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Book review

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POLITICS BETWEEN AUTHORITY AND POWER



Ljubiša Despotović. 2022. *Politics between Authority and Power: Introduction to Political Science*. Novi Sad: Nacional, p. 294.

Political science, as an inexhaustible discipline, requires creative and daring steps upon research of complex subjects and research problems and processes and phenomena that are often invisible to the eyes of ordinary citizens. Since ancient times, politics has been theoretically perceived as acting for the common good, which has, during the centuries-long continuity of implementation of politics in practice, been lost between authority and power. The mere knowledge (*episteme*) is not enough in order to recognize the said processes, but skills (*techne*) and wisdom (*phronesis*) are necessary as well, being perceived as particularities that contribute to quality of research.

Professor Ljubiša Despotović, the author of scientific monograph entitled “Politics between Authority and Power”, faced the challenging currents of politics, analyzing politics from the mere term to its practice, through the use of scientifically responsible and multidimensional approach, thus giving a fruitful scientific contribution to the Serbian political thought. With academic responsibility and methodological precision, professor Despotović grapples with a broad research field of political science, attempting to unify significant terms, occurrences and processes that concern every individual in the world through

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extensive research work. Here lays the social significance of the presented monograph.

The scientific monograph is consisted of sixteen chapters, enriched with innovative and multidimensional texts that systematically clarify the given problem and research subject. Having in mind that the monograph deals with the development of political science and important terms and segments of the said science, the author uses the first three chapters to provide conceptual and disciplinary definition of politics, that is, political science. Professor Despotović clearly marks temporal phases of development of political science with a tendency to present ancient, Middle Age and modern perceptions of the terms of politics, as well as provide disciplinary determinations, starting from political theory, political philosophy and political sociology, political systems and political ethics, but also the world politics, geopolitics and globalism as an ideology. An important segment of the monograph is presented in the fourth chapter, in which the author deals with the structure of politics, that is, its institutional (*polity*), procedural (*politics*) and normative (*policy*) aspects.

The next chapter deals with fundamental terms of politics, such as state, authority and power, but also overthrow and coup

d'état, declining towards giving attention to political capital and political modernization. Professor Despotović approaches the said issues with precision, with a goal to define and bring closer to the readers with as much efficiency as possible. After acquiring new knowledge on fundamental terms of politics, the reader shall with much more ease be able to follow the next chapters, in which the author depicts political parties, social movements, interest and lobby groups. We are speaking of quite a complex field of politics that should be examined both in theory and in practice, which is another challenge *extraordinaire* when speaking of researching this topic. It is important stressing that political parties have a complex role, to which the author testifies as well, singling out four most significant functions: articulation of political ideas and ideologies, aggregation of political interests of citizens, mobilization of their own electorate, as well as political representation of interests of citizens. Following the intended functions of parties, Despotović takes a serious scientific approach to pathological deviations in functioning of political parties as well, with the goal of presenting "the both sides of the coin".

The author dedicates a separate chapter to civil society as one of the most significant legacies of modernity. Civil society takes

actions towards construction and preservation of democratic political culture of citizens, which the author especially stresses, adding that this is quite a significant condition of establishment of democracy. In this context, the author singles out the most significant principles and strategies of civil society. In the next chapter, the professor singles out political culture. We are speaking of one of the most significant segments of political science, given that it expresses attitudes of the majority of citizens regarding the corpus of political values and norms that define politics. Formative factors of political culture, as professor Despotović also stresses, are the following: political tradition and political socialization.

Significant chapters of the monograph refer to types of political regimes and forms of government. The author depicts in this segment autocracy and democracy as political regimes, as well as monarchy and republics as forms of governments. Despotović pays special attention to models of democracy, offering a precise overview of models of liberal democracy, participative and cosmopolitan democracy, as well as hyperdemocracy. The latter model assumes the existence of a global order with one world government as a central level of governance. Regarding this, professor Despotović wisely notices that we

are speaking of a projection of the new world order that, in the field of economy and social life, will be based on transhumanism and related companies, which could have unfathomable consequences for the humanity.

Indispensable fields of politics refer to political marketing, political communication and political propaganda, all of which are depicted by the author in the following chapters. We are speaking of terms that are interlinked in practice, thus making the effort made by the author scientifically and socially justified. In the next chapter, the readers are enabled to get acquainted with political violence and its forms, a quite common occurrence in realpolitik processes of the 21st century.

Finally, professor Despotović makes an additional step forward with the goal of entering the political spheres that are, as any dark corridors of power, most often hidden from the citizens' sight. Therefore, the final chapter of this monograph is entitled "Politics as Subversion", through which the author clearly states the goal of his research mission. Only a handful of authors in scientific circles deal with the topic of network society, conspiracy and cryptopolitics, which adds to the uniqueness of this monograph. When speaking of network society, the author stresses that the entire reality in which we live

is structured exactly in accordance with the rules of network society, defining our existence and building on new forms of postmodern totalitarianism (pp. 264-265). The next segment of the chapter deals with arcane structures of political processes, that is, cryptopolitics and those segments of politics that are insufficiently transparent to the eyes of the public. Cryptopolitics is closely related to conspirology, which deals with practice and doctrine of conspiracy, thus giving the reason to the author to define and distinguish them. The complex and multi-meaning discourse on conspiracy represents a multidisciplinary engagement and seeks for knowledge originating from numerous scientific fields, and the pages of the presented monograph undoubtedly present the seriousness and dedication of professor Despotović to research of insufficiently researched phenomena and processes.

The scientific monograph entitled "Politics between Authority and Power", written by professor Ljubiša Despotović, represents the result of many decades of dedicated and scientifically responsible work. The monograph represents a guidebook for anyone who wishes to learn about political science, thus confirming its scientific and social value, quality, as well as pedagogical approach of professor Despotović.