

BREAKING “THE SPELL OF THE MONARCHY”

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One of Foucault’s claims concerning power is that in a modern welfare state the organization of the state structures should follow the network type of organization, especially like those organizations subnational or supranational, which prove to be the greatest threat to the nation states in modern times. According to his thought the state structures in most of the Western countries are still too central, reminding us of the distribution of power in the monarchies of bygone eras. Therefore, those states, which are fully modernised are unable to answer current day challenges. As he explains we must break the spell of the monarchy in our mind and the concepts about power and create a new understanding of sovereignty. The nature of power is much more like a web, it can not be bound to one person exclusively. He continues by saying that no sovereign approach exists in modern societies.¹

The power and its source are not an isolated phenomenon, they can not be understood within themselves, they are a social phenomenon, they are constructed by the society within the different interactions and human relations as he mentions. However, this is a mutual relationship, namely as Foucault expresses in his concept of the self, as selves are also constituted by power relations.²

For Foucault the fact of the constant observation in modern societies means power, which means that in a modern society everyone is observed and observes at the same time, which actually means a slice of sovereignty accordingly. This mutual control somehow translates into a participation in exercising power.³ He also mentions the role of discourse in modern societies, which constructs power. He distinguishes

¹ Joseph ROUSE: Power/Knowledge. In: Gary GUTTING (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994.; HORKAY HÖRCHER, Ferenc: Az interszjektív állam. In: PÓCZA, Kálmán (szerk.): *Álmánk Állama – Egy hatalmi centrum az ezredfordulón*. Budapest, Századvég, 2002. 133–160., 149–150.

² Amy ALLEN: *The Politics of Our Selves: Power, Autonomy and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory*. New York, Columbia University Press, 2008. 2.

³ Michel FOUCAULT: *Felügyelet és büntetés. A börtön története. (Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison.)* Budapest, Gondolat, 1990.

between discourse and true discourse, which in actual number are always limited, namely the all-time power is always intending to reduce the potential appearance of true dialogues. Therefore, a true discourse is always monolithic, since only one Truth is possible. According to Foucault, in modernity the plurality of truths was substituted with the monolith Truth through the expropriation or monopolization of discourses by the power and has led to totalitarian systems.⁴

One can also discover a parallel with the system of mass democracy. As Gustave Le Bon warns of the mass individuality and shares such values, which they would never share as an individuum. Burke, Tocqueville and Mill also focused attention towards the threat of the tyranny of the majority related to democratic settings. Equal voting right results in a large population of socially low status people entering the voting system, who are in favour of a tutelary state and are inclined to surrender their freedom in favour of the micro-order.⁵

The 20th century produced totalitarian power relations corresponding with these totalitarian discourses. According to Foucault (2000), current day power is global because in the geographical sense it involves everyone and because it formulates its own exclusive discourse about everything. It is also invisible, because we do not know to whom it belongs, or who controls it, but rather only who do not. Today power is also secret, we can not talk about it, since it is invisible, and discourse about power is anycase exclusive, being shaped and created only by those invisible who hold power. This is also independent from individual interests because it is also served by those who do not have an interest of serving it.⁶

Foucault's aim was the demolition of this global power with his deconstruction process. It also meant the creation of local discourses. Since the 1960s the metanarratives became the target of serious debates. This criticism against comprehensive systems was articulated in local critiques. Local knowledge appeared as being non-scientific, non-comprehensive but rather with partiality. This was the rebirth of that knowledge, which was obscured by the previous narratives. The aim of these was to break the power of exclusive, arbitrary overall discourses.

According to this line of thought, it is a paradox feature of current day anti-globalist movements that they do not transcend the limits of global discourses, they are the captives of the globalization paradigm.⁷

Habermas' power approach is quite similar to Foucault's ideas in many aspects concerning the basic structure and origin of power as a social phenomenon where communication creates the spine of the structure, which produces and creates power

⁴ Michel FOUCAULT: Mi a felvilágosodás? (Was ist Aufklärung?) In: SZAKOLCZAI, Árpád (szerk): *A modernség politikai-filozófiai dilemmái a felvilágosodáson innen és túl. Michel Foucault írásaiból.* Budapest, MTA Szociológiai Kutató Intézete, 1991. 87–114.

⁵ OCSKAY, Gyula: A lokális diskurzusok és a globális hatalom egy hálózatépítési modellprogramról (Local Discourse and the Global Power – A Network Building Model Programme). *Tér és Társadalom*, 2002/1. 17–40.

⁶ Michel FOUCAULT: *Az értelmiség és a hatalom. Nyelv a végtelenhez.* Debrecen, Latin Betűk, 2000. 246–248. (2000b)

⁷ OCSKAY op. cit.

relations itself. In his deliberative approach of democracy, he intended to resolve the tension between the liberal and republican theories of democracy, creating a synthesis both ensuring the invulnerability of individual freedom rights and popular sovereignty.

According to Habermas, a real consensus can be achieved by the rational debate behind which there is clear communication, however, as Balázs (1998)⁸ points out he does not really describe the criterias of distinction between real consensus and illusory consensus, which is not achieved by the right discourses. These illusory consensuses are the foundations of ideologies, which should be unveiled or denounced.

At this point in his conclusion he seems to agree with Foucault. However, what is much more debated in Habermas’ discourse theory, is that according to Steinhoff (1996), his discourse theory can not stand as a legitimacy principle since in this case of human rights questions we would need the consensus of the whole of humankind to accept these as legitimate norms, which is practically impossible, only in homogenous societies such as Rawls’ Original Position. Moreover, even if this could be achieved it could also lead to totally undemocratic and illegal results, which liquidates exactly the basic conditions of the discourse itself. He also argues that the pre-conditions of rational debate should be considered as realized according to Habermas are generally not present in the political debates, so Steinhoff finds this also as a problematic element or weak point of Habermas’ theory. Accordingly, it is more of a utopian approach. (For instance, none of the concerned participants are excluded from the discourse, the proposition or posing topics are free and not limited by certain pressures or sanctions, manipulations, the contributions and information flow are not limited or pushed by any factor.)⁹

According to Habermas, through the process of rational debates the general will is produced, in which the individual subjective and political freedom rights are guaranteed since in rational discourse principles transcending the individual interests can prevail and gain legitimacy. In this general will the individual and minority intentions, initiatives can not be suppressed. Steinhoff and other critiques of Habermas suggest that he could not convincingly prove his theory.

His theory also goes against Rousseau’s thoughts about the realm of the political, which according to him is fundamentally not rational, but rather ruled by emotional, or even religious motifs.

What Habermas claims is just the opposite of what Rousseau expressed in the Legislator, where the popular sovereignty, exercised by the people without any intervention can lead only to the emphasis of individual interests and calculations. The intervention and the education of legislator is needed, thus creating a political climate which transforms the heart of the individuals in order to overcome their

⁸ BALÁZS, Zoltán: *Modern hatalomelméletek*. Budapest, Korona, 1998. 92.

⁹ Uwe STEINHOFF: Probleme der Legitimation des Demokratischen Rechtsstaats. *Rechtstheorie*, vol. 27. (1996), 451–456.; Szűcs, László Gergely: A diskurzuselv mint a jogállamiság garanciája – Vizsgálódások egy radikális Habermas-kritika kapcsán. *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle*, 2011/2. 75–77. <https://bit.ly/2UdfqpD>

selfishness, because the individuum is otherwise asocial. However, the tool for that is *not based on ratio*, because the rule of law, and the laws *do not affect the pshyche* of the political community. The Legislator abolishes the plurality of interests but not by rational debate. The democracy and the creation of political community and the general will is rather an irrational religious act according to him.¹⁰

As Molnár (2015) suggests Rousseau's Legislator shows similarities in many aspects with Weber's charismatic leader questioning even the very basis of liberal democracy's legitimacy. Moreover, what maybe surprising is that Rousseau did not actually believe in total popular sovereignty. Molnár was clear to highlight this point.¹¹

"If a nation would exist which consists of Gods only, then they could have democratic government, but it is not really for people. [...] Democracy in its original sense never existed and never will."¹²

The United States presidential election of 2016 seems to prove Rousseau was right concerning the most decisive factors and considerations of the members of political communities. Although, Rousseau used the term "religious" maybe in a broader sense, it is also true in specific terms that religious motifs have the most influential role on voters' behaviour and voting itself as the Barna Institute forecasted.

"The top-rated sources of influence" are a person's religious beliefs (as 18% claim that had "a deep influence") and family members (10%). The other eight sources examined fell within five to eight percent.

When combining those who say a source exerted either "a lot" or "some" influence upon their choice of a presidential candidate, the rankings change only slightly. The greatest influence is still religious beliefs, listed by one-third of adults (33%). This was followed by family members and news media, each listed at 28 percent, and followed by friends and television political commentators, each chosen at almost one-quarter (26%).¹³

The two main sources of influence it is fair to say are religious motifs and the influence of family members, none of which are really based on rational considerations. Thus, Habermas's idea about unlimited discourse with its preconditions of the free flow of information, and equal opportunity of contribution without any pressing sanction and especially that of rational arguments being the only way of convincing the others in the process of discussion, looks like at least as much not any more

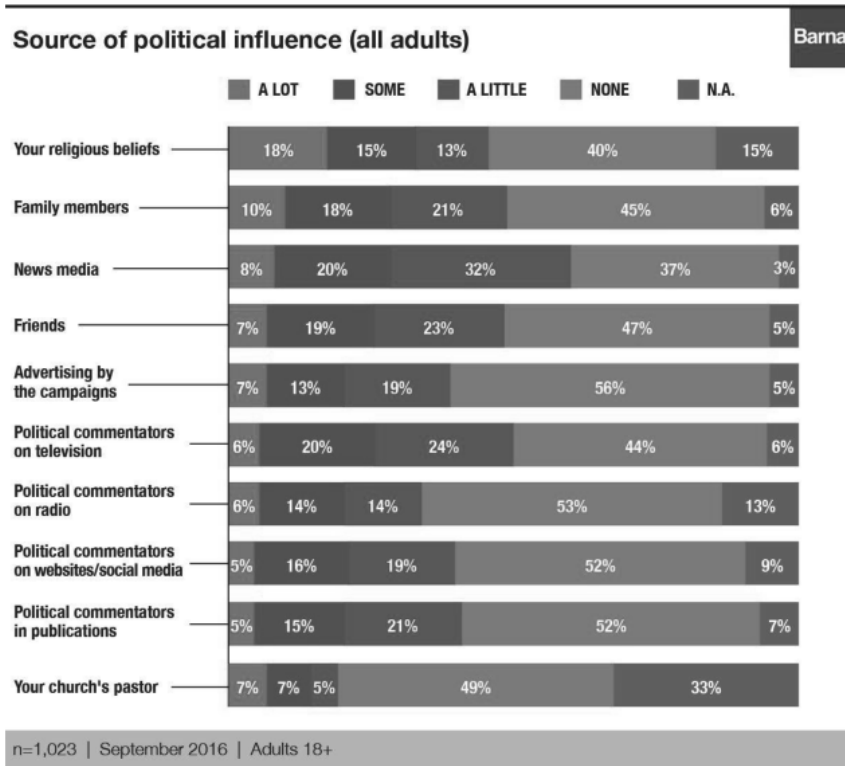
¹⁰ Jean-Jacques ROUSSEAU: *Értekezések és filozófiai levelek (Essays and letters)*. Budapest, Magyar Helikon, 1978. 504.

¹¹ Steven PFAFF: Nationalism: Charisma, and Plebiscitary Leadership: The Problem of Democratization in Max Weber's Political Sociology. *Sociological Inquiry*, vol. 72. no. 1. (2002) 81–107.; MOLNÁR, Attila Károly: A politikus nagyszerű lelke: Rousseau és Weber. In: EKERT Mária – MOLNÁR Attila Károly (szerk.): *Teremtés, politika és művészet*. Budapest, Nemzeti Közsolgálati Egyetem, Molnár Tamás Kutató Központ, 2015. 9–25., 17.

¹² ROUSSEAU (1978) op. cit. 532.

¹³ BARNA GROUP: Religious Beliefs Have Greatest Influence on Voting Decisions. *Culture & Media*, <https://www.barna.com/research/religious-beliefs-have-greatest-influence-on-voting-decisions/> (27 October 2016)

realistic than the prerequisites of free market ideology, in which failure has also become inevitable these days.



Source: <https://www.barna.com/research/religious-beliefs-have-greatest-influence-on-voting-decisions/>

1. The End of the Myth of the Secular State

These research results allow us to consider the validity of some of the arguments of political theology concerning the secular state as outdated or actually something which always has been in deadlock.

2. Religion as One of the Most Influential Political Shaping Factors of the 21st Century – “Desecularization of the World – Resurgent Religion”¹⁴

According to the recent research results it would be fair to say that the inclination towards religion is not just reappearing as it is already, one of the most influential

¹⁴ Peter L. BERGER: *Desecularization of the World – Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. Washington, D. C., Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999.

factors in shaping politics in the 21st century, and not only with the electorate, but also with the politicians as well.

As the survey 'State of the Bible' (American Bible Society's annual survey conducted by Barna Institute) concluded:

“[...] A similar majority (53%) says American politicians would be more effective if they read the Bible on a regular basis. In addition, nearly half of all adults (46%) say they wish the Bible had greater influence on American society.”

This factor can not be ignored anymore when it comes to political power and opportunity especially in the United States as we can see. As Békefy (2016) commented on the research of the Barna Group in his study “USA 2016 – The Religious Component – Religious Faith Has the Greatest Impact on Voters’ Decision” the religious component can not be underestimated, on the contrary it should be considered more and more as a political shaping factor. Since Berger’s (1999) paradigm changing book (*Desecularization of the World*) there is no doubt that the secularization thesis became outdated, and the Neorenaissance of world religions of the 21st century has arrived. As he continues it is not by chance that research institutes observing the relationship of modernity and religions has appeared in different parts of the world, at several universities like Harvard in Boston, or in the German state of Münster and other places. It is also not by chance that *God’s Century* (a bestseller in the USA and in Western Europe) by Prof. Monica Toft, researches the impact of the Bible and religion on foreign policy as also does *God is back*, a similar publication reseaching the effect of religion.¹⁵

The above-mentioned research data and empirical findings opened the space for the approach of political theology. As Lánctzi (2015) explains the essence of modernity is exactly one of separation and disconnection. Separating the state from the church, traditions from present, sexuality from reproduction, is deconstruction. The classical philosopher’s starting point was wholeness. On the contrary now in order to understand the life we separate things from their life-giving roots. The problems started with the enlightenment, which substituted tradition and religion with rational thinking.¹⁶ However, it was not enough that state and church has been divided, as Lánctzi (2015) mentions first religion, then philosophy and all those questions were exiled from politics, which give meaning to the life. As Lánctzi (2015) elaborates the aim of the modern settlement is the penetration of the state with legal rules to an exaggerated extent, and setting the state and politics under the rules of normative

¹⁵ BÉKEFY, Lajos: USA 2016 – The Religious Component – Religious Beliefs Have the Greatest Influence on Voting Decisions. *Barna Group online*, 2016., <http://bekefy.agnusradio.ro/2016/11/usa-nem-tevedtek-bizonyos-elorejelzesek.html>; John MICKLETHWAIT: Culture and Media, *Barna Group online*, <https://www.barna.com/category/culture-media/>; Adrian WOOLRIDGE: *God is Back: How the Global Revival of Faith Is Changing the World*. London, Penguin, 2009.

¹⁶ LÁNCTZI, András: Politikai teológia: állam, szuverenitás, kivételes állapot. *Jogtörténeti Szemle*, 2015/3. 9–18.

processes. Since Machiavelli not only religion, but morals too, were detached from the realm of the political. Furthermore, Molnár (1961) exposed that in Western civilization the transcendent, sacral aims are substituted with material aims.¹⁷

3. Sacral Component and Popular Sovereignty of the Modern State

After this short review of the religious components of contemporary society’s political participation, it is worthwhile to see whether these trends, or tendencies apply to the functioning and organization of power structures in modern liberal democracies, and if not, whether or not it goes against the principle of popular sovereignty.

As Bolz (2010) argues, “the preachings about the kingdom of God are tolerated by the modern state only to the point that it is understood internally, metaphorically and spiritually, but as a call or appeal for political theocracy it is not accepted. Furthermore, it means that the secular state does not take the faith of the believers seriously. As in other areas of life, the request for the equality of the state is only manifested in indifference¹⁸

Here we also need to mention a significant difference between the Western and Eastern perception of the role of religion in the philosophical foundations of the state. As Rousseau expresses the Western perception: “Although the subject of religion and politics is not the same, by the time of the birth of nations, one of them is the tool of the other.”¹⁹

Here we can see a clearly extrinsic understanding and role of the religion, religion understood as a tool only. As Mezei (2009) highlights concerning the Hungarian conservatism: “it is strongly bound to religion, though not absolutely to the positive and ecclesiastical religion, but rather to some kind of mystical religiosity, in which the direct relationship with God is crucial.” Referring to the Hungarian legal-political thought he continues: “It never considers religion as an extrinsic reference, tool or mere tradition, as it can be observed by the English and French thinkers. The striking characteristic of these latter ones is that religion plays a relatively little, inconsiderable role by them, and also this is subordinated to social and political thought.”²⁰

4. New Sacrality

New sacrality concepts emerged too, which suggests that the dynamics necessary to catalyze modern development was produced by traditional sacral communities during thousands of years and this was captured by monetary powers, while its technical opportunities were grabbed out of their universal sacral contexts. Therefore, these

¹⁷ Thomas MOLNÁR: *The Decline of the Intellectual*. Cleveland, World Publishing Company, 1961.

¹⁸ Norbert BOLZ: *Konsumista kiáltvány*. Ford.: NAGY Edina. Budapest, Műcsarnok, 2010. 18., 7–32.; HORVÁTH, Márk – LOVÁSZ, Ádám: *Sekély tenger – Felszínes mélység a posztmodernitásban*. Manuscript. 2014. 24.

¹⁹ Jean-Jacques ROUSSEAU: *Confessions*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000. 508.

²⁰ MEZEI, Balázs: Molnár Tamás körül. *Kommentár*, 2009/6. 3–17.

suggest the emergence of theocracy or at least Kingdoms by the Grace of God (Vass, 2005).²¹

5. Communication on Which Level?

Moreover, when it comes to the role of communication, which is central in new state concepts, like the communitarian concept of the “Intersubjective State” (Hörcher, 2002) that approaches the political community from a dialogue based on anthropology, which is about a state imagined in a new way,²² we should notice a basic, crucial question and division line here from the above mentioned aspects. The basis of this philosophy is an anthropology which takes into account that human beings are basically social beings, and so they gain their identity from the intertwining threads of communication with others. But here in the light of the above mentioned criterias the most important aspect remains gloomy, or blurred, namely if communication is the basis of identity, which creates our social reality, then communication on which level constructs the identities? If this remains on the level of damaged egos and selves then it creates a certainly different social reality and political community, power relationships than in the case of sacral communication which could be the topic of another study.

6. Coordinated Power Relationships, Network-like Structure of Organization According to the Holy Crown Theory

Finally, last, but not least it can be interesting to see a historical parallel where the network-like structure that Foucault lacked in the 1960s appeared centuries ago, and functioned as a multicultural state for long centuries. The main difference between the Hungarian state organizational principles according to the Holy Crown Theory is exactly the aspect which survival in modern state organizing was the target of Foucault’s critique. The notion of sovereignty was basically different in the Hungarian Kingdom, compared to the Western European governmental structure. The main source of sovereignty originated in the Holy Crown itself as a sacral, and also legal entity, and not in the person of the ruler as in Western Europe. Thus, it meant that the nation and the ruler were basically on a horizontal relationship subordinated to the Holy Crown, however, the nation was not under the direct subordination of the ruler. Moreover, counties had large entitlements and autonomy in a good number of fields. We can in fact talk about jurisdictional division of tasks, which was a fairly progressive element of the rule of law of the time. Zlinszky (1999) pointed out this shared, coordinated exercise of power between the central and local power as a

²¹ VASS, Csaba: *Hatalom, szakralitás, kommunikáció*. [Kölcsey Füzetek]. Budapest, Kölcsey Intézet, 2005.

²² HORRAY HÖRCHER op. cit. 133–160., 149–150.

unique feature of its time.²³ Besides the strong local power, which was in balance with the central power, the state structure was built on this extensive system of the full territorial, cultural autonomies, showing yet another novelty in Europe (1224 Diploma Andreanum, first in Europe for Saxons).

7. Coordinating Rather Than Subordinating

Therefore, we can see that there is a clear difference between the power approach of the Hungarian Kingdom and the Western European concepts. While the latter is basically built on the premise of subordination and the central structures that can be derived from this perspective, the Hungarian state organizing rather coordinating, means a shared, and more horizontal power relationship between the centre, the ruler and the local power, which comes from the Eastern philosophy based on the very opposite foundations compared to the Western perception of time and space. It is rather based on the notion and concept of infinite space, and the realm of timelessness, as Karácsony (1939) put it.²⁴ This approach applies to our modern day network theories and consensus building approach (CBA) processes ensuring longterm sustainability and more stable solutions for democratic plurality than the temporary solutions of Western thinkers like Dahl’s polyarchy seized in the frames of hierarchic, central structures criticized by Foucault and others.

²³ ZLINSZKY, János: A Szentkorona-eszme és története. In: MOLNÁR, Tamás – PAP, Gábor – PECZE, Ferenc – TÓTH Zoltán, József – VASS, Csaba – ZLINSZKY, János: *A magyar Szent Korona és a Szentkorona-tan az ezredfordulón*. Budapest, Szent István Társulat, 1999. 7–35., 17–18.

²⁴ KARÁCSONY, Sándor: *A magyar észjárás*. Budapest, Exodus, 1939. 15.