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The Language of the Polish Political Class

Abstract: This article is about two languages, technocratic and moralising, used by the Polish political class to communicate with, and seduce, citizens. These languages have displaced the proper language of politics, the language of representation, which was only spoken in the early nineteen-nineties when politicians defined themselves as representatives of "ordinary men and women." The language of representation disappeared in the mid-nineties, as trust in the government waned and the increasingly painful consequences of transformation were exposed. As the first language of politics, technocratic language was used to promise to conduct politics professionally, sensitively and in a non-ideological fashion. In this language "problems" come to the forefront: the citizen "has" these problems, the politician "knows" how to solve them. The government is the first intervening institution which wants to combat social pathologies whereas the good state is merely a "normal" state, an efficient machinery. Moralising language, meanwhile, with its central category of "moral indignation," connects the governing and the governed on the normative plane. When used by the government, it supplements the technocratic language. When used by the opposition, it questions the technocratic language and serves to stigmatise political adversaries as people who have no principles and no conscience. All in all, the two languages are well-fitted to Poles' ideas about what politics should be. Their existence is as much a sign of Polish society's lack of culture and political inactivity as of the crisis of the institution of representation which we are also witnessing in mature democracies.

Keywords: language of politics, representation, technocracy, morality in politics, de-politicisation.

The Spoken Word in the Service of Politics

If we accept that *accountability* is what distinguishes legitimate political systems from illegitimate ones then every authority, democratic or not, which governs with the permission of the governed is in a way a logocracy. This is not to say that by merely applying terminological convention we can fulfil the centuries-old dream of political philosophers that states be governed by the judicious word. Words meant to unfold the just and justified can, after all, serve a completely different purpose, as Machiavelli, that ultimate critic of philosophical claims, argued. They may be used to seize power and maintain power. Ever since Plato, philosophers have viewed sophists as their worst enemies who tarnish their reputation (vide Socrates whom they accused of preaching false wisdom and depraving youth). Yet if they themselves want to spread their truth to "wide circles," they cannot help adopting the sophists' *techne*. After all, the "wide circles" have too little reason to discover it for themselves and live by it. From this perspective, sophism—when in the service of philosophy—is not a form of political pathology itself but it can become one if it is reduced to ubiquitous propaganda in the service of totalitarian ideology. But totalitarian regimes are not the only ones to

"bombard" the people with words so that they can understand and evaluate them in their own words. For, as Murray Edelman (1985: 9) wrote,

Even without much encouragement by the government, obsessive involvement with verbal accounts of political acts occurs in democracies, too, and it has the same numbing impact upon the critical faculties. It can bring gratifications, looming threats, the appearance of victory and of defeat: in election campaigns and in policy battles elsewhere in the government or in international relations. A dramatic symbolic life among abstractions thereby becomes a substitute gratification for the pleasure of remolding the concrete environment.

This article is about two basic languages which the Polish political class in the broad sense uses to communicate with the electorate on a daily basis. These languages complement each other rather than compete. They have dominated political discourse, driving out the proper language of democracy, the language of representation, almost completely and only giving way to the languages of two ideas, "new deal" and "returning normality," in the pre-election period. I am talking about mature technocratic language, not the transitional language of transformation which dominated in the early nineties, and about the moralising language with which Poles have long been familiar. Both the government and the opposition use these two languages to give accounts of what they are doing and what they intend to do. But do these languages really help to communicate or do they simply serve as cover-ups? In the book *Ritual chaos*, which discusses public discourse in the first few years of the 3rd Republic, Marek Czyżewski (1997) predicts that a new mode of communication between the government and the governed will emerge from the chaos which dominated political discourse in the mid-nineties. Politicians will seduce the citizens.

'Seduction' in the public arena in Poland—Czyżewski writes—is intensifying in response to the increasing importance of media discourse (the discourse of symbolic elites, including politicians), so typical of contemporary societies, at the cost of traditional political discourse (that is, public discourse which politicians conduct as part of their political functions). It is also intensifying due to increasing "seduction" and the tacit dictate of the masses in global culture. These changes are accompanied by significant shifts in the hierarchy of values implemented by the political elites. Politicians nowadays pay more and more attention to their media image, bearing in mind the simple truth that mass media audiences, and especially TV viewers, have the decisive vote. Lack of essential communication skills disqualifies the politician but increasing focus on the medial image carries the doubtful message that politicians should not be taken too seriously (Czyżewski 1997: 59).

Although I do not agree with everything the author of this quotation says, I think his prediction is correct: the languages I have distinguished are used to seduce citizens. Politicians use them to entice the electorate but public opinion is exceptionally unanimous that they are hardly succeeding (some purely linguistic seduction techniques are discussed in the collection of articles called *The Language of Politics and Contemporary Political Culture*). It is no coincidence that nowadays we seldom hear a politician speaking the classical language of representation in the media—the privileged language of the classical theory of democracy, quite useless for the seducer. Poland is no different from other developed democracies. On the contrary, it seems to be "making up for lost time" compared with countries with a more intensive political life and a longer tradition. The two aforementioned languages distort the real image of politics wherever they are used, however. They also distort the ideal, presenting

it as it should not be, argues Bernard Crick. It is no more than an "activity by which differing interests within a given unit of rule are conciliated by giving them a share in power in proportion to their importance to the welfare and the survival of the whole community" (Crick 1964: 21).

In this article domination of public debate by technocratic and moralising languages is just a hypothesis and I know that it would be very difficult to test using sociological methodology. To put it even more abstemiously, it is merely a general intuition which would have to be formulated precisely, in falsifiable terms, before it could be put to any empirical test. It is surely easier to illustrate the claim with concrete examples than to prove it in its entirety. Hence all I mean to do is present one specific aspect of these languages, that is, their capacity to do more than just convey information: "[t]o know a language is to know the things which may be done with it," says J.G.A. Pocock, political historian of the so-called Cambridge school, on whose theory of political language I am basing my discussion (Pocock 1991: 28).[1] This approach is basically about the relative autonomy of language and its privileged position with respect to users: they can only do as much with language as the language itself will permit them. In this sense we may say that rather than people speaking languages, languages speak through people. We must remember, however, that if we accept this assumption then what we are in fact studying is the possibility of shaping discourse whether or not this possibility will ever be realised although proof attesting that it indeed has been realised can be found in other utterances.

The Language of Representation or Democratic Liturgy

Before anything can be done by means of this language, the language itself must first define the political community and constitute its power structure. This is rather problematic in representative democracy because communities are no longer formed by the simple fact that they are subordinate to the same authority, as is the case in monarchies (there is no power if it is not conferred from without or from above) and the ungoverned community is too large for its members to be linked by natural bonds of loyalty or solidarity. Hence political language must create the symbolic bonds of state community. Nowadays these bonds usually overlap with national bonds although the two are not identical. We have compatriots and co-citizens and only in some countries (France is always the model but the United States of America would fit the description perfectly well) will these be one and the same people. Therefore the language of politics is replete with symbols of group identity which accentuate the group's unity despite existing diversities. It also justifies the delegation of power and emphasises the importance of representation as such, travestying in one way or another Abraham Lincoln's democratic formula: "government of the people, by the

[1] I discussed this theory more comprehensively (and critically) in A. Waśkiewicz (1998). *Interpretacja teorii politycznej. Spór o metodę we współczesnej literaturze anglosaskiej* [Interpreting political theory. The methodological debate in contemporary Anglo-Saxon literature]. Warszawa: Scholar (see in particular pp. 93–111).

people, for the people." Finally, he reminds citizens that it is their duty (!?) to vote, that the absent have no arguments in their favour and if they fail to vote they have no moral right to criticise the government etc. Because of its ceremonial character, this language can be called the language of political liturgy. It is no accident that it is always spoken prior to elections and on state holidays; just as the ordinary "clergyman" becomes the "sacerdotal priest" when saying Mass, so do ordinary "taxpayers" become "Citizens" when elections are imminent. The liturgical language of democracy with its central concept of "common good" is basically the language of agreement although actually this is agreement to disagree because this language also creates a symbolical space where politicians compete, speaking the languages which will be presented below.

The language of representation, the natural language of political competition, need not be explicitly confrontational. All it needs to do is highlight the differences between the politicians and political parties from which citizens are to choose. It gives substance to the empty concepts of the language of democratic liturgy, both the most general ones such as "common good" and the more specific ones which are more enmeshed in the context of ideological conventions, such as "justice" or "equality." The difference between the representative and the ordinary lobbyist is that the former is someone who has a vision of the state and who shares this vision with his electorate or tries to convince voters to accept it and who has both the competencies and the determination to see that things take the desired course (I use the word "vision" as Sheldon Wolin does, meaning both an ideal and an interpretation of an existing state of affairs). Citizens who live in mature democracies do not expect their representatives to do wonders but even so electoral rhetoric in the language of representative democracy is naturally bombastic and a bit pompous. Phrases such as "I'll do my best," "I'll do everything I can" or declarations in the name of the party that "we will not allow it," "we will never accept," "we will put an end to" etcetera, all meant to underscore personal involvement in, and completely serious treatment of, the cause are quite frequent. These of course are accompanied by assurances of "the necessary qualifications," "years-long practice," "experience," supplemented with information about the candidate's possession of highly esteemed personal qualities. And these are the typical features of the language of representation: it combines competence and obligation, knowledge and morality.

The style of this language, especially spoken language, is naturally more informal and depends on who is offering to be a representative and to whom. The languages of rival political forces will therefore differ not only in the content of their messages but also in their leading "tone" or "code" which will be present in both their parliamentary addresses and their communications with the media. This tone is a party's signature, a "shorthand" for its program and its policy. For example, the party which governed in Poland in 2005–2007 styled its language "assertively" (although it was also clearly albeit involuntarily "resentful") whereas the main oppositional party did everything it could to come over as "artlessly sincere" (and therefore could not understand many of its rival's decisions although it "really tried to"). Adherents and opponents of both parties received a clear message: PiS [Law and Justice] will not rest in its struggle with "connections" and PO's [Citizen's Platform] shadow cabinet will confront its

every move with what "a normal government" should have done in the circumstances. Of course parties are simply more complex, multi-vocal organisations. Each of their component parts speaks differently—the ideologists, the pragmatists, the lobbyists if they speak at all (to quote Herbert Kitschelt's familiar classification)—but the party PR officers work hard to make sure that messages addressed directly to the electorate are in harmony with the organisation's policy.

Although politicians speak under the banners of their own parties during campaigns, the language of representation itself emphasises the candidate's relations with potential voters. This personal touch will naturally be stronger when the electoral law is a majority one but this does not mean that parliamentary deputies elected according to this method will actually be more intimate with their electorate. Uncritical enthusiasts of the majority vote sometimes seem to think that reality boils down to language alone. But even when the electoral law is more conducive to competition between parties rather than individuals, the personal touch need not disappear completely as long as the party has a sufficient number of candidates with significant public authority who can be presented as supra-party personalities and who legitimise the party program. Finally, the party may even be forced to discount its human capital if its program is not very popular or if it is so ambiguous that voters cannot "pick it out" from the other programs. It is no accident that Freedom Union (UW) so often exposed its venerable professors in its campaigns. The language of representation has a major inconvenience for politicians, however. Voters may take promises very seriously or even hold them to be obligatory (several years ago a man who voted for the German SPD sued the party for breaking its promises once it came to power). Be this as it may, the language of representation encourages people to make politicians accountable for what they do—both for their promises and their declared competencies. This is hardly true of technocratic language, where accountability is explicitly missing, or moralising language, where competence is explicitly ignored.

The Language of "Successful Professionals"

In technocratic language "problems" come to the forefront: citizens have them, politicians, (the experts), know how to solve them. "Problems" are something which governments and the governed share. Instead of the citizen-representative dyad we now have the citizen-problem-expert triad. The expert is supposed to solve, not represent, and even if she represents, she certainly does not do this like parents who represent their minors and are legally responsible for them. She is more like the lawyer at court who represents her clients but is not responsible for them and is merely bound by a contract for her services. Their problems are not her problems and so they cannot expect her to be loyal and make sacrifices. In technocratic political language, as in any technocratic language, the government is an omnipotent intervening institution for the "monitoring" and correction of social life. This image is rooted in the sometimes unconscious belief that

only technocrats are 'entitled to' limited freedom of choice whereas non-technocrats are only 'entitled to' the dual constraint of nature and science on the one hand and the individuals, institutions and theories at the top of the social ladder on the other hand (Kurczewska 1997: 131).

This does not really worry avid adherents of the governance of experts because they believe that a good state is a smoothly running machinery, sensitive to external cues and capable of self-repair. It is a self-sufficient state: on its own, without any social mobilisation, it is able to cope with every pathology—not immediately, of course, because the greatest pathologies require the implementation of several "programs" which, together, make a "successful policy" for the fruits of which one will have to wait.

Technocratic political language must depersonalise politics. If, in the language of representation politicians promise to act in the name of the people "with all their problems," so in the technocratic language they promise to solve the problems with which society is struggling all by themselves. Hence, in the language of representation we have nearly 3 million unemployed people whereas in the technocratic language we have a 17% unemployment rate (if the rate is high it is called pathological). In the language of representation we have "doctors and nurses who earn ridiculously/dramatically little," in technocratic language we have "an underinvested health service" and "a level of wages of senior and middle medical staff which is causing protest." In the most humanised version of technocratic language there is mention of problems of the so-called ordinary man and woman but this means nothing more specific than a collective where 15–20% of the members are unemployed, 40% live in the village and 60% live in towns and cities, 10% have higher education etcetera.

Technological language also depersonalises politics because it belittles the role of the politicians themselves. The party is, first and foremost, the "program" ("The Program for Poland," "The Pact for Poland," "The Second Balcerowicz Program," "The 4th Republic" etcetera). The program is a universal algorithm which helps to understand and reconstruct social life in all its complexity. The politician is merely someone who is to implement the program. The program is always the work of "distinguished experts" (incidentally, such assurances were also frequently offered by the chairman of the populist party Samoobrona), whereas politicians, by force of their raised hands or thumbs in parliament, merely legitimise it. For this reason technocratic language seldom exposes the candidate's personal qualities or competencies (a practice which does a great favour to candidates who have little to show and much to conceal). An advantage of the use of technocratic language in electoral campaigns which cannot be overestimated is its ability to reduce costs: it is enough that all candidates repeat the same mantra, grandly called the programmatic manifesto, in front of the cameras.

By depersonalising politics this language does the government a great favour because it conceals personal responsibility for unpopular decisions (but on the other hand it cannot dramatise popular ones). Actually, despite the popular belief in the omnipotence of technocratic authority, this language altogether diminishes the human role in politics (including the language of the "human factor") which it confronts with a whole list of "necessities" to which it must succumb. It was Machiavelli who introduced the concept of "necessities" to the language of politics in order to explain

why his prince must violate recognised (that is, Christian) moral principles so often. Meanwhile, in technocratic language this term is used to justify decisions which the nation, the nominal sovereign, must simply acknowledge. Specifically, it may be used to explain why the governing political power cannot implement the "program" which won it the elections. "Election programs" emphasise "the possible" (the technocratic equivalent of republican "liberties") whereas that same program under the name of the "governance program" will be balanced by "necessities," that is legal and financial limitations. Hence the problem which the candidates promised to confront now becomes "part of a greater problem" which must be approached "in the context of other problems." It must wait to be solved because there are other "problems," or better still, other "problems" have emerged, which "need to be dealt with immediately." Generally speaking, the government is always excused because it was previously insufficiently informed: "we wanted to but we were unaware of the scale of the problem" and of course it was the previous government which "concealed the scale of the problem." Only now, once it has come to power, the new, well-intentioned team of experts has discovered that "the real problem lies elsewhere" and must sometimes admit that "it is too big for the state to solve at present."

Although this language can easily explain why the government is so helpless it by no means places the government and the governed on an equal level. In its governmental variety it keeps them at a distance. This distance was slightly smaller when the electoral, less technical, variety of the language was adopted but we need not attribute too much significance to this difference. Of course the "simple solutions" offered prior to the elections referred to difficult issues, too difficult to be understood by the "ordinary citizen." This language becomes much more complicated after the elections because the state apparatus itself is complicated. Pre-election "rises" now become "benefit levels," "tax reduction" now becomes "adjustment of the size of taxes to the possibilities of the budget" and the promised "remission" can now be translated, without loss of content, into forever postponed "reduction." Such phrases increase the distance between politicians and so-called ordinary people and, in a way, protect the government from the claims of the governed and bring it closer to the real technocrats with whom politicians naturally have more in common during their term of office.

Because to govern also means to administer the country, this language can even be viewed as a natural and functional form of communication between those in power (although when politicians who are not in power discuss issues with real experts one often has the impression that, although they all use the same words, only the latter know what they are talking about). But if Marshall McLuhan is right and the medium really is the message, then if the government uses this language when relating to the governed it must, *nolens volens*, let them know that they by no means owe their position to the electorate, they owe it to their knowledge of issues so complex that "ordinary people cannot possibly get a hang of them." This is not good for the authorities when they need social support and so in such cases they speak to people very vernacularly (although this is more common among MPs of the governing party than cabinet ministers). They also use simple words on special occasions such as New Year's Eve

presidential address to the nation although now the language is more likely to be the language of democratic liturgy with which all Honourable Citizens are very familiar.

The alienation of power, detectable in technocratic jargon, should be prevented by the much more "audible" tone of government "work," the typical normative element of this language. The government wants to govern peacefully, that is solve the country's problems, whereas loud rabble-rousers from the opposition are just getting in its way. But the government will do what it is supposed to do because "the time of politics is over" and now is the time of "work for Poland;" "the government is working unassumingly and in a dignified way," as Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz put it when his cabinet had been in office for a hundred days, with very meagre results many thought. Hence the government regularly asks the opposition to stop playing "political games" and to support the government's suggested solutions, simply because they are "good for Poland." The government understands that the opposition will be against them "for political reasons" whereas the opposition "can only guess" what "political goals" are lurking behind the new act of parliament. Importantly, however, the opposition does not question the fact that the government's principle function is to solve the country's problems, or at least it cannot say so in technocratic language because, when used by the opposition, technocratic language is the language in which the government is "scored." The language used to revile its incompetence and short-sightedness. Massive criticism of the government's work and style will be expressed by the opposition in moralising language.

The Language of "Ordinary Men and Women"

Technocratic language accentuates politicians' competencies and, as Weber would have said, the substantive aspect of politics, whereas moralising language adds a purely ethical aspect to public debate. Pursuing Weber's ideas further we must point out, however, that this is not the ethics of accountability—political ethics proper—which permit governments to commit the lesser evil and preach the need to make do with the lesser good. It is an absolutist ethics of conviction. Moralising language redefines substantive disputes which could be conducted in technocratic language and transports them to the realm of absolute good and evil. And no wonder: politicians need moralising language to express their "moral indignation" with their opponents' conduct—conduct which is invariably "irresponsible," sometimes more and sometimes less harmful for the country, and sometimes downright "wicked." Moralising language is, by its very nature, Manichaean. It divides the world into Light and Darkness and therefore, despite its reference to ideals and values, is openly confrontational as opposed to the language of democratic liturgy which is not confrontational. It also differs from ideological language in its pretensions of universality. The goal of moralising language is to unite all people of good will, "everybody who cherishes ideals…," "who disagrees to…," "who see something more in politics…," whatever particular values they endorse. By speaking the moralising language, the opposition can also reach out to the less convinced adherents of the governing party who may have al-

ready become disappointed with the party's policy. These people voted for the party "in good faith," did they not? They were just "beguiled by their promises." In fact moralising language, just like the language of liturgy or the language of representation, once again makes references to the category of "ordinary man and woman" as its ultimate instance and supreme political authority which is now supposed to certify that the opposition is justifiably indignant. Finally, it is a didactic language in a way: it helps politicians who speak it to "preach" real democracy to their rivals and to the citizens, to instruct them as to what is consistent with the values of real democracy and what is not, what politicians do and what they don't do, exactly as the present authorities are doing.

Moralising language personalises politics once again and this is the main reason why the government resorts to it more often than the opposition.[2] Although some vague "others" may rule in the "vernacular" version of the moralistic language, this language is used to highlight the (bad) human will in governmental decisions, not technocratic necessity. One cannot dispute necessities, one has to accept them whereas one can evaluate human activity. Hence moralistic language will be the first language not only of the opposition but also of every citizen who is worried about how things are going in the country—things whose complexity he or she does not comprehend or even try to. In this language, judgement precedes comprehension or even takes its place and this is all many citizens want. They may not know what the government is doing but they certainly know whether it is doing it well or not. Politicians, meanwhile, greatly benefit from the fact that this language allows them to comment the doings of their opponents on the spot, in front of the cameras, because they do not need any special "linguistic competence" to speak it. Moralistic language contains no technical terms and, without digging into the matter any further, it can be used to comment just about anything: the corruptive scandal in the ministry, the bungled act of parliament or the unfavourable adjudication of the Constitutional Court, not to mention such gems as an MP being caught "driving drunk" which can only be evaluated in this language. All this can become bon mot fodder, which will be repeated by the media for several days in succession, like Jan Rokita's *Nicea o muerte*. Finally, because of its stark simplicity, moralistic language is also accessible to second and third league politicians who are unable to master technocratic language. Improbable as it may sound, there are quite many examples. But from time to time even they must stand up and "support in the name of" or voice their "strong protest."

Moralistic language owes its significant position not only to the natural human tendency to perceive reality in simplified, normative terms but also—despite verbal or genuine acceptance of pluralism —to reluctance to face the resulting conflicts. "In the humanist tradition, in philosophy and in Christianity," writes Phillipe Braud,

"the emphasis is on unifying qualities: consistency of the subject, uniformity of the individual and, from the collective point of view, primacy of the common good, superiority of the common welfare and, above all, consensus. Conflict is thought to be something bad and must be destroyed; it is a symptom of the inability

[2] However, Józef Oleksy, then Prime Minister, gave a brilliant display of moralizing language when he was accused of co-operation with the Russian intelligence service. Cf. Dabert, D., "Wielki spektakl. Mowy obrończe Józefa Oleksego" [The great spectacle. Józef Oleksy's defence speeches].

of individuals or groups to overcome their egoisms. Being a source of suffering, conflict assumes guilt or at least misunderstanding. Hence some people find political discord to be 'despicable'" (Braud 1991: 102).

For this reason moralising is not the speciality of the political margin. In Poland even many political commentators are moralisers (refined ones, of course). Moralising language—even if it is not always able to hide its cynicism—is basically well received by the Poles because it is a language with which they are very familiar. It is the language of Sunday sermons, those which are about something and those which are about nothing. It is also the traditional language ("sociolect") of the intelligentsia whose group identity is defined in terms of their obligations toward the Fatherland. Finally, it is the language in which the averagely educated Pole thinks about his country, full of military and political defeats which became "moral victories." It is also in this language (how could it be otherwise?) that national solidarity—so deeply engrained in Polish culture—can be expressed.

Two Languages of the End of Politics?

The moralising language and the technocratic language alternate in politicians' everyday utterances although it is probably true that each of these languages is either their "first" one or their "learned" one in the linguistic sense. In other words, when asked to say a few sentences into the microphone some politicians will instinctively use grand words whereas others will immediately place each problem in the context of assumed objectives and available resources (which must always be found). Of course some topics are easier to discuss in one language than the other one and some will create disharmony between the moralising language and the technocratic language. For example, at first glance social solidarity (solidarność) belongs to the realm of moralising language but actually, once it has been institutionalised by the welfare state and renamed (*solidaryzm*), it becomes a state objective which the government must meet. The biblical formula "bear ye one another's burdens" can be phrased in moralistic terms ("it's outrageous that people are dying on the rubbish tip") or technocratic terms ("the state must take effective action to limit the scale of poverty"). However, methodical resolution of the problem by means of benefits rather than naïve and unsystematic charity, coined in technocratic language, loses the moral aspect. Those who are obliged to realise the solidarity principle by paying higher tax contributions receive no symbolic compensation for their efforts, even if they actually gain much more in the way of social stability. Such compensation simply cannot be expressed in technocratic language whereas in moralistic language the rich man is at best "honest."

To summarise, analysis of the rhetoric of politicians who mainly speak technocratic and moralising language reveals a very odd picture of their work. Politicians try to convince citizens that politics are a service rendered to society by high-class specialists whose only goal is the common good of the country. No longer is there any room here for the typical tension between the hot heart and the cold mind which Weber discussed in his famous lecture nearly 90 years ago. This image of politics can sooner be equated with the "helping professions" (its closest approximation being social work), funded

by the budget but giving great personal satisfaction which compensates for low wages (every time one manages "simply to help" people). I need not convince anybody that this image is very different from the social image of politicians yet it is very much expected by the Poles. Cezary Trutkowski came to this conclusion when he analysed his research findings and dozens of surveys corroborate it, as do the words we here daily in the street: "what we need in Poland at the end of the 20th century are managers who know how to solve specific problems of specific people, not spiritual leaders who paint glowing visions of the future" (Trutkowski 2000: 242); for respondents an "efficient state" is always more than simply "a just state." If "political lunatics" were mainly responsible for delaying the construction of the efficient state in the early nineties, today it is the "cynical strategists" who are to blame.

The Polish dream of an efficient state free of conflict—and therefore also free of politicians because conflict is their raison d'être—should be viewed in broader context, however. Suppression of the language of representation signifies the crisis of the very institution of representation, as political philosophers, sensitive to the quality of public life, have been telling us for a long time. "Professional" politicians have merely adjusted their language to the expectations of the people. Drawing upon the work of Alisdair MacIntyre and his diagnosis of contemporary public culture we may say that the politician who alternates between technocratic and moralising language wants to come over as a manager, expert and therapist of his political community all at once. Such aspirations may irritate us or amuse us but they are understandable if we remember that he sees the community itself "as if it were a body incapacitated with sickness" (Montesquieu).

European societies have changed tremendously since Weber gave the aforementioned lecture. Simplifying matters to the limits of Weber's "borderline type," we may say that, compared with society in the nineteen-twenties, contemporary society is class-free but not conflict-free, anti-ideological but not devoid of ideals, and a-historical although history continues to confront it with new challenges. Today Western societies are not split by such deep ideological controversies as they were in Weber's times although we can hardly claim that ideologies, despite all their metamorphoses, no longer play any role in political life. After all, the end of ideology diagnosed in the nineteen-fifties, like the end of history declared after the fall of communism, only applied to ideologies which promised to completely reconstruct society, not ideologies which merely provide citizens with a "map" (MacIntyre) of social and political reality. Yet politicians' attachment to ideology which, according to Weber, was to warm their hearts, is much weaker today than it was several decades ago: sometimes it seems to be quite negligible compared with pure greed of power. Nowadays party organisations also adopt a more pragmatic (read: cynical) approach to their ideological manifestos and declarations. And although the transformations which have taken place in European societies within the last few decades have definitely helped to cool down politicians' hearts, we must not forget that hordes of cool-headed experts also worked hard to bring about this change. Politics have become more professional but few observers probably doubt that they are becoming more of a profession, less of a calling.

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