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Theory of Politics in Poland on the Track of Consensual Approaches to "the Political"

Abstract: Polish political theorists' research revolves around the question of the political. There have been many analyses of this issue in Polish political science journals, for which the starting point was antagonistic and subsequently agonistic approaches to the political. Against this background, inquiries going in the direction of consensual approaches constituted a minority; additionally, it is difficult to synthesise them directly from the output of Polish theorists, as these approaches are often not explicitly articulated, but their significant elements appear in nominally non-consensual considerations. The purpose of this article is to bring this picture closer, not only from the personal side, but also as an attempt to reconstruct the essence of the political in terms of consensus, no longer antagonism or agonism. The other objective is to indicate both the theoretical potential of this approach and its interpretative usefulness against the background of other dominant approaches.

Keywords: the political (what is political), the political (Schmitt), antagonism, agonism, consensus

Is it possible to argue with antagonism?

The aim of this article is to attempt to reconstruct a consensual approach to "the political", which has nominally been displaced in Polish political science in favour of the category of antagonism. The notion of "the political" has been a fundamental point of reference for contemporary political theory for the past few decades. Particularly in the Polish political literature, there has been intensive study of the issue, giving it priority in terms of identifying the object of cognition

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in political science (see: Biały, 2012; Minkner, 2014; Skarzyński, 2014; Karwat, Młyńczyk, 2017). It came into general "use" thanks to a famous essay by Carl Schmitt, the crown jurist of the Third Reich, published in a volume of his *Political Theology* with this title (Schmitt, 2000). Schmitt's proposed definition of "the political" is considered antagonistic to the highest degree. The author assumed that "the political" is defined by forms of behaviour, read in the form of phenomena whose basic and only determinant is people's ability to form groups, being the result of a distinctive division into *enemy* and *friend*. All political action can be reduced to this very distinction (Schmitt, 2000, pp. 197–198; Skarzyński, 2014, p. 15). "Political differentiation is the ability to determine the highest degree of intensity of connection or separation, association [*Assoziation*] or dispersion [*Dissoziation*]" (Schmitt, 2000, p. 198). At the same time, this separation as well as association is understood in an existential way, while, hostility and, consequently, conflict can be recognised solely on the basis of existential participation and attendance. Schmitt did not intend to use any metaphors here, and existential conflict can result in the protection of one's own position, including the potential annihilation of the opponent (enemy). The material expression of Schmitt's antagonism is war and violence associated with it (Arendt, 2022, pp. 5–120). It was probably Carl Schmitt's political biography that contributed to the fact that he was not read exclusively literally in order to avoid awkward associations. For this reason, the essay on "the political" became an inspiring cognitive tool for generations of political theorists. The interpretation of the concept of "the political" can be placed on a continuum from antagonism to consensual approaches.

Consensus of the anti-liberals

In the Polish literature on the subject, coined by Carl Schmitt, "der Begriff des Politischen" is regarded as the core of the understanding of the political or what is political; against this background, the work of Ryszard Skarżyński (2012) should be pointed out as canonical. But it should be remembered that in the Polish political science literature, Schmitt was first introduced by Franciszek Ryszka, who put cognitive curiosity and the researcher's duty above any moral judgements (1975, p. 137). Nevertheless, the approach to the works of the author of the notion of "the political" was based on analyses typical of the legal sciences, which resulted mainly from the gradual growth of a community of political theorists in Poland from the 1970s. This community, in turn, was the consequence of the development of a new discipline, i.e. political science, with all associated teething troubles. Analysing the thought of the German political theorist through the prism of the paradigm prevailing in the People's Republic of Poland in the 1970s

(Młyńczyk, 2015a), Ryszka sees analogies with the class struggle, but honestly admits that Schmitt himself strongly shunned such analogies (Ryszka, 1975, p. 150). He reminds us that all value judgements introduce the category of moral norms and order, which in practice leads to the "abandonment of the sphere of politics" (1975, p. 151). For Skarzyński, on the other hand, Schmitt's political theory and thus *what is political*, had its place between the politicisation of the total state and the depoliticisation of the liberal state (Skarzyński, 2012, p. 47). It is difficult not to understand this position when we realise the importance of the German political theorist's basic distinction: what is political must be distinguished from what is of the state, and this will only be the case if we have the possibility of escaping from widespread and complete politicisation in the era of the total state (2012, p. 46). At the other end of this continuum, we can see the liberal state. This observation, which is important for Skarzynski's findings, indicates the limited possibilities of reading Schmittian politicity through a consensual filter, should we regard only the de facto liberal order as such. Nevertheless, the very situation of the division into the enemy and the friend was not so much eliminated, as there emerged some semantic substitutes, consequently reducing the negative impact of conflict to maximising participation in decision--making processes, and thus enlarging the area of demo-power in the form of a broad decision-making spectrum. Arkadiusz Lewandowski writes in this context about the exclusion of a large part of citizens from this all-encompassing will to reach a consensus, which masks their resistance to this extortion (2017, p. 20). For this political scientist from Bydgoszcz, conflict is the natural state of society's functioning (2017, p. 24). Thus, he advocates the classical demarcation between the antagonistic, agonistic and consensual visions of politics. Of course, one can indicate numerous instances where, following Schmitt and Chantal Mouffe, many Polish political scientists perceive liberalism as preventing the occurrence of conflict and being total in this prevention.

   Zbigniew Blok looks at the liberal consensus (see: Mirocha, 2013)[2] model proposed by John Rawls in his postulated principle of the primacy of justice. Writing about Rawls, Michael Sandel states that "justice is a standard for mitigating conflicts of values and reducing tension between competing concepts of the good when they are not always reconcilable" (Sandel, 2009, pp. 56–57). Rawls's concept avoids any pretensions to an acceptable universal moral vision, shifting the focus to basic institutional order, maximally just for the political organisation of the social life of individuals. Blok views "the political of Rawls" in three respects: (1) as a feature of political institutions; (2) as a feature of the subject or scope of a certain field; (3) in terms of commonly shared ideas and principles (Blok, 2009, pp. 32–33). This political theorist from Poznań rightly points out that the institutional basis of this famous social contract presupposes some

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[2]   For the sake of precision, in John Rawls's thinking, we find the "idea of partial consensus".

specific order that only fits the structure of a liberal and democratic state (Blok, 2009, p. 32). Illustrating the theory of justice, Blok indicates its rational postulates, which, however, in his view, must be located in the realities of a modern democratic society, which in a way reduces the universality of the general assumptions of the project of the founder of the *Political Liberalism* (2009, p. 33). Another theorist from Poznań, Remigiusz Rosicki, reminds us that an ideology such as liberalism gave societies a new idea of identification, or simply the possibility of emancipation, and democracy itself undermined the previous bipolar system, as it relieved antagonisms or provided mechanisms to neutralise them (Rosicki, 2014, p. 47). According to Rosicki, the situation is analogous in the case of accusations formulated by Mouffe, who rebukes liberalism for covering up antagonisms, which makes it impossible to recognise and solve real problems (2014, p. 48). What emerges from these images presented by Polish theorists, often citing the findings of post-Marxist political theorists, is a total picture of political liberalism enforcing consensus through the colonisation of politics, science, and culture. Evoking the dichotomy between politics perceived in terms of competition, war, struggle and power and politics perceived as harmonisation of interests and cooperation, Mirosław Karwat sets the liberal order *par* excellence in counterpoint to Marxism (2010, p. 64). Presence in the world of politics is sometimes measured by the degree of aversion to and engagement with what is political. Karwat calls these states the passive non-political and the active non-political (2012, pp. 26–30). The first group of people is distinguished by an escape from "the political" into conscious passivity. They become addressees of the politics of affirmation proposed by institutional authorities and consume "the political", and their motivations, although different, need not be of primary importance to decision-makers. Characterised by activism, the other group wants to correct the mistakes of politicians, which requires entering the area of dissenting groups. If only by virtue of permanently defining the object of dissent, these groups are already forced to recognise what is political, hence their political neutrality expressed in the form of a desideratum remains at the stage of declaration (Karwat, 2012, p. 27). The effect of this is the necessity of at least partial association, which in a way falsifies the claim of liberal depoliticisation of social reality. The public identity of the citizen and the non-public identity of the private person is a dichotomy that, in the light of the consensual approach to "the political", need not be absolutely true.

If we juxtapose the liberal political with its opponents, we first see the common and logical accusation of eliminating what is political. Going further, we see that resistance concerns the liberals' separation of the ontic qualities of man and citizen in their impersonal entanglement in procedures, formulas and gestures (Graczyk, 2010, p. 68). The real problem, however, is the correct transcription of political realities and inspirations. Let us remember that the inspiration for the anti-liberals was Athenian democracy. "When the Greeks spoke of the

political equated with the polis, they had in mind their city-state in a particular sense identical with the community of its citizens, and therefore established in and maintained by that community. [...] This is why the Greeks saw the opposite of the political [*das Politische*] in the private, the self-oriented, the self-interested" (Meier, 2012, p. 35). We need to discover what liberalism is for its critics and, for a better understanding, to clear the mind of the thin layer of resentment against capitalism and neoliberalism, which confuses our interpretative tracks. Schmitt and his fellow critics created a picture of liberal democracy that, by putting individual rights and activity on a pedestal, introduced a completely apolitical definition of the individual (Kaczorowski, 1998, p. 191). For what is political is realised in what is communal, and communities are political actors. Zbigniew Blok aptly pointed out that "the political" collectivity is not the sum of the "accumulations of the political" of individuals that make it up. Nevertheless, slightly in excess of what was right, he recognised some kind of "the political" as perceived by Schmitt in every active individual (Blok, 2009, p. 40), although it should be noted that claims about "the political" of what is private are present in the Anglo-Saxon literature on the subject. Writing about society as perceived by Rawls, Szymon Wróbel emphasises mutual benefits, common interests, as well as conflicts, for although everyone (renouncing the private) expects a better existence as a result of social cooperation, they are not indifferent to how these benefits will be shared (conflict) (Wróbel, 2008, p. 99). A common feature of such approaches is the consistent positioning of interest as the result of differences arising from the objective phenomenon of valuation by each person/citizen. But it will be a monocausal scam reducing the expected effect to an insistent need, and such a need would probably be the sole cause.[3] Meanwhile, the consensual model is about something else. There is no perfect quantitative measure of democracy; it is difficult to imagine a political community of all citizens in which every participant has the same will, and these, in turn, add up to a unified position of all. Writing about association, Schmitt indicated the power that arises from the association of elements that perceive some existential opposition. This political association is capable of reaching a common decision, but there can certainly be no uniform intensity of either friendship (political alliance) or enmity. Liberalism does not so much dissolve antagonisms by pluralising reality or, as Mouffe argues, take them out of our sight, as it establishes a forum for negotiation. For example in the deliberative formula, where liberals replace economics and the aggregation of interests by morality and refer to clearly polarised spheres. This opens space for the occurrence of an anthropological miracle, i.e. man's capacity for living with their enemy. It imposes a rule that seems inappropriate to critics because it requires an effort to forge a consensus, and in this it seems overly principled. These assessments probably result from the common

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[3]   In a vulgarised version, we would talk about "profit maximisation".

notion that it is not so much the form of seeking consensus that is of value, as the danger of forcing through demands unwanted by opponents. Piotr Nowak takes a closer look at the picture of contemporary liberals presented by the American literary theorist Stanley Fish, according to whom they rely on the rule of neutral principles and mask strictly political actions, using the principle of impartiality and neutrality (2014, p. 135). At the same time, Nowak explicitly shows that all this criticism originates from a reworking of Schmitt, and that, according to Fish, the liberals themselves gush over aesthetic contrasts only (Nowak, 2014, pp. 137–138). Absolutely, what is political externalises itself in a symbolic and aesthetic form – speech and voice in Aristotle. I have written about how "the political" "is a fundamental value not only for the anti-liberals, but also for the liberals themselves. It is certainly not a merely aesthetic expression. Transferring any phenomenon to the level of what is political means giving it the highest clause in the world available to us. Such intrinsically individual concepts as creativity and idleness reach their apogee in terms of content and recognition only through their politicisation (Młyńczyk, 2015b). This is the ontological condition for "being among others" (Młyńczyk, 2015b, p. 12).

It is worth looking at what Schmitt's critique of liberalism as a non-political circumstance refers to in practice. Paweł Kaczorowski writes a lot about this (1998). In his view, Schmitt understands liberalism as a concretised model of social life; the point of reference remains the democratic parliamentary model, which does not produce a political situation. Let us note that, in this strict sense, Carl Schmitt's and Georges Sorel's analogous ways of perceiving parliamentarism are similar to one another (Sorel, 2014; Młyńczyk, 2022). Concepts such as enemy, war, violence and rebellion cease to have a conclusive meaning for a political organisation. In both cases, we can speak of the annihilation of "the political", which can also be seen in the concept of general strike as an element of identity and vitality that is a consequence of an extraordinary situation. For both, the cognitive challenge was the confrontation with the idea of revolution, above all the French Revolution, which, by destroying previous hierarchies, singled out individual existence as a political construct. In this matter, Kaczorowski states as follows: "a revolution causes a state of nature, a stateless state in which individuals, freed from all traditional and class-based ties, recognise their individual being from which freedom and equality are inseparable as their essential being, to be recognised as the basic plane of social life" (Kaczorowski, 1998, p. 178). Political consensus is seen by both as preventing the emergence of an extraordinary situation: the division into enemy and ally and general strike, respectively. Parliamentarism becomes the cause of opportunism for the sake of liberal democracy. In Schmitt's case, the critique concerned a model of a state with a radically liberal form, such as a parliamentary state at the dawn of the 20th century (Kaczorowski, 1998, p. 181). In this case, in fact, the consensus taking the form of a parliamentary debate is abandoned in favour of the over-representation

of different individual attitudes resulting from mass democracy, which reduces the parliamentary mechanism to a struggle between factions and pressure groups for power and interests, and in a state perceived in this way, "the political is total" (1998, pp. 188–189). Thus, the reflections of Polish theorists clearly head towards the consolidation of the polemical interpretation of "the political". This "us and them" imposes a certain ontic perspective, while it does not necessarily reach any ontological perspective (Sawczyński, 2016, pp. 62–63). Too much theoretical activity seems to have been placed on exposing the difference between political entities rather than their specificity in the form of an analysis of the characteristics of what is political.

Normatively oriented political theory most often follows an ideologically defined paradigm. Thus, we have an abundant representation of leftist approaches whose primary aim has become to adapt the notion of antagonism and the ensuing notions of hostility and war. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's post-Marxist concept of agonism, based on a new reading of Schmittian antagonism under conditions of compliance with the rules of democracy, has a special place in the discipline's theoretical output (Laclau, Mouffe, 2005). In the Polish literature, it is worth mentioning the work of Filip Biały, who attempted to analyse the model of agonistic democracy (2018, pp. 56–58). However, the liberal approach, to which we inherently ascribe consensus, has a somewhat more difficult task here. While Schmitt himself rejected liberal democracy as a system that, at its core, negates the extraordinary situation, which is the essence of "the political", it is not true that under the conditions of recognising liberalism as a meta-ideology limiting polemical value at the normative level, theorists did not try to adapt this notion to their analyses. Citing the writings of Laclau and Mouffe (Młyńczyk, 2015b), Piotr Sawczyński indicates their critique of liberalism, which is only seemingly strictly inclusive and without conflict, because, if no forms of exclusion are experienced, then not a single political project could emerge (2016, p. 85). In principle, it can maintain a state of permanent conflict if this guarantees political success (Nowak, 2014, p. 135). I have devoted a considerable amount of text to this, arguing that "the political" in the reality of the modern democratic state does not so much become the result of a dialectical contradiction as it effectively uses conflict for the purpose of its political identification, but by focusing on its apparent contradictions (Młyńczyk, 2015b, pp. 49–67). Actual conflict does not so much determine the advantage of some at the expense of others, as it can stabilise the system at the level of the qualities of what is political. If, in the area of defining a way of life, we use the category of who we want to be and what we want to have, we potentially come into conflict with anyone who negates our model of life (Król, 2005, pp. 74–75). Recognising these expectations, we reach the point where the highest degree of their earthly fulfilment takes place at the political level. It is only by politicising the problem, and thus discovering its political identity, that we can ultimately give it the

highest enforceability, with no stage beyond. Antagonism under liberal democracy is revealed at the level of political, social, economic or psychological competition. Conflict thus serves to maintain a symbiosis of activity (Młyńczyk, 2015b, p. 97). It is only in the competition for meaning, for being recognised, that one arrives at the content of what is political in the demo-liberal order.

What if political becomes political

The apparent tautology of the title of this section will be illustrated below by an advanced debate whose effect was the deprecation of the term "politics". This resulted from the great popularity and analytical potential of the notion of "the political", which intensified normative interpretation in political science, bringing about a number of new conclusions in the field of political theory. Other insights arise from a priori accepted distinctions, and these are referenced in the preference for an ideological dispute as the leitmotif of contemporary understandings of "the political", such as that of the authors of *The Political of the Media* (Pietruszewska-Kobiela et al., 2015). We may freely identify political qualities throughout the symbolic sphere or popular culture (2015, p. 10). However, we should not reduce this state to a relatively easily identifiable opposition, but, as the authors note, to the whole process of the formation of relations and tensions among social phenomena and the contexts in which they are inscribed (2015, p. 11). This perspective is definitely broadened further by Karwat. This political theorist from Warsaw has made a very important methodological interpretation for the purpose of using the notion of "the political" (Karwat, 2015, p. 33). His starting point is indicating the necessity of self-awareness concerning political science. The essence of it will be the understanding that the criterion of "the political" adopted by the researcher often constitutes the most important cognitive goal of theorists. In such a way, antagonism or consensus is the result of standing up for these concepts, while their effective defence, according to Karwat, must consist in presenting one's own view on the basis of the ontic and methodological status of the notion of "the political" itself. This is where our tendency to interpret what is and is not political comes in (Karwat, 2015). Ulrich Beck states that "where everything is political to some extent, nothing is political anymore" (2009, p. 54). This key allows us to understand Karwat's theoretical motivations. He points out that we can read political phenomena in their specificity, either as they are or as they appear to be, and thus passing through the filter of intentionality and conventionality (Karwat, 2015, p. 33). If we consider a political act to be performative, then, of course, interpreting phenomena, we somehow "make" them political, in which case we recognise the dominance of a single factor, multiple aspects, or the "syndromaticity of the political"

(Karwat, 2015, p. 34), as required. Of course, one must agree that the polemical nature of notions used in political science also concerns "the political", having a complement in the non-political. This, however, requires an important caveat, namely the agreement on the existence of social phenomena that are not the result of our intentional creations. Karwat clearly separates the objective and intentional senses of "the political", just as it can be different to attribute a political sense to something from something that we intrinsically define as political (2015, p. 35). This is a consensual approach to the notion of "the political", but in a metatheoretical aspect. The author is concerned with not so much the process of choosing between what is political and non-liberal versus what is non-political and liberal, as with the criteria for considering phenomena as political. Thus, we gradually move away from the question of "what the political means" to "how the political means", which is emphasised by Kamil Minkner (2015, pp. 50–51). He presents the process itself as disavowing the notion of politics. "The political" was reduced to ideology, and politicians' permanent lack of morality and competence was pointed out (Minkner, 2015, p. 52). The triumph of post-politics is the belief in the reform of its original form, which is also subject to some type of depoliticisation, with "real" problems being solved outside of politics with the help of scientific and technological achievements (Minkner, 2015, p. 50). The author indicates the metaphorical nature of the contemporary language of politicians that depoliticises the language of politics, in view of which he concludes that conflicts of interest are hidden behind the notions of neutrality and competence (Minkner, 2015, p. 51). Insofar as public opinions, which play the role of facts in political science, are full of contradictions and misconceptions, whose basic message is the separation of politics from "the political", regardless of ideological motivations that we all may have, Kamil Minkner does not surrender to these passions on the grounds of theoretical analysis. He makes it clear that the discovery of tensions or contradictions, which is attributed to "the political", against the background of politics hiding these phenomena, cannot reduce this dichotomy to mere utility (Minkner, 2015, pp. 55–56). Stripping politics of "the political" is reminiscent of the scientifically unwarranted tendency to separate public politics science, security science or, more recently, international relations science from political science. Following this line of thought, we could conclude that political science is an academic discipline that teaches about rivalry for power in a world full of antagonisms lined with conflicts of interest.

However, the approaches to "the political" discussed so far present a situation of shifts along the axis between antagonism, agonism and consensus. Anything below the point marking Schmitt's limes of "the political" can, to a certain extent, be considered an agreement to negotiate at least partially what is political. One can, of course, try to determine the status of antagonism in politics as an element capable of annihilating any constructed (which, contrary to Schmitt, Mouffe proclaims) unity of a political nature (Leder, 2016, p. 136), but also as

an effect of the polemical nature of political notions, which do not exist outside their cultural understanding and mean nothing without the background reflecting them. Antagonism drove the development of "the political". Some form of depoliticisation (subtraction of "the political") was seen in the development of public politics. Are we then faced with a political desert after the collapse of antagonism? At present, hacktivism is emerging as a polarised tool for repairing politics. This is where conflict is highly verbalised, coalitions are formed consciously (intentionally) as well as unconsciously (algorithmically). Nowadays, "the political" is a measure of settlement; it is a matter of convention whether it is a zero-sum game or a positive-sum game, so it is no longer possible to defend the boundaries between the three approaches to what is political. Fundamental to the description of man and society, the world of culture is recognised as a system in which politics, called its continuation, but conducted using other means, also has its place (Kuisz, 2018, p. 58). Natural science itself, on the other hand, did well without culture, disregarding the examination of what is merely speculative, although falling into a humanistic description of reality. Artur Laska sees it differently: for him, politics is, of course, a product of culture, but one rooted in human biology (2017, p. 9). At this point we must imagine a biological antagonism reflected in politics in the form of an existential conflict. Although a strictly political decision, Schmitt's war was the ultimate and existential means of resolving divisive hostility. In the case of a political organisation, the verdict on who is to survive and who factually survives yields an identical result only within the aforementioned domain. The survival of a nation as a political species does not actually imply the survival of every citizen and may be the result of a tacit consensus (the lives of soldiers in an armed conflict). Struggle expressed in the form of animalistic aggression always refers to the one who will be removed outside the political domain, and the very survival of a political organisation is not just a sum of biological existences, but also the simultaneously dominant form of culture. Polemicising with Artur Laska, I do not assume his biological determinism. I do believe, however, that we cannot explain political rivalry in identical terms in the animal and human worlds, because political entities often undergo effective transformation, periodically raising their potential, also in terms of science and technology, and thus improving their ability to survive. However, this is not a strategy of anti-naturalism, while in the world of predators and their prey, observed changes have never assumed such a revolutionary character. Ryszard Skarzyński tried to resolve the aforementioned dispute in his theoretical proposal. He called the proposed position *political mobilisation*. It consisted of a process in which people form a group to fight, by every possible means, in order to establish universal order, the reference for such a definition of "the political" being, for him, a large space and a long time (Skarzyński, 2011, pp. 67–68). Nevertheless, Skarzyński clearly articulates that highlighting political behaviour in animals would direct our thinking towards considering the social life of humans

as thoroughly political, if mutual interactions of individuals of a species were to be considered a manifestation of political activity (2011, pp. 57–58). This argument relates to the assumptions of the evolutionary theory of politics, and thus cautions against explaining simpler phenomena by means of theories concerning complex phenomena (Młyńczyk, 2020, p. 14).

Instead of conclusions

The universality of democratic regimes of the liberal type determines their internal criticism. Similarly, they constitute nowadays an objective point of reference for theory-political analysis. Contemporary liberal democracy has been rejected by its opponents because it has become oligarchic as a result of promoting negative freedom, which removes the citizen from the space of decision. Moreover, it has often been accused of being a dictatorship of form, and it has offered its own political gains not so much in a non-alternative way, as, for many, even in a totalising way, appealing to postulated rationality, not only political, but also scientific and technological. The consensus it offers is blamed for the progressing processes of depoliticisation. Thus, if one were to adhere strictly to the theoretical predilection of the extraordinary state, which is the essence of "the political", such accusations must be considered valid. I have written about the fact that:

> [...] it is, however, difficult to deny that [liberalism] with all its faults, can create the presence of citizens, and these citizens can participate in what is political. Created apoliticism constitutes the essence of the dominant European political culture. At the same time, this should be understood as the antithesis of 'the political', which is, in simple terms, a form of collective identity making it necessary to recognise behaviour in terms of cause and purpose, and this can only be fully realised in an exclusively political way. It is like the reverse of populism. The consciousness of 'the political', whose function will be the right of societies to root their needs in what is political, articulates itself in public action (Młyńczyk, 2018, p. 144).

We are witnessing a phenomenon that can be described as being deprived of the right to "the political". The point is to create some unique decision-making vacuum consisting in the representation of not only citizens but also the leading lines of political debate. Subordination and belief in procedures meant to reproduce society that is happy due to its orientation towards consumption. Politicians have tried to be the guardians of low political consciousness that guarantees a lack of competition, but modern media have introduced radical pluralism in this area. "This is not really about the values rooted in political culture, but about the monopoly on the production of what is political" (Młyńczyk, 2018, p. 145). Ultimately, our tendency to reinforce negative freedom is exploited. The citizen can become seemingly free from politics defined as an objective

necessity. By limiting agency to verbal codes, we are deprived of the most constitutive feature that organises us into society, i.e. "the political". The answer may be a liberal form of politics, with its pragmatic approach to every sphere of social activity. Political liberalism expresses itself in forms of making a maximally full set of ethical ideals available, while being simultaneously concerned with keeping the potential for their forceful imposition at a low level (Sawczuk, 2018, p. 192). Liberalism has a problem with imposing a consensual model of "the political". Such considerations are rather marginal to theoretical political inquiries, perhaps because of the position of Carl Schmitt, who permanently marked the category of "the political" by eliminating liberalism from it. Antagonism is a prevailing description of what is political, evolving in the reality of a democratic regime towards agonism. In its dominant essence, it is impossible to be eliminated absolutely. However, a review of the output of Polish theorists allows one to believe that the categories they introduced are merely terms, universal with respect to form, but not with respect to content.

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