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Esperanto and the Market State

Abstrakt (Esperanto i państwo rynkowe). Państwo narodowe jest modelem rządu skupiającym główne grupy etniczne, językowe bądź kulturowe na wspólnym terytorium. Jego początki pochodzą z XVII i XVIII wieku i było najpowszechniejszym modelem Państwa w XIX i XX wieku. W tym modelu uzasadnienie dla rządu wynika z dostarczania usług obywatelom (np. edukacja, infrastruktura, zabezpieczenie społeczne). Esperanto jest produktem ery państwa narodowego i wiele symboli i struktur ruchu esperanckiego związanych jest z ideami państwa narodowego. Obecnie natomiast według wielu analityków i publicystów, ten model organizacji państwa chyli się ku upadkowi, a wyłania się nowy model państwa, często określanymi jako państwo rynkowe. W państwie rynkowym relacje między obywatelem i rządem, tak jak między samymi rządami, ulegają daleko idącym przemianom. Ten artykuł omówi możliwości i przeszkody dla ruchu esperanckiego wynikające z tego nowego modelu państwa.

Abstract. The nation state is a form of government that merges a dominant ethnic or culture group with a political entity on a shared territory. It dates from the 17th and 18th centuries and it was the dominant state form in the 19th and 20th centuries. In this model, government legitimacy stems from providing services (such as education, infrastructure and social programs) to the citizenry. Esperanto is a product of the nation state period and much of the symbolism and structure of the Esperanto movement is tied to nation state ideas. At present however, according to many social and political analysts, this form of state organization is now in decline and a new state form, often referred to as the market state, is emerging. In the market state the relationship between citizens and governments, as well as governments with each other, undergo profound, far reaching changes. This article examines opportunities and obstacles that this new state form poses for the Esperanto movement.

Introduction

The original goal of the Esperanto movement was to change the way people communicated across linguistic barriers. The original name of the language was *Lingvo Internacia* (International language). The meaning of the word international has changed

in some languages. Zamenhof's original motivation in creating a neutral auxiliary language is usually traced from his experiences of living in a multi-lingual city within a single polity, the Russian Empire. His usage of the word *internacia* was probably influenced by the Russian word национальность, usually translated into English as *nationality* but closer in meaning to the modern term *ethnic group*.

Nonetheless as the movement grew the mainstream, or larger focus evolved away from bridging language differences within countries and towards the use of Esperanto between different countries speaking different languages. The movement, however, is decentralized and other rationales for cultivating the language exist. Of note is Raumism (*raŭmismo*), first articulated in the Manifesto of Rauma (Manifesto de Raŭmo), written at an International Youth Congress (*Internacia Junulara Kongreso*) held by the World Esperanto Youth Organization TEJO (*Tutmonda Esperantista Junulara Organizo*) in the Finnish city of Rauma in 1980. It seeks to disengage from formal political processes in favor of cultivating Esperanto for its own sake among a „self-selected diaspora linguistic minority” (original: *mem elektita diaspora lingva minoritato*). This is similar to Wood's 1979 description of Esperanto speakers as “A Voluntary Non-ethnic, Non-territorial Speech Community”.

The goal of this article is to examine the current process of evolution of state structures, more specifically it addresses movement away from the nation state model that dominated socio-political and economic organization in the 20th century toward a new model, often referred to as the Market-State. It also will discuss some of the challenges and opportunities that these pose to the Esperanto movement in its goal of dispersing or at least maintaining Esperanto as an effective tool of cross linguistic communication. The study is preliminary in nature and does not represent a summary of research carried out but rather a survey of ongoing political trends with discussion of how these are likely to influence the Esperanto movement along with suggested directions for future research.

Functioning of the Nation State

There are a number of different definitions of the term nation state. Most concentrate on the ethno-cultural nature of the population. The strictest definitions require a single ethno-national group to form a large majority of the population and for most members of the group to live within the territory of the nation state.

In this view the rise of the nation state is tied to the concept of nationalism. While some elements of nationalism can be traced back to ancient times, according to Kohn (1944) the idea became fully formalized only in the latter part of the 18th century. Anderson (1983) pointed out that much nationalism is largely socially constructed as limited (so that not all belong to the nationality) and sovereign which delegitimizes government as a function of divine ordination and repurposes the mission of govern-

ment to safeguard the interests of the nation. The material and military success of this model was such that it soon became the dominant governmental form. Therefore in this article the term nation state refers less to the ethnic makeup of the population and more to a particular form of government. Even more specifically it refers to a particular kind of relationship between government and citizens that has its origins in the rise of the nationalism but which expanded beyond that narrow base. This model does require some form of national unity to function but it does not have to be ethno-national or linguistic in nature.

Most crucially, as outlined by Bobbit (2008) the core of this model has to do with the way the government justifies its rule. The model is that the government does what it can to improve living standards for citizens. Toward this end it provides services for them including the maintenance of systems of law, the development of infrastructure as well as educational and social safety net programs. This represents a break from previous systems of government where citizen well-being was only a passing concern of government. But these services are not provided for free. In return for increasing living standards, the government expects that when it asks citizens for their support, as in times of war, the citizenry is expected to volunteer its support.

This is the model followed, either successfully or not, by virtually all countries in the 20th century. It should be noted that many of the most successful states in this period were not nation states in the classical sense but nonetheless followed the model of citizen loyalty in return for government services.

A key feature of the nation state model is a high degree of vertical integration. That is the government not only represents the citizenry but has much in common with it in terms of ethno-national origin, language and culture. This has its origins in ideas of nationalism where the government is a direct representative of the nation and therefore must be seen as emerging from it. There is only a small degree of horizontal integration (between governments) and it is accepted that different states will organize themselves differently.

The Emergence of the Market State

According to many social and political analysts, the nation state form of organization is now in decline. A new state form is said to be emerging, named the market state by Bobbit (2008). In the market state the relationships between citizens and governments undergo profound, far reaching changes. The manner in which governments interact with each other changes as well.

The primary change is that in the market state the government de-prioritizes providing services for the population. Instead, it indirectly provides opportunities for citizens by attracting capital which has been freed of geographic restrictions. In extreme cases, attracting capital becomes the primary mission of the government.

Also in the market state, vertical integration within the state is replaced by horizontal integration between states. The goal is for governments to work with each other in order to provide security and to solve problems that are too large for single states to engage with. These include diffuse non-local problems such as terrorism, international migration caused by socio-political disruptions or climate change.

Internally, the make up of the citizenry is also changed. There is very little vertical integration and there is no presumed cultural or ethno-national continuity between the government and the citizenry or between citizens. Justin Trudeau, the Prime Minister of Canada famously spoke on this (New York Times Magazine, 2015):

There is no core identity, no mainstream in Canada... There are shared values – openness, respect, compassion, willingness to work hard, to be there for each other, to search for equality and justice. Those qualities are what make us the first postnational state.

Some of these processes are a natural result of globalization where previous geographic diversity of populations has been largely replaced by local social diversity within single locations.

This emerging change in state form can be helpful in understanding many ongoing conflicts in Europe (and the ‘West’ in general). The two sides are those who welcome and/or seek to hasten the arrival of the market state and those who resist in favor of maintaining more traditional nation state models.

The result of the electoral referendum on whether the United Kingdom should remain in the European Union or leave (Brexit) can be understood as a disagreement between those benefitting from the erosion of state boundaries („remainers”) and those who have not benefitted and who favor of retaining the nation state models (pro-Brexit). Similarly presidential elections in the United States and France also revolved around candidates representing either a traditional nation state (Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders, Marie Le Pen) and those representing a move toward the market state (Hillary Clinton, Emmanuel Macron).

The refugee crisis which peaked in 2015 and the ongoing disagreements on how to handle migration within the European Union also reveal the same dynamic. Those politicians who facilitate the arrival and dispersal of migrants are following a market state ethos while those more oriented more toward the nation state show greater reluctance in housing refugees or other migrants within their borders.

The attitude can be seen in the widely reported practice of European governments redirecting resources away from services to citizens and toward the facilitation of migrant arrival. A Swedish woman whose farm had been robbed repeatedly was upset that police told her that resources were stretched so thin due to the migrant crisis that they could not help her and suggested joining with neighbors to patrol each other’s properties. This led to one of the clearest expressions, from the citizen point of view, of the changing relationship between the citizen and the no-longer nation state (Svenska Dagbladet, 2016): “Are the State and I now in agreement that our mutual contract is being renegotiated?” (original: *Är jag och staten överens om att kontraktet mellan oss nu omförhandlas?*).

The Market State and the Economy

The emergence of the market state is very much tied up with economic ideas especially those of Fordism and later Neoliberalism. Fordism refers to a system mass production of standardized products and requires a relatively stable labor force to be economically viable and relative job security and internal job ladders for promotion are features of Fordism as is buttressing by the state in the form of short term welfare for citizens in times of dislocation.

Neoliberalism on the other hand refers to the resurgence of 19th century ideas of *laissez faire* economic liberalism and practices such as the privatization of state run economic entities, deregulation of industries and the expansion of international free trade zones. It also represents a partial withdrawal of government support for economically vulnerable segments of society as it posits strict limits on social spending.

This coincided with a process described by Bauman (2004) in which people in western societies transformed from being producers to being consumers. The old tradeoff of giving up a degree of freedom for the security of steady employment was reversed as people willingly relinquished security for greater freedom to purchase and consume. In the market state the fundamental tenets of Fordism no longer operate as standardized mass-production is replaced by just-in-time-manufacturing and often corporate goals are re-oriented toward facilitating interactions between sellers and buyers. As one analyst (TechCrunch, 2015) said:

Uber, the world's largest taxi company, owns no vehicles. Facebook, the world's most popular media owner, creates no content. Alibaba, the most valuable retailer, has no inventory. And Airbnb, the world's largest accommodation provider, owns no real estate. Something interesting is happening.

The retreat from standardized mass-production that characterized Fordism has been accompanied by a retreat from the steady full-time employment needed by Fordism as well. This is especially characterized by young adults entering the labor market and finding either that there are no positions or a series of part-time contingent positions. This development has been labeled the "Gig Economy" in which with prospects for internal promotion are replaced by precariousness and the necessity of frequent movement from one job to another. As of 2015 over half of all new jobs were temporary contracts according to Eurostat (New York Times, 2015). This is one aspect of what Bauman (2012) refers to as „liquid modernity" where individuals flow from one identity or life-situation to another as the ties to traditional economic structures are severed.

Despite this, a yet underestimated function of the government in the market state is as a pseudo-employer of last resort. Within the last 10 years the number of practice firms (government funded virtual companies in which pseudo-employees carry out simulated business activities) has increased and presently thousands of practice firms are in operation across the European continent.

Language in the Market State

In terms of language in the EU, the idea of a Multilingual EU supported by translation and interpretation services when governments meet is rooted in the model in which nation states have a high degree of internal autonomy. At present, increasingly in the EU, English is the default language of any cross linguistic communication. The position of English as a default or ‘world reserve language’ is a feature of the market state.

Interestingly, at the height of the 2015 refugee crisis, one famous photograph, endlessly repeated in the international media, showed a group of young Germans holding up a sign in English to welcome new arrivals reading “Refugees welcome”. What is odd here is the choice of language (echoed in many other signs, also repeated in the media). Rather than a message of welcome written in German (the language of the country they wanted to reach) or Arabic (the language of most of the migrants) the choice was a language with no real cultural connection to the hosts or the new arrivals. In one way, this can be regarded as a welcome to a market state rather than a nation state. Similarly, many of the complications that have arisen in the intervening years, such as the failure of many refugees to learn German (Handelsblatt Global Edition, 2018) are continuing manifestations of the emerging market state reality. Similarly, the rise of populist parties are largely a nation state based reaction to the practical problems of assimilating large numbers of migrants from a very different cultural background.

The Esperanto movement and Nation State Symbolism

Esperanto is very much a product of the nation state period. While it was born within the Russian Empire which did not follow nation state forms of government, its early expansion was largely in the more nation state countries of western Europe. And although early intellectual support of the Esperanto movement, or more broadly the movement to create an international auxiliary language was openly anational, professing cosmopolitanist ideals (Aray, 2017) other early supporters began applying nation state symbolism to the movement.

For example there is an Esperanto flag. Originally created by a local club in the French city of Boulogne-sur-Mer it was adopted as a symbol during the first World Esperanto Congress (*Universala Kongreso*), which was held in that city in 1905. It could easily be mistaken for a national flag (a green field with a green star in a white square in the upper left-hand corner). It is still used extensively within the movement and is used on the internet in some of the same ways that national flags are used, for example to link to Esperanto versions of web pages.

There is also an Esperanto anthem, a poem by L. L. Zamenhof, *The Hope* (*La Espero*) set to a triumphal march by the French Esperantist Félicien Menu de Ménil

in 1909 (other musical settings also exist). In addition, the community of speakers is often referred to by Esperantists as *Esperantujo* (Esperantoland). This mimics the way that names for most European countries were formed by adding the ending *-ujo* (roughly ‘container’) to the names of nationalities, so that France is *FranCUjo* (place where French people are found).

There is even a group that sees itself as trying to establish legal grounds for representing Esperanto speakers internationally with a federal structure, the *Esperanta Civito* (Esperanto Citizenship). It should be mentioned that this is a highly controversial idea within the broader Esperanto movement and most Esperantists distance themselves from it.

Esperanto in the Market State

The market state, and the current de facto spread of English that accompanies it certainly provides many obstacles to the traditional Esperanto movement. One of the earliest articulated goals of the Esperanto movement was the *fina venko* (literally ‘final victory’ or the universal acceptance of Esperanto as an auxiliary language). But this idea in itself is deeply rooted in nation state thinking as it depends on government good will.

The idea is that national governments or international bodies will sooner or later accept Esperanto as a superior solution to various language problems and take a leading role in its dispersal for the good of the citizenry. This is exceedingly unlikely in the current trajectory. In the market state communication among governments is important (and already accomplished through English) while communication among the citizenry or between citizens of different countries is not a primary concern.

On the other hand, the market state also provides (mostly still undiscovered) opportunities for the Esperanto movement. Indeed, the movement has demonstrated a number of times that it works well within the ethos of the market state. Indeed, at times it seems to precipitate developments.

A good example is the *Pasporta Servo* (Passport Service). While it is not the first such hospitality service it is arguably one of the most highly developed and durable. Its origins, under a different name, reach back to 1966 and has existed in its current incarnation since 1974. Maintained by TEJO, it is a registry of those willing to host Esperanto speakers in their homes for up to three days at no cost. It currently lists 974 hosts in 81 different countries. While the Passport Service is a non-commercial venture, later commercial ventures such as Airbnb or Uber seem to mimic some of its structure of a middleman service provider.

Many Esperanto organizations and events are similar to this in being broad, geographically diverse and horizontally integrated projects. Esperantists in general are arguably better than English speakers at integrating people with different values. English due to its double duty as both an international language and a carrier of specific national identities (Farris, 2014) requires non-native speakers to assimilate to native norms while the non-aligned nature of Esperanto prioritizes negotiated rather than mandated unity.

It is far too early to draw any firm conclusions on how the Esperanto movement will fare in the emerging market state reality. But the 1980 Manifesto of Rauma, seems to offer clues on possible fruitful strategies. What is striking, in light of the developments of recent years, is how prescient the manifesto is in its disavowal of the search for official recognition within a given timeframe: “official recognition of Esperanto is neither probably nor essential in the 1980s” (*la oficialigo de Esperanto estas nek verŝajna nek esenca dum la 80aj jaroj*). What also seems ahead of its time is the manifesto’s embrace of Esperanto as a decentralized linguistic and cultural interface for individuals rather than a top down imposed means of communication. It is almost as if the world might some day catch up with the Esperanto movement over 35 years ago.

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