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TRUMP AND THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

Introduction

Trump's victory in 2016 shocked the liberal elites. But it constituted also disoriented the republican elites. Both were already by the time of his victory in a kind of informal alliance being part of the ruling class with global consciousness battling each other in fact on the margins of real political issues. Although the Republican Party is not tantamount to the conservative movement, the latter is in general today part of the Republican camp. For the Republican Party trying to select a challenger to the post-Obama democratic opponent, Trump's rise despite its adamant sabotage by the majority of its establishment was especially bitter. It had to confront the truth that their traditional voters were not with them but with a maverick usurper who decided "to run on the Republican ticket". They realized that Trump knew something about America they did not know locked in their insular, increasingly oligarchical world and politics as usual. The Republican establishment realized that in a deeply polarized America winning an election required a coalition with a different platform responding to the global contest which the United States was losing. In relation to this immediate political problem within the Republican establishment Trump's victory also constituted a challenge to the American conservative movement. This movement, deeply heterogeneous and divided against itself till today has always had

a complicated relationship to the Party. Not only in terms of tactics but also strategic aims. But Trump's spectacular rise forced the movement once again to confront some of its basic assumptions about what it was and what should be the conservative movement in America, including an immediate problem how to respond to Trump himself and his program.

Introductory remarks

The modern American conservative movement emerging after the World War II became a powerful and important part of the Republican Party's electoral coalition in the 60's. At the beginning it was formed in opposition to the overtly interventionist and powerful rise of the government since the New Deal. But it crystallized in the 70's when the Democratic Party's electoral coalition formed during the New Deal was shattered and the Party adopted a radical "emancipatory" program of the countercultural revolution of 1968 and moved from traditional American individualistic understanding of liberalism into its new form of identity liberalism. It was then that a large part of the Party's traditional working class base moved to a new Republican conservative coalition organized politically by Ronald Reagan, president from 1981–1989, and forming its important part. This new conservative movement was organized intellectually in the fifties by the conservative milieu formed around the *National Review* magazine founded by William F. Buckley Jr. in 1955. But from the beginning it consisted of many different axiological currents, often contradicting each other and politically difficult to organize. The conservative camp since then has always been perceived as a huge, unruly archipelago of movements and ideas sometimes living separate to each other, sometimes fighting each other but rarely being animated by a common unifying idea. In a negative sense the enemy of the conservative movement in America has always been progressive ideology and politics animated by it, especially its reformulation in the wake of the 60's of traditional liberalism into identity liberalism. But different aspects of progressive ideology and politics have been important for different currents of the conservative movements in rapidly changing America. Tactics with whom and on what terms different alliances were to be formed also varied. Thus, libertarians and free market conservatives have always had a very uneasy relationship with the cultural or religious conservatives. Today the working class forms in substantial numbers part of the conservative coalition battling globalism. They fight not only with the liberal-left progressives but also with the libertarians of the Right not only because of their economic policies but also because of their countercultural, radical emancipatory ideologies devastating their communities.

All currents of the conservative movement have always had a complicated and stormy relationship with the Republican Party which has many times

disregarded conservative causes, although not necessarily all of them at the very same time. The Party – as all political parties – has always been tempted to become a typical party of power politics alienating itself from large sections of its natural conservative base. Therefore, to create one viable political block capable of winning elections has always been a difficult, if not a herculean task. Ronald Reagan managed to do this masterfully organizing and leading to political victory diverse branches of the conservative coalition under a unifying common denominator of anticommunism, the glue holding the conservative movement together.¹ But a definition what was conservatism after President Ronald Reagan left the office in 1989 and the Soviet Union collapsed in 1990 has slowly become unclear and eventually the coalition collapsed. This was so because new problems to which conservatives had to respond such as recession, loss of jobs in the manufacturing sector, challenge of Islam, liberal-left culture war and war on America's heritage either did not exist then or their intensity was rather low. Conservative intellectuals may be faithful to Reagan's legacy and his policies, but conservative voters have been escaping from the camp for a long time. When Trump appeared, a candidate so radically different from any conventional American politics, it seemed unlikely that such a candidate in almost every respect different from what the conservative orthodoxy of any persuasion believed in would capture the conservative imagination, let alone the vote. His personal history challenged anything cultural or religious conservative held true while his political pronouncements challenged all pieties which the conservative opponents of Trump defended in public debates.²

Nevertheless, conservative voters finally went with Trump, testifying to the fact that the conservative movement rebelled against the Republican Party establishment which after such a humiliation found itself conceptually and politically in disarray, trying again to come out with a unifying formula to win conservative voters back. Trump was not the most appealing face of conservatism, even after a large part of the conservatives sided with him and even if he was defined that way by his liberal-left opponents who wanted to pin his vices to the movement

¹ See a comprehensive analysis of this development: A. Bryk, "Konserwatyzm amerykański od Ronalda Reagana do rewolucji Obamy", [in:] *Ronald Reagan: nowa odsłona w 100-lecie urodzin*, ed. P. Musiewicz, Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, Kraków 2011, pp. 191–319; N. Bjerre-Poulsen, *Right Face: Organizing the American Conservative Movement 1945–65*, Museum Tusulanum Press, Copenhagen 2002; also an excellent book by J. Micklethwait, A. Wooldridge, *The Right Nation: Conservative Power in America*, Penguin Press, New York 2004; G. Hodgson, *The World Turned Right Side Up: A History of Conservative Ascendancy in America*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston–New York 1996; a classical G.H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945*, 30th anniversary edition, ISI Books, Wilmington, DE 2006.

² For instance, Jeb Bush represented a classical Republican establishment, Marco Rubio the newest version of the worn out neoconservative perspective, Rand Paul was a classical libertarian talking endlessly about markets and taxes, while Ted Cruz, being the most orthodox conservative seemed to be too politically timid to challenge the new problems of America considered by the establishment to be nonexistent and when touched upon as reactionary.

itself. But Trump's showmanship did not differ much from other politicians in this media saturated age. His personality cult on the part of his followers was just a consequence of his ability to use his showmanship to define a clear alternative to the elite consensus of both parties, the consensus in favor of global liberalism which has taken over American political establishment, the media and intellectual elites since the fall of communism in 1991. He favored economic nationalism and nationalism in general, or to put it another way economic and international Westphalian approach. In the United States history that tradition has been visible incessantly till today as far as the Republican Party policy was concerned and a success of this approach created for America a comfortable geopolitical situation and the rules of the global game. This global game began at a certain point to be no longer favoring the United States and the dream of the universal liberal order created by it turned out to be chimera. The American interests were at stake, and they coincided with the interests of a large part of the Trump voters who expected to stand up for them. But this was not an aberration or "turning the clock back" as Trump's detractors defined such a change, because this was "a return, in however haphazard a fashion, to the policy orientation that once really did make America great and the GOP grand".³

American conservatism from George H.W. Bush to Donald Trump

From the time of Ronald Reagan's presidency (1981–1989) until Trump the conservative movement passed through two phases. The first one was a time when Reagan's legacy took the place of irrelevant after the fall of the Soviet Union anticommunism. But that proved to be a short lived phenomenon even if politically this stance carried the movement to successive presidencies of both George H.W. Bush (1989–1993) and George W. Bush (2001–2009) as well as congressional Republican victories. But when the memory of communism receded and new generations not remembering it were born the conservative political movement began to unravel with its three major parts that is libertarians, religious conservatives and especially neoconservatives going their separate ways. In the meantime, cultural climate in America, especially in the media and university circles began to change becoming more radically "progressive" and this ideological offensive did not much concern the Republican Party, which began to be the party of the establishment. It left in general the negative economic consequences of globalism to its own logic not realizing how the Republican elites began to lose part of their traditional working class and parts of the middle class. The Tea Party movement was the first serious harbinger of trouble for the Republican elites perceived increasingly as an oligarchical cartel in alliance with its equivalent in the Democratic Party. In the meantime, the media and the university circles began to

³ D. McCarthy, "A New Conservative Agenda", *First Things*, March 2019, pp. 19–20.

be taken over by the neo-Marxist ideologies, including its American variant, the critical race theory, while socialist ideas began to prepare a stage for questioning the very essence of the American political system.⁴ Nevertheless, despite all such new developments and challenges to a cohesion of the conservative movement, officially all its currents stood behind the Republican Party during elections, especially presidential ones. For this reason, Reagan's legacy, interpreted in different, sometimes very bizarre forms prevented the "conservative crackup" incessantly possible taking into consideration festering conflicts between different currents of the conservative coalition. Reagan's legacy was constantly invoked although political programs put forth by the Republican presidential candidates contained little substance let alone real Reagan's ideas, while the conservative movement could not find any unifying intellectual formula. Its different parts trying to do this showed constant inconsistencies, policy reversals and deviations from "true" conservative movement which could not be properly defined. But this was not in fact a new situation. Reagan's legacy kept the movement together mainly by the fact that he was spectacularly successful only in one field of foreign policy, ending the Cold War.⁵ But there was a strong dissent and conflict within the Reagan camp both during his presidency and long after the end of his presidency.⁶ A sense of uneasiness that the movement was sputtering and going nowhere was very much visible already at a time of Reagan's death.⁷ Different currents of the conservative movements during his times were also blind to the fact that he himself despite everything which was expected from him by people who wanted their hopes realized was, apart from his anticommunism, more rhetorical than ideological conservative. He was resembling a traditional American pragmatic conservatism, "to get things done". Consistency in politics, as Winston Churchill famously explained in his classical essay in 1932 is rarely a virtue, and policy reversals are often not only justified but even necessary if a rule *rebus sic stantibus* requires flexibility in pursuance of "the same dominating purpose".⁸

⁴ Bernie Sander's presidential campaigns, very popular among the Democratic electorate in 2016 and 2020 or nomination of Kamala Harris to a post of vice-presidency by Joe Biden in 2020 testified to this shift.

⁵ A history of Reagan's conservative legacy written from the liberal side, conceding yet the Reagan's defeat of communism is given a comprehensive treatment in, for instance, S. Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan. A History, 1974–2008*, Harper Collins, New York 2008.

⁶ From the libertarian, economic side a good account was done by M.D. Tanner, *Leviathan on the Right: How Big-Government Conservatism Brought Down the Republican Revolution*, Cato Institute, Washington, D.C. 2007, esp. pp. 19–60, 77–98, 229–234; from the religious conservative point of view see: R.A. Viguerie, *Conservatives Betrayed: How George W. Bush and Other Big Government Republicans Hijacked the Conservative Cause*, Bonus Books, Los Angeles [cop. 2006], esp. pp. 101–114.

⁷ See a good account of this mood the entire number of *National Review*, June 28, 2004.

⁸ W.S. Churchill, *Consistency in Politics*, [1932], <https://archive.org/details/W.S.ChurchillConsistencyInPolitics1932> [accessed: 8.06.2021].

This observation fit Reagan's policies perfectly, if we define his "dominating purpose" as a defeat of communism, "we win, they lose".

Fragmentation of conservative movement after the end of the Cold War

One could not say that this crisis of the Reagan's legacy was not recognized by many within the conservative camp. Efforts to give this legacy more intellectual credibility in the new, rapidly changing conditions were visible long before Trump. Attempts to create a viable common conservative unifying idea were of course taken up. One of the most curious was a coalition of the pro-life movement with the neoconservatives who treated Islamic terrorism as a new threat to America. This seemed bizarre but somehow the Islamic terrorism began to function as a new equivalent of the once existing anti-communism. This adventurous foreign policy was risky because many conservatives could credibly claim that this equivalent was weak and in fact compromised by too many narrow lobbying interests, especially Jewish neoconservative lobby, far away from truly conservative cultural and religious concerns which once could be accommodated within the anticommunist camp. The enemy then was truly totalitarian and strong, the new one was in fact marginal, subject more to police operations than huge global conflict. Of course, the opponents of abortion or euthanasia could say that there are truths about human life and dignity which had to be defended at all costs in internal politics while the opponents of "Islamofascism" claimed that sharia law and terror were opposite to human life and dignity in international context. They formed as time showed a very tenuous alliance. International politics turned out to be much more complicated. But the alliance showed a deep desire to find a common cause again and revive the spirit and exhilaration of the Reagan years in an entirely new context. This was in fact

[...] the shotgun marriage of ex-socialists and modern puritans, the cynical political joining of imperial adventurers with reactionary Catholics and backwoods Evangelicals. These facts still remain: The sense of national purpose regained by forceful response to the attacks of September 11 could help summon the will to halt the slaughter of a million unborn children a year. And the energy of the pro-life fight "the fundamental moral cause of our time" may revitalize belief in the great American experiment.⁹

This new alliance had its own not so much edifying spectacles and soon turned out to be shaky and short-lived. What was left as Joseph Bottum observed already in 2005 was a worn out mosaic of different conservative factions fighting each other in search of a unifying idea. This was nothing new since

one of the least edifying spectacles in American conservatism over the years has been the apparent determination, among later converts, to disparage earlier converts. [...] It seems

⁹ J. Bottum, "The New Fusionism", *First Things*, June/July 2005, p. 36.

necessary to nearly everyone on the Right to find a more Rightist group *against* which to set themselves. If “No Enemies on the Left” is more or less the motto of liberals in America, “Only Enemies to the Right” seems to be the motto of conservatives.¹⁰

All unifying efforts turned out to be sterile, without any visible consequences.¹¹ Some more promising experiments in rejuvenation of the conservative movement were of course taken up. George W. Bush’s presidency brought his idea of “compassionate conservatism” policy.¹² But the idea did not inspire much following. A challenge from a rather unexpected direction after Bush came again in 2008 when Sarah Palin got vice-presidential nomination on the John McCain’s Republican ticket and the Tea Party movement, at the surface conservative-libertarian, exploded in 2009. Both Palin and the Tea Party movement constituted the first “populist” challenge on the part of the Republican electorate to the economic consequences of globalization uniting cultural conservatives and libertarians together. Despite being harbingers of a new unifying idea both movements were not properly defined and organized. Some Republican politicians began also to organize themselves around the idea of “constitutional conservatism” showing how perversions of the Constitution by courts’ loose interpretations, activities of administrative agencies without any oversight and executive mistakes began to create oligarchical pathologies, including the financial crisis giving rise to the Tea Party movement. But this narrowly tailored “constitutional conservative” movement also did not succeed.

As Bottum wrote all historical camps of the conservative movement from the 50’s and 60’s thought to be once more or less cohesive now lost their clear definition and were drifting with numerous currents and cross currents battling each other. Thus,

[...] it must seem as though there are more ways to sort conservatives in America than there are actual conservatives to be sorted. And what about the issues for which these different conservatives care? [From] [a]bortion [and] [...] homosexual marriage, [to] the creation of democracies in the Middle East [...] [it goes] on and on. They bear no more than the vaguest family resemblance [...]. Back during the Cold War, conservatives could all be counted upon at least to share an opposition to communism, while various writers [...] sought something resembling a unifying theory through the rich pages of Adam Smith’s economics and the deep prose of Edmund Burke’s traditionalism.¹³

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 34.

¹¹ See *Crisis of Conservatism? The Republican Party, the Conservative Movement and American Politics after Bush*, eds. J.D. Aberbach, G. Peele, Oxford University Press, New York 2011, esp. pp. 3–14, 259–278, 379–390.

¹² See on this especially: M. Olasky, *Compassionate Conservatism: What It Is, What It Does, and How It Can Transform America*, foreword by G.W. Bush, Free Press, New York 2000, and A.C. Brooks, *Who Really Cares: The Surprising Truth About Compassionate Conservatism. America’s Charity Divide – Who Gives, Who Doesn’t, and Why It Matters*, Hachette, United Kingdom 2007.

¹³ J. Bottum, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

But it was visible, noticed Bottum, that nothing of that old intellectual viability remained and no single common theme could be discerned and defined among them as truly conservative, the term which became absolutely nebulous. Conservatives were neither a well-defined political party, definitely not commensurate with the Republican Party any more, nor there was any intellectual common idea uniting all who by instinct associated with this sentiment. A “crack-up waiting to happen” was always imminent. In general, the American politicians and intellectuals were tearing the edifice of the conservative coalition apart trying to distinguish themselves from each other with the Republican establishment drifting together with the Democratic establishment towards the globalist perspective, even if thinking that this globalist perspective would be commensurate with the American rules of the game, unlike the Democrats for whom, at least many of them, this globalist perspective was much more appealing in the form of the post-national internationalism.

Fragile alliance against the “New Brave World” of the liberal left

The recent most promising attempt among the generation of the so-called millennials to form a common conservative cause, especially between the most potent, probably, libertarian camp and the social conservatism camp might be formed in relation to recent transformations of liberalism. If classical, individual liberalism gave little promise of forming one common cause because of nearly impossible to overcome philosophical, anthropological difference between the libertarianism and social conservatism, especially religious, a common denominator can be found today. This difference is overcome or can be overcome because of „the existence of a common enemy. Before, that enemy was communism. Today, that enemy is identity politics”.¹⁴ Today social conservatives, especially the millennial conservatives, adamantly claim that in today’s authenticity obsessed world they have enormous difficulty forming a natural alliance with economic and cultural libertarians, especially at a time when the libertarians seem to influence the Republican Party most. This is mainly visible in case of two issues that is free speech and abortion. There is an enormous offensive to legislate guarantees, mainly among Republican circles, to the free speech officially protected by the First Amendment of the American Constitution. This is especially visible in a crusade against the so-called speech codes at the universities (less so in corporations) aimed against a movement to protect “the environment” from hate speech.¹⁵ But social conservatives are reluctant to be enthusiastic about supporting this crusade

¹⁴ Ph. Jeffery, “Conservatism’s Next Generation”, *First Things*, August/September 2018, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2018/08/conservatisms-next-generation> [accessed: 8.06.2021].

¹⁵ This “hate speech” is usually defined by the most vocal progressive circles and lobbying groups which aim at eliminating any criticism to their cause.

since they realize that essentially this is a libertarian cause revolving around its notion of tolerance as indifference. For libertarians as Gilbert K. Chesterton observed “tolerance is the virtue of the man without convictions” and the virtue of free academic life without convictions is today free speech. Everybody can speak but with no sense of the fact that free speech is for something. Free speech facilitators want to position themselves as neutral in a market place of idea without requiring any commitment to real values or any social issues. So according to social conservatives the libertarian crusade for free speech amounted to libertarian Identitarianism as

“both reject the community in favor of ‘autonomous’ individual preferences.” In a university culture where rules are broken left and right in the name of personal freedom, it takes no special bravery to flout rules and spark controversy.¹⁶

For social millennial conservatives this is a quarrel essentially between liberal-left progressivists and libertarians conducted totally outside of community oriented context and disregarding the very real sense of substantive notions of good. That unacceptable difference is visible even more as far as conversations about abortion, much more important to social conservatives than free speech movement of the libertarian type. For this reason,

the self-proclaimed “pro-life generation” is cooling on classical liberal arguments for life that focus on the individual rights of children in the womb in favor of arguments that an ethic of life promotes the common good of mother and child. [...] They saw at the core of the abortion problem a false view of family life as “contractual” or “transactional,” as consisting of rights and preferences mutually recognized by all members, to be dropped if the relation proves inconvenient or otherwise undesirable. [...] “[N]either side’s [libertarians and liberal-left progressive] liberal arguments are especially convincing.” Even when [libertarian arguments are] employed against abortion, “pro-life ‘rights’ language doesn’t do what [...] [social conservatives] want [...]. A framework in which we view the fetus as a stranger allows the mother to treat the fetus in an unacceptably shabby way”.¹⁷

For this reason, the logic of the liberal rhetoric of rights and autonomy is rejected among the young social conservative millennials exactly at a time when the Republican establishment elites lost interest in the pro-life causes, as if giving up on a chance of moving the majority of the public opinion to their side on this issue. The Republicans officially support the pro-life movement to get its votes, but this electoral power of it was not reciprocated. For this reason, the pro-life millennials as part of the conservative movement distrust the Republican and in general conservative establishments. They do not want to be used for other’s agendas, instead they expect a common ground clearly articulated or searched for. But for the pro-life movement the bigger problem is important. It is “political impotence” of the Republicans even when they are presented with

¹⁶ Ph. Jeffery, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ *Ibidem.*

the most horrid examples of abortion industry and do not take any decisive action to try to stop it. But this stems from the fact that such a political failure is connected with a deeper philosophical failure, that is a fissure between conservative values and the Republican establishment. The conservative base is deeply suspicious whether this establishment still wants to act politically in the name of conservative principles or whether it has become a typical party of power. If there is any visible sign of conservative principles believed in by the Republican establishment it is connected solely with economic libertarianism which at the same time translates to social libertarianism. Conservative millennials consider such a stance to be self-serving and unacceptable, especially when they saw how the Republican establishment abandoned a defense of traditional marriage before 2015 using all kinds of ridiculous arguments why they could not be more outspoken against it and in fact accepting the liberal definition of love and thus marriage as the only basis of this institution. That was especially infuriating for the social conservatives because they argued for years that the same-sex marriage was not value-neutral concept, and the change is anthropological, not just legal.¹⁸ But such a change of anthropology which the Republican politicians in fact accepted without any resistance paralleled the logic of identity liberalism. If they criticized a dominant version of identity liberalism it was criticized from different principles than social conservative did this.¹⁹

Identity politics resembles a religion, and many showed the bastard similarities of such politics to it.²⁰ The “new faithful” operate on the assumption that they need something to believe in, although that assumption cannot be applied to libertarian and that is why the new millennial social conservatives distrust libertarians’ resistance to identity policies battles on American campuses in the name of free speech. Libertarians’ resistance is similar to their resistance to “right wing” students, that is social conservatives which make them odd allies of the conservative camp. Visible recent attempt to revive the coalition between the social conservatives and libertarians seems to be thus a difficult task, although the old guard of the social conservatives, including the protestant fundamentalist religious groups supported Trump who from a point of view of libertarians on many issues was sparing their approach. But the young social conservatives attempting to form a new fusionism are vary since for them

the first fact of fusion conservatism – the fault line that runs beneath it – has not disappeared and will ultimately prove more important than any Trump-induced drama. The extent of

¹⁸ See in general: H. Arkes, *Natural Rights and the Right to Choose*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2002; Sh. Girgis, R.T. Anderson, R.P. George, *What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense*, Encounter Books, New York–London 2012.

¹⁹ See e.g.: Ph. Jeffery, *op. cit.*

²⁰ See for instance: M. Eberstadt, *Primal Screams: How the Sexual Revolution Created Identity Politics*, Barnes & Noble, New York 2019 and Ch. Caldwell, *The Age of Entitlements: America Since the Sixties*, Simon & Schuster, New York 2020.

their influence on the future can't be determined yet, but if they have their way, the establishment donors, politicians, commentators, and experts who spend much of their energy tallying tariffs and House seats could find themselves facing a tough question: Who's driving this bus, and who should?²¹

Will Donald's Trump presidency serve as a basis for conservative renewal?

Whatever turbulences one could observe as far as the conservative movement was concerned there could be no doubt that Trump's victory constituted a final blow to the more and more artificial efforts to sustain a modicum of credibility to the strategy of keeping Reagan's legacy viable.²² But at the very same time he galvanized this sleepy drifting of the conservative movement habitually sticking to the Republican Party putting an end to an indefensible task of keeping the Reagan myth alive, even if certain reformulations of that myth, too powerful to be dismissed easily, have been visible all the time and might even be necessary as a starting point of the new conservative opening.²³ This was especially evident within the religious conservatives. They were conscious of a threat to religious freedom posed by the liberal-left radical program of "emancipation". The religious conservative movement is of course very diverse; thus, Trump's program elicited all kinds of reservations. Nevertheless, they were suppressed for the sake of forming a common ground against the liberal-left. Opposition to abortion was just one of such contested issues here, because its prominence in the conservative religious program was not shared by all conservative religious groups, for instance Jews.²⁴

But what might constitute a new conservative fusionism, a common program of any lasting consequence is not clear. The second Trump's term could have clarified the issue, but his defeat in 2020 left it in disarray, divided against itself with the Republican Party still searching for a clear political program to challenge more and more radical Democratic, progressive camp. But Trump's ephemeral triumph in 2016 could constitute a reorientation moment for the conservative movement in search of any uniting idea, despite the fact that his personality and confrontational style of presidency did not, and does not now, make him a possible leader of this new wave of the conservative movement when a substantial part

²¹ Ph. Jeffery, *op. cit.*

²² S.F. Hayward, "The Ronald and the Donald", *Claremont Review of Books*, Spring 2020, p. 38.

²³ A comprehensive analysis what might happen with the conservative movement in America after the Reagan's myth collapsed and what consequences Trump's victory might bring to it is provided by M.M. Witcher, *Getting Right with Reagan: The Struggle for True Conservatism, 1980–2016*, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence 2019.

²⁴ See: R. Moore, "Fragmentation of the Soul", *National Review*, December 5, 2016, pp. 45–46.

of the traditional Reagan style conservative elites were against him.²⁵ But they are unconvincing since they could never explain why despite the fact that

after two decades of Republican resurgence at the state and local level, the party still managed to lose five out of the six national popular votes prior to Trump. [...] Few Never Trumpers can fathom why millions of culturally conservative working voters [so far] [...] either stayed home or voted Democrat until Trump brought them back into the fold [...] ignoring [...] [these often] populist voter would mean a near-permanent Democratic White House²⁶.

This clearly showed that there was not only a strong separation between establishment Republican elites, the party of non-ideological power politics, a phenomenon which in the 50's and 60's was called liberal Republicans, or RINO (Republicans In Name Only) and the more conservative Republican leadership. There was also a visible separation between conservative Never Trumpers and the populist conservatives who supported Trump in millions. Never Trumpers are much more opportunistic and more loyal to their class than to their supposedly conservative principles. Populist conservatives are closer to social, including religious conservatives by instincts even if they are devastated by pathologies of the liberal-left policies. Trump kicked a table of the conservative Never Trumpers in Washington D.C. and refused during his presidency to court them, something to which they were accustomed to during all previous Republican administrations. But they opposed Trump not seeing where his real basis of support was and how their opposition turned out to be impotent and irrelevant. This resistance, provoking a question what conservatism meant for them, was so adamant that they did not want to wait until the election of 2020 but tried to overthrow Trump by any means including an attempt to impeach him.

Alternative to liberal technocracy

Trump proved to be a perfect manager of anger and a brilliant player of the federal logic of the American electoral system. Despite his personality and fuzzy principles, he was a leader able to organize and deliver into the ballot box millions of voters without which the conservative coalition could not be politically victorious. The Republican establishment never grasped the moment when their voters rejected its leadership, a situation „when the rich few privatize public goods and capture them for themselves”.²⁷ Therefore, Trump might still be – even after los-

²⁵ See: R.P. Saldin, S.M. Teles, *Never Trump: The Revolt of the Conservative elites*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2020; also J. Kelly, *Disloyal Opposition: How the #Never Trump Right Tried – and Failed – to Take Down the President*, Encounter Books, New York–London 2020.

²⁶ V.D. Hanson, “Always Never Trump”, *Claremont Review of Books*, Fall 2020, p. 23.

²⁷ R.R. Reno, “Manufacturing Hate”, *First Things*, April 2019, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2019/04/manufacturing-hate> [accessed: 8.06.2021].

ing an election – a serious political player. What his phenomenon truly showed was a truth which Kevin Philips exposed in 1969 that the future of the Republican Party and conservative politics as well depended on moving the party away from the northeastern establishment and toward the middle and working classes and the emerging power of the Sunbelt religious voter. Philips argued that social and cultural issues would define future elections with downscale voters being attracted more to the Republicans not to the Democrats who had their unquestioned support since Franklin D. Roosevelt's times.²⁸ The Republican establishment forgot this and was faced with the populist revolt of its own electoral basis which Trump organized. This was a grass root rebellion against the elites which forgot whom they were supposed to serve, the same rebellion from the times of Sarah Palin and the Tea Party movement. What changed was the fact that unlike Palin or the Tea Party Trump was smart enough to find a successful means of communications to mobilize the victims of globalization and cultural devastation while at the very same time trying to formulate a viable policy agenda.

Trump's confrontational style together with political and bureaucratic inexperience was definitely a problem. But unlike Palin and the Tea Party, he had a gift to appeal to "unprotected" and turn them into an effective political force, trying to formulate a sensible policy to respond to their interests and worries. Trump proved that its anger was well-founded socially and economically but a very substantial part of it had also to do with "attitudinal conservatives". His electorate's social, cultural and religious beliefs were incessantly attacked by liberal-left politics united in its universalist global ideology with the Right's economic global policy. The Republican Party, the "party of the rich" as the Democratic Party has become, had to confront the truth that its electorate is not big business any more but another target group which could not be duped indefinitely. Trump's great achievement was to show that any winning Republican coalition was no longer possible without this group which he organized and gave their ideas a full and fair hearing.

Therefore, Trump opened a new chapter in a process of a gradual realignment of the conservative coalition after its wandering in the woods during the futile effort to turn it into a lasting and viable political movement. He recognized a problem the Republican and conservative establishments ignored for too long, that is a structural problem of globalism hitting a large chunk of the electorate totally abandoned by the libertarian economic Right and subjected to social engineering by the cultural liberal-left. He was able to identify this dimension of the American crisis which touched upon such qualities as patriotism, social solidarity

²⁸ K. Philips, *The Emerging Republican Majority*, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ 1969. See also J. Kotkin, W. Cox, "Joe Biden's Imaginary America", *National Review*, June 14, 2021, <https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2021/06/14/joe-bidens-imaginary-america> [accessed: 15.06.2021] and D.E. Paul, "Culture War as Class War", *First Things*, August/September 2018, pp. 39–44.

or responsibility of elites for the weak in their care understanding the fears and grievances of his voters animated by

“a perceived failure on the part of government to protect vulnerable Americans from threats to their way of life.” The “American way of life” may sound like the most leaden of clichés, but the rise of Trump means that it again poses resonant, contested questions. [John O’Sullivan captured this sense of belonging arguing that] [...] America’s political life is animated by its founding principles, but the nation’s civilization rests on the fact that “Americans are a distinct people, with their own history, traditions, institutions, and common culture.” This richer, enveloping sense of Americanism means that the United States has assimilated people from around the world not simply by getting free agents who happen to share one patch of land to abide by certain rules of citizenship, but by getting them to commit to a way of life that makes them part of the unfolding heritage of a particular people. “[...] and above all Lincoln’s ‘mystic chords of memory’”.²⁹

Trump had instinctively if not conceptually the basic conservative disposition that “politics is downstream from culture”, meaning not only the fact that conservatives always should pay attention to culture which shapes sensibilities of the general public. If liberals, as one of the observers noticed perceptively, impose their narratives and effectively make them ingrained into people’s souls, no reasoned argument can un lodge the public from this frame of mind. The statement that politics is downstream from culture has its broader, anthropological sense because of unavoidable junction between political institutions and believes present in the society which shape and influence the former incessantly.³⁰ Therefore, Trump’s slogan “Make America Great Again” should be interpreted as a call to rebuild social solidarity and republican responsibility for all and to counter the liberal-left’s “narrative of American depravity”. This was not a slogan to make America more chauvinistic, racist or exclusivist, but it was a call to restore social bonds without which any chance of taking responsibility for all the excluded would be impossible.

A profound question of aesthetics is involved here, and this poses an enormous challenge to the American conservative elites. For many conservative

²⁹ W. Voegeli, “What’s at Stake”, *Claremont Review of Books*, Spring 2016, pp. 33–34; a good account of this delegitimization of patriotism by the liberal elites and its role in Trump’s electorate see: S.B. Smith, *Reclaiming Patriotism in an Age of Extremes*, Yale University Press, New Haven–London 2021. In this sense the cancel culture movement and post-patriotism of the liberal-left elites constitute one of the instances of illiberalism, an attack on human liberty. It is unable, because of ideological prejudices, “to understand and cherish a humane national loyalty and how its civic foods uphold a free and dignified life for citizens with different religious, political, and ethnic loyalties and attributes. Before the ‘widening gyre’ delivers us to a ‘blood-dimmed tide’, we might seek a sober knowledge of why patriotism is something we are predisposed to and how it can order our affections property ... We can’t then label the illiberal enthusiasms that masquerade as justice for what they really are: ideological fronts that would impose a dogmatic re construction of political, economic, and social reality”, R.M. Reinsch II, “To Recover Patriotism. America Needs Mishpocheh”, *National Review*, June 14, 2020, p. 39.

³⁰ See e.g.: W. Voegeli, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

pundits Trump to a large degree truly represented this electorate which Hillary Clinton called “the basket of deplorables” that is people described by J.D. Vance in his *Hillbilly Elegy* as devastated economically, socially and culturally by the liberal elites’ policies. For the upper-class conservative elites, the greatest challenge is to find a connection to these “deplorables” and find a common cause with them. Trump tried, with success, to do this. Still, many within traditional conservative elites, let alone the oligarchical elites of the Republican Party treated his ascendancy as a political “accident”, not understanding that he found such a common denominator. Some efforts at realignment had nevertheless been taken even before Trump’s defeat in 2020. In turn the Democratic Party establishment realized that it unwisely disregarded Trump and during the election a plot to eject him from office was concocted, the plot which was ready to employ illegal means and social unrest to destabilize the political system. And they decided after gaining power in 2020 in both chambers of Congress to think about changing the electoral law so possibility of Trump’s “recidivism” or nothing similar would not happen again.³¹ Another plan is to enlarge by congressional law the number of liberal-left judges in the Supreme Court to neutralize Trump’s three conservative nominations.³²

American conservatism after Trump’s rise and fall

After the defeat in 2020 some conservatives, mainly the libertarians and neo-conservatives have focused on traditional economic and foreign policy issues, criticizing the liberal-left to which the establishment of the Republican Party and the conservative elites capitulated. One of the conservative libertarian intellectuals Ramesh Ponnuru observed that Trump’s victory was both a challenge to conservatism and a chance, and all currents of the conservative Reagan’s coalition needed to reassess their goals and find an accommodation with

³¹ The aim is to change electoral laws in many states, the process which the Democratic Party has been doing for years, to make the postal election more available (favoring younger people more inclined to vote for the Democrats) and a verification of voting rights less rigid, so a bigger number of its supporters could vote, including possible illegal immigrants. Such measures were questioned during the last elections. That is why after Joe Biden’s victory the conservative states enacted laws to improve honesty of the electoral voting so to diminish a possibility of a fraud. But this is not a simple political feud but a bitter fight. That is why the Democrats prepared a bill in Congress limiting an autonomy of the states as far as their right to enact electoral laws, a move liquidating state prerogatives and introducing unifying federal measures.

³² This would be a truly revolutionary change which nevertheless has a small chance to be introduced. Although Congress has such a right, since the middle of the 19th century such a move was tried once during Roosevelt’s New Deal times and met with bipartisan, let alone the public resistance. Moreover, such a law could easily be changed by the next Republican majority, so it is a double-edged move.

a new reality. First of all, they should try to understand the Trump phenomenon and his presidency in terms of conservative principles instead of focusing on his personality. He pointed out that debates revolving around a question whether his presidency was a kind of a hostile takeover of the conservative movement and the Republican party were useless and senseless. Trump won in a democratic election and his presidency did not signify any national crisis. Conservatives should not debate over Trump's "unaesthetic" personality but should focus on the vital question what was to be the conservative agenda in the "age of Trump" and what he understood about the voters the conservative establishment was incapable of grasping. But the most important question was which strategic and immediate political aims should be formulated for the times in which the inherited Reagan agenda is obsolete.

Ponnuru was right to conclude that although Trump recognized irrelevance of the old agenda, he was

unable or unwilling to supply a new one of his own that fleshed out his instincts and themes. [...] [But] even his biggest fans must admit that [Trump's] [...] talents do not include policy development. This is not an entirely bad thing. The idea that the president should set the policy agenda is not in the Constitution, was not the American practice for much of our history, and was introduced into [...] [American] politics by progressives in order to promote their vision of government".³³

Ponnuru delineated several areas where conservatives should propose distinctive reforms, intellectually and politically, getting out of "politics as usual" mode practiced in the Congress. No president representing a radical change can accomplish this by his action. For Ponnuru these areas are health care, different from costly and inefficient Obama's reform but available to all, the area where the Republicans and Democrats were unfortunately acting in tandem increasing the federal government's power to deal with it. Conservatives should focus on the market forces overseen by government ensuring its justness. The second area should be a destruction of "the higher-education cartel" with tuition costs and dropouts exorbitantly raising, when obtained skills do not match market needs any more, and debts are killing chances of normal life.³⁴ The third area should bring federal spending under control by moving "toward a more rational system that guarantees against poverty – by setting a minimum benefit at or higher than the poverty level [...] [and] change the way benefits are calculated". Finally, conservatives should focus on immigration reform in a situation when "around 40 percent of illegal immigrants to [America] [...] came here legally but overstayed their visas. A wall, whatever its merits, would not address this problem. If we want to instill respect for the law and have control

³³ R. Ponnuru, "Right to Where?", *National Review*, June 25, 2018, p. 14.

³⁴ America has a system that "supposed to be a ladder for upward mobility has become to a significant degree a bottleneck in it", *ibidem*.

over whom we let in, we have to make employers verify the legal status of new hires – and give them the tools to do so”.³⁵

These are definitely grave problems to be considered by the conservative camp. The concrete policy measures would activate its electoral base and draw to it many undecided voters. But strikingly absent from Ponnuru’s diagnosis is a total absence of cultural and religious issues standing at the very center of the American culture war.³⁶ Thus, conservatives who consider such issues paramount for their sense of security and freedom come with their agenda. Such conservatives know that America of the Reagan times was an utterly different country in which they had a much more friendly elite environment than today, especially at universities, in media and in big business. Even a large part of the liberal churches of different denominations are now overtly hostile to them refusing to grant them equal citizenship. This is mainly because both the conservative and the liberal-left now argue, unlike still in Reagan times, from entirely different anthropological principles. The conflict is thus much deeper, in fact existential with liberal anthropological principles being defined as the only legitimate.³⁷ The liberal-left elites, dominating the above mentioned institutions, want to shape the American cultural and social code including a redefinition of institutions and rights and refusing legitimacy to people thinking differently, mainly religious ones. This is the outcome of a phenomenon called sometimes technocratic liberalism, where the liberal-left “emancipation” ideology was connected with the most aggressive economic oligarchy in search of a perfect, totally controlled consumer operating on the market. Here the sharpest dividing line is a boundary between an increasingly aggressive agenda of the sexual revolution and beliefs of the religious people, a clear cut refusal to recognize a principle of religious freedom of the First Amendment, with liberal faith becoming a surrogate of state religion. Therefore, to have a theocratic form of government, you do not need to believe in God.³⁸

³⁵ For Ponnuru legal immigration should also be reformed, orienting itself “more toward the recruitment of high-skilled immigrants and less toward the reunification of extended families. We don’t have a national interest in low-skilled immigration on the scale we have allowed it, and low-skilled immigration puts unnecessary pressure on people at the low end of the labor market. The price is paid by many low-skilled immigrants themselves. [...] These ideas are very far from a complete agenda, and some of them might well make politicians blanch. Doubtless there are many other ideas that conservatives can and should pursue. [...] [But if] [t]he conservative themes of decentralization, local control, markets, accountability, national self-confidence: [...] are not to be lifeless abstractions, they must be put into practice and shown to work. Wherever they stand on Trump, conservatives have to engage in this tasks, and support Trump whenever he wants to tackle such issues even after his loss in 2020”, *ibidem*.

³⁶ See: J. Dys, “Trump and Religious Liberty”, *First Things*, May 2019, pp. 9–12.

³⁷ See on this R.P. Kraynack, *Christian Faith and Modern Democracy. God and Politics in the Fallen World*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, IN 2001.

³⁸ The most notorious case was a statement by Professor Mark Tushnet of Harvard University who several months before Trump’s win declared that in case of his success, the “enlightened” liberal elites should hit at him with all possible force refusing him any political, social and moral

Trump's victory in 2016 was both a challenge to conservatism and a chance amidst the ruins of the Reagan's conservative coalition and his legacy. Ponnuru's diagnosis was at the level of concrete politics, but this is not enough. To start with one has to realize that for the first time there is a new fusion possible to be formed in the republican-conservative camp and Trump sensed it. The first fusion was formulated in 1950's and 60's by the *National Review* editor Frank Meyer stitching together under a banner of anticommunism all different strands of the conservative movement. After the World War II conservatives

[...] never marched in lockstep. Just as they oppose centralized economic planning, so do they oppose centralized political planning. The conservative movement is a loosely bound movement made up of, in Morton Blackwell's words, "activists, scholars, donors, and organizational entrepreneurs held together by ... shared philosophy, shared enemies, and shared experiences." And it is a movement that comes together when confronted with a common foe.³⁹

The Soviet Union and its vow to communize the world was the main enemy of conservative anticommunism, but it was rooted in a deeper truth that became the fundamental principle of fusionism that "the freedom of the person [is] the central and primary end of political society". For Meyer, a former communist,

legitimacy, and his electorate including religious and cultural conservatives should be, in principle pushed and herded into ghettos, M. Tushnet, "Abandoning Defensive Crouch Liberal Constitutionalism", May 6, 2016, Balkinization, <https://balkin.blogspot.com/2016/05/abandoning-defensive-crouch-liberal.html> [accessed: 8.06.2021]. Subject to "thought crimes" Trump's voters, have to go through "reeducation", as without any restraint were saying the most prominent politicians of the Democratic Party or professors at the elitist universities after Biden's victory. They ceased to be citizens and become enemy subject to "annihilation". This Manichean project is a variant of the Marxist class war for propaganda and disinformation purposes defined in a language of "progress", "antiracism" as well as identified with diverse theories such as: critical theory of race, identity politics, "cancel culture" or such organizations as "Black Lives Matter" or Antifa. This project as Yoram Hazony captured it, is based on few simple principles. Society is divided between the oppressors who control all the instruments of power (bourgeoisie, "whites") and "oppressed" who often possess false consciousness, a kind of dominant ideology from which they have to emancipate themselves to recognize a true nature of oppression. Change is only possible through a revolution, a destruction of the oppressor class, introduction of universal equality, not only economic but ideological and mental as well, and uniformization of thinking as a form of justice, with the aim of abolition of human existential alienation and the end of its history. But Marxism's problem is that it treats all unequal human relations as exploitation, not hierarchy. Hierarchy as authority is morally suspect in the age of "equality", strengthened additionally by oligarchisation of liberal democracy and a lack of responsibility of the strong for the weak in a post-national. But Marxism itself does not possess any reasonable definition of the state and power, changing only one oppressed class for another with an assumption that these class antagonisms disappear. In turn liberalism treats evil in categories of still not yet perfected system of equal rights, education and psychotherapy. See: Y. Hazony, "The Challenge of Marxism", *Quillette*, August 16, 2020, <https://quillette.com/2020/08/16/the-challenge-of-marxism> [accessed: 8.06.2021].

³⁹ L. Edwards, "We Need a New Fusionism", *The American Conservative*, September 17, 2020, <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/we-need-a-new-fusionism> [accessed: 8.06.2021].

especially sensitive to its totalitarian anti-freedom message, a human being was a rational, autonomous individual, and freedom was “the essence of his being, indispensable to his pursuit of happiness”.⁴⁰ But making this observation Meyer also distinguished such conservatism from classical American liberalism which for him was tainted by inherent utilitarianism and secularism bound together by power of autcreation which excluded per se any notion of a stable human nature or its normative core, the natural law. Thus, conservatives had to save the Christian understanding of “the nature and destiny of man”. For Meyer this approach was nothing new, but just a reiteration of the existing consensus formulated in fact by the Founding Fathers in the US Constitution.⁴¹

Democratic republicanism as an alternative to liberal oligarchy

The new coalition, while rejecting its once dominant but now moribund anti-communism, even if not anti-Marxism or its current variant of neo-Marxism, has to take into consideration what should be the basis of a common cause between social and cultural conservatism and economic populism. Definitely, after Trump American conservatism – however much it was in disarray at the time of his victory – can never be the same and had to be redefined anew. In July 2019 during the National Conservatism Conference a discussion began about the future of conservatism in the Age of Trump. What was striking was a nearly unanimous agreement that the old coalition between Big Business and social conservatives was over. A new coalition had to start with a simple recognition that Trump’s victory was not a fluke but a sign of a profound realignment, exposing also growing and fundamental fault lines within the Democratic Party electoral base. Whatever one might think about Trump’s personality and his behavior during the election in 2020 there was, as many commentators named it “no blue wave”, no Democratic landslide, with Trump winning the highest number of non-white voters of any Republican presidential candidate since Nixon in 1960.⁴² It is thus apparent that the realignment has been real and as Robert P. George, a professor at Princeton and a leading voice of the conservative camp, observed, that during elections in 2016 and 2020 a huge constituency existed to combine social conservatives and economic populism into one block, and Trump aired exactly such a message and it obviously was successful.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ See in general: G.H. Nash, *op. cit.*; also a good account of Meyer’s effort see: K.J. Smant, *Principles and Heresies: Frank S. Meyer and the Shaping of the American Conservative Movement*, ISI Books, Wilmington, DE 2002, esp. pp. 93–110, also J.P. East, *The American Conservative Movement: The Philosophical Founders*, Regnery Books, Chicago–Washington, DC [cop. 1986], pp. 69–104.

⁴² He doubled Mitt Romney’s result in 2012 and nearly tripled George W. Bush’s result in 2000.

Trump – as far as this coalition was concerned – outperformed himself in 2020 in comparison with 2016. The Republican Party

is becoming a working (and small business) class party. Its supporters are saying: ‘Uphold our moral and religious values; protect our industries against unfair practices and unfair competition [...]. “So far, the big inroads against the Democrats – who are now the party of the professional classes, ‘Woke’ corporate America, and the super-rich – have been with the white working class [...]. The obvious goal for Republicans now is to win over *minority* working class voters. Their values and concerns line up well with those of the white working class. [...]” For years, the political arm of the pro-life movement has known that large numbers of Hispanic and Black voters are socially conservative, but still consistently vote Democrat. Many of these voters have grown increasingly turned off by gender ideology, Drag Queen Storytime, and other boutique social issues that have become so front and centre in the increasingly progressive Democratic Party. This [...] indicates that a realignment is possible “[...]. Republican candidates of all backgrounds need to compete vigorously for the votes of socially conservative, economically populist voters, including minority voters”.⁴³

This realignment had been visible for long before 2016 and advised as an electoral strategy for the Republicans by many scholars.⁴⁴

This observation contradicted conventional political wisdom in the United States that, minorities would always be within the Democratic Party camp, that they would be “wholly owned” by them as “demography is destiny”. But this turned out not to be true during the election in 2016 and 2020. Trump’s many personal faults including some reckless and irresponsible comments during the 2020 election made him a danger to himself which hurt him badly among some sectors of the electorate. But, as George observed he “pulled back the curtain on American elites – including economic elites – and he revealed that there is a yawning gap between elites and working-class Americans”.⁴⁵ Thus, Trump not only destroyed the Republican establishment’s control over the Party but reconstructed it into a machinery loyal to him causing problems for the Democratic Party as well which, despite its electoral victory in 2020, is in a total disarray with visible signs of a panic. Joe Biden was accepted for the party establishment only because he was used as a means to oust Trump. Apart from this his value is purely instrumental, to give cover to radical progressive politics with possible exception of foreign policy. This creates an enormous chance for the conservative coalition but differently constructed.

⁴³ J. Van Maren, “The Realignment is Real”, *The American Conservative*, November 12, 2020, <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/the-realignment-is-real> [accessed: 8.06.2021].

⁴⁴ For instance, Charles C. Camosy. See his *Resisting Throwaway Culture: How a Consistent Life Ethic Can Unite a Fractured People*, New City Press, Hyde Park, NY 2019, and *Beyond the Abortion Wars: A Way Forward for a New Generation*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI 2016.

⁴⁵ J. Van Maren, *op. cit.*

“Gone is the classic left/right binary around big and small government [...]. Instead, there is a party – the Democrats – who seem to be becoming the party supported by elite money, elite ideology, and Big Tech. The GOP, by contrast, seems to be becoming the party of populism and the working class. [...] Being associated with Trump himself is toxic, especially for young people, but the fault lines his ‘blowing up the system’ have uncovered are incredible [...]. For many decades now, [for instance] pro-lifers have been part of a political coalition in which small-government mindsets dominated. If massive government intrusion into private life regulating pregnancy seemed counter-intuitive in this coalition, social welfare programs to support mothers, children, and broader families were generally off the table. But now, in the new realignment, pro-lifers need not choose between resisting abortion on both the demand and supply side. [...] There is an amazing opportunity to put our libertarian past behind us and build an ‘all of the above’ approach to protecting and supporting life. The GOP should immediately move to build on the gains with Blacks and Latinos, especially with an eye to religious beliefs, social welfare for families and education, and life issues. [...] What it does mean is [not hubristic anti-intellectualism, but] listening to the wisdom of the working classes as a contrast to the censorious and extremist monied and elite class who ignore or castigate as regressive the views of the very people they claim to support”.⁴⁶

Whether this potential will be used to create a new fusionism, a conservative coalition with minorities will be seen. But there is no doubt that Trump destroyed a conventional wisdom among the Republicans and Democrats, creating total political chaos and posing questions which both parties will have to confront. Trump seems not to be what the Democrats and the liberal-left wanted him to be, that is a “mistake”, an irritating political event but marginal anyway, incapable of stopping the march of progressive America represented by the elites. A rejection of this “minority alliance” with liberal-left progressivism created a new fusion of economic populism with social and cultural conservatism or better to say social solidarity and conservatism.

Trump forced a disintegrated conservative to redefine itself anew, especially when his huge conservative electoral base rejected the Republican Party establishment. It was obvious that even after the defeat in 2020, the new conservative coalition which Trump organized was to persist and to define it more precisely in the new conditions was an urgent task. The question was what this conservative movement in the Trump era wanted to achieve. Discussions about this have been going on incessantly. For instance, the subject was comprehensively taken up already right before the election of 2020 by an influential *The American Conservative* with representatives of all currents of conservatism trying to answer a question what united them and what the Trump’s movement relation to this core principle of American conservatism was.⁴⁷ The discussion was heated, with some even claiming that conservatism was an insignificant movement consisting of “bizarre little cults [...] no longer capable of anything but reflexive spasms” and

⁴⁶ Ch.C. Camosy in: *ibidem*.

⁴⁷ “What is American Conservatism?”, *The American Conservative*, June 29, 2020, <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/tac-symposium-what-is-american-conservatism> [accessed: 8.06.2021].

declaring that “American conservatism ... is a failure”.⁴⁸ Still, the majority tried to devise tactics to rejuvenate the conservative movement which Trump’s presidency gave such a unique chance. Yuval Lewin argued that conservatives should start with a simple observation corroborated by Trump’s success that although the market economy was important to free society, any dogmatism in this regard was suicidal. The market was “dangerously inadequate” since it totally disregarded the common good about which it had nothing to say when left to its own logic but may bring social upheaval of which Trump’s success was one of the most blatant examples. Conservatives should understand that the underlying question, in the light of which all other issues including the free market, should be looked at is a question of “how best to apply a complex view of the human person to the politics of a free nation”. Daniel McCarthy, editor of the traditionalist journal *Modern Age*, pointed out that conservatives live in an age of ideological revolution and therefore are and must be by definition “a counter-revolutionary force which, despite its flaws, is worthy of our loyalty”. In case of America that means a deep commitment to the sources of our civilization “‘if we are to prevail again,’ as we did following the French Revolution and during the Cold War”.⁴⁹ Some supported “constitutional conservatism” in response to internal and external threats to America’s very existence. This constitutional conservatism means a preservation of constitutional government and “commitment to ordered liberty”. All authors understand that a new fusionism should devise a strategy to win back libertarian conservatives and find a common cause around the pro-life issue and other cultural matters. Nearly all agreed that American conservatism was

not dead, as [some] [...] once proclaimed, but is very much alive and the object of constant examination, proof of its ability to impact the body politic. [...] [it] is at its best when it practices fusionism. The historic successes of the Reagan years, including the implementation of supply-side economics and ending the Cold War at the bargaining table and not on the battlefield, proved that. Today’s trifecta of crises – the coronavirus pandemic, the struggling economy, and the challenge of persistent racism – calls for a New Fusionism encompassing the major strains of conservatism. [...] [but] American conservatism is just that – American, not European, confident and optimistic, reliant on the founding truths of the Republic and on Western civilization. What should conservatives do in this testing time? Be radical in thought and action. Educate the Millennials about the myths and realities of [their own Times] [...]. [...] Take the lead in demonstrating that the American Spirit still lives, America remains an exceptional nation, and “We the People” still govern”.⁵⁰

Fate of core conservative believes in the liberal world

One has to say that the most important challenge to conservatism today, especially to its intellectual class, in the Republican Party and in a society in general

⁴⁸ L. Edwards, *op. cit.*

⁴⁹ *Ibidem.*

⁵⁰ *Ibidem.*

as a minority group in the media, universities, corporate business is a situation which was not even contemplated during Reagan times. This challenge is not immediately polemical, political, or economic but fundamentally anthropological. Behind confusing and changing lines of alliances, friendships, skirmishes or even hostilities among American conservative intellectual class, or the wider Right camp, the real question, and the very crucial one is whether they will accept as a minority group in the media, universities, corporate business the ubiquitous and culturally reigning liberal anthropology of non-negotiable subjective individual choice as a basis of moral obligation and rights. For libertarians or foreign policy conservative nationalists this is not a question of life or death. But for cultural conservatives, including religious ones of all denominations this is a question to be or not to be. The question whether, to what extent and within what spheres to

make peace with today's autonomy-maximizing, technocratic arrangement? Or does our moment require a more combative posture toward that arrangement? Is conservatism merely an adjunct to liberalism – liberalism, but a little less? Or is it something else? Does the conservative vocation involve aggressively defending and expanding the empire of liberal norms and proceduralism? Or, is it about offering a substantive vision of the common good, one in which autonomy and liberal norms and procedures take their rightful place but are neither fetishized nor treated as ends in themselves?⁵¹

There has been a large current within the traditional conservative Reagan coalition, mainly libertarian and neoconservative, market oriented Chicago school currents, which treated this anthropological dimension of the Reagan times as given, taken for granted and not considering it important for their goals, making it possible to form such a coalition. But with the advent and aggressive imposition of this liberal-left anthropology on the American society and its institution due to political victory among the establishment of the “emancipation” ideology corresponding nicely with the civil rights revolution and changing of individual liberalism into identity liberalism, the conservative coalition was forced to confront this anthropological shift. Its consequences began to be visible once the media and the universities were captured by it, corporate capitalism sensed its profit potential and technocratic liberalism which captured the Democratic party, and the bureaucratic establishment began to implement it. It was then that the large part of the conservative movement of the traditional Reagan coalition began to see conservatism as an addition to the hegemonic liberalism becoming at most its friendly critic from inside. This included the most aggressive implementation of the liberal anthropology – the sexual revolution. Such technocratic liberalism and such Republican Party wanted to sign a peace treaty with the sexual revolution, not realizing that this is not a question of tolerance but a brutal imposition of

⁵¹ S. Ahmari, “Giving the Boot”, *First Things*, April 2019, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2019/04/giving-the-boot> [accessed: 8.06.2021].

another vision of the world. Such liberalism refuses to license “the conviction that human beings have a natural end, and to speak in this way puts one in violation of the canons of public reason”.⁵² It was another embodiment of the “end of history” ideology. Politically it meant that liberal democracy was the end of political development, its Hegelian highest stage, economically it implied global liberal free market, culturally acceptance of the liberal anthropology of an individual. This individual in a process of autocreation chooses its own values, the very essence of the liberal human rights endlessly, for reason, expanding.⁵³ This global hegemonic outlook encompassing its political, economic and cultural dimensions, including educational one as far as interpretation of history is concerned, supported by the military and economic might of the West is digesting anyone who encounters its full-fledged force. It is evident that only conservatism capitulating to this anthropology can be recognized as morally legitimate in a liberal world. Recognition can be granted only if the axioms of this anthropology are accepted without question, with a definition of any other social movement, religion or idea rejecting it as illegitimate politically and morally. That is what justifies use of such terms as “populism”, “chauvinism”, “racism”, “blood and soil”, or as in case of Hilary Clinton “deplorable”, against anyone who challenges the orthodoxy of such a liberal world even in the slightest way. It is this current of the conservative movement which comprises mainly the “Never Trump” people.⁵⁴

Trump for all imaginable reasons was an ideal target for this type of attack in which many conservatives of the libertarian or neoconservative or in general

⁵² This applied especially to attempts to subvert religious freedom. Any attempt “to restore religious freedom to its proper *philosophical* place, as something like the sine qua non of freedom itself, presupposes just the view of human nature and reason that our post-Christian liberalism rejects from the outset”, M. Hanby, “The Civic Project of American Christianity”, *First Things*, February 2015, p. 39; on this making peace with the sexual revolution: R.R. Reno, “Liberal Tradition, Yes; Liberal Ideology, No”, *First Things*, December 2017, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2017/12/liberal-tradition-yes-liberal-ideology-no> [accessed: 8.06.2021].

⁵³ See: P. Manent, *A world beyond politics?: a defense of the nation-state*, transl. by M. LePain, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2013.

⁵⁴ Such conservatives seem to be writing themselves into a classical American division visible in nearly entire 20th century, that is a division between two forms of liberalism, the classical one and the progressive one, created at the beginning of the century by such people as a journalist Herbert Croly with his book *The Promise of American Life*, The Macmillan Company, New York 1909, Woodrow Wilson’s administrative science of government as professor of Princeton and then president, then F.D. Roosevelt and his New Deal, who used the machinery of the state to introduce liberalism’s goals. This American progressive liberalism had its European equivalent in the Oxford School of liberalism as represented mainly by a Hegelian Thomas Hill Green which wanted to square classical liberalism with the imperial aims of the British empire and the welfare state. The classical-progressive division disappeared today because both share the same common goals, both are enemies of all forms of human solidarity and relational and communal life based on moral obligations not subjective rights. See for instance: P.J. Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed*, Yale University Press, New Haven 2018; on the English wing of Progressive liberalism see: R. Hudelson, *Modern Political Philosophy*, M.E. Scharpe, London–New York 1999, pp. 59–70.

Republican political mold began to participate, accepting this liberal orthodoxy and questioning only its marginal issues at best.⁵⁵ It seems that such conservatives realized that power rests now with liberals and wanted to be part of it engaging in rituals and using a language making them part of the elite. An important element of such a narrative, having a long history going at least to Henry L. Mencken and the Scopes Trial of 1925, is strong and deep antipathy for religion, especially for the “deplorables”, protagonists of the *Hillbilly Elegy*, unsophisticated “red-necks” who seek solace in biblical faith.⁵⁶

For such “Never Trump” conservatives who made peace with liberalism’s hegemony religious conservatives who supported Trump are despicable, fearful people incapable of understanding the “signs of time” represented by the liberal progressive reforms. For this type of “liberal” conservatism politics is a prudent and incremental action with limited government, individual freedoms and policies which avoid harm and are subject to consent, the only legitimate objectives. But such liberal conservatives are incapable of raising the most principled questions about purposes and origins of human communities, exactly the questions Trump and his “populist” electorate raised, not only in America but in Europe as well. Trump’s electorate forced conservative camp to face the nature and purpose of common life after decades of compromise with liberalism, not realizing that its logic begins to attack and define anew according to its ideological assumptions every nut and corner of human life. Of course, these principles seemed to work and until recently had brought spectacular successes, including material prosperity for all. This consensus, which might be defined as a secular-liberal-technocratic consensus became a hegemonic world-view. It began to radicalize itself especially after the 1968 revolution, was to be introduced globally organized by endlessly expanding liberal human rights. At its center stood a conception of human freedom as a radical emancipation of individuals from so far existing culture, religion, traditions and even sexuality in the name of maximizing their potential as consumer of material goods and values. This was the essence of liberal globalism.

⁵⁵ Reagan was also attacked without a pardon but as “ignorant”, “half-wit”, “incompetent”, “warmonger” etc., but not, at least so brutally and widely, as morally evil, except in his foreign policy ideas connected with the Star Wars program.

⁵⁶ During The Scopes Trial (1925), so-called Monkey Trial, Mencken, at that time the most influential and “progressive” publicist portrayed in such a way the people of the Bible Belt as “despicable trash”, because they resisted evolution as a scientific theory contradicting the Biblical account understood in the most literal way. This contributed to a cultural division of the US into two groups, first, the people who defined themselves as progressives and the second one as reactionaries in a constant battle for the future. This cultural division goes back to a split in American Protestantism into the so-called Social Gospel Protestantism, influenced by modernism, and the Fundamentalists. See: R.M. Gamble, *The War for Righteousness: Progressive Christianity, the Great War, and the Rise of the Messianic Nation*, ISI Books, Wilmington, DE 2004.

Fusion of conservatism with liberal monism

The conservative thinkers and politicians in the United States after Reagan's era were pretending to live by his principles but not realizing how they were gradually subjecting themselves to a logic of life dictated by global liberalism. In this way they were abandoning traditional American liberal values and accepting their new modern liberal-left version promoted politically by the Democratic Party, corrected only on the margins. They did not realize that the conservative electorate did not accept this stance of "politics as usual" and did not anticipate a rebellion thinking that all discontents would be neutralized by enormous, also global, economic and technological successes of the technocratic development. But the conservative electorate began to rebel because its negative consequences affected a large part of it, the problem ignored by the establishment of the Republican Party, including its conservative politicians. They seemed to accept easily the main premise of the technocratic liberalism that any shared idea of the common good was illiberal, not realizing that it itself began to be repressive. Without a vision of the common good shared by all society

devolves into consumerist cliques and warring tribal factions. With the eclipse of the metaphysical ideals that underlie their conception of reason, America and the West can barely address other civilizations, much less win them over. And it turns out that the consent principle, without more, can authorize all manner of degradation [of a human being] [...]. The liberal consensus, then, has emerged as a profoundly illiberal, repressive force – precisely because it grants the autonomous individual such wide berth to define what is good and true.⁵⁷

Such "liberal" conservatives were unable to understand Trump's "populism" and his rise to power and sided with liberal-left camp in a spectacle of hate, not noticing how profound illiberal the allegedly free liberal technocratic regime became and how much discontent it generated. The liberal elites defending its orthodoxy and blind to its rising dysfunctions were engaged in a process of punishing any "heretic" contemplating a deviation from it. Any serious concerns raised over some dramatic developments affecting millions of people such as unrestricted mass immigration, a state sponsored "emancipation" from all communal religious or family structures in the name of radical autonomy or criticism of economic growth treated as an idol were defined as phobias, as if history of the world and human thought truly ended. This hubristic liberalism also claimed that one can replicate the western model in any given foreign culture. Some conservatives who supported this approach, especially the neoconservative camp, were blind, noticed Sohrab Ahmari to powerful traditions, history, concepts of order, community, authority of other civilizations, which are incompatible with the Western liberal model. They did not realize that such events as the Trump's

⁵⁷ S. Ahmari, *op. cit.*

election, Brexit, rise of the “populist” parties were direct outcomes of this blindness, a legitimate, desperate attempt to correct a liberal system. Such events

should have mugged, or re-mugged, the conservative movement, in the same way that the disorders of 1968 awakened an earlier generation of thinkers to the limits of abstract idealism. Instead, [some conservatives] [...] doubled down. [...] [their efforts to stay the liberal course without] reflection on the unaddressed malaises and internal contradictions that made Trump, as distasteful as he often was (and is), a plausible choice for 63 million of his compatriots. Instead, [...] [such] coterie of die-hard Never Trumpers cast the election [of Trump] as an evil anomaly, a plot concocted by the Kremlin and a replay of the 1930s and '40s. [...] [with the] hotheaded rhetoric about Trumpian “fascism” and “despotism.” [...] [But] [i]f Trump’s election really is a Hitlerian-scale catastrophe for the West, then civic friendship between Trump America and non-Trump America is impossible. And indeed, that is a premise shared by the #Resistance and the most hysterical of the Never Trumpers [...]. They speak of “defending democracy,” [...] but what they really mean is defending the technocratic liberal consensus [...]. [...] [But] [o]ne needn’t make himself comfortable with Trump to appreciate the space he has opened up to ask basic questions once more.⁵⁸

The problems of or with the American conservative movement did not originate with Donald Trump’s election in 2016 and they will not go away after his defeat. In fact, his unexpected to the Republican and conservative establishment victory exacerbated only the perennial problem of the American conservatism, so different from historical or nearly not existing contemporary European conservatism. It is a problem of a constant vacillation whether the movement is and wants to be a part of the original liberal American *novus ordo saeculorum* or whether it wants to stand outside of it. Today this problem is especially visible, since liberalism has become a hegemonic ideological current with a distinctive anthropology to be imposed on all different thinking people, especially Christians. Whether this outcome was written into a logic of classical, also American liberalism has been recently hotly debated.⁵⁹ But equally important problem is the American pragmatic approach to reality and a blatant disregard of deeper philosophical, let alone metaphysical questions, which in conditions of inherent pluralism of American politics and society was not a problem. But with the hegemonic, also in an anthropological sense, modern liberalism, disguised under different names of identity liberalism, progressivism, liberal-left or liberal democracy, this traditional conservative American approach has proved to be totally inadequate, subject to capitulation on the hegemonic liberalism’s terms, with only marginal differences being tolerated and being pushed into insignificance. This does not really mean that the American politics will become monopolistic. The Democrats and the Republicans are going to battle each other but only within alternatives prescribed by monistic liberalism.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ See for instance: P Deneen, *op. cit.*, who argues that such an outcome had to happen.

⁶⁰ See for instance on this liberal monism in relation to religious liberty J.B. Elshtain, “The Bright Line: Liberalism and Religion”, [in:] *The Betrayal of Liberalism: How the Disciples of*

Conservatism forgot about first principles what for a long time was not dangerous because liberalism has not shown its totalitarian potential, especially in confrontation with its true enemy, that is communism. But now conservatives in America have no more place to retreat to, the truth the European conservatism disregarded and lost the battle. To do this American conservatism, historically never a very cohesive movement, must confront monistic liberalism by returning first of all to metaphysics, a challenge for pragmatically inclined American frame of mind. This was done during the anticommunist chase of conservatism but today the first axioms, its philosophical premises have been “lost in politics; its politics confused with policies; and its policies subsumed into personality”.⁶¹ But American conservatism never accepted traditional European conservative principle that tradition, preservation or, exactly conservation of it, is the very essence of conservatism. American conservatism, so much obsessed with the Founding Fathers, the Constitution and national grandeur placed within its core a revolutionary idea of liberty understood as metaphysical liberty ontologically grounded in a source which was not human autonomous will. This was visible clearly in the Sharon Statement, the founding statement of principles for Young Americans for Freedom written by M. Stanton Evans and ratified by William F. Buckley Jr. This document written in 1960 was at the very same time American modern conservatism’s founding document. It stated “[t]hat foremost among the transcendent values is the individual’s use of his God-given free will, whence derives his right to be free from the restrictions of arbitrary force”.⁶² The statement espoused five core principles which have directed the conservative movement since its adoption: individual freedom and the right of governing originate with God; political freedom is impossible without economic freedom; limited government and strict interpretation of the Constitution is crucial; the free market system is preferable over all others; communism must be defeated, not contained. This was in fact Frank Meyer’s “fusionism” in its fullness combining traditional conservatism, libertarianism and anti-communism, the three major camps of conservatism at the time. Some of the Sharon Statements’ principles have become dated as for instance an adulation of the free market, a word of God was controversial for many, but whatever its wording the basic idea defining conservatism was metaphysical.

Man is created in the image and likeness of God. This is essentially the basic conservative axiom, from which stems an idea that nature has definite limitations because it has definite moral ends. For this reason man as free and infused with a sense of moral conscience should strive to achieve moral ends as his best

Freedom and Equality Helped Foster the Illiberal Politics of Coercion and Control, eds. and introduction by H. Kramer, R. Kimball, Ivan R. Dee, Chicago 1999, pp. 139–155.

⁶¹ Ch.G. Long, “Conservatives Must Return To Metaphysics”, *The American Conservative*, August 27, 2020, <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/conservatives-must-return-to-metaphysics> [accessed: 8.06.2021].

⁶² *Ibidem*.

judgment dictates. This judgment also should constitute a barrier against utopian ends pursued by human means, the very essence of conservative realism. As Christopher Long observed, conservatives should be especially suspicious of the radicals, whether in the left or in the liberal-left camp, who try incessantly, in the words of Eric Voegelin “to immanentize the eschaton”. By doing this they create hell on earth by using totalitarian political means to eliminate evil from this world. They focus today mainly on obliteration of any form of inequality or discrimination, treated as crucial criteria of moral judgment without regard to natural laws’ limitations, let alone unintended consequences. Within this perspective the preeminent goal of American conservatism, as of any true conservatism, amounts to persistent resistance to any gnostic and antinomian temptations which disregard human nature and its true place in the order of creation. True, a metaphysical dimension does not contradict individual autonomy, in fact, as M. Stanton Evans observed, the former is a precondition of the latter, thus making possible the very idea of political liberty to be born. That is why liberty and a pursuit of virtue are not opposite, they flourish or perish together, and that is why they should never be dealt with independently. This should be the main goal of any true conservative program, whether cultural or political. In contemporary America it means, for instance, that conservatives should battle “woke” or “gender” utopianism which captured large sectors of the American institutional as well as mental life. As Evans wrote true conservatives should be first of all realists communicating to the Americans proper ideas about liberty,

virtue and the happiness derived from a well-ordered life. The key to achieving this goal lies in promoting conservative politics, policies and personalities in accord with a proper understanding of nature and its laws while opposing with fervor the secularists working in the service of disorder and error – including those among us.⁶³

It is hard to doubt that Donald Trump was as far away from this sensibility as one could imagine a politician to be, may be with one instinctual pro-life stance. He did not formulate anything resembling such metaphysical contours. However, one may argue that he successfully shattered the prevailing complacency of the oligarchical tendencies within the conservative movement as well as within the Republican Party. That is not much, but neither it is little.

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⁶³ Evans as quoted in *ibidem*.

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Trump and the Conservative Movement

United under Regan by anti-communism, the US Conservative movement is now deeply divided. This division was already visible in the so-called Sarah Palin’s conservative populism and the Tea Party movement. However, it showed itself in full force when the Republican party elite, living in symbiosis with liberals from the Democratic Party, had to respond to Donald Trump’s electoral success. It turned out that the traditional Republican electorate did not back the party’s globalist elite, but an outsider. Trump gained the support of that section of conservatives who rejected integration into the hegemonic ideology of leftist liberalism with its destructive narrative of “American iniquity” and the adoption of the technocratic global oligarchy model as the only possible “end of history”. Conservatives supporting Trump’s candidacy referred to the tradition of American conservatism, appealing to the Founding Fathers, the Constitution and national pride and supporting the idea of metaphysical freedom, ontologically rooted in being greater than the autonomous will of the individual. Thus, the possibility of agreement with the oligarchic elite professing identity liberalism is very limited. However, it is possible to create a tactical alliance between conservatives, especially religious ones, and libertarians. Despite fundamental anthropological and philosophical differences, the link is a common enemy – liberal identity politics. Additionally, Trump’s victory forces all currents in Regan’s conservative coalition to revise their goals and adjust to the new reality, as Trump did not appeal to economic globalism but called for the restoration of social solidarity and republican responsibility for all. He was aware of the possibility of creating a new coalition in the camp of conservatives and republicans, which must find a new common political goal, combining social and cultural conservatism with economic populism. Donald Trump, however, met with stiff opposition from conservatives who accept the technocratic hegemony of leftist liberalism along with the sexual revolution and new anthropology.

Key words: Trump’s presidency, American Conservatism in the 21st century, culture wars, populism, liberal oligarchy, technocracy, identity politics

Donald Trump i ruch konserwatywny

Zjednoczony za czasów Regana, dzięki antykomunizmowi, amerykański ruch konserwatywny jest obecnie głęboko podzielony. Podział ten widać było jeszcze w tzw. konserwatywnym populizmie Sary Palin oraz ruchu Tea Party. Uwidocznili się on jednak z całą mocą, gdy żyjące w symbiozie z liberałami z Partii Demokratycznej elity Partii Republikańskiej musiały zareagować na sukces wyborczy Trumpa. Okazało się, że tradycyjny elektorat Republikanów nie poparł globalistycznie nastawionych elit partii, lecz człowieka „z zewnątrz”. Trump zyskał poparcie tej części konserwatystów, którzy odrzucali integrację z hegemoniczną ideologią lewicowego liberalizmu wraz z jego narracją „amerykańskiej nieprawości” oraz przyjęcie modelu technokratycznej, globalnej oligarchii jako jedynie możliwego „końca historii”. Konserwatyści popierający Trumpa odwoływali się do tradycji konserwatyzmu amerykańskiego, stale odnoszącego się do ojców założycieli, Konstytucji i narodowej dumy, popierającego ideę wolności metafizycznej, ontologicznie zakorzenionej w bycie większym niż autonomiczna wola jednostki. Tym samym płaszczyzna porozumienia z wyznającą liberalizm tożsamościowy elitą oligarchiczną jest bardzo niewielka. Możliwe okazuje się jednak stworzenie taktycznego sojuszu konserwatystów, zwłaszcza religijnych, z libertarianami. Mimo zasadniczych różnic antropologicznych i filozoficznych łącznikiem jest wspólny wróg – liberalna polityka tożsamościowa. Zwycięstwo Trumpa sprawia, że wszystkie nurty konserwatywnej koalicji Regana muszą zrewidować swe cele i dostosować się do nowej rzeczywistości, tym bardziej że Trump nie odwoływał się do globalizmu ekonomicznego, lecz wzywał do odbudowy solidarności społecznej i republikańskiej odpowiedzialności za wszystkich. Był świadom możliwości stworzenia nowej koalicji w obozie konserwatystów i republikanów, która musi znaleźć nowy wspólny cel polityczny, łączący konserwatyzm społeczny i kulturowy z populizmem gospodarczym. Donald Trump spotkał się jednak ze zdecydowanym sprzeciwem konserwatystów akceptujących technokratyczną hegemonię lewicowego liberalizmu wraz z rewolucją seksualną i nową antropologią.

Słowa kluczowe: prezydentura Donalda Trumpa, konserwatyzm amerykański w XXI wieku, wojny kulturowe, populizm, oligarchia liberalna, technokracja, polityka tożsamościowa

