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From depoliticization to politicization: three periods of thinking politically with Carl Schmitt in Hungary

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ABSTRACT

The article connects the much discussed recent political developments in Hungary under Viktor Orbán with the dynamics between depoliticization and politicization guiding the local reception of Carl Schmitt's works. Recent developments in Hungarian politics have been widely researched, but mostly without giving due attention to political thinking. The article argues that the reception of Schmitt's works, both in academia and in public discourse, has significantly influenced political thinking in Hungary throughout the 20th century and in recent decades. By reading the history of reception, the article aims to confirm that depoliticization and politicization are not diametrically opposed in the sense that the former stands for the elimination of politics. Rather, depoliticization and politicization follow from each other, as Schmitt himself described the impossibility of neutralizing politics. Beginning with the 1920s, this article examines three periods of Schmitt's reception and shows that, after attempts of depoliticization, Schmitt was increasingly acknowledged as an author who argues for an overtly politicized account of politics. In terms of political thinking, this last development has defined the context of Hungarian politics since the 2010s.

1. Introduction

'I am sure Carl Schmitt would be very proud of Viktor Orbán', Donald Tusk, then President of the European People's Party, said in an interview in April 2020.[1] Resuming a debate on whether Orbán's Fidesz should be expelled from the EPP and criticizing COVID-related emergency measures introduced by the Hungarian government, Donald Tusk framed the issue by invoking the controversial German thinker, whose past is considered dark enough to cast shadows on anyone who appears to follow in his footsteps. Accordingly, in a letter to all EPP party leaders, Viktor Orbán strongly rejected any similarity and distanced himself from the 'follower and ideologue of Nazi Germany'.[2] To our knowledge, this was the first time Orbán publicly referred to Carl Schmitt. However, this by no means implies that Carl Schmitt was a new name in Hungarian political discourse. Although the dispute between Tusk and Orbán brought Carl Schmitt into the

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headlines, his name was already well known in the Hungarian political context, and, as we argue, his influence was profound far beyond political and legal theory.

Carl Schmitt's name is often mentioned when trying to explain the dramatic political changes that have taken place in Hungary since 2010. However, most approaches focus on the institutional-legal framework, the exercise of power, or the role of autocratic populism, without addressing Schmitt's ideational significance for political discourse in Hungary.[3] In contrast, the aim of this article is to provide a more detailed and historically broader account of Schmitt's role in shaping Hungarian political thinking.[4] In order to understand and explain the profound changes in Hungary during the last decade, one should turn to political thinking where attempts to depoliticize politics were overcome by politicization as a result of an extraordinarily extensive reception of Carl Schmitt's works. Our claim is that the scholarly and public reception of Schmitt popularized a conflictual understanding of politics that shaped the ideational context of post-transition Hungary.

In our article, we reconstruct the Hungarian reception of Carl Schmitt's works in order to trace the dynamics between depoliticization and politicization. From the early 1920s to the late 2010s, we retrace a trend of eliminating and depoliticizing politics, and how these attempts failed by proving – in line with Schmitt – that depoliticization always implies politicization. We rely on Schmitt's account of politicization on two levels: First, we accept it as a general description of politics in which conflicts cannot be eliminated; second, we consider Schmitt's reception as the material on which the dynamics of depoliticization and politicization unfolded in Hungary, contributing to a latent and then a manifest politicization of public life.

Our analysis differs from the literature approaching the Hungarian case via Schmitt in three ways. First, we aim at going beyond readings that use a few Schmittian buzzwords but do not address the genuine Schmittian problem of politics. By turning to a systematic reading of the reception of Schmitt's understanding of the political, we show that it is not sovereignty, the friend-enemy distinction, or anti-pluralism that explain the Hungarian case, but the dynamic between depoliticization and politicization. Second, to avoid decontextualized examples viewed through Schmittian glasses, we offer a longer history of Schmitt's reception in Hungary to show that the depoliticization/politicization dynamic has been present since the early 1920s. Third, we do not read political or legal theorists separately from public intellectuals or politicians. In contrast, we emphasize that Schmitt's reception occurred at the level of political thinking that encompassed both theory and practice and collapsed the supposed boundaries or any hierarchy between the two fields.

We proceed as follows. We start by establishing the conceptual framework by briefly introducing three approaches to depoliticization, including Schmitt's one. Next, in the following two subchapters, we provide an overview of the reception of Carl Schmitt in Hungary from the early 1920s to the 1980s and the democratic transition. As we will show, despite crucial political differences, Schmitt was criticized both between the two world wars and during Communist dictatorship for his 'over-politicized' account of the political. In our reading, these depoliticizing readings, along with the liberal attempt to depoliticize politics after the fall of Communism in 1990, were not only themselves political but confirmed the entanglement between depoliticization and politicization. Finally, we show how Schmitt was increasingly ready to politicize politics in response to liberal depoliticizing tendencies after 1990. We argue that in the 2010s, Schmitt's

reception in Hungary asserted a politicized account of politics over depoliticizing currents, and that this shift in political thinking provides the ideational context for recent political and constitutional changes in the country.

2. The Schmittian dynamic of depoliticization and politicization

Is depoliticization even possible, or is it just another kind of politicization? Before turning to the various levels of reception of Carl Schmitt's works as they contributed to the discourses on depoliticization in Hungary, a possible conceptual trap must be eliminated. In line with some of the most insightful work in the literature, we argue that depoliticization is not possible without politicization. Politics is never just about depoliticizing or politicizing something. Rather, there is an inexorable slide towards politicization in any attempt or claim of depoliticization. Thus, it would be somewhat naïve and, given the literature we briefly review below, contradictory to assume that politicization and depoliticization are diametrically opposed extremes on a single scale. Both theoretically and in terms of practical politics, it makes more sense to speak of depoliticization as a dynamic process in which the complete elimination of politics through a strategy of depoliticization remains as impossible as it is undesirable for those who develop such a strategy. In this respect, depoliticization, whether celebrated or deplored, is rightly a 'misnomer',[5] as it does not designate the end of politics but a path of repoliticization.

Even if depoliticization is a misnomer, it is by no means meaningless and could be summarized as 'the denial of political contingency and the transfer of functions away from elected politicians'.[6] Of course, neither of these options means the end of politics, but both imply a certain approach to what politics is. What depoliticization might refer to, then, depends on how narrow or broad the understanding of politics that underlies it should be. Accordingly, depoliticization could refer to the removal of a political issue from an established institutional framework ('arena-shifting'),[7] to the removal of contingency, contestability, or to the rejection of the need for decision-making.[8]

The intertwining of depoliticization and politicization forms the basis for Jacques Rancière's oft-quoted dictum that politics is about the suppression of the political: 'depoliticization is the oldest task of politics'.[9] Although politics cannot be definitively abolished, the abolition of its own contingency is the fundamental impetus for all political action. Depoliticization, according to another but more practical account, includes institutional tactics such as the creation of non-majoritarian institutions, rule-based tactics that narrow the scope of policy-making by limiting the need for political decisions, and preference-formation tactics that interpret certain issues as outside the realm of politics and thus outside the realm of contingency and contestability.[10] In this context, depoliticization may be responsible for the rise of populism by enabling the contrast between pragmatic and rule-based governance on the one hand and the common sense of redemptive populism on the other.[11] Drawing on recent literature, it is crucial to understand that depoliticization and politicization cannot be conceived as mere opposing categories. Rather, what is at stake is the relationship between contestability and political efforts to remove that contestability in order to achieve political goals.[12] A parallel dynamic can be found between contestation and decontestation as described by Michael Freeden. In political thinking and in political ideologies, decontestation is necessary to deal with uncertainties. However, since the decisions underlying

decontestation remain grounded in uncertainty, they never achieve finality and inevitably point to alternative decontestations or imply the potential undermining of a particular pattern of decontestation.[13]

Depoliticization, or more precisely, the fight against depoliticization, is the conceptual backbone of Schmitt's thinking. Matthias Lievens describes Schmitt's resistance to any depoliticizing force as a metapolitical struggle for the possibility and recognizability of conflict.[14] Depoliticization, whether as the real possibility of the elimination of the political or as the mere concealment of the political, is not a purely theoretical question but an existential threat; the enemies of the political, who deny the necessity of distinctions, undermine the capacity for genuine political action.[15] Schmitt himself was not sure that complete depoliticization, the elimination of the distinction between friend and foe, was even desirable or achievable,[16] but he was convinced that the pursuit of depoliticization is a pervasive historical tendency that is always intertwined with politicization. Underpinning the dynamic relationships between depoliticization and politicization, he outlines in *The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations* a historical trajectory of the inevitable failure of creating a neutralized ground to eliminate conflict.[17] From theology to metaphysics and morality to economics and technology, the goal has always been to neutralize the central intellectual domain of the age, but it was precisely the attempt at depoliticization that sowed the seeds of conflict and politicization. To be sure, Schmitt's work itself implies similar ambivalences and dualities. Flinders and Wood argue, for example, that the very notion of exception, introduced in *Political Theology* in 1922, implies ambiguity, since on the one hand it represents the politicization of a self-enclosed system, but on the other hand, following Agamben's reading, as a mode of governance it leads to depoliticization without alternatives by invoking the ultimate and unchallengeable decision-maker.[18] However, as the historical course of neutralizations and depoliticizations shows, which, according to Schmitt, is neither a progression nor a regression,[19] the shifts between depoliticization and politicization do not signify the completion of a strategy, nor the conclusion of a tendency that follows a general law of history, but a dynamic relationship in which the opposites are mutually dependent.

Depoliticization has become a fundamental, if less explicit, theme of contemporary realist political theory since the mid-2000s. Although contemporary realists do not address the issue directly, the way in which realist thought is put forward against abstract, universalized philosophizing about politics runs strikingly parallel to the arguments described above. According to the realists, mainstream political philosophy represents 'the desire to avoid, displace, or escape politics'.[20] This displacement of politics by an abstract, 'moralistic' political philosophy, much like technocratic governance, aims to solve political problems by removing them from the conflicting realm of politics and settling them by presenting solutions achieved through supposedly apolitical means. In contrast to these attempts at depoliticization, realists call for a 'political' political theory,[21] which they specify through the concept of the autonomy of the political.[22] This latter is a theoretical claim that refers to how thinking about politics can be 'better adapted to the nature of the political itself'.[23] Realists emphasize a number of 'political' features of politics that need to be taken into account. The first of these is that disagreement and conflict are ineradicable. In the absence of a proper methodology and consensus, politics is the means of addressing disagreement.[24] Moral principles are unrealistically believed to settle – and depoliticize – political questions precisely because there is constant

disagreement about them. Therefore, depoliticization is not only rejected but also claimed to be subject to the same conflictual character it purports to escape. From disagreement follows the need for authoritative decisions, and, according to realists, political rule means authoritative rule grounded in normativity that creates obligations.[25] Political action is the way to deal with disagreement, and it is done not through reason or morality but through authority and law.[26] However, since politically authoritative, binding decisions are fragile and subject to contingency, political rule requires centralized political authority.[27] Another feature is that political order is legitimated order and coercion,[28] but legitimacy cannot be generated by pre-political – e.g. moral – principles, since these are themselves subject to the regularities of the political realm. This means that the principles and norms of legitimacy cannot be depoliticized, since the gesture that takes them out of the political realm reintroduces their politicization.

That depoliticization always means politicization is a fundamental insight that informs both classical and contemporary literature. Depoliticization, we learn from Schmitt, is an impossible undertaking, but this does not mean that it is a rare or meaningless attempt in political thinking. On the contrary, depoliticization occurs routinely, as political action often sees itself as fulfiling a goal, either by resolving an issue that has been raised as a problem or by claiming unquestionability and delegitimizing any attempt to challenge an established position. In the end, however, politicization reappears, as in the case of the Hungarian reception of Carl Schmitt, which provided both the conceptual resource for understanding the inevitability of politicization and the material that resisted to depoliticizing readings. The critique of Schmitt's works as a critique of politicization turned out to be a form of political intervention, either in the name of morality, Marxian economics, and over-politicized ideology, or as the liberal neutralization and containment of politics after the democratic transition in 1990.

3. Depoliticization contra Schmitt in the interwar period

Carl Schmitt's *Die Lage der europäischen Rechtswissenschaft* was first published in Hungarian, being the written version of the lecture Schmitt had given in Budapest in 1943.[29] It was his second visit to Hungary, which served to strengthen German-Hungarian academic relations.[30] Schmitt's criticism of legal positivism in his lecture elicited only limited reactions. Despite the political-military alliance with Germany, both Anglo-Saxon and neo-Kantian legal traditions remained strong, as Schmitt himself noted in a conversation with a Hungarian professor.[31] This does not mean, however, that Schmitt went unnoticed in Hungary. By the time he visited Hungary, Schmitt had been frequently mentioned and quoted by legal scholars, essayists, and even journalists.[32] His theory of sovereignty became famous shortly after *Politische Theologie* was published. In 1923, a leading daily newspaper reported on a local election campaign in which the opposition candidate challenged the police and gave his speech despite the ban on his rally. Citing Schmitt, a 'prominent Bonn sociologist', the newspaper interpreted the incident as an example of a state of exception in which extralegal sovereign power prevailed despite existing legal authority.[33] It was an early, but not the last, instance in which Schmitt was used to explain political events.

Schmitt's academic reception in the 1920s and 1930s was fragmented both politically and theoretically. While *Politische Romantik* was criticized for its unclear conceptual

framework and one-sided, superficial rejection of European romanticism,[34] an unidentified author in a Catholic journal praised *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form* for rightly pointing to the social role of the Church.[35] Occasionally, Schmitt's theories were read as having practical significance. The prominent conservative legal scholar László Ottlik, for example, derived a political strategy from Schmitt's idea of substantial homogeneity to be observed by Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries – a key issue in Hungarian politics after the 1920 Treaty of Trianon.[36] In a two-volume work entitled *The Statesman*, philosopher Gyula Kornis offered a brief but insightful reading of Schmitt's friend-enemy distinction, though by downplaying its existential implications, he reduced it to an account of adversarial politics.[37] Later in the 1940s, as the reception of Nazi jurisprudence intensified, Schmitt's recent works, written by the leading jurist of the Hitler regime, were both recognized and denounced.

In addition to legal theory and intellectual history, some readings focused on Schmitt's political theory and, in particular, Schmitt's account of the nature of politics and the concept of the political. Politicization and the autonomy of the political were discussed in two of Schmitt's more detailed readings, which dealt with the normative limits of political action.

Budapest-born philosopher Aurél Kolnai, in his thorough critique published in 1933, describes Schmitt as one of the German 'irrationalists of life and power'.[38] Although Kolnai left Hungary for good in 1919, he continued to publish in Hungarian-language newspapers and journals, and some of his works written in German were closely followed in his former homeland.[39] According to Kolnai, Schmitt's theory of the political is a eulogy of power in the name of pure life and pure existence without any substantial normative content. In contrast, Kolnai hopes to find values that could justify political action beyond coercion and the use of force, which, even if they cannot be eliminated from politics, signify limits to Schmitt's theory. The problem with Schmitt's account, then, which stems in part from the primacy of foreign policy over domestic policy, is that it is 'merely a novel sociological version of the age-old principle: "It is power, not justice, that counts"'.[40] In Kolnai's reading, Schmitt misunderstands the relationship between politics and war as well as the role of debate. According to Kolnai, politics should be oriented towards the common good, which reveals that the autonomy of the political is both recognized and suppressed. Kolnai's reading of Schmitt is characteristic of a liminal understanding of politicization; it is, on the one hand, the 'emancipation of politics',[41] and, on the other, an attempt to depoliticize it by depriving it of its autonomy. Thus, Kolnai's otherwise thorough reading of Schmitt yielded an account of politics that is subject to a fundamental form of depoliticization. Although Kolnai acknowledges that Schmitt captures the particularity of the political, his reading is an – obviously political – move of limitation and depoliticization.

Six years after Kolnai's article, the neo-Kantian philosopher József Halasy-Nagy addressed Schmitt at length in his essay on politics and morality.[42] Similar to Kolnai, Halasy-Nagy reads Schmitt's friend-foe theory as an overly naturalistic approach to politics that lacks justification and grounds political action in pure power and force. The distinction between friend and foe, however, is not a primary or elementary political fact, Halasy-Nagy writes, but the result of conscious political evaluation. Almost contemporaneously, and similar to Hans J. Morgenthau, in his early Schmitt critique, Halasy-Nagy narrows the friend–foe relationship to the evaluation of advantages and

disadvantages.[43] Lacking foundations, however, remains a problem since genuine justification, requires more. In politics, explanations based on mere life must be overcome: 'political judgement is value-laden and ethically motivated',[44] suggesting once again that politics must be stripped of its autonomy and consequently depoliticized in order to become a kind of ethical action.

Kolnai does not seem to propose such strict limitations, conceding that while politics should be concerned with 'non-political values – those of religion, welfare, justice, humanity, technological control, convenience, etc', there are also 'peculiarly political values' such as success, ingenuity, and timing. Nevertheless, their hierarchy is also a given for Kolnai: 'The friend-foe theory of politics advocates an untenable absolutism and relativism of political values'.[45] Thus, despite the differences between these two accounts, written by authors established and recognized in the Hungarian context, they share a common rejection of the autonomy of politics. If Schmitt's concept of the political can be seen as a radical approach to politicization, then Kolnai's and Halasy-Nagy's critiques pursue a kind of depoliticization that sees the essence of justifying politics outside the political realm. This interpretive pattern of displacement proved long-lasting and influenced the reading of Schmitt in the following decades, even if the reception was to become much more ideological.

4. Depoliticization contra Schmitt after 1945

With the establishment of the Communist dictatorship after 1945, Schmitt's theoretically diverse and fragmented reception was replaced by a complete rejection of his thought. While Schmitt was still occasionally mentioned in legal scholarship (most notably as the author of *Der Hüter der Verfassung* and the *Verfassungslehre*), he was not considered a scholar anymore but an intellectual whose theories actively contributed to the creation of the totalitarian Nazi state. Of course, Schmitt's reception during this period was primarily determined by the leading intellectual of the Communist era, György Lukács and his 1954 work *The Destruction of Reason*.

In his review of the Hungarian reception of Schmitt, Lajos Cs. Kiss delineated various strategies of dealing with Schmittian thinking during the Communist era. Destruction, suppression and concealment, and finally a cautious addressing characterized the various approaches that developed in the course of the transition from totalitarian to autocratic rule in Hungary.[46] Lukács seems to belong to the first category, since in *The Destruction of Reason* (1954) he condemned Schmitt as a fascist thinker. It is well known that Lukács and Schmitt shared a controversial and complicated intellectual past. As disciples of Max Weber, critics of romanticism and neo-Kantianism, opponents of liberal parliamentarism, they could even be considered theorists who provided structurally similar, if differently reasoned, answers to the impasses of modernity.[47] Political opposition, however, prevailed between them. To call Schmitt 'Hitler's former official lawyer' and a supporter of American imperialism,[48] was tantamount to banishing him from intellectual and scholarly discourse. In Lukács's narrative, Schmitt's fascist sociology represented the absolute enemy to be destroyed.

Despite, or perhaps because of this eliminative gesture, the reading Lukács presents is worth describing in detail, for it is here that the dynamic relations and intertwining between depoliticization and politicization take place. Lukács exercises a close

ideological reading of Schmitt, exemplifying the dynamics of depoliticization and politicization. He attempts to read Schmitt against Schmitt just to demonstrate that politicization is inevitable. First, as an ideologically motivated critique, it aims to eliminate Schmitt. Second, it presents an opposition between Marxism and Schmitt's connections to National Socialism and is thus a politicized rejection of any debate. Third, however, despite its politicized foundations, Lukács's argument rests on a depoliticizing reading of Schmitt's account of politics, which exerts a long-lasting and fundamental influence on Hungarian political thinking. Here, Schmitt's reception as a theorist of the political and as a contestable representative of a political position on the role, extent and nature of politics coincides with a long-lasting effect in the Hungarian case.

According to Lukács, in Weber and Mannheim as well as in Schmitt, formalism is the problem to be overcome, because the 'ever more methodical replacement of causal connections by analogies' led to ideological forms such as justice and religion being seen as more important than economics.[49] Although Lukács, also an anti-liberal, acknowledged the originality of Schmitt's thinking, he could not escape the general narrative of the critique of irrationalism. According to Lukács, formalism and irrationalism in Schmitt served to disguise an anti-democratic monopolistic-capitalist strategy.[50] Despite the 'existential trimmings' and the 'flirting with "life" and historical concreteness', politics, understood as the distinction between friend and foe, remained a reduced theory without concreteness.[51]

The substance that Lukács misses in Schmitt is economics and the causal relations that would determine and justify political action. In Lukács, politics is not seen as an autonomous domain or as a specific type of human activity, but merely as a derivative. Formalism, the main object of Lukács's critique, implies excessive politicization because it lacks content and causal determinants that would constrain it. Obviously, this was an insight that Lukács could not endorse in his most dogmatic Marxist (or, more precisely, Stalinist) book. Lukács' destruction of Schmitt's destruction of reason led to a neutralized understanding of politics through the Marxist primacy of economic conflict. Thus, Schmitt once again became an example of political cynicism,[52] while his politics was understood as an unfounded sphere of domination devoid of any foundation.[53] Just as Kolnai and Halasy-Nagy, Lukács rejected Schmitt's concept of politics because of the unconstrained politicization it entailed. The question for all of them was how to depoliticize politics by turning to transpolitical foundations. Schmitt's dogmatic depoliticization by a major ideologue of the Communist era did not, of course, mean that politics could be eliminated for the good; on the contrary, it led to politicization.

Not unrelated to Lukács' influence, a strong anti-Schmittian argument characterized the discourse when Jürgen Habermas became part of the Hungarian sociological discourse during the relative liberalization of the Communist regime.[54] In 1964, a leading Hungarian sociology journal reported on the Weber conference in Heidelberg and Habermas's remarks about the Weber-Schmitt kinship.[55] Later, some of Habermas's articles were translated into Hungarian, and the unfolding reception of his theories reinforced the explanation that there is an inherent link between Schmitt's specific conservatism and totalitarian or authoritarian politics, and that Schmitt's separation of politics and morality is behind such tendencies.[56] Moreover, Schmitt's 'political' understanding of politics and his rejection of moralism were recognized in the early reception

of theories of political pluralism, although these contributions also remained within the framework of Marxist criticism.[57]

While Lukács's account of the role of irrationalism and Schmittian fascism seemed too dogmatic in light of the political and theoretical developments of the 1960s and 1970s, his general implications regarding the need for depoliticization proved durable. Schmitt did not completely disappear from the discourse, nor was he intellectually destroyed during the decades of Communist rule in Hungary, but officially he remained an enemy figure as the originator of 'fascist sociology', against which the theoretical strategy employed was to argue how the excessive politicization implied by the concept of the political should be tamed by finding the applicable norms that would constrain political action.

Especially in Lukács, the dynamics of depoliticization and politicization quickly become clear. The ideology of the Communist dictatorship not only turns out to be political but to the extent that it permeates all levels of interaction – political, professional, and private – it becomes over-politicization. Apparently, Lukács's depoliticizing reading of Schmitt and the shadow it cast on subsequent readings, signifies a specific form of depoliticization and a resulting politicization. Thus, it was not surprising that the democratic transition was not only about eliminating the Communist system but also about securing private and professional spheres of everyday Hungarian life that could not be politicized. Although the final decades of Communist rule brought a loosening of ideological constraints and a less pervasive form of politicization, the aftermath proved strong enough to generate an influential depoliticizing current during and immediately after the fall of Communism. Thus, Schmitt was rejected, albeit for different reasons, by both Communist ideology and the liberal democratic mainstream.

5. From depoliticization to politicization: Schmitt in Hungary after democratic transition

After the democratic transition of 1989–1990, the reception of Carl Schmitt intensified in two different directions. First, with the regained autonomy of political science, scholarly reception began to flourish, and Schmitt gradually became one of the most discussed authors. Second, especially since the early 2000s, Schmitt became a frequently cited author in daily political debates, in essays, opinion pieces, and sometimes even by politicians. In this part of our article, we examine how readings of Schmitt contributed to the repoliticization of politics, but first, it is important to establish the background against which Schmittian discourse emerged.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, anti-political thinking was influential and limiting the autonomy of politics was part of the mainstream. As mentioned earlier, this was a direct result of the remnants of Communist over-politicization, but the trend was even broader, encompassing multiple streams of political thinking. Due to the ideologically driven Communist rule, its final technocratic period, but also due to the 'negotiated revolution',[58] politics was expected to dissolve into expertise and consensus-based discussions. In the literature on Hungary before and after the fall of Communism, there seems to be agreement that liberalism played a prominent role and provided a general attitude to the new regime.[59] In an overview of post-1989 political thinking, three phases of liberalism were identified: the moment of liberal consensus during the fall of Communism, the dominance of left-liberalism until the late 2000s, and the subsequent

anti-liberal turn.[60] During the transition, liberalism provided a reasonable response to the Communist regime as a provisional platform for opposition by prescribing the restriction of government, separation of powers, protection of human rights, and depoliticization of the economy and bureaucracy.[61] Although this apparent consensus quickly broke down, the intellectual dominance of liberalism as social liberalism continued both in politics and in the writings of intellectuals and scholars such as János Kis or György Konrád.[62] The political thinking adopted a moralizing and anti-political understanding of politics, supported the radicalization of the separation of powers, the neutralization of the concepts of the state and the common good, the dominance of a technocratic discourse, and understood democracy as a substantial requirement supposedly preventing majoritarian politics.[63] Somewhat independent of actual party relations, politics was almost generally expected to be constrained by depoliticizing normative and technocratic standards. However, by the end of the 1990s, anti-political liberalism and technocratic governance were challenged by Fidesz's adoption of a neoconservative political language and by the emerging role of personalized political leadership.[64] The realist approach to politics became stronger, while conservatism also gained ground from the mid-2000s. Thus, liberalism, being in a dominant position in both politics and political thinking was put on the defensive.[65] Parallel to the latter developments, political theory intensively discussed the agonistic-antagonistic character of politics, especially through the reception of Carl Schmitt's works,[66] which had an unprecedented impact on public discourse.

Schmitt's reception includes the translation of his works. Somewhat surprisingly, the first text of Schmitt to be translated after the fall of Communism was his short post-war dialogue on power but it did not become the focus of reception. The situation is different with *Politische Theologie* translated in 1992 and *Der Begriff des Politischen* (2002) which have remained the key texts of the Hungarian reception even if later *Legalität und Legitimität* (2006), *Politische Theologie II*. (2006) as well as *Ex Captivitate Salus* (2010) were also published. Schmitt's post-war writings, similar to the more literary or intellectual works, have enjoyed only moderate attention. Despite its flourishing reception, Schmitt's work in Hungary has remained limited to a handful of his writings, and Schmitt has been associated primarily with the idea of sovereignty, the concept of the state of exception, and especially the friend-enemy distinction. After the first monograph on Schmitt,[67] however, numerous articles and edited volumes have demonstrated that Schmitt's understanding of politics has become known in the academic world. More importantly, however, via scholars pursuing political thinking in the public discourse, Schmitt has become a familiar name in the broader political publicity as well just as he was before 1945.

This difference – and conflict – between the two conceptions of politics, the liberal one and the Schmittian – politicized one – became evident outside the academic world, for example, in 1992 in a public debate between two philosophers, the conservative writer Tamás Molnár and the, at that time, liberal MP and public intellectual, Gáspár Miklós Tamás.[68] In the exchange, which was published in a daily newspaper and a weekly magazine, they agreed that John Locke and Carl Schmitt held opposing positions regarding a desirable understanding of the state, but that a middle ground should be found between them. According to Molnár, in the conflict between 'polemology' and 'economism', Schmitt was right to warn against the expectation that politics could be replaced by automatic and bureaucratic procedures or by solutions exclusively driven by

moral principles. Yet even Molnár rejected what he saw as a voluntaristic and overly conflictual approach to politics in Schmitt, and suggested looking for the best in both Schmitt and Locke, whose individualism he otherwise described as equally excessive. Thus, although the need for decisiveness and genuine political action seemed to be legitimate demands, Schmitt – and his theory of the primacy of the political, as Tamás later described it[69] – remained an unsuitable alternative.

It is characteristic of Schmitt's Hungarian reception, and it remained prevalent until the late 2000s, that his works were read as potentially dangerous to discuss openly but important to read in order to know how the enemy thinks. In this context, Schmitt became an authoritative source for discussing the problems of parliamentarism. As early as the late 1980s, it was noted that parliamentarism's self-understanding absorbed much of Schmitt's criticism in order to guard against threats that might jeopardize its integrity.[70] After the fall of Communism, Schmitt's critique was met with a liberal defence of parliamentarism as a government based on open and rational discussion. Moreover, it was transformed into a commonplace critique of politics equated with conflict and irrational tactics that ruin public discourse and impede substantive discussion.[71] Schmitt's insights about parliamentarism and the dangers of reviving his thought went hand in hand.[72] Since political conflict was synonymous with polarization and dangerous to parliamentarism, depoliticization was seen as normatively right.

In this context, Schmitt was quickly reduced to an advocate of friend-foe politics. Schmitt's complaint about the distortion of his theory in the preface to the 1963 edition of his *Der Begriff des Politischen* seems to apply to the Hungarian case; the criterion was transformed into a superficial and accusatory slogan[73] representing a type of politics that could be disastrous for the desired unity of the political community.[74] After 2010, Schmitt's friend-enemy distinction, and more generally the conflictual nature of politics, was seen by intellectuals as a political logic applied specifically by Fidesz, leaving the left-liberal elite unprepared to confront a politics in which anything goes.[75] A former leader of the Socialist Party criticized the friend-foe distinction as a characteristic tactic of Fidesz, bringing about a war like situation in which the opposition is no longer seen as an opponent but as an absolute enemy.[76] Similar statements, without mentioning Schmitt, have become commonplace rhetorical elements in Hungary, especially after 2010. The latter development, however, signals a double shift in Schmitt's reception. First, the boundaries between scholarly inquiry and public debate lost their ability to shape the reading of Schmitt, and intense discussion of Schmitt began to emerge in political debates. As in the first period of reception, Schmitt became a public figure. Second, association with Schmitt's politics, instead of being just a particularly blunt kind of criticism, began to take on explanatory value, sometimes even fulfiling the role of justification.

Considering how Schmitt's reception contributed to Hungarian political thinking, two important readings should be highlighted. The first was an article by the internationally acclaimed Hungarian philosopher Ágnes Heller' on Schmitt's concept of the political, published in the second volume of the Hungarian Political Science Review.[77] In this article, Schmitt was described as the dubious but insightful author whose account was crucial for understanding the true nature of politics. The second step occurred a decade later, but on a much broader stage, when another political philosopher introduced Schmitt to the public in a popularizing televised lecture in 2005. Sponsored by

a multinational telecommunications company to popularize internet-based communication, the lecture series, backed by online resources, covered a variety of scientific fields, from physics and biology to engineering and art history. The speakers were leading experts in their respective fields of research, and the events were heavily promoted and distributed through various channels. Speaking on politics was the widely respected political philosopher György Bence, a former student of Lukács, co-author of János Kis, a critic of Marxism who turned away from liberalism as well and became an advisor to Viktor Orbán for a few years in the mid-1990s. Bence's lecture,[78] entitled *The Specificity of the Political*, aimed to explain why politics cannot be subjugated to expertise, bureaucracy, and, above all, morality, and why the autonomy of politics is inevitable and proper. Criticizing Rawls, Dworkin, and Habermas, and referring to Hannah Arendt, Michael Oakeshott, and especially Schmitt, called 'the dark genius of politics', Bence argued that politics cannot be measured and judged by extra-political standards and that it is impossible to get rid of it.

Emphasizing that conflict is inevitable while consensus is not, Bence briefly summarized Schmitt's theory of sovereignty and the friend-enemy distinction to conclude that politics, and Schmittian politics in particular, can indeed be dangerous. He argued that depoliticization is never final, while politicization is always an option, but a positive one, since it means for a people to decide on the form of political community and to allow for new political beginnings. Certainly, it is not possible here to measure the direct impact of the lecture, but it may be important to note that the reports and interviews that helped popularize the event afterwards through online and broadsheet media all emphasized the key Schmittian points and highlighted a conflictual understanding of politics in the highly polarized context of the mid-2000s. Arguably, Bence's contribution was to offer a Schmittian conceptual framework that openly, and as publicly as possible in terms of the media context, challenged both technocratic and moralistic approaches that were the main attempts to depoliticize politics at the time. This is not to say that Schmitt has become an even more frequently cited author, but rather that the relevance of his concepts and theories to the current political context in Hungary has become widely recognized and, consequently, the application of Schmitt has become more pronounced. On the occasion of the 120th anniversary of Schmitt's birth, for example, an article by Péter Techet was published in a leading national daily newspaper. The author – a journalist and scholar specialized on Schmitt – states that one should read Schmitt to take stock of the past decades since the fall of Communism, to understand the catastrophic polarization, the formalistic constitutional interpretation, the weakness of the head of state, the judicialization of politics, and the whole process of democratic transition.[79]

Since the late 2000s, Hungarian political discourse has been increasingly influenced by Schmitt's idea of the state of exception. The successive crises in Hungarian politics have often been understood as a gradual expansion of the logic of the political which concept was invoked to explain decisions violating the usual formal and informal norms. Of course, in this discourse Schmitt was heavily quoted and used, but very often misread. The 2006 political crisis triggered by a leaked speech by the prime minister, in which he revealed how lies helped him win the election that year; the impact of the global financial crisis in 2008; the apparent loss of the ability of the government of Ferenc Gyurcsány' to act; the landslide election victory of the Fidesz government in 2010 and the resulting new

constitution; the migration crisis that began in 2015; the COVID-19 pandemic, and the domestic handling of Russia's war against Ukraine – all of these events all have been explained as undoing the seeming consensus of the transition and raised questions about the nature and role of political decisions.[80]

What was seen as a state of exception was also interpreted through Giorgio Agamben's reading of Schmitt. By becoming permanent, the state of exception, along with an increasingly conflictual understanding of politics, was discussed as justifying extraordinary means, but it was also criticized, especially after 2010, as a means to depoliticize any potential opposition.[81] As Fidesz gained a supermajority in parliament in 2010, 2014, 2018, and again in 2022, the permanent constitutional majority was often seen as a permanent state of exception in which decisions potentially always exceeded norms, or in which – through a simplistic misinterpretation of Schmitt – norms were seen as a mere consequence of decisions. In this context, the meaning of the democratic majority and pluralism became contested, which manifested itself institutionally in the curtailment of the powers of the Constitutional Court and the adoption of a new constitution without compromise. Although this increasingly majority-oriented understanding of politics, often explained as populism, is also related to Schmitt's understanding of democracy as a homogeneous unity of the people,[82] Schmitt's thesis of the incompatibility of democracy and liberalism has become a standard reference point in debates about the nature of the Hungarian political system even without mentioning Schmitt. Friend–foe relations have been described as the main logic characterizing the post-2010 political regime, where naming the enemies contributed to the general politicization of the polity.[83] Furthermore, given the disputes between the Hungarian government and the European Union over several legislative acts and the handling of immigration from the mid 2010s, the concept of sovereignty has become a commonplace reference point even in Viktor Orbán's speeches, albeit without mentioning Schmitt.

In a recent study of political thinking in Hungary, Zoltán Balázs and Csaba Molnár showed that Schmitt has become an important source for both right-wing conservatives and left-wing radicals.[84] What is interesting, however, is how Schmitt has been used as a positive reference point to justify Viktor Orbán's government or conservative right-wing thinking in general. Certainly, Schmitt has become an ideological reference point to a limited extent. Since the late 2010s, he has increasingly been seen as a conservative thinker (especially by authors of the journal *Kommentár*) whose ideas could revitalize right-wing politics and usher in a conservative revolution that emancipates the 'old conservatism' from liberal hegemony. There are authors close to or openly sympathetic to the government or known as leading conservative political thinkers who rely on Schmitt for a more pronounced conservative stance that is necessarily radical, given the post-Communist conservative context with inherited hegemonies, and others who attempt to reconcile the radical threads in Schmitt with a more traditional conservatism.[85] One might describe this as a process of politicizing an ideological position aimed at challenging the liberal hegemony established during and after democratic transition.

To conclude this part of our article, let us point to a recent but largely incomplete shift in the discourse we surveyed above. While Schmitt's 'breakthrough' has lasted and his works continue to be important in both scholarly and public discourse in arguing for and carrying out politicization, a later shift in political thinking seems to replace Schmitt with

the more general framework of realism. A brief survey of recent public discussion confirms that while the Schmittian approach to politics remains influential, it has been increasingly referred to as realism. As evidenced by the recent interest in it in both public and scholarly discourse in Hungary, realism seems to have become the argumentative resource that explains and justifies politicization. And just as happened to Schmitt, it is also praised and denounced at the same time as a genuine but divisive – politicized – approach to politics.[86]

6. Conclusions

A recent volume, testifying to both the importance and the extent of the reception, has brought together most of the work written on Schmitt by Hungarian scholars over the past three decades – nearly 70 chapters. Lajos Cs. Kiss, the editor of the volume, summarized the state of research in such a way that the reception has reached the stage of normal scholarship which 'has been able to consistently distance itself from any form of ideological-political application of Schmitt's theories'.[87] On the one hand, one could agree with this reading, since it is true that Schmitt can be discussed in Hungarian scholarship by strictly scientific means without necessarily evoking friend-foe groupings. On the other hand, however, our results show not only the relevance of some direct uses or direct political implications but, more importantly, that the underlying Schmittian dynamic between depoliticization and politicization also influenced the reception itself. That is, depoliticization and politicization has taken place on the level of the reception of Schmitt which, in turn, due to the highly extensive and public nature of the reception contributed to the politicization of political thinking, especially after the transition.

In our overview of the reception, two tendencies have emerged. To read Schmitt against Schmitt means, as in the case of Kolnai, Halasy-Nagy, but also Lukács, to propose an alternative to politicization. However, we agree with Schmitt's approach to depoliticization and aimed to show that it is necessarily political, either as a covert form of limiting politics or as an attempt to eliminate it and subordinate it to other spheres. The other tendency that can be seen in Schmitt's reception after the fall of communism concerns the question of how politicization was accepted as inevitable. On the one hand, it follows from the acknowledgement of Schmittian insights on the nature of the political, on the other hand, at the level of political thinking in Hungary, it is a reaction to depoliticization as the mainstream, either in the form of moralism or technocracy.

The reception of Carl Schmitt's works in Hungarian political thinking confirmed the relevance of the Schmittian dynamics and the intertwining of depoliticization and politicization. The process of reception ran parallel to what was read but not always understood, in Schmitt. Readings that aimed to limit, restrict, or eliminate the political in Schmitt eventually became political on a broader level, politicizing the adjacent fields of morality or economics. However, the recent shift in political thinking, which has recognized that attempts at neutralization are either naïve and futile or merely disguised forms of politicization, seems to refute that it would be possible to distance Schmitt from the political and separate the reception that is political from readings that are not.

Finally, the limitation of our reading is that it cannot, and does not want to, establish causal relations between Schmitt's reception and recent political developments in

Hungary. We do not claim, because we do not believe that such a claim can be substantiated, that the contested regime of Viktor Orbán is there because of Schmitt. It seems certain, however, that in addition to the new constitution and the new power structures, another novelty in the Hungarian case should be taken into account, namely that of political thinking, where the politicization of politics has opened up avenues not previously explored.

Notes

1. P. Müller and J. Puhl, 'What the Economy Needs Is a Blitzkrieg', Spiegel, 21 April 2020, https://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/donald-tusk-what-the-economy-needs-is-a-blitzkrieg-a-382b2e03-3f48-412c-9973-9a883e913f5e (accessed 26 April 2023).
2. V. Orbán, 'PM Orbán demands apology from spreaders of fake news in letter to EPP', 5 May 2020, https://rmx.news/article/pm-orban-demands-apology-for-spreaders-of-fake-news-in-letter-to-epp-presidents (accessed 26 April 2023).
3. A. Antal, 'The Political Theories, Preconditions and Dangers of the Governing Populism in Hungary', *Politologický Časopis/Czech Journal of Political Science*, 24(1), (2017), pp. 5–20; E. Bos, 'Das System Orbán', *Osteuropa*, 68(3–5), 2018, pp. 19–32; A. Körösényi, G. Illés, and A. Gyulai, *The Orbán Regime: Plebiscitary Leader Democracy in the Making* (London, New York: Routledge, 2020); L. Vinx, 'Carl Schmitt and the authoritarian subversion of democracy', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 47(2), (2021), pp. 173–177; I.P. Karolewski, X. Libin, H. Patapan et al., 'Carl Schmitt and Democratic Backsliding', *Contemporary Political Theory* (2023), https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-023-00625-5
4. We use the term 'political thinking' following Michael Freeden's differentiation between thinking politically and thinking about politics: M. Freeden, *The Political Theory of Political Thinking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). The logic of thinking politically is a key element of István Schlett's history of Hungarian political thinking, which, has immensely influenced political science in the country since the democratic transition: I. Schlett, *A politikai gondolkodás története Magyarországon* (Budapest: Századvég, 2018). Political thinking, either practiced by professional politicians or scholars is an ineliminable part of doing politics by focusing on aspects such as coming to terms with the situation, maintaining the capacity to act, and to make decisions.
5. M. Flinders and J. Buller, 'Depoliticisation: Principles, Tactics and Tools', *British Politics*, 1 (2006), p. 296.
6. M. Flinders and M. Wood, 'Depoliticisation, governance and the state', *Policy & Politics*, 42(2), 2014, p. 135.
7. Flinders and Buller, 'Depoliticisation: Principles, Tactics and Tools', *op. cit*., Ref. 5, p. 296.
8. C. Hay, *Why We Hate Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), p. 81.; L. Jenkins, 'The Difference Genealogy Makes: Strategies for Politicisation or How to Extend Capacities', *Political Studies*, 59(1), (2011), p. 160. for Autonomy
9. J. Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics* (London, New York: Verso, 1995), p. 11, 19.
10. Flinders and Buller, 'Depoliticisation: Principles, Tactics and Tools', *op. cit*., Ref. 5, pp. 293–318.
11. J.A. Scott, '"There Is No Alternative"? The role of depoliticisation in the emergence of populism', *Politics*, 42(3), (2022), pp. 325–339.
12. M. Freeden, 'Book review: Ruth Wodak and Bernhard Forchtner (eds) The Routledge Handbook of Language and Politics', *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 20(1), (2020), pp. 88–89.
13. M. Freeden, Ideologies and Political Theory (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1996), p. 76.; M. Freeden, *The Political Theory of Political Thinking*, *op. cit.,* Ref. 4. p. 23.
14. M. Lievens, 'Carl Schmitt's Concept of History', in Jens Meierhenrich and Oliver Simons (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt* (New York: Oxford University Press: 2016), pp. 401–425.

15. C. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press: 2007), pp. 49–52.
16. Schmitt, *ibid*., pp. 35, 45, 53.
17. C. Schmitt, 'The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations', in *The Concept of The Political* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 80–96.
18. Flinders and Wood, 'Depoliticisation, governance and the state', *op. cit*., Ref. 6. p. 143.
19. Schmitt, 'The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations', *op. cit*., Ref. 16., p. 82.
20. W. Galston, 'Realism in Political Theory', *European Journal of Political Theory*, 9(4), (2010), p. 386.
21. M. Philp, 'Realism without Illusions', *Political Theory*, 40(5), (2012), p. 631.
22. B. Williams, 'Realism and Moralism in Political Theory', in Bernard Williams, *In the Beginning Was the Deed* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 3.; Galston, 'Realism in Political Theory', *op. cit*., Ref. 19., p. 408.; R. Geuss, Philosophy and Real Politics (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 23.; M. Sleat, 'Liberal Realism: A Liberal Response to the Realist Critique', *The Review of Politics*, 73(3), (2011), p. 471.
23. M. Sleat, 'Introduction: Politics Recovered – on the Revival of Realism in Contemporary Political Theory', in Matt Sleat (Ed.) *Politics Recovered. Realist Thought in Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), p. 6.
24. M. Sleat, 'What Is a Political Value? Political Philosophy and Fidelity to Reality', Social Philosophy and Policy, 33(1–2), (2016), p. 256.
25. Sleat, *ibid*., p. 256.; Z.G. Szűcs, 'On the edge of anarchism: a realist critique of philosophical anarchism', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, (2022), DOI: 10.1080/13698230.2022.2040201
26. E. Rossi and M. Sleat, 'Realism in Normative Political Theory', *Philosophy Compass*, 9(10), (2014), p. 692.
27. C. Burelli and C. Destri, 'The Sources of Political Normativity: The Case for Instrumental and Epistemic Normativity in Political Realism', *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 25, (2022), p. 400.
28. Sleat, 'What Is a Political Value? Political Philosophy and Fidelity to Reality', *op.cit*., Ref. 23., p. 257.
29. C. Schmitt, 'Az európai jogtudomány mai helyzete', *Gazdasági Jog*, 5., (1944), pp. 257–269. Cf., A. Carrino, 'Carl Schmitt and European Juridical Science', in Chantal Mouffe (Ed.) *The challenge of Carl Schmitt*, (London, New York: Verso, 1999), p. 191. Further works by Schmitt published in Hungarian (original German titles in parenthesis): C. Schmitt, 'Beszélgetés a hatalomról', *Vigília*, 56(2), (1991), pp. 116–125. [Gespräch über die Macht und den Zugang zum Machthaber, translated by Andrea Kurucz]; C. Schmitt, *Politikai teológia* (Budapest: ELTE Állam- és Jogtudományi Kar: 1992) [Politische Theologie, translated by Péter Paczolay); C. Schmitt, *A politikai fogalma* (Budapest: Osiris – Pallas Stúdió Attraktor: 2002), [edited and translated by Lajos Cs. Kiss, includes the 1963 edition of Der Begriff des Politischen, Theorie des Partisanen, as well as the following essays from Positionen und Begriffe: Die politische Theorie des Mythus; Der Begriff der modernen Demokratie in seinem Verhältnis zum Staatsbegriff; Der Gegensatz von Parlamentarismus und moderner Massendemokratie; Wesen und Werden des faschistischen Staates; Die Wendung zum totalen Staat; Weiterentwicklung des totalen Staats in Deutschland; Der Führer schützt das Recht; Totaler Feind, totaler Krieg, totaler Staat]; C. Schmitt, *Legalitás és legitimitás* (Máriabesnyő – Gödöllő: Attraktor: 2006) [Legalität und Legitimität, translated by Katalin Mulicza, Péter Füzesi, and Márton Holczer]; C. Schmitt, *Politikai teológia II*. (Máriabesnyő - Gödöllő: Attraktor: 2006) [Politische Theologie II., translated by Balázs Szikszai]; C. Schmitt, *Ex Captivitate Salus* (Máriabesnyő-Gödöllő: Attraktor: 2010) [Ex Captivitate Salus, translated by Péter Techet]; C. Schmitt, *Katolicizmus és politika* (Budapest: Szent István Társulat: 2023) [Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form; Politische Theologie, translated by László Gájer]; An edited volume on the Hungarian reception of Schmitt's works includes several essays written in the mid 1930s, Lajos Cs. Kiss (ed.) *Carl Schmitt fogadtatása a társadalomtudományokban* (Budapest: Ludovika

Egyetemi Kiadó, 2022) [Nationalsozialistisches Rechtsdenken; Der Führer schüzt das Recht; Ein Jahr nationalsozialistischer Verfassungsstaat; Die Verfassung der Freiheit; Der Rechtsstaat; Was bedeutet der Streit um den „Rechtsstaat"?; Faschistische und nationalsozialistische Rechtswissenschaft; Die deutsche Rechtswissenschaft im Kampf gegen den jüdischen Geist; Politik, translated by Lajos Cs. Kiss].

30. On Schmitt's lecture trips, see C Tilitzki, 'Die Vortragsreisen Carl Schmitts während des Zweiten Weltkrieges', in Piet Tommissen (Ed.) *Schmittiana 6*. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1998), pp. 191–270.
31. Following the lecture on November 9, 1943, Schmitt met László Gajzágó whose book on the law of war he cited later and whom, according to his official report on the trip, he proposed to be invited to Germany. See, Tilitzki, *ibid*., pp. 209–210.; C. Schmitt, '*Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum*' (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1974), pp. 88, 89. A 1936 study on the constitution of the Nazi Germany, while acknowledging Schmitt's contributions and citing his *Der Hüter der Verfassung* and *Staat, Bewegung, Volk*, implicitly confirmed Schmitt's remarks emphasizing that due the historical constitution the Hungarian case is comparable to English constitutionalism: I. Csekey, 'A harmadik birodalom alkotmánya', *Magyar Szemle*, 28(106), (1936), pp. 116–127.
32. L. Cs. Kiss, 'Találkozások Carl Schmitt-tel', in Lajos Cs. Kiss (Ed.) *Carl Schmitt jogtudománya* (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 2004), pp. 19–143.; B. Révész, 'Carl Schmitt magyar fogadtatása az 1920/30-as évektől', in Lajos Cs. Kiss (Ed.) *Carl Schmitt fogadtatása a társadalomtudományokban* (Budapest: Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó, 2022), p. 98.
33. 'A ceglédi példa' *Pesti Napló*, 74163) (22nd July 1923), p. 1.
34. Gy. Miskolczy, 'Carl Schmitt-Dorotic: Politische Romantik', *Egyetemes Filológiai Közlöny* 47 (1–6), (1923), pp. 111–114.
35. -rf-, 'Katholicizmus és politikai forma', *Pannonhalmi Szemle*, 1(3), (1926). pp. 260–262.
36. L. Ottlik, 'A kisebbségi kérdés tegnap és ma', *Magyar Szemle*, 27(2), (1936), p. 105. A similar reading of Schmitt applied the friend-enemy distinction on the Hungarian minority media: G. Késmárki, 'Kisebbségi sajtópolitika', *Magyar Kisebbség*, 11(5), (1932), p. 121.
37. Gy. Kornis, *Az államférfi* (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1933), vol. 2. pp. 174–179.
38. A. Kolnai, 'Der Inhalt der Politik', *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft*, 94(1), (1933), pp. 1–38. Hereinafter, references are to the English translation: A. Kolnai, 'What is politics about?', in Zoltán Balázs and Francis Dunlop (Eds.) *Exploring the world of human practice. Readings in and about the Philosophy of Aurel Kolnai* (Budapest – New York: Central European University Press, 2004), pp. 17–44.
39. A review on the 1932 edition of The Concept of the Political praises Kolnai's article for offering an alternative to Schmitt's one-sided Hobbesianism (named a vanguard of Hitler by the reviewer): P. Bíró, 'Hitler szállászcsinálói', *Századunk*, 8(4–5), (1933), p. 156.
40. Kolnai, 'What is politics about', *op. cit*., Ref. 37., p. 27.
41. H-J. Sigwart, 'The Logic of Legitimacy: Ethics in Political Realism' *The Review of Politics*, 75(3), p. 408. 407–432.
42. B. Révész, 'Carl Schmitt magyar fogadtatása az 1920/30-as évektől', *op. cit*., Ref. 31., pp. 100–101.
43. J. Halasy-Nagy, 'Politika és erkölcs', *Budapesti Szemle*, 67(741), (1939), p. 146. Cf., H. J. Morgenthau, *The Concept of the Political* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 111–112.
44. Halasy-Nagy, *ibid*., p. 146.
45. Kolnai, 'What is politics about', *op. cit*., Ref. 37., pp. 38–39.
46. L. Cs. Kiss, 'Találkozások Carl Schmitt-tel', *op. cit*., Ref. 31. pp. 19–143.
47. Cf. W. Eßbach, 'Das Formproblem der Moderne bei Georg Lukács und Carl Schmitt,' in Andreas Göbel, Dirk van Laak, and Ingeborg Villinger (Eds.) *Metamorphosen des Politischen* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), pp. 137–155. Close to the collapse of the Communist rule in Hungary a study drew parallels between irrationalism and dialectic rationalism applying Lukács's framework but, at the same time, playing off Lukács against himself: G. Molnár, 'A feltámadt Leviatán,' *Medvetánc*, 2–3, (1988), 91–129.

48. G. Lukács, *The destruction of reason* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J. : Humanities Press, 1981), p. 801.
49. Lukács, *ibid.*, p. 607.
50. Lukács, *ibid.*, pp. 646, 841.
51. Lukács, *ibid.*, p. 658.
52. Lukács, *ibid.*, pp. 801, 838.
53. Others saw Schmitt's existentialism as a new Machiavellism: Z. Fábry, 'Európa elrablása 18', *Irodalmi Szemle* 6(2), (1963), p. 144.
54. An example of criticizing Lukács's method yet maintaining his basic argument on Schmitt: Zs. Papp, 'A filozófiától a szociológiáig?' *Szociológia*, 1, (1978), pp. 6, 13.
55. Published as a review of the foreign journals: C. Cerny, 'Vihar Max Weber körül', *Valóság*, 7(10), (1964), p. 127.
56. J. Habermas, 'Az amerikai és a német újkonzervatívok a kultúra ellen: Értelmiségi mozgalom két politikai hagyomány vonzásában', *Szociológia*, 1–2, (1984–85), p. 123. Foreshadowing the uses of Schmitt after 2010, he was discussed as a representative of the conservative revolution: Zs. Papp, 'Békés békétlenek. Vita a polgári engedetlenségről', *Kritika*, 7, (1986), pp. 3–6.; M. Szabó, 'A "svéd modell" válsága', *Világosság*, 21(8–9), (1980), pp. 494–500.
57. P. Hardi, 'Pluralizmus-felfogások az amerikai politikatudományban', *Világosság*, 21(4), (1980), p. 213.; J. Bayer, 'A pluralizmus és kritikusai', *Társadalmi Szemle*, 8–9, (1981), p. 157.
58. R. Tőkés, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution: Economic Reform, Social Change and Political Succession* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
59. Z. Balázs and Cs. Molnár, *Irányzatok a magyar politikai gondolkodásban* (Budapest: Osiris, 2019), p. 60.
60. (Mándi 2015) T. Mándi, Tibor, 'Politikai gondolkodás', in András Körösény (Ed.) *A magyar politikai rendszer – negyedszázad után* (Budapest: Osiris, 2015), pp. 13–34.
61. A. Körösényi, Cs. Tóth, and G. Török, *The Hungarian Political System* (Budapest: Hungarian Center for Democracy Studies Foundation, 2009), p. 29.
62. F. Laczó, 'Five Faces of Post-Dissident Hungarian Liberalism' in Michal Kopeček and Piotr Wciślik (Eds.) *Thinking through transition: liberal democracy, authoritarian pasts, and intellectual history in East Central Europe after 1989*. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2015).
63. A. Körösényi, 'A magyar politikai gondolkodás főárama, 1989–1995' in András Körösényi *Értelmiség, politikai gondolkodás és kormányzat* (Budapest: Osiris, 2000).
64. Z.G. Szűcs, 'Újkonzervatív forradalom: A nyelvi újítás mint diszkurzív stratégia az 1998-as kormányprogram vitájában', in Márton Szabó (Ed.) *Fideszvalóság* (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2006).
65. I. Krastev and S. Holmes, *The Light That Failed* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2020).
66. On how important Schmitt was in Hungarian political science, see Z. Balázs, 'Political Theory in Hungary After the Regime Change', *International Political Anthropology* 7(1), (2014), pp. 5–25.
67. S. Pethő, *Norma és kivétel* (Budapest: MTA Filozófiai Intézete, 1993).
68. G. M. Tamás, 'Üzenet a túloldalra', *168 óra*, 4(48), (1992), p. 7. T. Molnár, 'Ami a szerződésből kimaradt', *Új Magyarország*, 2(275), (1992), p. 14. Interestingly, turning to Marxism in a few years later, Tamás mentioned Schmitt more and more frequently in a distanced but appreciative way regarding his understanding of politics at least.
69. G. M. Tamás, 'Konzervativizmus, filozófia és Kelet-Európa', *Világosság*, 34(2), (1993), p. 9.
70. B. Pokol, 'Ideológia és politika mint társadalmi alrendszer', *Társadalomkutatás*, 1, (1987), pp. 66–67. Later, Pokol as co-author of an often-used introductory book to political science elaborated on Schmitt's understanding of parliamentary government thereby contributing to Schmitt's reception in the higher education as well: M. Bihari and B. Pokol, *Politológia* (Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 2011).
71. For an example, quoting Schmitt's book on parliamentarism, see, Gy. Gábor, 'A vita kultúrája', *Népszava*, 133(86), (2006), p. 6.
72. G. Halmai, 'Németországi töredékek' *Magyar Nemzet*, 56(52), (1993), p. 7.

73. Schmitt also comlained about such uses of his theory: C. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1963), p. 16.
74. In the newspapers, such statements, mentioning Schmitt, were put forward by leftist, liberal, and conservative authors alike: 'Interview with Mihály Bihari', *Népszava*, 134(217), (2007), p. 8.; P. Techet, 'A szellem kalandora (120 éve született Carl Schmitt)', *Magyar Hírlap*, 41(192), (2008), p. 16.; Á. Szilágyi, 'Kettőről az egyre', *Népszabadság*, 66(174), (2008), p. 5.; A. Lánczi, 'Az új rezsim,' *Magyar Nemzet*, 62(7), (1999), p. 15.
75. A. Pikó, 'Akkor se fognak templomba menni, ez egy pogány nép: An interview with György Csepeli, Tibor Dessewffy, Sándor Radnóti, and János Széky', *Mozgó Világ*, 41(4), (2015), p. 24.
76. I. Lendvai, 'Villamosjegy a pápától', *Népszava*, 140(297), (2013), p. 7.; I. Lendvai, 'Anyád napja', *Népszava*, 145(103), (2018), p. 10.
77. Á. Heller, 'A "politikai" fogalmának újragondolása', *Politikatudományi Szemle*, 2(2), (1993), pp. 5–18.
78. Gy. Bence, 'A politikum sajátossága', in Szabolcs Pogonyi (Ed.) *Politikai-filozófiai tanulmányok*, (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2007). pp. 13–25.
79. P. Techet, 'A szellem kalandora', *Magyar Hírlap*, 41, (2008), p. 16. During the 2006 political crisis that followed from Prime Minister Gyurcsány's leaked 'we lied to win the election' speech, the same author discussed Schmitt regarding the role of the head of state – as the guardian of the constitution – might play in reinstating order by invoking a state of exception: Péter Techet, 'Az alkotmány őre és lehetősége', *Magyar Nemzet*, 69(332), (2006), p. 6.
80. e.g., A. Antal, 'The Political Theories, Preconditions and Dangers of the Governing Populism in Hungary', *op.cit*., Ref 3.; G. Mészáros, 'Carl Schmitt in Hungary: Constitutional Crisis in the Shadow of Covid-19', *Review of Central and East European* Law, 46(1), (2021), pp. 69–90.; A Molnár, L. Takács, and É. Jakusné Harnos, 'Securitization of the COVID-19 pandemic by metaphoric discourse during the state of emergency in Hungary' *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 40(9/10), (2020), pp. 1167–1182.; G. Mészáros, Gábor, 'Never-Ending Exception: The Ukraine War Perpetuates Hungary's Government by Decree', *Verfassungsblog*, (2022), https://verfassungsblog.de/never-ending-exception; A. Antal, *Hungary in State of Exception: Authoritarian Neoliberalism from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to the COVID-19 Crisis*, (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2022).
81. A. Antal, 'A kivételes – mindennapos,' *Népszabadság*, 74(130), (2016), p. 10.; A. Antal, *Kivételes állapotban: A modern politikai rendszerek biopolitikája* (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2019).
82. J. Boros, 'A baloldali populizmus példája', *Napi Gazdaság*, 25(161), (2015), p. 10.; A. Antal, 'A populizmus vizsgálata demokráciaelméleti perspektívában', *Politikatudományi Szemle*, 26(2), (2017), pp. 129–148.; The Schmittian idea of homogeneity was invoked against multiculturalism as well, L. Tóth Gy., 'Európa mint kulturális hadszíntér', *Magyar Nemzet*, 74(2), (2011), p. 6.
83. Z. Bretter, 'Carl Schmitt – Az illiberális demokrácia kottája', *Politikatudományi Szemle*, 30(4), (2020), pp. 109–128.; R. Metz, 'Népi hős vagy népi ördög? Érzelemgeneráló populista repertoár Orbán Viktor politikájában', *Socio.hu Társadalomtudományi Szemle*, 12(2), (2022), pp. 41–65.
84. Balázs and Molnár, *Irányzatok a magyar politikai gondolkodásban*, op. cit., Ref. 58. pp. 117–118; 144–147; 178.
85. Buzogány – Varga 2018; Kováts 2022; A. Lánczi, *Konzervtív kiáltvány* (Máriabesnyő – Gödöllő: Attraktor Kiadó, 2002); A. Karácsony, *Döntés és hagyomány* (Budapest: Századvég Kiadó, 2019); Á. Czopf, 'A "szavak promiszkuitása". Kommentár a Politikai romantikához', *Kommentár*, 2, (2019), pp. 89–96.; A. Karácsony, 'Konzervatív forradalom – egykor és most', *Kommentár*, 3, (2022), pp. 71–79.; M. Békés, 'Konzervatív forradalom Magyarországon', *Kommentár*, 3, (2022), pp. 88–100. Cf. Á. Buzogány and M. Varga, 'Against "post-

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86. Illés 2022) Körösényi, et. al., *The Orbán Regime: Plebiscitary Leader Democracy in the Making, op.cit.*, Ref. 3. pp. 130–135.; G. Illés, 'A realista Orbán Viktor', in Balázs Böcskei and Andrea Szabó (Eds.) *Az állandóság változása. Parlamenti választás 2022.* (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó – TK PTI), pp. 183–198.
87. L. Cs. Kiss, 'Előzetes megjegyzések', in Lajos Cs. Kiss (Ed.) *Carl Schmitt fogadtatása a társadalomtudományokban* (Budapest: Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó, 2022), p. 14.

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