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Reassessing the Political Theology of Johannes Althusius: A Forgotten Architect of Federalist Thought in the Age of Centralization

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ABSTRACT:

Johannes Althusius (1563-1638) has been remained one of the best influential philosopher in European history of philosophy and also contributed in the western philosophy but his works faced many problems and remained as were underestimated. Johannes Althusius was very influential in the age of when there was shift in power, as power was supposed to be shifted to many authorities. Before that shift there was monarchical system as dated back to history which started from Roman Empire and remained applicable until the John Locke influential philosophy.

Johannes Althusius was a German philosopher and was the founder of federalist government structure and also got fame for the renowned work as his one of most influential and applicable work was "**Politica Methodice Digesta (1603)**". He was citizen of Germany also was jurist, Calvinist and as he was best political theorist of his time and the work, which put the foundation of pluralist government and updated federal system of governance through the work of "**Consociational theory**".

This article or this study determine the way Althusius worked and especially his ideas of covenantalism and decentralized authority are still able to shape the politics of modern world. As Althusius born when there was religious wars were ongoing in the region of Europe that's why he put his ideas into reality and unpacked the system of government where the power will be not in one hand but in share community. As power will be in hands of family and community members. His time was full of chaos, conflict and the people were in consistent zone of uprising and conflicts and were demanding the absolute sovereignty for their own statehood. As Johannes was not given much respect and was unable to get attention of western world as compare to other philosopher like Hobbes and Locke.

As far this study we have applied multiple discipline for the sake of this evaluation as investigation of conceptual contexts, study of comparative federal system and the political theology of Althusius. This study and research can also be seen as in this research article through the lens of **neo-Calvinist political theory** and this theory also resemble with the contemporary system of governance and present model of federal system.

For the sake of this study we also adopt several case studies as investigatory examples to apply and for the analysis and for the sake of political theology of Althusius, which pose that how political ideas of Althusius have resemblance with modern political system. Case studies like Pakistan,

European Union and Ethiopia, as in these region and countries there have been tough circumstances between the centralize and decentralize government as these are pluralist states that's why we have put these region as case studies. For support of Althusius work his principle of subsidiarity has been very influential and also gives the authentic moral-ethical unit for these kind of region where states are in state of religious pluralism.

INTRODUCTION:

Dating back to history as the change in western philosophy and its evolution from the idea of republicanism to the idea of John Locke liberal democracy, this all evolution has been in the form of sequence as one after another and this era and duration is often marked by the renowned philosopher like Hobbes, Machiavelli, John Locke and Rousseau. This era of ever great philosopher has been influential in every inch of our human environment and in political sphere.

Among the studies and work and for the sake of fame, Althusius have never been able to gain attention for his great work, why his philosophy did not able to gain attention? It's still anonymous instead of his great work like subsidiarity and federal ideas about governance. His famous work of "**Politica Methodice Digesta**" gave many direction for the system of governing states territories. His famous work not only allowed to think about the absolute and sovereign system of state but also let us able to think about the unity under one God.

When Althusius framed his work, it was the time when there was the coexistence of ideas as arising ideas of Jean Bodins, famous for his theory of indivisible sovereignty and other existed ideas were rise of Hobbes work leviathan centralism. So it was the time of reformation and challenging ideas in which Althusius posed his work. As comparatively by the work of these philosopher, Althusius all work is accordingly his principle of subsidiarity and with traditional covenant theoretical work which is aligned with the inherited knowledge of biblical principle. His philosophy also share the moral values and also put the system of states that cooperative work and its vision for unity also share and propose the structure of share system of governance.

This study also aims to revisit the political ideas of Althusius theology and also to determine this study to reshape the debate which is on the ideas of decentralization, moral values and disciplines in governance system, religious governmental patterns. With the arousing ideas of centralization and religious debate in governance system, work of Althusius frame these ideas in peaceful ways and in the form of solution oriented ways. I have informed early in this article that when Althusius was writing it was the time of religious wars and was the time when much attention towards religion. So that's why his most work on these realistic ideas. His ideas prefer the sovereignty in the form of community and oppose the sovereignty in the form of external entities which define this concept as imposed ideas. And this slogan also disagree with the slogan of secular world and with the people who appreciate the idea of liberal world.

As this paper is comprise of many steps inside it, as framing theoretical concept, problem statement, literature review, and then coming towards objectives and hypothesis and then towards the methodological work and with the help of comparative studies and expert views. As the heart of this article is the political ideas of Althusius about federalism, which help to reshape modern political system. **(Hueglin, 1979)**

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

One of main problem that has been in the jest of political system which is the problem of political centralization in the era of modern political system, as there are moral, autonomy and political and religious expression here. In context of academia, it put the idea, attention and much focus on the

ideas of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke political ideas. These ideas and domains put aside other relative models for the study of religious, ethical and moral inherent ideas. This concept, which is dominated by other philosopher put on the edge of river, which means that, totally negligence of Althusius ideas from mainstream political theories. As a result, contemporary political system which is lagging behind and also negligible to adopt robust political system, Althusius principle of federalist model which can hail the modern day governance system.

OBJECTIVES:

- To study conceptual framework of Althusius theology which is hidden in his famous work "**politica methodice digesta**".
- To sort out the link between the ideas like sovereignty, theology and federalism.
- To create relation between work of Johannes Althusius and other philosopher like Hobbes and Locke.
- To analyze the philosophy of Althusius and its influence on modern day governance system

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- How principle of federalism assist with help of theology and philosophical foundation?
- In which conditions his subsidiarity principle assist in backdrop like Pakistan, European Union and Ethiopia?
- Is Althusius work able to give outlines or framework for combined societies and for religious pluralist system?

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The literature on the philosophy of Johannes Althusius has been under dynamic phase as many scholars put the different point of views about the philosophy of Althusius. As one of the philosopher named Gierke who introduced and presented his work in his nominal work "political theories of middle ages". Another philosopher who named Carl Joachim Fredrick's, this philosopher was first who recognized the work of Althusius philosophy and welcomed him in the realm of political theories. And he also has given tribute to Althusius as called him the "**father of federalism**". He was the first who paid attention to his work and made clear it that philosophy of Althusius have the relevance to the idea of pluralism and post-war circumstances and also with idea of decentralization. (Hueglin T. O., 2006)

The core point of discussion in Althusius philosophy is the gap or up against point between the philosophy of himself and Thomas Hobbes. As Hobbes puts the idea that there should be single authority to rule and to stop war against other or against one's own people. In contrast, the ideas of Althusius pose the ultimate vision of unite and collective form of government. In this debate one other philosopher interrupts named Hueglin who sketched that the proposed system of federalist government by Althusius is more applicable for robust governance. Another philosopher named Loughlin who put the idea that, given concept of Althusius is underestimated for several states which are secular and critiqued the Althusius philosophy.

After many studies and analysis of points, other theories like mainstream and philosopher contribution like Hobbes and Locke, Althusius work and philosophy is often faced problems for acceptance and these theories neglected the Althusius philosophy. As Hobbes and Locke philosophy is still dominating the political world and applicable while having opposing points. Hobbes idea of centralism and Locke theory on democracy and theory on rights of property is still applicable in the realm of politics. As Althusius much focused was towards moral laws and

federalism ideas and was not able to get much attention and his philosophy still packed. **(SKILLEN, 1974)**

Furthermore, as much contribution was given by Althusius and after this contribution still there is much literature gap, as only less studies ever analyzed the work of Althusius in realm of politics and in terms of federalist government structure. As many philosopher explained and gave arguments about the philosophical work of Althusius, some referred that his models and principle suggest the hierarchical structure of government and some put the ideas that his work as Calvinist paved hinders in acceptance and relevance for other pluralist societies.

By the broad view of his philosophy and by studying his theological principles the study aims to bridge the gap and would paved way for the ideas of Althusius and make relevance to modern political system.

THEORATICAL FRTAMEWORK:

The research article and its relevant study which all is deeply rooted in the political ideas of Althusius theology, the ground work of federal theory, which collectively are inherited from the Calvinism ideas and principles, pluralist political system and the adherence to political philosophy of Althusius.

SYMBIOTIC ASSOCIATION:

The proposed politics as collectively link people between each other to collectively engagement and for the vision of building. For the base of political sequence and its order there need to be establishing at one point, not the absolute autonomy give the political order. As he followed the work and ideas of Aristotle and biblical ideas as societies are made on the base of share interest and ideas rather than the contracts among people of states.

SOVEREIGNTY AS DELEGATED AUTHORITY:

As many philosopher came and went like Hobbes who gave the theory of realism and defined human nature, Althusius arguments reflect that in contrast of Hobbes philosophy for the independent states that freedom and sovereignty is when you divide the power across all members of society as families, communities and groups. And that's the original form of political freedom as these ideas have resemblance with ideas of Montesquieu but Althusius ideas are much applicable.

(Nicolas Faucher, 2022)

NATURAL AND DIVINE LAW:

The concept of law which is defined by Althusius as he put the idea that laws are inherited ideas, laws are not given by humans but as **natural law(reasoning)** and as divine laws refer the idea of(**absolute laws or scriptures**). These laws and ethical invention which guides the duties about religion, political dilemmas, duties of people and also provide best ways of correct and legal governance.

SUBSIDIARITY:

The concept of subsidiarity as also were given much priority for the best models and decision making problems. As this principle later was added in to the political structure of European Union and also were added in the work and teaching of **catholic**. As later when these ideas were put down in front of peoples and they supposed to make decision on primary level and also on secondary level and one more thing id directly support the ideas of communitarian sovereignty and federal affiliation. Collectively, these ideas are still applicable and assisting the modern political system of modern world.

CONSOCIATIONAL FEDERALISM:

Consociational federalism as this theoretical framework was one of the best work of Althusius political philosophy. This work is fundamental part of Althusius philosophy and this provided the best governing procedures into the realm of governance. Althusius provided many forms and model for governance as coming from different structures as family and then towards the hierarchical status of all peoples. As every one of his model and framework base on binding procedure which refer to his famous coined term covenant which puts the synonyms like collective work of stranger. Furthermore, his work of consociation federalism suggest us that each person should be given priority and should be given responsibility to influence the political turf and sphere of influence. (Koch, 2010)

HYPOTHESIS:

- Althusius work advised best relative models and quality approaches for centralized independency by putting the political system divided and by collective power.
- The concept of subsidiarity as fundamental work of Althusius, provide best and extraordinary approaches and put similar work for maintaining pluralism political system in states like Pakistan, EU and Ethiopia.
- Contemporary pattern and constitutional system and federal pattern could be advised by the work of Althusius collective governance ideas, specifically the space where conflict stays between upper and lower authority.

METHODOLOGIES:

This study as applicable for modern political system and base on conceptual and extraordinary approaches, this study base on qualitative methodologies as all study base on qualitative analysis and findings

ANALYSIS OF STUDY IN CONTEXT OF TEXTUAL-HERMENEUTIC PROCEDURE:

The work of Althusius as **politica methodice digesta** has been processed for the sake of this study to put his ideas into the context of history and theology of his own.

COLLECTIVE STUDY OF CONSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS:

As for the sake of study best outcomes we have applied his comparative model of constitutional analysis on many pluralist counties and state where power is divided among the hierarchical structure as states like Pakistan, EU, and Ethiopia.

EXPERT VIEWS:

This research is conducted through various sources as I as a researcher would mention later in other section but as for the sake of subjective views of experts, it consist of clear points because of expert policymaker's views and ideas are also put down in this study. Expert analyst arguments and theorist opinion is also be given in this study.

SYHTESIS OF THEORATICAL FRAMEWORK:

Collective ideas and fruitful approaches from the collective study of Althusius conceptual framework like political theology of Althusius and his famous work on covenant theory and modern system and models of governance are broadly synthesized.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE:**POPULAATION:**

The work which aligned with the political theory of Althusius and texts which are applied on states federal system and which relate with Althusius philosophical foundations, all data and population is selected having work accordingly with the point of views of Althusius.

SAMPLE SIZE FOR STUDY:

- As for the sake of primary study the famous work of Althusius is analyzed.
- For analysis several case studies have been taken for better understanding of Althusius political philosophy and to make study much relevant to modern political system. Case studies like European Union (federation having power like supranational) and Pakistan (as this state is Islamic republic base on constitutional framework) and Ethiopia (this state with having many ethnic groups).
- For the sake of this study many people having base and extraordinary knowledge about this study have selected as there are 12 respondents for this study. Dividing these respondent into different domains like 4 from each domain like 4 experts from different universities, 4 from the domain having knowledge about political theories of Althusius philosophy and 4 from policymakers and from constitutional framework.

SAMPLING TOOLS:

PURPOSIVE SAMPLING:

For this study we have adopted the purposive sampling technique to collect data where we satisfied that this person really have much knowledge about this study. And we also from the sake of this study selected political system where government and federal system is found to be dissect the religious, moral and binding forces like pluralist catalytic forces or burdened.

SNOWBALL SAMPLING:

We selected this tool of sampling to get data from peoples who are directly aligned with the theoretical framework of federalist framework and about knowledge of political theology of Althusius.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS:

ANALYSIS OF TEXT:

For the sake of this study and to make it very conceptual, ideas of Althusius which are fundamental and necessary for this study are analyzed and several concepts are interpreted as his ideas on consociation, and ideas about sovereignty and analysis of laws within the text of **Politica**.

REVIEWS ABOUT DOCUMENTS:

As we have taken many case studies for the sake of this research as European historical treaties are analyzed for this study and also of Pakistan as recent analysis of 18 amendment and analysis of Ethiopia constitutional article named 19 has also been analyzed in this research.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS:

For the purpose of this study many interview has been conducted for this study, putting question about how ideas and principles of Althusius provide fundament system of governance and what kind of limitation they have.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS TOOL:

To check applicability of this research many tools has been applied for this study credibility as NVivo tool used to process this data.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

Althusius work and centralist views:

The work of Althusius laid down the foundation of federalism and it was against the ideas of Hobbes political ideas on human nature and sovereignty. As Hobbes gave the idea of indivisible freedom and sovereignty and Althusius challenged it by giving the ideas like covenant theory and principle

of subsidiarity. As the thinkers who were experts put the idea that the political ideas of Althusius are favorable for the solution of postcolonial conflicts and for the regimes having single authority for rule.

PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY:

- In the region of **European Union** the principle of subsidiarity is considered to be the fundamental approach for the framework of constitution as like treaties which are based on article 5. The thinkers of western political thought put the idea that this principle of subsidiarity and its main crux may pose and can advise implications based on ethical views by neglecting the ideas based on efficiency.
- As in the case of **Pakistan**, 18th amendment was made to provide the power to several bodies and to all provinces based on hierarchical structure. For this domain the ideas of Althusius suggest mighty approaches and viable framework.
- In case of Ethiopia region as there are multiple ethnicities residing, thinkers and philosophers, the follower of Althusius work provide the principle of association and covenant model for understanding and for best pluralist state governance system.

3. IDEAS ABOUT ETHICAL AND PLURALISM:

The framework of Althusius who provided the ideas about law, that laws should be made and based on inherited natural and divine laws. As these laws should have space for ethical and religious debates.

- In case of Pakistan where there is coexistence of ideas and laws. As constitution of Pakistan and traditional values lie at a single point.
- In case of European Union, they put respect for religious studies and principles of religion as there is seen to be found that the difference in laws based on secular world and Christianity.
- In case of Ethiopia, where there are many religious and ethnic groups and they all are handled with help of old and ancient system of laws and principles but still follow the pluralist system of governance.

CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF THIS STUDY:

The political thinkers and view from experts who are follower of Althusius study, they strongly suggested that ideas and framework of Johannes Althusius can fill the gap in modern political system and can assist in several points as:

- **Design or framework of constitution:** It can provide the best model by determining the active engagement of peoples and their presence in decision making problems.
- **Moral necessary education:** By the ideas of Althusius with framework of morality, it can be drawn out that every person's eligibility and responsibilities with this.
- **Managing conflicts:** Althusius ideas and framework is able to pose solution for religious and political conflicts because it provides the best system of governance.

CONCLUSION:

The research article which is posed to introduce the ideas of Althusius in the realm of political sphere. And this article also provides his strong ideas on moral, ethical, federal and on legal laws which are here in this modern world. As the ideas of Althusius are much relevant in the era of this interconnectedness and in the contemporary era of globalization and also provide legal and comprehension framework for better understanding of this chaotic world.

His ideas of subsidiarity, moral values, adherence towards the natural and divine laws, and best federalist system of governance provide best approaches and give robust system and structure of governance and also put ideas against the liberalism views and also provide best system in countries like Pakistan, European Union and in Ethiopia. His philosophy was not only relevant in his duration of influence but have the potential to provide ever best alternatives for robust governance.

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