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The Boundaries of the Transnationality Framework

Book Review

Tristan James Mabry, John McGarry, Margaret Moore, Brendan O'Leary (eds). 2013. *Divided Nations and European Integration.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 405 pp.

'David Nations and European Integration' (henceforth 'David Nations') is an important book because it breaks with the post-Second World War framework to account for 'divided nations'. It proposes a paradigmatic shift to which scholars of Central and Eastern European history can subscribe to. Although the concept of 'divided nations' has been around in the scientific literature (see for example Stephen Borsody (ed.), *The Hungarians: a Divided Nation*. New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1988), it has been contested and it certainly has not been represented in mainstream scholarly literature. The post-Second World War consensus on ethno-linguistic allegiances has been dependent on the Westphalian arrangement for European inter-state relations. In accordance with this, the editors of 'Divided Nations' distinguish two positions, including the integrationist position, namely its stronger version stating that a state can only host one nation at a time, and its weaker form, the accommodationist position, that allows ethno-linguist minority groups some sort of space for maintaining and cultivating their language and culture different from the majority nation. However, the Westphalian system is undermined by 'transnationality' as one of the defining features of globalization what has led to the 'softening' of borders. As a result, the whole concept of 'ethno-linguistic allegiances' straddling borders is on the agenda again. The topic has been put on the agenda by influential scholars, such as Roger Brubakers and Will Kymlicka, who have been accommodating ethno-linguistic allegiances, minority rights and groups within a liberal democratic framework in which group rights are normally perceived as problematic.

'Divided Nations,' edited by Tristan James Mabry, John McCarry, Margaret Moore, and Brendan O'Leary, goes beyond the premises of Brubaker and Kymlicka reflecting upon the boundaries of the transnationality framework, although taking the work of Brubaker and Kymlicka as a starting-point. The editors of this volume consider ethno-linguistic allegiances equally legitimate as

a means for creating cohesive structures as nation-states dominated by a majority culture as an outcome of the Westphalian axioms. Much of the empirical case studies in 'Divided Nations' are related to the European Union, more precisely to its expansionist programme of integrating new states, which is a transnational strategy par excellence. Due to the integrative process, the ethno-linguistic groups and minorities are 'reunited' with their kin-state, so to speak.

It is too easy to accuse the editors of embracing the ideology of 'nationalism' that has been the main motivation to get rid of the 'divided nations' in the Westphalian framework in the first place. 'Nationalism' has been seen in the EU as a menace for stability and peace if nation-states are internally divided or nation-states expand into neighbouring states. The latter has been excluded almost totally by the fact that the rights of the kin-state to protect its external minorities in the international system of states has not been self-evident in the Westphalian age. In the primordial versus modernist debate, Mabry et al. adopt the modernist interpretation of nation-states. They consider nations to be constructed, but they hasten to add that they are real entities which can be studied insightfully in a political-social theory (p. 5), and in fact they should be studied because the present-day transnationalist framework offers a reliable paradigm to understand the political-social discourse that is enfolding. The Brubakerian triadic nexus, or its extension, the quadratic nexus, including supranational organizations, replaces the formerly branded 'kin-state irredentism'. After nailing down the starting position of this study on divided nations, the case studies fall into place.

The subject of the book is carefully described in the introductory chapter by John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary. According to them, 'Divided Nations' discusses 'the development of nations and national homelands divided by sovereign borders within and around the current and prospective frontier of the European Union (EU)' (p. 2). They define 'divided nations' as follows: 'Divided nations are nations separated by states' (p. 4). Definitions and terminology are relevant because the new transnationalist paradigm requires a different nomenclature from the Westphalian one. Hence, you can find phrases in the book for indicating 'national and ethnic minorities that have a kin-state' drafted as 'segments of divided nations' or to underline the clear transnational dimension as 'divided nations straddle states, or borders'. Examples of divided nations to be discussed in the book are the Hungarians in Central and Eastern Europe, including Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, and Austria and the Irish in Northern Ireland as part of the UK and the Irish Republic (p. 3).

Apart from the Introduction and Conclusion – which are both written by John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary –, the book includes another ten chapters. Chapter 1 and 2 are written by Margaret Moore and Tristan James Mabry respectively. Moore places the issue of divided nations in the context of global justice theory and Mabry relates divided nations to language politics and provides a taxonomy

for language types distinguishing concepts such as 'official' language, 'national' language, 'minority' language, and so on (pp. 58–59). The taxonomy helps us to understand that the language law in the EU member-state Slovakia, i.e. the Slovak Language Act, is exclusive and counter to the spirit of the EU. The Act turns the use of non-Slovak languages in the official public space on the territory of Slovakia illegal. This is a clear violation of the minority rights of Hungarians, Germans, Roma, Ruthenians, and other nationalities (p. 81). The other eight chapters in the book discuss case studies. In these case studies, the 'divided nations' framework' outlined by McGarry and O'Leary is more or less adopted by the authors.

The case studies can be ordered into three groups, including firstly divided nations that are within the borders of the EU, such as Irish (compare Etain Tannam, Chapter 8), Basques (see Zoe Bray and Michael Keating, Chapter 4), Germans (see Stefan Wolff, Chapter 9), and Greeks (see Tozun Bahcheli and Sid Noel, Chapter 10); secondly, divided nations that are partly within the European Union, such as Hungarians (Zsuzsa Csergő and James M. Goldgeier, Chapter 3) and Croats (Marsaili Fraser, Chapter 7); and thirdly, divided nations that are not yet within the EU but are on its borders and near its prospective borders, such as Albanians (consider Alexandra Channer, Chapter 5), Serbs (see Marsaili Fraser, Chapter 7), Kurds (see David Romano, Chapter 6), and Turks (consider Tozun Bahcheli and Sid Noel, Chapter 10). Most of the authors operate with concepts like triadic and quadratic nexus, including the nationalizing state, kin-state, its external minority and the role and function of supranational organizations (see also László Marácz, *The Politics of Multilingual Communication: Case Studies and Research Agendas*, in: Sarah Craze and Frieder Lempp, eds, Communicating Conflict: A Multidisciplinary Perspective, Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 45–63). Note furthermore that there is a rich variation of kin-state strategies.

This point is elaborated extensively in an interesting paper by Csergő and Goldgeier, which touches upon important methodological issues (Chapter 3). The authors compare the kin-state strategies of Russia, Hungary, and Romania (p. 92). They observe that these three kin-states pursue a different policy with respect to their external minorities. The two extreme cases are Hungary and Russia, while Romania is positioned somewhere in the middle. Hungary has been most active in supporting its external Hungarian minorities in Central and Eastern Europe, while Russia – although opting for the status of a regional power – has not demonstrated much interest in its external minorities for nation-building (p. 97). The differences in attitude between the kin-states are explained in the paper in terms of a set of vectors, like national canon, the historiography, geography, and demographic statistics that can vary and may be of importance in the process of nation-building. These vectors can not only change from kin-state to kin-state but they can also change over time, as the recent conflict between Ukraine and

Russia over the Crimea and Eastern Ukraine clearly demonstrates. Although the Russian kin-state did not demonstrate much interest in its external kin-minorities for nation-building until now, due to security reasons, Russia has changed its attitude towards its Russian co-nationals in Eastern Ukraine from almost passive into pro-active or even aggressive.

In the closing chapter of McGarry and O'Leary, *The Exaggerated Impact of European Integration on the Politics of Divided Nations*, the authors point out that fundamental rights do not hold in the EU, like the respect for the right to territorial self-government, the most essential demand of any sizable national minority (p. 357); the territorial integrity and sovereignty of neighbouring states is not universally respected across the EU (p. 346). Both cases have resulted in continuous tensions and instabilities in the old Westphalian framework. The questions are not solved by the European integration either. The impact of the European integration has been uneven and the authors even claim that the politics of divided nations has been exaggerated (p. 361). A number of delicate issues in the domain of divided nations are in limbo. Hence, generalizations including all the above case studies are not easy to make. McGarry and O'Leary argue convincingly that the distinction between ethnic Eastern European nationalism and civic Western nationalism, as has been argued by Hans Kohn and others, is artificial and incorrect (p. 362). France takes an assimilationist position towards its own internal minorities comparable to Greece and the kin-state Ireland follows an expansive strategy towards Northern Ireland, comparable to Serbia which wants to include the Bosnian Republika Serpska. McGarry and O'Leary convincingly demonstrate that it is not the different type of nationalism what counts but a different path of nation-building or self-projection of the national-identity that is responsible for the differences in Europe (p. 366). Taking into account this all-over-Europe point of view, the Hungarian historic Szeklerland (Hungarian: Székelyföld, Romanian: Ținutul Secuiesc), consisting of the Romanian provinces Harghita, Covasna, and Mureş, where Hungarians claim to have a majority in the Romanian region of Transylvania, is in fact a non-recognized sub-national or regional exclave. However, Szeklerland is no longer an exotic, far-away territory in Transylvania. It can be insightfully studied and classified by positioning Szeklerland – where Hungarians enjoy general personal language rights, although restricted by territorial conditions – between the Spanish Basque Country (Basque: Euskadi, Spanish: País Vasco) that enjoys territorial autonomy and the French Basque Country (Basque: Iparralde, French: Pays basque français) that is an anathema for France (p. 361).

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