Nándor Birher – Péter Bertalan: *Hálózatokban (In Networks)[1]*

With the advent of the 21st century it became more and more clear that a new approach is needed for the understanding and even predictability of social processes, that is, to think in networks. Network theory is a new tool in the hands of mankind, with which, if used properly, we can find answers to the relevant questions concerning our existence and security, whether it is cancer research or the events taking place in Ukraine or in the Middle East.

We need to run faster in order to stay in place – writes Thomas L. Friedman in his work *The World is Flat*. Network theory not only makes it possible to stay in place, but also makes the future more predictable and clear, but of course not like a weather forecast. Nowadays it is often expressed that everything is connected. It makes more and more sense.

In the book *Hálózatokban* [In Networks] by Nándor Birher and Péter Bertalan, published in 2014, the network theory of law is presented together with its background in law theory and the philosophy of law. *"The task of thinking in networks is to reveal those key players in society, the help of whom those patterns are created, which – by the formalized law – are expressed as rule of law and practice of law."[2]* In the first chapters of the book the reader can have a look at the most important theories and philosophies of law , which determine the development of present day legal systems and social networks. Those processes are presented in greater details which have led the authors to the concept of the network theory of law.

The authors examine, with novel methods, the possible solutions for the questions of education and employment of the Roma and Gypsies . The mapping of connection network of keywords of norms provides a deeper analysis. The quantitative text analysis, as a possibility for predicting with the use of keywords in the process of law-making and the application of the law is presented.

The dynamic development and adaptability of networks is remarkable. This is especially true for the organization of the Catholic Church. *"The apparent stability and flexible adaptability of this institution is derived from the dichotomy of its structure: on one hand, the multi-centric and hierarchic structure, on the other hand the vertical structural form makes plastic-like its operation, to always be able to withstand the*

1 Nándor Birher – Péter Bertalan: Hálózatokban. Oktker-Nodus Kiadó, Veszprém, 2014. 221 p.

2 Birher – Bertalan: op. cit. p. 72.

storms of history and the social changes."[3] We can witness the clash of the Catholic Church and the State Security Services in the chapter titled "Clash of Networks", which relies on primary sources from the Historical Archives of the State Security Services, and introduces the less known Provida Mater Encyclic apostolic Constitution.

In the study titled "On the edge of historical networks" the socio-political importance of the Roma are in the foreground, whereas the chapter, titled "On the edge of social networks" is about the Roma ethnic groups as smaller communities within society, examining the networks determining their mechanisms of integration, approaching the question objectively and scientifically. This issue in Hungary is often not free from misinterpretation and emotions.

The book not only provides intellectual and thought-provoking journey to the world of networks for those who knows well the work of Hakan Hakansson, Nicholas A. Christakis, James H. Fowler, or Albert-László Barabási, but also for those who want to get to know the complex system of connection of social processes and social networks, those links, which determine our everyday life, and surround us.

„*Time is a stream that bears or covers you:*
A man may swim in it but not direct it."

The thoughts of Imre Madách are reflected in the birth of the *homo dictyous*, network man. Our embeddedness in the network of connections determine our decisions in business, in political and in private life as well. The individuals are embedded in the network of connections of society; the states, trans- and multinational companies, international organizations are embedded in the international system. The man of the 21st century can be compared to a spider tangled into its own web.

Nándor Birher and Péter Bertalan looking for the roots of the current social problems with the help of network theory, found solutions in its system of contexts. Concerning the situation of the Roma they see the solution in the process of law-making and, urging a closer cooperation between state institutions and civil organizations of interest of the Roma, the parliamentary representation of the Roma free from parties.

"The norm creating ability of man is not the result of reason, and not of some elusive nature, but simply an evolutionary necessity, which ensure that we get along better together. Only life can legitimize the rules. For 6–7 billion to be able to live on the planet at the same time, very sophisticated network coordination is needed. A new evolutionary situation has arisen. The spirit in this new situation gave us new tools in order to survive. The system theories and the technologies attached to them belong to these. If we are able to use them properly, many of us – live more creatively, stronger and happier. If not, we will inevitably deplete our future."[4]

Joining forces and cooperation are inevitable not only to deal with social problems, but also to manage international conflicts. The news in the public media can lead us astray, if we do not sense the processes and the reality of networks behind the events. I recommend the book for those who would like to get acquainted with the world of social networks, and also for those who looks at it through the lens of the scientists, since the researches carried out in the book are suggestive. The book was written by two authors working in two different disciplines, along clear and logical way of thinking.

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3 Op. cit. p. 143.
4 Op. cit. p. 53.

For the easier understanding, at many points there are illustrative figures and similes helping the reader to grab the main points of the book. The representatives of the profession and those interested in the topic can read with pleasure this not easy, but meaningful and useful read.

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