
Development of Monarchies and the Process of Political Integration

Summary of “The history of World Economy, The development of Political Economy by Javier Anton Pelayo and Antoni Simón Tarrés

by **George N Njenga**

1. New Form of Imperial Monarchies

From the 13th Century, the Pope and the Emperor, asserted themselves as superior to all. There was nevertheless a renewed understanding of the role of the majesty, which until then had been the preserve of the emperors. The new Monarchs manoeuvred to take control of regions and states through war supported by doctrinal exegesis and extensive propaganda.

1.1 The Loss of Papal Authority

In the Christian world, Papal authority went beyond Doctrine issues into the ambit of politics. The Pope began participating in secular activities and was supported by requisite doctrinal interpretation as found in the works of key intellectuals such as Hugo de San Victor, St Bernard of Clairvaux, John of Salisbury, St Thomas Aquinas and Egidio Romano. These Politico-religious rational also affected questions of Clerical appointments, Church income, and the administration of justice.

Acrimony between the monarchs and the Pope was ignited. This acrimony undermined both authorities at different levels. The reason was simply that the Pope had both spiritual/moral authority and at the same time secular authority. When Philip IV of France asked the Pope to finance French wars the pope excommunicated the King rousing a widespread discontent. This together with the decampment of the Pope to Avignon, France, for seventy years (1309-1377) resulting in a great schism of the church (1378-1417), weakened papal authority. The 15th century saw the Pope ceding authority of clerical appointments to Kings who now seemed to have taken the semblance of Caesero -Papists, i.e. they combined the two roles of King and priest at the same time. By 1523, Pope Adrian VI ceded perpetual authority of the appointment of Bishops and other clergy to Charles I, giving ample authority to the King over the Church clergy.

1.2 Decline of the Caesero-Papist Claim

The medieval kings had slowly become autocrats. The Christian - monotheistic environment, where the king was considered "*Rex Gratia Dei*"- i.e. *King by divine right*, rendered this claim sacred and holy. This was a thorn in the flesh of the Church especially during the reign of Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085). The result was a direct confrontation with Kings whose authority over that of the church found ardent supporters in Engelbert of Admont, Dante, and Marsilio of Padua among others. The figure of the King slowly took the shape of absolutism, claiming independence from the any other authority outside his territory. The King became in his own territory *Vicarius Christi* - Vicar of Christ. The kings went on to impose the Roman law to support their claims to power and authority.

1.3 Control of the Local Powers

At the same time the Kings had to confront the problem of the disintegration of the feudal system. Insecurity grew with the onslaught of the Muslims, Mongols, Normans and Slavs. The King could not effectively defend the without ceding authority to the vassals. Each feudal territory therefore became quasi-autonomous. At times, the Vassals soon questioned the authority of the King. In the end there was a feeling of co-authority with the King in such a way that the Vassals saw the King as *Primum inter pares – the first of equals*. As long as the vassals saw in the King a ruler with a religious character, the situation still conceded to a contractual relationship represented first by the Feudal contract and then by the constitutionalism that developed in the urban areas.

In the cities thanks to Industrial development and commerce, there arose a new class of bourgeoisie – middle class - as a power which defended the rights of the merchants and the development of Industry. The kings manoeuvred to reinforce their power by supporting the emancipation of the urban cities from the Feudal lords and in turn subjected them to their rule by giving them ample autonomy and privileges. This happened in most of Europe except Italy where the cities became city-states, autonomous and autocratic.

These new authority within an authority resulted in a complex form of government; such as the Spanish courts, the Diets in German states, parliaments in England and Société general in France. The lower governing bodies participated in the governance of the kingdom and the approval of extra-ordinary taxes. A sense of national unity arose with the bourgeoisie taking the powers earlier reserved to the feudal lords. With the King combining both the public power and the supreme

sovereignty of a territory, the new administrative ensemble took the shape of a State. The governing structure was a fragile formula of tempered monarchical powers and parliaments where the nature of the King's power depended on how much control he had over the Parliaments.

1.4 The New Prince

In Italy, the opulence and domination of rich families had made it impossible to have effective governance of the state. In Spain and France, as we have seen above, the nature of monarchical control of the state was extremely complicated by the rise of the Bourgeoisie. This exasperating condition of weak internal governance and weak exposure to foreign aggression, made Nicolo Machiavelli contemplate a new form of government which would take the nature of a Republican state. It would have as leader the **new prince** with absolutist tendencies as those exhibited by Fernando the Catholic. In his main work, *the Prince*, Machiavelli hated the French and Spanish domination of Italy but, he saw in them the new power necessary for internal control and unity of a nation against foreign aggression. This new government would be nourished by a powerful organisation of army and a diplomatic body. The latter two would be necessary ingredients of a powerful foreign policy.

According to Machiavellian preponderance the new Catholic king was to become simultaneously famous and a guest of honor of the profligate or perverse (The prince, chapter XVIII). He had to be a man of his word and preach peace and loyalty only when there was no possibility of the state or his reputation. If an aggressor, internally or externally, endangered both against the truth, then "*the end justified the means*".

Machiavellian principles were contested by Possevino, Botero, Gentillet or Ribadeneyra but the difficulties of state control internally and externally continued unabated. This resulted was the justification of the Machiavellian principle of “the rational of the State” in defense of religion. Absolute monarchists remained for a long time.

2. State Configurations and National Identity

The tendency towards the constitution of great monarchies had continued since the decadence of the medieval age. In 1493 and 1532 France absorbed the vassalages of Burgundy and Britain respectively. Carlos V reunited under his person the inheritances of Isabel de Castile, Fernando de Aragón, Maximilian of Austria and Maria of Burgundy. The principality of Wales was united to England and submitted to its administration in 1536. Monarchies therefore presented a vast complex to dominions while at the same time maintaining privy constitutions. These constitutions translated into the existence of legislative bodies, legal regimes and particular institutional machinery. However, these did not obscure the widespread internal divisions of institution and political segmentation flanked by ethnic, cultural and linguistic plurality; nay in the fiscal preponderances as well. It is these divisions that made the new formation of the modern state difficult to integrate politically, institutionally, fiscally and territorially.

2.1 Mother Land and Nation: Nationals and Foreigners

Although the word “patriotism” was used for the first time in the 18th century, it certainly defines the political sentiments and ideas that arose during the formation of the first modern states. The intellectual and moral sentiments of nationhood

during this period were well illustrated by Joan Benimelis, who acknowledged in his work, *“History of the reign of Mallorca”*, that *“among other obligations that men have, one and certainly not the least of them, was to the motherland [...] which obliged them to submit their lives for love of it.”* In the 1517, Ulrich von Hutten wrote in a humorous tone that he sensed *“more good wishes than thieves Poland, heresies in Bohemia, Villains in Switzerland, insolence in Spain, drunkards in Savona, prostitutes in Bamberg and sodomites in Florence.”*

Although normally the concept of nation in the traditional sense meant a group of people who spoke the same language, another new sense of *“nationhood”* as a concept, which encompassed a political and territorial dimension, was acknowledged. The *“other”*, i.e. *“the foreigner”* became the enemy nation in aggression against ones nation. This sentiment was clearly seen in the all too common intensification and diffusion of propaganda in support of the political powers of one’s country and against the *“enemy state”* at war.

2.2 Identity and Contra-Identity

The complex European societies forged at the altar of composed monarchies in the Renaissance period, suffered a paradox of multiple *“patriotic”* identities. Several types of patriotisms could be identified. They were; the *“local”* patriotism representing the love of the individual according his place of origin; a *“jurisdictional”* patriotism deriving from the bonds of fidelity between Lords and Vassals; a *“dynastic”* patriotism based on professed loyalty to the Monarch or to the ruling family and in which were bound inhabitants of a particular country or territory. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, there also existed patriotism based on the sentiment of a collective identity arising from the nation-politic and whose

institutions, laws and privileges went hand in hand with the language and shared history.

The coexistence of all these “patriotisms” was common. However, coexistence of patriotism based on adherence to the nation-politic and the dynastic patriotism was prone to disintegration due to strong internal tensions. Needless to say, the prevailing absolutist, centralist and assimilation tendencies of the Monarchs fostered the patriotism of the nation-politic as a moral front in order to form the “new nation states”. It is important to note that the national political patriotism at the beginning of the modern state was reserved to the elite who formed the institutional structures of the nation state. Later, these sentiments were generalised hidden under the auspices of the old concept of “Universal Christendom”. The premise on which this type of patriotism grew was the all omnipresent state of war. In 1518, Erasmus of Rotterdam explains that there was also a sentimental sense in the patriotism of the national-politic. In his colloquiums he states that ““Practically all the Anglo-Saxons hate to the Gauls and all the Gauls the Anglo-Saxons, only for the reason of being such. The Irish, indeed by being such, hate to Britons, the Italians the Germans, the Slavs the Swiss and thus it will be always.”

2.3 The Frontiers

Soon the primitive concept of borders as frontiers emerged. Cartography was significantly developed in the 14th Century. Maps and atlases became symbols and instruments of political and military strategy for the monarchs and statesmen; but also to locate individuals in a defined territory and identification of the state. More than fixed and impermeable, the borders were elastic and porous. The political territories still did not have “a linear” definition as they had in the definition of

border of 18th Century. There was linguistic continuity, jurisdictional enclaves in the other “side” and territorial vindications was an object of long disputes, etc. In texts of those primitive geographers there is an interpretation and an appropriation of the “space” in which they construed economic, physical and human geography, and define the owners were they the “French”, the “English” or the “Scots. They also often made an anthropological identification.

2.4 Culture, History and Language

One of the characteristics of the High Modern Age is the reinforcement of the bonds between political power and culture. All the powers of a nation state, whether central, regional or local, created symbols and cultural references. The role that history and the historians had in the transformation of the national consciences was without a doubt very important, up to the point that Bernard Guenée affirmed that “in a certain sense, it was the historians who created the nations”. The ruling nation state was idealised and mystified through recounting the past. The cultural values of “humanism” re-evaluated the past. Many humanists and scholars entered “pre-eminent battles” to vindicate the antiquity, religiosity and historical feats of their nation, thereby proclaiming their superiority with over the neighbouring communities. The past history of “nations” also appeared in support for the national state.

To this set of myths and symbols that gave a sense to the own past, it is necessary to add equally essential other to it: the one of the language. In the 16th Century there was a decisive impulse of great European national Literatures: it was the century of Ariosto, Camoens, Cervantes, Ronsard, Rabelais, San Juan de la Cruz and Shakespeare. Thus, for example, by edict of Villiers - Cotterêts (1539), Francisco I

imposed the use of the language of the Island of France instead of Latin in writings of judges and the notaries of the entire kingdom.

2.5 The structures of the state

The development of monarchic power went together with the development of centralized organs of government and justice, of a bureaucracy of civil employees, fortified instruments of the foreign policy – diplomacy - and army and of a property and fiscal policy that had many challenges facing the increasing costs of the regional conflicts. And, to a certain extent, one can affirm that the almost permanent state of war was the main factor that stimulated the appearance of the essential structures of the European modern states.

3. The Court and the Central Organs of Government

The court that had evolved from the “medieval royal house” was an exhibition and image of royal power, because it was the centre or power of Government. It was well organised and was adorned with the appropriate protocol, festive and religious ceremonies among other things. There were elaborate norms of conduct by which the councillors of the court perfected their routine. These codes would be well written later as is manifested by “The Courtesan” of Balthazar of Castiglione in 1528. The role of the monarch in the courts was that of protector of the citizens.

In her were located, not only the organs of the central administration, the royal house. It was the scene of contact and transaction between the political crown and elites. The court served to domesticate the aristocracy, and as a bastion to press for

and to agree with the royal power. At the end of 16th century, the courts of London, Madrid, Vienna, Stockholm and Paris were already considerably large at times comprising of several hundreds of members. The Viennese imperial court already counted on 451 persons in 1554 and 531 in 1576.

The growth of Monarchical power went hand in hand with the growth of the central institutions of governance. The typical advisory system of the European monarchies was an inheritance of the feudal duty of the conciliator. It was subdivided into several institutions or councils destined to governance and justice in the territories they integrated; to take care of specific departments, like property; to administrative agencies of a collegiate character, mainly exercised by jurists who, through documents called “consultations”, exerted counselling functions while the monarch made decisions of governance. To a certain extent, these councils can be considered as the embryo or precedent of the future ministries. In its classic sense, the Council and advisors of the Valencian Prince Fadrique Furió Ceriol (1559) defined a councillor as, “the advisor to the Prince in almost every sense of his, understanding, memory, eyes, ears, voice, feet and hands”. The enormous complexity of this system of government signalled the advent of secretaries - civil servants - in charge of connecting the councillor with the king. It is the secretaries who completed the fundamental pieces of the institutional gear.

3.1 The Bureaucracy

Unlike the medieval period where the men and means of administration and economy were relatively few, in the “new modern age”, and especially starting from the 15th Century, the function of state administration expanded significantly; firstly in administrative requirements as a result of growth and secondly, to enable

strengthen the hegemony of the Monarchs. While, in a sense, the expansion and extension of the central administration augmented the power of the Kings and encouraged the assimilation of the autonomous provinces, it also on the other hand weakened the power of control of the Kings. The power was diffused through the bureaucratic system into the hands of the central administration (Civil servants), bringing in many more of the lower nobility and bourgeoisie.

Although hegemony was extended as the central administration expanded, that does not mean that the autonomous provinces (estamentales) suffered. There was a general consensus of the mutual help and strengthening. The positions or offices that these servants of the king carried out were still impregnated with elements of the feudal world. It is certain that the officials of the king exerted a public function, but it was based on a relation of fidelity with the monarch and had a patrimonial conception with respect to the offices enjoyed. It is true that in the formation of councils of governance, including the juries, the autonomous states provided the personnel from their own lineages. For instance, in England the position of judge of peace was exclusive to gentry.

Gaining positions in the bureaucratic system was an advantage and a desire for many gentry and therefore resulted in the sale of public offices. As it is known, the sales of offices public, already existing in the low-medieval period, became general at this time of affirmation of the great monarchies. In France, Francisco I ordered the creation of a specific department in 1523, Recette de Parties Casuelles, to collect the numerous incomes derived from the sale of positions public. Despite this we can surmise that the monarchic institution ended up being weaker in its social rooting as well as its instruments of control on that same society, as in the case of

England, but it seems unquestionable that, simultaneously, the venal bureaucracy contributed to strengthen to the royal power.

3.2 Diplomacy

From the Renaissance period, the states, as organizations of power, had to take care of international relationships necessitated by the opening-up of the international world. Foreign policy was intricately inserted into the system of state plurality. Territories that were until then excluded from the Christian empires were now part of the literature and hegemony of the European states. The instrument used to strengthen foreign relations, which arose after the “explosion of the Christian nucleus” of the medieval times, was, as expressed by Jean Delumeau, diplomacy. Italians first and then the French and Spaniards and last of all the Russian Czars, began to name ambassadors. The extraordinary missions of the Monarchs were left to the special envoys. In the middle of the 15th Century, the resident ambassador was a servant of the interests of his prince living in the foreign courts, whose work was to get information, to influence in the process of political et cetera, decision making; whereas the plenipotentiaries envoys were authorized to reach agreements and to close treaties, taking from the court of his prince instructions and detailed powers of attorney. Soon writers, such as Torcuato Tasso in *Il Messaggero -The messenger*, drew up a behaviour model in which the Diplomat had to be equipped with qualities like the grace, the eloquence and the ability to hide the ones own interests while discover the foreigner’s. Diplomacy was in essence, an art.

Together with this growth of diplomacy, the most powerful European monarchies developed networks of agents, spies, correspondents and informers who, to obtain

and to analyze all class of information, what Miguel Echevarría Angel defined as the “secret diplomacy”.

3.3 The Armies

Someone calculated that the 16th century had less than ten years of complete peace, and that in the 17th century only they were only four. In brief there was intense conflict caused by; patrimonial pretensions of the European dynasties that aspired to enlarge their territorial dominions, religious confrontations that exploded with the sprouting of the Lutheranism, pressures opposed towards integration and the political disintegration in Europe of “compound monarchies”, institutionally, politically and ethnically. The treasuries and fiscal-financial systems, government and administration organs combined to organise armies for protection of the state and support the expansionist policies. The war in turn, from 15th century had a strong impact on the economic, political and social life of the Europe of the Renaissance. In the course of 16th and 17th Centuries the predictions of Machiavelli became reality. Modern military models have their roots in the 15th century. Fortifications and defensive constructions in brick, with bastions provided with artillery and defendants with wide pits guaranteed defensive superiority of tactics in case of a siege during warfare. The size and composition of the armies as well as in the character of the wars changed;

1. In the first place, shadowing the cavalry exited as an important tactic in battle;
2. Secondly, wall works improved technically until such a point that they could repulse any attack.
3. The military wore down if it was not extended and enormous and in turn this increased the costs of the campaigns;

4. Finally the quality of the artillery prevailed and each time more extensively employed depending as much on the number of sieges as in open battles.

In the meantime, European kingdoms increased their foreign expansion in the 15th Century; the Portuguese and the Spanish Monarchies first and later Holland, England and France. They created very remote empires of the continent. The marine and colonial disputes complemented their terrestrial wars. Although these Maritime empires did not contribute to the conformation of the state structures in the same measure the terrestrial war did, it served to the development of a solid navy and the extension of the number of civil employees and control systems they demanded. These new colonies were a source of wealth. For the Hispanic Monarchy, the American gold and silver reinforced the continuance of its extensive hegemony.

3.4 Properties and Finance

The European Monarchies needed a permanent and alternative source of state income to finance the expanded central administration structures and war. However, there were numerous limitations;

1. In the first place, the Medieval age doctrine that the King had to be contented with income from his own patrimony and income from his sovereignty. But this had many exemptions besides being very small. For example, Monopolies of the mines, taxes on commercial income, salt mines were exempted. Besides income from the autonomous provinces were subject to negotiations. Most of all the main source of income would come from the Agricultural produce which had its owners.

2. Secondly, states and monarchies had a legal limitation on the fiscal privileges of autonomous provinces or corporative structures in urban areas which had a restricted social tax base.
3. An administrative limitation also existed, because of the development of bureaucratic apparatus was insufficient to collect the income. Consequently, the monarchies had to decentralize or to privatize many of these functions.
4. There were also different fiscal systems in the different provinces thanks to the inclusiveness and intensification of hegemonies.

These difficulties, however, did not hinder the primary objective of the monarchs which was to strengthen the state income. Hence, during King Henry VIII's (1485-1509) reign, the income from territories of the crown and the feudal claims were tripled from 52,000 pounds to 142,000 pounds a year, nay even with negotiations between the crown and the representatives of the regional states and the oligarchies in commerce. Nevertheless, it was insufficient, since in the expenses exceeded the income.

Consequently, the monarchies were forced to resort to international credit with private banks. Thus, Carlos V received contractual loans in the form of seats valued at 28.8 ducados million, committing to paying an average interest rate of the 31.7 percent. This interplay between state finance and private banks served to strengthen sovereign relations. Another source of income was principally that of taxing the import and export of commercial goods passing ones territory. Only those ships, for instance, in which the Captain, the flag and the goods belonged to the state, were exempt from tax.

4. The relations between the states

In the 16th and 17th Centuries, European states were still dotted with fragile and limited state policies and structures. If on the one hand the regal power was extraordinarily reinforced by the court, the bureaucracy, the army and the diplomacy; on the other hand, the plurality of state and municipal jurisdictions, privileges and the sovereignty ties continued. Uprisings in defence of the autonomous provinces and in retribution for increased taxes were a commonality. Besides, the demarcations of what would be called a state oscillated in theory between those who used the term modern state to refer to any hegemony and those who would not concede the name state to any amorphous territory so considered by the ruling class. The presence of war helped to distinguish the presence of one state from another, and therefore the need to find an appropriate legal basis of distinguishing them. There was a plurality of states certainly.

4.1 Challenges of the New Monarchies

The Tudors and Stuarts in England and the Valois and Bourbons in France were a clear example of authoritarian national monarchies. These monarchies were based on more or less compact territorial units unlike the Hispanic state, thanks to the conquests of Carlos V. The relations between these states were made even more difficult by the limitations of communication between territories and the defence of the Christian hegemony in light of the Lutheran uprising. This ideal of Christian Empire was augmented by Carlos V when he fought the advance of the Turkish

moors. As a result of this ideal the monarchs tried to submit the princes to the authority of the imperators. The result was anachronistic and chimerical state of affairs since the Princes did not submit. Lutheranism encouraged the augmentation of the governing Prince's power. The Anabaptists, a new schism, questioned the purpose of Christian hegemony and the rights of the pope over the clergy and the poor German masses and interpreted the Kingdom of God in light of the equality and commonality of goods. As a consequence, Germany revolted. The Church lost its properties in the process at the altar of the liberated German states. The principle of "*cuius regio, eius religio* – he who reigns, so his religion", granted the princes and gentlemen of the Holy Empire the freedom to choose their religion and to impose it on their subjects and this was a testimony of the new affirmation of the state.

4.2 International Law

The vanguards of the political currents of thought in 16th century, that is the authors of the Spanish school of scholasticism, were against the universal jurisdiction of the emperor and denied the Papacy any temporary power on the Christian princes. Its interference was only justifiable when the spiritual aims were threatened. The elevation of autonomous states with autonomous lordship gave way to the international principles of state relationships as proposed by the Dominican Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1546). This new ideal called for an *ius gentium* – law of the people, that would govern all the people of the earth and the *ius Communicationis* – Law of movement, which would answer the questions of free movement between one state and another. This in turn opened the way for free trade and emigration between regions. Later, Jesuits, Luis de Molina (1535-1600) and Francisco Suarez (1548-1617), although following many aspects of the theories

of Vitoria, identify the right of people within the positive right of the consuetudinary, with which the laws of the sovereignty state prevail over *ius gentium*. The result was that in the peace accord of Westphalia (1648), that ended the Thirty Years War, consecrated the modern international right. It was a lay solution that recognized the rights of the princes and the cities of the Holy Empire to develop diplomatic ties independent of the emperor and finally gave impetus to the recognition of a series of smaller states, which entrusted their security in the new international order.
