

FROM STRUCTURES TO COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

This study aims to delineate the way that leads from the structure that is broken down to elements according to the structuralist approach, to working communities. It is another purpose to point out that certain systems or subsystems by themselves are not the representations of the entire society. It is particularly important to investigate the process of norm formation, by which it becomes clear that rules – including provisions of law – are established in the course of a much broader cooperation than it has been prescribed or modelled by constitutions or any law on legislation. The question arises: how can we apply these recent findings in the process of integrating smaller communities?

Keywords: system, community, norm, law, cooperation, prognosis, convergence

Inanimate systems and living communities

The development of modernity resulted in the process of breaking everything down to the level of systems. The discovery and recognition of structures, finding out the ideal structure of the world brought about the illusion of a new, more tolerable community. Although the illusions dissolved; the pure admiration of ideas is not a pleasure any more, regulation and control still determine everyday human existence. The position of humanity is more and more effectively taken over by the formality of deliberate economic, political and cultural processes. Diversity might be on the surface, but in effect there is always uniformity behind it.

These statements do not convey any new information. The domination of idealism, though, seems to be undermined in the following aspects:

- it has turned out that regional forms of political idealism are not sustainable (e.g. national socialism, communism). On the other hand though, there are serious efforts to evolve their global form
- it has turned out that certain systems are not simply “normatively closed, cognitively open” idealtypical structures, but there are much more complicated correspondences between them (Network thinking is present, but its rules are still under dispute and in social science it is restricted to sociometry)
- it has turned out, that “sustainable development” is not sustainable mainly because of its environmental aspects (however, there are no actions aiming at genuine change, there are only virtual actions)
- it has turned out that individualism does not create the basis of medium-term sustainable human coexistence (however, there are global efforts to strengthen individualism).

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Structures of idealism, which do not work locally, try to establish their existence in a global context. This experiment is not feasible in this form, since expanding the scope of the structure (globalising) in itself does not assure its viability – even though the processes are seemingly evolutive¹, they develop toward fitnesses that emerge from the system itself.²

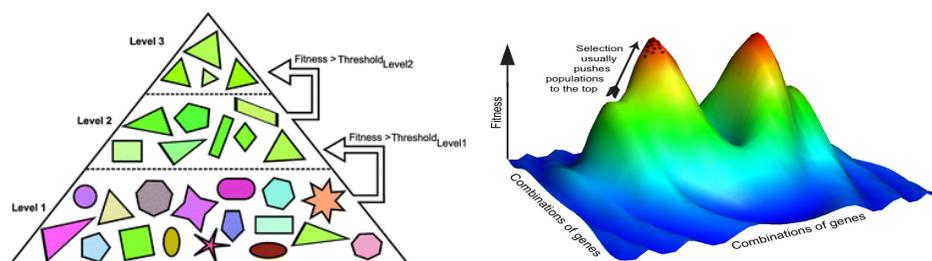
World vision in empirically describable structures is an important step in the development of Western thinking, which is based on Plato’s philosophy. This system in itself, though, is unsuitable to present a liveable future for mankind; on the other hand – after some improvement – it is capable of being the basis of human communities. Thus, it is reasonable to take the following aspects into consideration:

- systems do not exist and work in themselves. The operation of systems has a well definable purpose (or purposes). Systems and their connections have a “nature”;
- systems are not static, but dynamic entities without clear-cut borders (they constantly change, connect to other systems and sub-systems);
- the collective thinking of individuals is in the centre of operating systems. Collective thinking goes beyond subjective, although its articulation can be realized through individuals. The description of collective thinking is

¹ Model of genetic variation in human social networks. James H. Fowler, Christopher T. Dawes, and Nicholas A. Christakis

² The absolute fitness of a genotype is defined as the ratio between the number of individuals with that genotype after selection to those before selection. Fitness is a value that does not refer to individuals but to groups of individuals. The number of surviving offsprings does not refer to the individual; it is the average of the group. It is extremely important to aid the reproduction of relatives. From a genetic point of view the seemingly altruistic acts are selfish strategies, since their function is to ensure the total genetic representation of the given genes in the population. (Caporael (2001) inclusive fitness evolutionary psychology).

The fitness landscape represents the values of the fitness in a three-dimensional environment. The peaks represent local fitness maximums. Natural selection always moves “uphill”, but a local fitness maximum might become stable even though it is not the ideal condition, since selection cannot move “backwards”, in other words from the local maximum to the valleys that represent the less fit conditions. These processes are purposeful, moreover they are totally irreversible. In social dimensions, the formative abilities of human mind affecting these processes have not been discovered yet.



incomplete, their rules are not defined, although the related technical equipments are advanced³;

- the risk of the system is that only a minority is aware of knowledge (the capacity to influence collective thinking) and they can easily impose their power on the majority. (This process is made complicated by national identities, cultures and religion.)

The essential elements of the system were well described by Buber, but unfortunately his theory is not widely known since it can only be understood by rewriting contemporary forms of collective thinking. This would require communities that reach enough people to change collective thinking. These communities must create the ideal mental patterns⁴.

Community can exist only on the basis of rules. The essence of the rules is still undeservingly undiscovered. Primary condition of human coexistence and survival is being aware of the "law". Both extreme idealism and the succeeding false individualism question this law. If we consider law an idea, it is too far from the individual. If law is created by the individual, it is necessarily relative. Consequently, rules can be strictly enforced only in individual subsystems. Otherwise the rules of co-existence become relative. A rule and the consequences of keeping or not keeping it always depend on the individual's position. While in the Middle Ages it was well-defined what a king was supposed to do, today it is becoming uncertain and unpredictable which person, group or country and when will be attacked by an interest group based on seemingly democratic intentions. Sometimes it is politics that forces economy to give an account, sometimes it happens vice versa, or other times it all takes place according to the doctrines of a religion.

The dominance of global economic interests is a characteristic tendency of our age. As a result, the controlling function of the states is often subordinate to financial rules, the concept of welfare state has been overshadowed.

Simultaneously the concept of legal positivism is still flourishing: according to this theory human intelligence regulates itself with stable constructions using its own rules. Rules are seemingly created and applied along democratic principles and clear processes.

In reality, though, regulation is a lot more complicated. The system of creating rules, regulation and the enforcement of rules is a complex social process; the description of this process can also delineate how society works. The obvious changes are the following:

- community thinking is pushed to a more virtual level, we experience increasing individualisation, which goes back to the level of everyday language⁵. The normative role and controlling function of classic groups

³ Practically the entire communication and location of individuals is traceable in virtual space.

⁴ A specific example is the aspiration of the head of Catholic Church to re-evangelize the community. The public reacted negatively to the traditional methods, and the church was represented in the press as the basis of conservatism. Based on the press news Pope Francis, however, embodies a "popular", likeable church, to which many people joined in a short time. For this purpose it wasn't necessary to change the dogmatic system of Catholicism, but its natural world view had to be made more realistic.

⁵ Researches carried out by Patricia Greenfield. According to her findings the transformation of written language represents the advancement of individualism and material values. Recent

(family, village) are taken over by the world of virtual mass communication. Rules become more and more global, their direct control works practically on the level of individual states, or beyond them, merely along economic interests. The controlling functions of smaller units are missing, consequently the effectiveness is decreasing;

- the notion of sophisticated thinking is taken over by money, which was a value transmitting symbol before. Money has gained more and more sacral characteristics; it has become the association centre of everyday language⁶, the only criterion of efficiency. While we experience significant dematerialization in the physical aspects of money, in terms of its everyday effects it has had a more and more central role;
- economy and politics are increasingly connected to the flow of money. Due to the concentration of the flow of money the rule of Matthew – “who already has, more will be given, in other words: many people will have little, few people will have much – is becoming obvious. Globalism and concentration are natural characteristics of money. All these, though, do not bring forth the better life conditions of people;
- the contemporary conditions of the world developed not according to the individuals’ will. It is more typical that partly random co-existence of the interests of lobby groups dominate, or rather the autonomous existence of man-made fetishes, which can be independent from lobby groups. One of these fetishes is obviously money, as well as other ideals of the community, in other words widely admired notions that are hardly understood correctly by people, such as unlimited individual human rights, family-destructive extreme liberty, or atheist fundamentalism in democratic disguise. The ideas of modernism exist independently in the multitude of individuals and in the complex network of community relations; they destroy normal communities and their values;
- the above described situation evolved due to the weakening and loosening of natural relations between individuals. Simultaneously with the shrinking of the world, or rather the cosmos, life-preserving natural communities are transforming. People do not need the help of the family, the support and legitimating of local community, or the identity that religion could give them. These have been substituted with urbanisation, mobility and self-awareness. Instead of the previously existing community networks the multitude of identical individuals developed. Individuals can be manipulated, formed or mobilised much more easily than real communities. When ethics is missing

texts contain significantly more individual-focused expressions, like “get”, “choose” and “decide” as older ones. Simultaneously other, more community-oriented words such as “give” or “duty” became overshadowed.

Based on Greenfield’s calculations around 1800 the word “give” was four times more frequent than “get”, by the middle of 20th century though the frequency of the two words has become the opposite. The expressions “him/herself”, “individual”, “unique” and their synonyms are also more widely used, while “belong to” and “prayer”, which are very important in traditional societies, occur rarely.

⁶ Words with high centrality according to in-degree; according to peak power calculated from inward edges; according to betweenness In: László Kovács, Magyar szóasszociációk hálózata (*Network of Hungarian word associations*), in: Magyar Tudomány, 2012. 06.

(since it is a communal notion), personal morality is usually not enough for making responsible decisions. In these cases the individual tends to follow the patterns he or she is offered, such as the pattern of production and consumption or the transcendentalism of money. We must emphasize that these are neither moral nor legal patterns. Simultaneously with the corruption of communities morals also decay, and when law is descending, the concept of state also declines. Finally law can exist only on those levels where it is enforceable. Patterns followed by individuals have mainly religious characteristics; they are based on the belief in virtual values. This leads to misbeliefs like money has a real value, or being convinced that there is nothing more important than fighting for their partial purposes. Other misbeliefs include theories that human being is a solely biological creature or Subject is the beginning and the end of life;

- why do people take on these beliefs? The majority of people receive these ideas as a ready-made world view and after accepting these structures they think they do not need to look for the essence of things. This seems to be the most comfortable world for them. The rules of public spheres govern people instead of the rules that exist in the country;
- why do these rules regulate people? The collaboration of people must always aim at value creation (fitness). The concepts of value, fair society and the idea people want to realise have mutated and have been replaced by the optimum of short-term effectiveness. The isolated individual is ready to act within the system to realise its objectives that are different from the individual's personal optimum. The individual can be easily mobilised for the purposes of production and consumption. These all increase the effectiveness of money creation and distribution. In this sense, the theory of money flow must be implemented instead of the theory of economy. (Foucault, Order of Things);
- problems of ethnic and religious groups evolving in the end of modernity in Europe can be best managed by the individualisation of these groups and by offering them the illusory freedom of diversity (simulacrum) together with the virtual freedom of subsistence and culture. (Lyotard). This broadening social perspective hasn't brought the desired freedom for the individual, but it has resulted in a serious inferiority. („human ant" – Feyerabend);
- the human being as a biological entity, as a stage in evolution or as the complex of multiple relations, is unsatisfactory for him/herself. He or she can find the essence of existence in the course of forming long-term viable patterns of community. Beyond this the natural intelligence desires to attain eternity. This eternity is the most personal and at the same time it is the most common as well. However, this would lead our thinking to the theme of religion. This present study, though, aims to approach the problem from a practical aspect, so the question arises, whether the directions of social movements can be predicted. Can we rely on the observations of other system- or network-based sciences, such as systems biology? According to the paradigms of evolutionary development, the approach of fitness optimums is a one-direction, irreversible process. It is a question though, where to proceed when our evolution is on the way to an ecologic catastrophe or an atomic bomb? Can bigger awareness of community lead to a more controlled, new conscience? It seems to be a fact: if this awareness does not emerge, the development will end up in destruction. It is our future

task to delineate the „adaptive landscape⁷” of human culture. Can human co-existence be modelled similarly as a “metabolic network model⁸”? Can long-term financial forecast models⁹ be used as models of co-existence? Or do we need to find a more complex model?

in-degree	peak power	betweenness
money	money	money
good	good	man
car	many	pleasure
bad	few	beautiful
man	rest	many

Mechanization and networks in rulemaking and rule enforcement

Detailed answer to the problem of predicting social changes exceeds the limits of this work and our available knowledge. However, it is reasonable to outline a few ideas with special regard to legislation and law enforcement, which still have not been examined from this aspect. It is controversial though, but Legal experts are sometimes referred by the term “engineers of society”. It is to be investigated if we can assert or predict anything from this aspect about the formation of rules and their effects on communal life. Legal norms might merely follow social events instead of determining them. It does not mean, though, that norms do not have a level that precedes – or more precisely causes – social changes. It is possible that these rules incorporate the optimums of the community’s life. Norms determine which social groups are in advantage, or vice versa, the structure of the community determines the ways certain rules are enforced. There are still many scientific works that consider law as a functional subsystem, which is easy to describe. However, it is more widely discussed that the nature of regulation techniques has changed and the role of central, government regulation is taken over by sectoral, institutional and informal behaviour control. Legal pluralism offers us a network reality¹⁰.

In each segment of life, modernity involved the admiration of machines and equipment. The idea of the nature as an originally given entity has been taken over by questions and answers on machineries and work mechanisms. The same happened to rule creation. The interpretation of ethics and morality led from geometric proof to casuistics, law has gradually become considered a hierarchic construction. Legislation and law enforcement seemingly take place in the course of precisely regulated processes.

It is becoming clearer though, that under this surface there is incomplete knowledge about the creation and applicability of rules. One of the main reasons of this is the

⁷ Adaptive landscape shows the adaptation of populations. There are relevant genetic variables represented by the coordinate axes, while in another dimension there is suitability value assigned to genetic composition. In this case it is required to take special account of the cognitive skills of human mind especially the correlations of cooperative and linguistic skills.

⁸ Balázs Papp, <http://group.szbk.u-szeged.hu/sysbiol/>

⁹ Eugene F. Fama attempts to get long-term conclusions from the strong, semi-strong or weak forms of information efficiency.

¹⁰ Fleck Z., *Kritikai mérnökösödés (Critical Engineering)*, in: *Replika*, 54–55, p. 113–116

supposition that the basis of our interpretation is the individual or institute which makes or enforces the rule. However, neither the making, nor the use of rules come from individuals (minister, parliament, judge), but both of these are supported by sophisticated relation systems of individuals and institutions.

For a more thorough understanding of rulemaking it is essential to discover these relation systems. The situation is made complicated by the interrelation of the simultaneous processes: the selection of rules that should be thematized and the selection of the ones who can actually thematize. When the question is asked why Hungarians do not live the way Swiss people do, we should answer: we need Hungarians to develop Hungarian mentality and, simultaneously, only Hungarian mentality can produce those Hungarians, who make the rules.

The theory of mechanized rulemaking is only partly acceptable. Instead of this, those interpersonal structures should be investigated, which enable the development of norms.

One of the important aspects of investigation can be the system of relations between the words used in norms, as well as their relation to common talk and legal practice. Common talk and the texts of laws and legal practice determine the directions that are important for the society.

It requires further examination to discover in what extent financial resources are assigned to important themes, since money is a basic indicator in economy-controlled society.

Summary

In this essay certain motives of the development of present social systems are outlined, and also several questions are asked which still need to be answered. The forthcoming empirical researches must be carried out along the above described guidelines to – at least partly – support the findings. After defining and verifying the principles we aim to investigate the possibility of developing a new convergence policy based on these principles.

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ÖSSZEFOGLALÁS: A STRUKTÚRÁKTÓL A KÖZÖSSÉGIG

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Tanulmányunkban a jelenlegi társadalmi rendszerek kialakulásának egyes mozgatórugóit vázoltuk fel, továbbá felvetettünk kérdéseket, amelyek megválaszolásával adósok maradtuk. A következőkben az itt leírt irányelvek mentén empirikus kutatásokat kell végezni, amelyek legalábbis részben alátámaszthatják az igazságként felismert kijelentéseket. Az alapelvek meghatározását és ellenőrzését követően célunk, hogy ezen alapelvek mentén vizsgáljuk meg egy új felzárkóztatási politika lehetőségét.

Kulcsszavak: rendszer, közösség, norma, jog, együttműködés, előrejelzés, felzárkóztatás

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