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Carl Schmitt against Mass Democracy: Reinterpreting *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*
Carl Schmitt Kitle Demokrasisine Karşı: Parlamenter Demokrasinin Krizi'ni Yeniden Yorumlamak

Abstract

Carl Schmitt's work on *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* has been subject to a new scholarly interest within the context of the debates on populism. Most accounts emphasized the anti-liberal elements in his thought that are discernible in those parts of the book that elaborate on the opposition between liberalism and democracy. This paper argues that such emphasis tends to oversee the analysis developed by Schmitt with regard to the decline of the nineteenth century parliamentarism in the same book. Suggesting that Schmitt nostalgically idealizes nineteenth century parliamentarism as an instance of bourgeois domination and blames mass democracy for its deterioration, this paper puts forth a different portrayal of Schmitt who is an anti-democrat and committed to preserving bourgeois social/political order. This paper finalizes by suggesting that a rigorous analysis of Schmitt's anti-democratic politics would offer us a new lens to interrogate the polemical side of his anti-liberalism. This would in turn disclose the shortcomings of portraying Schmitt as a principled anti-liberal.

Öz

Carl Schmitt'in *Parlamenter Demokrasinin Krizi* isimli çalışması popülizm tartışmaları bağlamında yeni bir akademik ilginin konusu oldu. Bu tartışmaların parçası olan çoğu yaklaşım, Schmitt'in düşüncesinin, bu kitabın liberalizm ve demokrasinin karşıtlığı üzerine düşündüğü kısımlarında teşhis edilebilen anti-liberal öğeleri üzerine vurgu yaptı. Bu yazı, böylesi bir vurgunun Schmitt'in ondokuzuncu yüzyıl parlamentoculuğunun düşüşü üzerine aynı kitapta geliştirdiği analizi görmezden geldiğini iddia etmektedir. Ayrıca, Schmitt'in burjuva hakimiyetinin bir kertesi olarak ondokuzuncu yüzyıl parlamentoculuğunu nostaljik bir biçimde idealize ettiğini ve onun yozlaşmasının sorumlusu olarak kitle demokrasisini gördüğünü öne sürerek, burjuva sosyal/politik düzenine bağlı bir anti-demokrat Schmitt portresi ortaya koyar. Bu yazı Schmitt'in anti-demokratik siyasetinin titiz bir incelemesinin onun anti-liberalizmin polemiksel yönünü soruşturmak için aslında yeni bir mercek sunduğunu iddia ederek sonlanır. Bu yazının iddiasına göre, böylesi bir mercek Schmitt'i ilkeli bir anti-liberal olarak resmetmenin eksik yanlarını da açığa çıkaracaktır.

Keywords
Carl Schmitt, The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy, liberalism, elitism, mass democracy, parliament

Anahtar kelimeler
Carl Schmitt, Parlamenter Demokrasinin Krizi, liberalizm, elitizm, kitle demokrasisi, parlamento

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Only a few figures in the history of political thought have recurrently occupied a central stage in the debates and discussions around the political predicaments of Western modern politics like Carl Schmitt (see Arvidsson et al., 2016). One of the most controversial thinkers of the twentieth century whose work has lent itself to diverse and politically-loaded interpretations on matters related but not restricted to emergency powers, sovereignty and constitutionalism, there is one central strand in Schmitt's thought that constantly provokes scholarly attention and it is his theory on the contradictory relation between liberalism and democracy (Bernstein, 2011). This aspect of his thought is most systematically developed in his canonical work on *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* written in 1923. In the last decade or so, such interest in this aspect of Schmittian thought has become visible in the attempts to grapple with the populist challenge in regard to the latter's ambivalent relation with the pervasive (parliamentary) liberal-democratic institutional/ideational framework. As part of the quest to ground and understand populism in its polemics towards liberal-democracy, scholars from different strands of democratic thought have revisited Schmitt's book on *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* (*TCoPD* from now on). I argue that *TCoPD* is a work that could be construed on two levels. On one level, Schmitt develops a coherent and systematic theoretical elaboration on the contradictory logics of (political) democracy and (apolitical) liberalism, associating parliamentarism with the latter's apolitical credentials. As part of this bifurcation, he opposes democratic identity between governing and governed –which, in his view, ideally culminates in the people's identification with a Caesarist dictator– to liberal/parliamentary procedures, e.g., free discussion and electoral representation based on the 'secret ballot' that would impede the 'immediate' expression of popular sovereignty which resides in acclamation. On the other level, Schmitt gives an account of the demise and decline of the nineteenth century parliamentarism which, in his view, ends up in the latter's perversion and degeneration in the course of the twentieth century. While the first level provides us with a strictly anti-liberal portrayal of Schmitt, the second level discloses the anti-democratic and elitist undercurrents of his thought and displays his political commitment to bourgeois order. This paper argues that the current revival of Schmitt through the lens of populism excessively focuses on the first level, leading to the refurbishment of his already known portrait as a principled anti-liberal who has contempt for parliamentarism and the parliamentary institution as a whole. It contends that when the other level is given a closer inspection, such a neat formulation is ambiguated. On this level of analysis, we come across an interpretation that puts forth an idealized configuration of the nineteenth century parliamentarism that allegedly loses its credibility and durability in the face of challenges from 'mass democracy'. This paper mainly focuses on this aspect of Schmitt's work. Reading such interpretation in light of his enriched account on the same issue –of parliamentarism– put forward in *Constitutional Theory* published in 1928, it suggests that Schmitt's nostalgic idealization is predicated upon two dimensions that are both grounded in his endorsement of the nineteenth century liberal bourgeois' political aspirations. On the one hand, Schmitt affirms and upholds the parliament as a historically unique representative

institute that gains its supremacy in its elitist configuration. On the other hand, he portrays the ideal political architecture of parliamentarism as a mixed state form based on the principles of anti-absolutism, balance within the different branches of the state and moderation. He gives credit to both the parliament as an institute and parliamentarism as a particular political configuration based on their bourgeois nature and aristocratic spirit. This paper suggests that Schmitt constructs a narrative of decline regarding the later trajectories of both and designates the rise of mass democracy as the ultimate cause of their disintegration. Thus, this paper puts forth the suggestion that Schmitt's anti-liberalism that has resurfaced with the debates on populism should be counterweighted by his anti-democratic stance grounded in bourgeois class politics and contempt for mass democracy. In fact, it argues that such a perspective that emphasizes Schmitt's anti-democratic proclivities would in turn help us gain a new perspective to unveil the politics and polemics behind his staunch anti-liberalism. A closer inspection on these political/polemical stakes would show us that, this paper argues, his anti-liberalism is ultimately grounded in his hostility towards the rise of democratic 'mass politics' in the 20th century rather than in his aversion to the aforementioned liberal/parliamentary procedures.

Schmitt's Anti-Liberalism and the Question of "Democratic Homogeneity"

Written mostly in the turmoil of Weimar political/constitutional crisis, Carl Schmitt's texts in the 1920s have responded to the debates around his time in post-WW1 Germany. His objects of scrutiny were shared by the prominent thinkers of his time, one example being Max Weber, who elaborated on the meaning of parliament/arism in the age of mass democracy, the bureaucratization of mass parties and presidentialism in the Weimar Republic just like Schmitt (see Magalhaes, 2016). Interestingly, Schmitt's responses were not the responses of a contemplative thinker with the claim to having an objective-minded spirit but were directly polemical, not shying away from asserting his political views –albeit sometimes in disguise– on matters directly related to the fate of the Weimar Republic. One constant theme he evoked and worked on was the relation between democracy, liberalism and parliamentarism which found its most systematic elaboration in his text on *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy (1923)*. Since its publication, *TCoPD* has received an impressive scholarly interest due to its rigorous criticism of the twentieth-century century parliamentarism/liberalism *and* has been usually perceived as a disclosure of Schmitt's fierce anti-liberalism (see Kennedy, 1985; Habermas, 1986). Today, one could argue that such a perception recirculates among intellectual circles in the ongoing discussions on populism. In this section, I will deal with the roots of this general form of reception in Schmitt's work and then, discuss the ways in which it reverberates through the current exchanges of opinions on the populist question.

The reception of Schmitt's work as anti-liberal is reasonably grounded in the theoretical framework he develops with regard to *democratic homogeneity* in this book. He develops two

points on the subject matter of democratic homogeneity, one concerning its self-admittedly exclusionary nature which contradicts and opposes the false pretension of liberal inclusionary universalism and the other concerning the logic that distinguishes it, namely identity/identification. Regarding the first dimension, he contrasts (apolitical) liberalism with (political) democracy, arguing that a proper homogeneous conception of the 'people' could only be achieved by the latter. Even though he does not explicitly theorize the distinction in terms of a discussion on the political –which he will be formulating later in his influential book, *The Concept of the Political* (1927)– it is still plausible to argue that his contrast between liberalism and democracy is foregrounded in this conception (of the political) (Scheuerman, 1995, p. 139, Leydet, 1997). Put briefly, in his book on *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt categorically differentiates *the political* from other domains such as morality or aesthetics based on its particular logic of existentially distinguishing friend from enemy in the public realm:

> The enemy is not merely any competitor or just any partner of a conflict in general. He is also not the private adversary whom one hates. An enemy exists only when, at least potentially, one fighting collectivity of people confronts a similar collectivity. The enemy is solely the public enemy..(28)

Such a definition overlaps with the one proposed in *TCoPD* with regard to one of the essential components of democracy, namely its exclusionary boundaries that set a homogeneous people against a (potentially) antagonistic other. Schmitt argues that democracy "demonstrates its political power by knowing how to refuse or keep at bay something foreign and unequal that threatens its homogeneity" (1985, p. 9), ascribing the *substantial* criteria of belonging to a community for a proper conception of (democratic) equality to prevail. He juxtaposes this political notion of democracy with the apoliticism of liberalism that supposedly thrives on formal and abstract equality of humans which is, according to Schmitt, a conception that infiltrates equality with individualism, universalism and liberty with no criteria to delimit a people's boundaries (see Rasch, 2016). Liberal abstraction generates the process of "abstracting out what is political, leaving only universal human equality" which is why it could be construed not a state form but a "form of humanitarian-universalist ethic" (Schmitt, 1985, pp. 11, 13).

This theoretical juxtaposition between democracy and liberalism reverberates through his particular understanding on the ideational foundations of parliamentarism as well: "The belief in parliamentarism, in government by discussion, belongs to the intellectual world of liberalism. It does not belong to democracy" (Schmitt, 1985, p. 8). For Schmitt, the ultimate rationale for a parliamentary system resides in the belief of arriving at (relative) truth and justice which could only be accomplished by way of a "public deliberation of argument and counterargument, public debate and public discussion" (1985, p. 34). As he is quick to add, one does not need democracy for the generation of such "dynamic-dialectic" process as the

latter hinges on the idea(l) of reaching consensus which forecloses the democratic requisite of the exclusion of the non-people: it aspires towards (relatively) 'universal' truth and justice (see Mouffe, 1998, p. 167). This is precisely the reason why Schmitt targets parliamentarism for "renouncing a definite result" as a definite result would amount to a proper political "decision", the ultimate one being the decision on who the enemy of the 'people' are (Schmitt, 1985, pp. 35, 36).

For Schmitt, the features of (public) openness and separation (and balance) of powers are indispensable for the generation of such consensus oriented clash of opinions in the parliament. The first feature of openness demands that no parliamentary proceeding should be secreted from the public (opinion) which, informed by "free" press, would freely evaluate the process in light of detached reason (Schmitt, 1985, pp. 34, 35). The second feature of the separation (and balance) of powers, on the other hand, provides the conditions in which the legislative process is immunized from the possible interventions that would come from the executive branch of the state, making sure to uphold the impartial characteristics of 'law' which is rooted in *veritas* rather than *auctoritas* (Schmitt, 1985, p. 41-44; Foster, 2000, p. 71).

When we come to the second aspect of Schmitt's idea of democratic homogeneity, i.e. the principle of identity that grounds it, we come across a reading that endorses an anti-liberal model of political embodiment (For a similar view see Urbinati, 2019, p. 240).

How? First, Schmitt argues that the fundamental criterion that distinguishes democracy is the "string of identities" it presumes between "governed and governing, sovereign and subject, the subject and object of state authority." (Schmitt, 26) However, he adds, such identity between governed and governing can never be empirically found in palpable reality and has to remain a presumption and a recognized ideal since the "masses are sociologically and psychologically heterogeneous", their (empirical) will never identical to the will of the people, i.e. *volonte generale* (Schmitt, 1985, p. 25). As an extension of this inevitable gap between the will of the people and the empirical people, Schmitt argues, "citizen even agrees to the law that is against his own will for the law is the *General Will*" (Schmitt, 1985, p. 26). This also means that in a situation of disagreement, the citizen ultimately *acknowledges* his own faulty assessment of what the singular will of the people is, affirming the gap between his empirical will as a *person* and his (public-political) will 'embodied' by the *General Will* as a free citizen. Such abstraction, according to Schmitt, logically arrives at the conclusion that the will of a minority would be *identical* to the singular will of the people without essentially contradicting the democratic principle of identity. Once one acknowledges that there is always a gap between the empirical wills and the *General Will*, the conventional criterion that defines democratic legitimacy in terms of the will of majority no longer holds. Then, for Schmitt, it becomes a matter of who 'embodies' the singular will of the people, opening the path to the paradoxical prioritization of the sovereign figure in its capacity to "control the means with which the will of the people is constructed." (Schmitt, 1985, p. 29; See Bask, 2020) Hence Schmitt's infamous celebration of Caesarist dictatorship as democratic: "..dictatorial and Caesaristic methods not

only can produce the acclamation of the people but can also be a direct expression of democratic substance and power". (Schmitt, 1985, p. 17) It is clear that there is a deep anti-liberal/anti-parliamentary thrust within this Schmittian formulation of democratic dictatorship (embodiment). In *TCoPD*, Schmitt considers the parliament to be an artificial 'machinery' produced by liberal reasoning that is doomed to fail in the face of the rise of a plebiscitary understanding of democracy. He advances two interrelated claims at this point. On the one hand, he argues that the parliament is a 'constitutional' institution that thrives on the (liberal) principle of discussion and thus, cannot withstand the sole criterion of the people's will which is unbound by constitutional/liberal constraints (Schmitt, 1985, p. 15). We could actually extend this claim and argue that the basic tenets of liberalism, e.g., civil liberties, separation of powers or rule of law also become disposable elements in such a model of democratic dictatorship. On the other hand, in a much more polemical tone, he argues against the justification of the parliament along the lines of 'expediency', i.e., the idea that the parliament responds to the 'practical' impossibility of constituting direct democracy by way of assembling "an elected committee of responsible people." He contends that such a practical-technical justification cannot properly challenge the claim –put forward along the same line of reasoning– that a "single trusted representative" like a Caesarist dictator would decide in the name of the people as well (Schmitt, 1985: 34). Here, one could suggest that his argument actually glimpses at the superior nature of "democratic" dictatorship over liberal parliamentarism.

The Revisiting(s) of Schmitt via the Populist Question

Today, Schmitt's above-mentioned anti-liberal (and anti-parliamentarian) arguments have received a renewed attention in scholarly disputes on the populist question. Especially his particular anti-liberal formulation of democratic homogeneity in terms of 'exclusion' and 'identity' has been revisited in order to understand what populism entails for the pervasive liberal-democratic configuration. As the present paper cannot cover the immense amount of literature on the contested concept of populism, we will mainly develop our analysis starting from the elemental definition provided by Cas Mudde. Mudde is a relevant source for our analysis not only due to his succinct formulation of populism-which makes his definition a core reference point around the discussions on the concept- but also because his formulation hints at the ambivalent relation between populism and liberal-democracy (Mudde, 2004, p. 561). Mudde argues that populism considers society as separated into two antagonist groups –the pure people and the corrupted elites–, and that politics must be an expression of the people's general will (Cas Mudde, 2004, p. 543). As suggested above, such a formulation points out to populism's ambivalent and tension-ridden relation with liberalism (see also Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2016). For, populism self-admittedly excludes a part of the population as non-people in an oppositional stance toward the liberal ideal of universal inclusion *and* delineates the people's general will as the only source of political legitimacy in contradistinction to the

liberal principle of limiting such direct reference to popular sovereignty through the ideational/institutional tenets of individual liberties, rule of law and separation of powers. Given the fact that Schmitt's articulation of democratic homogeneity also thrives on these two (anti-liberal) principles of exclusion *and* "unmediated" expression of general will, i.e. identity, the recent discussions on populism have reasonably returned to his work in order to unearth the political implications of the latter (see Frank, 2017, p. 633). Their differing opinions on and stances toward the political implications of populism notwithstanding, many scholars have grounded populism in a Schmittian framework or better put, have disclosed the affinities between the two based on their shared anti-liberal characteristics. This contributed to the recirculation of a strictly anti-liberal portrayal of Schmitt. To give a few examples from scholarly discussions, Rummens and Abts suggest that Schmitt's model of democracy paradigmatically exemplifies the populist recourse to a 'substantial' body of people embodied by an authoritarian leader and thus, threatens to obliterate the (Lefortian) democratic empty place of power (Rummens and Abts, 2007, pp. 415-416). The latter can only make sense against the constitutionalist background of a shared recognition that there is no figure that can exclusively speak on behalf of the people's will: populism obliterates this (liberal) democratic presupposition and Schmitt's celebrated dictator supposedly partakes from this logic as well. In a similar vein, Müller argues that Schmitt's conceptual split between the substance of the people on the one hand and the empirical outcome of (parliamentary) elections on the other foreshadows the current populist shift towards authoritarianism since such a split would uphold a dictatorial power who claims to speak on behalf of the singular will of the People (Müller, 2016, p. 52). Urbinati's works also share a similar view and suggest that Schmitt's conception of representation which is a form of anti-liberal authorization is inspirational for a salvific populist leader who would seek legitimacy not through formal accountability but acclamation (Urbinati, 2019, p. 119). She also aims at Schmitt's idea on the inseparability between ('political') exclusion and democracy and argues that populist polarization between the few ('elites') and many ('the people') can in fact be construed as an extension of Schmittian politics (Urbinati, 2019, p. 191). For her, both of these aspects –anti-liberal representation/embodiment and polarization– are deep threats to representative democracy in their authoritarian inclinations for a leader who has the last word on deciding who the 'enemy' of the People are (Urbinati, 2019, p. 132). Schmitt's anti-liberalism also receives a renewed attention among some scholars who favors the populist moment insofar as the latter is considered to open up a space for emancipatory regeneration of democracy. For instance, in contrast to the critical views of populism outlined above, Mouffe endeavors to extract what might be useful in Schmitt's theory for her left-populist political agenda (Mouffe, 2018). Nonetheless, she agrees with the aforementioned scholars on associating Schmitt with a staunch anti-liberalism. For her, Schmitt helps us recognize the political blind spots of liberalism as well as the necessarily 'bounded' (exclusionary) nature of a (democratic) people and this actually gives us a chance to revitalize democratic politics within the current predicaments of neoliberal triumphalism (see Mouffe, 2018, pp. 14-15).

Schmitt's Nostalgia for the Nineteenth Century Parliamentarism: Elitism, Moderation and Aristocratic Spirit

However reasonable and plausible it may seem for scholarly discussions on populism to unveil the latter's anti-liberal characteristics in a Schmittian framework, they still suffer from an excessive emphasis on one level of analysis pursued by Schmitt. They tend to *extrapolate* the anti-liberal Schmitt who is fit for understanding populism, missing out the other dimension in his *TCoPD* that provides us with a different political stance that is grounded in his elitist circumscription of politics and contempt for mass democracy. Even though one needs the particular methodological guidance of reading between the lines of his subtle arguments in *TCoPD* and enrich them in light of his other texts, we can still depict the elitist and anti-democratic undercurrents of his thought in this book as well, especially in the parts that comprise his narrative on the decline of the nineteenth century parliamentarism. At this level of narrative of decline, we encounter a different mode of critique which is, in McCormick's words, more anachronistic than foundational (McCormick, 1997, p. 171) or in other words, more attuned to the ways in which the parliament has historically turned into an anachronistic institution with no link "to its moral and intellectual foundations" (Schmitt,1985, p. 21). In contrast to the aforementioned foundational critique that identifies parliamentarism strictly with (apolitical) liberalism and argues it is ill-fated from the start, the anachronistic critique approximates an historical idealization of nineteenth century parliamentarism that has only *later* diverged from its original principles and ideas with the advent of mass democracy.

What do we mean by mass democracy? Mass democracy basically designates the extension of suffrage to all adult men and eventually women at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century and emerges on the historical scene on the back of the growing influence of mass society, i.e. a new social entity coming into existence with the effects of rapid industrialization, agricultural modernization and the emergence of the modern urban proletariat (see Bellamy, 2005, p. 70, Schupmann, 2017, p. 37). For Schmitt, it is this dimension of the extension of suffrage via mass democracy that is deemed responsible for the decline of the nineteenth century parliamentarism.

Before scrutinizing Schmitt's narrative of decline in more detail, one needs to make sure to understand that for Schmitt parliamentarism is not identical with the notion of the parliamentary government, i.e. a system in which the executive is wholly subordinated to the parliament (Schmitt, 1985, p. 33): parliamentarism connotes a whole political configuration within which the executive and the legislative are afforded their particular functions/places according to the principle of balance of powers within the state (1985, pp. 44-48). Schmitt specifically refers to the organization of the constitutional monarchy that finds its ultimate expression in Louise Philippe's France between 1830 and 1848 (Schmitt, 2008, pp. 331-332). Within the balance of powers in constitutional monarchy, the parliament figures as an institution that is bound with its legislative role, occupying a unique space against the executive power repre-

sented by the monarch. For Schmitt, as we have already seen, the classical nineteenth century parliament is permeated by an *ethos* of discussion and openness and strictly adheres to these principles in order to promulgate (normatively-binding) "laws" that arise out of principled deliberation in the service of truth and justice: in this ideal parliament, there is not a struggle of interests but instead conflicts of opinions (Schmitt, 1985, pp. 2, 5). However, such a normative requirement is only purposeful for the legislative processes of the parliament and cannot be extended to cover the role of the government which ought to stand apart as a site of will and command- and for Schmitt, this particular differentiation, balance and counterpoise between the legislative and executive branches within the state is the ideal ground of parliamentarism (Schmitt, 2008, pp. 328-329). To exemplify, Schmitt contrasts Condorcet's "absolute" rationalism that endeavors to impose reason on all branches of the state with Alexander Hamilton's *Federalist Papers* which tends towards balancing the 'rational' (parliament) with the 'irrational' (government) and argues in favor of the latter (Schmitt, 1985, pp. 45-46, see Cristi, 1998, pp. 85).

It is interesting that in his narrative on the decline of parliamentarism, Schmitt idealizes the liberal *status quo ante* embodied by the parliament as a representative institution and by parliamentarism as a particular configuration of balance of powers within the state in the nineteenth century. His idealistic depictions of both the parliament and parliamentarism are grounded in their supposedly "aristocratic" spirit.

For Schmitt, the parliament's aristocratic spirit is inherently linked to the ways in which it performs its genuine representative role. How? Schmitt emphasizes the parliament's *transitory* representative role in its struggle against the monarch across continental Europe, mainly in France. In an extended note in *TCoPD*, Schmitt argues that at some point in history, parliament acquired the role of representing the people conceived as a political unity (Schmitt, 1985, pp. 97-98). This struggle which incidentally emerged against the "absolute" monarch persisted throughout "constitutional monarchy" as well, the ideal-typical example being Louise-Phillippe's bourgeois kingdom. It rose upon a particular dualism in which the parliament struggled with the monarch on the question of who represented the political unity of the people: "In a transitional and intermediary phase, one can attempt to place *two* representatives of the 'nation,' the politically unified people, alongside one another, the king and the parliament." (Schmitt, 2008, p. 244). Put in the broader context of Schmitt's work, representation as a formative political principle hinges on the prerequisite of "making an invisible being visible and present through a publicly present one" (Schmitt, 2008, p. 243). However, Schmitt adds, the invisible being that is represented is not just any being but in fact an existentially enhanced one worthy of becoming visible in the public sphere. The people or better put, the political unity of the people is such an entity since "it is a type of being that is higher, further enhanced, and more intense in comparison to the natural existence of some group living together" (Schmitt, 2008, p. 243). The parliament's historical value resides precisely in the way it acquires the role to render this higher entity of the political unity of the people visible, at least in the context of

the struggle against the monarch. However, for Schmitt, this is only fully eligible via the configuration of a restricted and narrow legislative body confined to a particular group of people who are distinguished by their *education* and *property*: "If the parliament really achieves integration of the political unity of the entire people in a distinctive sense, it does that under the presupposition and on the foundation of these bourgeois concepts of property and learning" (Schmitt, 2008, p. 336). He especially upholds education and learning as the basic attributes of parliamentary representation since they are the features through which the wisest can rule on behalf of the entire people. In Schmitt's perspective, the wisest have the political capacity to overhaul their particular/private interests in favor of the public and to represent the "ideal" condition of the learning and reason of the entire nation (Schmitt, 2008, pp. 334). Thus, such idealistic portrayal of elite-dominated parliament betrays the aristocratic spirit and principle that undergirds the latter. Here, one should add the crucial note that Schmitt's particular understanding of the aristocratic principle, at least in one of its dimensions, discloses and endorses its Aristotelian genealogy that emphasizes, not hereditary lineage, but the select of the best few (see Schmitt, 2008, pp. 60-61, 237). Thus, according to Schmitt, the ideal representative schema of the parliament does not only presuppose the dualistic architecture of the constitutional monarchy (parliament versus monarch) but the elitist confinement and circumscription of the legislative body as well.

Regarding the dimension of parliamentarism, this time Schmitt offers an explanation based on moderation and balance rather than the struggle of the parliament against the monarch. At the very beginning of the third chapter on "Dictatorship in Marxist Thought" in *TCoPD*, Schmitt once again resorts to a brief historical sketch –of nineteenth century parliamentarism– via Guizot who is the major spokesperson for Louis-Philippe's France and this time emphasizes how the constitutional-parliamentary monarchy had an intermediate position between monarchy and democracy in the 1830s France: "Ancient monarchy and aristocracy were defeated, and the approach of democracy appeared a chaotic storm against which a dam had to be built" (Schmitt, 1985, p. 51). In his later work on *Constitutional Theory*, he expands on this view and explicitly suggests that we should give due attention to parliamentarism's 'aristocratic' spirit of moderation fit with the political interests of the liberal bourgeois in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century (Schmitt, 2008, pp. 331-332). Taking the example of French bourgeois kingdom between 1830 and 1848 as an *ideal-type* once again, he argues that the parliamentary system in that period is the embodiment of the aristocratic spirit of mixed state form (Schmitt, 2008, pp. 250-251). Here, Schmitt refers to another particular understanding of aristocracy which acquires its worth as a political principle in its unique position standing in the middle "between monarchy and democracy and, consequently, already intrinsically contain(ing) a mixture." (Schmitt, 2008, p. 250) Deriving its exceptional "aristocratic" status from the mixture of these opposing and different political elements, parliamentarism upholds *monarchical* constructions in order to strengthen the executive against the parliament and the people while using *democratic* ideals to strengthen the people represented by the parliament against the (constitutional) monar-

ch. The essential principle that undergirds such a mixture is its prevention of any "absolutism", be it monarchical or democratic, or even parliamentary. What essentially interests us here is the class politics that undergirds and determines such intermediation though. As Schmitt is keen to argue, the mixed state form of parliamentarism is directly correlative to the political interests of the liberal bourgeois who simultaneously protects the rights of the parliament against the monarch but at the same seeks "protection in a strong monarchical government, in order to save bourgeois freedom and property" against "proletarian democracy." (Schmitt, 2008, p. 331)

So, Schmitt offers two different understandings of the aristocratic spirit which are 1) the selection of the best few ("elite rule") and 2) mixed state form in order to unveil the historically ideal *milieu* within which the parliament as well as parliamentarism *could* and *did* work. His depiction of this milieu as a context which corresponds to the interests of the liberal bourgeois in bracketing off the boundaries of the political sphere from proletarian masses clearly gives us a clue as to what historically undermines these conditions: mass democracy. It is only with the rise of the latter that the proletarian masses become "integrated" into the political scene of the parliament and hence, disfigure parliamentarism's ideational ground (Schmitt, 1985: 336).

In *TCoPD*, Schmitt seems to provide a rather straightforward answer to the question of the degenerating effects of modern mass democracy when he argues that the latter "makes argumentative public discussion an empty formality." (Schmitt, 1985, p. 6) He says that with the rise of party democracy as a by-product of mass-democracy, the "real business takes place, not in the open sessions of a plenum, but in committees" behind closed doors, transferring the legislative power of the (wholesome) parliament to "parties" with heterogeneous constituencies and diverse economic interests (Schmitt, 1985, p. 20, 51). What is his real target here? Schmitt argues that a proper parliamentary representation can only emerge when the members of the parliament are free from the electoral mandate (Schmitt, 1985, p. 80; 2008, p. 339). The latter would, as the historical development of mass democracy shows, transform the "independent" deputy –who is wise enough to represent the whole people– into a commissioner or an agent the role of which is confined to being a transmission belt for the "particular" interests of voters (Schmitt, 2008, p. 247). The ascendance of such a particularistic/fragmentary political scene is inseparably linked to the growing political influence of subordinate strata or in Schmitt's words, the masses of industrial workers (Schmitt, 2008, p. 336). For instance, in the preface to the first edition of *TCoPD*, he argues that the idea of *proportional representation* that comes along with electoral mass democracy –in Germany– destroys the particular relationship between people and its (parliamentary) representatives insofar as it makes different social factions/fractions bound with their particular socio-economic interests an indispensable part of the parliament, rendering the very core principle of representation, i.e., the staging of the people (as unity) in the parliament, obsolete and meaningless (Schmitt, 1985, p. 19-20). Thus, for Schmitt, the essential danger for the parliament effectively resides in the political expression of diverse social and economic interests which can only emerge via the extension of suffrage to the proletarian masses and the rise of mass democracy. Put in other words, what essenti-

ally concerns Schmitt about mass democracy is the gradual political integration of the lower classes into the parliament that degrades and depreciates its nineteenth century configuration which *was* grounded in the integration of a particular strata: bourgeois elite distinguished by education and property (see Schmitt, 2008, pp. 334-337; also see Schupmann, 2017, p. 36). He argues that with the advent of mass democracy, "politics, far from being the concern of an elite, has become the despised business of a rather dubious class of persons" (Schmitt, 1985, p. 4). Following the line of thought brought forward by the nineteenth century *liberals* who were mainly concerned about the augmentation of irrationality in democratic politics (see Bellamy, 2005, p. 74, Gottfried, 1999, p. 41), he also associates mass-democracy with passion-driven politics: "Direct democracy is the rule of a mass driven by passions and interests." (Schmitt, 2008, p. 338) According to Schmitt, when the elite-dominated parliament gives way to the irrational political impulses of heterogeneous masses, it is not only the parliament that loses its (historical) validity but a whole scene of political stability and order that had been achieved in the balance of the mixed state form of parliamentarism. As Scheuerman puts it wonderfully, the expansion of suffrage effectively undermines the nineteenth century political architecture of constitutional monarchy by "locating intense political cleavages *within* the parliament." (1995, p. 144) While parliamentarism had been able to contain intense political conflicts within a rather neat and orderly demarcation "between the prince and the people, state and society, government and parliament, executive and legislative powers" (Leydet, 1997, p. 51), mass democracy left this universe in disarray: it erupted as a force of disorder and instability.

A New framework for Analysis: Schmitt's Anti-Liberalism as an Extension of his Anti-Democratic Politics

Until now, we have unveiled Schmitt's anti-democratic politics grounded in his commitment to bourgeois class domination that unfolds in his idealistic/nostalgic portrayal of the nineteenth century parliament and parliamentarism with the intention to show that Schmitt's political stance cannot solely be reduced to a staunch and principled anti-liberalism (for similar views see Cristi, 1998; Landa, 2010, pp. 165-187; Schupmann, 2017, pp. 35-68). As we have seen, it is possible to excavate both political positions endorsed by Schmitt - anti-democratic stance and anti-liberalism- from the same text of *TCoPD*. However, we have argued that most scholarly revisitings the latest example of which is the debates on populism tend to emphasize his anti-liberal stance without giving due attention to his anti-democratic (class) politics. The leading result unfortunately becomes one of instrumentalizing Schmittian anti-liberalism in the service of the current discussions on the problematic relation between populism and the liberal-democratic framework. In this section, I would like to interrogate the following questions: Is it possible to reconcile his anti-liberalism and his anti-democratic (class) politics? Are these two stances totally separate aspects of his work, one pertaining to his theoretically-informed juxtaposition between liberalism and democracy and the other pertaining to his historicall-

y-informed analysis of the narrative of decline of parliament/arism or do they actually add up to provide us with a more or less coherent portrayal of Schmitt? I would argue that such reconciliation is possible insofar as Schmitt's anti-liberalism –and its counterpart which is his plea for "democratic homogeneity"– is revisited through the lens of his anti-democratic politics. Such revisiting, however, can only succeed via unveiling the *polemical* underside of his anti-liberalism which is informed not by the theoretical endeavor to distinguish democracy and liberalism but by the *concrete* challenges he encounters within the crisis-ridden context of the Weimar Republic.

To start with, there is now clearly a considerable amount of literature that suggests Schmitt is not an anti-liberal *per se* but actually a defender of bourgeois social order with a resentful attitude towards democracy and working class politics (see Cristi, 1998; Schupmann, 2017; Landa, 2010; Preuss, 1999, 2016; Bolsinger, 2001). Some of these accounts have also managed to disclose the political/polemical stakes behind his anti-liberalism that, according to most views presented in these accounts, have more to do with class politics than a proto-populist critique of the (liberal-constitutionalist) constraints on democracy. For instance, Landa puts forth an illuminating account that suggests Schmitt's anti-liberalism can only be considered as a *transposition* of his anti-democratic elitism discoverable in his nostalgia for parliamentarism into the context determined by liberalism's political fatigue in the face of challenges from mass politics (2010). In a similar manner, Bolsinger depicts Schmitt as a "class-conscious bourgeois" who targets (bourgeois) liberalism precisely because it has lost its political vitality and suffers from "theoretical disarmament in the face of a possible creation of a proletarian order out of the upheavals in Germany." (Bolsinger, 2001, pp. 41-45) Let me scrutinize this last argument a bit more. After WW1, Germany goes through a political/constitutional revolution that transforms the source of legitimacy, taking it from the monarch and giving it to the people. The transition from monarchy to democracy is by no means a smooth one though as the very process rises upon the violent repression of *Soviet Republics* in Germany –especially the Bavarian Soviet Republic in Bavaria– which had succeeded for a short period of time in 1918 (see Balakrishnan, 2000). For Schmitt, the new democracy promulgated by the Weimar Constitution is no better in taming and containing the 'civil war' but in fact perpetuates it: It hinges upon the model of 'mass democracy' and introduces a fractured and competitive party system that would integrate heterogeneous masses through universal suffrage, proportional representation, and institutions of collective bargaining, carrying civil war into the parliament itself (see Preuss, 2016, p. 472). Against this historical background, Schmitt's anti-liberalism comes into the picture as a way to polemically target the "anachronistic" –not "foundational"– status of liberalism: it had once worked but is now insufficient to deal with the current crisis-inducing dynamics of mass democracy. For Schmitt, liberalism is insufficient for warding off the threats coming from mass democracy simply because its ultimate principle is discussion (see Foster, 2000, p. 76 and Landa, 2010, p. 176). While reasoned discussion had been successful in providing the core principle of an elitist and representative political stage, i.e. the

parliament against the monarch in the nineteenth century, the disruptive dynamics of mass democracy made such reference to discussion meaningless for ameliorating the crisis induced by these very dynamics (see Schmitt, 2008, p. 336). Yet, there seems to be another dimension to his critique that resonates more with his account on the degeneration of the parliament from a site pervaded by an *ethos* of discussion into an "insubstantial social-technical expedient". (Schmitt: 1985, p. 16) For Schmitt, what mirrors the above-mentioned degeneration is the growing disillusionment with the liberal ideal of "rule of law" which is grounded in the normativist reference to justice and truth *and* the ascendance of statutory positivism which reduces law to the "the tautology of a raw factualness: something is valid when it is valid and because it is valid." (Schmitt, 2008, p. 64) With the predominance of such statutory positivism, the parliament's legislative authority in Weimar Republic is reduced to ratifying laws in accordance with the (value-neutral) formalistic/procedural requirements. As Schupmann notes, this effectively means that legislative process transforms into an instrument that turns "will, in this case the will of the masses, into valid binding law" without any extra-positive normative commitments (Schupmann, 2017: 22). Thus, the historically forged link between nineteenth century liberalism and the parliament falls into disarray as the latter becomes a mere instrument and a formalistic apparatus subordinate to mass democracy. Liberalism can only appear as anachronistic in the wake of the rise of such an unfortunate amalgam of mass democracy and the parliament as it is wedged to a normative *weltanschauung* incompatible with the now predominant mechanistic conception of law and politics (see Cristi, 1998, p. 155).

In resonance with the critiques above, Schmitt also argues that the bourgeois parliamentary regime has emerged *posthumously* in Germany: "Now, their –'liberal bourgeois'– demands were realized, but meanwhile the political and social situation was fully changed and their fulfillment acquired a different sense than it would have had fifty years before." (Schmitt, 2008, p. 358) His message can be interpreted in the following way: "liberal-parliamentarism" becomes obsolete in the 'new political and social situation' determined by the twin triumph of democratic ideal of popular sovereignty and mass democracy. Rooted in a particular *milieu*, liberal-parliamentarism can only function without the intense pressures and invasive interventions coming from the heterogeneously composed subordinate strata. Unfortunately, Weimar Republic has not been able to contain these pressures but instead made them an organic part of the new parliamentary-democratic regime, pulling the rug under liberal- parliamentarism's feet. One might even consider his assessment in terms of the opposition between Louise-Phillippe's ideal bourgeois kingdom and the contradictory amalgam of parliamentary regime and mass democracy in Weimar Republic. Now that 1) bourgeois parliamentarism has been superseded by mass democracy and 2) liberalism suffers from incompetence in decisively fighting against the disintegrating effects of mass democracy, a new candidate for preserving the bourgeois social order has to appear in the political scene. For Schmitt, this is the Caesarist dictator with a democratic disguise, allegedly representing the homogeneous will of the people.

This last point brings us to the counterpart of Schmitt's anti-liberalism, namely his plea for "democratic homogeneity". In *TCoPD*, Schmitt is keen to argue that popular sovereignty has indeed effectively replaced the monarch as a source of legitimacy as is evident by the promulgation of the Weimar Constitution in Germany. In such conditions, Landa argues, Schmitt has to disguise his anti-democratic aspirations in a democratic rhetoric as the latter has managed to have the "self-evidence of an irresistible advancing and expanding force" after the disintegration of the monarchical rule (Schmitt, 1985, p. 24; see Landa, 2010, p. 178). Ultimately, he breaks through this impasse via the option of Caesarist dictator who can effectively uphold the democratic rhetoric of the will of the people. In addition, as Preuss wonderfully puts it *apropos* Schmitt, a putatively homogeneous will of the people and its embodiment by a sovereign figure expresses itself in opposition to –and as an imposition on– the 'particularistic social forces', forces that extend and expand democracy in unprecedented scales (Preuss, 1999, p. 161). Thus, Schmitt's affirmation of the alleged democratic principle of homogeneity against liberalism can be considered both an opportunistic move to disguise his anti-democratic commitments in a democratic rhetoric and a new way to preserve bourgeois order against the disintegrating effects of mass democracy.

Conclusion

All in all, when one revisits Schmitt's take on the questions on parliamentarism, liberalism and democracy laid out in *TCoPD*, one should be vigilant about the anti-democratic core of his thought that is committed to preserving bourgeois order and should consider the ways in which such stance also undergirds the polemical underside of his anti-liberalism. Regarding today's heated debates on populism, such a new perspective would help us unveil the shortcomings of a full-fledged *instrumentalization* of Schmitt as a strict anti-liberal and offer new paths for interpreting his work.

Contribution

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