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THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP: SECURITY CHALLENGES



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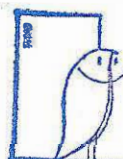
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REGIONALISM AND REGIONAL AUTONOMY IN AN AGE OF RENATIONALIZATION

Carlos E. Pacheco AMARAL

Abstract. Organized in three fundamental moments, this text focuses upon the ideas of regionalism and regional autonomy, instrumentally understood as tools that allow us to revisit the political organization of the Continent. A first moment is dedicated to the idea of sovereignty and to the Europe of sovereign independent States it heralded. A second moment is centered upon the erosion of sovereignty and the crisis that befell the Europe of sovereign States, at least, since the middle of the last century – opening the way, in fact, to the re-emergence of the ideas of regional autonomy and infra and supra-national integration. A third moment highlights the re-emergence of the idea of regional autonomy and the ways in which it has been recuperated to forge and to integrate new political communities in the continent, both within and beyond the previously sovereign States, transfiguring the political map of Europe. Finally, a concluding moment is reserved to an evaluation, albeit tentative, of the success and shortcomings of regional autonomy and of both infra-national and supra-national integration throughout Europe in the second half of the 20th century and in these first decades of the 21st century – and the study of the current reinforcement and growing appeal of nationalism and State sovereignty, both at the supra-national, European, level, evidenced in such tendencies as the Brexit, for example, and at the infra-national level, manifest in the separatist aspirations of autonomous regions that appear to aspire to become sovereign States, like Catalonia, Scotland or Flanders, for example.

Keywords: autonomy, integration, region, renationalization, sovereignty, State.

1. Sovereignty and Europe of States

The modern idea of sovereignty led to a very specific configuration of the political map of Europe: a Europe of States, each sovereign in so far as sole possessor of the concrete territory in which it stands, of the peoples established there, as well as of all the resources, both natural and other, available within the impermeable and impenetrable frontiers with which it encloses itself. Sovereignty allowed for the replacement of the medieval cohabitation within the same territory of a plurality of autonomous political entities, kingdoms, free cities, guilds, abbeys, duchies, etc., by a singular new solipsist unity: the State. The concentration in a single unit of the instruments of power previously dispersed among a plurality of entities, of the widest range and nature, granted the new States an impressive new capacity for action, both within its frontiers and beyond.

The modern social contract theory explains this new political reality of Europe in simple and impeccable terms. It is grounded upon a rather simple proposal: the idea of the fundamental equality of all human beings, understood in themselves, as *selves*, fundamentally, as subjects that are able to take possession of themselves as well as of the plurality of things that each one ends up accumulating throughout her or his life. In an original moment, so runs the modern argument, all individuals are equal. As *selves*, we are, as it were, *tabulae rasae*. Like

blank slates, we are all equal in so far as we are all destitute of ascriptive characteristics that may force upon each one a specific predetermined identity. As *selves*, we are all equal in so far as we are radically devoid of properties, yet capable of acquiring them. Entirely deprived of text or color, a blank sheet of paper is the exact equal to all others (of the same weight, size, etc., of course). Moreover, it is precisely the fact that it is blank that allows a sheet of paper to receive the text or the colors that one may wish to write upon it, thus individualizing it and making it different from all other.

The same applies to human beings. As the modern argument goes, instead of beings marked by their respective family, social strata, religion, culture or place of birth, each one of us emerges as a *self*, an individual who can elect whom to be through the possessions he or she elects to acquire and accumulate. That is why instead of being condemned to the social class, religion, profession and set of values of one's parents, for example, modernity will proclaim that each of us is responsible for forging her or himself by imprinting color and meaning to the *tabula rasa* that, at bottom, he or she truly is. That is a task that each one of us accomplishes through the accumulation, the commerce and the dispensation of the possessions we elect to characterize ourselves. Therefore, instead of being who nature or society made us, we are who we choose to be.

At the personal level, I build myself through the accumulation of the properties that I elect in more or less free fashion: the education that I select, the profession that I practice, the marital status that I adopt, whether or not I choose to have children, the system of values and beliefs that I hold, the place where I live, and all my remaining possessions that characterize me as the individual person that I am.

The same, modernity will proclaim, holds at the socio-political level. At the personal level, I carve my *self*, imprinting upon it the properties and the characteristics that I choose or am able to hold, and that is how I am directly responsible for becoming the concrete person that I am. At the socio-political level, our States carve their citizens, imprinting upon them the properties through which they define themselves. That is the primordial task of the social contract which, from Machiavelli to John Rawls, modernity elects as the fundamental instrument for community building.¹

Modernity, it should be underlined, inverts the relation between the individual and the community proposed previously. The ancient and the medieval paradigms perceived the individual to be indissociable from the social units he or she integrated. So much so that one's very identity and being was perceived to ensue from the communities of which he or she was a part of; thus, the well-known Greek perspective of man as a *zoon politikon*, a political animal. For the modern mind, it is not only possible to separate the two as the first, the individual, instead of being a product of the second, the political community, emerges as its artificer. So much so that, according to the narrative of the social contract, it is the individuals who,

¹ For a systematic presentation of the theoretical foundations of the modern State, cf. Carlos E. Pacheco Amaral, *Do Estado soberano ao Estado das autonomias* (Porto: Afrontamento, 1998), especially Chapter 1 "The State: emergence, framework and nature," 29-111.

reuniting for some reason or other, voluntarily choose to celebrate a contract among themselves that will be responsible for binding them into a political community.

Understood as a *tabula rasa*, the modern *self* is sovereign, free to both, carve her or himself at pleasure, and to unite with others as he or she freely elects. And finally, as the modern narrative will hold, it is precisely the sovereignty of the *selves*, parties to the social contract that allows for and legitimates the sovereignty of the State they establish by contract. In a word, the State is sovereign because it receives the sovereignty of the individuals who gathered to create it. Before the social contract, the individuals lived in a *state of nature*, in which, as a sovereign *self*, each one was absolutely free to do as he or she saw fit, and, therefore, to carve her or himself at pleasure, not knowing the categories of *right* or *wrong*, *just* or *unjust*. At the pleasure, that is, that the instruments of power he or she commanded allowed for!²

Sovereign selves produced sovereign States.

It is, besides, in this very process, of emptying themselves of each and every parcel of the sovereignty with which nature had endowed them, that the parties to the social contract transform themselves into *blank slates*. Moreover, in the process, the sovereign powers of the contractors is neither lost nor destroyed, but accumulated and offered to the third party created precisely to receive them: the State. And once the State emerges as the *Grand Leviathan*, and its parts are transformed into *blank slates*, we finally become ready to proceed with the final act of the modern social contract in which the newly sovereign State imprints upon the contractors who gave rise to it the shape and form it freely chooses, transforming them into its citizens, through the system of law that it adopts.³

2. Crisis and exhaustion of sovereignty

This, in broad strokes, is the narrative adopted by modernity for the political organization of Europe in sovereign States. Entailing the quartering of the continent into territorial units, delimited by impermeable and impenetrable frontiers, it allowed the new European political units a panoply of instruments of power, both internally and externally. At the domestic level, it allowed the new sovereign states to effectively reduce the medieval feudal plurality, to the unity of their sovereign identity and values. Internationally, sovereignty translated into an array of instruments of power, so extraordinary that it allowed the new emerging European States nothing less than planetary projection, conquest and domination, starting with the Iberian

² Cf. the fundamental texts of the social contract modern tradition from Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Classics, 1980) and John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980) to John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

³ The work of Michael Sandel constitutes one of the most interesting and illuminating critiques of the modern political paradigm, grounded on the contracts celebrated by sovereign selves for the production of sovereign States. Among his reflections cf., in particular, chapter one "America's Search for a Public Diplomacy" of his book *Public Philosophy. Essays on Morals and Ethics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 9-34.

countries, Portugal and Spain, the first to assume the form of States.⁴ With their new sovereign power they managed to project themselves across the entire planet, all the way to India and to the Pacific, and even to carve the world among themselves, under the blessing of the Holy See. And they would soon be followed by the Dutch, the English, the French...

The two world wars of the twentieth century, however, heralded the exhaustion of European power, and, with it, the roll back of the continent's sovereign states both externally and internally.

Internationally, throughout modernity, the States had grounded their legitimacy upon the protection and the security that each assured to its citizens and to the promotion of the respective national interests. *Protecto ergo obligo* was, in the authorized words of Carl Schmitt, the *cogito ergo sum* of the sovereign State.⁵ The State obligated, because of the security it provided to its citizens. And yet, by the middle of the twentieth century the very same idea of State sovereignty that allowed for European planetary domination, threatened the outright destruction of the continent. Unable to assure their territorial integrity, much less the promotion of their national interests across frontiers, State sovereignty became an impediment to the good political organization of the Continent, which required far more than the by now old idea of sovereignty was able to deliver. The new conditions in which Europe found itself required, if not the outright abandonment of the idea of sovereignty, at least its tempering, though supranational integration. Unable to even defend themselves, the European States would entrust that primordial task to a supranational, planetary, organization, the United Nations, and when that proved unfeasible, to a regional one, NATO. Unable to assure their peoples the amenities that traditionally go with the good life, they would forge new political entities, of a new type, better able to provide them for their peoples, the European Communities, since then transformed into a Union. In a word, the exhaustion of sovereignty required a new form of political organization for Europe.

Internally, sovereignty had permitted the European States to fully impose the premises of the social contract. Its overwhelming might allowed the States to take possession of all those who, often, following the vicissitudes of war, found themselves encapsulated within their borders. To take possession of them and to transform them into *tabula rasa* through the erasure of the various politically significant characteristics they elected to adopt in order to present themselves as members of individuated communities. This is as a preliminary exercise of human ground clearance, so to speak. Once cleansed of any ascriptive characteristics of their own, the individuals became ready to receive the singular unitary character of their respective States, translated into its singular language, values, identity and system of right. In a word, the might of sovereignty allowed States to complete a double exercise. Firstly, to take away from each one within their frontiers the characteristics that allowed them to define themselves as Basques, Catalans and Galicians, Flemish and Wallons, Alsatians, Occitans and Bretons, Sicilians, Tuscans and Valdotians, Scottish and Welsh, etc. turning them all into individuals,

⁴ The original theoretical formulation of the idea of sovereignty would be presented, later, by Jean Bodin in his renowned work *Les Six livres de la République* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1993), originally published in 1576.

⁵ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), 52.

entities entirely destituted of properties and identity, yet apt to receive those properties and the identity that their respective State offered them. Secondly, on strict command of sovereign power, each State would be able to imprint upon the *blank slates* located within their borders its singular identity and system of right, thus transforming them into Spaniards, Belgians, French, Italians and British.⁶

Leading to the emergence of both the modern State as well and the international system it engendered, this fundamental idea of sovereignty translated itself into an instrument of tremendous success for Europe. With it, the continent would end up assuming control of no less than the entire planet in a process that started at the dawn of modernity, by the Iberian countries, Portugal and Spain, perhaps the first to assume the form of modern sovereign States. In full possession of the instruments of power available within their frontiers, the Portuguese and Spanish monarchs were able to mobilize them in the external projection of their countries to North Africa, first, and, afterwards, to the South and to the West, along the African and the American continents, all the way to the Pacific Ocean, to Asia and Australia. And, the remaining European countries would soon follow: the Netherlands, England, France... assuming themselves as planetary colonial powers.

Sovereignty allowed Europe to command the world.

Throughout modernity, the idea of sovereignty proved to be so useful that the rest of the planet rapidly sought to adopt it as well and to organize itself in sovereign States up to the universalization of the proposal. And, as a matter of fact, the same idea of sovereignty that allowed Europe to command the world would end up allowing the rest of the world, not only to free itself from European domination, but to check and challenge it following a double phenomenon. Firstly, as the continent's power basis exhausted itself, one after the other, the European powers were forced to retreat to their continental dimension of origin, just as, correlatively, organized as sovereign States, the former objects of European domination, gathered sufficient power to free themselves from the continent. And, secondly, as the European powers exhausted themselves in the two world wars of the twentieth century, they fell to the mercy of the two more or less benign extra-European powers that emerged on world stage. The two superpowers of the Cold War. If one can pinpoint the start of the process of European world dominion to the incursions of the Iberian countries into Northern Africa, the withdrawal from Hong Kong and from Macau, in 1997 and 1999, of the British and the Portuguese, respectively, constitute clear markers of the closure of the cycle.

In a nutshell, by the middle of the twentieth century, the idea of sovereignty no longer represented an adequate formula for political organization, both domestically and internationally.

⁶ Thomas Hobbes explains this phenomenon masterfully in the double dimension of the social contract. Cf. the two moments of his method: resolute and compositive; resolute, for the transformation of concrete individuals into selves; compositive, for the transformation of abstract selves into concrete citizens of the respective State; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*.

Domestically, the degradation of central State power opened the way for the reemergence of regional identities, which the idea of sovereignty was supposed to have obliterated in the process of construction of the nation-State. If we think in terms of the social contract proposed by modernity, it was as if it had never actually been completely fulfilled and the individuals, instead of giving up their primordial ascriptive characteristics in exchange for the equality imposed upon them by the sovereign State, had simply put them on hold, so to speak, waiting for a more favorable opportunity to present them publicly again. That opportunity would surface in the twentieth century at moments of fragility of States. Firstly, in the aftermath of the First World War, in the Aaland Islands, which successfully managed to see their specific identity recognized within the Finnish State and to obtain the political power adequate to its fulfilment. The aftermath of the Second World War brought forward a second opportunity, this time for the Danish and Italian regions with strong identities and the will to give them political translation. The relative weakness of the Danish and Italian central States, which, after Nazi occupation, the first, and fascism, the second, had to be redrawn, opened the way for the replacement of unitarism by political autonomy. Or, in the case of Portugal and Spain, it was the relative weakness of the respective central States ensuing from their replacement of the previous fascist organization to democracy in the mid-nineteen seventies that allowed for the adoption of the principle of regional political autonomy. In all of these cases, the justification was simple enough: to allow regions with individualized identities within the context of their respective States to freely organize their social lives and fulfill the specific interests that characterize them. And this in a process that would be repeated a bit throughout Europe and which the process of European integration would not fail to hearten.⁷

The point of the matter is that the sovereign State proved to be too large and unable to correspond, duly, to the requirements of its peoples, particularly in terms of democratic participation, socio-economic development and autonomous control of their destinies. That is why, the new condition of fragility in which sovereignty found itself in the twentieth century allowed for the emergence and political consolidation of new, smaller, political communities within the midst of the State, better able to correspond to the demands of peoples who perceive themselves to be, simultaneously, equal to their fellow countrymen, in some respects, and, therefore, a part of the State, yet, also different from their fellow countrymen, in other respects, because endowed with a specific identity and interests ensuing from history, geography, language, culture, etc.

However, at the same time that, domestically, the sovereign State was excessively large, internationally, it proved to be too small. In both cases, the sovereign State appeared unable to deliver the fundamental tasks entrusted to it: internally, peace and order, and the overall pre-requisites necessary for the good life of the citizenry that deserves to be lived; externally,

⁷ From the wealth of materials on the nature and political significance of regionalism in Europe, cf. for all the works of Solange Gras and Christian Gras, *La révolte des régions d'Europe Occidentale de 1916 à nos jours* (Paris: PUF, 1982) and of Ada Ferrara, *Autonomia regionale, itinerario di un'idea* (Roma: Civitas, 1982). For a synoptic overview of the recent evolution and contemporary circumstance of regionalism and of autonomous regions in Europe, cf. the study coordinated by Francesco Merloni, *Tendances de la régionalisation dans les pays Européens. 2007-2015* (Strasbourg: Congrès des Pouvoirs Locaux et Régionaux du Conseil de l'Europe, 2016).

the security of its borders and the stability of the international system. And the two world wars of the twentieth century brought the evidence that, as the proposal of sovereignty had exhausted itself, international peace and security required far more than what the traditional international system was able to deliver. That is why the *restauration of the world* as it was prior to war was no longer an option as it had been at the Congress of Vienna – to resort to the expression celebrated by Henry Kissinger in his Doctoral dissertation.⁸ The new conditions that emerged in the twentieth century did not require the restauration of sovereignty, but its tempering through the forging of political communities of a different type, grounded upon a different idea, the idea of autonomy.

3. The re-emergence of the idea of regional autonomy

A bit throughout Europe, the solution to the crisis that the modern principle of sovereignty encountered in the twentieth century entailed the recovery of the idea of autonomy, understood as an instrument of political order, both domestically and internationally.

Autonomy is an old idea, dating back to Ancient Greece. Forged both as a concept of international relations and of domestic order, autonomy was coined to describe two fundamental phenomena. Firstly, at the international level, autonomy expressed the condition of those political communities that were neither entirely free nor independent, nor subject to the despotic will of others. They were autonomous, on the one hand, insofar as being integrated and therefore a part of greater units, instead of being independent, they had to abide by the collective decisions adopted by the institutions proper to the whole of which they were part. Yet, on the other hand, being autonomous meant that in a more or less vast array of domains they were free to act and to regulate their lives with the norms they freely wished to adopt for themselves. Secondly, and at the domestic level, autonomy translated the freedom that the various parts of the Greek *polis* enjoyed. Instead of being an island, a simple, unitary actor, the Greek *polis* resembled more an archipelago. In Aristotelian language, it constituted a complex whole, made up, not just of individuals, much less understood as abstract entities, but also of "families" and "villages", each of them with their own identity, and *telos* to fulfill.⁹ And, it was precisely this fact that recommended them their autonomy, i.e. the realm of freedom that they enjoyed in living their individuality and delivering the conditions and the services that rested at the roots of their very existence and legitimated them. Within the *polis*, autonomy ensued from an ontological point of departure, translating the recognition that it integrated parts that were individuated by the presentation of a series of characteristics. It further entailed that these parts that together made up the *polis* better recommended themselves for the provision of certain services which the individuals required in order to aspire to the good life that deserved to be

⁸ Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Mettemich, Castlereagh, and the Problems of Peace* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957).

⁹ Aristotle, *The Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

lived. Therefore, autonomy expressed the freedoms recognized and guaranteed to each of them in the fulfillment of their *teloi*.¹⁰

In the twentieth century, the erosion of sovereignty recommended the emergence of new political communities and the reconfiguration of the State. Autonomy is a concept that recommended itself to the task in so far as it allowed for the emergence of new political communities both within and beyond the State. Unable, by itself, to assure the conditions adequate to the good life, the sovereign State was forced to rethink and to reorganize itself and to allow, in those domains in which it was unable to deliver, for the emergence of other political communities – besides itself – that proved to be able to find success where it had failed.

Within the State, these new political communities that emerge are, paradigmatically, the autonomous regions. Their appeal ensues from the fact that they are better able to correspond to the requirements of a citizenry, increasingly aware of its specific identity and desirous of taking charge of significant parts of its own life. Europe knows a wide variety of autonomous regions, of the widest size, ranging from under 30 000 inhabitants, the Aaland islands, to over 7 million, Catalonia, and competences, some, with but scanty political and administrative autonomy, like the Nordic, French and Dutch, others coming close to the dignity of traditional statehood, like the Belgian regions, or threatening to request it, Scotland, or engaged in outright struggle for it, as is the case now with Catalonia. Across the spectrum, regional autonomy emerges increasingly as catalysts for democratic participation. Not just for democratic participation along traditional lines, where more democracy translates into having more people vote more times. But for direct democratic participation in the decision-making of those who are going to be directly affected, both by the political options that are to be adopted and by the legal norms which are to regulate and materialize them.

In all cases, autonomy assumes a more or less voluntary double or hybrid character, expressing, simultaneously, a desire both of singularity of a community and of integration. An autonomous region is always, at the same time, and without contradiction, a whole in itself and a part of a superior greater whole in which it is integrated and of which it is a part. Whereas throughout modernity, the sovereign State appeared, in strictly solipsist, as the singular political actor on stage, each radically distinct and separate from all others, the autonomous regions emerge as integral parts and partners of other political entities. Whereas modern States claimed for themselves no less than sovereign independence, autonomy throws the regions that receive it to a context of integration, partnership and power sharing through subsidiarity a concept entirely foreign to the discourse of sovereignty.

Beyond the State and as sovereignty proves to no longer constitute an adequate guarantee of security and or an appropriate instrument of political order, regions are forged, above and sometimes beyond the States, to step in, in more or less autonomous fashion, where

¹⁰ For an indepth exploration of the emergence of the concept of autonomy in Ancient Greece cf. Martin Ostwald, *Autonomia, Its Genesis and Early History* (New York: Scholars Press, 1982). For a synoptic overview of the evolution of the concept, cf. our work *Do Estado Soberano ao Estado das Autonomias*, especially Chapter 3 "Autonomia, subsidiariedade e Estado regional ou das autonomias," 201-317, as well as the bibliography identified there.

traditional statehood failed. The Council of Europe and its Human Rights regime constitute a prime example. Whereas the sovereign prerogative of States to create for themselves the body of law it freely willed proved to lead to such monstrosities as those witnessed by the first half of the twentieth century, it proved necessary to domesticate the sovereign capacity of States to legislate subordinating them to a higher right: namely to Human Rights and, for its implementation, to subordinate the States to higher courts, namely to the Human Rights Court in Strasbourg.

It is often argued that European integration started in the field of Economics and that Jean Monnet, one of its major founding fathers, at the end of his life had regretted it, stating that, could he start again, he would have started by grounding integration not in Economics, but in Culture. Now, on the one hand, there is no record of such assessment and, on the other hand, the truth of the matter is that European integration did not take off with Economics, but with a common law: Human Rights. And, as the Lockean tradition reminds us, it is precisely the sharing of a common body of law that grounds a political community.

In a fundamental, albeit discreet manner, the Council of Europe constitutes a true region, not, of course, a region like Catalonia, Scotland or the Faroe islands, these present an infra-national character, but a supranational one. A region made up of states that, guarding their traditional legislative capacity, see it now checked by a higher, superior, filter.¹¹

It is important to underline that the second moment of European integration and, therefore, of supranational regional construction for overcoming the incapacity with which States confronted themselves did not lay in Economic, either, but on security. In the two wars of the twentieth century, the European states all but exhausted themselves and, failing the incapacity of the United Nations to obtain the appropriate instruments to assure its constitutional promise to abolish war and to be an effective guarantor of world security, it became necessary to forge in Europe a second region, a security region. One that, given European fragility, required, naturally a wider scope, opening to the major part of the Western World: NATO. As the San Francisco Convention promise of World government or, at least, of world security faded away, it became necessary to forge an alternative. At the foundations of the UN Charter laid the aspiration that the armed forces of States would know a destiny little greater than that which the medieval instruments of force underwent in the transition to modernity. The aspiration was that just as counties, duchies, abbeys, free cities and feudal lords, in general, lost to the emerging States their military might, allowing the new sovereigns to claim no less than a monopoly over the legitimate use of force, both within their midst and across their borders, so too the United Nations would possess a parallel monopoly worldwide.

Moreover, it was only the fact that such a desideratum was – and remains, of course, – far from concretization that led to the birth of NATO. The Organization, it should be underlined, was never thought as an alliance, along traditional modern lines, but as a region, an organization, as spelled out in its very name. And that is probably the fundamental reason of its

¹¹ For a broader discussion of this notion cf. our essay "Direitos Humanos e integração europeia," *Boletim do Núcleo Cultural da Horta* 24 (2015) and the bibliography identified there.

survival of the Cold War, even as the Warsaw Pact disintegrated. The point of the matter is that, as a security region, NATO's legitimacy ensues from a double foundational incapacity: firstly, from the incapacity of States, their sovereignty notwithstanding, to ably assure their own security; secondly, from the incapacity of the United Nations to deliver on its promise of World Order.

Such a fact, besides, would appear to remain at the heart of the organization's success and continuous appeal. At present, the major dilemma facing a variety of countries resides in knowing if their security is going to rest on the sovereign instruments of power at their disposal – with the knowledge that from the United Nations no effective guarantees can be expected – or if they can, instead, integrate a greater whole, a security region, capable of enveloping them with its power and, subsidiarily, deliver such assurance. In other words, the attractiveness of NATO would come forward clearly upon consideration of whether a State finds itself inside or outside its regional borders.

One had to wait for a third moment of European integration to encounter the economic dimension. And its legitimation remained fundamentally the same: the fragility and, by now, impropriety of the modern sovereign formula. It was, it should be remembered, the incapacity of the European States to remain adequate spaces for economic development – or even to feed the Europeans – that led to integration. The fundamental intuition of the *European Recovery Plan* that would be celebrated by its main proponent, Secretary of State George Marshall, speaks loudly in this regard, as does the entire process of European integration. Integration is a remedy, a *sovereign remedy*, in the words of Winston Churchill, or a concrete strategy, in the design of men like Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman, aiming, from the start, not at the replacement of the States by a super-State, but at the fulfillment of the *lacunae* presented by the States when faced with the circumstances of the contemporary world. In other words, integration knew, from the start, a regional dimension, aiming at the development of a regional space of economic prosperity, capable of opening the way to the emancipation of the continent.

So much so that the success of European integration ensues from its capacity to deliver: progress, development and quality of life for citizens. To deliver, subsidiarily, where, by themselves, the States prove to do so. And, again, that goes a great deal in explaining the success of the process of European integration and its enduring appeal. It is, again, a question of determining on which side of the regional border a State finds itself: if outside (in which context it can, sovereignly, count on its wits and its resources alone) or inside (in which context it can count on the broader ballast of the region of which it is but a part). In a word, grounded upon a dualist perspective, the modern idea of sovereignty points to a world where each State stands out alone, by itself, in solipsist fashion, the single responsible for itself and its people. Regional integration, whether in the field of Human Rights, security, or economy, translates into the new fact that Member States no longer stand alone. The very reason for regional integration is that interests and destinies of Member States are better served, not merged, or fused together in a super-State, nor independently of one another, but consolidated. That is why, instead of remaining a sovereign responsibility of each, they become a joint affair.

The Ancient Greeks taught us that, as a *Zoon politikon*, man is a very peculiar kind of animal: one that needs to share life with his fellows. With whom, however, do we need to share our lives in order to aspire to the good life that deserves to be lived? To that fundamental question, whereas the Greeks had pointed to the *polis*, modernity points to the States. We need to share our lives, that is, with our fellow countrymen. It is with them that we constitute a community, a *demos*. Moreover, whereas our *demos* is composed of those who are our equals, the other *demoi*, the rest of mankind, is made of foreigners, others organized in foreign States, independent from our own. It is with our countrymen that we constitute a community of destiny and it is with them that we count to jointly forge our lives. With the rest, with the foreigners, we are convoked to deal, through diplomatic or consular channels, in peace time, as in war, in strictly utilitarian fashion and in so far as such relations may lead to the gratification of our interests.

Regional integration translates into the breakup of such a scheme through the establishment of links of rights, as well as of duties, across borders – if not all the way throughout the entire planet and embracing all of humanity, as promised by the cosmopolitan tradition, at least at the regional level; at the level, that is, of the region composed of those States that are willing to open themselves to the experience. And, again, the fundamental question remains the determination of where to place the new regional borders. Which States are in and which are out?

Conclusion

And yet, instead of evidencing a generalized will to solidarity and integration, at the infra and supra national levels, contemporary Europe seems to be bent upon the recuperation of the old discourse of sovereignty and the model of order heralded by it. The reconfiguration of political order that appears to be required by the new conditions heralded by these first decades of the twenty first century, both within and across our States, is giving way to a renewed appeal of the logic of sovereignty which finds translation in disturbing new dimensions.

We witness the recovery of the modern utilitarian ethics at the expense of the republican ethics of community building, participation and sharing of a common life and a common destiny. It is this utilitarian ethics that, instead of pointing to the reshaping of our political communities, both within and across States – thus the phenomenon of regionalist integration – points, instead, to the return of the State and, whenever necessary and insofar as necessary, to the formation of alliances dedicated to a better procurement of gratification by each of its national interest. The ethics of integration requires more or less permanent arrangements, grounded upon the solidarity that ensues from sharing a common identity and a common destiny. After all, for example, I am not Portuguese only when my country wins the tournament and takes the cup; I am Portuguese irrespective of the result. Just as I am not a friend of my friends only when they are healthy and rich and I manage to benefit and obtain significant gains from being with them. As a matter of fact, should I be a friend of my friends based upon a strictly utilitarian evaluation of the costs and benefices of our relationship, what that would mean is that I would evidence possessing little knowledge of what friendship is all about and that, at bottom, there

never was between us a relationship of friendship at all, at least not from my part. And the same goes for solidarity, be it local, regional, national or European.

The modern ethics of utility points, directly, to a world where States join each other in alliances that possess no ontological grounding other than the profit that at each moment they are able to produce. So much so that it is with complete naturalness that yesterday's foe becomes today's ally, and vice versa, depending upon the arithmetic results of the utilitarian calculus of the impact upon the national interest of relations with them. Or, for that matter, this is the logic from which, translating into the adequacy of a country's policies to its capacity to finance them, austerity is grounded upon. Not so with values, particular with those values that make us the concrete persons – and communities – that we are.

As an alternative to integration and community building, we witness the renationalization of political life and the return of intergovernmentalism. At the European level, Europhilism gives way to Euroskepticism, just as, domestically, regional autonomy is challenged by the aspiration to independent statehood and, in a plurality of our countries, it would seem that populism, a contemporary version of the most impudent sophistry, appears to present itself as the single option of government produced by our democratic systems that find themselves dangerously close to discredit.

In the process, our States appear to be engaged in the suicidal march to the abyss that waits all those who, according to the ancient council, allow themselves to be led by the blind or, at best, to be condemned to a destiny of outright international irrelevance. Paraphrasing one of the major intellectual founding fathers of the modern world, Niccolò Machiavelli, it would appear that the *fortuna*, which the contemporary political scene offers us, has hardly been so adverse and, therefore, so ripe and so needy of a *virtù*, able to master it and, in the process, lead our societies in the eminently political process of carving a better future for the communities available for us to situate our lives: regional, national, European and cosmopolitan. In a word, our present conundrum requires far more than a return to the past, to a Europe, and a world, of sovereign States. And that is why the ongoing European policies of *austerity*, of adequating the policies of States to the resources that they are able to command, represents a tremendous waste and borders on tragedy. Instead, what is required, is the creativity and the audacity to forge new forms of political organization. Just as at the dawn of modernity the idea of sovereignty recommended itself and became an instrument of tremendous success, exhausted, at present, it needs to be discarded and substituted by a new one, more adequate to our contemporary reality and demands. Regions, both infranational and supranational enchainedly subsidiarily in accordance with the fundamental principles of autonomy and personal dignity and recognition appear to stand out among the most promising alternatives.

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