Thesis of PhD Dissertation

Is it Possible to Reconstitute the Political Community Justly? Moral Reasoning in Democratic Politics

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AIM OF THE DISSERTATION, CIRCUMSCRIPTION OF THE TOPIC

In my dissertation I covered three questions. Why is it desirable that moral views are prevalent in democratic political practice? Which are the moral views the observation of which is not only desirable but also possible? Under what condition can we hope that in democratic political practice these possible moral views will indeed prevail? The three topics I have observed in two – a Hungarian and an Anglo-Saxon – contexts. The first area of research was a Hungarian discourse in which the connection between politics and morals between 2002 and 2007 was investigated. The second area of my research was that Anglo-Saxon political philosophical dialogue which became known as the liberal-communitarian dialogue. The comparison of the two contexts was necessary because the three questions were only discussed in detail in the Anglo-Saxon discourse. In contrast, only the necessity of the connection of politics and moral were discussed in the Hungarian discourse. This was odd because the Anglo-Saxon discourse was in many respects the pattern for the Hungarian discourse. It affected the partakers' choice of value, it influenced their picture of themselves and the future. This was especially true for the starter of the discussion, János Kis. János Kis started the discussion, the partakers of which sought the answer to the question whether the prevalence of moral views are desirable in democratic political practice. The expressed positions reflected mainly of János Kis' related thoughts. The question is, therefore, why was the expression of the not only desirable but also possible moral values in democratic political practice not attempted?

What results do I hope from the confrontation of the domestic political discussion and an idealized "background discourse"? One of my answers is that the particular need of repetition in domestic political discussions analysis is this way avoidable or at least controllable. Most of the scientific reflects view two extremes. One of these positions is when the reconstruction of political dialogue stays merely descriptive. From analysis like this no statement can be made of the "quality" of the discussion, as it just about justifies the existing state. Representatives of alternative analysis wish to avoid these consequences. For this purpose, the objectivity of science is specified for the reason of justice in the argument of the two opposing positions. More refined versions of this last aspiration are the cases when the analyst of the political discourse is lead by the completion and excesses of these "unblessed and unnecessary" arguments. The effect of "equitable" and "balancing" analyses is but restricted or counterproductive. In better cases the partakers simply ignore them, in worse cases the partakers use these analyses for the verification of their own views. This is how I came to the

presumption that maybe we should not strive for the completion of "unblessed discussions". A pursuit like this can not affect the partakers positively because the goal is the same as the partakers' goal. Both the person scientifically analysing the discussions and the partakers originate from the idea that the "recipients" are willing to give up their positions and their identities concerning these positions. It seems benign, that we do not connect the programme of the development of debate-culture with some kind of identity swap. Not giving up the argument, and with this the acquired concerning identity and then attaining a new identity, is necessary but the outlining of the ethics of the identity-political debates. This is why in my dissertation I am looking for the answer to the question of the possibility of such ethical horizon which is able to facilitate identity-political discussions and if such a thing exists on what conditions can we hope for that it will not only be consistent but also functional.

APPLIED METHODS

According to my hypothesis, the assessment of the possibilities and conditions of moral values prevailing in democratical political practice failed in Hungarian context because the discursive position of participants of the debate did not make this possible. Therefore, my method of analysis was exploring and reinterpreting the analyzing horizons of the participants. In the first section of my dissertation (first and second parts) I focused on the analysis of the book *Politics as a moral problem*.[1] The reason for this choice is that this text included not only the unfolding of the author's previous comments but also the interpretations which the author gave of his debate partners' positions. The microphilological assessment of this book made it necessary for me to reconstruct not only the expressed theses but also the circumstances affecting these theses. One of the possible ways for the expansion of the microphilological assessment could have been to analys all of the related topics to this of the era and mapping the intertextual connections of these positions. This method, however, would not have been enough to answer the initial questions. Besides demonstrating the circumstances of the creation of the book and the train of thought in it, the exploration of paradigmatic blindspots in the book and the "deconstruction" of it were also necessary. This was the reason why I focused on the exploration of the theses which the partakers could have expressed but did not. Reassessing the analyzing horisons of the participants of the debate I

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[1] Kis János: A politika mint erkölcsi probléma. Irodalom Kft, Budapest 2004.

discovered that the unexpressed arguments are only reconstructable if we have already found answer to the unresolved questions. That is why in the second section of my dissertation (in the third and fourth parts) I turned to the observation of a discussion on the Anglo-Saxon political philosopy in which the question of the possibly viable moral views in democratic political practice is a lot more detailed than in Hungarian discussions.[2] This Anglo-Saxon political-philosophical discourse is known as the liberal-communitarian discussion. The link between the Hungarian and the Anglo-Saxon discourse is that the latter affected the prior in many respects. The Anglo-Saxon discourse was in many respects the pattern for the Hungarian discourse, so it affected the partakers' choice of value and influenced their picture of themselves and the future. Assessing the questions in the "modeling" discourse and the one following that and reconstructing the answers given to those questions is beneficial because it is more easily identifiable when the participants in the discourse following the other one's pattern are using the discursive tools of highlighting or even exclusion. In the third section of my dissertation (the fifth and sixth parts) I have turned back to the analysis of the Hungarian conext. The reconstruction and comparison of the answers of the Anglo-Saxon context has shown me which are the desirable and possible moral views of the Hungarian democratic political practice and under what conditions can we hope for following these views.

THESES OF THE DISSERTATION, RESULTS

1. The book *Politics as a moral problem* included the innovative and the cumbersome approach to the connection of politics and ethics. In the instrumentalist reinterpretation of the

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[2] Beiner, Ronald: Community versus Citizenship: MacIntyre Revolt Against the Mo¬dern State. Critical Review, 14/4. 2000.; Bell, Daniel, A.: A Communitarian Critique of Liberalism. 2005.; Dworkin, Ronald: Szabadság, egyenlőség, közösség. 2000, 3. 1993. 9-19. Horthon, John – Mendus, Susan (Szerk.): After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre. Polity Press, Cambridge, 1994.; Kymlicka, Will: Liberalism, Community and Culture. Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1991.; MacIntyre, Alasdair: Whose Justice? Which Rationality? Duckworth, London, 1988.; Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy and Tradition. University of Notre Dame Press. Notre Dame, 1990.; Az erény nyomában. Ford. Bíróné Kaszás Éva. Osiris Kiadó, Budapest, 1999.; Nozick, Robert: Anarchy, State, and Utopia. Basic Books, New York. 1974.; Rawls, John: Political Liberalism. Columbia University Press, New York. 1996.; Az igazságosság elmélete. Ford. Krokovay Zsolt. Osiris Kiadó, Budapest. 1997 (1971).; The Law of Peoples. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts. 1999.; Sandel, Michael: Liberalism and the Limits of Justice. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982.; A procedurális köztársaság és a „tehermentes" én. Ford. Babarczy Eszter. In Huoranszki Ferenc (Szerk.): Modern politikai filozófia. Osiris-Láthatatlan Kollégium, Budapest. 1998. 161-173.; Mi igazságos... és mi nem? A helyes cselekvés elmélete és gyakorlata. Corvina Kiadó, Budapest. 2012.; Skinner, Quentin: A szabadság és a honpolgárság két rivális hagyománya. Vilá¬gosság, 10. 1995. 21-33.; Walzer, Michael: Spheres of Justice. A Defense of Pluralism and Equality. Blackwel, Oxford. 1993.

operation of democratic institutions János Kis attempted to prove that the instrumental strategies facilitated by democratic institutions could even be used to the prevalence of moral principles. He summarized his results in the thesis of indirect motivation. On the other hand, while analyzing the moral dilemmas prevailing in democratic political practice he established that good politics could not be reduced to the efficiency-based actions of the technocratic political elite. The simultaneous analysis of instrumentalist reinterpretation of the operations of democratic institutions and the moral dilemmas appearing in political practice intersected the lines of demarcation along which the participants of inland political public speaking specified their position. This was the reason why the participants of Hungarian political public speaking found it difficult to interpret the main theses of this book.

2. The inland reception of the theory regarding the connection of politics and ethics was made more difficult with conceptional contradictions. With the reassessment of the operations of democratic instituations the author had to tackle the challenge that the strategy of indirect motivation and the principle of deliberation can in any case be combined into one single theory. János Kis' solution was that he gave key role to "critical intellectuals".[3] This solution, however, became the source of new problems, and he did not deal with these in his book *Politics as a moral problem* any more. The most significant difficulty ensued from the fact that the key role of critical intellectuals can only be invoked if the political community is integrated, if the loyalty between the members of the political community is so strong that their distinct identities can not invalidate that. It can not be accidental that in his later analyses Kis gave up his starting point according to which the above condition is true for the Hungarian political community. Without the unified identity of the political community elevating "critical intellectuals" protecting the substantial principles of democracy did not make out as a selfless act but such political step which aimed for the foundation of one's own demand for power. In this perspective the separation of moral principles independent from politics and suitable for the judgment of politics is considered a step the original aim of which would be for one of the groups, forminging a political community, to make their identity the same as the whole community's identity. In the perspective which is irrespective of János Kis' and his debate partners' presuppositions the instrumental concept of the connection of politics and moral is "unveiled".[4] In this perspective politics is such a social action which evolves its

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[3] Kis János: A politika mint erkölcsi probléma. Irodalom Kft, Budapest 2004. 34-38.
[4] Ambrus-Lakatos Loránd: Folyamatos erkölcsi válság. Élet és Irodalom, XLVII/13, március 28. 2003; Ambrus-Lakatos Loránd: Politikáról és morálról: türelmesen. Élet és Irodalom, XLVII/17, április 25. 2003; Bojtár Endre: Kis-minimum. Élet és Irodalom, XLVII/1, január 3. 2003; Bozóki András: A mérlegelő döntés. Élet és Irodalom, XLVII/3, január 17. 2003; Eörsi István: Morál és politika. Élet és Irodalom, XLVII/3, január 17. 2003; Fleck

suitable norms for its own judgment. This critical point of view is based on an autopoetical concept of politics which challenges those metapolitical concepts that measure their political acts according to norms independent of the political sector. Because of the challenge in the autopoetical perception of politics the main questions of the philosophical reflection of the connection between politics and morals vary as follows: How can moral be "rescued" from the prison of autopoetical politics? How can moral autonomy be ensured against politics? How can such moral principles be achieved which can influence political processes in a way that the inner and outer contradictions mentioned by János Kis are avoided?

3. Without the loyalty between political communities, as in in the context of identity-political fights, the strategy of indirect motivation and the description of moral dilemmas valid in political practice have to be reconsidered entirely. János Kis has drawn up the moral dilemmas prevailing in political practice through the paradigm of consequential ethics. This way, analysis of the moral dilemmas prevailing in identity-political context assumes the extension of the paradigm of consequential ethics. Above mentioned challenges are avoidable if we supplement the duty-based approach which János Kis applied with the virtue-based paradigm. Within the frames of virtue-based interpretation politics creates a social practices the aim of which is not the accomplishment of moral principles irrelated to politics but the development and perfection of such values which can only be used within political activity. The possibility of a virtue-based interpretation can be spotted in János Kis' theory and in that autopoetical concept of politics, which is radically opposing János Kis' theory. Throughout his argument János Kis fought the "weberian" interpretation of politics where the essence of politics is to achieve goals which are particular to it and are only achievable by it. According to the authors standing by the autopoetical concept of politics, however, it is pointless, harmful and spurious to fight against the autonomy of the political sector.

4. For the dissection of the political community's alternative interpretation and for the dissection of the moral dilemmas in democratic political practice the "model discourse" gave a possibility. Analyzing MacIntyre's virtue-based theory showed that the virtue-based approach easily complies with the observations according to which political activity is independent or can be separated from the moral imperatives determined by duty-based moral concepts. MacIntyre also thought that different social practices are possible with different

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Zoltán: A moralisták ellen. Élet és Irodalom, XLVII/15, április 11. 2003; HackPéter, A politikai cselekedetek mércéjéről. Élet és Irodalom, XLVII/2, január 10. 2003; Haraszti Miklós, A politikai minimum. Élet és Irodalom, XLVII/6, február 7. 2003; Kerpel-Fronius Gábor, Vég vagy kezdet. Élet és Irodalom, XLVII/5, január 31. 2003; Salamon János: A félelem liberalizmusa. Élet és Irodalom, XLVII/24, június 13. 2003; Nádas Péter:

goods provided we ensure the autonomy of these practices against the universally accepted moral principles. Therefore, the real moral dilemmas are not derived from the conflict of goods implemented through virtues and the universally accepted moral principles. The reason for the real moral dilemmas is that we have to choose between the different goods implemented through virtues. MacIntyre's theory includes more than what the analyses emphasizing the autonomy and autopoetical nature of politics claim. This way for example, it allows the assessment of differences between the simulacra of virtue to virtue, or the identification of those practices harmful to the success of other practices. Ergo, MacIntyre's virtue-based theory claims the plurality of values, but contrary to the analyses emphasizing the autonomy and autopoetical nature of politics, it is not relativist. The reason for this is that according to him virtues do not prevail alone or without context but at the same time as other virtues and in many cases rivaling those. The value conflict, therefore, can have a constructive function and this function assumes the existence of such virtues that give a basis to the complex context of virtues. In MacIntyre's virtue-based theory the "virtue of a sense of tradition" was the virtue giving the ground and protecting the complex context of virtues.

5. The alternative strategy managing moral dilemmas made reinterpretation of political community necessary. Comparing Rawls' and MacIntyre's virtue-based perception made this possible. The result of the comparison is that Rawls and MacIntyre construed similarly both the virtues and the political communities in which the practice of these virtues might have an important role. Because of these observations I have concluded that within the frames of modern political communities delimited by identity-political fights, political activity can be assessed on the basis of moral angles if we complement the classical understanding of political virtues with Rawls' principles of justice. The synchronization of virtue-based and duty-based approach is based on Rawls' perception of the unity of human life, as in personal individuality and the moral dimensions of this. Throughout my comparison of Rawls' and MacIntyre's picture of community I have also assessed that in Rawls' drawup of modern sociological context - opposing MacIntyre's assumption - the virtue of practical intelligence phronesis can also prevail. The virtue of practical intelligence, as in phronesis can be exceptionally important in situations where the rivaling notions of principles of justice are incompatible. In political communities delimited by identity-political conflicts also these incompatible notions of the principle of justice are valid, which is why in the political lives of these communities the virtue of phronesis can be exceptionally important.

Áldatlan és fölösleges vita. Mihancsik Zsófia interjúja Nádas Péterrel. Magyar Narancs, június 27. 2002; Nádas Péter, Az értelem kockázata. Élet és Irodalom, XLVII/1, január 4. 2003.

6. Examining the role MacIntyre gave to the virtue of practical intelligence, and the traditional concept based on this, I have concluded that - unlike MacIntyre's own intentions - can be used in the context of modern political communities. It is for this virtue-based traditional concept that the "traditionalisms opposing emancipation" can be contrasted not only with emancipation opposing traditionalism but also the emancipational programmes based on the logic of premodern tradition. Reconstructing Rawls' concept of political communities also justified my assumption, according to which within the frames of Rawls' principle of justice the "premodern" virtue of a sense of tradition can also get a role. According to Rawls if the basic structure of a political community is defined by the principle of justice, then the community is advocating special forms of identity. This special form of identity can be described with the concept of the Unity of the Self. This concept is "genuine goods for man", as in it can be related to the picture demonstrated by MacIntyre of the narrative unity of life, this way, it is not surprising that it can be created with the support of such communal traditions which are in connection with the premodern virtue of sense of tradition. Therefore, the subjectum concept in the center of Rawls' principle of justice also fits into the "discursive" concept of tradition. On this basis we can form such descriptions of the history of modern political communities, whose main motif is the momentum of the liberation of Rawls' subjectum concept.

7. Returning to the analysis of the Hungarian discourse I concluded that in the Hungarian political discourse it was possible for theories verifying the use of leverage-increasing tools to be popular, because the political public speaking was defined by identity-political fights. This popularity of the identity-political fights and the ideological verification of the use of leverage-increasing tools was the reason that the debate started by János Kis did not evolve. Though, János Kis reflected on the phenomenon of identity-political fights, he incorrectly identified the origins of it. According to Kis the reason for the increase in identity-political fights is that the opposing political sides base their identities on various unprocessed historical offences. As a result of my own analyses I have concluded that not only the unprocessed or incorrectly processed offences can stand behind the maintaining of the anachronistic identity but also those specific benefits which come from the averting of responsibilities. The "hysterical" insistence to "anachronistic" identity can be motivated by the convulsive fear of responsibility. Therefore, raising the standard of political public speaking is not by therapizing the attitudes seeking gratification but by neutralizing the leverage-increasing ideologies.

8. From the theories verifying the leverage-increasing angles the interpretation crowning the autopoetic nature of politics deserves attention. The main source of this theory is Foucoult's concept of power. Rawls' picture of community and MacIntyre's understanding of dilemma can be used to confute the analyses ephasizing the autopoetical nature of politics, and also for the therapy of identity-political conflicts standing behind such political concepts, because they gave a privileged role to the benefit of self-respect. Namely, the role of a victim and the fear behind it (fear of responsibility) is not compatible with the benefit of self-respect. For the prevalence of the good of self-respect appropriate communities are needed, where the different virtues can evolve. One of the most important virtues will be the virtue of the sense of tradition, which restricts the vehemence of identity-political debates, seeing as it leads to such interpretation of moral dilemmas in political practice, which are incompatible with the interpretations motivated by the identity-political fights.

TEXTS PUBLISHED IN THE TOPIC OF THE DISSERTATION

I. BOOK/MONOGRAPHY

Rácz Sándor: Lehetséges-e a politikai közösség igazságos újraalkotása? Erkölcsi érvelés a demokratikus politikában. (Is it Possible to Reconstitute the Political Community Justly? Moral Reasoning in Democretic Politics) Eszmetörténei Könyvtár 19. Budapest, Argumentum Kiadó, 2013. pp. 267.

II. STUDIES

1. Rácz Sándor: Törvényesség vagy morál? (Legitimacy or Morals?) In. Dénes Iván Zoltán (szerk): A megosztó válság: 2006. ősz, Budapest, Gondolat, 2007.

2. Rácz Sándor: Liberalizmus versus republikanizmus? (Liberalism versus Republicanism?) In. Liberalizmus és nemzettudat. Dialógus Szabó Miklós gondolataival, Szerk. Dénes Iván Zoltán. Argumentum - Bibó István Szellemi Műhely, Budapest, 2008 /Eszmetörténeti Könyvtár 8./. 273-293.

3. Rácz Sándor: A polgári engedetlenség rawls-i értelmezése. (Rawls's conception of civil disobedience) In. Huszonöt fennsík - A művészetektől a tudományokig, Szerk. Bujalos István, Valastyán Tamás, Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, 2011. 284-296.

4. Rácz Sándor: Törvények és erények. (Laws and Virtues) In. A szabadság felelőssége. Írások a 65 éves Dénes Iván Zoltán tiszteletére, Szerk. Pénzes Ferenc, Rácz Sándor, Tóth-Matolcsi László. Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, Debrecen 2011. 53-64.

5. Rácz Sándor: Erkölcsi érvelés a demokratikus politikában. (Moral Reasoning in Democretic Politics) In. Nagyerdei Almanach, Szerk. Hornyák Péter István, Karap Zoltán, Debrecen, 2011. (http://www.nagyalma.hu/archivum.php)

6. Rácz Sándor: Az erkölcsi szerencse a politikában. (Moral Luck in Politics) In. Bibó 100: Recepciók, értelmezések, alkalmazási kísérletek. Szerk. Dénes Iván Zoltán. Budapest, Argumentum - Bibó István Szellemi Műhely, 2012. 438-449.

III. EDITED WORKS

A szabadság felelőssége. Írások a 65 éves Dénes Iván Zoltán tiszteletére. (Responsibility of Liberty. Writings onto the respect of 65 year Dénes Iván Zoltán) Szerk. Pénzes Ferenc, Rácz Sándor, Tóth-Matolcsi László. Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, Debrecen 2011.