

THE EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN STATES PARADIGMS OF STATE ORGANISATION



Edited by
Norbert Kis – Gábor Máthé



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Contents

<i>Authors of this volume</i>	7
Preface (<i>Gergely Gulyás</i>)	9
Norbert Kis: Introductory Study – Scientia Intuitiva	13
Gergely Deli: A Juristocratic Reform in the Roman Empire – The Anamnesis of an Evolutionary Cul-de-Sac	17
Gábor Béli: Hungarian State Organisation – The System of Donations and the Resulting Consequences until the 16 th Century	65
Gábor Máthé: Kingdom of Hungary – Habsburg Monarchy – Central Europe	105
Attila Horváth: The Sovereignty of Hungary in the So-called Short 20 th Century (1918–1990)	161
Norbert Kis: Laws of State Evolution – Sub Specie Aeternitatis	237

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Preface

We see countless examples of politicians who lack moral vision mechanically copying each other's practices. They repeat the mistakes of their predecessors and contemporaries because they lack the capacity to think ahead. But history also provides us with abundant evidence of the opposite: wise statesmen who understand the great challenges of their times and are able to deliver the necessary solutions – often averting disaster. History only repeats itself if we allow it to. That is why this collection of essays is so relevant today. The authors carefully examine the ways in which states have organised themselves throughout history, providing the reader with a wealth of fascinating reflections. They also demonstrate the truth of the old adage that there is nothing new under the sun: even in ancient Rome, arguments raged about the wisdom of reforms imposed from above and conceived by legal scholars alone.

Today, the sovereign state defines many of the essential parameters of our lives. Yet it is also true that in our modern age, the time-honoured concept of the nation as we know it is under attack. On the one hand, many of the world's largest corporations now wield far more economic power and political influence than most countries. On the other, there are continuing attempts to make the Westphalian model a relic of the past by entrusting an ever-widening range of public affairs to international organisations. Fortifying statehood, however, requires a clear understanding of where it comes from, how nations are built through the work of generations upon generations.

King Stephen's political foresight ensured that Hungary became a model of Christian nation-building, and thus the central theme of the essays on Hungarian history is generally celebratory. Our country has kept its statehood intact for more than a millennium. The National Avowal of the Fundamental Law upholds this tradition: "[W]e do not recognise the suspension of our historic constitution due to foreign invasions." The constitution of a thousand-year-old nation could not more accurately express the integrity and noble spirit that characterise the thinking of Hungarians in the 21st century. The facts of history preclude us from surrendering our independence, and reinforce our devotion to it.

Europe is organically structured, in terms of geography, language and ethnicity, and this diversity is our greatest asset. Yet, time and again, the forces that fail to appreciate this wonderful richness rear

their ugly heads. In fact, they see diversity as a distraction and try to turn it into an unnatural monotony. In the past, a failed attempt was made to unite the peoples, but this experiment in juristocratic reform proved to be a dead end. Habsburg absolutism, which ignored national diversity, and the revolutionary fervour of Napoleon Bonaparte, which temporarily subjugated all of Europe, also failed. The brutal empires of Hitler's and Stalin's socialism wreaked terrible havoc and were consigned to the dustbin of history.

We are once again facing an enormous challenge. Behind the decisions of the bureaucracy in Brussels, which fancies itself a political actor, a European superstate is emerging, with the United States of America as its model. However, the U.S. constitutional tradition itself is diverse. The Eurocratic elite has opted for the more progressive version of the American ideal, which radically disregards tradition. Thus, virulent individualism and relativism became the guiding principle of the European federalist agenda. Central Europeans recognise the ends and the means: first, they indoctrinate our children to weaken the family. For when the family is weak, the nation – and state – are also weak. Our natural communities have always been the main barrier facing the internationalist forces in realising their ambitions. Second, they intend to eradicate institutions of the sovereign state because they impede the movement of global capital. Third, they seek to erase the differences between religions and, if possible, to abolish them altogether. The world's great religions teach self-control and self-discipline, which is a further obstacle to unbridled consumption.

These hegemonic aspirations, however, are doomed to failure because they run counter to the uniqueness of our human nature. Attempts to homogenise empires from ancient times to the present have all failed. All over the world, national consciousness is making a comeback. Europe will not be excluded from this trend for long. Hungary is the first swallow in the new spring of nations, and is seen as an inspiration by people of common sense from the United States to Europe. From the dawn of our history, Hungary's purpose has been to participate in European affairs as a strong, self-reliant and independent state. This was the case for a long time after the establishment of the Christian Hungarian state. More difficult periods followed later, but we never gave up on Hungarian sovereignty and the relentless pursuit of it, even in the face of the conquering ambitions of foreign empires. Every year

on March 15th and October 23rd we remember how this nation rose up when its freedom was taken away.

Building and preserving a state that can assert its sovereignty and national interests is more important than ever for Hungarians of today, because, to recall the timeless words of Count István Széchenyi: “He whom God created Hungarian and does not champion the cause of his nation is not a noble man.” This collection of essays provides potent intellectual ammunition for this no small challenge. Today, Hungary not only protects its own constitutional identity, but also emerges as the conscience of Europe. Armed with the insights gained from these articles, we can now confidently state what we have always suspected: Hungarians may not be right now, but they will be. We have every reason to continue to fight courageously, relentlessly, and with our heads held high for the preservation of our national independence and a free Hungary.

I congratulate the authors on their excellent work and wish you a pleasant reading.

Gergely Gulyás
Minister of the Prime Minister’s Office

Norbert Kis

Introductory Study – Scientia Intuitiva



“While science deals with reality, it, suddenly and unnoticed, escapes from its grasp, giving way to the realisation that it is no longer centred around reality but some dumb theory.”

(Béla Hamvas: Carnival)

The title of our volume compels the introductory study to formulate questions and hypotheses for the studies that follow. Connecting various historical eras and cultural spaces, the papers in this volume seek for the *patterns of state development*. Our hypotheses are drawn from the *evolutionist interpretation of state development*. The paradigm of evolution is apt to give common points of interpretation to the studies of this volume, theses that appear as research questions related to the pivotal points of state development. The authors of the studies do not necessarily confirm or refute those theories but provide overviews of legal and political history that can serve as bases for readers to further consider the possible patterns of state development. In recent decades, the *evolutionist theories of the birth and development of the state* have become points of reference in the discipline of state theory.¹ The task of that discipline is to explore and typologise the general patterns of state development.² The evolutionist paradigm *transposes the development concept of evolution into the interpretation of state development*. That is presented and evaluated in the studies of this volume, along with the further consideration of the evolutionist state theories.

In his work titled *Ethics*, Spinoza argues that the knowledge obtained by intuition is the most basic form of knowledge, as it is the observation of things *sub specie aeternitatis* (under the aspect of eternity). Accordingly, *scientia intuitiva* seeks for the laws and eternal aspects of phenomena. The hypothesis of the volume is that *state development is driven by political*

¹ SZILÁGYI 1998: 70. Szilágyi made a reference to SERVICE 1975.

² SZILÁGYI 1998: 70; see also, as an in-depth analysis of the task of the discipline of state theory, Cs. KISS 2022.

interests and actions. This “realpolitik” or “political realism” strives to explore the true *political interests* behind the history and existential changes of the states. This *realist approach* is objective and descriptive, less following the normative, often ideologising or utopian perception typically applied by the theory of the state, since the former is centred neither around the values of the state or the nation, nor the concept of the “ideal state”, which often occurs in the classical works of state theory, such as the *Republic* by Plato, the works of Thomas More, Francis Bacon, Campanella, or in the *Anti-Machiavel* of Frederick the Great.

The springboard of our analysis is the concept that in order to define the state, we must first define politics. There are certain persistent questions in the research of state history: What political interests can be identified behind the specific existential changes affecting the state(s)? Had there been any political interest group(s) behind the dominant state interest(s)? If there had, what kind of political interest prevailed in the activities of the interest group? Why and how did the given political interest and interest group become a public power that shaped the state?

According to our hypothesis assuming the existence of patterns, one or several *political interest groups, whose successful advocacy had directly or indirectly become a public power or state-shaping force, can be identified behind the existential changes of state development in every instant*. This concept is not contrary to the theory that seeks the political drive of state development in the so-called *state interest*. The idea of state interest is an abstraction, or, in a certain sense, a fiction, behind which we can find a group of people active in the physical reality, along with their collective interests. The world of political wills that define the reality of public power indicates the presence of even more diverse interest groups. Thus, the approach centred around *the competing plurality of political interests can be considered a realist approach*, while the concept that seeks for a *state interest – that is, a sovereign and legitimate government influence representing the national interest –* behind every change affecting the state system is more idealistic in nature. The theory arguing that the political drive of state development is the rivalry and enforcement of state interests is connected today mostly to the “offensive realism” formulated by John J. Mearsheimer.³ This “realism” is centred around the concept of the “sovereign self-interest of the state”, which, Mearsheimer argues, is the most reliable compass in the world’s chaotic system of interests.

³ MEARSHEIMER 2019.

Another tenet of realism connects state development to the advocacy of great powers, the USA in particular. Not disputing the fact that, both in the 20th century and today, world politics has been dominated and defined by the hegemonic aspirations of the United States, Mearsheimer applies a critical approach against the USA's foreign policy. The conflicts between the great powers spark wars that reshape the system of states (world wars). Out of economic interests, great powers colonised territories, abolished old states or created new ones. Further elements in this field are Pax Americana and the – sometimes violent – policy of the USA labelled democracy export.

However, the paradigm of state evolution followed by the studies of this volume takes the subject matter of the examination to the *level of political interest groups* from that of great power interests, state interests, or economic or ideological interests, and to the *level of physical reality and people from that of abstractions*. This is a more “realist” concept than political realism or realpolitik, as it presumes that *behind every interest or notion related to a social phenomenon, there is a group of people active in the physical reality and the collective interests of that group*. The economic, ideological or value content of the interests must also be considered real, but a political group can be identified as the primary stakeholder and advocate.

Of course, however, according to the value-based approach, the *ideal political formula of state development is the prevalence of state interest*, that is, sovereign national interests, preferably based on mutual benefits and in an amicable manner. Accordingly, our hypothesis can be refined by clarifying that the *power of state evolution does not appear exclusively at the level of state interests, but at the level of political interest groups functioning with efforts for public power*. The theory of state should strive to seek for political interest groups behind the various forms of state development, which, at a higher level of abstraction, can be considered national, economic or ideological interests. The first study of this volume seeks for the above patterns in the juristocratic reforms of the Roman Empire. The Middle Ages shall be examined through the system of benefices that shaped the development of the Hungarian state. The modern age shall be presented by analysing the alliance systems and conflict patterns of monarchies. The spheres of interest of the 20th century will be examined from the aspect of the sovereignty of Hungary, while the analysis of the first quarter of the 21st century is yet to be penned. The last study offers a frame of interpretation – that is, a possible paradigm – for that analysis

and all the historical periods, state configurations, and value systems missing from this volume: *the law of state evolution*. As the concluding remark of this introduction, we turn to the great Hungarian poet, Endre Ady, who would accept our wise thoughts with a stoic smile: “Holding a giant sieve / Time stands, for ever sifting, / Picking out and sifting whole worlds [...]. Whoever falls through the mesh deserves it. / Time has no pity for chaff. / The miasmal desires of senile nations, / Worlds that have lost their fire, broken lives [...].”⁴ (*In Time’s Sieve*)

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⁴ Ady’s poem translated by Michael Hamburger.