

# N-of-1 Survey Finds Support for a Return to the Divine Right of Kings (A Satire)

Written by Patricia Sohn

This PDF is auto-generated for reference only. As such, it may contain some conversion errors and/or missing information. For all formal use please refer to the official version on the website, as linked below.

## N-of-1 Survey Finds Support for a Return to the Divine Right of Kings (A Satire)

<https://www.e-ir.info/2018/05/22/n-of-1-survey-finds-support-for-a-return-to-the-divine-right-of-kings-a-satire/>

PATRICIA SOHN, MAY 22 2018

The Rule of Law. That pesky little technicality. We appear to be overthrowing it in our midst. Some local officials, apparently preferring to keep their crime stats low, refuse to arrest people engaged in criminal activity. As a result, criminal activity runs rampant and 17 children and adults are shot and killed in cold blood in South Florida. National officials, preferring to remain free and able to enrich themselves at the expense of others, do not enforce the law on themselves when they take confidential national security documents home (on a home server); when they sell raw materials for the construction of nuclear weapons to an enemy state (btw, does it have to be 20% to matter?); when their wealthy business partners suicide themselves mysteriously, and other serious ethics or possible criminal violations. Do they go to jail? Noooooo. We do not like to send such people to jail anymore. It messes up our crime stats. It makes us look far too criminal, like we haven't gotten a handle on keeping public order. And, besides, public order is only something that we enforce on minorities anyway... (Oops, did I say that?!)

Who says that it's the Wild Wild West All Over Again here in the beautiful expanses of North America? And, anyway, who cares? Those pesky little "rule-of-lawyers" are just a bunch of do-gooder kids. We all got sick long ago of watching Shaggy and Scooby win out against grown men and women who were just trying to eke out a living through a life of crime! Do-gooder kids went out with musicals, and fantasy movies like *Narnia*. Enough with mythology. We are rationalists here! Crime pays. Crime rocks! Any kid with even a bit of rationalist Machiavellian sense to him or her at all knows it. (Just in case it was not clear, that was sarcasm. I am no advocate of *The Prince*.)

The problem is, as pointed out in the brilliant work of E.P. Thompson and others, the Rule of Law is the political framework that we used to replace the Divine Right of Kings after the Glorious Revolution of the late-1600s, or, at the least, by 1723 with the introduction of the Black Act in Britain. No public official is outside the bounds of the Rule of Law; if you break the law, you go to jail. That's how the story goes. That is why the Rule of Law was considered a legitimate replacement for the Divine Right of Kings. It offered the same law to apply to all citizens, and to individuals and agencies within the state as well. No more Kings and Queens *qua* law, or *qua* state. Since the establishment of the Rule of Law to replace the Divine Right of Kings, Law now applies to us all, is enforced equally, and everyone gets the same penalty for breaking the same law under the same circumstances: JAIL.

Well, that is the bedtime story that I was taught growing up. And, I intend to make sure that it is good and true at least as long as I still breathe, using any power within my grasp to do so.

Hmmm. What powers do I have? The power of flight? No. Unlike *Wonder Woman*, I cannot fly. The power to change the weather? No, unlike *Storm*, I cannot manipulate the weather. The power to take on ancient supernatural villains with one hand? No, unlike *Lara Croft* and *Evie Carnahan*, I cannot raise the ancient dead, nor put them down (with a punch or a kiss, respectively). Unfortunately, I have no powers at my disposal to achieve my lofty goal of the just and equal enforcement of the Rule of Law on all citizens, rulers, politicians, and public officials in their own Rule of Law nation-states everywhere. So, I have come up with another alternative.

The Divine Right of Kings!

# **N-of-1 Survey Finds Support for a Return to the Divine Right of Kings (A Satire)**

Written by Patricia Sohn

If we do not want to enforce the law anymore, because it hurts our crime stats (which, apparently, are something akin to makeup rather than having anything to do with substance); if we don't want to enforce the law on some parts of the population because they are either in power, or they are part of a powerful ethnic group, race, or economic class; if we don't want to enforce the law on older teens because it doesn't make us look pretty and we get tired of our numbers being so terrible next to almost every other advanced industrialized country in the world – then we must admit that our experiment with the Rule of Law is over. It is a failure, and an abject one at that.

The only solution is to return to the Divine Right of Kings.

Indeed, I was so interested in this suggestion – my suggestion – that I ran a survey of 1 and asked myself if this would be a good idea. To my stunned surprise, the survey result was a resounding, YES!!! It is a wonderful idea! Let us return to monarchy and the Divine Right of Kings.

But, in all seriousness, why is this a good idea? Feudalism, associated with much of the European history of monarchy, you say, does not have such a pretty ring to it.

Nay, I say in response. I assure you! Feudalism was *all that* before noble seats were able to be purchased with coin rather than requiring heroic acts of human goodness and kindness. When you had to do heroic good deeds to win a noble seat, why, the work that was required of you in being given great power and great responsibility came as naturally as the wind that carries the air. But, once those seats could be purchased, alas, the criminal element made its way *right* into the seats of power!

If we have neither monarchy nor the rule of law – I promise you, another alternative will prevail. And anarchy is always the most brutal to the gentlest among us. If you are so much a rationalist that you think that is some sort of valid state-of-nature -rule-of-the-wild, then I bow and welcome you to return to the wild, where you might be more comfortable. Indeed, I hear that a Troglodyte movement has emerged strongly advocating *The Lord of the Flies* as required “how-to” summer reading around the world.... Happy Summer reading!

---

## **About the author:**

**Dr. Patricia Sohn**, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Florida. She is co-editor (with Simone Raudino) of *Beyond the Death of God: Religion in 21<sup>st</sup> Century International Politics*, (University of Michigan Press 2022); and author of *Judicial Power and National Politics: Courts and Gender in the Religious-Secular Conflict in Israel* (SUNY Press 2017 and 2008).