EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY VERSUS NEOLIBERAL TOTALITARIANISM

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Abstract: This paper points out the need for a philosophical articulation of democracy, contrary to ideological interpretations in the context of liberalism, i.e. the paradigm of liberal democracy. This perspective is considered in the light of the human condition in a pandemic crisis. The world before the COVID-19 pandemic was largely marked by the so-called posthumanism.

In this paper, posthumanism is regarded as an entropy of diversity among people and their understandings of the world and life, which is placed in the context of democratization without reflection. Thus, "democracy" makes it impossible for "human phenomena" to be placed under one human idea. What determines this process, however, is not democracy, but a phenomenon which is already known as *global extension of neoliberalism*.

The destructive effects of this ideological hybrid, especially for the sovereignty of the human community, call for renewal of the civilizational foundations of European democracy, which is based on the principle of sovereignty of states and peoples; hence, a philosophically articulated Christian democracy.

Keywords: democracy; neoliberalism; sovereignty; human; safety; Europe.

> *"Democracy can only be Christian or it will not be at all"*
> **Robert Schumann**

The world before the COVID-19 pandemic was largely marked by the so-called *posthumanism*. The coronavirus phenomenon seems to have made it more transparent.

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Here, by posthumanism, I mean primarily the entropy of diversity among people and their understandings of the world and life, which is benevolently placed in the context of democratization on the wave of globalism. This kind of entropy makes it practically impossible for "human phenomena" to be placed under *one human idea*.

However, what determines this dynamic process more accurately is not democracy but a phenomenon that we can call *spread of neoliberalism*. We will explain why we think this is the case in the following lines:

1. Democracy, if it is not reduced to the ideology of liberalism or to the ancient understanding of its closeness to anarchy, is based on the principle of sovereignty which represents the human as capable of identifying the subject of sovereignty. Sovereignty in the context of posthumanism is also a kind of ontological criterion because its identification re-examines the human basis of subjectivity. If these foundations are lost, the place of human subjectivity remains not only controversial, but also vacant. Ultimately, the artificial constructions of human sovereignty can easily occur, and even worse: the transformation of people from subjects into objects of sovereignty.

2. One of the ways to see the process "clarified" by the coronavirus pandemic is the neutralization of the difference between *public* and *private* as another couple from the era of traditional humanism (and even classical liberalism) that ceased to be the backbone of life in the age of "unstoppable progress".

Under the pressure of progress and emerging emergencies, on the other hand, the private sphere of people's life is disappearing in various requests for public or "available private information" about people. Neutralization is a good expression for that process because it happens within the circumstances of the so-called *new reality* that is, in a way, presented as a natural course of events. So, it seems that the annihilation of *subject* of the sovereignty of human community is also part of the evolution of humanity.

However, the security interest that underlies the articulation of people's sovereignty and that truly bears the interest of a democratic

society recognizes the problem of normality long before the corona crisis.

The reason is that it differs extraordinarily from the regular (normal) state. That is why, in a democratic society, the situation can be recognized as a state of emergency or even as a formally declared state of emergency, but which must be limited in time and explained with additional criteria.

So, it lasts as long as there are reasons for that publication, and the explanation implies the availability of the purpose of emergency measures to every member of the human community. This also applies to the flow or distribution of data on the private life or characteristics of individuals.

The data and this kind of knowledge in general are not abstractly public but *common* because all members of the community, as well as the community itself, are endangered, and then the meaning of the community is fully expressed as *a synthesis of private and public aspects of personality*.

3. Neoliberal globalism (Harris-White, B. 2002) reinforces the long-standing metaphysics of progress[1] where the people involved in the process are increasingly becoming objects and less subject to this alleged progress. This further means that the logic behind these processes is becoming more and more abstract, and distances most people from the ability to make decisions and thus influence those processes.

For example, the distribution of digital data updated during the coronavirus pandemic again indicates the growing importance of the so-called artificial intelligence. In itself, it can be an abstract source of power for the vast majority of people and for the ones in whose name it is used.

Thus, the so-called *social distance of power* reaches its maximum and undermines the idea of sovereignty and democracy.

The independence of any power in the political milieu of a democratic society undermines its foundations. This seems even worse if

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[1] This phenomenon points to a philosophical contradiction or logical deficit I have called *progrresus ad infinitum* (author's note).

the power that is becoming more and more abstract takes more and more abstract forms, especially if we can no longer connect this problem with the issue of human abuse. To make matters even more suspicious, the possibility of "human abuse" appears as an argument for an even more sophisticated (and even more abstract) procedure that can be reduced to an *inhuman control algorithm*.

So, it happened that safety (security) as a fundamental human interest includes interest in all segments of the removal of the proven "human factor" from the decision-making process. Everything that affects this process must be subject to the previously mentioned regulations and to the context of the state of emergency in general, not the normal state. Is it a paradox of humanistic progress or a bare fact of the posthuman era, or a new step inside the same process?

Among other things, the coronavirus pandemic has revealed the enormous manipulative power of another global technology: the so-called *digital media*.

In addition to the alternative life, like reality that suspends real social relations, the power of arbitrary (i.e. censored) distribution of content has been exposed. This kind of separate or independent power indicated a danger for the principle of sovereignty in a "natural" way as well. Because, in itself, it is outside (because it is globalist) and also above (because of liberal currents) the principle of sovereignty of a democratic society.

The coronavirus pandemic showed when it was most difficult that the national (sovereign) state is an irreplaceable security subject of reacting to circumstances that it recognizes as extraordinary, regardless of the different and variable success from state to state (Bodin, M. 2021).

However, at the same time, there are conscious efforts to propose the introduction of global mechanisms that would be a "more efficient alternative" to the cooperation of sovereign states instead of the values that people and states point to each other (international solidarity). A decades-long attempt to fight global warming shows what this may look like.

The most responsible country for emitting harmful gases or some centres of power from those countries propose global solutions and rules for radical emission reduction, although smaller pollutants and far poorer countries cannot have stable economic development without the use of fossil fuels.

The calculation is clear if 80 percent of the polluters apply measures in the next 10–20 years. The problem would be visibly reduced independently of other countries (poorer ones) with 20 percent participation in air pollution, which would have more time to adapt to their weaker economies.

There are no easy and eternal solutions to this dynamic, but one should take into account the reflection of essential human interests, which is the meaning of the philosophical character of security. There is the reflection of danger and attention to the fact that, through manipulation and inversion of security interests, the question is raised of the death of the subject of sovereignty (analogous to the "death of god"). It can happen so abstractly as I mentioned before that death becomes irrelevant, so that the sovereignty of people and the state becomes superfluous; that it should be "excluded from the apparatus" due to (un)determinable death.

In the neoliberal process of globalization, which suspends the sovereignty of a democratic society in an increasingly sophisticated way, the creation of centres of power that act on both people and states, dissolving them like a process by which acid dissolves the organism, is largely at work (Hammerlund, P. 2005).

This implies the alienation of human from social and national resources supported by the already mentioned progress management technology.

It follows from all this that curbing the neoliberal destruction of human subjectivity, and thus the sovereignty of a democratic society, is possible only by placing the authentic human interest in the security issue at the conceptual and operational levels of national and international security, i.e. related security of states and peoples (Gill, S. 2003).

It also follows that the fundamental importance of security interests must be the criterion for distinguishing between the improvement

of people's life that gives meaning to it and the role of technology in human life.

Recalling the countless differences between people mentioned at the beginning of the text, it should be noted that the democratic principle of the majority's will to lead society for a limited time (mandate period) counts on and encourages the collection of common human qualities, some of which long-lasting and others quite temporary. The principle relies on a certain historical continuity of the idea of human in an authentically democratic approach.

What we can call "liberal" in this context is a corrective role that prevents the *petrification* of that idea. The corrective role of liberalism is contrary to the ideological character of liberalism (i.e. its matrix role), and the established model of "liberal democracy", consequently the installation called the *world liberal system* (Bodin, M. 2019).

The concept and practice of neoliberalism developed from this ideological setting – from the initial economic contours of the concept through the political ones to the ontological means mentioned in this text, which influence the posthumanist understanding of reality.

The latter lies in the deepest connection with the initially non-transparent properties of totalitarianism, in the name of the so-called "law of freedom", i.e. the civilization of infinite progress. By non-transparent we mean that neoliberalism is expressed as a transparent form of covert totalitarianism in the structural sense of classical liberalism and capillary totalitarianism in the systematic elaboration of the world liberal system.

Due to all that, it is necessary to re-articulate the preconditions of civilization, above all European democracy. They can no longer be understood or silenced. Precisely because of the point where it is necessary for democracy to no longer be the handmaiden of neoliberalism. Just like philosophy, which must regain the self-reflection of its own being, it is a reflection of the truth above all, as well as the wisdom for a human being to treat it accordingly. Philosophy must no longer be a servant of the ideology that distorted its meaning.

In this way, democracy should be articulated in the reflection of its civilizational foundations. Specifically, European democracy should be a philosophically embraced experience of European civilization, conceptualized so that it is more than the declarative or descriptive meaning of democracy. It must be in the spirit of the development of the human being, which also develops sovereignty and does not reduce or even destroy it.

Otherwise, it leads to posthumanist totalitarianism and undermines the foundations of democracy at the core of its meaning.

This brings us back to the sentence which is the *motto* of this article: "Democracy can only be Christian or it will not be at all". These words of Robert Schuman, one of the founders of the European community (not the liberal union), point to the conclusion of this text that it is necessary to reaffirm the civilizational foundations of European democracy. These foundations point to the values that make the idea of *Human* continuous despite the many differences between people.

The Christian essence of European civilization is *a synthesis of the principles of sovereignty and democracy*. This implies that there is a dynamic equilibrium between the so-called horizontal and vertical values that make human life and even the idea of *Human* meaningful. Christian democracy, therefore, is not a political category, although it is known from political life.

Unlike the nominal political parties, the CDU of Germany as the most important party lost its essential attitude towards Christianity and the idea of *Human*, because it was there that the abstract category of *human gender identity* was introduced. It is essentially Christian democracy that represents the idea of the European Civilization Constitution.

That is why the conceptual content lies on the thoroughly articulated positive heritage and removal of the negative heritage of the Christian history of Europe. Regardless of confessional similarities and differences, onto-theological, ethical, cultural, and finally political values should be articulated and placed in the context of the need for a legal orientation of life in the European community of sovereign states as a recommendation for the improved United Nations model.

Thus, European civilization would really be a Leader in the democratization of the world and not a participant in the neoliberal enslavement of the world.

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