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Three Kinds of Religion in Hungary Lessons of Three By-elections in Local Political Context

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There has been a long tradition in the history of Hungarian intellectuals that dates as far back as the 1930s. It became well-known as the clash between the "populist" (*népies*) and "urbanite" (*urbánus*) camps as two factions of the intellectual classes or status groups. However, the author's historical investigations show that this clash originated during the first reform period of Hungarian history (1830-1848), when the "Centralists" under the leadership of József Eötvös confronted the "Municipalists" whose leading figure was Lajos Kossuth. The former group represented the Western Europe oriented faction, who heavily called into question the county system, while the members of the latter group warranted it as the bulwark of the Hungarian constitution. The conflict was renewed between the two world wars as "westernizing" urbanites opposed the "Magyar"-oriented populists. Also, after the regime change in the 1990s, this old clash posited itself politically first as the strife between the Hungarian Democratic Forum and the Free Democrats and later on it got the form of a European-oriented Leftist-Liberal wing facing the moderate Right. The desperate struggle between the two political wings appeared at the local level as well. The author describes a paradigmatic case of the overall contradiction in a case study. During the local elections in a Hungarian village the post-communist mayor was forced to run against a traditionally religious mayor, while the entire village population, including civil society, followed the desperate clash up to an unserviceable stage. At this point, a third mayor candidate stepped in competing with both former enemies and won the exceptional election. The new mayor transcended both the post-communist era and the oppositional mayor of traditional religious background, for as the great-grand child of a landowner in the period preceding the Second World War who was persecuted in the Communist era; this mayor restituted the continuity with the ancient landowner class. And at the same time, while jettisoning the old-fashioned religion, she exhibited a certain attachment to a new type, as it were, a postmodern religiosity.

Keywords: History of Hungary, split between "westernizing" and Nation-oriented trends, "volksreligion", do-it-yourself religion, postmodern religiosity, post-communist saving of power, intergeneral mobility, interrupted upwards mobility.

A Brief Historical Account of the Subject

It is widely difficult to make those having no idea of the history of a small country, like Hungary, understand complicated historical events that would require a bird's-eye view at least to capture the connection between the remote era and our own age. But there is no other choice than to tempt the impossible by giving a

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brief account of the 150 years of Hungary in the hope of not making you lost in the "deep well of the past"—as it was described by Thomas Mann, who added: "Should we not call it bottomless?" (The first sentence of *Joseph and His Brothers*). Anyway, I am setting off to present you with the account of this past.

Well, once upon a time, just in the thirties of the 19th century (Nagy, 1991), there emerged a gulf between two factions of Hungarian political intellectuals—i.e., who were at the same time educated men and professed politicians, expecting a better future. The bone of contention lay in the old, traditional territorial unit, namely, the county: whether it should be kept or dismissed. The so-called "Centralists" under the leadership of Baron József Eötvös confronted the "Municipalists" whose leading figure was Lajos Kossuth. To sum up the gist of this gulf briefly, the former represented the Western Europe-oriented faction who heavily called into question the county system as being an antiquated remnant compared to the institutions of the West, while the latter warranted it as the bulwark of the Hungarian constitution that was deeply burnt into Hungarian hearts. The clash has been mostly reminiscent of the Russian contradiction between "Zapadniks" and "Slavophils". While the former sought to join the developed Western countries, the latter were making every effort to keep the Orthodox traditions and the old Russia unmoved (Berdiajew, 1937). It should be noted that this kind of split can be found all over the world only in the countries of the periphery as opposed to "core" countries, described by Immanuel Wallerstein (1974)—even in Indonesia, as Clifford Geertz reported, since for decades debates were going on about the decisive question whether Indonesia should be represented in terms of 2,000 years of its culture, advocated by traditionalists, or, as the other extreme, i.e., cosmo-politicians held, the country should join the world of modern societies as quickly as possible (Handler, 1991). At the turn of the century, the gulf took on a new dimension, the one of anti-Semitism. Since the Westernizing wing was mostly represented by young Jewish intellectuals who gathered around the periodical *Huszadik Század* (20th century), in the Association of Social Sciences, even in the *Galilei Kör* (Galileo circle), whose members were predominantly (about 90 percent) of Jewish extract (Polányi, 1986). They inexorably cast doubts, with varying intensity, on the political, social and cultural traditions cherished by Hungarian (conservative) hearts. This general attitude characteristic of but a small part of Jewish population, namely, of radical intellectuals, triggered not only anti-Semitism but at the same time partly defensive, partly aggressive reflexes of the "official" Hungary (that, by the way, added to the fact that in Hungary sociology became a "damned science" since that era until recently). Accordingly, between the two world wars, this antagonism contributed to a renewal of the old split between the two factions as the "westernizing" Urbanites (in Hungarian: *urbánus*, rooted in a Latin word that has nothing to do with, let us say, city-planning, but rather denotes civilized, educated, briefly, urban ways, of highbrow standards) and the "Magyar"-oriented Populists (again, this term has nothing to do with populism as is used today globally), for farthest to have an uniformed ideology they were initiated in the view of liberating the poor peasantry and to binding it with the great slogans of the French Revolution: *égalité*, *fraternité* and *liberté* (Borbándi, 1989; Bibó, 1986). The Urbanites (whose membership later incorporated not only Jews but Hungarian intellectuals as well—just to mention one, Attila József, the famous poet) were seen as infected with a leftist, even Marxist flavor. They were in opposition to the Horthy regime, though they were tolerated—unlike the Populists, some of whom were imprisoned, and, of course, the Communists, who were mortally persecuted. The other wing, the Populists—notwithstanding that they were also up in arms against the regime but at the same time, unlike the Urbanites—turned towards folklore and folk culture with most appreciation, and with heart and hand. This contradiction between the two factions manifested in different

periodicals, the *Szép Szó* (Beautiful word) for the Urbanites and the *Válasz* (Answer) for the Populists, respectively. After the Second World War the Communists opted for the Populists, for they precisely appreciated the Populists' preference for land-distribution as being in line with the socialist orientation. Under the Communist rule the old mutual opposition could survive but *sub rosa*, in disguised forms. When the Communist system collapsed in 1989, the primeval rupture posited itself on the political level, and manifested in two parties. The Hungarian Democratic Forum (in accordance with the former national Liberalists, the Populists and Christian Democrats) that won the first free elections inclined to maintain the Hungarian traditions, while the Free Democrats as the largest political opposition sought quickly to go all-out for the political, economic and cultural achievements of the most developed Western countries. The cleavage pervaded the whole of the society from the political sphere to cultural life.

Since the post-communist party won the election of 1994, and they invited the Free Democrats to form a coalition, the policy they pursued was most similar to the conservative-liberal one on the pattern set by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, as it aimed to weaken trade unions and to put the market in a ruling position. Similarly, the socialist-liberal coalition's policy aimed to privatize—as much and as quickly as possible—the former state-owned industrial factories and agricultural farms as well as the service industry (including public utilities for electricity, gas and water supply), liberalization of prices as well. The neo-liberal economic policy, unlike in the USA, was intertwined with a libertarian cultural policy (supporting, for example, gay and lesbian movements, free choice for women, all with an anti-religious poignancy). This particular coalition won two other elections (2002; 2006) up until the opposite force divested it of power (2010), and bestowed government upon a counter-party, the Young Democrats' Fidesz, which was believed to return to a nation-defending, independence-seeking policy, including support for religion as well. The government sometimes confronts Brussels administration, heckling it when it introduced a so-called unorthodox economic policy and ousted the International Monetary Fund after paying off the loan taken out by the former, post-communist governing party in order to avoid state bankruptcy.

Thus, the old cleavage has survived in Hungary all along, almost over the last two centuries. At present, on the one hand, there stand the opposition parties (including the former ruling party, the Hungarian Socialist Party, which disintegrated into two parts, one of them is under the leadership of the former prime minister who split from the mother-party and formed a new party, Democratic Coalition), brought along small fragmented parties (excluding the extreme right party "For a Better Hungary"), all of them, despite all kinds of differences, act in full unison with each other in that we Hungarians must turn our attentive eyes to the European standards, e.g., following the directions of European Union ("To Paris turn your watchful eyes", advised 18th century Hungarian poet János Batsányi). On the other hand, Fidesz took the role of the moderate right wing, with a policy seeking to keep up the putative national interests, as it has been doing from the olden days of Lajos Kossuth through the Populists between the two world wars to the non-communist protagonists of the 1956 Revolution. This cleavage—or gulf, or split, or rupture (whichever term you prefer)—pervades Hungarian society from top to bottom, which manifests, on the one hand (to give an instance) in the duality of the art world as represented by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Art Academy (top), and, on the other hand, at the local level, as our case will prove (bottom). Nowadays, it permeates religious life as well.

Before turning to our case study, let us present a general outline of the situation of religion in Hungary.

Religious Partition in Hungary

Some Methodological Problems

Before analyzing the case, we are forced to point out some methodological problems. It must be stated that in describing the series of events we have to prepare it not in the form as it happened in reality. If I may put it that way, I made the inverse of Max Weber's construction of ideal types. While Weber (2005) set off from a construed ideal type in advance, prepared clean notions, and he compared it, through the investigational process, with the "energetic" (as he put it) reality, pointing out the margins from it, and tried to explain its causes and measure (pp. 59-61), I had to confront the chaotic reality face-to-face, and by purifying the case to be investigated from the accidental elements in order to arrive at a probably clean story rather than the ideal type in Weberian terms. Of course, I was aided by my prior experiences in similar cases and my orientation in the scientific literature, but the discovery of the substance hidden in the story came to me as a bolt out of the blue. As Michael Polanyi (1966) described it, the discovery cannot be deduced from the direct antecedents. It is a grace or intuition.

Before submitting our empirical method, I feel it necessary to usher in a new term since to my best knowledge it is not common in international sociology. The new term is *investigational camp of village*, briefly: *village camping.* To tell the truth, it is a particular kind of sociography already introduced by both Ferdinand Tönnies in the 19th century and Karl Mannheim in the middle of the 20th century as a third kind of sociology beside the sociology as pure or theoretical sociology and applied sociology (Tönnies, 1971), and technical special field beside the sociology as *Fachwissenschaft*, *Fachsoziologien* (in plural) and as *Kultursoziologie* (Mannheim, 1945). Village-camping was in the making in the thirties of the past century, and got a form of social-political movement. Young graduated social scientists went to the village, as they call it, "to discover Hungary". The buzzword "Discovery of Hungary" originated in a meeting of a leading Hungarian sociologist (later politician and, from the mid-1920s, professor of Oberlin College, USA), Oszkár Jászi with Émile Durkheim in Paris, 1905. On the latter's influence, Jászi abandoned the Grand Theories (Marxism, Spencerism, etc.) and, giving a new trend to the whole of contemporary Hungarian sociology, he had recourse to the empirical reality of Hungarian society. He was the first to introduce the turn: "Discovery of Hungary" (originally, "We had discovered Hungary") (Nagy, 1993). The phrase was taken over later, in the thirties by the Populists as a battle-cry, who launched a series of books under the title "Discovery of Hungary". Some of the publications amount to political significance, since a couple of their authors were officially indicted for subversive content, and later on sentenced to prison for "counter-class incitement". These books in question added to a fermentation of Hungarian public life at large, and they too contributed to a crisis of conscience among leading intellectuals of the country. Accordingly, the village campers seemed to be leftist and opposition-like and represented a third-road conception, for they distanced themselves not only the actual establishment but from the communist endeavors as well). A large part of Populists founded a left-wing social movement called "Front of March" in 1937 (Salamon, 1980; Bibó, 1986; Borbándi, 1989) that provoked vexation by the police. Later on the movement turned into a political party (National Farmer's Party). Stigmatized by this kind of oppositional flavor, village-camping took over this oppositional stigma to the socialist era as well, and when sociologists restarted it in the eighties they attracted several underground oppositional personalities that provoked the interest of the secret police (as I experienced it personally). Some of the village-campers later on, after the collapse of communism, became leading figures—an MP (Pál Juhász), a minister (Bálint Magyar) or a famous novelist (Pál Závada)—in the new political system and political life.

Thus, sociography is an empirical investigation focusing on a marked theme, issue or topic. The village investigational camp had been wide-spread not only in Hungary but in Central Europe as well, including Germany, Czechoslovakia, and especially Romania where ingenious sociologist Dimitrie Gusti influenced Hungarian sociologists through his study on Hungarians living as a national minority in Romania between two world wars as well.

As I attended the first village camp organized in 1982, under the leadership of a "great old man" of Hungarian sociologists, István Márkus, who had the chance to learn how to make it from Ferenc Erdei in the 1940s, and, further to it, I was the one who first introduced the investigational village camp into the sociology major at Hungarian universities in order to make students experienced in real life as such. Those opting for sociology usually come from urban surroundings and, in my experience, they are ignorant of real life outside. I hoped to guide them to a better understanding of Hungarian social life. Up till the present I attended more than two dozens of village camps, both as an attendant and an organizer. Relying on the experience thus gained, I can outline the course of the camp as follows.

Before beginning, the future leaders of the camp are getting a line on the possible spots, and preparing the camping. A camp needs three kinds of activity in advance: preparation politically (gaining the goodwill of local authorities and the group of people studied), economically (fund-raising as the financial background), and professionally (looking for the camp staff, learning materials, etc.). The camp itself can be divided into three stages. The first is a preparatory one (at least at universities) that consists of a semester during which future participants ought to learn the history of village research in Hungary, and they must read some classic books of the forerunners in order to study the statistical and historical data bearing on the village to be investigated. The second stage, which takes approximately 7-10 days, implies the effective camping, i.e., the fieldwork when one collects all sorts of data of the village and queries the questionnaires. This work usually starts in the office of the local authority with an analysis of documents, primarily of the minutes of the local council's sessions. It takes one to two days, then we pick up some stories for investigation. Thence, the research groups split into different subgroups under the leadership of experienced sociologists following the main sociological branches or subjects: local politics, estates, criminology, education, cultural life, and so on. During the fieldwork camping stage the participants come together and report on their daily work. Finally, the third stage is the elaborative one, all along which, practically for the entire semester, students carry on their work, which ends in a script or a written paper, an account of their work done.

The crucial point of the investigation is the selection of the issue for the research. After attending more than two dozens of village camps, it has become my firm conviction that the uppermost way is to pick up *a story of conflict* (Simmel, 1955), since all kinds of interested parties, more or less vitally interested, agents present in a village are forced to step in so that they can vindicate their vital interests. If the story of conflict is found, we are making every effort to make up the *elementary events* based on an analysis of facts, the more the better. First, we thoroughly examine the minutes of the council's sessions, and then set out to gather all documents as traces put in writing to identify those who have decisive roles in the whole business. Second, after having established the main actors, one goes to them to make *interviews*. There are many methodological troubles with the interview as a method to gather data to which I do not seek to digress from all but one. This is the problem of differences in language use between the interviewee and the interviewer. The former speaks an everyday language, while the latter should translate it into a scientific one, i.e., into the language and

terminology of sociology. This is very close to the "confusion of tongues" as it was described by Clifford Geertz (1973) in his famous "thick description" that is always applicable when social conflicts occur in cases of conflict but in an unusual situation as well. This is true for our case that intersects both of them.

> Our double task is to uncover the conceptual structures that inform our subjects' acts, the "said" of social discourse, and to construct a system of analysis in whose terms what is generic to those structures, what belongs to them because they are what they are, will stand out against the other determinants of human behavior. […] The aim is to draw large conclusions from small but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with complex specifics. (Geertz, 1973, pp. 27-28)

Our case to be described below is a micro-sociological one; it reveals a "dense texture of facts" that we will situate in conceptual, even historical context. However, we should warn ourselves not to draw premature conclusions. The reconciled end remains as it was: isolated, but not without any lesson.

Coming back to methodology: the whole problem that we attempt to interpret a story happening in a world that we are not familiar with bears on the question of understanding the "indigenous", for without a lived-through experience one have to face fatal misunderstandings as it is often substantiated not only by anthropology but even by sociology (Habermas, 1997, pp. 158-170). Be that as it may, I have to confess my deep conviction that no other method exists as that of interview to get to reality as close as possible.

An Overview of Religious Life in Hungary

According to several statistical empirical data on the religious life of Hungarian society, three blocks can be distinguished in terms of religious self-identification, a distinction that was introduced by the late Miklós Tomka, the most renown sociologist in Eastern Europe under the communist rule, whose achievements in the sociology of religion were rewarded by various institutions (e.g., the honorary doctorate awarded by the Faculty of Theology, Vienna University). Following his categorization (Tomka, 1995), the first group can be called "religious following the Church's instructions" (pp. 35-36). We call them later on "Church-like" religious folk. The term more or less overlaps—following the Austrian sociologist of religion, Paul Zulehner—*Volkskirchlich* religion (roughly: "folk religion") (Tomka & Zuhlehner, 1999). Most members of the first group belong to the older generation, the one that looks back with nostalgia to the thriving religious life between the two world wars (namely, when the hegemonic role of the Catholic church was swaying all along the social, political and cultural setting); the second group consists those who confess themselves to be religious in "one's own way", to use the Hungarian classification's term coined by Miklós Tomka, that can be described, in international terms, as "do-it-yourself religion"; and the third group can be categorized as being indifferent, atheist or uncertain. One can identify the first one with the traditionalist, patriotic population, although no empirical evidence is at our disposal. The second one is varied; political convictions vary from the extreme right to extreme left, from Europe-believers to Europe-rejecters, from Conservatives to Liberals. As to their religious background, we are guessing among them those who could be characterized with "postmodern" religion, at least partly, and they consider themselves to be religious "in their own way". The third block, as we assume, is mostly the post-communists who as a consequence of the atheist education during several decades long remained anti-religious or at least neutral, nevertheless they constitute the massive base for the left-wing parties, including those who are professed Europe-believers. As in all post-communist countries, the picture is confused by the former communist nomenclature that "trans-exculpated" themselves after the regime change and participated in the first free local elections not as communist but as "independent" candidates.

In our empirical research, we found a case in a village where the post-communist mayor was forced to face a traditionally religious (*Volkskirchlich*) mayor, while the entire village population, including civil society, followed the desperate clash between the two factions up to the unserviceable stage of the village. The unpleasant situation endured as long as a third mayor candidate stepped in competing with both former enemies and won the by-elections. The new mayor transcended both the post-communist era and the oppositional mayor of traditional religious background, for—as the great-grand child of a landowner before the second war persecuted in the Communist era—she restituted the continuity with the ancient landowner class. And at the same time, while jettisoning the old-fashioned religion she disclosed a certain attachment to a new type, as it were, a postmodern religion.

As Miklós Tomka (1991) pointed out in his book, based on public opinion surveys, since 1972 Hungarian population could be divided in two categories: the proportion of those who confessed to be religious increased from 41% to 51.1%, while those confessed not to be religious remained the same (46.6%). Nonetheless, if we take the population following their self-confession in 1991, those who considered themselves to be "religious according the Church's prescriptions" (hereafter: Church-like) amounted to 16.1%. However, if we include those who confessed themselves to be "religious in their own way", then 69.6% of respondents belonged to the "religious population", while those who confessed themselves to be non-religious declined from 40.8% in 1978 to 26.6% in 1991. In the latter category, a remarkable trend showed itself, namely, while the percentage of those who said "I am not religious" increased from 17.3% of 1978 to 22.1%, the ratio of those who chose "I am of other conviction, I am definitely not religious" declined from 40.8% to 23.5%, and down to 3.95%.

Recently, Mónika Földvári set up a sophisticated version based on an empirical research. By dint of a questionnaire, she was searching for the correlation between value-orientation and religiosity on a random sample of 1,000 individuals, and she differentiated three kinds of religious behavior: (1) Church-like religiosity to which one tenth of the whole population belongs; their characteristic implies a traditional family-oriented and work-centered attitude, and whose idiosyncrasy can be described as "intense and intrinsic religiosity". This division, as we suppose, overlaps those confessing themselves to be "religious following the prescription of the Church"; (2) The second division consist those whose religiosity can be characterized as "cultured or educated Christianity", to which half of the population can be classified; they are also family- and work- oriented but with a kind of openness to world-view and tolerance, and at the same time an attachment to postmodern value orientation; and (3) Into the third division we can group those who don't care for any kind of religion but who are characterized by a humanistic and post-material value orientation (Földvári, 2009, pp. 23-24).

Let us switch our attention on the religious divisions. We have already seen that Tomka made the distinction between Church-like and "in one's own way" religion following self-confession. Later on, Ferenc Gereben pointed out—based on Nagy's representative sample of 3,600 individuals—that 67% of the population confessed themselves to be religious, including the 12% who classify themselves to have Church-like religiosity (that decreased by 3% compared with the data of 1985). Gereben went on to investigate both the Church-like and "one's own way" religion. As to the former, he finds two forms of religion. One of these exhibits a "traditional, routine religion", while, in the second division, one can find an "intrinsic, spiritual and inwardly lived-through religion". Parallel to other investigations, I suppose that the latter tends to be characteristic of a young, urban and educated population. However, both of them display "Christian tradition" (religious education, religious family, believing in God and in the Christian tenets, etc.); the two can probably be united as a third kind of Church-like tradition (Gereben, 2003); religious practice (praise, weekly

Church-goings, getting of the holy communion, Bible-reading, etc.); Christian running-of-life (sympathy towards faith and love, its deepening, follow-up of moral good, etc.); loyalty or else returning relationship to any practicing Church. Sometimes, first of all in intellectual circles, one can experience doubts, a tacit, not aggressive but cautious questioning of the Church's tenets (Gereben, 2003). As to the "religious of one's own way" division, Gereben found as well that they too can be classified into three kinds in terms of criteria, such as distance from the Church, spirituality and individual orientation. If we subtract from them those expansive of half of the total population who are more or less close to the Church, we arrive at the result that one third of the population can be considered more or less religious. And we get the result: Following the religious attitude, the Hungarian population in its totality can be divided in three somewhat equal categories: (1) one third consist those more or less close to the Church-like religious population; (2) one third consist those who individually feel no attraction to any Church but have some religious remnants or attachment; (3) one third of the population belong to the neutrals, the uncertain and expressly non-religious section (Gereben, 2003, p. 35). Let me add that the results vary in terms not only of the time but also of the method of data processing as well. For instance, following the Tomka and Zuhlehner research in 1998, 17% of the adult population rated as "explicitly religious" and 37% as "in some degree religious", that is, altogether 54% identified themselves as religious. But in 2000, the next research conducted by Gereben showed 23% as "explicitly religious" and 27% as "to some degree religious", so the end result, that is, those who are at least religious of some degree amount to half of the population (Gereben, 2003, pp. 31-32). Or else, after the 1991 (ISSP) research 32% of the adult population never went to Church, whilst following the 2000 research, 40% of the same population had never been to Church (Tomka, 1996).

Földvári (2009) quoted above made an interesting remark. Namely, that among those born between 1939 and 1947 we can observe the trend towards a "private religion" due to the religious discrimination in the communist era, while among those born after 1969 the same trend can be observed due to the pluralist religious situation. And in spite of this different original situation, the younger generations are inclined to vest the "religious pattern characteristic of the parent's generation" (Földvári, 2009, pp. 24-25).

Similar trends appear in Europe as well. In Italy the number of those who are "Catholic in a laic way" (Ricceri, 2006, p. 65), or else, "do it yourself" religiosity has been growing, according to a 2006 empirical research. However, at the same time 36.8% of the whole population confess themselves "Church-like" believers, with 6.2% going to Church weekly, 23.7% fortnightly and 29.6% during ceremonial holidays, respectively.

Similarly, two kinds of religion can be distinguished in Austria too. The first is, to borrow the term from sociologist of theology Paul Zuhlehner, a *Volkskirchlich* religion, which overlaps our "Church-like" religion. The second one is "longing for spirituality", which intermingled with secularization trends, sometimes confronted with it, or occasionally implies a certain kind of religious need. The latter trend takes on a tendency of moving towards atheism (Polak, 2006). This domain can be matched to our "one's own" kind of religion.

British sociologist of religion, Grace Davie, also discriminates two kinds of religion in Europe. The first one is a religious attitude of "believing without belonging" that we guess more or less overlaps our "in my own way" or "do-it-yourself" religious behavior. The other one called "substitutive religion", exemplified by Scandinavian countries. Scandinavian population belongs to the least practicing religions of the world, rarely go to Church but, at the same time "several of them have a strong attachment to religious buildings of their locality" and the plurality of them belong to the Lutheran Church, stays on to paying the scot and lot, and they take the religious service as national as religious identity (Davie, 2010, pp. 192-196). The author seems to

ascertain similar trends in the post-communist countries but, it seems to me, this trend could not be proved in the light of the recent investigations.

In any case, we are keeping ourselves to Gereben's division of "religious in one's own way", namely, to the section of it that seems to be closest to the Church-like religion that we consider to be a "postmodern religion". One can conceive it following Grace Davie (2010): "The religious narrative fragmented, lost its core even as the secular, i.e., scientific, rational, anti-religious narratives, e.g., rationalism, Communism. The space of Sanctity put on quite other forms compared with the former ones" (p. 131). But I would like to attach a narrow sense to the term "postmodern religion". In this sense, the term "postmodern" does not stand for "anything goes", as it accepted widely, or else, as Roger Scruton (2007) described it: It does not gave out in "the culture of repudiation" (Scruton, 2007, p. 74). It remains within the Christian framework, i.e., Christian World-picture or world-view. To some extent, the religious narrative has been fragmented, as Grace Davie worded it, but it has a centripetal power that holds together the religious, not to say, theological views about to be divergent. We will return to this point later.

The Case in Question

In what follows we are to describe a peculiar local story that was happening around three by-elections of mayors, the ones which imply both the social and religious rupture of the Hungarian society described above. While the social rupture's origin, political in kind, as we had seen, dated back to the 1930s, the religious split is rather due to secularization and to the development of the open "religious market". In order to anticipate the result at which we are to arrive, we should repeat that the social gulf can be substantially conceived as a struggle between the progressive, Westernizing wing and the conservative, patriotic wing. However, the religious clash diagonally crossed the "patriotic–westernizing" rupture, for it was appearing not only between the two opposing wings as they were classified in the way that the former one would have been religious and the latter anti-religious, but just within the religious population as well.

Now, coming to the point we have to turn our case. In advance, we learned that, in the village to be studied, there have been three by-elections for mayors. In Hungary, parliamentary elections are regularly held every four years, namely, in the same year when the elections of local authorities also occur, including the mayors and the members of local councils. These elections took place in a row: in 1990, 1994, 1998, and so on. In the village in question, let us call it R village, the first mayor (P) won the first local elections in 1990 as well as the next two elections in a row (1994; 1998). During the first election, he was supported by the Hungarian Socialist Party (former Communist one), later on he gained the mayor's position as an independent candidate. He forwent his mayoralty in 1999, and as a consequence, a by-election had to be declared. Upon the new elections, O became the winner with right-wing support. Later, in 2011, he failed because he came to minority in the local council, and in terms of the Self-government Act, it is compulsory to declare a new by-election in that case. It was held in 2012, and a third mayor, a woman, let us call her S, won it.

That was all we learned in advance. Since the third by-election seems the most interesting one, we were focusing on its story. Having arrived at the village, we tried to ascertain the so-called elementary incidences, including the document analysis and the interviews as follows.

As we have already pointed out, one of the main difficulties lay in establishing the so-called "elementary incidences". For, in our case, the most crucial point was the course through which S succeeded in defeating both of the other candidates upon the third by-election. We enumerate the main points of the course in a row:

1. November 2010: S was called upon to stand for candidate of the mayor's post by an acquaintance of her parents, called D, taken part in the Association of Vine-dresser's Choir. D was very active as a member of the city council under both former mayors, but he had come to conflicts with both of them, therefore he got frustrated.

2. December 24: Acquaintance D called S and informed her about the dissolution of the village council, and that a new by-election would take place. The possibility opened up for her to apply.

3. New Year's Eve: S came over in the village and visited the relatives of her parents and grandparents. They discussed the vexing businesses of the village (including the trouble with drainage, etc.) They encouraged her to stand for the election.

4. Just being on maternity leave, S set out to gather a group for the future village council, since without a neat majority she would not have any chance to overcome. First, she won over D, an influential man in the village, to join her.

5. S went on to set up her future group. First, she visited an agricultural entrepreneur of the village, who promised her support, as did his son, active in many business of the village. The wife of the father—general practitioner of the village, which made her popular among the folks—originally supported the former mayor P but, when the village council dissolved and she was not a member any more, she also sided with S.

6. Then, she visited the head of the nursery school, who was second cousin of the man calling upon S to be a candidate. She took on it (but did not win on the election). So, they came out at four persons but needed still two others to gain majority. Further, she visited the village nurse, and also the trainer for physical culture who secretly sided with her but feared to support her openly for fear of future retaliation by the then mayor. She tried to win over from the adversary group D, a fireman, a leading figure of the Church council whose wife was acting as divinity teacher. All were anxious of D's character as being a divisive figure. Neither did dare to side with S openly but promised an oblique support through a covered agitation standing by her, and also suggesting a reasonable third solution for the future voters. The group so formed tried to entice S from the group of O who was earlier despised as a traitor by the circle of P for voting against them on an occasion.

7. Then, S visited the main other entrepreneurs of the village. First, she went to one of them, an owner of an international trade holding, having diversified contact even to higher political circle as well who was staying abroad in most cases. He warned her to undertake on such a grandiose work, but, in spite of his reserve, he promised support to her in the last analysis. She also visited the owner of the large lactic agricultural factory, who proved to be rather neutral. However, when she won and had the water laid on to his cow-farm, he also supported her. She also visited the leader of a bull raiser crawl who let him speak to the workers of the farm.

8. After the election, S and her group remained in minority, for only three of them were elected. The others were elected as independents. Just before the first occasion of the statutory meeting S convened a special discussion with the two independent young men, KD and DG, and she succeed in persuading them to join. KD was a volunteer fireman, and as a member of the laic board of the local Church he does much charity work. His wife was a divinity teacher in a neighboring village. DG is a teacher of physical culture in the school who married the daughter of the former director of the school. They still formed a minority, for three other persons were elected from the adversary group, including O, the former mayor, and two other supporters of the penultimate mayor were present as well. The above mentioned "traitor" first sided with the former mayor, earlier with the penultimate one, and now he is approaching the new mayor.

Characterization of Protagonists

I/1. First Mayor, P. Born 1953, born in the village. His father was in a leading position in a state-owned factory; his mother was a clerk in the local savings bank. After the elementary school, he went to a secondary school for agrarian operators; later on he learned accounting and statistics at a technical college. First, he started to work as technician at an institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, later he became an independent conveyor. While being interviewed, he recalled a revealing, say, mystical experience when his son miraculously recovered from a mortal illness (For us, this seems to prove the fact that, even in the most secularized being, we can find a sprinkle of the "religious perspective", as Clifford Geertz (1973, p. 110) called it). In the wake of the regime change, in the autumn of 1989, he organized a local group, called "Village Federation", recruited members of the agents of the former local nomenclature (including the ex-president of the cooperative, the manager of a factory, the leader of the local sport club, etc.) who came together weekly to discuss the future if the regime change was to happen. This friendly society representing the former political system encouraged him to run as a candidate for the mayoralty of the village. He let himself convinced and won the election of 1990, and thenceforth 1994 and 1998 as well. Later on he was denounced for allegedly drawing on the communal gymnasium illegally for his private purpose. Having had enough of being doomed for, in his mind, an indignant accusation, he resigned in 1999. Under the new mayor's era, he was keeping his membership of the village council, took a strong position in it as the president of the economic committee, and on this account, he was conducting unrelenting attacks against the new leadership as long as he would reach an instantaneous majority on a session in December 2012. And this momentary majority was enough, on his proposition, to arrive at a decision of dismissing the board itself, and consequently it was, pursuant to the law, compulsory to declare a new by-election for the mayoralty. Sessions were dotted with roaring and altercations, sometimes deteriorated almost to fistfight. P as the former mayor made up his mind to overthrow his enemy, and he succeeded in having the by-elections declared.

I/2. Second Mayor, O. He was marked out to become mayor by "an old great man" of the village who was persecuted for his activity in the anti-Communist revolution of 1956 and even suffered having been sentenced to prison. Thus, he earned a respect of the local public and his word weights a lot. He was picked by O as a potential adversary to the current mayor, the "former party secretary" (as they believed) who seemed to compete with the latter in the hope of success. The candidate born in a traditional religious family, and on this account, no wonder, he was elected a member of the laic board of the local Catholic Church. He was also supported by another member of the Church-board, a founding father of the local Folk Circle, and a former pupil of a famous Hungarian Benedictine secondary school (Pannonhalma). During our interviewing him we could identify the Church-like (*Volkskirchlich*) religious conviction of those who were looking back to the religious hegemony of the Catholic Church between the two world wars. As the mayor, according to inside gossips, O was doing better than his word to anybody just visited him, and undertook an investment into the sewage disposal that he failed in the work, incurring a large budget deficit.

I/3. Third Mayor, S. First of all, this woman being elected as a mayor can be considered a smaller miracle, not only for being female but for the fact that she was not a dweller of the village. But, be as that it may, her life course, including her pre-life (pre-born life!), cannot be considered a normal career of life. Her great-grandfather was the first, that is, the biggest landowner in the village before the Communists took power, and on this account, he was persecuted as a *kulak* in the communist era. Though he was not deported to a

remote village, as happened to many, "only" expelled from his family house, the family settled in a neighboring village. Her grandfather had been a prisoner of war in the Soviet Union for three and a half years. Later on he became a responsible person in a defecation mud. During the 1956 revolution, armed troops from both sides came for sugar, and he forcibly gave them as much as they wanted. Therefore, after the collapse of the revolution, he was called to account, seized, interned in a camp, beaten, and after six months of detention, he would have been released. The father of mayor S was a mechanical engineer, who, learning from the stories of his father and grandfather, sought a good upbringing for his daughter, and sent her to study law at the Catholic University. She graduated *summa cum laude*, and she was selected to be the drafter of a public prosecutor. In the meantime, she married a former student of a Catholic secondary school. She was about to be appointed to Public Prosecutrix when called upon to set forth in the by-election for mayoralty. The inviter of her was a man participating in the Association of the Folk Choir (Népdalkör Egyesület) of the village in question, in the same group which her parents living the next village attended to sing regularly. She accepted the call, and turned to organize a possible majority in the future village council (as we have seen above). She visited first the opposing party's "old great man", the one closest to her world-view, of whom she knew that he had known her ancestors in afore-time lived in the same village. Yet, she was not met with understanding, in fact, she was rejected. Then, after having learned that she could count but with herself, she started to visit all the potentates in the village to gain their goodwill or, at least, benevolent neutrality. She got it and won.

Her religious life cannot rate as "Church-like" in the pattern of "following the prescription of the Church". Further to this, it has nothing to do with the *Volkskirchlich* attitude characteristic of the opposing party in the village that related to her with hostility. She did not go to Church weekly, only when she felt it to be necessary. Yet, her studies at the Faculty of Law at the Catholic University, religious icons on the wall of her office, her confession to worship sometimes, all that seem enough to be suspected her to follow a new type of religion. It is more than the "do-it-yourself" religion, for it is closely bound to the Church-like religion, but she follows the religious prescriptions not so literally. Still, she leaves no doubt about her commitment to her religious bound. If one seeks to determine her kind of religion, considering the religions described above, it can be found in between the first and second sections, according to Gereben's categorization. As Gereben reported me, many of the "Church-like believers are increasingly closer to the "in one's own way religion" group. The decline of the weekly Church-goers too points in that direction. Thus, the first division of the "in one's own way religion", who are closest to the Church-like section, is presumably growing. Conversely, it seems to me that it is time to construe a special kind of religiosity that can be described as "postmodern". "Postmodern" is a term with spangly varied senses. Its literature is of legion (to mention but a few: Lyotard, 1984; Huyssen, 1984; Habermas, 1981). It is a particular junction between the first section of "one's own religiosity" and second section of the Church-like one. She could not choose at will, as did those with the "do-it-yourself" kind, for she does not embrace a new religious doctrine or a part of various trendy religions; her vision of the world remains within Christianity but with an individual flavor; what is perhaps missing from her is a special spirituality, a kind of lived-through religious life. But no wonder, as Tocqueville hinted at it, that those very much busy with the workaday business, have no time to concern with the ultimate questions of life. An individual character of her religious attitude manifested rather in a particular criticism concerning some prescriptions of the Church. And just this point discriminates her from the Church-like—in our case: *Volkskirchlich*—religion represented by her adversaries in the village. The latter are bound to the olden Church when it played a swaying part in the

whole of society before the war. Of which they could not have any direct experience, for they did not live at that time. However, they must have heard some fragmented memories and reminiscence from their parents or teachers who—in one case—encouraged them to go to the Catholic secondary school. For them, that became an object of "wishful thinking", and when they got the opportunity, when O came to power as a winning mayor, they tried to turn it into reality.

A substantial observation should be emphasized, namely, that differences among Christian denominations and religions are fading. The old opposition, conflicting tenets—e.g., the former hostilities between Catholic and Protestant religions—are loosing their significance, and it seems for many that there is no difference, e.g., between the Lord's supper and the Holy Communion. In the core of the centripetal power may be Jesus Christ, but it smoothly fits a theologically heretic projection of God the one who is not as jealous as the God of the Ancient Covenant but the Love's God forgiving towards all benevolent men and women, or else they are ignorantly adherents of the "God above God", as Paul Tillich (1952) already described it. One could enumerate similar points to characterize this kind of "postmodern religion" (in the absence of a better term), but we would anyway prefer to mention the difficulty of confronting that new phenomenon. Men and women belonging to this kind of postmodern religion submerge into the day-to-day business life, and have no opportunity to get along with the complicated theological questions, but they are substantially convinced about the final truth of Christianity.

Therefore I suspect that a new kind of religiosity is on the rise, which I called "postmodern", although I am not sure that this description covers the phenomenon as experienced in the case above.

The Rupture on Civil Society

We have already hinted above the fact that during the eras of the first two mayors the civil society also became as divided as the two mayors. Both of them contributed to the gulf, and both of them made one or the other associations present in the village of use. We have that P himself construed a friendly circle, the "Village Federation" of the former nomenclature that encouraged him to run for the mayor's election. He also gave rise to the home guard that of course sided with him. Although there was a pensioner's dance club, P animated another one under the label "waspish pensioner's dance club". He was advocated by some potent personalities as follow: the former directress of the school who was peeved for her forced retiring; the local veterinary; one of the wholesalers who is the actual president of the home guard. On the other hand, the following civil associations stood by the second mayor, O: the militia; the Folk Circle; the Peacock Circle, a women's choir; Poppy-flower Dancing club of the village. He can also align some local notables: the great old man, imprisoned after 1956, the founding father of the Folk Circle, a former pupil of a Catholic secondary school; the local pharmacist and his wife, a member of the laic board of the Church; a librarian, who is a leader of the local nationalist youth; a woman, former civil servant of the police and vocalist of folk song; a program organizer, who was actually the president of the Folk Circle.

The rupture between the two kinds of associations robustly manifested in the fact that if one of them were financially supported by one of the mayors, the others were handicapped by the other.

As one of our interviewees put it:

> Sorry to tell that, but I think just the civil associations generated the hostility, for they could not agree with each other, and, properly speaking, they made the village council set against each other. For the Folk Circle stood behind O, and O could not let them lurch to the Folk Circle once they supported me to become the mayor. I am turning sympathetic ears to their requests, and I also support them, etc. The village sought to get rid of them. They wish they freed themselves from

that situation. There were happening open struggles, loud vociferations and disqualifying tone to the effect that everybody wished them to go whishing to have anybody to come only if they go!

The rupture entails bad consequences. They missed the deadline of tenders, there were sessions of a 40-point agenda, there were there sessions when P, gaining majority in the village council, blocked any draft of mayor O, and so on. The two civil associations, every one of them organizing festivals, never invited anybody from the other association, and every dwellers of the village must take stand on one or the other side. Even the village split into two blocks, depending on which one of the two mayors they supported. The life of the village was blocked.

The interviewed subject quoted above spoke out the secret of the mortal hostility: “Like the whole country were split into two parts, the same happened in our village. As hard as a stone. Yes. There was a camp of P, and another one of O”.

Instead of a Conclusion

One is inclined to think in the terms of Hegel, whose Absolute Spirit has not done anything new thereto what was happening earlier in reality, namely, in the objective and subjective spirits. For the “owl of Minerva begins its flight only with the onset of dusk” (Hegel, 1991, p. 12), the spirit is only going through what was happening before his appearance on the stage. It only conceives the real history in the world of notions. Like here, the real protagonist, quoted above, worked up to what is happening in reality. As the whole of Hungarian society is being split into two sides, the same is happening in the village.

But, as the mortal rupture of a village has dissolved in the air, can it happen at the national level too?—that is the question. No way out is to be expected in the near future.

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