

Exmos(as). Senhores(as),

Serve o presente para recorrer da classificação de 2 valores atribuída ao projecto de trabalhos. O motivo deste recurso prende-se com:

- 1) o reconhecimento próprio de que esta é uma classificação desadequada, tendo em conta o historial do projecto e de candidaturas a bolsa de doutoramento da FCT;
- 2) o reconhecimento de terceiros de que esta é uma classificação desadequada.

Em detalhe, no que ao ponto 1 concerne, começo por relembrar o meu historial de 3 anos de candidaturas à bolsa de doutoramento da FCT:

2010:

Mérito do Candidato: 3,5

Projecto: 4,1

Condições de Acolhimento: 4

2011:

Mérito do Candidato: 4

Projecto: 3,8

Condições de Acolhimento: 4,2

2012:

Mérito do Candidato: 5

Projecto: 2

Condições de Acolhimento: 5

De realçar que o projecto submetido nos concursos de 2010 e 2011 tinha como temática “*A contribuição do pensamento político britânico para a implementação do liberalismo em Portugal no século XIX*”, e foi elaborado inicialmente entre 2008 e 2009, quando ainda estava a finalizar a licenciatura. O projecto submetido em 2012 é subordinado à temática “*The spontaneous order and the role of tradition in classical liberalism in face of modern rationalism and post-modern relativism*”, e foi elaborado no início de 2012, quando já havia terminado o mestrado, sendo as diferenças entre os dois projectos manifestamente evidentes no que à solidez científica diz respeito, já que o segundo foi não apenas fruto de um pensamento muito mais aprofundado, decorrente dos estudos realizados para a obtenção do grau de mestre, mas também alvo de contribuições e revisões de vários professores da área de Ciência Política.

Parece-me ser de assinalar que os dois 5 atribuídos no concurso de 2012 são evidentemente reflexo do meu percurso pessoal e intelectual, entrando em clara contradição com uma pontuação de 2 no projecto. Acresce a isto a evidente inconsistência entre as avaliações dos dois concursos anteriores e o deste ano no que à avaliação do projecto diz respeito, não sendo ainda despiciendo salientar que se tivesse sido atribuída a pontuação de 3 valores ao projecto já me teria sido atribuída a bolsa.

Ademais, permitam-me referir a justificação do júri para uma pontuação tão penalizadora, que passo a citar integralmente: “*Projecto no âmbito do pensamento*

politico contemporaneo. Discussao adequada do estado da arte. O tratamento muito genérico dos objectivos, sem precisão ou delimitação conceptual e específica, torna difícil a objectivação da pesquisa. Bibliografia significativa, mas onde faltam todavia algumas referencias pertinentes à matéria.”

Começando pelo fim, em relação à bibliografia, deve ser salientado que o sistema de candidatura da FCT apenas permite que se incluam 20 referências bibliográficas. Obviamente, incluí apenas as referências principais. Mais abaixo encontrarão a lista de referências bibliográficas completa. Esta contém não só as referências que já havia pesquisado quando submeti o projecto à FCT, mas também novas referências que foram pesquisadas ao longo do passado mês de Outubro de 2012, quando me encontrava já na Universidade de Durham, antes de ter sido obrigado a regressar a Portugal em virtude do resultado inesperado da candidatura à Bolsa da FCT. Quer pela pesquisa que já encetei, quer por todas as referências bibliográficas que não puderam ser inseridas no formulário da candidatura, e quer ainda pelo que a orientadora em Durham salienta na carta que enviou já por via postal ao cuidado do Presidente da FCT e que mais abaixo transcreverei, resulta ainda claro que a afirmação relativa aos objectivos e à objectivação da pesquisa é desprovida de fundamento. E ainda assim, ainda que estas duas afirmações tivessem fundamento, tal não justificaria a classificação atribuída de 2 valores.

No que diz respeito ao ponto 2, para além da carta da minha orientadora em Durham, devo ainda salientar as cartas dos Professores José Adelino Maltez, meu orientador da dissertação de mestrado e também orientador em Portugal do meu projecto de doutoramento, e (...), precisamente no sentido do acima exposto, que foram também enviadas por via postal.

Permitam-me transcrever estas três cartas:

(...)

Estas três missivas foram enviadas ao cuidado do Presidente da FCT, bem como uma missiva da minha autoria onde expus a informação supra.

Posto tudo isto, aqui apresento uma versão melhorada do projecto, substancialmente revista à luz das vossas observações, mormente aquelas acerca dos objectivos do projecto:

Título: The spontaneous order and the role of tradition in classical liberalism in face of modern rationalism and post-modern relativism

Introduction/abstract

In adhering to the Enlightenment Project's commitment to reason and objectivism, modern moral and political philosophers developed a cultural, social and intellectual framework that is consciously inimical to tradition. This development was further exacerbated by post-modern authors, who abandoned reason and embraced nihilism and relativism and ensured that this framework has become firmly entrenched in both popular culture and the social sciences. The combination of constructivist rationalism and relativism has produced what Hayek calls 'unviable moralities',

“systems of moral thought and sentiment incapable of sustaining any stable social order” that create a cultural atmosphere “which is profoundly hostile, not only to its traditional inheritance, but even to its own continued existence.” (Gray, 2009:131)

Considering that the liberal strain of political theory has become the dominant mode of political thought in the western world, the central purpose of this thesis will be to enquire if the notion of tradition as used in classical liberalism has the resources to overcome the moral failings of modern and post-modern political thought and rescue liberalism from its more rationalist, abstract and ungrounded forms and, if so, to contribute to the formulation of a political theory grounded on the rationality of traditionalism that might serve as a starting point for overcoming those moral failings. Drawing on the concept of spontaneous order and evolutionary or critical rationalism, and the work of Friedrich Hayek, Michael Polanyi and Karl Popper in particular, will be essential for this project.

State of the Art

The concept of tradition is a pluralist one which accounts for approaches as diversified as the ones from syndicalism, solidarism, socialism, or social-christian doctrine and catholic political thought that in the beginning of the 20th century converged on a consensual pluralist model of beliefs against sovereignism. Compensating for positivist and sociologist exaggerations, this model is heir to a moral framework of federalism, liberalism and pre or anti-absolutist traditionalism (Maltez, “Pluralismo”, in <http://maltez.info/aaanetnovabiografia/Conceitos/pluralismo.htm>). Some concrete political-philosophical movements inspired by this model that immediately come to mind are traditionalist integralism, theorized by authors such as the Portuguese António Sardinha, the French René Guénon or the Italian Julius Evola, and the british guildism, that had in G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc its main thinkers.

Nonetheless, and in order to circumscribe the study object, I shall approach the concept of tradition mainly through the lens of classic liberalism, considering in particular the works of Hayek, Polanyi and Popper, but also contrasting them with Alasdair MacIntyre, Richard Rorty, Edmund Burke, Michael Oakeshott, Roger Scruton and John Gray and having as reference works on the meanings of tradition Josef Pieper’s *Tradition* and Edward Shils’ *Tradition*.

Firstly, to understand Hayek, we must turn to his philosophy of the mind, and his take on the abuse of reason. Only by understanding the epistemological implications of the mind being a spontaneous order, a cultural product that results from evolutionary processes between a physical structure and sensory qualities, whose knowledge is mostly tacit and implicit, can we then comprehensively apply the concept to the social world, as Hayek does. He develops an approach to society based on cultural evolutionism, attributing great importance to tradition as a way to ensure social order by transmitting knowledge and rules of conduct and to use reason against its own abuse.

Polanyi stresses that reason does not oppose tradition and that, in fact, all reasoning must occur inside a tradition, a fiduciary framework, which is not static but dynamic since it embodies the possibility of internal conflict, the ability to rebel against the consensus and the possibility of cultivating radical progress in a framework of continuity. MacIntyre parallels Polanyi. Also lamenting the rejection of tradition by modernity and post-modernity, he realizes, as Polanyi does, the false dilemma between objectivism and relativism that can only be overcome by tradition, in which reason can only be impersonal and universal if it is neither neutral nor disinterested. Thus reason

requires personal participation, the submission to the authority of tradition and the mastery of someone belonging to the tradition.

Popper, on the other hand, resorts to rationalism but overcomes cartesianism and replaces it with critical rationalism. In “Towards a Rational Theory of Tradition” (Popper, 2010) he distinguishes between traditions of practice, traditions of thought and composites of both, and asserts that we can accept tradition in two ways: uncritically and critically. Popper is mainly concerned with the latter. He does not believe in dogmatic rejection of tradition but in submitting it to critical assessment. Only after this analysis can a tradition be either rejected or accepted rationally. He is mainly interested in explaining how traditions originate, develop and persist and their functions in social life, so that one is able to instrumentally compare traditions, and he does so by focusing on the tradition of science.

We are thus faced with a state of the art which asserts that spontaneous order and tradition are composed of common experience between individuals that coordinate their behaviour with one another without communicating. One might ask how order and predictability could be possible if there were no regularities in the social world. In one sense, traditions constrain our behaviour, but, on the other side, in the tradition of the Scottish Enlightenment, those traditions might be faced as liberating, because in a world of fragmented, tacit and disperse knowledge, institutions that arise from traditions account for some kind of social order.

Detailed description (Background, research questions and methodology)

Taking into consideration the intellectual outlook of modernity, John Gray stresses that it has produced a framework which is deeply destructive of the intellectual and moral European traditions and institutions. This framework has taken secure root not only on popular culture but also in social sciences. The combination of constructivist rationalism and relativism has produced what Hayek calls unviable moralities, “systems of moral thought and sentiment incapable of sustaining any stable social order” (Gray, 2009:131), that through sociological theorizations and the corruption of architecture and arts create a cultural atmosphere “which is profoundly hostile, not only to its traditional inheritance, but even to its own continued existence. We confront the phenomenon of a culture permeated throughout by a hatred of its own identity, and by a sense of its purely provisional character” (Gray, 2009:131). It is no wonder that one of Popper’s most famous quotes is that “The main philosophical malady of our time is an intellectual and moral relativism, the latter being at least in part based upon the former.” (2009:419)

Rejection of any kind of institution or code of behaviour which is not rationally justified appears to be a distinguishing feature of modernity (Feser, 2003:17). This provides a chance for inquiring into the moral foundations of modernity and post-modernity and debating the possibility of reaffirming the concept of tradition in the sense of the Scottish Enlightenment, in order to “open to us the abandoned road to genuine knowledge of man and of the conditions of his freedom and welfare first laid down by the thinkers of classical liberalism” (Gray, 1998:140) because, according to José Adelino Maltez (2011:509), “To be for tradition is to know how to go back, in thought and enthusiasm, in order to give roots to the future, by deepening the present, and better be able to move forward, denying the false dialectic of old against modern. Tradition is both the act of transmission of a set of moral and spiritual values, and the integration of each one of these in a stream of knowledge and wisdom originated in plural cultural sources.”

Tradition is interconnected with the concept of spontaneous order, the self-organization of the elements that compose it, which obey to common rules without having a defined single purpose, but that pursue different purposes. Hayek, Polanyi and Popper have made important contributions to tradition and spontaneous order. And if the first two made it extensively, it was Popper who most accurately understood what needed to be addressed in a research project on tradition. But Hayek also points out that for a rational theory of tradition one must come to terms with modernist Enlightenment ideas, and this is possible through a Darwinist approach. Hayek develops a full account of how systems of rules and practices evolve. They do so by a double process: internally, by gradually developing; and externally, by competing with other evolving systems. The latter is the one that Hayek's theory of cultural evolution is concerned with. My main research question and sub-questions are drawn from these concerns.

Main research question: *What is the role of tradition in classical liberalism and how can it help overcome the problems inherent in modern rationalism and post-modern relativism?*

Sub-question 1: How do traditions arise?

Sub-question 2: How do traditions develop and culturally evolve?

Sub-question 3: What is the function of traditions in social and moral life?

Sub-question 4: Can we normatively compare traditions?

Sub-question 5: How does natural selection operate in regards to competing traditions?

Sub-question 6: Are modernity and post-modernity morally coherent without the notion of tradition?

Sub-question 7: What role is there for tradition confronted with the dilemma of objectivism vs. relativism?

Since this project requires a qualitative methodology, the research design will not be structured through hypotheses, aiming at their empirical confirmation, but rather through the formulation of questions that guide the research, and through which the study object is circumscribed and interpreted.

Bearing in mind that to attain the true scientific character one must undertake a rigorous effort to “replace opinion (*doxa*) with knowledge (*episteme*) (...) searching for truth through the elaboration of an account (*logos*) which, in this sense, contrasts with the mythical (*mythos*)” (Maltez, 1996:41), I shall adopt methodological individualism, for this is the only perspective that has in the individual and his activities its basic unit of analysis, thus not falling into the traps of scientism or historicism.

Despite the different perspectives of methodological individualism, they all have in common the emphasis on the importance of individuals and their intentions to the analysis of social phenomena. As Kenneth Arrow (1994:1) synthesizes, methodological individualism bases all accounts on a starting point which has in the actions and reactions of individuals the determinant variable, whose interaction produces results that determine, for example, the functioning of an economy. I shall resort to two of the methodological individualism perspectives, strictly connected with Hayek and Popper: *Austrian school of economics methodological individualism*, “which first proceeded by assuming the isolated individual, or Robinson Crusoe, but which later conceived of individuals as social or cultural beings who attach subjective meaning to their own actions and to human artifacts”; and *Popperian methodological individualism*, “which

accepts objectively existing social institutions in the antecedent of social scientific explanations, or as exogenous variables in social scientific models” (Udehn, 2002:499).

Objectives

The central purpose of this thesis will be to enquire if the notion of tradition as used in classical liberalism has the resources to overcome the moral failings of modern and post-modern political thought and rescue liberalism from its more rationalist, abstract and ungrounded forms and, if so, to contribute to the formulation of a political theory grounded on the rationality of traditionalism that might serve as a starting point for overcoming those moral failings. Arguing for an evolutionary and anti-constructivist conception of social life and politics, this thesis will approach the concepts of spontaneous order and tradition by articulating their components through the lens of the tradition of thought of classical liberalism, in order to be able to understand how traditions arise, develop, evolve, persist, die and what their functions are. It will also need to discuss how we can compare and normatively analyse competing traditions. This shall be achieved by drawing on the work of Friedrich Hayek, Michael Polanyi and Karl Popper in particular, as liberals, and contrasting them with the works of the communitarian thinker Alasdair MacIntyre, the conservatives Edmund Burke, Michael Oakeshott and Roger Scruton, the pragmatist Richard Rorty and the both liberal and critic of liberalism John Gray.

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