

The return of the nation state... ... and the decline of Europe?

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The slippery slide of populism:
Pluche: on the banalisation of the extreme right

The dangerous charms of nationalism
Kleinstaterij! The return of the nation state and the decline of Europe



"I never knew a man who had better motives for all the trouble he caused"
Graham Greene, *The Quiet American*

The return of the nation-state?

In practice:

- traditional patriotism
- aggressive nationalism
- active separatist movements

In theory:

democracy and rule of law

⇔ common public space, national sovereignty and a national culture

Basic concepts:

- sovereignty
- nationalism
- democracy
- European integration

⇒ how relevant are they?

⇒ how compatible are they?

⇒ **does the return of the nation state mean the end of Europe?**

PART I

**Why do we need a state?
[and how do we get one?]**

Nationalism as a positive/pro-European force:

Scotland is different from UK, open to the world,
wants to join the “Brotherhood of Nations”

Idem for: Catalonia, Flanders, Basque
country...

But:

- Who else?
- And how do you perceive EU through same perspective?

Kosovo* in search of recognition

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

- international opposition
 - EU unwillingness
- ⇒ domino theory

Unless:

- segmental institutions theory
- right of remedial secession

⇒ **self-determination is not what it used to be**

How independent/European would a new Member State be?

- Art 48 TFEU v Art 49 TFEU
- 'continuity of effect' v 'absorption capacity'.

⇒ 28 + 6 or 7 + ?

⇒ EU remains a union of [existing] states

⇒ **independence is one thing ≠ European membership another.**

Because!

- consistency
- legitimacy

PART II

**What is a nation?
[and what is it *for*?]**

The 'universal' idea of self-determination

Nationalism as peace project:

- Giuseppe Mazzini
- Woodrow Wilson

⇒ how many dominoes are there?

⇒ **who gets a [member] state [and who doesn't?]**

Woodrow Wilson (1919):

“When I spoke those words ...

I did so without being aware of the existence of all the nationalities who now come to us each and every day.”

Identity politics and the individual

Nation state as a prerequisite for social fabric?

'The nation':

- Max Weber
- Ernest Renan

The state:

- Bertrand de Jouvenel: 'us' v 'them'

The logical combination?

- Robert Cooper

⇒ trying to recapture the nation within the state × modern complexity

PART III

**The EU is not what it used to be
[and neither is sovereignty]**

The EU is not what it used to be:

- Fiscal Treaty
- economic governance
- Blueprint for a deep and genuine EMU

& made more effective and democratic:

- size Commission
- power European Parliament
- politics in European Council
- one size fits [almost] all

⇒ **will nationalism still be 'pro'?**

Enlargement drives integration forward
Meaning **smaller states lose out!**

CONCLUSION

New nation states risk falling between two stools:

- the EU as network of existing MS is not able or willing to soak up a new wave of members
- the EU as developing federation is threat to new-found sovereignty

⇒ 'old' and 'new' nationalism are more similar than you would think.

Populism - nationalism:

Attractions:

- Legitimacy
- Democracy
- Recognition
- 'Festina lente'

e.g. Rene Cuperus' "populist correction":

"a fundamental reset of the immobilised socio-economic system

by a less self-centered and alienated elite".

Dangers:

- Offer more thorough & structural 'solution' to political problems.
- From critical to negative
- All things to all people: left & right, more for less
- Unable to live up to its promises.

=> Vicious cycle of discontent / antagonism

Remedies?

- Realism and responsibility: sovereignty? identity?
- Politicisation: *agonism* vs *antagonism*. Democracy!
- Orwell's "Common decency"
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