

C. COLLAMATI, “Habit as blind spot of modern political concepts. A Humean path”, in *Topoi. An International Review of Philosophy*, Springer-Nature, monographic number: *The power of Habit & the Habit of Power*, ed. by M. Piazza, M. Viola (Accepted after double peer-review, publication expected by December 2025)

Following some recent works (*e.g.* Agamben, Virno, Chignola) that reactivate the concept of habit as a critical tool in the philosophical-political debate, the article questions habit as a “blind spot” of modern political concepts. More precisely, I refer to a specific tradition of political modernity: the one starting with the social contract theories and reverberating in the contemporary representative democracies. This tradition is based on two conceptual pillars: 1) Modern power is legitimate only because is the *power of the will*, which implies a concept of will as *autonomy*. 2) The conceptualization of the political order through a radical rupture with its “other” (that could be nature, society, some “pre-historical” or “pre-political” dimensions, etc.). The proper political life implies an *event* that cuts connections with the past, an *exception* regarding to the previous order. Because of these two pillars, the modern political subject is a *constituent* subject, a subject with a *constituent power*. A subject endowed with sovereign attributes, and capable of *founding* the political order.

In this critical perspective, the concept of habit challenges political modernity in at least two ways: 1) By cracking the sovereignty of the will, the self-transparency of the political subject and its constituent power. 2) By disrupting the temporal logic of the event because of its *processual* character. Habit is a particular form of repetition: by repeating the past, it also *transforms it*. It’s a repetition that guarantees the stability of a practice and, in so doing, makes it *effective* (in the Hegelian sense of *wirklich*). It’s not a pure *ex-nihilo* creation, but rather a *transmission*.

For this reason, my approach to habit is deeply connected with the concept of *institution*. We could say: habit is to will’s autonomy (anthropological level) *as* institution is to constituent power (political level). To give consistency to such a reading of habit as a proper political concept, the article turns to Hume’s philosophy and its deleuzian reading. Deleuze emphasizes that Hume’s understanding of social rules, and particularly the rules of justice, doesn’t follow a *semantic of law*, but a *semantic of institution* as “general rule”. What is the difference between these dimensions and why it has to do with habit and its normativity?