

THE END OF IDEOLOGIES AND THE MILITARY POWER

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Abstract: *The military power refers to the part of controlling influence over others by coercing; also, it means to use force or the threat of force to influence. This kind of power is just a rigid manner to put into act the domination in such a dynamic society. The dynamics of the society creates the possibility to construct the mental concept of the metabolism of the powers. In this space of the power’s flows, the military power remains a surface effect of the domination.*

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1. THE MATRIX OF POWERS

1.1. Mann’s matrix. If power is, in a wittgensteinian way, a “deep structure” of some games of depth (shaped in a set of domination rules that are circumscriptive to the power’s exteriority) [1], then the politics cover only the “last layer” as in the dermis / epidermis relation. The power is a dynamic outer structure, relative to dynamics of society, not only in its expressed ways, by exercising (having a certain area of contents, a certain intensity), but also in its latent ways, as capability, potential. The dynamics of the society and of the power are in a close connection, provided that the politic methodology is transformed in social praxis.

In another way, the power was artificially associated with the political power, because of the practical transfer from city to state (and so state became the main center of the power). Michael Mann [2] distinguishes four types of power: economic, politic, coercive, and symbolic. By the established relation of power and pregnant tendencies, “Mann’s matrix”, completed by the Bourdieu’s “social field theory”, makes the base for the temporal position of each individual, for the dynamic balance in which exists in every moment in the society. Surely, the mentioned relationship helps an understanding of ‘power’ as “*someone’s capacity to action in the way of*

aiming his purposes and interests, the capacity to intervene in the events’ course and to modify the result” [3].

Returning to the “Mann’s matrix”, the examples of the reciprocal conditioning and of the actual dynamics justifies the varied perspectives and the separation between power and politics, as long as the states stop being the center of power concentration. We can talk about the weakening of the power in the USA after the Vietnam War, but compensated by winning the new symbolic positions (see the ‘flower power’ movement). Also, we can talk about a Soviet Union weakening after the Afghanistan episode (in this case, the power compensation delayed in appearance). To keep the power balance, USA compensated with the coercive component. The intervention in Iraq was determined by a weakening of the economic power and by the unfavorable prediction in the economic field of activities, plus some steps back made by the politic component. “At any cost” military action covered the lack of the symbolic power; this lack was proved by the demonstrations against the intervention. The absence of a rational or affective premise, meant to convince the public opinion, needed a coercive demonstration, the only one way to keep untouchable the USA hegemony.

A more eloquent example is the War World II’s. As the symbolic and economic

power of the Jews grew, the Germans tried to counter-balance, using the Nazi ideology as an answer in the limits of the symbolic component. The failure was compensated by the induction of the violence in a coercive manner. In fact, the past demonstrates that in many actions the politic power resorted to the measures of coercive compensation, not even in the symbolic manner.

1.2. The interior dynamic relations.

Regarding small cultures, it is no surprise that we assist to the same barbarian method inducted by the lack of balance in the power area. The small cultures can't resist the civilization wave, neither with the politic component nor the economic component. Generally, a small culture assumes the misunderstanding of the gain resulted from the imposition of the local identity on the context of the globalization. A small culture ignores from the beginning the symbolic component, in the name of which, in a paradoxical way, resorts to coercive methods. The small cultures resort to coercive power: a rudimentary way of correction, in pushes, concerning terrorist actions. If the symbolic power builds its edifice upon the values of a strong culture, the gain is ensured by the dynamics of power ratio. The controversial symbolic decline of the Old Europe in the Rumsfeld terms won't remain only a spoken thing if there are voices of the "identity" expressed on the symbolic level. Also, this decline is due to **the import of the symbolic power** (a civilization import) and not to the construction upon the "European value". In the consolidation of the European values, Edgar Morin's studies or Tzvetan Todorov's will remain only hypothetical directions as far as the assault upon the symbolic direction isn't an attitude yet.

The existence of some paradigmatic institutions, which are specific for every type of power, doesn't fill the lack of unity in the action in the symbolic direction. We can feel the absence of the unified paradigmatic cultural institution, like a unitary Christian Church.

With the help of "Man's matrix" the distribution of hard power / soft power [4] becomes a dynamic relation. From other point

of view, the effect of the globalization determines an exaggerate growth of the distance between power and politics. If politics remains, like in the past centuries, a term that depends on the territoriality, which keeps its specific, its limitation, the power enters in the virtual area, in the cyberspace domain. Here, the conflict between space and place, a conflict having deep roots in Romanian thought, appears as a basic characteristic. Politics continues to report to a rigid structure, as Baumann says, while power reports to changes, to flows: "*the flows of power generate the power of flows whose material reality imposes itself as a natural phenomenon that cannot be controlled or predicted. People live in places, power rules through flows*" [5].

The liquefaction is necessary in the "thaw" of the solid perception, of the static perception about the elastic clashes at Huntington: "*power rules because it flows, because it is able to flow – to flow away*" [6].

2. THE MILITARY POWER'S MARGINALIZATION

2.1. The "military power" concept. The importance of the military power has been decreased since the beginning of the Cold War. Many specialists in the social field claimed that in the "Mann's matrix" the real power is the economic power. While the military aspects were cold in the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union and the politics were perceived as a visible part of the economic movements, the "economic power" gained the primary role in the power's matrix. Let's notice that economic power involves the capability decisively to punish (or to reward) another party, according to whether that party responds in the desired way, combined with a perception that the possessor has the will or political ability to use it if necessary.

What exactly that phrase, "military power", means? If the term "power" can be taken as "*capability of producing an effect*" or, what is probably more directly relevant for normal use in the international arena, "*possession of controlling influence over others*" [7], "military power" involves the capability to

coerce a recalcitrant party. In other words, “military power” is a part of the coercive power from the “Mann’s matrix”.

Throughout history military power has been paramount and economic power a luxury. Economic power can be defined broadly as the capacity to influence other states through economic means. Military power on the other hand is the capacity to use force or the threat of force to influence other states. If a state has the economic resources it should be able to increase its military power. This is the proof of the interdependence between the two kinds of power and of the marginality of the military’s.

In this case, military power has the role of imposing the economic, political and symbolic power. That means that the violent way replaces the peaceful one. The new modality of showing the surface of the domination is to convert the military war into a peaceful confrontation between the other components of the “Mann’s matrix”.

To convert the military dimensions supposes funds. *“While it is possible to convert military power back into economic power peacefully, the cost is largely prohibitive. Forceful use of military power to build economic power is extremely risky and can have counterproductive side effects in the form of economic sanctions. Military power is also extremely difficult to sustain without corresponding levels of economic power. For it is economic power that allows military power to be built up in the first place”* [8].

2.2. The soft core. What’s about the soft power? As we saw in the Huntington study, the soft / hard distribution of power can also be interpreted in the Mann’s terms as a relation between the political, economic and symbolic power, on the one hand, and coercive power, on the other hand. Initially, the economic dimension was seen as a coercive dimension. That because the soft / hard distribution was a appliance of the Joseph Nye’s studies. There are no problems in understanding the phrase “hard power” in the same meaning of the initial concept of J. Nye. The concept of “soft power” has been the subject of debate for quite some time now. In the meanwhile it was misunderstood.

The confusion in debate between soft and hard power generates misunderstandings. Soft power should be seen in connection with the exercise of power in the international community rather than in the context of domestic politics. It makes no sense, therefore, to discuss the exercise of power in the international community in the same dimension as the exercise of power at domestic level. (It is not correct, for example, to view US domestic public opinion during the Vietnam War as a type of soft power.) *“One blind spot in the soft power concept is the confusion over the source of this power. For Nye and many others, the power of soft power lies in “attraction.” The problem with this idea, however, is that it views things from the perspective of the party exercising power. Seen from the viewpoint of the party being influenced by the power, the question of whether accepting the power accords with this party’s own interests is likely to be a far more important consideration than the attraction of the power. Here we must keep in mind that sovereign nations in the international community act not on the basis of likes and dislikes but in accordance with their own interests. No matter how attractive a given country may be, other countries will not accept its attractive power if it obstructs their freedom of action or adversely affects their economic interests”* [9]. Hollywood movies, for example, are often cited as a source of American soft power. Concerning the Hollywood industry, to speak about *soft nucleus of power* means to refer to the *media culture*. This phrase, established by Douglas Kellner’s works, presumes an average amount of culture (using a physical term, a *medium culture*), setting up the dictatorship of the instantaneous [10].

Media culture is a manner to mix, in a “melting pot”, civilization and cultures, with the aim to obtain a homogenous community. In this way, the soft power is used to reduce the differences between culture (identity) and civilization (political institutions of the society). But, in the same way, communities involve the intolerance. *Soft power*, seen as a power of masses, isn’t a source of stability. Also, *hard power* is surely a source of

instability. The only solution to reach a certain level of power's equilibrium is to see the *hard – soft power* distribution as a dynamic entity. This is the metaphor of the vivid organism: the whole society lives as a human body and its metabolism is defined by the power's flows.

2.3. The metabolism of the power.

Politics, far from its origin – the city -, doesn't mean lack of symbolic dimension. Only the political vitality is in regress. The city gains, in the power circuit, economic and symbolic identity. The city turns over the structure of the nation-state, replacing it with the flexible networks. Although, the city refuses the influx of the political power as long as it not makes up for any power relationship.

The power practice (its intentional shape) doesn't need the subordination of the cultural and economic power. The particular relations of subordination condition **the metabolic circuit of the power** in the city: the symbolic institution of the press to the politics, the political structures to the economic networks, economical relations to the symbolic institutions. The vitality of the city and of the society depends on the health of the metabolic circuit of the power.

For a healthy power's metabolic circuit there are imposed some rational / conscientious relations. The dominance represents the instrument of the dominant ideology. For a society in a good health, the more important aspect is the fluidity of the power. We saw, "*power rules because it flows*". The dominance relationship supposes power relationship (in the "*surface structure*"). The "*deep structure*" doesn't exclude the surface streams. The political life of the city / of the society is an appearance in the domination relationship.

In this space of the vivid power, the military power is marginalized. On the one hand, it represents a surface effect of the domination. On the other one, it represents the marginal structure.

Like the foam on the boiling milk shed over the margins of the pot.

Which seems enormous, but which is reduced to drops when the fire is out.

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