. Hence, Chruščëv was able to become either prime secretary of communist party and govern head, events which were seen as a return to that “cult of personality” that characterized the Stalin period (as well as, obviously, the czarist epoch), but, notwithstanding that, he failed in facing the comparison – above all, at the economic level – with other countries, among which are Western ones (Natalizi 2017, §§ 13, 14).

With the destitution of Chruščëv and his replacement with Leonid Brežnev, around 1960s, the two charges of prime secretary of communist party and head of govern, brought by a unique person until Chruščëv, were separated and assigned to different persons. Furthermore, the political program was, then, turned towards the welfare of Russian population, which demanded economic and civil well-being as well as an improvement of the general life conditions. But, the corresponding consumerism increasing, as hoped together a technical-scientific innovation, wasn't supported adequately by a suitable economic program, whence Brežnev's government, in 1970s, engaged with a crisis which was also due to both the pushes of government nationalistic autonomies and the centralization of the control of economy but relegated to each state member of the Soviet Union, which went to favourite local organizations and political elites. Then, the inexperienced in foreign politics compromised the relations with Western nations and USA, leading Russia to increase its military potential and re-opening mobilization processes but, at the same time, neglecting socio-economical context which will rapidly lead, after the death of Brežnev, to an unavoidable collapse of Soviet Union, then officially decreed by Michail Gorbačëv (Natalizi 2017, §§ 14-19).

For what has been said above, notwithstanding Gorbačëv reforms and the opening toward Western countries, Russia and the ex-Soviet states didn't be able to alienate themselves of the past political schemes centred around Soviet system and its ideologies (mainly based on Leninist ideas) which hindered the introduction of an institutional framework similar to that of Western countries and warranting liberal systems and democratic governments that Gorbačëv wished to establish ex-novo, but without success (Bellezza 2017, p. 699). So, post-Soviet settlement was characterized, so to say, by an unaware tendency to remain on past Soviet political schemes and older ones (like in the case of Putin regency), according to an historical phenomenology which sees, whenever these are newly re-evoked, the occurrence of appeals to nationalistic feelings and self-determination, till to discuss, even animatedly, on what is the real national identity of either Russia and every single ex-Soviet state (Bellezza 2017, §§ 1-3). This may be also compared with the strange social situation which is occurring in many post-Soviet countries, like Ukraine, where the growing of social inequality leads to a “right-wing” populist derive rather than a “left” political turn (Kiryukhin, 2018).

Therefore, amongst the typical aspects of the history and its phenomenology of Russia and Soviet Union, above all in the witnessing of the authors of *The Ideology and Politics Journal*, it stands out that the question of “national identity” is a recurrent theme occurring in many historical events of this specific history (as well as of many others<sup>12</sup>), having however to do with separation movements of peoples rather than with integration processes. In particular, such a theme has to be involved in secessionist movements and self-determination tendencies<sup>13</sup>, a theme which is closely related, from

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, (Sassoon, 2019).

<sup>13</sup> See, above all (Johnson 2006, Ch. 1).

a socio-anthropological standpoint, to the notion of “ethnicity” as connected with the notions of “nationalism” and “national identity”. In particular, as witnessed by certain crucial moments of the Russian history (see above) as well as by many other historical instances of secession or separation movements (and the very recent history of the European Union just comprehends many related cases), the references to a presumed ethnic identity is always recalled or claimed; it has been always involved, in some way, in many of those numerous conflicts that determined the collapse of Soviet Union (Mammarella 2000, Cap. XXI), besides to have been present among the causes of October revolution (Benvenuti 1994, § 2.8). Therefore, it seems quite reasonable to consider “ethnicity” as one of the basic (socio-anthropological) themes of secession or separation movements analysis, hence critically discuss it.

From an anthropological standpoint, *ethnos* is a Greek word which originally means an ensemble of individuals having certain specific features, which has undergone processes of reification, or *essentialization*, until up to become an almost biological feature of the human beings belonging to the related membership group. Modern anthropology has criticized this trend, which neglected the basic historical-contingent nature of those processes giving rise an ethnical identity which is meant as ontologically eradicated ancestrally or primordially. All that might be considered, from either a socio-anthropological and a socio-psychological standpoint, as prejudicial arguments for justifying in-group–out-group conflicts<sup>14</sup>, often due to materialistic motifs for the benefit of the own in-group but leading to possible attribution errors (Anolli 2004, Cap. IX, § 1; Hogg & Vaughan 2010, Ch. 3; Dei 2016, Cap. 2, § 3, Cap. 14, § 4). On the other hand, there exist close and basic relations between identity and group membership with the related cultural systems (Amerio 1995, Cap. IX; Sciolla 2012, Cap. 4, § 6).

From a sociological standpoint, then, it is possible to distinguish basically two identities, namely a *personal identity* and a *collective identity*<sup>15</sup>: the former is related to the singularity of each individual in her or his relationships with others, so distinguishing, on the one hand, between self and others, and, on the other hand, between us and them, while the latter is related to a certain social group considered as distinguished by other social groups. If personal identity is the outcome of a complex process of socialization, collective identity is the result of an as many complex historical process, the modern Western state-nations being an instance of that. Closely related with collective identity is also the so-called *cultural identity* which does not refer to personal identity features (like gender, age, and so forth) but rather to a feeling about a presumed common origin as a social group, whose specificity is claimed inside a wider multiethnic society composed, on the one hand, by immigrants and, on the other hand, by cultural minorities acquired by *absorption process* by past conquests or colonisations. Cultural identity, as a typical distinction form of the type us/them, may undertake, above all as *ethnical identification*, a primary role predominating over the other choices concerning the construction of the own social identity of each individual. An *ethnicity*, meant as strongly rooted in an innate and objective manner, is often chosen as a primary identity dimension which will lead to the formation of other social status constellations of the own identity framework (Sciolla 2012, Cap. 4, § 6).

Ethnicity is an anthropological category studied for various reasons and from different standpoints. The anthropologists have recently put attention to this category in that, being ethnicity a marginal

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<sup>14</sup> To which we refer to social psychology for characterizing them from this stance; see, for example, (Speltini & Palmonari, 1999), in particular to Chapter V for the centripetal and centrifugal forces acting on social groups, as well as (Catellani 2011, Cap. IV).

<sup>15</sup> See (Mancini, 2010) for a social psychology enquiry of identity.

effect of modernization processes closely linked with developments of capitalism and its models of society, it necessarily reappears when demodernization processes take place, also inside capitalistic societies in the presence of ethnic minorities, from which a reconsideration of this category started. Therefore, ethnicity has turned up again, above all inside those alleged modern capitalistic societies, in relation to the internal presence of minorities mainly due to the two above mentioned processes of inclusions (by immigration and absorption). It is a category that, as a cultural pattern, springs out from a historical process (*ethnogenesis*) which will provide a cultural (and not ideological) meaning to an ethnic category through history, so excluding any other hypothesis which considers ethnicity as a category coming from a reification process, so avoiding to look at ethnicity as an objective entity. An ethnic category, as a self-representative configuration, is therefore the outcome of an historical process that takes place in dependence on certain contingencies of the socio-economic-environmental context (Scarduelli, 2000).

At this point, it seems to be needed to make some reference to the so-called *ethnic revival*, a notion which has been introduced and deeply studied by Anthony D. Smith (1981; 1986), also in relation to nationalism, in regard to which he speaks of *ethnic nationalism*. Smith points out the emergence of ethnic revival notwithstanding the occurrence of modernization processes, like those linked to economic liberalism, which predicted the end of past features of primordial societies just like ethnic motifs. In the case of the implosion of Soviet Union, as a main consequence of the political and economic defeat with respect to NATO states, we look at the failure of Stalinian project of military and ideological imposition of Russian pan-Slavism to the world which was based on the French principle of social and cultural assimilation of the various ethnic minorities ruled by a politics whose tools were settled for taking into account this variegation of ethnicity, so that Russian government was made by many elements drew from the government of each ethnicity (with exception of the Polish one, refractory, for its strong nationalistic aim, to each type of imposition of central power). Furthermore, since 19th-century, European movements of political independence of the new national identities were known to ethnic minorities subdued to czarist Russia (Tullio-Altan 1995, Cap. 7, § 2).

The disaggregation of SSSR gave rise the question of reclaiming a specific national identity for the new states, each of which was earlier subsumed by the wider Soviet identity; this question turned out to be much more important than other social issues, and each ex-Soviet state tried to find, in the best way, its own national identity also making reference to what Sovietism had attributed to it. Just after the collapse of Soviet Union, an heated political and cultural debate on what meaning had to be assigned to the adjective “Russian”, identifying at least, six different ways to intend this term (Bellezza 2017, § 3). Anyway, after this collapse, the simple deletion of the past operated in the first phase of post-communism, has not been enough to build up a shared and accepted reflection on the own recent past, a reflection which however reduced to an animated debate on the identity and to a consequent searching for a strong identity memory making always reference to what happened in the ex-dominant state, the Soviet Union/Russia, which often influenced negatively this process of rediscovery of the own national identity with the patriotic exaltation of the victory of the 2nd world war seen as a prosecution and ideal sublimation of the great revolution of 1917 (Corni 2017, § 4).

What has been said until now, about Eurasian history regarding Russian period comprised between 19th- and 20th-century, shows and testifies what prominent role<sup>16</sup> plays ethnicity in determining the

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<sup>16</sup> Also used for strategic ends; in this regard, see (Cuhe 2006, Cap. 6, § 5).

separation or secession movements<sup>17</sup>. This, because such a notion – i.e., that of *ethnicity* – is closely related to that of *nation*<sup>18</sup> as frequently involved in processes of nationalistic claims of the various ethnicities to determine their *ethnic identity* as basically due to the primordial opposition us/them (*alterity*) which, on its turn, springs out from the comparisons among human groups in some sense different culturally. The identity has to be meant as a continuous, unrestrainable and unavoidable historical process which is always operating in every human being in a context of alterity. In any case, ethnicity is a socio-cultural construct<sup>19</sup> which is based on a set of some common traits, linking together a certain number of peoples, deemed to date back to a presumed common historical origins really re-evoked to justify materialistic aims and economic interests. Basic founding elements of ethnicity are either a common membership sentiment felt as authentic and an historical deep-rooted belief about a mythological origin of such an ethnic sentiment (Fabietti, 1998; 1999; 2004).

The principle of ethnic identity has also concerned the unexpected phenomenon of the collapse of Soviet Union, which was deemed a stable social and state asset that may challenge centuries, after which one attended at the strong re-emergence of ethnic forms of social aggregations which seemed by now extinct and historically overcome, so a re-examination of the category of ethnicity urged to be undertaken by social sciences and humanities. This last task was accomplished either dating back ethnicity to either objective, reified referents (like race, people, country, language, culture, ancestry, and so forth) and subjective entities (like unconscious lived states as well as conscious mythological representations). Accordingly, from this standpoint, ethnic identity has been considered, from time to time, as either an unavoidable and permanent primordial attribute or an historically influenced product culturally codified. Anyway, all these various – and often pairwise contrasting – meanings attributed to this category, have however a common, basic primordial symbolic nucleus which gives meaning and value to it, as previously identified by Anthony D. Smith but without giving further explanations<sup>20</sup>. Just to this end, Carlo Tullio-Altan (1992; 1998) has provided to study the symbolic bases of the category of *ethnos* and its emergence in all those historical forms with which it is or has been involved in aggregation/disaggregation phenomena of humans.

Therefore, as also the few remarks made above on phenomenology of post-Sovietism witness, the category of *ethnos* (or *ethnic identity*) is closely related, or involved, in aggregation/disaggregation phenomena of peoples, like, for example, secession movements. So, an its in-depth and wide study, as that made by Carlo Tullio-Altan (1992; 1998), should cast further light on secession movements.

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<sup>17</sup> For instance, after the collapse of Soviet Union, there were no so many difficulties to reunify East Germany with the Western one, after Berlin wall fall, just because of a common ethnic identity of the people of the two Republics.

<sup>18</sup> In this regard, see (Fardon, 1987), (Forrest, 2004), especially Chapter 1, and (Richard & MacDonalds, 2016). See also the discussion of the case of nationalism of Baluchi, the first nation without a state of Asia (in the Western zone of Pakistan), which makes reference to presumed early Indo-European origins (Fabietti et al. 2012, Cap. 5, § 5.3).

<sup>19</sup> Functionally quite similar to the so-called *imaginative cultures* of B. Anderson.

<sup>20</sup> In (Smith, 2000; 2008), the author points out further the need to come back to the deep historical-cultural rooting of ethnic structures into a given society to understand its framework of nation.

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