estrema

Revista Interdisciplinar de Humanidades

Interdisciplinary Review for the Humanities

Centro de Estudos Comparatistas

Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa

Centre for Comparative Studies

School for the Arts and the Humanities/ University of Lisbon

http://www.estrema-cec.com

A Troublesome Historical Legacy: Nationalism, Integration and Differentiation in Europe

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Abstract: Nationalism and differentiation are two of the hottest topics in the current European politics context. Based on the existing literature, this article seeks to establish what relationship exists between these two phenomena by analysing them from two perspectives: the political science one and the historical one. Thus, the paper discusses the evolution of the institutional structure of the modern state in Europe and shows how this institutional structure was transformed by the European integration process. The main conclusion arising from this paper is that the influence of nationalism in setting the institutional framework of the European states, is one of the key factors to explain the current configuration of European Union as a "system of integrated differentiation".

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Introduction

This paper deals with the following question, what has been the influence of nationalism as a political phenomenon of contemporaneity in the configuration of the European Union as a "system of differentiated integration"? To achieve this, we use specialized literature and combine both a historical approach, which allows us to trace the origin and evolution of that influence, and a political science perspective that permits to evaluate and to understand the impact of this phenomenon on the birth of differentiation as a political reality of the European Union. The article reaches the conclusion that nationalism made modern states into political units, institutionally designed to preserve their autonomy and within which all discussions, proposals and realities are constrained by national perspective. A reality that has hindered the integration process and has made differentiation into a key feature to allow its advance.

In the first chapter, we analyse the way in which nationalism shaped the institutional structure of the modern state and made it into a nation state. The second part examines the nation state's evolution in Europe after 1945 and the manner in which it was transformed in a member state by the process of European integration. The third part evaluates the cleavages which appeared within the Union as a result of the progressive integration of states with different characteristics and structurally designed to protect their autonomy and peculiarities. Lastly, the paper focuses on differentiation as one of the main features of the European Union and tries to establish the

historical linkage between nationalism and that specific characteristic of The European Union integration process.

From the state to the nation-state

The idea of the nation appeared in Europe connected with liberalism during the period of political revolutions that gave rise to the modern state, between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In those days, though it did not occupy a central position in political discourse, the concept of nation referred to all citizens whose collective sovereignty established them as a state which was their political expression. In this sense, ideas of participation and choice were key to this concept because, although they were not yet developed, they allowed to link the nation (all citizens) with the territory, at a time when the structure and the definition of states were essentially territorial.

Thus, the modern state, which governed all the inhabitants of a territory bounded by clear boundaries and without intermediate systems of rulers or autonomous corporations, was obliged to consider the opinion of its citizens because of two fundamental reasons. On the one hand, because the new political systems developed during the revolutions gave voice to citizens -usually through different kinds of elected representatives. Furthermore, because it needed their consent and even their active participation more and more each time. Thereby, the state and citizens were progressively linked by ties of political representation.

Considering that all traditional legitimations of state authority were under constant challenge since 1789, this new situation raised two major political problems to states and ruling classes: loyalty to the state and the ruling system and the citizens' identification with them. Classical liberalism, which emerged as the main form of government after the revolutions of the 1830s, dodged the issue of political beliefs of citizens by restricting political rights to men who owned property and had been educated. However, during the last third of the nineteenth Century it became increasingly evident that the democratization, or at least the increasingly electoralization of politics, were unavoidable (Hobsbawm 1992, 83).

Moreover, in the last decades of the nineteenth century it began to be obvious that in those places where men were allowed to participate in politics, it could no longer be taken for granted that they would be loyal to their rulers or the state. This exacerbated the need for both the state and the ruling classes to compete with other rivals for the allegiance of citizenship. Democracy forced the political parties to pay more attention to the masses to get their votes, and nationalism was a useful tool to achieve it.

As a result, since 1880 nationalism jumped to the forefront of political debate at a time when the decline of the old socio-political ties had forced the state to develop new forms of civic loyalty. In this regard, the political appeal of national slogans for the masses of voters was a matter of very practical interest. Indeed, the question was interesting not only for governments faced with various kinds of agitation or national demands, but also for political parties that sought to mobilize the electorate based on national movements (Gellner 1997, 25-36).

Consequently, nationalism, which had been a phenomenon of the educated middle classes up until then, became a masses mobilizer (Zimmer 2003, 27). The states took advantage of this new social phenomenon to build new loyalties which would enable them to obtain the support of a citizenry which had become larger. Thus, using feelings of collective belonging that already existed, states began to build collective identities that permitted them to build up human communities strongly connected with their territory. As a result, modern states and nations got closer.

The nationalization of the masses required the penetration by the state in each area and place of national life (police, transportation, taxes, schools, etc.), and it was based on the extension of universal suffrage and the national press, as well as on the start-up of state cultural policies. However, this process was bidirectional since at the same time that the states advanced on their respective citizenries' nationalization, making them respond to national loyalties first, their institutional structures were also nationalized. Therefore, and this is a key element in our argument, all events and conflicts that occurred within national frameworks were determined, constrained and wrapped by nationalist rhetoric and national approaches (Zimmer 2003, 34).

The time, when the democratization of politics made the link between state and nationalism essential, coincided with a situation in which nationalist feelings and racial superiority ideas began to be more easily mobilized as a result of the great migrations taking place in that period (1880-1914) and the growing international rivalries. In fact, from the 1880s on, nationalism joined Imperialism inextricably. This event, made

nationalism potentially aggressive and expansionist, specially owing to the fact that imperial expectations were usually too high to be accomplished. In this context, nationalism turned rightist and ethnicity as well as language became its main criteria (Anderson 2006, 83-11;141-154).

Finally, nationalism became an explosive force during the interwar period as a consequence of strong political instability. At that time, nationalism also took control of the economy due to the fact that capitalism sought refuge from economic crisis in nation-state during the thirties. In Eric Hobsbawm's words "what dominated inter-war nationalism in Europe, therefore, was the nationalism of established nation-states" (Hobsbawm 1992, 143).

From the nation-state to the member-state

What happened to nationalism after 1945? According to Hobsbawm, if we take into account the role which was played by nationalism between 1830 and 1945 we must conclude that it lost its importance as vector of historical change. However, that does not mean it disappeared from European political life (MarcadorDePosición2, 163,181). In this regard, Bickerton has pointed out that the nation-state did not undergo any transformation after the fascism's defeat, as well as that change did not occur until the late seventies and especially the eighties (Bickerton 2012, 13-14). Therefore, nation-states led the process of European integration during its first decades.

Since 1945, the acknowledgement of Keynesian consensus allowed European nation-states to preserve the two characteristic elements of nationalist policies that had shaped their institutional structures along the previous decades, the close relationship between state and society and the control of the economy. Regarding the former, after 1945 the actions of the European nation-state were fully subjected to a social contract that connected it with society through two functions: its role as mediator between the world of work and enterprise; and the redistribution of wealth through the welfare state. The second task made it intervene in the economy in order to stabilize the economic cycle.

In light of above mentioned, the national ties remained strong in this period, so that political life remained firmly linked to the nation-state. This situation largely limited national governments to internationalize their actions, prompting a restricted integration of national frameworks, something which was reflected both in the foreign policy cooperation and in the economic integration process. Concerning the former, there was very little cooperation between Western Europe states. Regarding the latter, the failure of the ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community) to function as a supranational route for industrial restructuring, highlighted the national governments' constraints to transfer powers to a supranational entity (Bickerton 2012, 124,152).

During the seventies, both the post-war Keynesian consensus and the corporatist nation-states articulated around it went into a deep crisis. At first, governments tried to strengthen the characteristics of that kind of state, but very soon all of them decided that the best solution lay in its transformation.

Thus, the answer to the crisis was sought in the denationalization of macroeconomic policies that had characterized European states since the end of World War II.

In this way, the dismantling of the Keynesian consensus and its replacement by a set of fiscal and monetary policies, released from corporatist and interventionist post-war policies, allowed national executives to deepen into the European integration process, especially in economic terms. From then on, the European integration process, which had its decisive moments with the signing of the Single European Act in 1985 and especially with the creation of the European Monetary Union in the nineties, played a key role in the transformation of European nation-states which, since then had to submit their macroeconomic policies to the European institutions.

This transformation of the Keynesian nation-state through its integration into pan-European policy development processes gave rise to a new type of state that Bickerton has conceptualized as "member state" (Bickerton 2012). A new state model characterized by the breakdown of the two main pillars on which nationalism and the nation-state were supported: the close relationship between society and state and the control of the national economy. Consequently, the new member states' foundations were a much narrower social contract between state and citizens. It consisted of a set of weaker political and social mediation institutions, with a clear weakening of the ones related to welfare state. In particular, executive power as well as national Administration became much more closely

connected with pan-European policymaking processes and with less capacity to control macroeconomic policy.

Thus, when governments were released from the complex society-state relationship, they manage to distance themselves from their domestic constituents and to become more dependent on supranational rules and regulations. In contrast to nation states, governments of member states base their power and identity in their membership in a group or wider community. However, what interests us here is that the transformation in member states did not substantially alter the institutional structure of nation-states, since member states continued to be ruled by national governments, which had to respond to national parliaments elected by citizens, who kept on identifying themselves with their countries' territory, defined by borders, and whose main concerns were related to issues happening within those boundaries.

State's differences and cleavages

The states that joined the European integration process did not only have different cultures and historical identities and were demographically asymmetrical, but also their citizens held different political points of view as well as heterogeneous interests (Fabbrini 2015). Despite this, the masses stayed in the sidelines of the integration process due to the fact that it was driven by each state's political elites, those elites were subject to institutional structures forged by nationalism. In other words, the states were

linked to their respective territories through the right to vote of the people who were born in them. In this way, native people could choose, at least formally, the government which would rule the state and change it if it did not meet their demands, which in the most of the cases were related to their own country. Thus, at the same time that the integration process progressed, structural divisions that reflected these differences started to appear and became established.

According to professor Fabbrini, three cleavages related to different member state views on national sovereignty, on democratic legitimacy and on the proper relations that should be set up between member states have underpinned those divisions (Fabbrini 2015). The basic structural cleavage concerns the very interpretation of state sovereignty in a union of states. National sovereignty (and its correlated national identity) has (and have) continuously played a dividing role in Europe, first between those supporting a view of the union merely as an economic community and those accepting the project of an ever-closer Union, and thus, within the latter group, between supranational and intergovernmental views. This cleavage reflects the different historical experiences of the Continental Western Europe and the island and peninsular states of Northern Europe in the formation of the nation state and its international extensions.

The UK has come to head a coalition of member states that view integration primarily as a process of strengthening a common market. These member states regarded the deepening of the integration process, which has taken place from the Maastricht treaty onwards, as a threat to their national sovereignty. This group was joined by some of the new East European

member states. The other side of the cleavage was represented by the large majority of Western European Continental member states whose historical experience was very different. In their case, nationalism was historically the force that erased democracy and so for them integration represents the antidote to the virus of authoritarian nationalism.

The previous cleavage has been reinforced by another one regarding the democratic legitimacy of the Union. In light of this cleavage, democracy has been considered as a form of government that is viable only by remaining at the national level and as a political regime that should be adapted to new historical needs. The former position has been largely shared in the Northern islands and peninsula in Europe as well as in some of its Eastern member states. This position has stressed that legitimacy can be claimed only at the national level where it is implemented through domestic parliaments. For them, keeping the EU within the limits of an economic community would preserve the democratic role of national parliaments. The latter position has been backed up by the main continental member states. These countries support the idea of developing a federal state in order to keep national evils under control and deal with the challenges of the future. Nevertheless, there is a division within this group between those recognizing integration as a necessity, as for the intergovernmentalist, and those celebrating it as a virtue, as for supranationalists (Fabbrini 2015).

The third structural cleavage represents the clash between the legitimate interests of small, medium and large member states. This cleavage, which has become more central as a consequence of the enlargements of the 1990s and the 2000s, has two sides. The institutional

one refers to the need of the small member states not to be overruled in the decision-making process and the request of the large member states to preserve a correlation with the democratic principle of "one person, one vote". Although a compromise has been reached in this regard between large, medium and small member states, a union of asymmetrical states will have to recognize the territoriality of its units as a source of equal political subjectivity. The economical one is related to the fact that the large states are more developed and richer than the small ones. This situation has been restrained by a significant redistribution of resources from the larger and richer member states to the smaller and poorer ones. However, the euro crisis has reduced the resources available for policies of territorial redistribution, showing the economic dependence of the smaller member states on the larger ones.

The lack of a formal constitution able to crystallize a common political will and to furnish a common normative language for framing both the deep divisions concerning the nature of the EU and the conflicts between the states, has made the structural cleavages an unresolved feature of the EU political system. For that reason, a Union has emerged constituted by member states and citizens with three different perspectives on what the EU is and should become. The perspective of the EU as an Economic Community, advanced by the defenders of national sovereignty, interested in protecting domestic democracy and in utilizing the Union as a means for creating and maintaining a common market. The perspective of the EU as an intergovernmental union, supported by those member states which claimed to pool their sovereignty on policies strategically important to them (such as

economic and foreign policies) at the European level of intergovernmental institutions. The perspective of the parliamentary union, backed up by those member states, who agreed to *share* their ultimate decision-making power on several policies regulating the functioning of the single market with Union actors politically connected to them, but also institutionally independent from them.

Differentiation and European Integration

The union of states structurally designed to protect their autonomy and to put national interests before any other, as well as the cleavages coming from that union, have turned differentiation across policy areas and spaces into one of the recurring phenomena of the process of European integration. However, while the examples of differentiation such as the opt-outs from EMU, the transitional arrangements for new member states, or the association of a non-member countries, have been mainly seen as (temporary or marginal) side effects of negotiations on bargaining about more integration, Leuffen, Rittberger and Schimmelfennig argue that differentiation is an essential and, most likely, enduring characteristic of the EU (Leuffen, Rittberger and Schimmelfennig 2012).

Accepting differentiation as an essential feature of EU makes it difficult to conceptualize it as a state or a federation (the classical polities' conceptualization), since both its level of centralization and its territorial extension may vary by policy or task. In this sense, both conceptions ignore

the extent to which the EU has developed an institutional core or centre that reaches across the EU's policy sectors with their variation in centralization and territorial scope. The EU is not "many Europes" with task-specific jurisdictions each having their own organization, but one Europe with a single organizational and member state core and a territorial extension that varies by function. This reality has been conceptualized as a "system of differentiated integration" by the above mentioned authors.

According to these authors, a system of differentiated integration is characterized by vertical and horizontal differentiation. In determining differentiation, we must start from a 'policy' as a set of rules and procedures governing an issue-area. Each policy has a certain level of centralization (or vertical integration) and territorial extension (or horizontal integration). Thus, the variance in vertical integration across policies constitutes the degree of vertical differentiation in the system. In addition, we can determine the horizontal integration in each policy area by counting the number of participating states. The variance in horizontal integration across policies constitutes the extent of horizontal differentiation in the system. On the other hand, it is possible to distinguish different kinds of horizontal differentiation in the EU. A policy area is characterized by internal differentiation if at least one member state does not participate in integration and by external differentiation if at least one no-member state participates. Furthermore, internal and external differentiation can go together if a policy combines both members and no members of EU.

From a historical perspective, whereas vertical differentiation has always exceed horizontal differentiation in European integration but has

nonetheless remained more or less stable, the latter has grown over the past 30 years. In this regard, it seems that horizontal differentiation has been the price of dynamic growth in both vertical and horizontal integration. Thus, European Community was a highly decentralized but uniform federal polity from 1950s to the late 1980s; by contrast, since then, the EU has developed into a system of differentiated integration combining vertical with horizontal differentiation. Moreover, the strong growth in both vertical and horizontal integration has not reduced either vertical or horizontal differentiation.

To provide a suitable explanation for this transformation into a system of differentiated integration, it is essential to keep in mind the survival of the institutional structure of the states forged by the nationalism, which we have already mentioned. Nevertheless, before addressing this account, it is necessary to consider four elements. First of all, the key role played by national governments in a process based on the signing of international treaties which transfer formal competences from states to an international organization. Secondly, the interdependence which arises between states taking part in the integration process as a result of multilateral cooperation established between them as a consequence of the signing of treaties. In the third place, the convergence of preferences. That is, the existence of common interests between all states involved in the integration process. And eventually, politization. In other words, the refusal of states to continue advancing the integration process when this requires the transfer of competences involving the loss of state autonomy (Leuffen, Rittberger and Schimmelfennig 2012).

As it is known, the early European integration process began with market integration under very conductive conditions owing to several reasons. On the one hand, trade is an area of high transnational exchange and international interdependence. On the other hand, it is a field of low autonomy and identity costs for states since by integrating the market, governments lose relatively little autonomy. Furthermore, markets do not qualify as strong symbols of national identity. Finally, the founding members of the EEC were similar in terms of their economic structure and wealth, a similarity which facilitated the preference for convergence.

The signing of the Maastricht Treaty and EU enlargement with the entry of Eastern countries, which reinforced the sovereigntist group, shifted the previous dynamic. At that moment, the initial integration outcome had created spillover institutionalization effects, which generated additional interdependence, calling for more integration and producing the expansion of integration to new policy areas, new countries, and higher level of centralization. The supranational integration of core areas of the state's power such us monetary policy and policies of border control, immigration, internal security and defence which had traditionally been exclusive domains of the state, and where transnational exchanges and interaction was more limited than in trade, threatened the autonomy of states which had been institutionally designed to preserved it and triggered politization. This shifted the locus of integration negotiations from the international to the domestic level, and as a consequence transformed them into domestically embedded and constrained. Under these circumstances, integration either stagnates, or further integration is accompanied by further differentiation

Conclusions

The main conclusion of this paper is that the influence of nationalism in the setting of the institutional framework of the European states is a key element to explain the appearance of the differentiation in the current European political reality and, therefore, in the shaping of the EU as a "system of differentiated integration". In this regard, although the process of European integration has transformed the state model which was forged by nationalism, it has not removed the mechanisms inherited from nationalism that make them work as independent political units and jealous guardians of their autonomy. In our view, these inherited institutional structures are ideal vehicles for channelling the resurgence of nationalism as a political phenomenon that is occurring in Europe at the moment. Consequently, we consider that unless current political conditions change, differentiation will be increasing within the European Union in the near future.

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