

ANTI-POLITICS, POPULISM and POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

ABSTRACT

This essay gives voice to pondering the dramatic changes in the Western politics of our era. The crisis of democracy, the spread of populism and the progression of national right-wing ideologies are the key headings of the analyses that research the phenomenon of, and deep social and even socio-psychological reasons for, the political reactions of Western societies. It assumes that the increasing anti-political attitude of the Western societies is shaped by two psychological factors: the burnout of Western people (their unhappiness) and Western people's increasing fear. As for our hypothesis, Western voters' psychic condition is deteriorating through a synergy of several "traps". These are (a) the trap of improving well-being (luxury trap), (b) the technological trap and (c) the biological paradox. Western people have reached the psychological tipping point these decades and have been looking for fast, radical and plausible politics. At this point the national political-based, in every sense protectionist, i.e., protective politics promising cultural identity and at the same time individual identity is successful. All these are a comeback to pre-modern political culture where the promises are guaranteed by the leader to make the public happy personally and through his charisma.

KEY WORDS

populism, anti-politics, political psychology, sociopsychology, democracy, nationalism, protectionism, Western society

Anti-politics, Populism and Political Psychology

I. The Twilight of the Old Politics?

This essay gives voice to pondering the dramatic changes in the politics of our era. Every generation considers the history of their own era unique and exceptional, so nowadays from a tight historical perspective, we could even speak about a *change in the political era*. The crisis of democracy, the spread of populism and the progression of national right-wing ideologies are the key headings of the analyses that research the phenomenon of, and reasons for, the political reactions of Western societies. Economic studies, as well as the study of political and social sciences, make every effort to prove how statistical data and mega-trends shape the politics of the Western world. What have Western people turned into? *Ecce Homo!*

„We are transferring power from Washington, D.C., and giving it back to you, the people.

[...] The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country”¹. These were, among others, the main messages of the most important political action of our present, the inauguration speech of the newly elected US President (20th January 2017). Messages that emphasize that there is a *significant rearrangement occurring within the political map of the “Western world”²*. Since the 2008 global financial crisis the new political trend, the ideal of strong state governance, the previous decades’ movement of liberal “governance” and the supranational financial and political governance have been decreasing. The narrative of the political sciences of the phenomenon is colorful. The *spread of right-wing ideals and populists* provides a popular framework of interpretation. The *weakening of liberalism and internationalism* and, in opposition, *the awakening of statehood and governance based on community and national ideas*,

¹ Inauguration speech of D. Trump, 20 January 2017, USA

² I use “Western world” and “Western people” in the civilizational and cultural terms followed by S.P. Huntington. According to Huntington the countries/peoples of the West are bound by the following criteria: religion, language, the separation of state and Church, the rule of law, social pluralism, representative bodies, and individualism. in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Budapest, Európa kiadó 2008. 223.)

form a clear antinomy.³ The majority of opinions visioning the crisis of democracy is based on the identification of liberalism and democracy, in other words, it is the liberal left-wing monopolization of democracy.⁴ Liberal as the adjective of democracy is fading away, i.e. the strength of individual-centered politics placing security issues behind the rights to liberty is waning. Democracy works even without the dominance of liberal values, thus in the countries where the right-wing values of security and national community dominate.

Another narrative of the new trend nowadays indicates the *spread* and danger of *populism*. It is unnecessary to analyze the concept in order to identify this phenomenon when *politics makes simple and impressive statements referring to the people, the nation*. There is a growing demand for populism, that is, for strong, leading personalities who use everyday language. This means the success of *personality-based and emotional politics*, *speech criticizing politics* on behalf of the nation, and in the sense of social sciences, the non-conformist and radical speeches. As opposed to the liberal institution-based principle and party logic, *the role of the political personality is strengthening*. The astonishing intensity of the media and Internet-based communication have a major role in it, which brings the voters and politicians closer to each other.

In the 2016 US election the businessman, Donald Trump, who is considered populist by the mainstream media, won. Since 2010 a stable and strong religious-conservative course has been functioning in Hungary. The Polish government policy becomes ever increasingly identical to the Hungarian model. The 2017 Austrian parliamentary election pointed out the failure of liberal politics and the rise of radical forces. The 2016 British government crisis, the German elections and French primaries indicated that dramatic changes have started in the relationship of Western societies and politics. In the Netherlands and in Italy the rise of radical anti-migration political forces demonstrates the above-mentioned trends.

³ According to Huntington the search for national identity, the strengthening of social and ethnic awareness and the revival of religion, “the return to holiness” become a worldwide phenomenon as an answer to globalization. in S.P. Huntington 97. According to Huntington the winning future political messages emphasize the protection of national community and identity, and the importance of sacredness.

⁴ Global Risks Report WEF 2017. 12th ed. part 2. Western Democracy in Crisis? 23

In the Western world the processes reflect a social reversal beyond right and left wing cyclic pole shifts. The extent of the instability of the old political forces is different by countries, however, the phenomena thereof can be sensed everywhere. The forces from different directions eroding the previous consensus on building the system are thriving. A fault line along Western democracies is being outlined, which seems to tilt the balance of Western political systems established after 1945. Consequently it would be a mistake to speak merely about the logical decrease of voters' confidence in the ruling parties and governments, and about the cycles of the democratic handover of power.

The question arises *whether it is enough to search for the reasons for the failure of the old politics with the old political way of thinking.* Most of the analyses look for the rational explanation of the changes in the usual way, in the performance of governance and in economic statistics from social sciences and economic points of view. According to this, the slowdown of economic growth, the development of public confidence in political and economic performance, and further objective reasons such as the income situation, employment and welfare benefits, are the explanations for the changes.

The strength of the changes and their simultaneous emergence in the Western world indicate that it is worth searching for deep social and even *sociopsychological reasons* that produce *elemental effects and sociopsychological projections against politics.* There is no doubt that the *sociopsychological processes* have a rather limited statistical justification, thus even the world of science and political analyses handle them cautiously.

II. The Revival of Anti-politics

Anti-politics has been the trend of the Western world for the past years, where new political forces achieve success by *rejecting the "old politics", considered as the politics of the elite, and change the traditional political style and speech.* The new politics *positions itself as opposed to politics itself, and attacks the political elite* with strong emotional mobilization *on behalf of the public.* The old politics positioned itself as opposed to the opposing parties, whereas *the new politics appears as the anti-politics to politics, as the voice of the people.*

Anti-politics represents plain and confrontative speaking, which represents real interests bluntly in political communication. It "refers" to reality and considers

political correctness as opposed thereto. The rejection of political correctness has become the “trade mark” of anti-politics in the media and everyday language, and in right-wing rhetoric the slogan of being engaged in politics for the people. There are few among the voters who know and understand what the concept of political correctness (PC for short), imported from the Anglo-Saxon political language, covers. We cannot speak about a novel phenomenon either since the right-wing parties have been using PC as an enemy topos for nearly two decades. The original meaning of PC is the *avoidance of plain speaking*. It was introduced ironically by left-wing and liberal culture, yet it stuck to them. They have become those “who avoid plain speaking”. The anti-politics of today goes beyond this and considers PC the language of the attacked political elite and even of the despised old politics, which “is not our language, not the language of the people”. Politics is considered the field of the left-wing and other political opponents by anti-political communication and stigmatized them as corrupt, PC elite. Anti-politics determines itself as opposed to “those”, i.e., PC, as the voice of the people. PC has become an enemy creating concept, and the enemy image has become an ever increasingly efficient means of political communication. The people’s weakening sense of security awakens the ancient instinct of enemy suspicion, in which the effective message of “we” and “they” can be built up in “we-do-tell-the-truth-but-they-do-not”.

The *rejection of* the “regular” faces shaping politics (the elite), the political-economic rationalities, and the *politics built on* global openness and liberty ideals, and on the integrating and moderate *topos* that can be called liberal, *is growing*. There is a growing demand in Western people for *new politics opposing political conventions*, for anti-politics. It values *being a political outsider* instead of the status of the insider elite. The strongest signal of this was the 2016 US presidential election, assuming that the voters valued the anti-political outsider candidate (Donald Trump) and the above non-conventional style. The anti-elite approach does not prevail in general but also as opposed to politics. If the people of the economic-financial elite can act as political outsiders they can win. This is reflected in President D. Trump as a person (USA) and the composition of his cabinet. Voters are more and more looking for non-conventional style and prefer the *nation and protection-based approach* to global openness. They value

a security policy more than the right to liberty. Securitization has become a standard means of exercising power in the Western world.⁵

In anti-politics, voters appreciate a strong populist voice instead of moderate-ness, the *defensive national drift* “*towards themselves*” instead of inclusive humanism. Another driving engine of anti-politics is *social media*, which rejects *traditional political methods* (mass media, billboards, leaflets) *in the field of communication*. Virtual space (cyber space) has become the campaign sites of elections. The young and the middle-aged are looking for their candidates here and this is the place where they communicate about political issues. While the conventional politics goes out in the streets and visits the television, *anti-politics builds its own community in the cyber space and social media*. *Cyber space is becoming a field dominated by anti-politics*.

The phenomenon of anti-politics indicates that it is not enough to attribute the voters’ feelings on politics to the economic and social processes of politics, which also refer back to the performance of governance. Looking for the development of voters’ confidence in the rationality of election pledges and the efficiency of their communication is not enough either. *The anti-politics awakening in the Western world shows such strong social reactions that, without the examination of the sociopsychological sources, the real reasons for the phenomenon remain unclear*.

III. The Sociopsychological Reasons for Anti-politics

We assume that the anti-political attitude of the Western world is shaped by two psychological factors, which are closely related to each other. *On the one hand the burnout of Western people (their unhappiness), on the other hand Western people’s increasing fear*.

It is about the phenomena of sociopsychology that *intensively search for political (politician’s) reaction, support*. *Western people expect fast and tangible solutions to these psychological problems and real action and strength from poli-*

⁵ Péter Tálás: *A terrorveszélyhelyzet-diskurzus margójára* (On the Sidebar of the Discourse of the Situation in Case of Terrorist Threat) SVKK Nézőpontok 2016/1. 1

tics. “Being democratic” is not enough to gain the voters’ confidence. Being correct, and conventional and rational argumentation, are insufficient for credibility. Western people are looking for force and style with the ability to provide for individual security and individual happiness, i.e., for an originally new politics. Behind the political “earthquake” of the West, the complex mass psychological processes of modernity shall be explored.

The unhappiness and fear of the Western people have always been present and affected political communication. Recently there has been more evidence on *the strengthening of the political role* of the two psychological problems. It is anti-politics that recognizes and uses *voters’ psychological factors*. It recognizes that *the emotion-driven person expects emotional motivation from politics in particular*, and it is not sure that he is open to the economic and sociological argumentation of politics or reasons at all.

1) The Unhappiness of Western People: Expectations for Miracles

Western people tend to reach the level of unhappiness and dissatisfaction with life, the projection of which to politics is becoming an increasingly important election factor. *They are impatiently waiting for political solutions to the improvement of their own personal happiness. They are expecting miracles from politics.* Politics has only recently been interested in measuring and evaluating happiness.⁶ These measurements increasingly provide opportunity for the issue *whether the fetish of politics, economic growth makes people really happy. Or as a paradox effect it makes them unhappier.*

As for our hypothesis, Western society is increasingly getting closer to the point of burnout, unhappiness is spreading at the rate of “well-being and financial development”. The voters’ psychic condition is deteriorating through a synergy

⁶ In 2011 the UN General Assembly adopted the proposal of Bhutan that in the global comparison indicating the development of certain countries GNH (Gross National Happiness) shall also be an indicator in addition to GDP or GNP. OECD has conducted the online survey on Better-Life indicator for several years, which measures life satisfaction and ranks the member states. The Hungarian CSO (Central Statistical Office) also measures life satisfaction. The UK Government started to intensively deal with the measurement of happiness (Office of National Statistics (ONS) in recent years. Happy Planet Index and The World Happiness Report operate a global indicator system and ranking.

of several “traps”. These are (a) the trap of improving well-being (luxury trap), (b) the technological trap and (c) the biological paradox.

a) **The Trap of Improving Well-being (luxury trap)**

According to the law of nature every “improvement” faces barriers. This trap is also present for governments living in the collective myth of economic growth. Economic growth together with the increase of consumption, encounter the barrier of the limits of usable natural resources at a macro level.⁷ The measure for political and economic success is economic growth, the measure for individual success is the improvement of the level of the life circumstances of well-being. Many of those who are reading these lines work for their families’ income and financial growth, considering it partly a success and a goal. *As the unlimited increase of consumption is an evolutionary trap, so drives individual financial growth people in a dissatisfactory (unhappiness) spiral.*

The “compulsion” to accumulate and increase material goods can be dated from the millennia of the transition to the agricultural-production lifestyle of mankind (about 16-18 thousand BC). The transformation of nomadic-migrating (gatherer) lifestyle, settling down, production and the possibility of surplus production launched the historic spiral of accumulation and individual growth. Recently, it seems to accelerate dramatically.⁸ We always want more and better from every tangible asset. In 1960 there were somewhat more cars than thirty-thousand, whereas today it is three million with regard to the same population in numbers. That is, within nearly fifty years there has been a hundred times increase in the number of cars, while the population has not changed in numbers. We consider it natural and normal that the people’s basic effort is to establish a better financial quality of life: to be multifaceted, have a better house, better schools, better and more cars, better holidays, more and better electronic goods. The list is un-

⁷ Global oil supplies are enough for about 40 years, gas for 150 years, coal for 400 years, source: N. Csizmadia: Geo-moment L’Harmattan (2016) 52.

⁸ At macro level: the growth in population doubled from 2.5 billion to 5.3 billion between 1950 and 1990, moreover it has increased by a further 2 billion for the past 25 years. A hundred years ago one hundred and twenty years were needed for a 1 billion growth; today the number of population is grown by 1 billion within thirteen years.

limited. As the governments fetishize economic growth, so commercials fetishize consumption; excessive shopping has become equal to happiness. Those who lag behind in consumption have been challenged in their social status. Consequently we are under constant pressure.

Where is the trap? “One of history’s few iron laws is that luxuries tend to become necessities and to spawn new obligations.”⁹ It is more appropriate to speak about a relatively more comfortable and easier way of life instead of luxury, and we expect it from financial growth in particular. Every family member shall have a car, there shall be more television sets in the house, a child’s room is actually a toy shop, and everybody shall have more and better everything. *We always reach a level from which we do not want to step back because we get used to it and it becomes a basic necessity.* This however, drives people further, since, in order to maintain the basic necessity, even “to achieve growth”, we have to earn more income, i.e., we have to earn more and more and this is why we are working. *The spiral is faster and faster, the level of demand is growing, and the compulsion to earn and work more is increasing. This is the luxury trap, which burns out Western people* and drives them to dissatisfaction (unhappiness) and ultimately to depression. The person affected is often the last one who recognizes and admits it.

According to European statistics, depression has become second in the reasons for death among the total population, and suicide has become second in the reasons for death among the age group of young people. The number of those getting psychiatric treatment increased in every EU member state between 2008 and 2013.¹⁰

If we accept the above diagnosis we have the basis for the assumption that *Western people are more and more exigent and impatient towards politics.* Con-

⁹ J. N. Harari: Sapiens, Budapest, Animus 2015. 89

¹⁰ Source: Eurostat; The EU launched a joint action to improve mental health and wellbeing in 2013. The ever deteriorating statistics give a tell-tale sign: in the 1980s taking 1.000 marriages there were 346 divorces; in the 2000s taking 1.000 marriages there have been 562 divorces. According to the European statistics the age of getting married has been postponed year by year, there has been a decline in childbearing. In the 1970s each European country had a fertility rate above 2.0 (Eurostat), by now, with one exception, this rate has been below the above in every EU member state, and the once existing islands of joie de vivre, the Mediterranean countries have become record-holders (Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece).

sciously or unconsciously, they expect *strong, radical promises and fast solutions* to their problems that have never been solved by politics. Does politics make you happy? *The often disappointed and impatient waiting for happiness is open to anti-politics*, which is one of the psychological reasons for increasing radicalism.

b) Technological Trap

We expect two things from the newest technologies: on the one hand *we should be able to perform faster and more efficiently* in the increasing work pace and under the pressure for production due to the luxury trap. On the other hand, *our life will become more comfortable, i.e., happier*. Paradox and trap, speed/efficiency and comfort are in contradiction. The technological boom and the digital revolution have sped up in the past 20 years to such an extent that if we look back at the daily use of technology in the 1980s the difference is dizzying. Nowadays we change technology in mobile phones, laptops, household appliances and in communication and data transmitting technologies every year. We have achieved by this that we feel we can solve more and more things simultaneously in less and less time (efficiency). At the same time, the price of this is that the work organization, including us as well, is totally adjusted to the pace of life of machines and networks. *We communicate in an ever increasing set of data being nearly constantly “online”, we “recycle” the time we have saved in the system because the rat race is continuously going on*. We pay for the time we “have saved” with stress and slowly admit that we have made “Faust’s deal” with technological development. It is not us who uses it but vice versa.

We struggle in the dual trap of the accumulation of material goods and the acceleration of technology: we have to work more and faster, and we have to lead a faster and more intensive life.

The accumulation of assets has been a phenomenon for a millennium, and technological development for a century. Yet the past 10-15 years have produced a boost of consumption and technological development, the psychological anoma-

lies of which are emerging.¹¹ The summary of this can be that *Western people tend to feel mass burnout, i.e., unhappiness in the axes of the servitude of material growth and the compulsion for technological acceleration.* The projection of this is gradually emerging in the voters' increasingly radical political reactions and in the anti-politics reflecting thereto.

The pursuit of virtual happiness and visual experiences weakens the sense of reality and real human relationships. *Western people can rather "consume" politics only in virtual space through social media. Their expectations are becoming more and more unrealistic,* they need strong impulses and effects, the emotional manipulation of politics can prevail more efficiently.

c) Biological Paradox

In L. Bunuel's legendary film "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie" (1972), a group would like to have dinner but they can never have the meal together. However hard they try they never succeed. The viewers and the film become increasingly tense. This paradox emerges in Western people's search for happiness. The paradox is that the more they wish and wait for happiness, the bigger failure they experience due to the lack of happiness. First of all they should understand what the object of their desire is in order to know what they are looking for. *According to biological determination we cannot substantially influence our subjective well-being.*¹² Basically our bio-chemical characteristics determine our level of happiness (the complex system of nerves, neurons and synapses, and chemicals like dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin). We can go a bit higher or lower accordingly but the system is like an installed air conditioning. If we do not un-

¹¹ As the old saying goes, if you want to know what our life will be like 20 years from now look at how people live in Japan. In the Japanese society individual wellbeing and technological development are years before the Western world's development perspectives. In Japan loneliness is an endemic among young and middle-aged people. According to the 2011 survey of the Japanese Institute of Population Research 61% of men and 49% of women aged 18-34 do not live in relationships, most of them do not even wish to have a partner. 36% of the men and 39% of the women of this age group have never had sexual intercourse. *The new generation of Japan is burnt out to a frightening extent by growth spurts and the production compulsion for luxury trap, and the obsession with technology.*

¹² Harari 343.

derstand these characteristics of our own personality and pursue the conditions of a “happier” life, we only multiply our own failures. *We cannot change our level of happiness determined by bio-chemistry even if we try.* A paradox phenomenon: man strives for happiness. However great efforts he makes to improve his financial circumstances and use the newest info-communication technologies, he does not feel happier. He is becoming more and more frustrated if he does not recognize the value of what he has: something that is in his subjective attitude and in the necessary tangible assets. He is looking for more happiness but he does not find it because it does not exist anymore. Therefore he feels unhappy. We know a lot of recollections¹³ saying that the level of man’s happiness recovers quickly even under hopeless circumstances. However, there are few stories about anybody being permanently happy because of success and wealth.

In the approach of evolutionary psychology¹⁴ our chances to *live a happier life* is almost out of the question. Homo sapiens were engaged in hunting and gathering for nearly seventy-thousand years, man’s “mental model” has been conditioned for these success factors. The past hundred years have closed us in office rooms, where everything is done by machines instead of us. *All achievements have been taken away from the man of nature in an evolutionary scale at seconds, the psychic defects of which cause suffering to an ever increasing number of people.*

As opposed to the above, several excursuses show the man of modern and post-modern times in an ideal of happiness. According to these the past decades have brought historic achievements in overcoming famine and illnesses and in preventing mass wars. In fact, today more people die of obesity than of famine and epidemic.¹⁵ Life expectancy is increasing and we fight “more peaceful” wars of new types than ever before in history. However, nobody will feel happier or unhappier as a result of these “improving” trends. Especially not in the Western world.

¹³ See Viktor E. Frankl: *Man’s Search for Meaning* (Kötet kiadó, 1996) about the world of Nazi camps.

¹⁴ Barkow – Cosmides – Tooby: *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and The Generation of Culture*, 1992

¹⁵ J.N. Harari: *Homo Deus*, Summary Part1 Harvill Secker London 2015

2) Fear and Trembling

Another sociopsychological factor shaping the Western world's anti-political feelings *is fear*. According to Bibó "it is the conscience of fear that is at the major, ultimate root of both politics and religion".¹⁶ The natural source of fear-reactions is the everyday mass of stress, which causes anxiety and fear as the persistence of "our animal instinct". The above analyzed feeling of burnout (unhappiness) also affects the spread of fear. The psychological imbalance and the problem of self-confidence weaken psychological resistance and decrease the sense of security. Western people's fear is fueled by a "specter" that dwarfs all the monsters of evolution. These are *the media and the Internet*. There are factual (real) phenomena behind the increasing fear but they are exceeded by the effect of mass media, the new media (social media) and the Internet.

It is a fact that the *migration* coming from developing countries to the Western world is increasing, which shows a growing trend. *Terrorist attacks* are carried out with new methods and in places considered safe. *Extreme weather, natural disasters or water shortage* are in the first place of the list of global risks.¹⁷ However, the sense of fear based on facts is made stronger by the wide variety of mass media, increased by "real time" reports and notorious replays, and the extreme flow of news and commentaries. *Manipulation with a political aim has long discovered the "voters' fear"*, which is a fixed political target. Although mass media manipulates, it still has minimum ethical limits and control. However, *the new media and the Internet* intensify fears and magnify the security risks in a non-controllable way and to a non-controllable extent.

Today info-communication globalization also oppresses the ideologies of local communities, by which it dismantles the *personal identity* built on local bonds, which is the base for psychological security. During his seventy-thousand-year evolution, *Homo sapiens has lived in small communities* so far (which means the recent centuries), he does not have global or international archetypal experiences. *The value-neutral, interest-driven globalism and the supranational system development do not have an evolutionary history*. The new politics gains success

¹⁶ Works of I. Bibó, VI, fapadoskonyv.hu: Az európai társadalomfejlődés értelme című értekezés nyitó gondolatai. (Opening thoughts of the essay of "The Meaning of the Development of the European Society" p.102); According to Bibó every thought related to politics assumes that the people are not in a healthy, balanced condition and this needs help. 78.

¹⁷ WEF Global Risks Report 2017

by integrating into the virtual community and there it is *able to build a community and develop a system of values by its own national and cultural myths. The evolutionary scale is the local (small community) level. This is able to provide for the experience of belonging and identity through traditions, common beliefs and ideologies.* In Europe mass psychological trends of the search for national/local community politics can also be traced in the rejection of the EU, *in the growth of Euroscepticism.*¹⁸ The closed community experience, and inward-looking appreciate the politics that is able to strengthen the ideal of community, the myth of “we stick together because we belong together”. The community-building ability of politics, *the cultural self-definition, the sense of national identity, the strengthening of community and religious identity are the answers most often searched for by fear-driven Western people.*¹⁹

IV. Questions

The timing of the ongoing turn in the political trend is explained by the fact that in the crossfire of the above analyzed several effects, *Western people have reached the psychological tipping point these years/decades* and have been looking for fast, radical and plausible politics. *At this point the national political-based, in every sense protectionist, i.e., protective politics promising cultural identity and at the same time individual identity (!) is successful.* All these are a comeback to *pre-modern political culture where the promises are guaranteed by the leader to make the public happy personally and through his charisma.* Democratic institutions have been functioning for two hundred years but they do not satisfy people’s expectations for miracles or demand for security per se, for example in the competition of parties. *The radical personalities criticizing or rejecting politics are expected to provide skills and performance beyond democracy (!), i.e., security and happiness.* Democracy could not prove historically to provide either one or the other for the people. Neither could politics or politicians. The rejection of the old politics is actually not anti-politics but a new politics, providing the experience of community, religious and cultural togetherness,

¹⁸ Marján-Buda-Koller-Kovács-Molnár-Szenes-Szuhai: European Policy Overhaul in. Pro Publico Bono 2015/2.69-72

¹⁹ Conventional analyses consider the “increasing national sentiment”, the politics built on identity and community a danger. WEF Global Risks Report 2017

promising defense and security, which makes politics on the basis of the voters' real attitude.

We do not know how long the momentum and strength of the suddenly emerged, new political era will last. If the hypothesis of our analysis is correct, according to which the people expect to be provided with security, community feeling and identity, i.e., happiness by politics, anti-politics can be successful as long as it does not become conventional and discredited, i.e., the caricature of itself: it does not turn into politics. Quoting Harari's book, the man of the future is the Homo deus.²⁰ It is doubtful whether there will be some politics that can satisfy the Homo deus, i.e., the man looking for happiness in the long run.

The narrative interpreting the new politics, which opposes politics, as the crisis of democracy and the emergence of populism, also witnesses other dangers in the changes in voters' attitude. It witnesses danger in the success of national and community concepts, the importance of security and protectionism and in the emergence of a blunter, non-conventional political style. The priority of Western politics after 1945 has become the avoidance of armed conflicts. It is a question of whether the system of national values and protectionism of the new politics can be open enough for multilateral consensus; whether the risks of international conflicts are not increased by the inward-looking national politics; whether the new American doctrine "America First" or the bilateralism can mean lasting peace in the world.

The task of science is of course to give answers to the questions of life, but we do not know the answers to the above questions yet. Quoting Bibó, politics is the field of human life that most persistently withstands the possibility of becoming a science. ...the first steps of science can also be made in politics. Experiences can be collected, and these experiences can be organized, sorted and grouped. Organizing principles and overall concepts can be found on the bases of the experiences gained and the people shall be convinced thereof.²¹

²⁰ J.N. Harari: Homo Deus, Harvill Secker London 2015

²¹ Works of I. Bibó, VI, fapadoskonyv.hu: Az európai társadalomfejlődés értelme című értekezés nyitó gondolatai (Opening thoughts of the essay of "The Meaning of the Development of the European Society", 21.

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