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## ETHNO-FEDERALISM: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### ABSTRACT

The study analyses the role of federalism in solving the national and ethnic conflicts. From this point of view it describes the main types of modern federal state: mononational (e.g. USA, FRG), multiethnic (Switzerland, present-day Russia) and multinational forms (former socialist federations, present-day Bosnia-Herzegovina). Hereafter the study outlines the most important views which appeared in the modern political thinking about the role of federalism in solving the national and ethnic conflicts. It refers to the messianistic federalist ideologies, to the French republican tradition, and to the American liberal approach. Furthermore it describes the main characteristics of socialist federations, briefly analyses the causes of their disintegration. Finally the study sums up the most important stabilizing factors of ethno-federations.

A large number of politicians and political scientists continuously and repeatedly claim that one of the most important and effective means to solve the ethnic conflicts in multinational societies is federalism. At the same time we can see that there are very few genuine and historically lasting “success stories” among multinational federal states; most of them struggle with problems of stability, and some (not only Socialist ones) have

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broken up. Therefore, it seems useful to examine what challenges federalism must face in a multinational environment and what their chances are to manage crises successfully.<sup>2</sup>

### FEDERALISM AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION – PRACTICAL FORMS

Modern federal states can be divided into three basic categories according to the role they play in dealing with ethnic issues. The first is that of *mononational federations*. These are not necessarily ethnically homogenous like Austria or Germany, they can be heterogeneous, but in the latter case their member states are not ethno-regional units, and their population is integrated by a common political and national consciousness and the unified identity of the population. A typical example of a mononational federation with an ethnically heterogeneous population is the United States, but Australia and federal states in Latin-America can also be included in this category. In these countries federalism is only linked to the national question in a historical sense as it used to be a tool to unify the state and build the nation, but in a structural sense it is not so any more. From a structural and functional perspective they do not aim at the institutionalisation of national-ethnic differences or the protection of minorities, instead, they work as territorial power-sharing systems, which basically intend to articulate regional differences, the decentralization of administration, and the provision of democratic checks and balances.

Countries which are nationally and ethnically heterogeneous and work in a federal structure at least partially based on national and ethnic heterogeneity (i.e. at least some of their member states are ethno-regional units) are usually called *ethno-federations*. They are also referred to as

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2 This article is the fourth, closing part with the conclusions of a larger, yet-to-be-published paper which analyses the history of ethno-federalism in East- and Central-Europe. The first part of the paper demonstrates the characteristics of the federal political systems and federalist ideologies, and shortly presents the western democratic ethno-federations: Switzerland, Belgium and Canada. The second part analyses the plans of the federal reconstruction of East- and Central-Europe (specifically the Habsburg-Empire and the Balkans) in the XIX. and XX. centuries. The third, largest part analyses the history and experiences of the socialist federations (Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia) and presents the now existent federal states in these regions (Russian Federation, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro).

multiethnic or multinational federations, but these two latter terms have a more restricted sense: they designate two versions of broadly defined ethno-federalism. *Multiethnic federations* in this narrower sense refer to those ethno-federal countries where – like in mononational forms – the population is united by state-patriotism and a unified identity of the population and/or where the demographic composition is characterized by the predominance of the majority nation. In these cases federation together with other institutions of consociation can be a successful means to handle linguistic and ethnic differences and conflicts. A typical example of such a multiethnic federation is Switzerland (where everybody defines themselves as Swiss first, and only belongs to one or other ethnic group or canton with a secondary group identity), but many analysts say that post-Soviet Russia and India are moving towards this form too.

On the other hand, the former Socialist federal states and today's Bosnia-Herzegovina are considered to be *multinational* federations, where the individual ethnic groups (or a majority of them, like in the Soviet case) had or have a separate national identity. Therefore, for this system, the loyalty of each nation is mainly linked to their own national member state, and the link to the union is secondary, through the member states. The success of multinational federations basically depends on whether the individual nations are linked together by some kind of a common long-lasting political interest. Due to the lack or weakness of common state-nation patriotism, only this can lead to internal cohesion, otherwise sheer power remains the only uniting force. As far as federation trends are concerned, the European Union is obviously moving towards this system.<sup>3</sup>

Those ethno-federations where integrative national political consciousness and a strong separate identity are simultaneously present can be considered to be *borderline cases* between multi-ethnic and multinational forms. Examples of this are Belgium, Canada, Serbia-Montenegro and most African and Asian ethno-federations. In the two Western democratic states – Belgium and Canada – there is some kind of common identity of the linguistic and ethnic groups and a feeling of belonging together as citizens,

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3 The Forum of Federations website considers 25 countries as de facto federations. (Internet: 2005.06.20.). From these mononationalist are Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Comoros, Germany, Mexico, Micronesia, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Venezuela. Ethno-federalist are Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Ethiopia, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Serbia and Montenegro, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland.

but (especially in the cases of the Flemish people in Belgium and the French in Québec) its dominance over group identities is questionable. A similar duality can be observed in the relationship between Serbs and Montenegrins. In the case of Afro-Asian ethno-federations it is even less adequate to talk about strong and comprehensive political group identities (perhaps with the exception of India), but linguistic, tribal and religious group identities “on the other side” are usually no more than pre-national identities. The question of dominance is still open in these countries. The population of Nigeria, for example, which can only be considered to be a virtual state-nation and yet may become a real one – but it may also disintegrate into separate Ibo, Yoruba and Hausa nations, or it can be divided along religious lines between Muslims and Christians.

We can see that in many countries federation does not serve as a remedy for national and ethnic conflicts. But it must also be noted that federalism is only one of the number of means to solve national and ethnic divergences. This is not only true in the negative sense (though it is absurd to refer to genocide and ethnocide, i.e. forced assimilation, border wars, population exchanges, deportations, etc. as “solutions”), but in a positive sense too. It depends on a number of factors whether it is necessary to federalize the given state in order to manage a national or ethnic problem in a civilized and democratic way, and, if so, in what form – or other means are sufficient, or in certain cases, more appropriate. Depending on the demographic structure, historical and political traditions, the economic and international situation of the country as well as the ethnic groups’ identity, their relationship and geographical pattern, a number of other options can come into question besides different forms of federalism. These can range from the equality of the citizens at individual level within a unified state or from different forms of autonomy to the various types of consocial techniques (cooperative mechanisms) and to peaceful break-ups.<sup>4</sup>

#### FEDERALISM AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION – THEORETICAL RESPONSES

In modern political thinking three basic approaches have developed concerning the role of federalism in the handling of national and ethnic issues. The first ones are the normative *federalist ideologies* which often

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4 See: John McGarry and Brendan O’Leary, „The political regulation of national and ethnic conflict”, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 47, No. 1. (January 1994), pp. 94-115.

lean to Messianism.<sup>5</sup> Those who see federalism as an opportunity to overcome all kinds of national hostilities and the nationalism of the majority or minority groups range from old Anarchist theorists to modern Eurofederalists. But apart from federalist ideologies in the stricter sense, several approaches are characterized by a similar anti-nationalist attitude, from Austro-Marxism to Lenin's post-1917 views and to today's various moderate ethno political platforms (e.g. Québec liberals or Catalan autonomists). These approaches see federalism as an opportunity which can provide the necessary protection of minorities and restructure the multinational states which have become exhausted in their unitarist form (an often quoted example of this is Belgium) without endangering the stability of the state and socio-economic development. Moreover, the federal development of the European Union could even "give a real perspective" to European integration.

French republican tradition maintains a view completely opposite to these optimistic visions about the relationship between nation and federalism. According to this view (which is not restricted to France at all), the roots of which can mostly be found in Rousseau's conception of the state and the Jacobins' unitarism, federalism has a clearly negative connotation.<sup>6</sup> This concept states that the federative structure weakens and endangers the unity of the state, especially if the federative structure is an ethno-federal one. In post-1789 French history federalism was linked with counter-revolutionary intentions, and later it contradicted the language homogenizing and state centralizing policy that the French (state) nation builders were trying to implement to integrate the linguistically and

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5 See: Pierre Joseph Proudhon, "A föderáció elvéröl" (Du principe fédératif), in: András Bozóki i Miklós Sükösd (eds.), *Anarchizmus*, Századvég, Budapest 1991, pp. 45-59.

6 "The center-periphery model (of statehood – J. J.) holds that sovereign power in a state is properly concentrated in a single center which may or may not be significantly influenced by its periphery. This model is derived from the organic theory of the polity and represents an effort to democratise monarchic and, most particularly, aristocratic polities by conquering and transforming the centre of power in each. While its modern political sources are to be found in Bourbon France, in the works of French political theorists exemplified by Jean Bodin, and in Rousseau's statist interpretation of the general will, its democratic expressions are principally Jacobin. (...) Centralization is the organizational expression of Jacobinism, which distrusts dispersed power because of the historical experience out of which it grew, in which localism was synonymous with support for the pre-revolutionary power-holders." Daniel Elazar, *Federal Systems of the World*, Longman, London 1991, p. xii.

ethnically heterogeneous society into a uniform community of citizens. Based on this experience, “modern Jacobinism” claims that federalism is inconsistent with the principles of the equality of people and of their sovereignty, as in federations member states with smaller populations are over-represented, thus the people living in these states are de facto given extra rights. “Modern Jacobinism” definitely rejects ethno-federalist forms, as it believes that the extra rights given to these ethnic groups lead to discrimination that divides people, and the state institutions ensuring their territorial segregation destroy the unity of the nation and state and threaten with secession. The practice of recognizing states after the break-up of the socialist federations and the legal principles of this practice as formulated by the Badinter Commission even deepened this feeling of endangerment, since the seceding member states whose independence was recognized were ethno regional units. According to this approach, these drawbacks – i.e. the democratic deficit and the (state-) nation-destroying potential – cannot be counterbalanced by any other benefits of a federation. With this starting point it is not surprising that they see the future of European integration as inter-state cooperation.

In spite of the fact that in the past 25 years regionalism has been accepted to a certain degree (since it weakened unitarism and centralism as well), this approach which is based on state-nation and unitarism still characterizes French politics, both on the Left and the Right, but it is well-known what a strong impact it has on current state-organizing strategies worldwide. And even if its strength is declining in some Western European states (Spain, Italy, UK), which traditionally follow consistent unitarism, in the case of most post-colonial and post-Communist states we can see that their political elite still shares this “Jacobin” antipathy. In these countries (in most cases centralized) unitarism is considered to be a prerequisite of the unity of the state, of political stability and effective economic development; moreover, in multinational countries it is linked with the political predominance of the majority ethnic group. Similar views are held by the hard-line versions of today’s minority nationalisms: when radical Basque, Québec French, Northern Irish, Chechen or Kosovar separatists question the existing borders they stress the necessity for the congruency of state and nation (of course they think of an ethnic and/or linguistic-cultural nation, not of a political one), they often see federalization as a means of making secession easier, and they imagine their independent states as unitarist and undivided.

Besides ideological federalism, which tries to find multi- or post-national answers to national-ethnic questions, and French republicanism, which refuses federations, the third basic approach is the *American federation concept*. This is a kind of middle approach which, in contrast with the Jacobin-unitarist one, does not see federations as a means of destroying the nation, but as a nation-building device. However, unlike federalist ideologies and similarly to French republicanism, it follows mononational values, therefore, like the French approach, it refuses ethno-federalism. This “integralist-national federalist” approach reflects American historical experience. In the history of the ethnically highly heterogeneous United States, federation has been a successful framework to organize the state and develop the political nation, and this happened without adopting an ethno-federalist form. Obviously, a unique social structure (immigrants’ attitude, “melting pot”) was necessary for this success, so political instruments alone, including the choice and implementation of federalism, would not have been sufficient – but the success obviously raises the value of the instruments used. Moreover, in American political tradition the principle of equality enjoys a lower prestige than the fundamental freedoms or the principle of power-sharing, that is why the American federalist approach – unlike the French one – is not so much afraid that federalism might harm citizens’ equality and the principle of the people’s indivisible sovereignty. The over-representation of the small states in the Senate, in the Electoral College and in the procedure of amending the Constitution is presented as a liberal way of defending the fundamental freedoms against the will of the majority.

However, according to this approach, federalism can only exploit its positive opportunities if it integrates the population so that it can push “premodern ethnocentric political activities” to the periphery.<sup>7</sup> That is why it is of great importance that the member states should not be ethno-regional units (at least in most cases if it cannot be avoided sometimes) because the coincidence of member state borders and ethnic borders would mean that

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7 “Federalism increases the opportunity for multiple sources of cleavage by adding regional interests and values to the others which crosscut the social structure. A major exception to this generalization occurs when federalism divides a country across the lines of basic cleavage, e.g., between different ethnic, religious, or linguistic areas, as it does in India and Canada. Democracy needs cleavage within linguistic or religious groups, not between them. But where such divisions do not exist, federalism seems to serve democracy well.” Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man*, Heinemann, London 1983, p. 81.

regions are dominated by different national-ethnic groups. This increases the danger that ethnic differences might lead to political friction, other kinds of conflicts can become ethnically motivated, more opportunities can be given to nationalists to mobilize their resources, and it can strengthen centrifugal tendencies. As a consequence of this approach (which does not lack a rational base, though) many analysts with liberal democratic views did not explain the disintegration of the three Socialist federations with the disintegrative potentials of structures “created by the Communists with intentions of power politics”, i.e. resulting from the multinational composition, but those of “pseudo-ethnofederal structures” designed with the aim of avoiding democratic reforms. But this was a serious underestimation of other reasons resulting from the multinational structure. The overestimation of the possibilities and attractiveness of a liberal and democratic system leads to the exaggerated supposition that elections in the member republics *preceding* the national elections would have saved these states, as they would have given the national multiethnic parties the possibility to concentrate the supporters of the single state and to obtain dominance in the central power. An often quoted positive example of this is the Spanish democratic transition, but it is not certain at all that it could have happened similarly in East-European societies, which were considerably more divided. Such contradictions can often be found in criticisms of ethno-federalism written by analysts who use the American federalist values as a starting point, which shows that the American-type mononational federalism model – supposing a population and social environment open to integration and even to assimilation in spite of ethnic diversity – has only a limited relevance in the case of multinational federations.

### SOCIALIST FEDERATIONS

The three disintegrated Socialist federations, which tried to create a constitutional framework for the coexistence and integration of different nations, formed a unique type of ethno-federation. The first of these was the Soviet Union founded in 1922 (though the first Bolshevik constitution of 1918 defined Soviet-Russia as a federation), which was basically the first national type of federation in the world. Later, the Yugoslav federation in 1945 and the Czechoslovak federation in 1968 followed the Soviet pattern. The state administration system of these countries complied with the criteria



of federations in general, and in certain respects they even gave more to the member states than the western federations did. Their positions were stronger for example in federal executive power, and – as the theoretical base of the system was the principle of national self-determination as declared by the Bolshevik revolution – they had the right to secede. But this was only so in theory, since the Socialist federations could not become real federal states. The system was a centralized one, because all the important functions were assigned to the central power when the functions of the state were allocated. It is even more important that the one-party political system, which refused the principle of power-sharing not only in practice, but – following Rousseau's concept about the state – also in theory, inherently restricted the possibilities for federalization. Power was exercised monopolistically by one party, and the organizational structure of the Communist party did not follow the federal principles, instead, de facto it was centralized. Therefore federalism *in practice* could only work partially and only at certain periods. This mostly happened when elements of decentralization appeared in the operation of the party or when the one-party system ceased to exist. The former case mainly refers to the last 25 years of Tito's Yugoslavia (but the most decentralization could achieve without democratic transition was that it changed the original centralized system to a polycentric party state), and the latter to the last years of all the three states (which was already the disintegration phase).

All in all, Socialist federations only served as ornaments in the centralized and autocratic system, and their real function was the implementation of legitimising and propagandistic aims. With this, they obviously triggered their small nations' aspirations of emancipation. In the late 1980s they could not respond to the challenges in the change of the political system and the dissolution of the bipolar world order either. Their disintegration was not surprising, but it cannot be said that their history had only negative aspects. At certain periods in history, e.g. at the time of their foundation, they contributed to the – at least partial – resolution of the accumulated national-ethnic conflicts. For their minorities with delayed national development they served as kinds of “incubators”: the (member-) state status, even if it was restricted, contributed to the strengthening of these peoples' identities and to the development of their own intellectual and political elite, and within the federation they formed their own member-states, which became the political subjects of their independence that can be recognized in the current international system. Moreover, the existence of

these federations contributed to the acceptance of the idea of national self-determination as one of the principles of modern international relations, and federalism has become a possible solution to the national question.

The break-up of the East-European multinational federations<sup>8</sup> was closely linked to the collapse of their Socialist social system. The lack of political democracy, the crisis of bureaucratically planned economy, and the inter-regional debates about the distribution of economic resources and burdens proved to be very serious disintegrative factors. Another obvious factor pushing these systems towards disintegration was the end of the bipolar world order that created the possibility of readjusting the borders and interest zones. In addition, the Western great-powers made serious attempts to overthrow the regimes they perceived as the ‘last bolshevik regimes in Europe’, for example Milosević’s government in Serbia.

But we cannot simplify the story as a collapse of “Communist pseudo-federalism” (and here it may be important to mention that the break-up of Czechoslovakia did not take place immediately after the fall of Socialism, but some time later, during attempts to consolidate the new capitalist-bourgeois democracy), and it cannot be said that their disintegration would not be a lesson to other ethno-federations. The liberal democratic criticism of socialist ethno-federations<sup>9</sup> is true in many respects, but it cannot be stated that the disintegration of these three federal states happened as a result of the deteriorating effect of (pseudo-) ethno-federalism on democratic evolution. Events justify Jacobin anti-ethno-federalism even to a lesser degree. Attempts at state organization in Yugoslavia before 1941 and in Czechoslovakia before 1968, not to mention tsarism, clearly showed that unitarism was not a feasible alternative, and because of the dominance of independent national identities there would not have been a real chance for an Anglo-Saxon-German type of mononational federalism. But we cannot simplify the disintegration as the “liberation of the nations”, the “natural disintegration” of the “artificial”

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8 See: Lukic, Reneo and Lynch, Allen, *Europe from the Balkans to the Urals. The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union*, SIPRI – Oxford University Press, Oxford 1996; Musil, Jifi (ed.), *The End of Czechoslovakia*, CEU Press, Budapest - London – New York 2000.

9 E.g.: Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996, pp. 30-43., 69-75; Laslo Sekelj, „Lehetséges-e a békebeli Jugoszlávia?” (Is peacetime Yugoslavia possible?) *Társadalmi Szemle*, Vol. XLIX., No. 7, July 1994, pp. 54-64.

frameworks of state maintained by Communist dictatorship as others thought (mostly, but not exclusively on the conservative-anticommunist and nationalist side). Overestimation of outside manipulation by the Great Powers and the internal fights of the elite groups (which tried to gain support in the race for recapitalisation with the help of ethnic mobilization) as reasons for disintegration could be heard from the Left. Of course, these statements contain important elements of truth, but the national heterogeneity of the three countries arose in a more complex way.

Nevertheless, the break-up was not a fatalistically inevitable consequence of national heterogeneity or the attempts to democratise. It was rather the result of the fact that after the 1970s the major changes in world economy, international and domestic policy lead to the disappearance of the dominant nations' *common interests* (which were, obviously, of different intensity regarding the formation or federalization of the three countries). Besides conflicts about emancipation and constitutional questions there were a number of additional factors which strengthened divergence and nationalization. The economic conditions and problems, the international perspectives, the social, cultural and civilizational characteristics of the member states were different. Consequently, they formulated various, and often contradicting strategies about economic reforms, the change of political system and the integration into a post-bipolar world order, thus they no longer had common political objectives that would have had some integrating power. The deficiencies and inconsistency of the federal administration system and its unsatisfactory quality which was unable to cope with the existing national-ethnic diversity even exacerbated the problems. In this context we could say that the fate of these federal states does not warn us about the dangers of exaggerated ethno-federalism, but rather about the risks associated with *insufficient* ethno-federalism: the break-up of Yugoslavia was a direct consequence of Milošević's attempts to recentralise, which represented a shift from the idea of multinational federalism, and the strengthening of Slovakian separatism was not independent from the Czech majority's rather centralist concept of federalism. The violence that accompanied the disintegration usually corresponded to the discrepancy of administrative and ethnic boundaries.

The *different forms* of break-ups, which basically took place at the same time and in similar international circumstances, can be explained by several unique factors. The most important of these was to what extent the nation enjoying hegemony in the "empire" was interested in the disintegration. The

more it was, the more it tolerated the others' secession. In fact, the fate of the Soviet Union was sealed by "Russian national emancipation", i.e. the opposition of the elite groups of the Yeltsin era to central power, and the Czechs, after recovering from their surprise about Slovak secessionism, soon discovered the opportunities offered by the "removal of the Slovakian ballast". The fast secession of Slovenia from the Yugoslav state could be explained with the latter factor too: after 1991 keeping Slovenia in Yugoslavia was not included in Great Serbian plans any more. We can also mention the differences in political culture (the Czechs, the Serbs and the Russians experienced the disintegration of their "empires" in different ways), and the moderating effect that the deterrent of the wars in Yugoslavia had on the two other federations. It is also important that the tensions caused by the break-up were softened by several factors in the cases of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. In the Soviet Union such a factor was the international demand to pass on the atomic arsenal in a regulated way, the foundation of the Community of Independent States, and the fact that many Russians living in the Baltic States and the Ukraine were ready to accept the independence of their republics in the hope of better living conditions. In Czechoslovakia the maintenance of the customs union and the wide range of benefits that either state offered to the citizens of the other country had an effect of easing tension. The differences in the volume of national disintegration were also important. Given the discrepancies between the ethnic borders and the borders of the member states, disintegration sometimes meant that certain nations were divided, and parts of them were placed outside their state as national minorities. Among the dominant nations of the three Socialist federations, this proportion was the highest in the case of the Serbs (24%, but if the provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo are also included, it is 40%), in the case of the Russians it was only 17%, which was lower than the Croatians' 22%, while the Czechs did not have to face this problem at all.<sup>10</sup>

#### STABILIZING FACTORS OF ETHNO-FEDERATIONS

Based on the break-up of the Socialist federations and the problems of other ethnically divided federal states we can identify some circumstances

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10 Sources: Die Ethnostruktur der Länder Südosteuropas aufgrund der beiden letzten Volkszählungen im Zeitraum 1977-1992, *Südosteuropa*, 42. Jahrgang, 1993, Heft 1., esp. pp. 78-80; Kardos, József and Simándi, Irén (eds.), *Európai politikai rendszerek* (Political Systems in Europe), Osiris, Budapest 2002, pp. 86-87, 147, 292, 343, 668, 810, 840.

which can contribute to – though, of course, cannot guarantee – the success of ethno-federalism and its continuously satisfactory ability to function for all, or at least all the major ethnic groups. Some of these factors are *not parts* of the federal structure itself, like economic prosperity, social and regional balance and, obviously, political democracy. If these are absent, in spite of all the sophistication and meticulous construction of the federal framework, the socio-economic equality of the ethnic groups will sooner or later be harmed and a psychosis of exploitation will develop in which any other alternatives might look better than the existing system.

One of the keys to success of ethno-federalism is *state-nation integration*. Such unification provides cohesion much more than anything else: Switzerland is more stable than any ethno-federations in the world, which is based on the fact that each linguistic-ethnic, religious or cantonal identity is just a group identity subordinate to the common patriotism of its citizens. The development of such a feeling of belonging together takes a long time, but it can be easier if there is a majority nation and there are no substantial differences between the ethnic groups, i.e. no strong and parallel social, cultural and religious diversities, and no historical revanchism. The importance of these is well illustrated by the comparison in the cases of Switzerland and Yugoslavia. The ethnic groups in Switzerland developed its bourgeois society more or less simultaneously, they all belonged to Western Christianity (and the dividing lines were not between the ethnic groups but inside them), and they had been defending their independence together for centuries. These circumstances counterbalanced the ethnopolitical fraction lines that occasionally surfaced, e.g. the different perception of World War I by the Germans and the French, thus Switzerland could become united. Southern Slavic peoples, on the other hand, ranged from Western-like social structures to Byzantine and Ottoman structures, and from Catholicism to Orthodox Christianity and Islam; some of them already possessed a firm base of independent national identity when the country was founded; the ethnic, religious and economic lines within the country roughly coincided; and the psychosis for a showdown appeared on several occasions. Therefore, in Yugoslavia, linguistic-ethnic kinship, unitarism enforced by power and (often really voluntary!) multiethnic political cooperation together could not counterbalance these deep differences, and that was the reason for the development of separate nations.

It is obvious that the stability of ethno-federations can be facilitated by an *ideal demographic structure*. We could already see in the cases of

American-German type federations that their stability is mainly due to national homogeneity. National homogeneity does not necessarily mean ethnic homogeneity, though there is a majority ethnic group in the former case too, like the historically dominant group of WASPs (white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant) in the United States. The more demographic (but not institutional or political!) dominance the majority ethnic group enjoys, the more stable an ethno-federation is (in general, but especially when state-nation integration is weak). That is one of the reasons why the outlook for the new federal Russian state is better than that of the Soviet federation used to be. The ratio of Russians has grown from 52% to 82%, and they live together with minority peoples, who – with one or two exceptions (like the Chechens) – agree to live in one state. Another reason why demographic structure is important is that an ethnic minority with secessionist potentials (due to its population number, its location near the borders or its external support) can become a destabilizing factor.

It is also an important aspect that the federal state of different national and ethnic minorities is not limited to federalism in the sense of territorial autonomism. One reason for this is that it is often impossible to draw territorial lines between ethnic groups. For the solution to this problem it could be helpful to include *cultural autonomy on a personal basis* in the structure (which can unite a minority irrespective of its geographical location), and the implementation of consocial techniques at *intra-regional* level (which can ensure the protection of local minorities – which can include people belonging to the majority population of the whole state – against the regional majority). It is perhaps even more significant that the organization of the state, besides ensuring self-government, must employ the principle of power-sharing at federal level as no local autonomy can compensate a minority against its under-representation in the central power. That is why it can be important that besides classical federalist tools (bicameral federal parliament, etc.) further *consensual-consocial governmental techniques* must be employed in the central power (all-party coalition, minority veto, proportionality in the elections system and the central executive apparatus – police, administration, judiciary, a balance in the use of languages, and the cooperative attitude of political elite groups). These forms can, of course, result in overcomplicated and inefficient government, but this is not inevitable, and it can also be a kind of “price” that might be worth paying to some extent in order to achieve a balance in governance. And since consensual techniques can be adapted more easily

into a parliamentary form of government than into a presidential one, in general we can say that a parliamentary system can provide better conditions for a democratic ethno-federation than a presidential one does.

From the aspect of *legitimacy* of ethno-federations, the act of foundation and its *voluntary* character are of crucial importance. Ethno-federations in Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia show the symptoms of forced unification and maintenance in many respects, that is why their legitimacy is doubtful, especially for some of their minorities. Western ethno-federations, on the other hand, were born as a union of different state formations (Switzerland), or as an internal division aiming at the maintenance of the state (Belgium), or even the combination of these (Canada). Of course, the voluntary nature was not absolute in these cases either, and it characterized the formation of other ethno-federations to some extent too. Let us just think of the Sonderbund War in Switzerland, for instance (in the civil war in 1847, just before the enactment of the first federal constitution the liberal-Protestant cantons defeated the Catholic-conservative cantons), or the foundation of the Canadian federation (which happened as a unification of three British colonies in 1867, but at the same time Canada was divided into two provinces, Ontario and Quebec, that is why it can be described as a combinative foundation) when the francophone elite of Quebec could hardly opt for independence. On the other hand, the birth of the second Yugoslavia was the consequence of a *multiethnic* anti-fascist war, and in 1945 most bourgeois parties (though they sharply objected to the Communists' policy on a number of questions) contemplated some kind of a Southern Slavic federation. Nevertheless, we can say that the voluntary nature was more characteristic of the three Western countries. In these three states federalization was based on the consent of the representative political elites of the ethnic groups concerned, and it could gain more legitimacy in the eyes of the population.

Finally, the *innovative abilities* of the federative system are of major importance. That is one of the reasons why the instruments of consensual democracy are significant, and these are especially crucial in the cases of *multinational* forms of ethno-federations. In spite of all its decision-delaying effects, this set of instruments can make the best political framework, in which the common interests of the constitutive elements of multinational federations can be *renewable*. It is this innovative ability that creates – in democratic conditions – the stability and cohesion of multinational federations, as common interests are “not forever”, they can change

according to a number of internal and external factors, they can even disappear (despite the good performance of federative institutions!), or they can appear again. The fact that the revival of federal states in Eastern Europe was not successful does not mean that the model of multinational federations is *ab ovo* unviable. Moreover, it is the – at least partial – adoption of multinational techniques that can consolidate those federal states which are borderline cases in the multiethnic-multinational model, where at least one part of the population has a strong distinct identity. In these countries an *asymmetrical federation* can be a framework in which it is possible to institutionalise the acceptable extra rights of regions significantly different from the whole of the country and the majority of the federal units (like francophone Quebec in Canada). Due to the absence of a European political nation, a combative integralist federalism can be one of the greatest threats to the future of the European Union, which, though in the spirit of noble post-national values, is trying to curb the inter-state and consensual decision-making mechanisms, and thus indirectly multinational techniques.

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## **ETNO-FEDERALIZAM: IZAZOVI I MOGUĆNOSTI**

### **REZIME**

Autor analizira ulogu, mogućnosti i domete federalizma u upravljanju etničkim konfliktima. Iz ovog ugla on prikazuje tri osnovna tipa savremenih saveznih država. Jedna od ovih je mononacionalna federacija. Ove savezne države (na primer SAD, Savezna Republika Nemačka, Austrija) etnički nisu bezuslovno homogene, ali im države-članice nisu etnoregionalne celine, a stanovništvo im integriše zajednički nacionalni identitet. U ovom slučaju se federalizam samo u istorijskom smislu vezuje za nacionalno pitanje – on je svojevremeno bio sredstvo uspostavljanja jedinstva nacionalne države, dok danas služi kao institucija teritorijalne podele vlasti. U multietničkim federacijama, na primer u Švajcarskoj, Indiji, današnjoj Rusiji, je bar deo republika etnoregionalnog karaktera, a jezički-etnički element se javlja i među organizacionim principima centralne vlasti. Znači federalizam se u ovim slučajevima ne samo istorijski, već i u strukturalnom i funkcionalnom smislu vezuje za nacionalno pitanje: ima bitnu ulogu u institucionalizovanju nacionalnih-etničkih razlika i u zaštiti manjina. Multinacionalne federacije, kao što su bivše socijalističke savezne države, današnja Bosna i Hercegovina (a po federacionim trendovima ovde se može svrstati i Evropska unija) u mnogome liče na multietničku formu; kod ovih federacija, međutim, javlja se jedna suštinska razlika. Naime dok stanovništvo multietničkih federacija integriše državni patriotizam, svest o zajedničkoj političkoj naciji, dotle u multinacionalnoj formi etničke grupe imaju samostalni nacionalni identitet. Zato ih njihova lojalnost vezuje pre svega za sopstvene države-članice i samo u drugom redu, preko njih za savez. Stoga preživljavanje multinacionalnih saveznih sistema može da se zasniva samo na trajnoj političkoj interesnoj zajednici pojedinih naroda.

Autor zatim analizira osnovna stanovišta u savremenoj političkoj teoriji o ulozi federalizma u upravljanju nacionalnim i etničkim konfliktima: mesijanističke federalističke ideologije, francusku republikansku tradiciju, te američko liberalno viđenje. Potom se u studiji predstavljaju najznačajnije karakteristike bivših socijalističkih federacija, i ukratko analiziraju uzroci njihovih raspada. Autor smatra da su te savezne države (sovjetska, jugoslovenska i čehoslovačka) formalno odgovarale definiciji federacije, te da su čak u nekim pogledima, na primer u načelno deklarisanom pravu na otcepljenje, pružale više državama članicama nego demokratske zapadne federacije. One su se, međutim, pokazale samo kao pseudo-federacije i nisu ostvarile formalno ustanovljene ideološke pretpostavke - ravnopravnost i uravnotežen suživot nacija. Politički sistem im je bio centralizovan i autoritativan, vlast je monopolistički pripadala jednoj partiji, a struktura vladajućih komunističkih partija ni u principu nije pratila federativnu formu državne sfere. Zato je federalizam u praksi dolazio do izražaja samo delimično, i samo u određenim periodima reformi, na primer kada se u bivšoj SFR Jugoslaviji ideja o decentralizaciji pojavila u partiji; pokazalo se da je krajnji domet takve decentralizacije bez demokratizacije bio labavljenje prvobitno centralizovanog sistema u formi policentrične jednopartijske države.

Raspad istočnoevropskih multinacionalnih federacija je usko povezan, ukazuje autor, sa urušavanjem socijalističkih društava. Manjak političke demokratije, kriza birokratskog centralističkog planiranja, inter-regionalne debate oko podele ekonomskih dobara i obaveza, pokazale su se kao dezintegracioni faktori. Ove federacije, isto tako, nisu uspele da se izbore sa izazovima koji su proistekli iz sloma bipolarnog svetskog poretka. Glavni uzrok raspada svih ovih federacija je ipak bio u tome što su zbog različitih unutrašnjih i međunarodnih razloga nestali zajednički politički interesi koji su dotle integrisali političke elite. Različita forma raspada triju socijalističkih federacija - "plišana" čehoslovačka, haotična sovjetska i ratna jugoslovenska - najviše se može objasniti različitim stepenom diskrepancije između etničkih i administrativnih granica. Zato su se najveće napetosti javile tamo gde je raspad starog saveznog sistema najviše pretio da će pojedini narodi živeti u više država.

Na kraju autor ukazuje koji su najbitniji faktori stabilnosti višenacionalnih federacija. Po njemu to su visok stepen integrisanosti u zajedničku političku naciju, odgovarajuća demografska struktura, ekonomsko-društvena ravnopravnost etničkih grupa, primena konsensualnih tehnika upravljanja, garantovanje manjinskih prava na intra-regionalnom nivou, kooperativni odnos političkih elita, te inovativna sposobnost demokratskog političkog sistema.