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Adam Sulikowski
University of Wroclaw, Poland
adam.sulikowski@uwr.edu.pl
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000–0002–8423–3199

How to Humanize 'Feral Children': Constructing 'Proper Identities' in Liberal and Illiberal Legal Discourses

Abstract: The subjects of this article are the mechanisms of constructing the identity of the collective subject of sovereignty in liberal and illiberal discourses and the issue of the relationship between collective identity discourses (primarily those related to law and imposed by law) and the political. The author adopts a specific perspective inspired by post-structuralism and post-Marxism. This perspective denies the claim of modern liberalism to be a meta-category in relation to other political and ideological options. The so-called post-politics inscribed in liberal discourses is, from the point of view of post-Marxism, a political proposition deeply entangled in ideology. The basic thesis of the article is that both the liberal and illiberal discourses in the construction of the subject of sovereignty are essentialist and perceive this subject as an imagined community that must be built with the significant participation of the law and (partially hidden) coercion.
Keywords: collective identities, constitutionalism, legal discourse, liberalism, post-Marxism

Introduction

Modern natural sciences have developed the concept of 'feral children'.[1] This means individuals who, biologically, undoubtedly belong to the species *Homo sapiens*,

1 In 1920, the people of the Indian district of Midnapore were plunged into fear, terrorized by 'ghosts'. The mystery was solved by Reverend Joseph Singh, who discovered that the 'ghosts' were two little girls living in the forest with a pack of wolves. They ran, like other wolves, on all fours with their noses to the ground. The children were treated by other animals like ordinary wolf pups. Joseph Singh captured the girls; he felt that he was legally and morally obliged to do so because of his membership of humanity. The 'human wolves' were given the names Amala and Kamala and placed in an orphanage. The girls did not develop speech, but they did learn how to

but who have not developed cultural competences and do not identify as humans. Without a doubt, the natural sciences are essentialist regarding the criteria for being human: someone who is born human has an inalienable human identity. Even if this identity does not coincide with individual feelings, it is the responsibility of the rest of humanity to restore the proper order of things. Essentialism leads to the construction of identity based on one feature (or a narrow set of interrelated features) and plays a double disciplinary role. Firstly, it disciplines the entity making a judgement regarding a specific identity; secondly, it sets disciplinary rules for an individual whose identity has been essentialistically established. Moreover, although essentialist discourse can become entangled in conflicts and generate coercion and violence, it presents itself as without alternative and apolitical, legitimizing its violent effects with the logic of objectivity and necessity (Calhoun, 1994, p. 9).

Undoubtedly, modernity has linked all normalizing and identity discourses more closely to the law, making the legal order both the most important tool and the strongest guarantor of identity essentialism. Each modern legal order does not allow the cultivation of an individual's own unique identity (even if it says that it does), but at most allows the choice of various options, which it classifies and determines itself.

In this article, I will address the issue of the relationship between collective identity discourses (primarily those related to and imposed by law) and the political. It is not my goal to follow Yascha Mounk's (2023) path and blame identity discourses for the weakening of the liberal projects and universalist programmes of Western modernity. On the contrary, I believe that identity conflicts cannot be eliminated, because they are part of the grammar of the Enlightenment. I will also not focus on discourses defining the categories of humanity and the characteristics of being human. The metaphorical anecdote about Amala and Kamala presented in note 1 may concern more than just species identification. As a philosopher of law and a critical constitutionalist, I will rather refer to the categories most important for constitutional law: the sovereign member of the national community and the law-abiding citizen. My goal is not to criticize liberalism, unless any questioning of its unique

howl, which was probably understandable to other wolves. During the day, the children hid, and at night they howled at the moon and refused to eat anything except raw meat. It was noticed that they had extremely acute senses of smell and taste. The orphanage employees attempted to socialize the girls, but this turned out to be impossible. Amala and Kamala had deformed joints and ligaments from constantly walking on all fours, which made them unable to assume an upright position. They also turned out to be completely resistant to human diseases. Due to a kidney infection, Amala did not survive even a year in the orphanage; Kamala lived for several years but never identified as human, even though she was about 16 years old at the time of her death. Interestingly, the deaths of Amala and Kamala are commonly perceived and explained not as an individual tragedy of two living beings who somehow coped with the world until they were forced to become human, but as a failure of the socialization process, the reasonableness and validity of which is beyond any doubt. As Reverend Singh lamented, unfortunately the girls were not able to be restored to their 'proper identities' (Singh & Zingg, 1942, p. 2 ff.).

truthfulness and metaphysical pretensions can be considered criticism. I try to approach the compared ideologies with a relatively similar distance.

To make my considerations less abstract, I will refer to the Polish context. My goal will be to show the entanglements of identity discourses that determine the main axis of the political (and legal) conflict in Poland. The first of them can be described as liberal, the second as illiberal; they are in opposition to each other, although at the structural level they are based on similar essentialist, exclusionary and predatory mechanisms of determining 'proper identity'. It is not my task to describe political conflicts or investigate their causes; I also would not like to 'accuse' liberalism of authoritarian practices. Rather, I would like to show that the two oppositional discourses have structurally similar features – they are two heresies within the same religion. The choice of the Polish case is, in my opinion, justified for several reasons: firstly because the Polish transformation of the last thirty years fits the 'feral children' metaphor more than Western examples. As sociological research shows, understanding and support for neoliberal views in Polish society in the late 1980s (especially among the lower classes) was minimal or at best insignificant. However, the reforms took place in an unequivocally neoliberal spirit, resulting in a sharp, painful transformation of the way of life of millions of people. There are many indications that while the need for a revolution was widely felt in Poland, the shape of the new political and economic system was imposed contrary to the imagination and expectations of the majority of society.

Secondly, eight years ago, the illiberal coalition effectively challenged the hegemony of liberalism in political terms by appointing itself a spokesperson for groups whose opinions were not taken into account in the processes of political transformation. The election results showed that 'feral children' do not necessarily have to be socialized in the only right way. The illiberal, populist parliamentary majority began to implement a new concept of rebuilding the 'proper identity' of the sovereign state based on the rejection (apparent in many respects) of neoliberal visions and replacing them with nationalist, conservative and anti-globalization theorems. The new discourse turned out to be similar to the old one, at the structural level. Despite its declared pluralism and heretical character, it became highly essentialist and repeated the postulate of the necessary resocialization of 'feral children', although, of course, it included other social groups in this category.

Currently, however, a liberal coalition has regained power, whose main effort is to restore the impression of the sole rightness of an order whose legitimacy had previously been significantly weakened. The third argument justifying the need to analyse the Polish case is of a more general nature. Taking into account the fact that in many Western countries, the hegemony of democratic liberalism is threatened by illiberal political forces that seem to be growing in strength, the Polish scenario may also be realized in a more or less similar way in the West.

When it comes to the theoretical dimension of the text, I am of course aware that I am not treading in virgin territory. The phenomena I am interested in were theorized by such stars of the philosophical left as Michel Foucault (*assujetissement*) and Louis Althusser (interpellation). Using some of their theoretical tools, and combining them with others, I would like to develop a concept that is as eclectic as it is convincing. Overall, the research perspective adopted for the purposes of this text is deeply inspired by post-Marxism. In the professional discourses of political science and philosophy, post-Marxism is nowadays mainly associated with the theories of Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau. However, the category of post-Marxism can be treated more broadly, referring to a relativistic position, the tradition of left-wing philosophy inspired by the ideas of Antonio Gramsci that rejected economism, the Frankfurt School and the classics of post-structuralism. The key element of post-Marxist discourse is a reinterpretation of Marxism based on radical social constructivism: if the social world is created by ideological practices, then identifying and delegitimizing these practices can effectively change this world. The rejection of determinism and of the traditional Marxist one-way relationship of determination between the base and superstructure, based on the famous thesis that 'life determines consciousness', leads to the assertion that the 'superstructure' is based not so much on economics as on specific relations of understanding and legitimacy, in which ideological leanings and entanglements in antagonisms and inequalities are not difficult to see (Rekret & Choat, 2016, p. 281). The post-Marxist perspective denies the claim of modern liberalism to be a meta-category in relation to other political and ideological options; the so-called post-politics, inscribed in liberal discourses, is, from the point of view of post-Marxism, a political proposition deeply entangled in ideology.

1. Relations between identity and discourse from a post-Marxist perspective

To put it briefly, Mouffe and Laclau, adopt the Foucauldian assumption that discourses construct both reality and identity. In other words, a given object can only have meaning within a discourse and, on the other hand, the (self)identification of the subject is also linked to discourses. If, following Carl Schmitt, one accepts that, for the political, the opposition of us and them – de facto meaning an identity-based interpretation of the friend/enemy distinction (identity is always constructed negatively, through reference to another) – is crucial, then identity conflict has to be viewed as a struggle between discourses (Mouffe & Laclau, 1985, p. 93 ff.).

In discourse, the political and identification dimensions intertwine and political categories are produced, which are based not so much on the a priori attributes of the individuals involved, but on the mechanism of forcing acceptance based on the rules of discourse. The mechanism is simple: if a given entity recognizes the truth of cer-

tain theses or the meaning of certain words, it becomes a subject of a given type and thus not only must accept the truth of subsequent theses, the meaning of subsequent words and the validity of subsequent postulates, but also should self-define and act in a specific way. At the same time, an entity rooted in discourse should deny the right to define itself to other discourses and reject the meanings of words and the validity of theses promoted by competing identities. In practice, differentiating oneself from others is a priori to self-definition. This is because identities considered hostile are easier to define in the perspective of discourse and seem more stable and clear; it is easier to attribute certain characteristics to the enemy by positioning oneself in opposition to them (Gupta, 2007, pp. 5–6). The pursuit of the stabilization of meanings and identity paradoxically makes it impossible to achieve this goal, as it triggers specific reactions in hostile discourses, which requires subsequent and practically endless redefinitions and rationalizations of what is hostile and what is ours. Participating in discourse gives the individual subjectivity, makes him/her understandable to others and to him/herself, but at the same time subjugates him/her, making him/her dependent on the rules of discourse; Michel Foucault used the term *assujetissment*, which means both 'subjectification' and 'objectification'. At the same time, *assujetissement* determines the conditions for the recognition and understanding of one's own identity by oneself and others, but also limits the possible spectrum of action, as it imposes an insurmountable discursive logic of being oneself. As Foucault wrote:

> This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word 'subject': subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to. (1982, p. 781)

Of course, a specific individual is at a given time a participant, or, as the French philosopher put it, a bundle of discourses. However, there are situations in which a particular discourse gains an advantage over others in defining identity. Louis Althusser noticed this when writing about ideological interpellation; *interpellation* in French means, first of all, speaking loudly and clearly to someone in order to get their attention. In Althusser's approach, interpellation has a different dimension, especially in politics: it forces one to accept a specific identity and makes it unique or primary (Althusser & Montag, 1991, pp. 23–24). For example, when an SS man addresses a passerby with the words 'Du, Jude' and he reacts and interacts, his Jewish identity (in a specific political context) becomes the most important or even the only significant one. Other possible identities – professional, family, class, etc. – lose their

significance. As Rafał Mańko (2014, p. 45) notes, political and legal discourses have a particular tendency to use ideological interpellation and reduce the various identities of a given individual to one leading pattern. Politics as an activity determined by the political (i.e. the primary force that antagonizes individuals and groups) is possible only as a result of the discursive *assujetissement* of individuals. Participating in a discourse causes identification with specific contents of empty signifiers, i.e. axiologically charged terms and theorems that cannot be ultimately filled with content acceptable to everyone (Laclau, 1996, p. 37). As Slavoj Žižek (2008, p. 113) convincingly argues, such signifiers always acquire a retroactive meaning; that is, they are filled with content after a specific identity is established and are treated as if they had this content for a long time.

Law in this perspective is primarily a tool enabling and sanctioning *assujetissement* and at the same time supports the hegemony of the discourse that governs the law. In other words, politics is a struggle of identity, a war of identification. According to Claude Lefort, politics (and especially democratic politics) exists as long as it is possible for collective identities to compete for a temporary occupation of the 'empty place of power' – a space that, with the triumph of modernity, was freed from traditional metaphysics. The triumph of one 'proper identity' means the end of politics, or at least the end of democracy (Lefort & Rosanvallon, 2011, p. 20).

2. 'Feral children' and revolutions in Poland

Revolutions in Poland usually created a collective identity for the revolutionary entity only after victory and with the significant encouraging and also repressive participation of the law. In other words, revolutions were brought from outside, and shaping the identity of the domestic subject of the revolution was a long and complicated process. External revolutionary forces encountered a population of 'feral children' in Poland, trapped in false consciousness, who had to be subjected to appropriate processes of healing socialization. This was the case with the proletarian revolution brought on the bayonets of the Red Army and with the liberal revolution imported from the West. It is difficult to deny that the socialist legal and political order was imposed on Poland by force and that the law was highly repressive. It was, in fact, the implementation of Lenin's famous thesis that class consciousness must be brought to the working class and peasants from the outside, using all possible persuasion, including the use of violence against those who resist. As noted by the Marxist sociologist Jacek Tittenbrun, the system that had developed in Poland since the time of Stalinism was based on deep distrust of the peasantry and the proletariat. Professional Marxist politicians were convinced that the 'false consciousness' of the masses, which resulted in, among other things, the failure of the agricultural collectivization project, required 'conversion by force' and monitoring of the gains with legal sanc-

tions (Tittenbrun, 1992, p. 179). The law not only encouraged identification with the new political order, but strongly prohibited any delegitimization of it. Based on Articles 22 and 29 of the so-called Small Penal Code (Decree of 13 June 1946 on Particularly Dangerous Crimes during the Reconstruction of the State), acts related to the dissemination, storage or preparation of information that was 'false' or 'slanderous' of the new system were penalized, which even included telling political jokes. The sanction for this was a stay in a labour camp for up to two years.

The Constitution of the Polish People's Republic of 1952 defined the state as a people's democracy, whose sovereign was 'the working people of towns and villages'. In 1976, the Sejm almost unanimously passed an amendment to the Constitution stating that the Polish United Workers' Party was 'the leading political force of society in building socialism'. During the preparatory work, an amendment regarding the dependence of citizens' rights on the fulfilment of their obligations to the state was deleted from the bill, almost at the last moment. The solutions introduced clearly demonstrate the authorities' concerns about the lack of real identification with the official entity of state sovereignty with the role assigned to it by law. The constitutional discourse of the era emphasized that the Polish People's Republic was a state of permanent revolution, building socialism, so the subject of the state was not so much the real people, but the imagined community. As the Marxist constitutionalist Sylwester Zawadzki wrote, surprisingly honestly, superior authority cannot belong to a community 'with a variable class structure' (1980, p. 112). Therefore, conceptual reconciliation of the concept of 'working people' with the subject of state sovereignty will only be possible after achieving the political ideal and the abolition of classes. This statement was an admission by an authority prominent in the eyes of the party that the main task of the government is to construct the identity of the collective entity of the state and not to determine its real aspirations and interests.

Despite the poor effectiveness of the process of 'building socialism', it is difficult to talk about a complete failure of the socialization project. All mass strikes, including those in the 1980s, broke out around demands for reform of socialism, not its abolition; this was not only due to fear of clashing with official law, but was also the result of arrangements related to the awareness and identity of workers. Nevertheless, the wave of protests in the 1980s was channelled into replacing socialism with a neoliberal version of capitalism. As Marxist philosopher Adam Schaff (1998, p. 19) points out, sociological research showed that in the second half of the 1980s, awareness of the unique correctness of capitalist solutions was negligible among representatives of the peasantry and working class, but dominated among a narrow group of influential elites, both those identifying with the official authorities and those declaring their opposition to them. The legal symbol of the changes is the famous 'lex Wilczek', the Act of 23 December 1988 on economic activity, adopted with the strong support of party elites in conditions of relative media silence even before the round-table discussions, which were considered the beginning of the political transformation.

The Act introduced a capitalist system in Poland based on supporting citizens' economic activity and the principle of laissez-faire (economic activity was limited only by explicit prohibitions formulated by law, and did not have to implement any social goals or programme norms).

The victims of the revolution were clearly the lower classes of society. Once again, the law became the basic tool for the socialization of 'wild children' because it was presented as a set of tough but necessary solutions that cannot be the subject of rational criticism, even if they 'seem' wrong and produce overt violence and exclusion. A characteristic feature of mainstream legal discourses in the region was the more or less clearly evoked but unambiguous acceptance of the thesis that the imported neoliberal complex of solutions is not only 'proper', but also must be protected against the 'unreasonable masses'. The approach to the problem of 'constituting power', known in the West, was very realistic, not to say Machiavellian, in the region. As Bogusia Puchalska notes, the lower classes in Central and Eastern European countries were perceived as an 'unorganised multitude which must acquire organisational form before they can be allowed to have a say on a new constitutional order under which they are going to live despite succesfully coordinating the democratic movement that brought down previous regimes and acting in compliance with the quasi-constitutional rules that developed during decades of political struggle' (2011, p. 14).

Despite the immediate introduction of the principle of national sovereignty in constitutional acts, in the dominant discourses the people were perceived as a source of solutions only in a very metaphorical sense – they were only de iure sovereign, and could only become de facto sovereign by carrying out ideological self-interpellation, i.e. by adapting to the law, as it were, as a priori established. Society was to be gradually accustomed to systemic solutions developed by professionals based on imports from the West. This import was treated not as ideological, but as primarily technological. Just as the masses were not supposed to worry too much about the construction of sewage systems or railways, it was also necessary to 'do your part' when it came to the implementation of neoliberal law. As the conservative American liberal Bruce Ackerman wrote in 1992, in a book that was a collection of advice on the constitutionalization of the liberal revolution in Poland, the key issue is to set a model of citizenship by law based on resourcefulness and care for oneself (first) and for public affairs. This requires, above all, supporting rationality and political restraint in a political and economic system that may prove unsustainable (Ackerman, 1992). If we apply Etienne Balibar's concept of 'the fear of the masses' at this juncture, we can say that the discursive aim is to transform 'the fear that the masses inspire' into 'the fear experienced by the masses' (1994, p. 4). The idea is to subject the lower classes to such indoctrination that they themselves come to believe they are a source of superstitious radicalism that is difficult to control. The basic tool is the aforementioned ideological interpellation; that is, the construction of such obviousness with regard to

the category of subjects and their rights that it becomes an insurmountable element of the self-identification of each individual in the 'terrible majority'.

Actions to increase the 'fear of the masses' were intensified in referendum campaigns concerning such 'obvious' issues as the adoption of new constitutions or accession to the European Union. Ackerman's emphasis on the requirement of rationality is clearly compatible with the concept of 'rational Poland' that was once popular in liberal discourse. This evaluative and binarizing metaphor, once disseminated by President Komorowski, refers to a certain imagined political community of objectively reasonable citizens, aware of the real *Raison d'Etat.* This community is the holder of collective knowledge – true, non-contradictory and non-political – which can and should be transposed into the ultimate solutions to specific ideological disputes, complementing the *acquis constitutionnel* and, as it were, abolishing politics.

The solutions resulting from this 'rationality' may indeed cause individual and group harm and may not be liked by everyone, but in principle they are simply appropriate and objectively necessary. The threat to 'rational Poland' is 'radical Poland' – an imagined community of people who are manipulated and do not understand reality properly, sharing the false consciousness of the participants in the political game. These individuals and groups incorrectly interpret their real or imaginary wrongs and, being wrong, take them to be an element of objective injustice, or, worse still, the result of the hegemony of a certain political vision. 'Radical Poland' is dangerous because, stuck in Foucauldian *déraison*, it interferes with the rationalization of government and unnecessarily opens political disputes that can, after all, be abolished by the consensual actions of expert bodies in whose hands real power should rest.

Of course, liberal discourse has evolved, and the content of law has changed along with the activities of institutionalized politics. However, the basic assumption of the system was still the construction of a new society of resourceful individuals trusting in the epistemological advantage of juristocratic expert systems.

3. 'Feral children' and 'lemmings': 'Proper identities' in illiberal discourse

In the light of the above remarks, it is not surprising that the main thread of the Polish populist discourse is that of an elite conspiracy – in this story, the alleged revolution of 1989 is the result of collusion between the communist and opposition intelligentsia. These two groups took ownership of the economy (and stole national wealth) by introducing laws that were primarily intended to secure the balance of power. Contrary to the official provisions in the Constitution on national sovereignty and democracy, the legal system and its institutions are, above all, a guarantor of the inviolability of the deal. The courts (so highly regarded by the West) are unfair and prefer a minority 'post-communist' ideology and mentality. Illiberal discourses have

made quite an interesting, convincing and surprisingly left-wing redescription of the process of the transformation and socialization of the 'feral children'. In the illiberal perspective, feral children are not only the so-called losers in the transformation, i.e. people who were forced to make heavy sacrifices to forcibly adapt to new conditions, but are also called lemmings – blind believers in the new reality who are unaware that they are heading towards destruction that will also consume them. Lemmings are the main carriers of post-communist mentality and at the same time its victims.

It is true that the adjective 'post-communist' has gained a career primarily as a term for the former countries of the so-called people's democracy and for the political forces that became the formal heirs of communist parties, but in the illiberal discourse it gained a new, 'mental' meaning (Nodia, 2000). Since the neoliberal transformation was part of an agreement, or rather a conspiracy, between former oppressors and foreign plutocrats, there is an obvious personal and ideological connection between Marxism and neoliberalism – all the more so because the political practice at the turn of the two systems preferred people with a specific mentality, cynics and tricksters who wanted to achieve quick success, giving up ideals and betraying the collective identities from which they came. Even though lemmings seem to participate in power, they only act as compradors in the service of internal and external enemies. Lawyers play a significant role among the lemmings, who by supporting the law of the *ancien régime* contribute to the alienation of the healthy part of society. The identity of the revolutionary subject can therefore be built on the rejection of the old law and in opposition to the lemming mentality. Law is again a tool for identity transformation.

Realism in the approach to the legal order means that the political demands of illiberals primarily concern the 'recovery' of the law by gaining control over legal decisions and the entities that actually make these decisions (mainly courts and tribunals). The best tool for implementing socialization plans through law would be a new constitution. Krystyna Pawłowicz – a current judge of the Constitutional Tribunal, a former member of the illiberal Law and Justice party and an academic lawyer – suggested that the adoption of Hungarian models would make it possible to limit the flaws in the Polish Constitution currently in force, which contains provisions that amount to 'an act of national treason committed by the then establishment' (Fronda.pl, 2015). Pawłowicz goes on to explain that 'the Constitution should clearly define the system of values binding on the Polish community, including the issue of Polish Christian identity, moral customs and the protection of life. These issues cannot be the subject of conjecture or free interpretation. […] Without being aware of this, we will not be able to rebuild our culture and tradition' (Fronda.pl, 2015). According to this vision, constitutionalization should not be based on the beliefs which society actually professes, contingently and temporarily, but rather on 'imponderables', the confession of which is the duty of every true Pole; the nation here is an imaginary community which must first be rebuilt through the arduous process of education.

The element of coercion in this statement, which is hardly concealed, is legitimized by the obvious nature of national duty. The Constitution, Pawłowicz continues, 'should contain provisions that will protect Poland from the various derangements of successive ruling groups that would like to deviate from these values' (Fronda.pl, 2015). In other words, the Constitution is tasked with rebuilding the constitutional identity of the nation and setting it in stone, so that it is immune to the 'whims of democracy'. Of course, the illiberals lacked a majority to implement their plans to 'constitutionalize' the revolution, but they managed to change the content of legislation with unprecedented dynamism. The results of the last elections show that the project of building a collective identity with the significant involvement of law has been partially successful: the illiberal coalition received the most votes, although not enough to maintain power as the opposition united against a common political enemy.

Conclusions

As I have tried to show, the model of forced reconstruction of identity with the significant involvement of law is structurally linked to revolutionary processes in Poland. The collective identity of the revolutionary subject, or the 'proper' identity of the sovereign state *in statu nascendi*, is constructed in opposition to a specific, discursively constructed group that must be changed through active socialization.

Anthropologist Arjan Appadurai promoted the category of predatory identity in his works; in its self-definition, the predatory identity assumes that in order to survive it must strive to eliminate other identities that it considers hostile. The trait of being predatory is primarily attributed to identities created by totalitarian, nationalist, terrorist and, finally, populist discourses (Appadurai, 2006, p. 7). Liberal discourse seems to value all minority identities, because it assumes the need for pluralism and the coexistence of various identity groups based on different interests (group interests are derivative of individual ones). However, from an external perspective, like any ideologized practice, it demands recognition of its vision of the coexistence of specific identities as a meta-category. At the same time, it rejects traditionally understood violence; however, as Isaiah Berlin (2014, p. 201) wrote, , liberalism contaminated by the Ionian fallacy baselessly assumes that all political problems can be understood and, consequently, solved through apolitical and 'pure' epistemologically oriented actions.

As I have tried to show, liberal discourse has also had predatory features in Polish practice. Of course, the intensity of a specific feature and its violent potential are important. However, if we look at the revolutions of recent decades diachronically, the violent potential of liberalism, measured by the number of victims and the intensity of coercion, turned out not to be small at all. However, the 'predatoryness' of illiberal discourse has turned out to be relatively small. Of course, factors independent

of the discourse itself may be responsible for this: the attitude of the opposition, support for liberals provided by the US and the EU or the inability to obtain a constitutional majority and full control over the judicial and administrative apparatus which both socialist and liberal political forces had previously achieved. I am not saying that illiberal discourse is not worse than liberal discourse, but its recent dominance of institutionalized politics has not proven particularly predatory. It must also be taken into account that the illiberal (unfinished) revolution in Poland was the first that was not deeply inspired from outside. Even though the liberal coalition has regained political power, the illiberal discourse will not disappear, and the identities it shapes will remain. Perhaps adopting the post-Marxist assumption that conflicts of discursively constructed identities cannot be avoided and cannot be resolved by meta-rules will prove practically useful in dealing with the inevitable.

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