POLISH POLITICAL SCIENCE

VOL XLII 2013

PL ISSN 0208-7375

DEMOCRACY AT THE SERVICE OF THE COMMUNITY

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In popular consciousness, the dispute between the communitarians and the liberals focuses on citizens' individualism and the role and place of the community in contemporary society. However, it is merely a simplified vision of the topic of discussion between supporters of the currents of political thought indicated above. Indeed, a no less essential part of the debate concerns problems associated with the interpretation of the idea and the principles of democracy, their uses and importance in human life.

The canon of fundamental values of democratic government includes freedom and equality. These principles are inherently conducive to the emergence of conflicts, as illustrated by the classic dilemma „the more freedom, the less equality, and the more equality, the less freedom.“¹ This particular problem has determined the emergence of two major theories of democracy: individualistic and collectivist.² The main difference

¹ J. Thomassen, *Wartości demokratyczne* (Democratic values), [in:] J. Russell, J. Dalton, H-D. Klingemann (ed.), *Zachowania polityczne* (Oxford handbook of political behavior – Polish edition), Warszawa 2010, t. I., p. 486.

² They were also referred to using different terms – eg. Anglo-american and continental tradition, or Madisonian tradition versus the populist (French) one. See J. Thomassen, *Wartości demokratyczne*, op.cit., p. 486; G. Sartori, *Teoria demokracji* (The Theory

between these approaches to democracy concerns the view of the relationship between the state and society, and between the state and its citizens. And thus, the individualistic current (procedural) derived from the traditions of the English Revolution aims to reduce the area of activity and competence of the government to the minimum specified explicitly in the rules of law. Consequently, both Society and citizens are free from the state, the latter becoming only the guardian of the laws.

On the other hand, the collectivist democracy (substantive approach, often also referred to as the republican), bases its assumptions on the tradition of the French Revolution, and emphasizes the primacy of the state over every form of social organization. In this case, the state is an active participant in all initiatives undertaken by both society and the citizen, and in addition determines the scope and object of civic activity.³

Today, without delving too much into the nuances of the conceptual definition and theory of democracy, one can indicate two competing models: procedural and substantive (Republican). The procedural model, preferred by the majority of liberals, assumes that every human as a rational being has the right to formulate, seek and implement their personal conception of "good".⁴ At the same time, another necessary condition is for axiological neutrality to be maintained, by establishing state institutions upholding the equal and equitable treatment of all varying views that appear in societies. Procedural democracy advocates opt for creation of the state limited in its operation only to the protection of individual rights. Jürgen Habermas stresses that the main task of the political processes in this model of democracy is the transformation of the economic interests of society and their transfer onto the political

of democracy revisited – Polish edition), Warszawa 1998, pp. 58–298; D. Held, *Modele demokracji* (*Models of democracy – Polish edition*), Kraków 2010, pp. 13–154.

³ J. Thomassen, *Wartości demokratyczne* (*Democratic values*), [in:] J. Russell, J. Dalton, H-D. Klingemann op.cit., p. 486.

⁴ See: Ch. Mouffe, *Paradoks demokracji* (*The Democratic Paradox*), op.cit.; S. Filipowicz, *Demokracja. O władzy iluzji w królestwie rozumu* (*Democracy – on the power of illusion in the kingdom of reason*), Warszawa 2007; see: G. Sartori, *Teoria demokracji* (*The Theory of democracy revisited – Polish edition*), Warszawa 1998

sphere (especially political institutions) so as to be able to coordinate the divergent interests of individuals.⁵

A particular variant of procedural democracy is the deliberative model, based on the concept of a decentralized society, devoid of a „command center“, with no defined goals and functions of the state, as well as no specific pursued model of society.⁶ Characteristic for deliberative democracy are also informal and extra-formal ways of shaping public opinion, influencing the communicative power through the channels of political choices.⁷ As remarked by Habermas, deliberative democracy is devoid of both the acceptance of the weak requirement for the democratic formation of political will, and the overly strong requirement of shaping the society according to a particular axiological system. In their place introduces a third requirement, whereby the procedures and communication assumptions of democratic formation of opinions and will function as the main sources of discursive rationalization for the decisions of the authorities, guided in their making by the law.⁸ Habermas' rationalization signifies more than legitimacy, but less than the formation of political power.⁹

The second model of democracy present in popular consciousness is referred to as substantive – the term Republican is used with equal frequency. It stands for a broader understanding of the function of politics, not limiting its role to just following the procedures. In this case, politics is the articulation of a deep-rooted vision of the moral life of the community, contained in the concept of the common good. Substantive democracy is based on the assertion that the objectives of different individuals overlap to such an extent that the state can see them as a roadmap for its actions.¹⁰ Communitarians advocate this type of democracy, and in

⁵ J. Habermas, *Three Normative Models of Democracy*, [in:] *Democracy and Difference. Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, (ed.) S. Benhabib, Princeton 1996, pp. 21–30.

⁶ J. Habermas, *Three Normative Models of Democracy*, op.cit., p. 24.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 28.

¹⁰ See: Ch. Mouffe, *Paradoks demokracji* (The Democratic Paradox), op.cit.; S. Filipowicz, *Demokracja. O władzy iluzji w królestwie rozumu* (Democracy – on the power of illusion in the kingdom of reason), Warszawa 2007; see: G. Sartori, *Teoria demokracji* (The Theory of democracy revisited – Polish edition), Warszawa 1998

their deliberations on politics and democracy are seeking a „cure“ for the deficiencies of the procedural form of the regime.

Yet before we closer present the ideals of communitarianism, we should point out the ambiguity within republicanism itself. It is widely believed that republicanism primarily signifies a democratic form of government, most commonly direct, or simply any anti-elitist regime leaning towards egalitarianism and collectivity.¹¹ Still, the above is not the essence of republicanism – it should be noted that republicanism is not directly connected to any specific political system as it gives priority to the substantive elements of the system over its formal (procedural) side, which is in turn treated only as an institutional expression of the values and principles cultivated in the state – the principles of justice and the common good.¹² The essence of republicanism was described by Philip Pettit, who noted that it is „a theory of freedom and government“, where freedom is understood as independence from anyone’s decision, and the power (government) is formed with the belief that its purpose will be solely to guard the laws.¹³ The finishing touch to the definition of the republican democracy can be seen in the opinion of Maurizio Virola, who remarked that the political wisdom repeated with minor deviations for centuries by the Republican theorists is that freedom can survive only if citizens possess the unique passion called civic virtue.¹⁴

A key category of republican democracy is freedom, understood both in positive and negative terms. It is assumed, however, that „freedom from“ can exist only if certain conditions related to its positive manifestations are met, such as serving the common good, civic virtue and finally non-arbitrary governance.¹⁵ This approach allows the interpretation of republican liberty as remaining in compliance with the law represented by the elected authorities, not expressing itself outside of it and demanding from

¹¹ E. Cizewska, *Filozofia publiczna Solidarności* (Public philosophy of the „Solidarity”), Warszawa 2010, p. 71.

¹² Ibidem, p. 73.

¹³ P. Pettit, *Republicanism. Theory of Freedom and Government*, Oxford 1997, p. 24.

¹⁴ M. Viroli, *Republicanism*, New York 2002, p. 12.

¹⁵ *Republicanism and Political Theory*, (ed.) C. Laborde, J. W. Maynor, Oxford 2008, p. 4.

the citizen a commitment to the interests of the community.¹⁶ Thus it creates an original combination of civic virtues and commitment as a consequence of specific understanding of equality, freedom and law – one permitting the creation of a political community with the ideal of a citizen at its core, and the correlated rights and responsibilities, and a specific approach to economic problems and relationships between citizens.

This general characteristic of republican democracy needs to be put in perspective – after all, the tradition from which it is derived is not homogeneous, as we can clearly distinguish the Athenian and Roman roots thereof. However, these differences have already been widely discussed in literature, and thus in the context of indicating the types of republicanism only the basics of Athenian republicanism, at the root of communitarian thinking about democracy, will be presented here. Its key concept is the belief that the chief criterion of political activity is the pursuit of the common good. Taken as the primary objective of the whole community, it leads to the marginalization of other, individualistic purposes and requires effort from the whole community. Thus, the primacy of the pursuit of the common good helps prioritize the public domain over private, as it determines the actions of an individual.¹⁷

The Athenian current of republicanism assumes that individual freedom is highly dependent on personal participation in public life. Consequently, the shape of liberty, and its prospects are determined by the community and its standards. The distinguishing factor is participation, that – in addition to freedom, having its source in the community – determines the conditions of personal excellence.¹⁸ In the context of this recognition of the role of participation, it should be noted that the described current of republican democracy is construed on the assumption of the high importance of civic virtues for the state's functioning, as they make the debate about the common good possible.¹⁹ The above considerations help to identify the determinants of republican democracy, which include:

¹⁶ E. Ciżewska, *Filozofia publiczna Solidarności* (Public philosophy of the „Solidarity”), Warszawa 2010, pp. 77–78.

¹⁷ P. Pettit, *Republicanism*, op.cit., p. 27.

¹⁸ J. W. Maynor, *Republicanism in the modern world*, Cambridge 2003, p. 13.

¹⁹ E. Ciżewska, *Filozofia publiczna*, op.cit., pp. 80

the ideal of equality before the law and equal access to power, the ideal of self-government as an expression of civic participation and the freedom akin to its positive dimension in the Berlinian concept.

Communitarians in their postulates for the functioning of communities in the political domain opt for the use of two forms of democracy: both deliberative and substantive. Yet to say that they use these models in a literal way is both a simplification, and misuse. While deliberative democracy is widely regarded as a variant of the procedural model²⁰, in the case of communitarianism „deliberation“ is clearly present in the substantive (republican) model of democracy as well.

Communitarians stress that a necessary condition for the existence of the political sphere as defined in their proposals is the definition of the „substance of politics“ on the one hand and the participation of citizens on the other. Moreover, they remark that as a result of their participation, the citizens become both better educated and socialized, and equality, dignity and freedom of all are ensured.²¹ Consequently, the concept of “the good life” pursued by a particular community is not external to it, in that it does not flow from the laws of nature, social contract or statutory law. The source, as already mentioned, lies in the tradition and cultural identity of the community, making it a value superior relative to the interests of an individual. The latter in particular are subject to a process of discourse, trying to convince an individual to act according to the axiology represented by the community – that way the bond of „solidarity“ is formed. Thanks to this solidarity, according to the communitarian theorists, it is possible for politics to shape the selfless sense of unity, based on values and a defined concept of the common good. Thus, the substantive model definitely “wins” over the model of procedural democracy.

Communitarians accuse procedural democracy above all of dualism, the division of political sphere into „us“ and „them.“ As remarked by Ch. Taylor, the governed do not directly participate in government, but they still want the authorities to represent their interests – they are trying to

²⁰ See: J. Habermas, *Three Normative Models of Democracy*, op.cit., pp. 21–30; J. Habermas, *Uwzględniając innego* (The Inclusion of the other – Polish edition), Warszawa 2009, pp. 250–260.

²¹ M. Taylor, *Community, Anarchy and Liberty*, Cambridge 1982, pp. 142–147.

„get through“ with their demands in applying „strength based solutions“, pressuring the authorities, lobbying, protesting, and writing petitions.²²

None of this dichotomy is seen in the substantive model of democracy, as it requires the participation of all citizens in governance. In this context, politics is an expression of positive freedom, as it makes one eligible for participation. At the same time it is an expression of collective life – thanks to the politics, citizens actively shape community life, influence the fate of the group and its concept of good. No less important is the fact that it ensures, thanks to participation and sense of unity, the free flow of thus-far hidden human energy, and the best use of individuals' abilities.²³ Communitarians emphasize that for a citizen to want to participate, the ethos of a particular community needs to be maintained, dependent on the joint development of views on what is “good” outside the political and public domains, in common habits, customs, traditions, culture, morals, etc. This builds the foundations for self-governing action for the benefit of the community, and taking responsibility for the community on a public forum.

The community and the „substances” – i.e. values – represented by it, in the communitarian approach, permit the formation of political parties and trade unions. The consequence is the development of active citizenship and capture of the essence of the common good. However, a necessary condition for the formation and survival of political communities is their axiology – the ideas around which the communities should form, most frequently mentioned by communitarians, include: patriotism, ethics, justice, freedom, brotherhood and solidarity, and the common good.²⁴

The idea of patriotism, reflected in the individual's loyalty to the community they are part of, is synonymous to the communitarians with the

²² Ch. Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, Cambridge 1990, pp. 51–66.

²³ M. Sandel, *Liberalizm a granice sprawiedliwości* (Liberalism and the limits of justice – Polish edition), Warszawa 2004, pp. 169–202; A. MacIntyre, *Czyja sprawiedliwość? Jaka racjonalność?* (Whose justice? Which rationality? – Polish edition), Warszawa 2007, pp. 443–447; A. Etzioni, *The Golden Rule*, New York 1997, pp. 43–46; Ch. Taylor, *Legitimation Crisis?*, [in:] *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, (ed.) Ch. Taylor, Cambridge 1985, pp. 257–259.

²⁴ Ibidem.

fulfillment of obligations to others as a result of group solidarity and dignity in its ethical dimension. Thus, patriotism is not so much an expression of altruism, as commitment to a particular community one identifies with, and which permits joint implementation of a particular political project, despite the lack of personal ties with individual members of the community. Patriotism and identification with the community are the basis for objections against violations of human rights and civil liberties, but also personal rights, and against violations of the principles of tradition and immoral conduct in public life.²⁵

As a result, the bonds between the community and the individual are stable and hard to destroy. They form the basis for the formation of the common good, which for the communitarians is the key for defining the criteria of assessing individual preferences, while not reflecting their structure. Defining “the good life” in turn determines the directions of development of the community way of life. This allows for the creation of a public ranking of the concepts of “good” that is not limited by the requirement of neutrality. Moreover, it holds priority over the individual preferences of what “the good life” should mean.²⁶

An institution that encourages the adoption of the concept of „the good life“ rooted in the community is the state. According to the communitarians, it should discourage citizens from accepting ideas contrary to the preferred concept of the common good. In this case, the state is regarded as a perfectionist institution, since it resorts to ranking the different ways of life and orders them according to the level of compliance with existing social practices. The situation leads to the emergence of the trend to replace the less welcome aspects of the community way of life with the more accepted ones, thus improving the quality of life of citizens.²⁷

²⁵ See: M. Walzer, *Spór o wojnę* (Arguing about war – Polish edition), Warszawa 2003; M. Walzer, *Sfery sprawiedliwości* (Spheres of justice – Polish edition), Warszawa 2007, pp. 427–465; Ch. Taylor, *Etyka autentyczności* (The Ethics of authenticity – Polish edition), Warszawa 1997, pp. 104–109; A. Etzioni, *The New Golden Rule*, op.cit., s. 18–22.

²⁶ H. Tam, *Communitarianism*, London 1997, p. 7.

²⁷ M. Sandel, *Liberalizm a granice sprawiedliwości* (Liberalism and the limits of justice – Polish edition), Warszawa 2004, pp. 169–202; A. MacIntyre, *Czyja sprawiedliwość? Jaka racjonalność?* (Whose justice? Which rationality? – Polish edition), op.cit., pp. 443–447;

Significant to this current of thought is the view stressing that the *social (common) good* is more than the sum of individual “goods”, as the common good is characteristic of the highly valued community way of life. It is expressed in the acceptance of the forms of coexistence of the community members, cooperation for the community benefit, selfless identification of citizens with the collectivity and its culture. Equally meaningful is the individual’s readiness to defend the community and its values, patriotism and moral action.

The values listed are also conducive to the strengthening of the community and, as emphasized by the communitarians, their absence may result in a tendency of the state to moral collapse, as the lack of a defined axiology increases pathologies, e.g. in the form of authoritarianism or corruption. As Ch. Taylor wrote, the personal selfish, material interests are not enough to move people to respond to a threat faced by the community, because these interests foster attitudes of submission and fear, and permit replacement of certain interests with others. Thus, more important than *the good* defined by personal interest is the common, shared good, both direct and indirect, for individuals as well as entire societies.²⁸

It should be noted though that communitarians draw in part on the tradition of liberal thought. Admitting that there is no single and constant hierarchy of goods and values valid for all, they recognize that conflicts between axiological systems emerge in societies. However, they stress, one can avoid or minimize the social damage caused by the conflicts by appealing to Aristotelian understanding of the good – as supra-individual, resulting from more than personal spontaneous feelings and judgments. The common good is therefore the result of the community action defining the way of life based on the preferred axiology. As a result, both the state and the community promote a specific way of life, while fighting the concepts in conflict with it.²⁹

A. Etzioni, *The Golden Rule*, op.cit., pp. 43–46; Ch. Taylor, *Legitimation Crisis?*, Cambridge 1998, pp. 257–259.

²⁸ Ch. Taylor, *Etyka autentyczności* (The Ethics of authenticity – Polish edition), op.cit., pp. 104–106.

²⁹ See: M. Walzer, *Spór o wojnę*, op.cit.; M. Waltzer, *Sfery sprawiedliwości*, op.cit.,

This does not mean, however, that an individual is a slave to the community – the latter is only (and as much as) the basis for building individual identity. At its root is the Community concept of *good*, but the individual behavior has a major impact on the development of personal identity. Individuals are involved in the creation of their own identity as it is their highest ranked need. In this context, the role of the community is limited to „providing building blocks.“ However, considering that a group identity is not a sum total of selfish interests of individuals, the communitarians indicate community as a source for the concept of individual identity.

The concept of the common good leads to the conclusion that the shape of society proposed by the communitarians allows to minimize or even eliminate conflicts. Therefore, the idea of justice is not a universal rule, superior to or neutral to the individual “goods” – it is one of many, and serves only the relative prioritization in the configuration of good particular for a given community. Communitarians note that different societies and cultures have different visions of justice, different views on when, under what conditions, and which values and how intensely they should be pursued. This approach results in the premise that moral principles, not laws, form the basis of collective life. What’s more, the activities carried out with the common good as an aim are by definition just.³⁰

Justice is not a universal good. As noted by M. Walzer, distributive justice is changeable depending on social contexts. The basis for this view is the belief that the principles of justice are plural in form, and the various social *goods* should be distributed according to various criteria, in accordance with different procedures, by different institutions. All emerging differences stem from the variable understanding of the essence of the common, social good – the inevitable product of historical and cultural particularisms. Hence, justice should honor the particular characteristics of *goods* that are being distributed.³¹

pp. 427–465; Ch. Taylor, *Etyka autentyczności*, op.cit., pp. 104–109; A. Etzioni, *The New Golden Rule*, op.cit., s. 18–22.

³⁰ M. Waltzer, *Sfery sprawiedliwości*, op.cit., pp. 436–437; A. McIntyre, *Etyka i polityka* (Ethics and politics – Polish edition), Warszawa 2007, pp. 292–295.

³¹ Ibidem.

Justice is an important principle and value of modern societies. For the communitarians, just as for Aristotle, justice is on the one hand a moral virtue, important for social life, and on the other – a hallmark of good social relations. Justice ensures social harmony because of the use of rational principles of exchange and distribution of goods in social and individual life, as well as the principle of equal opportunities. Therefore, while it serves as a tool for distributing goods, it is also a form of self – fulfillment for the citizens. Law and the principles of justice are methods of understanding its own self for society, the means of shaping itself, and not a tool to increase and distribute benefits.

For the communitarians, justice – next to the rights and freedoms – is one of ethical goods. By design, they are to be internal to the ethics of the community, and the state and other institutions are only there to implement them. In view of the above, citizens support the institutions in their actions and expect that they in turn will not be neutral to the values and the good of the community.

A special place in the considerations of the communitarians on the shape of social life is occupied by the idea of freedom. Frequently, freedom is interpreted in the context of its negative understanding, and as a result emphasize the communitarians – it is not an activating factor in the social life of an individual. A much more important determinant than freedom is for them the social position of an individual.

This position determines two aspects of an individual's life – first of all, it makes the citizen face the limits set by the nature of social life – individuals in a community by definition limit each other's liberties. Thus, everyone should develop a certain autonomy of relationships. In this context, communitarians draw on the experience of the liberals. For the communitarians, however, this aspect is less important than the belief that society provides a person with the material based on which they can determine what to do, what it is worth achieving. Therefore it defines the goals of the individual and helps build the values and the concept of good. Especially in the context of building the common good, an individual's life is given sense, and their identity becomes finally definable. Consequently, personal freedom is made significant – freedom which, in the communitarian school of thought, opposed to

the liberals, is not a value in itself, but a means to implement and bring to life any value.³²

Thus, an individual is permitted to shape their liberty in its positive meaning. In the communitarian assumption it is not realised in pursuit of abstract goals, external to the individual, but in the full realization of individual identity in all its aspects. An individual builds a vision of their own person, which will be manifested in a given social context.³³ It should also be emphasized that freedom and choice are not on their own a value for the communitarians – instead, they are carriers of values, which are an expression of the citizen's closeness to the roots of their community.

These accepted concepts of democracy do not affect the role the state should play for the community and its citizens. Communitarians opt for a two models of state: involved in creating and maintaining the values of the community, and neutral to the community axiology.³⁴

The first one assumes that individuals acquire identity as a result of their presence in the community. Therefore, as stressed by the communitarians, laws from the point of view of ethics can not be neutral – and hence also no state can be neutral. The state's duty is to actively promote the way of life selected by the community. Only a state operating within the defined axiological system has the ability to protect the social environment, enabling individuals to develop their personal identity, leading in turn to personal self-determination.³⁵ Therefore, the objective of politics is not so much the governance of interests of the individuals, but rather creation of bonds of solidarity among members of the community, as well as the implementation of the basic vision of the communities moral life. This trend is visible in the postulates expressed by the majority of communitarians. The element cementing all their views is undoubtedly the

³² Ch. Taylor, *Etyka autentyczności* (The Ethics of authenticity – Polish edition), op.cit., pp. 34–35; M. Sandel, *Liberalizm a granice sprawiedliwości* (Liberalism and the limits of justice – Polish edition), Warszawa 2004, pp. 263–268.

³³ E. Ciżewska, *Filozofia publiczna Solidarności*, op.cit., pp. 76–80.

³⁴ See: A. Szahaj, *Jednostka czy wspólnota, Spór liberałów z komunitarystami a „sprawa polska”* (An individual or the community? The liberal-communitarian debate and the „Polish cause”), Warszawa 2000.

³⁵ Ch. Taylor, *Etyka autentyczności*, op.cit., pp. 106–107.

belief that active participation of citizens in community life will increase as a result of the creation of appropriate material life and institutional conditions. There is a tendency and postulate at the same time to minimize the role of government and bureaucratic institutions so only the administrative and executive spheres remain. The community becomes the center of decision-making, and the agreements there are reached as a result of discussions.³⁶

The model of uninvolved state, axiologically neutral, assumes that the state involvement resorts to coercion as a means of introducing a particular moral order – a thought clearly contrary to the assumption of consensus arising from the functioning of the community, as authorities should not be involved in the pursuit of the common values. This particular task should remain in the sphere of public debate. It can be argued that the neutrality of the state restricts its activity only to the sphere of administration. Yet the principle of pluralism is a necessary condition to ensure proper functioning of many communities within the state – as a result, the pluralism of values becomes *the* central value, and the state acting in accordance with this principle raises “neutrality” to the level of „substance“, so that the state is no longer merely an administrator.

In view of the foregoing, it should be noted that while communitarians are essentially supporters of substantive democracy, the values they are proponents of are still subject to discussion within the planned community. Depending on the community model – exclusive, inclusive or responsive – a specific range of deliberation is suggested, but all agree that some extent of discussion is required. The problem of involvement and scope of obligations of the state towards the communities remains debatable, not only internally, but also externally.³⁷

The most restrictive application of a substantive democracy model is proposed by A. McIntyre. This particular project goes as far as to impose on the members of the community a “pre – defined cementing element.”

³⁶ Ł. Dominiak, *Wartość wspólnoty* (The value of the community), Toruń 2009, pp. 330–341.

³⁷ See: A. Szahaj, *Jednostka czy wspólnota...*, op.cit., pp. 172–173; A. Gawkowska, *Biorąc wspólnotę poważnie, Komunitarystyczne krytyki liberalizmu* (Taking the community seriously. Communitarian critique of liberalism), Warszawa 2004, pp. 12–13.

At the same time, he postulates the use of constraints in order to achieve wide-spread respect for the community goals. As already mentioned, the community is for MacIntyre the basis of social order. The focus of its members on the axiology delineating the differences between this particular community and the others, points to marginalization of the role of the state and the political system. In A. MacIntyre's work, the objectives he sets the state are clear.³⁸ Above all, he calls for neutrality in the promotion or protection of certain values. Assuming that the community is an entity "bigger than family, but smaller than the state" MacIntyre holds that there are many communities in each state. He still remains aware of the "non-translatability and incommensurability" of moral principles in the different communities. Thus, any discourse is only possible within the community, not between them. By consequence, a necessary condition to foster discourse within the community is the complete loyalty of its members and their knowledge of the subject under deliberation.³⁹

MacIntyre believes that community is a value in itself. Their support and development is one of the fundamental tasks of politics, as politics is obliged to create conditions – primarily institutional, but also material – which enable citizens' participation in community life by working for its benefit.⁴⁰

MacIntyre's views on the impact of politics on the community are strongly opposed by M. Sandel. The latter opines that one of the key tasks of the community is to shape the civic attitudes of its members, and to communicate and implement the vision of "the good life"⁴¹. These tasks not only preclude the neutrality of politics and power, but also impose an obligation to actively participate in creating and promoting values.⁴² Consequently, for Sandel politics is a sphere of morality, which can support

³⁸ A. MacIntyre, *Dziedzictwo cnoty* (After virtue – Polish editio), op.cit., p. 61; A. MacIntyre, *Czyja sprawiedliwość?...*, op.cit., pp. 256–257.

³⁹ Ibidem..

⁴⁰ See: C. Pateman, *Participation and the Democratic Theory*, Cambridge 1970; T. Buksiński, *Współczesne filozofie polityki* (Modern philosophies of politics), Poznań 2006, p. 90.

⁴¹ M. Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent. America in Search of a Public*, op.cit., p. 351.

⁴² Ibidem, p. 350.

or destroy the way of life adopted by the community. Moreover, only the truly involved state can shape committed and educated individuals who are able to deal with the problems of their fellow citizens. According to the philosopher, such an approach will enable both the realization of positive freedom and the participation of citizens.⁴³

The participation of citizens is for Sandel primarily a guarantee of a reduction of interference of state institutions, while the citizens remain interested in public affairs. In this way, he echoes the concerns expressed already by Tocqueville, believing the existence of „soft despotism“: he sees neutral politics as concerned only with the economical, and views the substantive politics and the state involved in the implementation of the obligations laid down by the community as its natural enemy.⁴⁴

The most interesting element, from the perspective of the functioning of the global population, is Sandel's proposal of the „dispersal of power“ that has been thus far overly focused within the nation-state.⁴⁵ Aware of the role of the economy in the modern world, he holds that the nation-state is not able to resist the hegemony of the market. To compensate for the formation of transnational economic organizations, one should contribute to the creation of supranational political institutions. As he remarks, the most promising alternative to the sovereign nation-state is the multiplicity of communities and political bodies – some more, some less extensive than nations – among which sovereignty is dispersed. The nation-state does not have to completely disappear, in his view, but it should waive its claim to exclusive possession of sovereign power and being the first object of political loyalty. Consequently, various forms of political association would have authority over different spheres of life and would engage various aspects of human identity.⁴⁶

While sympathizing with the so-called “cosmopolitan movement“, emerging in the late 1980s and 1990s in the United States, Sandel also points out its shortcomings. He emphasizes that the hope of self-govern-

⁴³ M. Sandel, *Freedom of Conscience or Freedom of Choice?*, [in:] *Articles of Faith, Articles of Peace*, (ed.) J. D. Hunter, O. Guinness, Washington 1999, p. 77.

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ M. Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent*, op.cit., p. 345.

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

ment lies not in the shift of sovereignty, but in its dispersal.⁴⁷ He points out that the sense of loyalty and affection is created in small communities, which is why they should occupy the intermediate level between the individuals and the supra-national communities, prepared to act on the macroscale.

Proposing the dispersion of sovereignty, Sandel is aware of the dangers of his postulates – first of all, the resulting fragmentation of society and possible emergence of antagonistic centers, aimed at re-focusing the sovereignty. In addition, he admits that the ambiguity associated with dispersed sovereignty can cause reaction in the form of tendency to fundamentalism.⁴⁸ Furthermore, citizenship can change in this case into a formless, changeable *I* without roots, unable to create a coherent whole.⁴⁹

In thinking about democracy, Sandel supports the so-called „strong republicanism“.⁵⁰ It envisages the creation of a very wide public domain, where values could be debated. It thus expresses opposition to the liberal axiological neutrality, while stressing that liberal ideals – such as liberties, the individual right to freedom of speech, religion, privacy and others – should and shall be weighed against the larger good or purpose they serve, rather than a priori always placed first.⁵¹

A different brand of republicanism is represented by Michael Walzer. In opposition to universalism Walzer says that the state, and thus also the politics, unite and impact many communities and their diverse understanding of goods and values. Therefore, the key principles of politics should be pluralism and absolute equality.⁵² He postulates that no society is homogeneous, consistent and harmonious, and as a result it can not be governed according to a specific standard, as the presence of communities representing competing values and traditions in one state often forces the authorities to negotiate a compromise between them. Therefore, the state

⁴⁷ Ibidem.

⁴⁸ Ibidem., p. 350.

⁴⁹ Ibidem.

⁵⁰ Expression used by Ł. Dominiak. See: Ł. Dominiak, *Wartość wspólnoty*, op.cit., p. 334.

⁵¹ Ibidem.

⁵² M. Walzer, *Sfery sprawiedliwości*, op.cit. p.13.

should have the final say, as the guardian of community values. Walzer is an advocate of the freedom of citizens within the state.⁵³ At the same time, however, he is in favor of freedom of citizens from the state institutions, seeing them as a means of domination over the citizens: institutions taking action often usurp the citizens' role. Consequently, they automatically become a risk to the freedom of the individual. In his opinion, procedural democracy should be supported by the possibility of co-operation between the citizens – hence Walzer's postulate of intertwining the two factors building the relationship between the society and the state: pluralism and political culture of a democratic civil society.⁵⁴

In pursuing Walzer's ideas, a citizen is not only a "carrier" of rights, but also their active creator. This allows both the state and the politics to implement the goal crucial to individuals and communities: ensure that the principle of justice is followed. In turn, such circumstances lead to an increase in the economic status of individuals. Walzer observes that ethnicity allows an individual identification, satisfies the emotional need of belonging, but economic development, freedom and mobility can be provided only by the state.⁵⁵

For Walzer *the good life* is possible only within the realm of division and struggle, but also filled with the authentic bonds of solidarity, when we become socialized and inseparable from the community. We see people freely associating and communicating with each other, creating and recreating groups of all kinds not in the name of one type of socialization or another – be it a family, tribe, nation, religion, commune, brotherhood, interest groups or ideological groups – but in the name of natural socialization. We are, by nature, social beings before we become political or economic animals.⁵⁶

⁵³ M. Walzer, *Pluralism in political perspective*, "The Politics of Ethnicity", London 1982, p. 28.

⁵⁴ M. Walzer, op.cit., p. 17; M. Walzer, *Politics in the Welfare State*, [in:] *Essential Works of Socialism*, New Haven and London 1986, pp. 56–57.

⁵⁵ M. Walzer, *Pluralism in political perspective*, op.cit., p. 28.

⁵⁶ M. Walzer, *Spór o społeczeństwo obywatelskie (The civil society argument)*, [in:] *Ani książkę, ani kupiec: obywatel – idea społeczeństwa obywatelskiego w myśli współczesnej*

The champion of substantive democracy based on deliberation is Charles Taylor. As already indicated, Taylor gives particular importance in the shaping of the community to the language. He believes that the meaning of words, their understanding by an individual reflects the social world, and particularly the culture. He points to three things always present in the language: articulation, creating a clear consciousness; ordering of matters in the public domain, what in turn forms and shapes the public sphere; and the making of distinctions that are fundamental to human problems, which fosters our openness to these problems. For all these functions, language seems indispensable to Taylor.⁵⁷

Thanks to the understanding of the language, and through its use in public discourse it is possible for citizens to take action, make choices, change the political orientation or cultural or moral attitudes. This does not though change the fact that to be able to decide, each individual needs to draw on the categories defined by the culture and tradition. Only in this way the dialogue in the public sphere is made possible, permitting action undertaken by informed and responsible citizens.⁵⁸

Taylor's proposal for the role of the state and politics does not mean the weakening of the community. Taylor's community is built on solid foundations – values and objectives shared by its members. Besides, in spite of its inclusive nature, the condition of truly belonging to a community thus defined is the language, building sense of unity among its members, who are then able to articulate this awareness.⁵⁹

This allows individuals to free themselves from being „enslaved“. According to Taylor, deliberation determines the possibility of a person's participation in the processes of civic life, as the main threat for the modern citizen is capitalism taking away the power from the participative

(Neither prince nor merchant: a citizen – the notion of civic society in modern political thought), (ed.) J. Szacki, Kraków 1997, p. 94.

⁵⁷ Ch. Taylor, *Theories of Meaning*, [in:] *Human Agency and Language*, "Philosophical Papers" 1985, Vol. 1, p. 263.

⁵⁸ Ch. Taylor, *Źródła podmiotowości*, op.cit., p. 743.

⁵⁹ Ibidem.

institutions, and passing it on to bureaucratic organizations instead.⁶⁰ Furthermore, Taylor proposes to effectively counter this threat through „direct participation“ in movements in which citizens organize themselves.⁶¹ Only then the „full and equal participation“ of individuals and communities in a democratic system is possible. For Taylor, the natural consequence of the above is that democracy embraces everyone without exception, and all are treated as equals – as in his view, in a society where culture enforces a hierarchy, democracy can not flourish.⁶²

Taylor, like Sandel, calls for the state and its role to be balanced by citizen participation. It is the only way to fight the indolence, passivity and social discontent, the consequence of which is undoubtedly the „enslaving“ of man. Therefore, through the idea of equality, every society should strive to take the initiative, to decide, to take responsibility and control the activities of the authorities.⁶³ Such a solution allows one to avoid the „trap of fragmentation“. According to Taylor, social fragmentation occurs when the way people see themselves becomes increasingly atomistic, when they feel less and less connected with fellow citizens through common ventures and values.⁶⁴

Two conditions permit the avoidance of the trap. First of all, as Taylor demonstrates on the example of the American people, individual rights should be guaranteed and the focus should be on politics as a way of promoting interests or projects.⁶⁵ In both cases, this requires commitment from individuals, and from the state – a definition of the basic principles and values by which they should proceed.

Amitai Etzioni also believes that politics should not be a set of procedures or neutral principles. He postulates that politics, as well as the state

⁶⁰ Ch. Taylor, *Jak wiele wspólnoty potrzeba w demokracji* (*How much community in the democracy?*), [in:] *Wspólnotowość wobec wyzwań liberalizmu* (*Community in the face of liberal challenge*), (ed.) T. Buksiński, Poznań 1995, p. 64.

⁶¹ Ibidem, p. 62.

⁶² Ibidem., p. 60.

⁶³ Ch. Taylor, *Etyka autentyczności* (*The Ethics of authenticity – Polish editio*), op.cit., pp. 105–108.

⁶⁴ Ibidem., p. 107.

⁶⁵ Ibidem., p. 109.

guarding the social order, should affirm the set of values represented by the community, creating the framework for its functioning and development.⁶⁶ The argument is contained in a concise statement that most institutions are not purely procedural, or axiologically neutral.⁶⁷ Thus Etzioni, like other communitarians, obliges the authority to seek common values, and represent and promote them.

Cosequently, the community being created on the basis of the principles of communitarianism brings certain values to the public institutions. On the other hand, the same fact may serve to justify the pressure that can be exerted by the community upon the individual. Such an option has no pejorative connotations for Etzioni, because this „pressure“ is only used as an aid in the internalization by the individual of the community values.⁶⁸ Thus appears the so-called moral voice that expresses the socially shared values. Their realisation is not guaranteed by government agencies (e.g. the law) but by the pressure of the community. In this context, the voluntary nature of assuming any obligations related to the community and individual responsibility for their implementation should be stressed. This perspective offers one autonomy, maintaining personal freedom from the coercion of the state. According to Etzioni, the state should above all play the role of an institution educating and “morally persuading”, so that the society manages to avoid the pitfalls of anarchy on one hand and of collectivism on the other.⁶⁹ At the same time, he notes, the social order is not the result of imposition by the authority, or an aggregate of individual efforts, but a community habitat, within which people are free, and without which they cannot truly gain freedom – a place where people are constantly re-defining the line between freedom and order.⁷⁰

Similarly as Sandel and Taylor, Etzioni believes that the community can thrive only in a substantive democracy as it requires commitment from

⁶⁶ A. Etzioni, *The Good Society*, “The Journal of Political Philosophy”, March 1999, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 88–89.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 95.

⁶⁸ A. Etzioni, *The New Golden Rule*, op.cit., p. 168.

⁶⁹ Ibidem, p. 44.

⁷⁰ A. Etzioni, *The Moral Dimension: Toward a New Economics*, New York 1988/1990, pp. 10–11.

an individual, a fundamental prerequisite for the existence of a responsive community. However, the democracy model preferred by Etzioni should be based not only on participation – its guiding principles are the socially shared values, customs and duties that determine sensitivity to the needs of citizens.⁷¹ These postulates can be met only by increasing access to information, and in consequence by changes in the “customs of authorities” – elimination of corruption, elitism, etc. For Etzioni, politics is a sphere of service and vocation, not an occupation.

Democratic proposals of the communitarians supply evidence for the lack of faith in the neutrality of the state towards different styles and values. It is not, however, synonymous with recognition of primacy of one good over the other, but only with acceptance that the state always chooses a specific way of life at the expense of another. In the case of republican democracy, the common good is selected and accepted as a result of participation and debate, and not through imposition by the authority. Hence the need to create a community of equality and positive freedom, and the requirement of full and active participation of its members.

⁷¹ A. Etzioni, *The Golden Rule*, op.cit., pp. 25–28; Pettit, *Republicanism*, op.cit., p. 275.